

What people who participate in our courses say.

Rick's comments solicited by the editor of the Bearing.

I have just completed the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron course with the Brentwood Bay Squadron. The instructors asked for a volunteer to put into words his or her thoughts about how he or she felt about the course.

I volunteered for this task, because I came into the course a flatlander from Saskatchewan and Alberta, with absolutely no knowledge or experience with the ocean that surrounds us on Vancouver Island. I have enjoyed fishing out of a 14-foot open aluminum boat on lakes and rivers for over 40 years, but never on the ocean.

My first contact with the Brentwood Bay group was with Peter Simpson, the registrar. He was friendly, informative, and very supportive and encouraging. I was to realize later that every single one of the course instructors and proctors are just as supportive.

Having just completed this course, it's hard for me to comprehend how much material we've covered. When I look at the course homework book, I am amazed at the amount and the diversity of the course material. For me, such basic words as Port and Starboard were foreign terms. I had heard them in movies, seen them in books, but I had no working knowledge of them.

The same could be said for each section that we covered. We learned about aids to navigation, or to me the ocean equivalent of highway signs and rules. We studied charts and plotting positions on the ocean, and how to arrive safely at a destination. We studied tides and currents and how they affect boaters. We studied about sailboats and powerboats; the various types of boats and hulls, construction materials and attributes of each. Safety was a major section with a total immersion in all areas from fire control to equipment and emergency procedures. I found the course very intensive in the amount and complexity of material covered. However, I learned a great deal about boating, safety and the ocean.

I want to emphasize what was to me the most important part of this course: the instructors. They were all about support and encouragement. It was obvious that every one of them had a love and respect for the ocean, and they were more than willing to share their knowledge and experience with their students. All instructors and proctors were willing to be contacted during the week if I had questions, and even meet with me, at their home or mine or their place of work.

I would highly recommend the Power and Sail Squadron Course to anyone who wishes to have a safe and enjoyable boating or sailing pastime. An important additional advantage of the course is that boaters new to the ocean would benefit by completing this course before purchasing a boat. The knowledge they would gain about the pros and cons of boats available would be invaluable in making an informed purchase.

Although I am still at the cautious beginner stage, this course has given me the confidence I need in beginning my new boating and fishing experience in the ocean environment.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the instructors and my proctor.