



America's Boating Club of West Michigan

For Boaters, By BoatersSM



Waterspout

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The official newsletter of the
Grand Rapids Sail and Power Squadron

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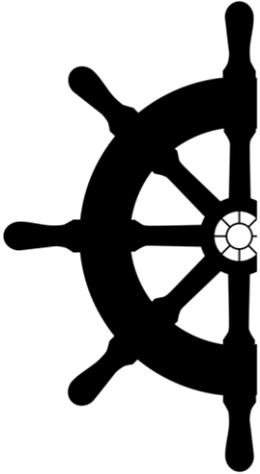


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Waterspout

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View From The Bridge

Marcia A Thompson
Squadron Commander



News from your Commander

Hello Everyone,

I would like to thank everyone for voting me in as commander for 2021. I am so excited about this next year; however, I have a lot of work ahead of me. I ask you all to be patient with me and give me the opportunity to add my vision to the squadron. This next year will be full of exciting opportunities. While I do not have a lot of boating knowledge or even own a boat unless you count our paddle boat; I have lots of boating stories over my lifetime. Growing up as a child, my father often took me fishing with him either on Crockery Lake or Cranberry Lake. I enjoyed this opportunity with my Dad and especially liked it when he took me night fishing. I am not sure if it was the fishing that excited me or the fact I got to be out on the lake past my bedtime. Either way, they are cherished memories.

Since we were unable to hold the Commander's Ball/COW on November 9th, we held a Change of Watch on November 24th at the EXCOM Meeting. District Commander Ralph Zeigler attended the meeting and swore in the new bridge and EXCOM Committee.

When I was added to the slate of officers for 2021, I sat down and drafted a plan of action based on what I thought the squadron needed to accomplish during the year I was commander. It is important that we have a plan of action, to know what we need to do to accomplish and where we need to go. The two areas that will be of great importance for me is membership and education.

Membership building will include monthly Zoom meetings or Chats with the Commander. These chats will be a time to catch up, share ideas and let me know what I can do for you as your commander. Our education department's focus will be on training new instructors, getting past instructors recertified and ensuring we will have a monthly listing of classes and/or seminars offered. We will work to connect with school's community ED program to our squadron and offer boating safety classes for students. With the rise in the number of personal watercrafts, it is important that our kids are trained to safely use them.

This is the time to recertify if you have not done so! National has relaxed the recertification process which includes watching a training video and completing a document. Once you have completed that and sent it in, you will be recertified. I believe they are looking at those who have let their instructor certification lapse in the last year; however, if it has been longer than that, let me know and I will try to help you get recertified.

While those are my main areas of focus, I will also be looking for funding sources for the squadron to offer scholarships for discounts possibly on membership, courses, and conferences. We will have our bylaws updated and I will work on developing an annual operating plan that will support the

organization's bylaws. We will look to increase our collaboration with other organizations that are either similar or who could support our organization by offering additional benefits to members.

While these may be considered lofty plans, the one thing I know for sure, I cannot do it without you. I am only one person. Therefore, I need each of you to step up during this next year and support the squadron with your talents and time. Without you, there may no longer be a squadron representing West Michigan.

Between now and the end of the year, I will be calling each of you to personally introduce myself as your commander and take a temperature as to what we have done right and what we have done wrong as your squadron's leadership. I need to know what our baseline is to understand our true starting point. I will also get the opportunity to personally wish you all a wonderful holiday time. These are different times with COVID-19; but we will get past them and we will be sharing our time with each other again. Until then, have a safe and happy holiday.

Warmly,





Squadron Education Department



Current Educational Opportunities

There are no local course offered at this time; however, you can access classes any time online using the links below:

Online Course <https://www.americasboatingclub.org/learn/online-boating-education/americas-boating-course>

Webinars & Seminars <https://uspsonline.lmscheckout.com/Course/index>



December 2020

- Renee Mika ~ December 1
- Vincent Mulford ~ December 12
- Marcia Thompson ~ December 13
- Thomas Trimpe ~ December 17



Lt/C Greg Heath
Squadron Administrative Officer



Administrative News

December Christmas Meeting

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, this year's Christmas dinner meeting has been canceled.

