



UPDATE

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THE PERFECT EXPERT

Right now many of you are probably using your boat as an icebreaker, or breaking off the ice. So that means there is nothing to do for boating safety. Right? That isn't right. Now you have time to develop some skills and contacts that will serve the **Coast Guard Forces** later, and for a long time.

I suggest you take the time to bone up on **STUFF** namely, materials on Operation BoatSmart, boating laws in your AOR, the materials from our PE offerings, and the latest statistics. Then contact your local media, print and electronic, and provide them with your contact information so you can serve as a "boating safety spokesperson." (Expert)

This makes perfect sense since one of the reasons the CG relies on us is our experience and local knowledge. Whether the media knows it or not, you are the best expert on boating matters the media has. But first you have to know. Then you have to let them know that you know.

Reporters like **EXPERT SOURCES** because they add a "neutrality and credibility" to the story. You need to be informed to qualify. When you get all the information you need, there are a few things you need to know before going to the press and tooting your horn.

First of all, let the media rep know that you are **AVAILABLE** and can respond quickly when they need you. Remember the talk we had about deadlines and how time is so important. Luckily that fits most of us. As Auxiliarists we can be reached faster than, let's say, law enforcement, the active CG or other governmental officials.

You also must be **RELIABLE**. The information you provide must be based on experience, CG materials, local laws, statistics and facts. An expert should be able to consistently document their claims, or at least give solid case histories

A media expert must use **SIMPLE LANGUAGE**. Remember, you are not talking to a member training class. You are also not speaking to the CG Academy graduating class. So keep it simple. Don't use acronyms or military jargon. You don't want to come off looking like a stiff-necked buttoned-down military type. Pretend you are speaking to a middle school class.

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A good media **ATTITUDE** will keep the media coming back to you as you are needed. You must have an appreciation for the reporter's job and understand that they are looking for a neutral opinion. If you don't know the answer, you should be able to help the reporter find who does.

NOTE: You don't have to be the "Perfect Expert" or the most articulate boating safety spokesperson in the world. In fact, if you talk down to folks, or are too authoritative, you may appear rehearsed or too stiff and formal. You come off looking like a stuffed shirt. Remember that if you look bad, we all look bad.

Being a media spokesperson isn't for everyone, but if this is something you would like to challenge, the info above will help.

Send questions and comments to me any ol' time at: nickn@ucnsb.net



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PUBLICATIONS

PUT SOME ICING ON THE CAKE!

What is news? The definition as to what is news may be different to a lot of **Publications Officers**, but news can include almost any event or opinion. We have so much information available to us on the Internet that we should never have a lack of things to print.

Once of the most important things a Publications Officer can do is **give timely information** relating to activities and events that your membership may not otherwise know. The Coast Guard Auxiliary newsletter should also have stories of the expanded Coast Guard family. Do not be limited to just Auxiliary events or happenings, but use information from the active side of Coast Guard Forces too.

Remember that the overall responsibility for the content of all material published within the district rests with the district commander. This authority is delegated to the Director of Auxiliary for all Auxiliary publications. Within the Auxiliary unit, the highest elected officer is directly responsible for that unit's published material.

How many have read all the SITREP articles that appear so many times during the month. These would make great copy in your newsletters, magazines or web sites and you should take advantage of them. Giving information like this to your non-computer members is also a plus. Pictures that are added to this electronic newsletter can also be downloaded to your publication. Read the latest information on the National web site under *What's New*.

WAVES is another interesting publication that can be a help to you if you are looking for some specific information. This month they discuss Global Distress Satellite System (FMDSS) and the importance of life jackets. How about **UP TOP IN OPERATIONS?** That publication is just chocked full of good information for you to download and put into your publication. **SAFETY LINES**, the newsletter of the **Department of Marine Safety and Environmental Protection** is also available for you to download and glean terrific information. This month **Safety Lines** discusses the three points of the trident.

The publications mentioned are on our National web site and are easily accessible by going to www.cgaux.org/ and reading the *What's New* section on the home page. National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) will be upon us soon and you need this information. On the *What's New* page, you will find information to download on NSBW. Since the packets for this event will not be mailed until the end of March, you would be wise to copy this information into your publications so that the chairpersons of NSBW get this important news.

Remember – *There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.*

Until next month,
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continued



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PHOTOGRAPHY

HOW TO TAKE BETTER PHOTOGRAPHS

TIPS TO REMEMBER

In these next two articles I will share some easy tips that we all tend to forget when doing photography.

#1. **Always use a filter** on every lens you own except for the ones that won't accept one. Filters have a purpose and that will be explained in another article later on. The reason they are so important is they protect your lens from being scratched and damaged. It is much cheaper to replace a filter than a lens.

#2. **A LENS CAP is a must.** It also protects the filter and lens from damage. Most Point and Shoot Cameras have the lens cover built in. Many close or cover it when the camera is turned off.

#3. **A LENS SHADE** is another important item to have if your camera lens will accept one. It stops the light rays from reflecting off your lens and causing streaks or sun spots. Lens shades are different depending on the millimeter of the lens. Be sure you have the right one.

#4. **The viewfinder can have a couple of drawbacks.** If it does not have a rubber molding around it, it can scratch your eye glasses, which will be pretty expensive. Also if your eye is away from the viewfinder it can let light in and give your camera a false light reading which can ruin your photo. They make a rubber cover for the viewfinder or a piece of black tape or your finger will help block out the light.

#5. Be careful, **DO NOT wipe your lens or filter with lens tissue if you are around sand or dirt.** You will scratch them. Buy a small can of air and carry it in your camera bag. First blow the lens/filter clean then use the tissue.

#6. **Buy a camera bag** that is padded and is large enough to carry all your needs for the photography shoot. Protect that expensive equipment. You may want a larger one for more equipment you buy in the future. I have four different sizes and pack the one I need for the day, depending on the situation.

#7. **Invest in a mono-pod.** This is a one legged tripod that is very light weight, easy to carry and will steady your camera and help reduce camera shake. They are made of aluminum and can also be used as a walking stick. There are many tripods that are expensive and heavy. What ever you chose, make sure it is strong enough to hold and carry your camera.

#8. **The Tripod:** (three legs) is a very important part of your photo needs.

It holds your camera and your flash. It steadies your camera for all occasions including low light conditions. It helps to prevent camera shake, which will prevent blurred photos. It is great for sunsets.

I will continue these easy tips in next month's UPDATE.