

UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB



Mark 4



Official Publication of District 4 - A Unit of United States Power Squadrons



Spring 2025



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Welcome to Spring! Your Mark 4 editor acknowledges that Spring actually started twenty days ago, but my excuse for the late arrival of this issue is that I wanted to include the latest event reports, photos and upcoming activities. Ensuring that the D/4 Spring conference was included caused much of the delay. So rather than trying to summarize the issue's contents here, I ask you to just dive into the issue. I hope you'll agree it was worth the wait.

The Mark4 staff extends our best wishes to every D/4 member and your family for the Spring holidays, whether it be Easter, Passover or another religious or ethnic one.

As always, Mark 4 welcomes articles and other notifications of your events and activities. Please send them to :

D4Comm@uspsdistrict4.org

Feel free to contact me with questions and suggestions at: cjvarga@optimum.net or by phone at (732)673-1383.





Commander's Message

D/C Joe Velez, AP

Question:

“Is a US State Boating Certificate valid in other States in the USA?”
I frequently hear this important question concerning U.S. boating certificate documentation.

Answer:

Yes, a US State Boating Certificate, particularly if NASBLA-approved, is generally valid in other US States that require mandatory boater education, a practice known as Reciprocity.

A more detailed explanation is as follows:

Reciprocity:

Many states have agreements to recognize boating certifications from other states, meaning a valid certificate in one state is accepted in another.

NASBLA Approval:

USPS Boating Courses approved by NASBLA meet national standards and are generally accepted by states that require boater education.

Look for the [National Association of State Boating Law Administrators](#) (NASBLA) logo on your certificate, as this indicates the course meets national standards.

State Requirements:

While reciprocity is common, it's always a good idea to check the specific requirements of the state where you plan to boat to ensure your certificate is accepted and to understand any time limitations on its validity.

(Continued on top of next page)

Exceptions: Some states may have specific requirements or restrictions, including:

- **Stricter Requirements:** Some states, like Colorado, may require a proctored exam for out-of-state certifications.
- **Different Age Requirements:** Age restrictions for boat operation can vary between states.
- **Vessel-Specific Requirements:** Rules can differ based on the type of vessel or engine size.
- **Short-Term Boating:** Some states allow out-of-state certificates for a limited time, which varies by state.

Boater Education Card:

A boater education card demonstrates you've met the minimum standards for safe and responsible boating, which is important no matter where you are on the water.

Boating Safety Course:

You can get a boater education card by completing an official boating safety course through one of our scheduled, United States Power Squadrons courses, taking the exam, and ordering your card online.

Carry your card:

You should carry your boater education card with you when boating.

Also take note of the following recommendations for checking online for the latest information available.

Check State Regulations: Before boating in another state, confirm the specific requirements of that state's boating authority (e.g., Fish and Wildlife agency).

NASBLA Website: Visit the NASBLA website for state-specific information and their interactive "Education Requirements by State" Dashboard.

Please Remember - Carry Your Certificate: Always carry your boating safety certificate with you while operating a boat.

Cordially,

Joe Velez

2025 Annual Meeting in Orlando

Submitted by P/D/C Ted Wallace

During the week of February 5 thru 9, 2025, 10 members of District 4 attended and participated in the events, seminars and meetings of the United States Power Squadrons Annual Meeting at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando Florida.

On Wednesday, as people arrived for the Convention, they were given the opportunity to register for the event and then relax and enjoy the 80-degree temperature poolside. That evening, those who registered for the evening Family Feud Game Show event gathered for a good meal, game show competitive fun and time to converse with old and new friends.

Thursday began with a breakfast meeting featuring a unique presentation by Sylvette Perez Figueroa who made history as the first woman to qualify Puerto Rico for the Pan American games as helmsman. She discussed her progression in life from her youth, and then as a member of the United States Power Squadrons, and her ultimate progression in education and experience on the water to her final success. The balance of that day included seminars and meetings as well as time to enjoy the beautiful weather poolside. Thursday evening offered an awards dinner, honoring those members who attained "Life Member" status.



Friday was devoted to meetings and seminars where you could attend and participate in topics including Vessel Safety Check updates, Instructor Recertification and workshops on how to use the IMIS member information management program, to name just a few.

