

# LGPS

## SOUNDINGS

September-October 2020



### Commander Message

By David Hawthorne

My first thought is hoping that our members are all well and taking care of themselves and their families. Having to constantly remember everything we're supposed to do to protect ourselves, is not something we're accustomed to doing. Every aspect of our lives is affected in some way! Although you might not think so, reading about the increased activity with Lake George's boat rental businesses as they are off the charts with rental activity, as though nothing could be wrong at Lake George. People are either reacting to being confined and restrained for so long or they just don't care. See the enclosed article re-printed from the Albany Times Union in this issue.

USPS National is providing on-line "virtual" meetings and seminars now, as a means of keeping operations as close as possible, to normal. Plans for a USPS Celebrity cruise through the western Caribbean are being advertised for next year in anticipation of a return to normal activities. I am also pleased to announce the presentation of four congratulatory pins to Lake George squadron members. I received the pins from National to be presented to four of us, in recognition of 25 years of membership. One recognition was to Max Gollmer, our squadron treasurer. "Congratulations to all" on a noteworthy achievement!

As our boating season nears another end be reminded of the beautiful fall foliage that can be seen by staying in the water a little longer. Weather permitting, there are still some useable weekends to enjoy on the water and gorgeous scenery to share with friends and family.

Stay Safe & Healthy

**LAKE GEORGE POWER  
SQUADRON  
BRIDGE-EXECUTIVE  
MEETING**

**Canceled Until Further Notice**

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Social distancing is the best way to stay safe.





## Vessel Safety Check 2020

**Vessel Safety Check Vision:** *Safe, Fun & Responsible Recreational Boating.* There is still time to arrange for a 2020 Vessel Safety Check - call Armand at (518) 372-7220 to schedule. He has had a busy year on and off the lake with VSC's this year despite COVID and PauseNY guidelines/restrictions in place and is available for at home or marina inspection visits. Social distancing, mask/facial covering and sanitizing is required at all times throughout the inspection. What are you waiting for – call today!

## Squadron Members Earn Merit Marks

The chief commander awards annually a “merit mark” to a member for substantial effort in personally furthering the interests, programs and objectives of USPS, its districts and squadrons. It is a coveted award, and is by and large the only “official” recognition a member receives for his/her efforts. Only one merit mark may be awarded in a year, no matter how extensive the contribution. A certificate is issued and a special insignia may be worn on the USPS uniform. Active, additional active and family members are all eligible. The Squadron Commander based on actual personal service performed by an LGPS member has made a recommendation for a merit mark this year for each of the following LGPS members:

Armand Canestraro  
Max Gollmer  
John Wainwright  
George Williams

Donna Canestraro  
Don Puckett  
David Wilkinson  
Katie Williams

## **THE BIG THREE**

**FOR A SAFE AND FUN BOATING EXPERIENCE...**

### **BOAT SOBER.**

Never boat under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents.



### **WEAR A LIFE JACKET.**

86% of people who drowned in a recreational boating accident were not wearing a life jacket. Always wear your life jacket!



### **TAKE A BOATING SAFETY COURSE.**

In accidents where the operator's instruction was known, 70% of fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had not received any boating safety instruction.



## **Boating Boom on Lake George**

### **Land-based attractions limited – the water is the place to be**

LAKE GEORGE — At Water's Edge Marina, people have been known this summer to show up at 2 a.m., air mattresses in tow, to nap in line as they wait for the chance to rent a boat. At a downtown marina, owners tell would-be renters to show up at 6:30 a.m. And at the Queen Boat Co., "we can barely keep up" with demand, said Matt O'Hara, one of the owners. This Warren County resort village, nestled at the southern tip of the 32-mile lake, is having a vacation boom as visitors take advantage of the outdoor activities that allow them to social distance. With the pandemic, "there's no race track, no SPAC, no baseball," observed Luke Schweickert, an employee at Water's Edge. And with hot, sunny weather, the lake's appeal can be overwhelming. "This is the year to get out and get on the lake," said Gina Mintzer, who heads the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and its local visitors' bureau. Campgrounds and hotels are also busy, she said. But part of that may be due to limited capacity as the state seeks to eliminate the spread of the coronavirus. "Camping in general is through the roof," she said. "But remember, we also have some places operating at half capacity." Motels in some cases also have reduced capacity, "because they don't have the staff to service" the rooms, Mintzer added. And everyone, it seems, wants to be on the water.

