



The Public Affairs UPDATE

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Boating Statistics

With the advent of the National Safe Boating Campaign, many of us have become exhausted writing traditional "why you should" pieces for the local print and broadcast media.

The media does not necessarily view boating with large numbers of people having an interest. How wrong they can be!

In 1996 the Coast Guard reported that the total number of numbered boats in 1996 was 11,877,938. In 1976, the total was 7,671,213. This is a 55% increase in the past 20 years. In addition it is estimated that there are 8,000,000 unregistered recreational boats because federal law does not require their numbering. Nearly 20 million boats represents a great many people engaged in boating activities.

According to the 1996 Boating Statistics report, **COMDTPUB P16754.10** published by the United States Coast Guard, there were 8,026 reported recreational boating accidents in 1996 with 709 fatalities and 4,442 injuries. It is widely accepted that not all reportable accidents are in fact reported.

Approximately 440 boaters lives may have been saved had they been wearing personal floatation devices (PFDs) or life jackets. In 1996, eight out of every 10 victims in fatal boating accidents were not wearing life jackets.

80% of the fatalities occurred on boats less than 26 feet in length. Specifically, 328 or 57% of the fatalities occurred on boats less than 16 feet in length. 96% of all registered motorboats are under 26 feet in length.

Nearly one third of all the boats involved in reported accidents were operated by persons other than the owner of the boat. This data strongly suggests that persons should not lend their boats to person who are inexperienced or who have not taken a safe boating course or who are otherwise

inexperienced,

85% of all accidents involving fatalities involved boats wherein the operator had not completed any boating safety course.

80% of all reported accidents involved operator controllable factors such as operator inattention, operating at an unsafe speed, failure to maintain a proper lookout and operating under the influence.

Capsizings and falls overboard accounted for 387 of the fatalities, more than 50% of the total fatalities. Collision with another vessel was the most reported type of accident. They resulted in 1,283 injuries and more than \$6.5 million in property damage.

Like the landlubbers, when there was adequate data available to provide the level of impairment, reported accidents involving the use of alcohol accounted for 27% (191) of all boating fatalities. This figure up 7% from 1995 data. A recent Coast Guard study estimates that boat operators with a blood alcohol concentration above .10% are approximately 10 times more likely to be killed in a boating accident than boat operators with zero blood alcohol concentration.

This is valuable information that could serve as the foundation for a number of current press releases on boating safety. The information is also useful for presentation at public meetings or forums for public speaking. It's true, its interesting and can be used to validate the need for wearing PFDs, taking a safe boating course and performing CMEs.

The information could also be incorporated into audio and video public service announcements. With nearly 20 million boats, nearly 70,000,00 persons are involved in boating activities of some sort.

National Safe Boating Campaign

The name change is official. It is the annual National Safe Boating Campaign (NSBC) which is intended to be a year long activity instead of one week. The data referenced in the adjacent columns speak loudly for effective safe boating campaigns all across the country.

These data show that 85% of boat operators involved in fatalities had no boating instruction while only 3% of operators who took a state course, a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or United States Power Squadron course were similarly involved. Only 6% of operators had taken an American Red Cross or similar course.

The months of October, November, December and January are the months wherein the boater has the greatest risk of dying in a boating accident. Too often hunters and fisherman don't look at themselves as boaters. This should provide for some great speaking opportunities.

Harriet Howard, The National Safe Boating Campaign Liaison for the National Department of Public Affairs, has some really great ideas for making the campaign a really memorable occasion. Her address is: 15323 Hayford St., LaMirada. CA. , 90638-5351.

The **NSBC** is a great tool to introduce our Public Education program, Operations and Courtesy Marine Examination programs to the public.

The number of boats being registered annually is outpacing the increase in the number of persons taking some form of an approved boating safety program. All NSBC activities should emphasize the value of our programs and promote them with the public. Keep a record of your NSBC activities and coordinate them with other units. Also, let Harriet know of your efforts.

This & That

Global Race...The large international Whitebread Round the World Race featuring 60+ foot sailboats started in Southampton, England on 21 September, 1997

The Whitbread participants have taken a spring break up the Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore and Annapolis as part of the 31,600 mile, nine leg world race. The participants also includes the *Chessie*, The Chesapeake Bay's first ever entry. This Two week spring break marks the first time the Whitbread race has visited the Chesapeake and the second time in its history that the race has come to America. It is scheduled to depart Annapolis May 3, 1998 on the 3,390 mile leg to La Rochelle, France. The Whitbread, like The Americas Cup, is an internationally famous sailboat race.