Friday evening offered the opportunity to visit and enjoy the "Meet and Greet" open house events that several districts provided. These hospitality suites were open to all members and enabled everyone make new friends and get reacquainted with old friends while enjoying liquid refreshments and snacks. The highlight of the evening was visiting with our dear friends of District 33 to participate in their "Pina Colada" party. Everyone had a great time. (At least that's how I remember it.)

Saturday everyone gathered in the Ballroom for our Annual meeting where the business of the organization was conducted and prior to closing of the meeting, the Change of Watch was conducted with Ralph Bernard of District 5 being sworn in as the Chief Commander for another year.

Saturday evening was the culmination of the week with fun-lovers from across the country enjoying the "Roll Back the Clock – the Seventies are Back" themed dinner-dance where everyone put on those old bell bottom pants and turtle neck sweaters as we relived the music of the seventies and discoed the night away.



As you can see, it was not all work. There was enough time allotted for fun and frivolity.





Forty-fourth Annual District Memorial Service

March 16, 2025

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Staten Island, New York



A memorial service for our district's departed shipmates



More From The District Memorial Service

March 16, 2025



Joint St. Patrick's Day Social Event Raritan Bay and Shrewsbury Squadrons 20 March 2025 Keyport Yacht Club, Keyport, N.J.

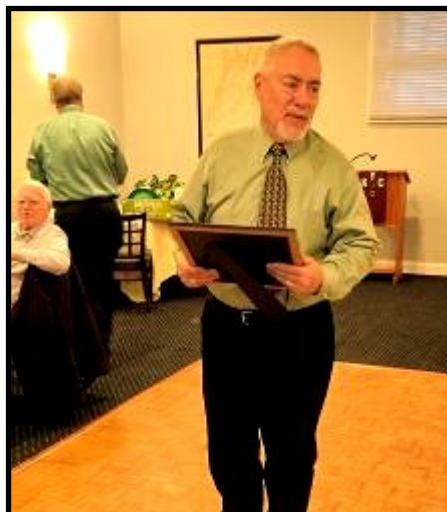
The Raritan Bay and Shrewsbury squadrons conducted their second annual St. Patrick's Day social at the scenic Keyport Yacht Club. They and their guests enjoyed the usual delicious repast consisting of corned beef and cabbage with all the accoutrements including crusty Irish soda bread. The yacht club's well-stocked bar served the requisite Guinness Stout and other libations of anyone's choosing. The meal was capped off with a tasty Irish-themed cake as well as assorted cookies. No one went home hungry, although many participants took home containers with leftovers. It was a grand party indeed!



More From Shrewsbury/Raritan Bay St. Patrick's Day Social



During the party, the Raritan Bay contingent surprised Cdr Joe Velez by awarding him with the prestigious Donald E. Baker Memorial Exceptional Member Award. This award is Raritan Bay's equivalent of the George Ruckdeschel Award. It recognizes a member for continuous exceptional contributions to the squadron. It was well-deserved.



Staten Island Sail and Power Squadron Change of Watch 11 March 2025

On March 11, 2025, 20 members and friends of Staten Island Sail and Power Squadron gathered at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Cedar Grove Avenue on Staten Island to attend the SIPS dinner and Change of Watch. Prior to the Change of Watch, members and guests dined on a dinner of Corn Beef, cabbage, carrots and boiled potatoes and was served buffet style. The meal was cooked by Commander Don Heap and was delicious. The corn beef was tasty and cooked to perfection. The meal was followed by cake, coffee and assorted desserts.

After the meal, the meeting was resumed and District Commander Joe Velez swore in the new Commander, Don Heap and his 2025 bridge.

It was an evening of good food and good friends. Good luck to the new bridge as they sail into a new year.



District Spring Conference & Change of Watch 5 April 2025 Holiday Inn, Clark, New Jersey

Our district conducted its 2025 Annual Meeting, elections and Change of Watch on April 5, 2025. The conference took place at the Holiday Inn in Clark, New Jersey. Nine of the district's ten squadrons were represented.

We had the honor of welcoming USPS Chief Commander Ralph Bernard and his wife Nance. Nineteen District 4 members had the pleasure of joining the chief and Nance for a casual elegant Italian dinner in Westfield.

