



June 1998

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VOL V No. 6

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The Public Affairs UPDATE

AUXILIARY AVIATION FEATURED FAA AVIATION NEWS

For you PA Officers looking for something to write about, the Federal Aviation Administration has given you the topic. The Auxiliary Aviation Program. Take some time to meet with and interview the Auxiliary Aviators in your area. It is sure to make a great local interest news story.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviation program received high marks in the most recent publication of the FAA, the *FAA Aviation News*.

Identified as "a big part of its "Team Coast Guard" is its volunteer Auxiliary which numbers about 34,000 members."

Auxiliary pilots provide an important and valuable service for active duty Coast Guard pilots. "They are a force multiplier. Anything they can do means we don't have to do it. This means that we can do something else they might not be able to do." according to Capt. Vivien Crea, the commanding officer at Air Station Clearwater.

The Author, H. Dean Chamberlain,

noted, "Because active duty Coast Guard resources, its people, ships and aircraft are limited, the Coast Guard depends upon its volunteer civil Auxiliary to provide vital support. The small group of Auxiliary Aviation pilots and observers provide vital support for many CG functions. For example, rather than send out a *Jayhawk* helicopter at a cost of several thousands of dollars per hour to search for a reported overdue or possibly missing recreational boater just offshore somewhere, the search mission can just as easily and professionally be done by a volunteer Auxiliary Aviation member in his or her own aircraft for tens of dollars an hour."

This, of course is the same concept by which the Coast Guard makes use of Auxiliary surface facilities and the coxswains and crew. When reporting the activities of the Auxiliary, keep these attributes in mind. We are cost effective and are trained volunteers who act in a professional manner.

NTSB RELEASES STUDY ON PERSONAL WATER-

Last month, the National Transportation Safety Board released a study prepared by its staff on safety issues related to the operation of personal watercraft. The number of personal watercraft operating on the nations waterways is now estimated to be over one million. The increasing popularity of these recreational boats has produced considerable concern about their safety to riders and other watercraft.

Coast Guard accident data released prior to the NTSB study reported that 80% of all reported recreational boating accidents were the consequence of operator controllable fac-

tors. The primary causes of accidents were identified as operator inattention, operator inexperience, operating at an unsafe speed and failure to maintain a proper look out. The remaining 20% of accidents involved boat and environmental factors.

The NTSB study, released 19 May, 1998, estimates that over 1 million PWCs are in use. The report notes that while recreational boating fatalities has been declining, the number of PWC related fatalities has been increasing. Fatalities began to increase in 1994. Preliminary numbers for 1997 indicate there are 83

PA BOOTHS

Harriet Howard, DVC-AL recently distributed a comprehensive report regarding **Boat Shows**, how to set them up and how to work them. It is a great guide and standard that should be used by all units across the nation. If the guidelines and recommendations are adhered to, your PA booth and boat show booths are almost assured a success and a pleasurable experience.

Harriet also provides some excellent suggestions on how to approach people to get their interest. Too often, persons manning booths at shows sit back and appear to hope no one will approach them. The mission, of course, at such events is to attract people to your booth to help them with boating safety.

There are many varieties of backdrops or booths available to help you display your message. There are even plans available to help you make a portable booth. The design and material can vary considerably as can the budget for building one depending upon what materials are used.

Don't overlook the advice to have any lease or contract reviewed by the appropriate legal officer. Some shows let the Auxiliary in free if they are wearing their uniform. Some don't. If there is a fee to be paid for booth rental, make certain that your unit has the resources to pay for it before any contract or agreement is signed. Failure to observe these requirements could end up making you liable for such fees or rental charges and perhaps additional liabilities that the Legal officer would not or could not agree to. Make sure you have lots of literature.

Don't just place it in a display rack. When you get someone's attention, make sure you have a printed version of your message available for them to take home with them if at all possible. Also, get as many names, telephone numbers and addresses for follow-up that you can.

NTSB PWC SAFETY

PWC fatalities. PWCs are the only type of recreational vessel for which the leading cause of fatalities is not drowning. PWC fatalities are primarily the result of blunt trauma. The NTSB acknowledges the study is incomplete because not all accidents are reported. A full copy of the report can be obtained from the NTSB in Washington, D.C. An abstract of the study is also available on the Auxiliary Web Site.

