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At the Helm

November 2024

Commanders Message

50 years of service 1974-2024



Once again we enter the dark time. The shortest day, December 21st, is rapidly approaching. The watery ways become solid enough to walk on them. The days are short, the nights are long. It is a long way to May.

BUT, it's also a good time to enjoy the company of each other and socialize. We have a pre Holidays luncheon planned. Please join us to enjoy good food and our company.

We will be planning other events for the winter time. Please stay posted.

It's also a good time to think about spring and plan what we might do when the waters once again have recycled back to a warmer liquid.

In the meantime, and most importantly, if and when you are out on the ice this winter, Please wear your life preserver.

Happy Holidays!

David Trudeau

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Our 2024-2025 Berkshire Sail & Power Squadron Bridge

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George E. Reynolds, S	J. Phil Scalise, SN
G. Richard Stidger, SN	

GENERAL COMMITTEES:

Auditing	Cindy Dinan AP (Chair)
Rules	Susan L. Darcy, JN (Chair) P/C G. Richard Stidger, SN (3 years)
Nominating Committee:	Kevin Dinan, AP (Chair) G. Richard Stidger, SN (2 years)

Berkshire Log

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The opinions expressed in "The Log", by the Editorial Staff or Contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron or those of the United States Power Squadron.



BSPS & USPS CALENDARS

**December 8th - Holiday Party - Mint Restaurant
 At 1 PM - Reservations to the Gilberts
 See Flyer on Page 5**

**ABC (Basic Boating) — two Saturdays
 Possible Courses being offered soon!
 Vessel Safety Examiner Course — ?? hours
 Weather Seminar — 2 hours
 New Boat Handling Course (New & Improved
 Seamanship) — 6 weeks
 Webinar on Hurricanes and Tornadoes
*What courses are YOU interested in?
 Let either Tom Dailey or Susan Darcy know
 what you would like to take.***



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Read informative articles about boating
 See announcements for courses and social events



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Berkshire-Sail-and-Power-Squadron/528850690570303?ref=hl>

**Berkshire Sail & Power Squadron
 FIFTY Years of Service to Boaters
 1974 - 2024**



Need information?

Call Dave - 413-717-4012
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 or Tom D. - 413-344-6895
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In LIVING COLOR at:

http://www.usps.org/d2/d2_squadron_news.html

Please Remember...

All members are requested to notify our commander or editor of the death of any other member or a member's family as soon as possible. We want to express our condolences in a timely manner and we need the help of all our members to this end.

On a sunny warm Saturday last month, Tom and Beverly Gilbert hosted a cruise up the Hudson River in their 31 ft Tiara. Guests on board were Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron members Kevin and Mary McGinnis. The waters were relatively calm, the company was delightful and the wildlife viewed was plentiful. Two locks were passed through, taking the boat up through the Champlain lock, and docking it on the shoreline right past it to a scenic marina.

Approximately miles north in all. The teamwork on the launch was impressive. Tom navigating the boat into a tight space, Beverly tying us in with very secure knots, with Kevin using the gaff to hold steady. A picture perfect day with friends on a lovely boat made all of us grateful to be out there on the Hudson River.

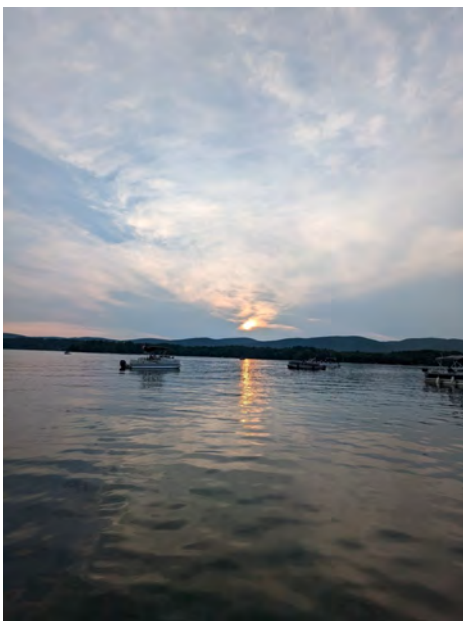


Kevin and Mary McGinnis



The Gilbert's Great Boat

If you missed the Live on the Lake cruises -
Here are two photos of what you didn't see!





More great photos of boats and members.

Upper left: Karen & George Reynolds

Bottom left Sailing on Pontoosuc Lake

Middle: Brenda & Tom Dailey
& the Reynolds

Bottom right: Williams College Sailing



Come One, Come All!!



***Join us in a celebration of the Holidays -
Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 1:00 PM
On Laurel Lake At***



***We will be having a fantastic buffet - including items for every
palate including vegetarian & vegan plus a cash bar.***

No Yankee swap this year but we will have lots of boating stories!

