



# OSTS Notes



Newsletter of the United States Naval Academy  
Offshore Sail Training Squadron

## DIRECTOR'S CUT

by Renee Mehl



Happy New Year and we wish you all the best for a happy and healthy 2020! There is lots of pertinent program information in this newsletter if you're an active volunteer, so please read through it all. We try to bundle what you need to know in the newsletter, so we don't fill up your inbox. We also have past issues on the Navy

Sailing website at the following link:

<https://www.usna.edu/SailingTeam/osts/Newsletters.php>

Winter training starts on Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> and focuses on leadership for the first four sessions. The heart of this program is about experiential leadership for midshipmen, to get them ready to be leaders in the Fleet. This is presented by the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership professors, in conjunction with our senior volunteers and midshipmen who have been Skippers and XOs. I was fortunate to be part of the Stockdale Center's inaugural Associate Fellows program last semester and will be adding what I learned from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and the coursework that will transfer to our program.

We have a great lineup of instructors and courses for the winter. There is lots to learn, but it's definitely a worthwhile endeavor to be able to work with your midshipmen crew as an instructor and mentor during the summer.

Our draft summer schedule is attached, along with an opportunity to sign up for your preference on block and location. We are still under a continuing resolution, so the schedule won't be final until the budget is.

We look forward to seeing you at the end of the month.



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## FLEET CAPTAIN NOTE

by John Formisano



*Skipper John Formisano*

It seems like it was just a few weeks ago that we were wrapping up the fall training and here we are at the start of a new year getting ready for our classroom training. For some the training helps chart a course through the programs' expectations and requirements. If this is your first winter training session I'm sure you'll find the material helps you better understand the core leadership principals being taught to the midshipmen during their time at the Academy, the flow of a typical summer block and some of the basics of the 44 systems and processes. If you have a few blocks under your D-Ring belt like me, I know that the training helps reinforce the key aspects of OSTS and the leadership principals we are striving to deliver through our "leadership laboratory", also known as a Navy 44, and some great hands-on training during our full day at the Small Craft Repair Depot (SCRD) across the Severn River.



Our winter training sessions are one of the few times that we assemble together as COs/XOs and candidates for those positions. Being able to share our “sea stories” becomes a big part of the learning process for our volunteers, and one that I always look forward to.

As we have in the past, we will have the opportunity to meet informally at the Naval Academy Club in *The Alley* after the Thursday class for those who can’t get enough of those sea stories. I look forward to seeing you in class.

**MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NOTE**

by CAPT David Jackson, USN (ret)

The Winter Maintenance period is in full swing. Besides boat-specific corrective and preventative maintenance jobs, projects that we are working include:

- We have approval to replace the existing weather fax receivers with SiriusXM® marine weather receivers. This will enhance weather display and equipment reliability. A unit will be installed in the navigation trainer in the VOST classroom for those that want to explore how the system works.
- We are hopeful that we will have approval to remove the remote oil filter and hoses and install the filter directly on the engine block. This will significantly reduce the source of oil leaks.
- Replacement of the sun damaged fire suppression displays in the cockpit.
- All cushion covers are cleaned.

Please block your calendars and join us on Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> for a day at the Small Craft Repair Division (SCRD) across the Severn River for hands-on boat systems training. There will be more on that later.

**FAREWELL**

We wish **LT Matt Vernam** the very best as he moves on to his next at-sea assignment in the Navy. Matt has done a tremendous job as our Operations Officer (OPSO) and filling in as Deputy DNAS the past few months. We will miss him and again wish him the very best in his new assignment! **LT Christian Burton** will be moving into the OPSO position when Matt leaves in February and is on track to be another great junior officer for OSTs.

A personal note from **LT Matt Vernam**: “OSTS Volunteers, it was an absolute honor to serve with you in the OSTs program! I appreciate all of the time you sacrifice mentoring fellow volunteers and midshipmen. Without you, this program would not be as successful as it is!