The conference began with the C/C's message. It was informative and well-received by the attendees. The conference featured two guest speakers. One speaker was Captain John DeCruz who is a veteran harbor pilot with the Sandy Hook Pilots Association. Captain DeCruz gave a riveting presentation on the duties and routines of commercial harbor pilots. He reported that the New York Harbor is the busiest port on the U.S. East coast, trafficked by giant container ships, tankers, freighters and massive cruise ships. He also shared the serious dangers caused by careless and curious recreational boaters.

Following lunch, we heard from our second speaker Mr. John Neuner. John is a lifetime advocate of water safety and, specifically, the safety of swimmers at beaches in our area. Having grown up near the waters off the Bronx, and having worked as a lifeguard with countless rescues over many years, he taught us how to recognize the tell tail signs of a swimmer who is drowning. What we learned is that it's not the behavior you might have thought. It was fascinating and instructive.

The presentations were followed by awards and recognition. Notable awards included the Anthony Aquilato Spirit Award (highest number of members working at the national or district level). New York took that one home. The George Ruckdeschel Award (most valued member as designated by the D/C) was earned by P/D/C Joe Balbo. Individual and squadron awards for vessel safety checks were also given.

Finally, elections were held for elected officers for the 2025-26 watch year. The bridge remains the same, excepting for P/D/C Joe Balbo taking the Executive Officer position, replacing D/Lt/C Scott Meyers. The assistant officer positions remain unchanged. We thank Scott for his past service. We wish our district bridge success in the coming year.

The following pages include photos from both the Friday, April 4 dinner, and also the Saturday conference.

Photos From D/4 Spring Conference



C/C Ralph Bernard and his first mate Nance.



D/C Joe and Charlene Velez stand behind a celebratory cake.



P/C Barb Mandarano introduces one of the guest speakers, John Neuner.



Guest speaker Captain John DeCruz of the Sandy Hook Pilots Association presents the job of a harbor pilot.



D/C Joe Velez poses with City Island Sail & Power Squadron's Cdr Gary Mandarano and P/C Barbara Maandarano.



C/C Bernard administers the pledge of office to D/C Joe Velez.



C/C Bernard then swears in the assembled squadron bridge officers in attendance. D/C Joe Velez is also the commander of Raritan Bay squadron.

More Photos From D/4 Spring Conference

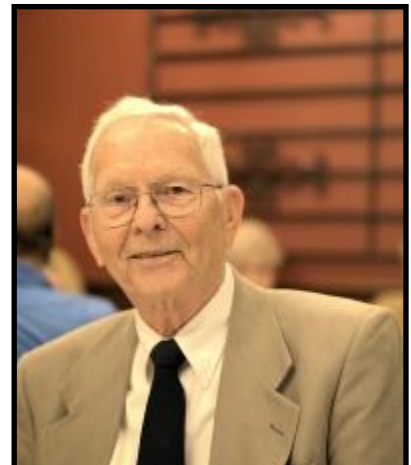
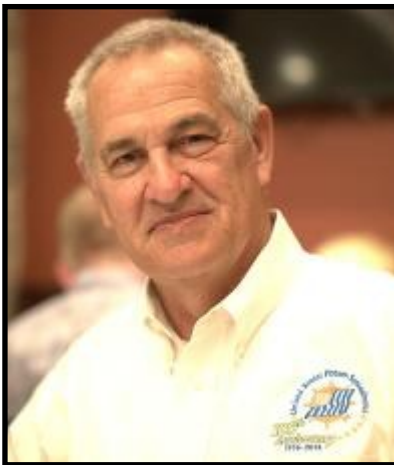


Above left: P/D/C Joe Balbo receives the prestigious George Ruckdeschel Memorial Award from D/C Velez.

Above right: New York squadron's Cdr Scott Meyers receives the Anthony Aquilato Spirit Award on behalf of the squadron. Fellow squadron member R/C Ruth Witztum, who is an important reason the squadron earned the award, joins in the photo.

Below: These photos were taken on Friday, April 4 at the welcome dinner event for C/C Ralph Bernard and his wife Nance. The event took place at Ferraro's Restaurant in Westfield, New Jersey.

All photos from April 4 and 5 are compliments of P/R/C Michael Friedman. Thank you, Michael.