***Cost is \$25 per person (payable at the door to Berkshire Sail &
Power Squadron)***

Please RSVP by November 21st to the Gilberts:
eMail tagtgilbert@gmail.com or 413-822-4306 .
Mint Restaurant is located at The Black Swan Inn
435 Laurel St, Lee, MA 01238



Pontoosuc Lake Cyanobacteria Issue Brief and Summary:

Used with Permission of Matt Gilbert

Background:

Since mid-September, the City of Pittsfield has issued an advisory for Pontoosuc Lake on high amounts of cyanobacteria blooming. Residents are forbidden from swimming, and are advised to avoid contact with the lake due to risk of exposure.

Cyanobacteria are a form of blue and green colored algae that bloom in the presence of sunlight and water contamination from areas high in nutrients, such as septic tanks.

Areas in Pittsfield and Lanesborough rely on septic tank systems for waste removal, and are close to the lake. This has the potential to cause disruptions to Pittsfield and Lanesborough in various forms:

Public Health Impact:

As previously mentioned, cyanobacteria when in bloom produce a series of toxins known as cyanotoxins. These substances are a health hazard in multiple forms. Apart from the damage to wildlife, including fish which can impact consumption and recreation as an activity, cyanotoxins can cause damage to the human body through exposure via airborne droplets or skin contact. Prolonged exposure also increases the risk of damage to the liver and kidneys. One individual who is responsible for removing cyanobacteria is only able to do so by hand, but due to the potential for an allergic reaction is required to wear a wet suit and immediately rinse off after finishing removal efforts.

Economic Impact:

The Berkshires, in particular its scenery, make it a highly desirable location for potential tourists, including the view of Pontoosuc Lake. The inability to use the lake however, decreases the value of lodging located in Pittsfield, as activities such as fishing, swimming, boating and other forms of recreation are not possible, making Pontoosuc lake less amenable for tourist visits.

Internally, residents of both Pittsfield and Lanesborough risk having real estate values fall as a result of the cyanobacteria bloom. Individuals that may wish to sell their homes in the future due to the lake's scenery and activities may find it more difficult as the rationale for relocating is decreased with minimal opportunities for swimming or boating.

Boating in particular, can become more of a liability due to cyanobacteria blooming. Cyanotoxins produced in the lake have the potential to harm boats across the lake, increasing the need for repairs and cleaning. This can make boating less amenable as a recreational activity and has the potential to impact boat rentals and sales.

Consequences of Not Acting and Potential Solutions:

Failure to act on removing the cyanobacteria from Pontoosuc Lake could have economic and public health consequences as mentioned above, in addition to rendering the lake unusable for a long period of time. A prior cyanobacteria bloom impacted Cheshire Lake, and the failure to remove the various cyanotoxins rendered it impossible to swim in anymore due to the health hazards associated with it.

While the City of Pittsfield did approve upgrades to Pontoosuc Lake, they have so far failed to address the cyanobacteria still in bloom. A few options however, are open to dealing with the ongoing health and economic hazard.

One option includes the usage of chemical treatment for the removal of cyanobacteria. Certain chemicals such as copper can be effective without the risk of harming any wildlife. Chemical treatment is urgently needed for the lake to remove blooms, as a cleanup while meant for 2024 has not yet happened, and manual removal of cyanobacteria is unsustainable in the long-term.

Another option includes the changing of sewer systems in both Pittsfield and Lanesborough from septic to municipal systems. Septic system runoff contributes to nutrients leaking into Pontoosuc Lake and fueling cyanobacteria growth. As it is impossible to increase the septic system size due to a lack of space, a change to sewer systems may decrease the runoff and potential for future blooms. A drawback however, is that both Lanesborough and Pittsfield are different municipalities and therefore would need different approvals for a switch, both which may take longer than anticipated. Additionally, it is unclear at present how many estates would be willing to switch from septic to sewer systems. Even if residents desired to switch from septic to sewer systems, additional funding such as grants or zero-interest loans may be necessary for such a transfer.

Septic system changes may also help with reducing the number of weeds in Pontoosuc Lake, as the same nutrients that contribute to cyanobacteria growth also contribute to weed growth. It is recommended that in the interim, Pittsfield and Lanesborough assist with weed harvesting and dredging, as was the case with the prior Stockbridge Bowl removal.

Conclusion:

Prior efforts at assisting with Pontoosuc Lake have only resulted in a few upgrades, which while helpful have not been fully effective at countering the growth of cyanobacteria. Additional funds from the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Lanesborough are therefore needed to ensure that the removal of cyanobacteria from Pontoosuc Lake, and its health and economic hazards can be countered effectively. Such assistance would lead to the Pontoosuc Lake's preservation in Pittsfield and Lanesborough.

For Pontoosuc Lake to remain as a crown jewel of Pittsfield tourism and business, The City of Pittsfield should help ensure that the lake remains usable for recreation.