January 2021 Membership Meeting

Place: Zoom - Online
Date: January 14, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM
Presenter: Drew Goss, Freedom Boat Club of West Michigan

Pour yourself a cocktail and come join us for our online membership meeting online (formally our dinner meeting). Until it is safe to meet again in person, we will continue to hold our meetings online through Zoom. A link for the meeting will be sent out at the beginning of January.

January 2021 Commander Chat

Place: Zoom - Online
Date: Saturday, January 9, 2021
Time: 2:00 PM

Join Marcia on the 9th of January, to chat with her, have the opportunity to share your ideas about the squadron and catch up with everyone online. Marcia will share further details on her plans to increase membership, increasing the value of membership, and plans for the squadron's education department. At this first meeting, further discuss will be held to determine the best day and time to hold these meetings. A link will be sent out at the beginning of January so you can join Marcia for this fun opportunity.





Savvy Boater



COVID-19 (coronavirus) and holiday celebrations: Tips for gathering safely

Find out how to limit your risk of infection with the COVID-19 virus and protect others when hosting or attending an in-person holiday gathering.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

With the holiday season approaching, you might be thinking about how to celebrate and keep yourself and your loved ones safe from the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Undoubtedly, the holidays will look different this year. But it is possible to celebrate safely, whether virtually or, in some cases, together in person. Find out how to minimize the risks involved in hosting or attending a holiday event.

Celebration considerations

When planning how to celebrate the holidays, make sure you check any state or local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations that might apply. It's also important to consider the unique risks posed by each in-person event. To determine the level of risk involved, ask these questions:



- **What are the current levels of COVID-19?** Check the number and rate of COVID-19 cases in your community, in the community where the event is being held and in the community where guests are coming from. The greater the numbers and rates, the greater the risk of infection and spread among guests.
- **Where is the event being held?** Outdoor gatherings are safest. If weather permits, celebrate in your backyard or in a park. For indoor gatherings, opening windows and doors can ensure proper ventilation and help lower the risk. Indoor gatherings with poor ventilation pose the greatest risk.
- **How long is the event?** Longer gatherings pose a greater risk than shorter gatherings. Keep your event short.
- **How many people will attend?** The greater the number of guests, the greater the risk. Keep the guest list small and make sure there is enough room to enable guests from different households to stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart. Consider keeping indoor gatherings to 10 people at most and outdoor gatherings to 25 people at most. It's safest to only gather with people who live in your household.
- **Are the guests traveling?** Spending time in airports, train stations, bus stations, rest stops and gas stations can expose guests to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- **Do the guests follow safety measures?** Gatherings with guests who don't follow safety measures before or during the event pose a greater risk. Safety measures include avoiding

close contact (within about 6 feet, or 2 meters) with others, wearing masks and washing hands. Use of alcohol can affect judgment and make it difficult to follow safety measures.

If you aren't comfortable with the level of risk involved, consider canceling, postponing or not attending the event.

In-person events: Who should avoid them?

Don't host or attend an in-person event if you or anyone in your household:

- Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and hasn't met the criteria for when it's safe to be around others
- Has symptoms of COVID-19
- Is waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test
- May have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Is at increased risk of severe illness with COVID-19

If you or someone you live with or work with is at increased risk of severe illness with COVID-19, avoid in-person events with people outside of your household.

If you or your loved ones aren't able to attend an in-person gathering, you can still celebrate together virtually. Consider setting up a video during your holiday meal or other activities so that you can still see each other and spend time together.

Safety tips for hosts and guests at in-person gatherings

Hosts of in-person holiday celebrations and guests can take several steps to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Before the celebration

The host can provide or guests can bring supplies to the event to promote safety, such as extra masks, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and tissues. It might be helpful to place markers on the floor about 6 feet (2 meters) apart to demonstrate and encourage social distancing. Ask each guest to bring a dry, breathable bag for mask storage between uses.