About **80 Auxiliary facilities** have joined Coast Guard facilities under the guidance of Coast Guard Baltimore Operations to facilitate the visits to Baltimore and Annapolis by the race participants.

The *Chessie* progress and the Whitbread Race can be followed on the Web Page of the Living Classrooms Foundation's World Wide Web Site. The URL is <http://www.classrooms.org/> The progress on the *Chessie* can be found on www.livingclassrooms.org/whitbread/.

We are hopeful that some of those Auxiliaries participating in the Regatta Patrols during the "spring break" will take some good pictures and report some great experiences for inclusion in the Navigator.

Membership Recruiting

While we do have an excellent Department of Personnel headed up by Carol A. Urgola and her staff, each Flotilla must ultimately bear the responsibility for recruiting new members. They can't do it all for you.

If we have a flotilla that is not actively pursuing the cornerstone programs, we can also expect that we have a flotilla that is not using Public Affairs activities either.

Boaters who are not affiliated with the Coast Guard Auxiliary through membership may be turned

off by what they don't know about the Auxiliary.

The Public Affairs officer has a responsibility to build a very positive image or perception of the Auxiliary with the public generally and with fellow boaters specifically. How do we achieve that goal?

First, we must look at our activities as being newsworthy and of value to the community. Then, we must do the necessary writing and talking to let the public know all about it. Sending press releases to the news media is only part of the solution. Our writing must also show the **value** of our services.

We keep hearing about this being the year of the volunteer. The Auxiliary has been volunteering for more than 60 years now. Are we keeping the public informed about our efforts?

Does your unit have a newsletter or other organ? Do you limit its distribution to you membership and the chain of command up the line? If so, rethink your policy and consider sending it to selected elected and appointed officials.

For example, your state boating law administrators; your local officials dealing with community parks and recreational areas; your local state legislators and U.S. Congressmen are all elected or appointed officials who have a need to know what it is we Auxiliaries are doing. Consider placing them on your mailing list.

Also you may know the various marine dealers within your area. While you can't solicit them for gifts or contributions, you can let them know more about what we are doing. Put them on your publication mailing list also.

We would like some feedback on this matter as well as other matters in this issue.

Our Electronic Media

It is most unfortunate that a majority of our 35,000 members lack the means of accessing the Internet and the Auxiliary and Coast Guard web sites. There is a great deal of information available now and this will grow considerably in months to come.

Each unit has been asked to designate a "Web Watcher" to keep the unit up to date on developing information. If your unit does not yet have a Web Watcher, get one and stay informed.

Much of the work of the Public Affairs Department appears on the Web site. This assures a wider distribution

of those work products. Other information is also valued by members and it can be made available through the Web Watchers program. Get listed in the National E. Mail Directory and let them know of your interest as a watcher.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

We still hear complaints about the inadequate distribution of our PA newsletter, the **PA UPDATE**. At the bottom of this page is a distribution guide. If it is followed, then there should be no complaints, especially since our newsletters are posted on the WEB.

I know it is being read because of the communications from readers. In virtually every case where the **UPDATE** is not being received by the FSOs-PA and PB, it appears that the breakdown is with the Flotilla Commander who is designated as the prime distributor for the flotilla. The FC is to get their copy from the DIRAUX.

**From Flotilla 33-5
8Wrvr, Jim Hansen, FC**

"Do The Right Thing, The Right Way, At the Right Time, Every Time"

**From Flotilla 59, Div 5,
8th Coastal region**

"EXTRA EXTRA EXTRA

Want to have a good time and meet other Lake Lewisville boaters in a setting that is slightly away from the docks, slips and boats? Then you should make plans to attend the "All Lake Mixer" at Sneaky Pete's in Eagle Point Marina, on Friday 25 April. This event is sponsored by the Dallas Yacht Club, **Tim Foley**, Commodore, and it sounds like a great place to rub elbows with fellow boaters, meet a few new people, and maybe even recruit a member or two for the flotilla. Don't be surprised if you run into stiff competition. I'm sure that the sponsors of this event probably have the same idea as far as recruitment goes." **PA at work? Sure is!**

DISTRIBUTION: National EXCOM, all district EXCOMs, DCPs, FCs, DSOs-PA, DSOs-PB all SOs-PA and PB and Historians via District Diraux and FSOs PB & PA via FCs.