*I will be departing USNA at the end of February. As a Surface Warfare Officer, my next assignment is Department Head School in Newport, RI. Following that, I will be assigned as the Chief Engineer on the USS Truxton (DDG-103), stationed in Norfolk,*

*VA. If you are ever in either one of those areas, please don't hesitate to reach out to me!”*

**WINTER TRAINING**

The 2020 Winter Training Schedule is attached. We will be having classes on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1600-1800. There will be a few Saturday classes: boat systems, Safety at Sea and the navigation practical exam. The first class will be Leadership #1 scheduled for **Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>** starting at 1600 in Michelson 110. A classroom locator map is also attached to this newsletter. You can park in any space not labeled F/S (faculty/staff) or I/C (midshipman).

New XOs are also required to pass 14 online exams on different topics, and a practical navigation exam. To help you manage the course load and get through the D-qualification on-line exams, we recommend that you attend or review each lecture, read any additional recommended study materials, and take that segment of the test shortly thereafter, while the information is still fresh.

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March 5	NAVIGATION 102	LUCE 101 & 102		LT Christian Burton/John Formisano
March 7	NAVIGATION EXAM		0900-1200	LT Christian Burton
March 28	SAFETY AT SEA SEMINAR	ALUMNI HALL	0800-1730	VARIOUS
March 31	TEACHING METHODS/XO PREPARATIONS	MICHELSON 110	1600-1800	Renee Mehl

**FIRST AID AND CPR/AED CLASSES**

We will be teaching basic first aid and CPR classes to our volunteers to fulfill that PQS book requirement. Existing D-qual volunteers will have courses offered over the winter, and new volunteers will be trained in the spring. We teach the EMS Safety courses. If you have a current certificate from American Heart Association, Red Cross, American Safety and Health Institute, National Safety Council, EMS Safety, or Backcountry Medical Guides, email or drop off a copy of your certificate to **LT Burton** and have him sign that off in your PQS book.

**SAFETY AT SEA SEMINAR**

Save the date! The Safety at Sea Seminar (SaS) is a requirement for our volunteers and is good for five years. Tracy Edwards, MBE (*Most Excellent Order of the British Empire*), the Skipper of the first Whitbread Around the World Race with an all-female crew will be our keynote speaker. We offer the one day course on **Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>** in Alumni Hall for free if you bring your own lunch, or you can sign up for a boxed lunch for \$10. If you want a US Sailing certificate for having attended this seminar, that cost is \$25. Some organizers of offshore races in the United States require these; however, the certificate in itself is not required by OSTs. A sign-up link will be provided in early March. If you’ve already taken the course, send us your certificate and we will sign off that line item in your PQS book. US Sailing does offer an online course that is the one day equivalent, but



there is a fee for that course, \$75 for US Sailing members, \$85 for non-members.

## D-SKIPPER QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The qualification process evaluates your sailing knowledge and your performance as a sailor and leader. This is documented through on-water verification by instructor-trainers, and online and written exams. The Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) book outlines the scope of the required knowledge and skills. You must demonstrate to a qualified D-Skipper instructor that you are proficient in each task/skill while underway and get their signature for each line item and each qualification level.

There are sailing logs embedded in the PQS book, after each qualification level. Each section has a minimum number of hours, but it may take more time on the water to master some of the skills.

The levels are Senior Crew (SC), Watch Captain (WC), Coastal Skipper (CS), and Offshore Skipper (OS). You are responsible for having your PQS book signed by the program director to complete each level of qualification before moving to the next one. Accurate, complete entries will support your request. Route your PQS book through **LT Christian Burton**. This will help us track your progress and make recommendations, so please don't wait until the last minute to get your final signatures.

The D-qual online exam sections may be taken in any order, at any time during your training. Blackboard will let you take each test twice before recording a final score; however, the questions are pulled from a pool, so you will not get all the same questions on a retest.

The DELMARVA trip in May will get you the requisite hours for the D-CS qualification level. Your instructor will provide your final assessment, so this event counts as your "final exam" to earn the D-qual and be ready for summer. We'll need your PQS book for final processing of your certificate.

## TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR PQS

Please review your PQS book for any signatures you still need, and ensure you get those skills signed off this spring (i.e., before the DELMARVA block sail). You can also catch most D-Skipper instructors during the various winter training classes if you missed getting a PQS book sign-off last fall.

### Sailing Log Book FAQ/Tips

- Record underway and sailing hours in quarter hour increments (i.e., .25, .50, .75, etc.), and round to the closest quarter hour.
- Enter one 24-hour period per line and get the Skipper or XO's signature before leaving the boat.
- Record average sustained wind speed.
- Record day and night hours underway **on watch**, and day and night hours **on watch** under sail.

- Accrue hours in each section until you have all the skills completed, and properly signed off. If you don't have enough hours, sign up for more sailing.
- When you have an instructor's "Recommendation to Proceed" to the next level, and enough hours, add the hours for each column and record in the space provided at the bottom of each qualification level's log section.
- Drop off your PQS book upon completion of each level (senior crew, watch captain, etc.) with **LT Christian Burton** for review and routing for either OSTS Director or DNAS signatures.
- You may use a separate and/or "electronic" sailing log to document your sailing time. The same required data fields must be documented, and a hard copy must be attached to your PQS book.
- The intention is that you finish Watch Captain this spring, then get enough hours for your XO qualification during a DELMARVA block sail in May.
- Periodically make a copy of your qualification book, in case it gets lost or destroyed by a random wave. It happens more than you think. Having a recent copy makes the reconstruction with the sailing staff much easier.

Review your PQS book often during the qualification process. You will be responsible for signing off qualifications for the midshipmen this summer, so it's good to be familiar with the book. Each qualification should be complete before you start signing off on the next qualification level. All midshipmen should be able to get through Senior Crew during the first week of block training, or into the start of the second week. They should be serving as a Watch Captain (for a day) before you sign off on WC qualification items. Your upper class should be able to get through the WC qualification by the end of the block and 3/C can have some items signed off if you implement the "WC for a day" training on the trip back. If they are able to complete those qualifications by the end of the block, and you recommend them for XO training, that sets them up to finish their watch captain qualification in the fall/spring and get XO signed off during the next year's DELMARVA. Just be aware that not every midshipman on your boat will show the aptitude and/or interest to pursue advanced sailing qualifications in the program. That is OK as long as they are actively engaged and contributing to the mission during your block.

## PROPOSED STUDY & TESTING GUIDELINES

Recommended readings for each D-qualification test segment can be found in the Books & References section of Blackboard. You can check out reference books from the Robert Crown Sailing Center Library. Pages and chapters referenced in the guide are based on the editions we have here in the library. We highly recommend reading the additional materials referenced for the electrical test. There is also a D-Qual Study Material section on Blackboard.

The following is a recommended D-Qualification examination

schedule, based on the winter training class schedule:

- **February** - Communications, Electronics and the Annual Rules of the Road (required prior to the May DELMARVA).
- **March** - Electrical, Engineering, Navigation Practical Exam, and Charts & Publications.
- **April** - Crew Overboard Recovery, General Seamanship, Heavy Weather, and Weather.
- **May** - Emergencies, First Aid, Safety, Rules of the Road Quarterly Refresher quiz and Sailing Theory.
- **August** – Rules of the Road Quarterly Refresher quiz.

Passing score is 70% or higher for all tests except Rules of the Road which requires 90% or higher to pass.

Blackboard accounts are set up now for all new volunteers. Blackboard administrators will send you an email with login instructions. All of our online qualification tests are hosted on Blackboard, and the winter lectures that are recorded on Panopto™ (voice and PowerPoint) can be accessed there too - usually within an hour or two of the lecture. The SCRD boatyard session and Safety at Sea Seminar will NOT be recorded.

If you are changing your email, please notify **LT Christian Burton** so he can download any grades you have in the system first.

