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NJPPC VETERENS NAMED TO POKER RUN HALL-OF-FAME

-- Mazzo, Patnaude honored for contribution to the sport

New Jersey Performance Powerboat Club (NJPPC) charter member Peter Mazzo and co-founder Dave Patnaude were inducted into the *Poker Runs America* Hall-of-Fame recently at the NJPPC Winter Awards Dinner in Atlantic City.

The honor, bestowed by the premier poker run publication, recognizes “dedicated poker runners who promote the ideals of camaraderie and safety in high performance boating.”

Mazzo, a resident of Moonachie, NJ, and an offshore racer on the NPBA circuit in the 80s, has served on the NJPPC board for the past eight years, but has been a member since the beginning and participated in the club’s first poker run in 1999. His first boat, ‘For Pete’s Sake,’ was a lime-green, 19-foot Crestliner which belied his future as a performance boater.

When Pete got the “go fast” itch, he scratched it with a 26’ Pantera. Unsatisfied after a time, he moved up to 30’ Scarab, which he docked at Ocean Beach Marina, home of the world’s largest Scarab dealer and a powerboat Mecca of its day. His third boat, ‘Johnny’s Dream,’ a 32 Hustler began a long love affair with the Fiore family and led to ‘No Discipline,’ his fourth boat, also a 32 Hustler with which he won several radar shootouts, often jettisoning anything that wasn’t nailed down to increase speed.

For some reason, the ‘No Discipline’ moniker stuck, and has adorned Pete’s next four hulls – all Outerlimits, starting with a 37 to his current 46.

Despite his impressive racing and shootout record, Pete has been blanked when it comes to poker run wins. In well over 100 events; from the Jersey Shore to Arizona, from Florida to Canada and all points in between, he has never cashed a check, not even for third place.

However, Mazzo is still a winner in the eyes of many performance boaters. From volunteering as a pace boat for regional races to making room in his boat so poker runners with mechanical problems won't miss a day on the water, Pete epitomizes the camaraderie of the performance boating community. Pete was also the driving force behind NJPPC's "Shore Dream for Kids," an event which provides a day on the water for special needs children.

Also honored at the event was NJPPC co-founder Dave Patnaude. Dave literally grew up in the New Jersey performance boating community, attending his first offshore race with his father Ray in 1976. Ray himself has a storied career in performance boating as a volunteer for the New Jersey Offshore Power Boat Racing Association (NJOPRA) who later became RaceCom Director, in charge of all on-water activities, including safety. And Ray took advantage of the free and enthusiastic labor he had from young Dave, who learned every facet of on-water race operations by watching his dad and doing what he was told. Little did either of them realize what would grow from the seeds planted through a unique father and son bonding experience.

Dave's first boat was purchased in 1990, a 22-foot Scarab with a MerCruiser 350 MPI/Bravo package. His next boat, in 1993, was only a foot longer, but the Velocity was powered with twin 502s and a pair of B&M 174 blowers. In keeping with the pattern of threes, it was in 1996 that Dave's life changed in two very significant ways; he married the beautiful and ever-patient Kelly, and he became director of the NJOPRA with a goal of moving the club back toward its roots of more on-water performance boating events in order to provide a reason to belong for those who did not race.

In 1998, Dave produced his first two poker runs for NJOPRA, including an overnight to the Trump Marina in Atlantic City. While successful by any measure, and perhaps because of the success, the divide between the racer and performance boater factions of NJOPRA grew wider apart, and eventually, Dave, along with his dad, Bob Cleveland and Rick Engstrom decided that the performance boating community needed an organization dedicated to its special needs, and the New Jersey Performance Powerboat Club was born the next year. And despite the original focus on performance boating, Dave was cited by *Poker Runs America* for always striving to include smaller, slower vessels in events, and even went so far as to produce a personal water craft poker run which has become a huge success.

In 2000, Dave felt the need for a boat more fitting a man of his position and 'Fra Diablo,' a 37' Outerlimits with 600 EFIs and #4 Speedmaster drives seemed to fit the bill nicely.

The next year, Dave figured out a way to mix business and pleasure by leaving his successful commercial food sales position to become General Manager for Typhoon Performance Marine. Such was his success – over \$7 million in sales his second year – that others noticed. The grueling schedule and roadwork of marine retail was taking a toll on his young family, so when Bank of the West came calling with an offer to join its Essex Credit subsidiary as a Vice President specializing in marine credit, Dave knew it was an offer he could not refuse.

While Dave's events always emphasized safety, enforcement at the time was spotty. In 2002, Chuck Sprauge a veteran NJPPC member suggested borrowing from the race community and adopting a set of formal, uniformed safety standards that could be used not only by the club, but by the growing poker run industry. Together, with input from other members, the "Poker Run Ten Commandments," were published and have become the standard against which poker run event safety is measured. As if a dream come true, the Ten Commandments were widely published and adopted by groups across

the country and across borders, being adopted as the official standard for *Poker Runs America* sponsored events.

In 2004, Dave made a move that shocked many, trading his Outerlimits for a more family-friendly 36' Concept center console. But lest you think he has lost his performance drive, it is power by twin Mercury Racing 250 XS OptiMax outboards, so he's not entirely out of the game.

Dave has grown NJPPC to over 200 members, with vessels ranging from 18 to 50 feet in length. His organization is run by a committee that could give lessons to organizations and bureaucracies everywhere. The group represents every age, sex, boat type, boat size and economic consideration that belongs to NJPPC. And they are effective, with one of the best member communication systems anywhere.

Dave has been at the forefront of bringing safety to the forefront of performance boating events and sets the benchmark for rules enforcement and participation, demonstrating that good safety is good business.

It was a visibly moved Dave Patnaude who accepted his induction honor, stating later, "I was really choked up, but hey, I didn't know it was coming and my dad was there that night and he is the person who introduced me to performance boating," which tells you far more about the man than any words on paper ever could.

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