If the celebration involves people from different households, it's recommended that the host and guests consider strictly avoiding contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering. The host can also keep a list of guests and their contact information for potential future contact tracing.

During the celebration

During the event, it's important for the host and guests to continue following safety measures to keep everyone safe and protected from the COVID-19 virus. This can be particularly difficult when you're trying to celebrate with family and friends. Consider these tips:

- **Keep a safe distance.** At the event, avoid close contact with others outside of your household. Avoid closely gathering around one table. Instead, provide multiple tables or seating areas so that people from different households can be at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart. Consider assigned seating. Also, avoid being in busy eating areas and using the

restroom at high-traffic times. Instead of hugging or even bumping elbows, wave or verbally greet others. If you're planning activities for adults or kids, consider options that allow for social distancing, such as playing Frisbee.

- **Wear a mask.** Keep masks on when you are around people who don't live in your household, except when eating or drinking. Avoid singing, chanting or shouting, especially when not wearing a mask and within 6 feet (2 meters) of others.
- **Encourage proper hygiene.** Make sure everyone washes hands or uses hand sanitizer before and after preparing, serving and eating food. If you are hosting a gathering, provide plenty of soap and single-use towels or paper towels in the kitchen and bathroom.
- **Promote safety around food and drinks.** Limit people going in and out of areas where food is being prepared. Encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and members of their households only.

If that's not possible, avoid self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets or drink stations. Consider having one person serve all of the food and sharable items, such as salad dressing or condiments. Or provide single servings of food and condiments. Wear a mask if you're preparing or serving food to people outside of your household. You might consider having guests use disposable plates, utensils and cups. Wash and disinfect any reusable items, such as cloth napkins and tablecloths, after the event.

- **Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces.** Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and shared items between uses. Provide or use touchless garbage cans, if available. Wear gloves when disposing of trash.

Also, don't allow pets to interact with people outside of their household.

After the celebration

After the event, if you feel that you were in close contact with many people from different households or that you may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, take extra precautions for 14 days. Stay at home as much as possible, avoid being around people at increased risk of severe illness with COVID-19, and consider getting tested for COVID-19. While you are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test, stay at home and follow safety measures.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 or you test positive for COVID-19, immediately contact the host and other guests who attended the event. This can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring that others get tested or stay home and away from others, if needed.

The holidays will involve extra planning this year. But taking safety precautions can allow you and your family and friends to celebrate and minimize the risk of becoming infected with or spreading the COVID-19 virus.

