

The Red Skies

Sea Scouts celebrate new Quartermasters

BY PETER CUSHMAN

Sea Scout Ship skipper

In October the members of the Red Skies family and friends celebrate an occasion that has not happened in Raven District of East Harris County, ever.

Backing up a bit, Baytown has had Sea Scouts for about eight years. For the last five years, Sea Scout Ship (SSS) 208, aka The Red Skies, have been together because of the support of St. Mark's United Methodist Church and Rev. Peter Miller as well as the Church Committee.

SSS 208 has grown in the last five years with the support of a committee of parents, Skipper Peter Cushman and Matte Carl Smith.

Today the Red Skies and all those attached celebrated three young ladies who completed a five-year journey to the rank of Quartermaster. This rank is awarded to young men or women following requirements that ensure knowledge and skills that build character, leadership skills, knowledge in seamanship, piloting, maintenance of a vessel, operation and navigation of a course, do it, teach it and more.

Boy Scouts of America has parented Sea Scouts and which was founded by Sir Bandon Powell only a year after Boy Scouts worldwide. Candidates for Quartermaster are held to similarly high standards of Eagle Scout candidates.

With far fewer members than Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts have even a smaller percentage of members make it to their highest rank. Roughly 5 percent of all Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award, would you believe that just 0.5 percent of all Sea Scouts earn the Quartermaster Award each year?

So, with that background, The Red Skies celebrated three Quartermasters to be added to the roles of SSS208's accomplishments. Members Shayna Smith, Lelaina Clayburg and Savannah Cushman received recognition for meeting all the requirements for a young person to be awarded the rank of Quartermaster.

Presiding over the ceremonies was Commodore of Sam Houston Area Council BSA, Mr. Dan Wilson, Fleet Representatives and honored guests/presenters included: Skipper Rob Freas Galveston SEAL coordinator, Lynn McKee, Matte 846, Matte Todd Thrash, 1701, Skipper Joy Ang 993 who spoke of the trio of Quartermasters as "Young women who have grown in skills and abilities beyond their age." In a ship, SSS208, that is welcoming and working with others in the Scouting community.

These ladies have individually and combined have a very complete resume' with activities, work and training in:

- participated in Several Community Service events with the Ship. We have become Service Leaders.
- done annual fundraising to cover the costs of activities and supplies, food and transportation for events.
- attended National Youth Leadership Training and two to staff events as well. sailed in the Harvest Moon Regatta from Galveston to Port Aransas and/ or Bay Cup Races with Skipper Freas on Sirley a 44' or 36' Gremlin Offshore racer.
- advanced and/ or Rescue Divers
- learned to build skills in maintenance, construction, mechanical, and operation of various sizes of boats, and more.

"These young ladies have laid the foundation for The Red Skies, they are what we want young people to become." Said the author and Skipper of SSS208. During the Bridge of Honor Matte Carl Smith said, "How many young people get to learn to work on and sail boats, or race offshore, not many."

As a parent I confess, I wanted my daughter involved in "more", but at 14 I was not sure what that would look like. When I was introduced into a new type of Scouting, Sea Scouting, that I could do with my daughters.... I was "Hooked". That seems to be the term to describe the feeling that Mrs. Ang, Ship#993, Mr. Thrash SSS#1701 and Mr. Smith SSS#208 all used to characterize their attraction to Sea Scouting.

There have been countless days sailing with the Red Skies, working on our boats, diving, camping, and attending other events with other ships in the SHAC fleet. All the work and time has been a growing exercise for me as a parent, teacher and scouter. Most adults that work with a Scouting organization get that same sense of accomplishment from working with the young adults that will lead our future.

The committee for SSS208 of Phylis Hildenbrand, Jenny Clayburg and Jessica Woods has helped build a network of support for the youth in the Ship that helps on acquisition of new supplies, organizing events like our annual seven-nine day campout "long cruise", SCUBA camp with B&W Diving of Channelview, Mini Cruise, and events like Sea Scout Academy or Safety at Sea held this year at the Coast Guard Station, Galveston, coming up in November. There is always plenty to do.



Left to right: Savannah Cushman, Lelaina Clayburg and Shayna Smith, New Quartermasters in Raven District of Sam Houston Area Council



Left to right: Mate Carl Smith, Shayna Smith, Lelaina Clayburg, Fleet Boatswain, Savannah Cushman and Skipper Peter Cushman