



The Public Affairs UPDATE

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INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Part of the responsibility of a public affairs officer is to communicate essential organization and operations information to the membership for the purpose of enhancing their participation.

How, do we do this? Every organization unit should have its own newsletter. Getting the newsletter produced, published and distributed may involve only a very few people within the unit.

Both the Publications Officer and the Public Affairs officers are within the cloak of operations of the Department of Public Affairs. It is only natural that they should be working together.

"But we don't have enough activity in our unit to justify a publication." The need for and publishing of a unit newsletter is not dependent solely upon the unit's activity. There is so much information of specific interest to members available, a unit publication is essential if the information is to find its way to the members. Also, there are so many changes taking place that it is difficult to imagine a unit surviving effectively without some vehicle to accomplish the task.

Available resources for information have grown faster than our ability to get it all distributed to the members in a useful format. The Internet is growing daily. We now have ten departments at the National level, most of which have at least one regularly published newsletter. All of this information is supposed to reach the flotilla members via a formal distribution scheme.

Unfortunately, the distribution scheme is only as good as the people who have agreed to accept the responsibility. The lack of funds and the lack of reproduction equipment are typical reasons given for not getting the material out to the members. Some of our flotilla commanders do stand up in front

of the members at their monthly meeting and attempt to read the various departmental newsletters. Others have made mention of their availability for review during the meeting.

To reproduce and distribute all of the information sent out from National to the various units can well be very expensive. All of the information may not be of interest to all members.

By developing its own newsletter, the unit can be selective in the dissemination of information that is geared to its members interests and activities.

Getting a periodic newsletter reproduced does not have to be a great financial burden either. There are some firms that will allow you to come in and make your own copies for a little as .03¢ per copy. That is as little as \$30.00 per 1000 copies. If your unit can't afford something like that, try getting help from a local Coast Guard Unit or other local military unit. If they are not available, perhaps a member has an employer who is willing to be supportive.

The advantages of a regular publication should be obvious. It can boost morale as well as provide for the timely distribution of essential information relative to the four cornerstones.

The person(s) responsible for getting a publication produced and distributed should, ideally, have a computer available with some form of desktop publishing capability.

This publication is put together on the Microsoft Publisher 97. It has considerable flexibility and allows the use of many forms of clip art, photographs and type variety. I am also the publications officer for my Division, Flotilla and the District Board.

Please let us know if you have specific questions on how to publish a newsletter. We want to help! □

NATIONWIDE SAFE BOATING CAMPAIGN

The Department of Boating of the United States Coast Guard has published on the Internet a three page document entitled, "New Nationwide Safe Boating Campaign." The Internet address is:

<http://www.uscgboating.org/more1.html>

The feature story is "The Dangers of Boating Under the Influence of Alcohol". There are additional subjects covered. Each of them can be used as the basis of either an informative news release or a feature story for your local media.

There is no excuse for not improving the effectiveness of the Auxiliary Public Affairs program when we consider the kind of support we are getting from "TEAM COAST GUARD".

In addition to preparing local news releases, you can also work with local and state elected and appointed officials to obtain support for a cooperative public information program to make the public more aware of the dangers and how to cope with them. One local PA officer has reported how he is working with the State Alcoholic Beverage Commission in developing a program and press coverage for a full scale campaign against boozing and boating.

In another instance, a member has reported contacting state legislators, the Governor and the local Mayor to obtain resolutions or citations commemorating the observance of National Safe Boating Week.