IS HERE!

**WISHING ALL MEMBERS OF DISTRICT 4
HAPPY PASSOVER
AND
HAPPY EASTER
SHALOM AND PEACE**

REMEMBER AND HONOR





Retired FDNY Fireboat John J. Harvey

**Join your District 4 Shipmates
for a free tour of New York Harbor
on a 94-year-old retired FDNY fireboat**

**Sunday, May 18, at 10 AM
Departing from Pier 66 at
West 26th Street in Manhattan**

**Bring your families,
kids will LOVE this!**

To secure space on the trip, email David Grill at
dwgrill@fireboat.org

Trip details will be provided in an acknowledgement email

2025 National Safe Boating Week May 17 to May 23



Source: National Safe Boating Council

Vessel Safety Check: ☒ Life Jacket: ☒ Engine cut-off switch: ☒

Fun day on the water: ☒

What Are Your Plans for Safe Boating Week?



CITY ISLAND SAIL & POWER SQUADRON



BOAT HANDLING (formerly Seamanship)


This course is the next step after completing America's Boating Course, taking the knowledge and skills learned there and expanding and extending them.

Build boating confidence and competence for safe and fun on-the-water adventures. Boat Handling provides a foundation of knowledge and skills in boat handling and maneuvering, boat operation, skipper's responsibilities, and boating techniques that will advance your boating enjoyment.

What's included?

For both sail and power boats, *Boat Handling* covers a wide range of topics, including:

- Types of boats and how they behave on the water
- Anchoring in various conditions
- Docking and line handling
- Close quarter and open water maneuvering
- Rules of the road
- Communication with other boats
- How to respond to various emergencies
- Marlinespike/basic knots

Date	TENTATIVE START Monday, June 16, 2025 Class meeting night (Monday-Thursday) is flexible and will be decided by the majority of students enrolled.
Time	7:00pm - 9:00pm (hours are flexible) Includes 15 minute break with refreshments Approximately 8 sessions
Location	3311 Radio Drive, Bronx, NY 10465 (Country Club section) RIGHT SIDE ENTRANCE/down driveway
Cost	\$70 USPS members \$90 non-members Pay via PayPal at www.cityislandpowersquadron.org Click on PayPal tab (located on home screen, left side bottom of tabs)
Instructor	Gary Mandarano Email: barb.mandarano@gmail.com Phone: 917-612-6516 (talk/text)
Registration	Please register online and pay by June 1. Paste this URL into your browser https://www.usps.org/cgi-bin-nat/eddept/800/getregform.cgi?L-18339 OR open the camera on your mobile device and point at the code below 



City Island Sail &
Power Squadron and
the Leonard Hawkins
American Legion Post
will proudly host:

The 2025 Blessing of the Fleet

**Sunday, June 29, 2025
1:00 p.m.**

**City Island Harbor
*the dock at Barron's Boatyard***

VHF Ch 71 (from 12:30 p.m.)
For more information call: 646-258-4250



Participation is on the water ONLY
for this multi-denominational blessing

SAVE THE DATE!!



**SHREWSBURY & RARITAN BAY
POWER SQUADRONS
Invite You To Our Joint
Picnic & Auction**



Commanders Joe Balbo and Joe Velez invite everyone to join us for great food, drink, fun, and camaraderie at our joint Picnic & Auction. We hope you will join us to enjoy this special social event. **SAVE THE DATE. DETAILS TO FOLLOW SOON.**

Saturday, July 12, 2025

12:00PM - 5:00PM

(Rain Date Sunday, July 13 2025)

American Legion Post #388 - 860 Route 36, Leonardo, NJ

Any questions please call Cdr Joe Balbo at (732)513-1301

Chicken - Hamburgers - Sausage - Corn on the Cob - Baked Beans

Vegetable, Macaroni, Potato Salads

Watermelon and Desserts - Cake

Beer - Wine - Soda - Water

Please bring items to donate for the auction.