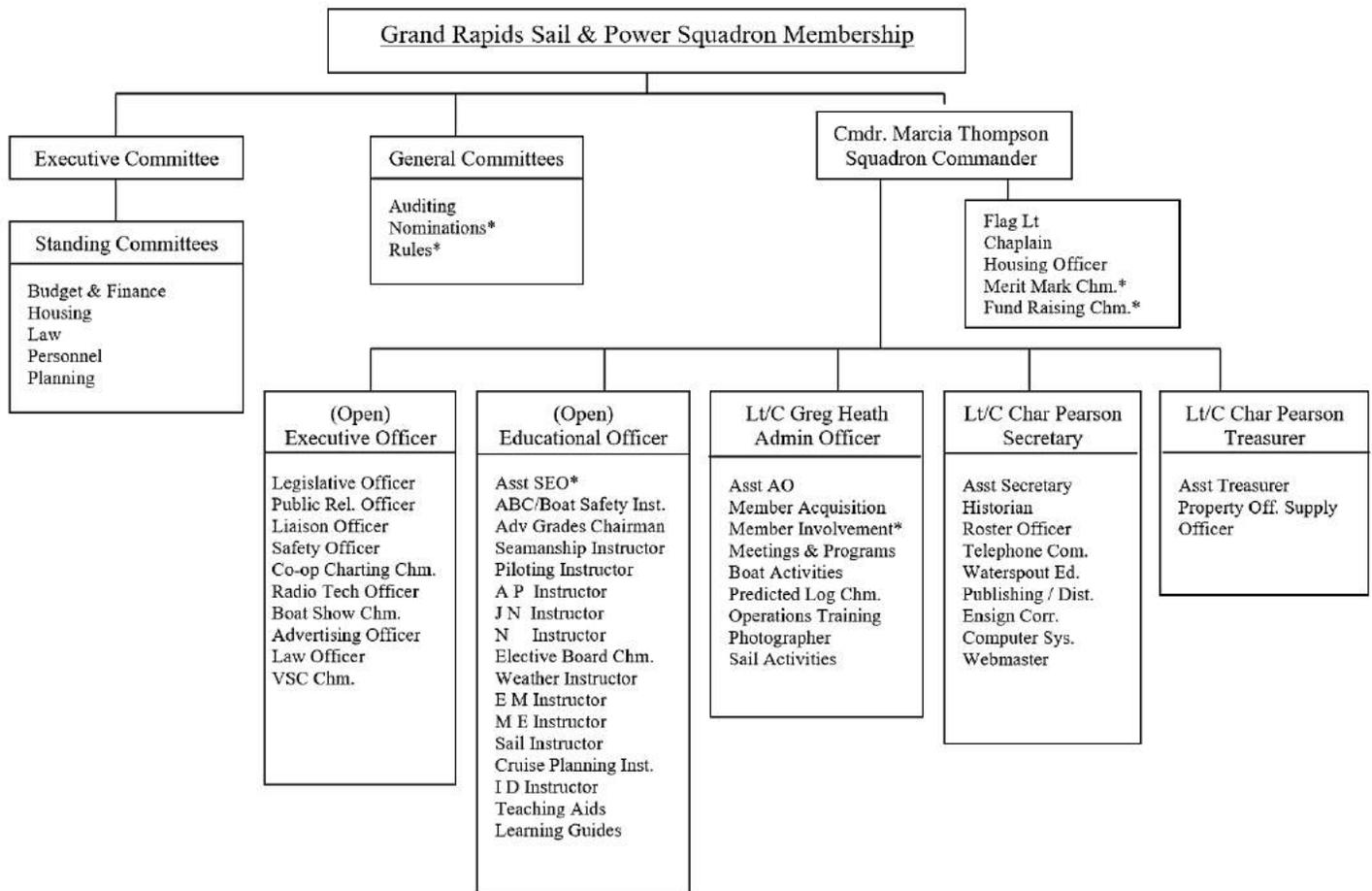
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/covid-19-holiday-safety-tips/art-20503363>



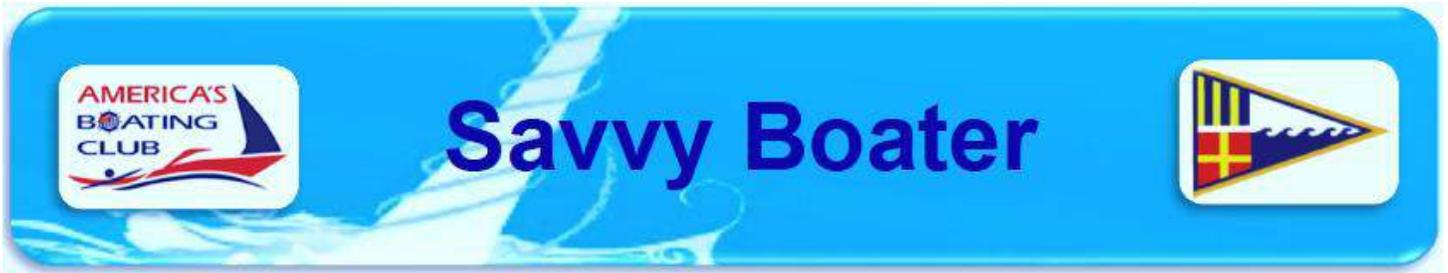
How Can You Help?

We need your help over the next year if we are going to make this squadron a value to our communities while promoting and educating safe boating to those who live and enjoy West Michigan's many lakes, small and big. Today, squadrons are including education on all types of watercrafts, including personal watercrafts such as canoeing, kayaking, paddle boating, etc. Given this, we are looking for people who can help us in these areas as well as other boating areas.