At N-TRAIN, the Auxiliary National Board adopted two resolutions calling for the adoption of specific resolutions dealing with the wearing of PFDs and mandatory boating safety education. The resolutions, ➡

reproduced here, may be worthy of a local press release and used for the purpose of informing your State legislators and/or State Boating Law Agency of the **Official Policy Position** of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. **Communicat- ing important information** about the Auxiliary to elected and appointed officials is **not getting involved in lobby- ing so long as you are not advocat- inn the passage or defeat of any legislation or rule or reaulation.**

Some time back, someone described the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary as, "The world's premier safe boating organization". My old dog eared dictionary tells me that we have claimed the **NUMBER ONE** position or the **LEADING** organization promoting safe boating. We can't rest on our laurels. There are other organizations out there who are sniffing hard on our heels with the objective of taking that reputation from us. They could, if we just sit back and don't keep working. Keeping on working means we can't hide our light under a bushel. We must let the public and our members know what we are doing and help them to take advantage of what we have to offer.0

PE NEVVS

The Department of Education has announced that the **Boating Safely Course** is in its second printing. The new printing has undergone "enhancements" to make the course fully acceptable as a basic boating course as well as a stand-alone personal watercraft course. The 8 hour course is NASBLA approved and is a ideal for states with a mandatory education course.

The Department of Education is completing arrangements to provide **Continuing Education Units (CEUs)**. under certain conditions. This is expected to be an added value to the course for students and will allow them to use the CEUs in lieu of certain college credit and/or in fulfillment of certain professional requirements. This may help as an inducement to interest younger persons in taking the **Auxiliary** boating safety course.

If you have any of the old Sailing and Seamanship course books, make use of them before 1 September 1998. After that date, no S&S courses can be taught. The present books will be replaced by a new NASBLA approved 7 lesson **Sailing** fundamentals course

N-TRAIN RESOLUTIONS

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary National Board, at special meeting in St. Louis, MO on 31 January 1998 adopted the following resolutions:

Resolution #1. "Resolved that, the National Board of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary supports mandatory boating safety education for all boat operators under the age of 16 years and encourages participation in such courses by other persons 16 years of age and older based on a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators approved boating safety course recognized by the United States Coast Guard and such course should include classroom instruction and require successful completion of a proctored examination."

Resolution #2. "Resolved that, the National Board of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary supports the mandatory wearing of personal flotation devices (PFDs) by all persons 12 years of age and under when present in open boats and on external decks of recreational boats with enclosed cabins."

that is expected to be available in the summer of 1998.

PHOTOS TELL THE STORY

We need to tell the story. We have a variety of excellent boating safety education programs for the public. Yet for some reason, public education course enrollments in 1997 apparently declined from 1998 enrollments.

Latest complete Coast Guard data for 1998 tells us that 89% of boat operators involved in fatal accidents had no safe boating education or training.

There are a number of good reasons for each **Auxiliary** Unit to promote our PE courses with **press releases** and other promotions.

Some of the reasons follow:

1. Since an overwhelming majority of boat operators have never taken a safe boating course, they will learn important information to help them avoid getting into trouble. Most accidents and resulting injuries and deaths are preventable. Education is one means of developing a prevention program.

2. The public education program also provides us with the major source of revenues at all levels of the Auxiliary. As enrollments decline, so can we expect our revenues to decline. We have no other source of revenues with which to provide our public education courses.

3. The PE class has always been

the major source of new members. The reduction in the enrollment of PE classes has already been felt in many areas with a decline in new membership applications.

Public Education is not the exclusive responsibility of the PE Officer and those who have qualified as instructors. It was recently pointed out that the decline in the public education program can in part be attributed to a decline in the public affairs program at all levels of the Auxiliary. However, the flotilla is the most important unit of the Auxiliary when it comes to the implementation of our programs.

Public affairs is not one of the much heralded cornerstone programs. Public Affairs Officers don't get a whole lot of attention for the work they do. But, without them no one would know anything about the Auxiliary. Use the tools you have to promote the Auxiliary.



Local TV crew interviewing a PE course graduate in Harrisburg last fall.

Distribution: National EXCOM; All District EXCOMS, DCPs, FCs, DSOs, PA, & PB; All SOs-PA & PB; via Distkt Diraux and & FSOs PA 8 PB via FC <http://cgaux.org/memopen.htm>