Dynamic hurricane season predicted for Atlantic in 2025

*For those wishing to learn as early as possible what weather the 2025 boating season might bring to the U.S., read this story from the AccuWeather.COM. Normally these forecasts are updated throughout the hurricane season. This is one of the preliminary outlooks. And, as ever, the actual season might be better—or worse than predicted. **NOTE: All images contained in this article are the intellectual property of AccuWeather. The information here is abstracted from the web article referenced below.***

By Brian Lada, AccuWeather meteorologist and senior content editor

Published Mar 26, 2025 6:32 AM EDT | Updated Mar 26, 2025 12:42 PM EDT ®, All Rights Reserved

The Atlantic hurricane season is fast approaching, and early indications have forecasters worried that it will have similarities to the 2024 season, which was one of the most devastating and [costliest](#) on record. "Super-charged" encapsulates the ferocity of last year's deadly hurricane season with hurricanes Beryl, Helene and Milton causing record-breaking damage. AccuWeather Lead Hurricane Expert Alex DaSilva warns it could be another year with volatile hurricanes, with the season officially starting on Sunday, June 1.

Keys to the hurricane forecast

One of the biggest factors for tropical development in 2025 is the abundance of warm water available to fuel storms. Water temperatures across the ocean, as well as in the Gulf and Caribbean, are already well above historical averages, and they will continue to run warm throughout most of the year. This will prime storms for explosive development.

"A rapid intensification of storms will likely be a major story yet again this year as sea-surface temperatures and ocean heat content (OHC) across most of the basin are forecast to be well above average," DaSilva said. The OHC measures not only the temperature of the water but also how deep the warm water extends. A deep pool of warm water provides much more fuel for hurricanes than a shallow layer of warmth near the ocean's surface.

One of the devastating trends in recent years has been hurricanes tapping into unusually warm water and quickly strengthening shortly before making landfall. As Hurricane Ian did in 2022, causing storm surge to become catastrophic in coastal communities, with water levels cresting higher than single-story buildings.

Water temperatures near the equator of the eastern Pacific Ocean will also be important, as this is the area that can spawn La Niña and El Niño. Although these phenomena take place in the Pacific, they have far-reaching effects that can boost or suppress tropical activity across the Atlantic. Neither is expected to be present during the first half of the season, but that could change by September, October, or November.

"A trend toward a La Niña could yield an active end to the season, while a trend toward El Niño could lead to an earlier end to the season," DaSilva explained.

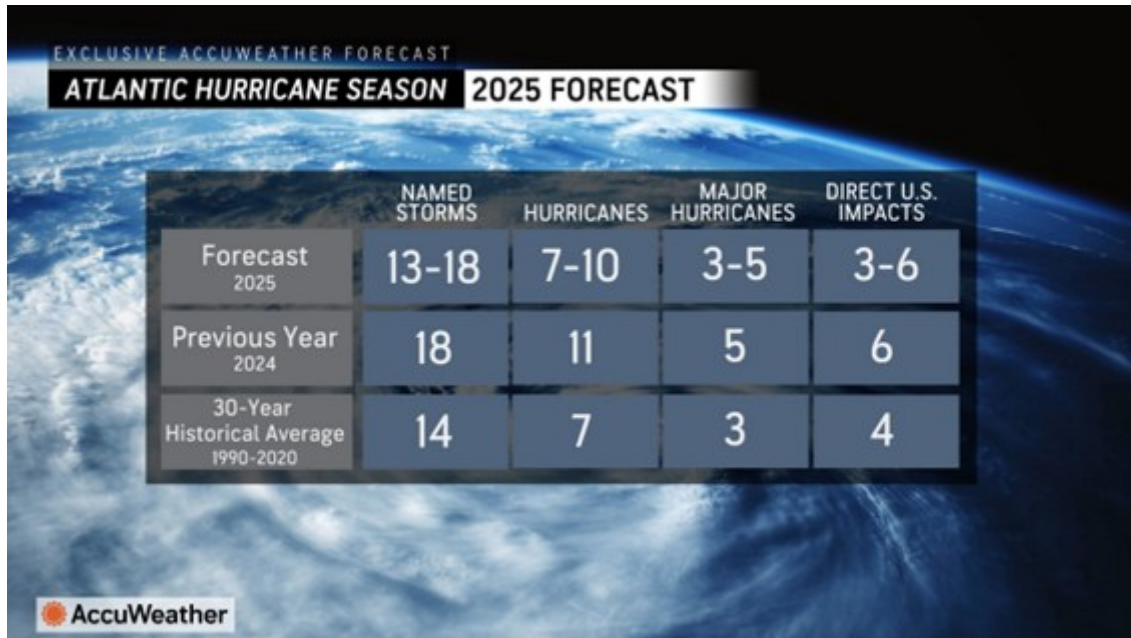
How many hurricanes and tropical storms are predicted for 2025?

