

## West Virginia Scouts Earn Flagship Award

The Monongahela River is pretty far from the sea but a crew of West Virginia Sea Scouts still had what it takes to win the BoatU.S. National Sea Scout Flagship Award for 2005.

Sea Scout Ship 46, *Arcturus*, of Westover, WV, near Morgantown, ranks top in the nation for its excellence in program quality, youth achievement and adult commitment. Like all Sea Scout units, Ship 46 uses boats, seamanship and nautical skills to develop character and leadership qualities in young people.

The Ship, with 20 male and female Scouts, aged 14 to 20, made attaining the Flagship Award its mission for all of 2004. In the process, the Ship compiled an impressive record of accomplishments, including 47 days of on-water activities. These ranged from formal training in boat handling, rules of the road and safety drills to boat maintenance, electronics and engine repair with a good measure of fun thrown in, like water skiing and tubing.

In addition to operating its 36-foot

Chris Craft Cavalier on the river and sailing small boats on nearby lakes, Ship 46 doesn't let the inland location keep its Scouts off the high seas. Last year the young people organized a two-week bareboat charter in the British Virgin Islands aboard a Beneteau 50 sloop. The Ship also participated in events on the Chesapeake Bay.

This is the fourth year for the Flagship Award, created by BoatU.S. in 2002 to mark the 90th anniversary of Sea Scouting and the first time given to a non-coastal Ship. Eight members of the crew, two adults and six youth, traveled to Dallas, TX to accept the Flagship trophy May 27 at the Boy Scouts of America Annual Meeting.

Record-breaking around-the-world sailor and aviator, Steve Fossett, presented the Flagship Award on behalf of BoatU.S. along with Charles Holmes, director of BSA's Venturing Division. Fossett chairs the BSA Venturing Committee and Holmes serves on the BoatU.S. National Advisory Council.

In honor of the achievement, the city



Sailor and aviator, Steve Fossett (far right) and BSA's Charles Holmes present the 2005 BoatU.S. Flagship trophy to Sea Scouts from Ship 46, *Arcturus*.

council of Star City, WV, the "summer port" where the Sea Scouts keep their Chris Craft, proclaimed the week of May 23 "Arcturus Week."

Sea Scouting is a co-ed program for youth age 14-20. Nearly 7,000 youth participate in Sea Scouting as members of 550 Ships nationwide. For more information, contact: [SeaScouts@BoatUS.com](mailto:SeaScouts@BoatUS.com).

## Boating Course Required in Washington State

Joining the 36 states that now require boating education for adults, Washington state passed legislation this spring that will require operators born after 1955 in boats over 15 hp to take a boating safety course or have a state-issued Boater Education card. In a model of cooperation, some 17 state and local boating groups, including boat owners and the marine industry organized as the Washington Alliance for Mandatory Boater Education, helped draft the law. It goes into effect in 2008.

The law is patterned after similar legislation in Oregon and will be phased in by age groups. For example, boaters 30 years and younger will be required to obtain their card by Jan. 1, 2010. Boaters born before Jan. 1, 1955 will be exempt. Purchasers of new and used boats may operate their boats immediately and have 60 days after their purchase to obtain a card. The free online boating course by the BoatU.S. Foundation is expected to be approved to meet the new requirement.

"A majority of states already have mandatory education laws on the books," said Michael Campbell, president of the Northwest Marine Trade Association, one of the founding groups of the alliance. "It's important to have a law that is fair to boaters, encourages safety, and yet doesn't restrict access to boating."

The complete text of the new law is available on the Web at [www.wambe.org](http://www.wambe.org).

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