### EXISTING D-SKIPPER QUAL PROFICIENCY REQTS

Your qualification proficiency is valid for a period of *one* (1) year from the date of your highest qualification, or the date of your most recent proficiency determination. *This is a good time of the year to check your qualification proficiency status as it gives you time to catch up on any open items before the sailing season begins in earnest.*

In order to maintain your qualification proficiency on a year-to-year basis, or regain your proficiency status if lapsed, the following requirements must be achieved within the periodicity indicated:

1. Successfully pass an annual “Rules of the Road” (COLREGS) examination with a score of 90% or better;
2. Successfully pass the quarterly “Rules of the Road” quiz with a score of 90% or better, every 3 months after the annual exam when actively participating in a given sailing year.
3. Successfully pass a bi-annual (i.e., every 2 years) Navigation Practical Examination with a score of 70% or better;
4. Maintain current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and basic first aid certifications from schools approved by US Sailing.
5. Every three (3) years, complete and pass with a score of 70% or better the D-Skipper qualification proficiency section examinations.
6. Participate in a summer program cruise block, or portion thereof, as an Executive Officer (XO), Skipper, or Coach at least once in any three (3) year period.

7. Attend a U.S. Sailing Safety at Sea Seminar within the past five (5) years

During the summer, one person on each boat is issued a “**fleet card**” for purchasing fuel or emergency parts. There are training requirements that go along with the fleet card. **LT Christian Burton** will contact you if you have held a fleet card in the past and need to renew any training.

You can check your qualification proficiency status by logging into Blackboard and reviewing the OSTS Proficiency Tracker sheet, or by contacting **LT Christian Burton**. Remember, it is your responsibility to maintain your qualification proficiency. Contact **LT Christian Burton** at [cburton@usna.edu](mailto:cburton@usna.edu) should you have any questions, corrections, or updates.

### SUMMER DESTINATIONS, VOLUNTEER AVAILABILITY AND PREFERENCES

Summer block dates, tentative destinations and a sign-up sheet for your availability and preferences are posted at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IUSgPwh6vn-k2FjXdKKndjKVgfp9Ghd8eUXMZfIs3w/edit?usp=sharing>

We will use this document to start building the draft summer schedule so please submit your availability. Assignments aren’t final until both DELMARVA sails in May are completed, but we will be refining it throughout the spring season. We do our best to honor your wishes but may need to put you where we need you, according to the “needs of the Navy”, and will communicate with you throughout the process.

### NAVAL ACADEMY YARD ACCESS

You will need to have a CAC card, retiree or dependent military ID, or a DBIDS Visitor Card to drive onto the Naval Academy for classes and spring / summer sailing. If you do not have an existing yard access credential, you will need to fill out a request form for a DBIDS Visitor Card as soon as possible as it does take a few weeks to process. Please contact **LT Christian Burton** for the form.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEADERSHIP GUIDE UPDATE

The Experiential Leadership Guide or ELG is undergoing an update over these next few months. The last edition of the ELG was released in 2014 and it is due for a refresh. The ELG is a working reference and instructor guide for D-qualified Skippers and XOs preparing for a summer block. The primary objective is to create a successful leadership experience for the group of midshipmen assigned to each OSTS Skipper/XO.

The Guide is broken down into five (5) sections: Introduction, Teach & Coaching Fundamentals, Preparing for Deployment, Reinforcement of Leadership Experience, and Lessons Learned. Specifically, over this winter break we are looking to refresh the case studies included under the Lessons Learned section. **Rick Robey** and **Bill Aucoin** have taken the lead on this update project.



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USNA  
Gate 8

Michelson  
Hall

Luce Hall

Sailing  
Center

USNA  
Gate 1

Alumni Hall

Michelson Hall

Ingram Field

Chauvenet Hall

Wesley A Brown Field House

Farrago Field

Rip Miller Field

Forrest Sherman Field

US Naval Institute

Naval Academy Cemetery

Hubbard Hall

Marian Hall, Maury Hall

US Naval Academy

Hammond Harwood House

William Paca House & Garden

St John's College

Greenfield Library

Maryland State House

State House Inn

Reynolds Tavern

US Naval