"AccuWeather is forecasting near to above the historical average number of named storms, hurricanes, major hurricanes, accumulated cyclone energy (ACE) and direct impacts to the United States," DaSilva said.

Between 13 and 18 named storms are expected in 2025, including 7-10 hurricanes, three to five major hurricanes that reach Category 3 strength or higher, and three to six direct U.S. impacts. DaSilva added that there is a 20% chance of more than 18 named storms this year.

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Meteorologists gauge an entire season by analyzing [accumulated cyclone energy](#) (ACE). This measures the combined intensity of every tropical system throughout the season, with weak, short-lived storms producing little ACE while powerful, long-lived hurricanes generating a high amount. For the 2025 hurricane season, AccuWeather is predicting an ACE of 125 to 175, above the 30-year historical average of 123, and around the level measured during the 2024 season.

DaSilva added that the upcoming season could get off to a fast start, including the chance for a named storm to develop before the season officially starts on June 1. He added that there could be a lull in activity following early-season storms, but it could be capped off by a busy end to the year. This would be similar to last year, when 13 of the 18 named storms occurred between September and mid-November.

The peak of the hurricane season typically falls on Sept. 10.

Where storms, hurricanes are most likely to make landfall

"Similar to last year, northern and eastern portions of the Gulf Coast and the Carolinas are at a higher-than-average risk of direct impacts this season," DaSilva explained. "Atlantic Canada and the northeastern Caribbean are also at an increased risk of direct impacts."

Landfall is just one part of a storm's lifecycle, and last season was a disastrous reminder that hurricanes and tropical storms could have far-reaching impacts, even in states that do not border the ocean or the Gulf.

"We witnessed tragic examples of just how far inland the impacts from hurricanes and tropical storms can reach. Hurricane Beryl spun up more than [60 tornadoes](#) along its nearly 1,200-mile-long path from the Texas coast to upstate New York," DaSilva said. "Hurricane Helene brought catastrophic flash flooding and destructive winds to the mountains of western North Carolina, hundreds of miles inland from where the storm made landfall in Florida."

DaSilva and the rest of AccuWeather's long-range forecasting team are able to make these predictions with the help of analog years, or years in recent history that had weather patterns similar to what is happening right now around the world. By looking at the past, meteorologists can piece together long-range forecasts with better precision.

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Deep dive: more pivotal players this hurricane season

Several other players could impact the upcoming hurricane season, one of them being the Bermuda-Azores high that is usually parked over the central Atlantic. Winds around this bubble of high-pressure direct storms and hurricanes westward across the ocean before curving northward.

"The Bermuda-Azores high position can be offset farther south and east compared to average," DaSilva said. "This can favor a period of re-curving tropical systems in the western Atlantic when the high is weaker and another period of storms reaching the Caribbean and Gulf when the high is stronger."

Depending on how this moves and strengthens throughout the season, it could significantly affect the track of tropical storms and hurricanes moving across the Atlantic.



Another area to watch is not far off the west coast of Africa. Last year, water in this region was cooler than the historical average for a time, resulting in a phenomenon called "Atlantic Niña." This contributed to a lull in tropical activity throughout August and into the start of September.

"It is certainly possible that we see lulls during the tropical season due to an enhancement of dry air if an Atlantic Niña develops," DaSilva said. He added that if water in this area warms up, it could have the opposite effect, enhancing tropical development.

Weather conditions across Africa may also breed more clusters of showers and thunderstorms that move into the Atlantic, known as tropical waves. An increase in these tropical waves can result in an uptick in tropical storms and hurricanes.

Conversely, massive clouds of dry, dusty air carried by the wind from Africa across the Atlantic can periodically limit tropical activity, as the moisture-starved air makes it more challenging for storms to develop and strengthen.

The Atlantic hurricane season officially starts on June 1 and runs through Nov. 30.