Included here is our squadron's organizational chart. Review this chart and see if there are any areas you would like to assist with, remembering we are including all types of boating. If you find an area you are interested in, contact the bridge officer for that department. If there is not a bridge officer, please contact either Cmdr. Marcia Thompson or Lt/C Greg Heath.



*Indicate filled roles or have a committee chair.



The Legend of Northern Michigan's Christmas Tree Ship

By KIM SCHNEIDER on December 24, 2015



Photo by Chicago Historical Society Captain Herman Schuenemann (center) and two members of his crew

With a load of fragrant evergreens from Michigan's Northwoods, a legendary schooner carried the spirit of Christmas—and an example of unusual courage—to turn-of-the-century Chicago. Then one stormy year the Christmas tree ship never came.

Captain Herman Schuenemann was not as jovial as usual as he lowered the evergreens into the hold of the grand but aging schooner *Rouse Simmons* in a small harbor in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

It was late November of 1912, and the legendary "tree captain" and his crew of 16 had just five days to run the length of Lake Michigan and still reach Chicago by Thanksgiving. There, a loyal crowd of families and merchants would be waiting for his arrival and the festive cargo he'd been hauling for 25 years. He had not yet disappointed them.

His nickname was "Santa" among the local children, but Schuenemann was no doubt thinking about money as well as holiday spirit. The tree captains of the Great Lakes made a living by sailing inexpensive old boats—boats others had deemed un-seaworthy—well into the stormy winter season on the lake. With a high demand for the trees, Herman could make three times as much as he'd invest in the harvesting, crew salaries and charter fees and even double his annual income between Christmas and New Years. And facing a lawsuit over an unpaid debt this year, he needed to squeeze every penny he could out of this voyage.

But the fate of his brother, August, couldn't have been far from his mind when Herman made a fateful decision that day and yelled to his crew, "keep 'em coming," until the schooner was packed with its biggest—and heaviest—load ever: some 10,000 trees.

August Schuenemann had miscalculated the risks back in 1898 when he sailed a rickety \$250 boat with a load of 3,500 trees and in a gale was thrown against the shore and killed. That was the only year Herman had stayed behind, and only because his twin girls had just been born.

But Herman took yet another risk in 1912 when he opted not to re-caulk his aging vessel. He even sailed against the advice of a loyal crew member, who said he'd had a premonition of trouble. No one knows just what he was weighing when, as lore has it, he simply replied: "There are children in Chicago waiting for Christmas trees."

"This is the tale of the Christmas Ship that sailed o'er the sullen lake. And of sixteen souls that made the trip and of death in the foaming wake."

—1912 newspaper story

The ship left port on a gray but calm day and wasn't spotted until the next afternoon when the lake got suddenly rough. At about 3 p.m., the *Rouse Simmons* was spotted by a ferry boat about five miles from Two Rivers, Wisconsin, with its sails tattered, its hull coated in ice and its distress signals flying.

At the same time, on Chicago's Clark Street Bridge, the atmosphere was festive as children clapped their mittens in excitement. Families pushed past peg-legged vendors and elegant carriage drivers in fur-trimmed hats to get to the edge of the water; each wanted the first glimpse of the ruddy-faced man who would arrive any minute bearing "gifts from the North."

Even the hint of snow couldn't dampen the holiday spirit as the crowd scanned the harbor for a single, snow-covered pine tree entwined atop Schuenemann's 80-foot mast. Every year, with the tree flying like a Christmas flag, the captain would sail past the modern side-wheel steamers to the dock, where the waiting crowds could take their pick from the overflowing stacks of fragrant balsams.

Schuenemann's arrival was always the best assignment of the year for cub reporter Vincent Starrett of the *Chicago Daily News*. He especially looked forward to the start of the annual assignment—a cup of Christmas cheer in the captain's cabin, where, as he would later write in an article about the custom, the two old friends would "discuss the perils of Lake Michigan as if it were the Atlantic Ocean."