"We're seeing lines like we've never seen before," said Schweickert. If customers are lucky to find an available boat, they'll often rent it for the week. "At some boat rental places, all their boats are reserved and paid for," said Mintzer. Safety can be a concern if the boat operator isn't experienced. The marinas have emphasized the importance of keeping the lake clean and safe, said O'Hara. Boat rentals aren't inexpensive. This year, one marina was quoting a price of \$440 for three hours, although that includes fuel and taxes, said Mintzer. Many people are choosing to purchase their boat instead. At the Castaway Marina, which has operations in Queensbury and Lake George, "there's been a huge demand for boats," said owner Thalia Chase. "People are staying in this area and using their boats." She said boat manufacturers faced disruptions in production because of the coronavirus, affecting available inventory. "We are ordering quite a bit for next spring," Chase said. But the strong demand has been welcome. "It's making up for a very challenging winter," when the economic outlook was uncertain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to a full-service marina, O'Hara's business also includes a Freedom Boat Club franchise. Members have access to O'Hara's fleet of boats, as well as to boats at other boat club locations. For one-time \$5,400 initiation fee and monthly dues of \$385, members get worry-free access to the fleet, while the boat club takes care of all maintenance, cleaning and storage. Members do pay for the fuel they use. And when winter comes, O'Hara says those members can head south to check out boats at club locations in such places as Florida and South Carolina. But it may be too late to join this year. "We sold out our memberships in early June," said O'Hara.

*(Re-printed with permission – Eric Anderson 08/22/2020 Albany Times Union Newspaper)*

### **Boat Safety Facts - PFDs**

- Buy your own life jacket, and wear it.
- Look at the label for size and weight limitations.
- Try it on and check the fit.
- Make sure the life jacket is Coast Guard approved.
- Replace your life jacket if you find air leakage, mildew or rot.
- Never alter a life jacket.
- Check your life jackets yearly for flotation and fit.

# Boat Inspection Station Statistics

(through 07/31/2020 – Source Lake George Park Commission)

Table 1: A Comparison of the 2019 and 2020 Inspection seasons through July 31, 2020

Through 7/31	2020 (current)	2019
Entrance With Seal	6,845	5,448
Entrance Without Seal	5,239	5,916
Exit	7,259	6,432
Total	19,343	17,796
Decontaminations	429	570
Decon Rate (%)	8.19	9.63
Vessels with Confirmed AIS	64	51
Staff Hours Worked	10,465	13,361
Staffing Costs	\$192,853.23	\$ 244,069.25

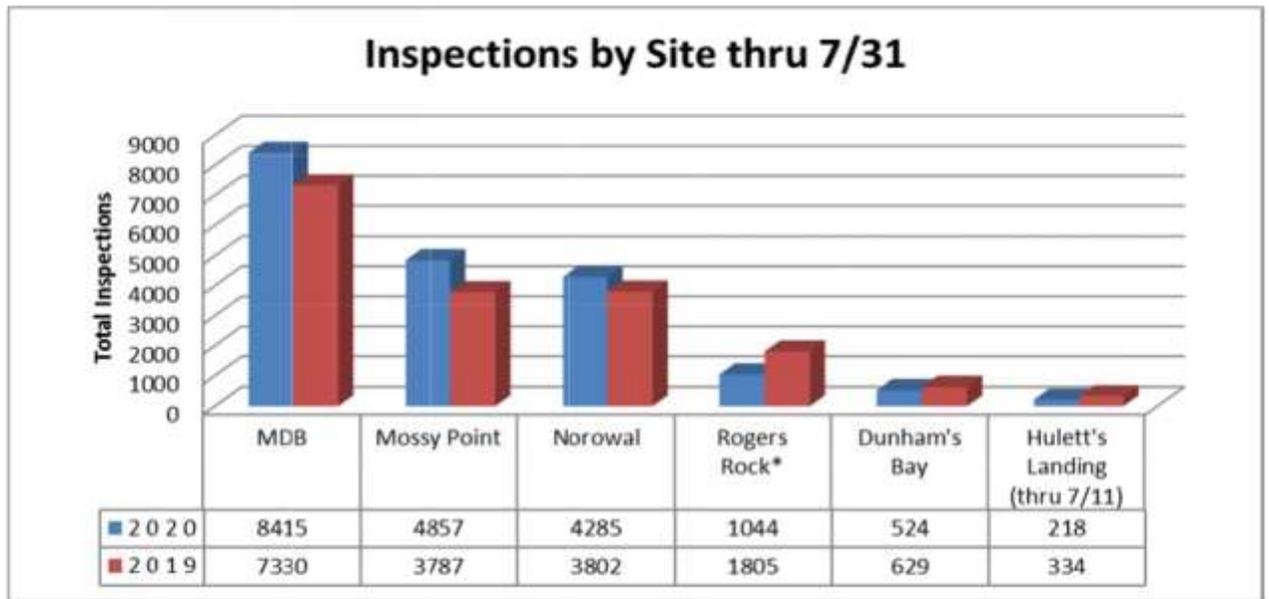


Figure 1: Shows a comparison of total inspection activity by site in 2020 and 2019. \*Note that the Rogers Rock inspection station was not opened until July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Stay at Home Activity

**Squadron Elective Courses:** Several elective courses are available at a nominal cost through headquarters for self-study including Cruise Planning, Engine Maintenance, Instructor Development, Marine Electronics, Sail, and Weather. If you are interested in any of these elective courses – contact Squadron Educational Officer P/C Donna Canestraro at (518) 372-7220 to arrange an order of the necessary textbooks.