Readers were also eager to hear more about the Christmas trees, which had firmly entered the ranks of tradition in Chicago and across America by that time. Brought to America by German immigrants, the custom had finally overcome a heavy resistance by the Puritans, who had called the trees "a plain case of idolatry." But the tree business was booming in 1912 as the cities of New York and Boston prepared to dedicate their first municipal Christmas trees in Times Square and Boston Commons.

When the captain reached Chicago in the early 1900s, he could expect a brisk trade that would go on all day and sometimes into the night, Starrett later would write.

"Prices were not excessive for the day," he recalled. "For 75 cents, one could get a full-sized tree; a dollar would give you the choice of the best. They all went quickly, for the Christmas tree ship was a Chicago tradition."

But as the day of expected arrival wore on, Starrett and his colleagues were starting to worry as they waited. Night fell and turned into another day, then another, and rumors began to fly about the ship's fate. Starrett would visit the docks for another two weeks before he got enough information to write

the story for the *Daily News*, which he began: *This is the tale of the Christmas Ship that sailed o'er the sullen lake. And of sixteen souls that made the trip and of death in the foaming wake.*

Boisterous Chicago newsboys swarmed the street shouting the headlines of the day: “Rats Fled Doomed Christmas Ship,” and the inaccurate, “Christmas Tree Schooner Sighted. Santa Claus Ship May Be Safe!” Rumors dominated the front pages until mid-December when Christmas trees started to wash ashore and become entangled in fishermen’s nets. On December 13, a bottle and a note torn from the ship’s log washed up on shore in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and solved the mystery. It read:

Friday – Everybody goodbye. I guess we are all through. Sea washed over our deck on Thursday. During the night the small boat was washed over. Leaking bad. Ingvald and Steve fell overboard Thursday. God help us. —Herman Schuenemann

The message wasn’t the end of the story, though, and it was the response of the captain’s wife, Barbara, that turned history into legend.

When the snow fell in Chicago that next November, Barbara Schuenemann and her daughters were standing proudly aboard a newly chartered Christmas ship as it sailed into port with the snow-coated pine tree flying in the mast. She carried on the tradition by both ship and rail until she died 22 years later.



TODAY’S CHRISTMAS TREE SHIP

Over the years in the same Chicago harbor, wily entrepreneurs—perhaps not at all unlike the Schuenemann brothers—have tried to bring back the spirit of the ship and capitalize on the sentiment it inspired. But the newer “tree” ships docked at Navy Pier haven’t yet found the secret of the captain’s three-masted schooner. And no modern-day Santa can yet compete with the man with twinkling blue eyes who’d sell trees under a make-shift string of white lights and a sign proclaiming: “Christmas Tree Ship. My Prices are the Lowest.”

Chicago’s boating community reenactment of the olden days of the *Rouse Simmons* landing in

Chicago is now portrayed by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw*. The trees are off-loaded from the *Mackinaw* by local youth volunteers, including Sea Cadets, Venture Crews, Sea Scouts and Young Marines and loaded onto trucks for distribution to more than a thousand deserving families throughout Chicago by Ada S. McKinley Community Services. The gift of Christmas trees to deserving families is made possible by the generous financial support of our sponsors, donors and contributors.

In 2017, more than 1,200 Christmas trees were delivered from Northern Michigan to families in Chicago. The 2018 Christmas Tree Ship will be Saturday, December 1, 2018.

Source: <https://mynorth.com/2015/12/the-legend-of-northern-michigans-christmas-tree-ship/>

**Commanders
Club**

The Commander's Club

An Honor Roll of Special Members
Representing a minimum gift of \$50 per year

**David and Sallie Brinks
George and Carol Mandigo**

If you would like to join the Commander's Club,
contact Jack Draper at Commander@grsps.org



**NewsLetter
DEADLINE**

**Deadline for next
issue is the 10th**

Submit photos from events, stories of travels, questions
or anything you would like to see in the newsletter next
time.

Submit photo as .jpg files at highest
resolution.

Send all information or questions to:
Editor at editor@grsps.org



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