The high utilization of PFDs was credited by the NTSB as having a relatively low number of persons who drowned. It was also noted that the worst experience was with PWC rentals and with persons borrowing PWCs that may have had inadequate training.

The NTSB made a number of safety recommendations to PWC manufacturers, The Coast Guard, State Boating Law Administrators, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Boat U.S. and the U.S. Power Squadrons.

With regard to the Auxiliary, they have recommended that all recreational boating classes **provide information on the safe operation of PWCs.**

What has this to do with Public Affairs? PA is the job of getting information out to the public and the members. The data and the report narrative offer a great opportunity for Auxiliary PA Officers to prepare and send out informational press releases that have an excellent opportunity to be used by local media.

The PA officer should work with the PE officer to develop PWC safe boating courses for their communities and to modify those courses where necessary that stresses the safe operation of PWCs. In addition to PE courses, the PA officer should be working closely with the VEs to set up PWC safety examination sites. We have a responsibility to capitalize on the NTSB study.

Now is the time to take this study and present the facts of the accident data and the role of the Auxiliary to the media to help promote our courses and examinations.

Another suggestion would be to contact local retailers or PWC dealers and let them know of your interest in helping them to promote safe operation of the vessels they sell.

It would be a great advantage if

they would share with you their customer list so the owners could be contacted. If any dealer agrees to furnish such a list, it is important that the list not be furnished to anyone outside those in the Auxiliary who need to know. Probably the best plan is to seek the cooperation of the PWC dealer and furnish him literature and information to send to his customers, if he will agree to do so. Maybe he will even sponsor a PWC safety course at his/her place of business or elsewhere. Don't be bashful about asking; he benefits as much, if not more than do we.

USCG BOATING SAFETY INITIATIVE

With the support of some prestigious supporters, the 1998 Boat Smart from the Start National Safe Boating Campaign was launched concurrently with the start of National Safe Boating Week.

Organizations involved in the promotion include the U.S. Coast Guard, the Auxiliary, National Safe Boating Council, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, the Safe America Foundation, Baywatch and Bombardier, the manufacturer of the SEA-DOO personal watercraft.

Funded in part from a grant from the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, and produced by The National Safe Boating Council, the objective of the program is to combine the efforts of boating safety experts, industry, media and local government to communicate the message: "Wear Your Life jacket! Boat Smart From The Start".

The program features a public service announcement (PSA) with David Hasselhoff and Kelly Packard, **Baywatch** superstars. The PSA will be distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada and will air four times during the **Baywatch** programming. Additional program elements include a satellite media tour, three video news releases, monthly safety releases and a grass roots effort responsible for distributing more than 18,000 campaign action kits to local communities.

Distribution: National EXCOM; all District EXCOMS, DCPs, FCs, DSOs-PA & PB, SOs-PA & PBs via District DIRAUX and FSOs-PA & PB via FCs

Public Affairs at NACON 98

Public Affairs and Publications Officers will have the opportunity at NACON 98 to get some valuable pointers of how to do their job more effectively and efficiently.

Members of the National Staff will be on hand to help provide instruction and answer questions of unit staff officers.

NACON-98 will be held in San Diego, CA from **Friday, 4 September to Saturday 5 September** at the **Town & Country Resort**. Check the Spring Issue of the *Navigator* for registration information and costs.

Public Affairs workshops are tentatively scheduled to be held on **Friday 4 September 1998 between 15:30 and 17:00** and **Saturday 5 September 1998 between 13:00 and 15:00.**

Department Chief, Como. Ted Neale, Jr. is planning the curriculum for the workshops and promises that it will be a real opportunity to obtain some valuable instruction that will make the PA officer more valuable.

"The Public Affairs Officer provides the glue that brings all of the activities of the Auxiliary together as a valuable part of 'Team Coast Guard' and binds us into a cohesive working group. If the PA and PB officers are not effective in their job, all other missions will also suffer and similarly be less effective. The NACON-98 Workshops are going to provide us with the opportunity to let our staff demonstrate how we can promote the Coast Guard Auxiliary missions", Como. Neale stated.

Other scheduled workshops during Friday and Saturday will include a Boating Workshop, Contingency Planning, Vessel Examination, The Internet, Member Recruiting, Marine Dealers, Aviation, Incident Command, Public Education, Headquarters workshop and Auxmis Reports.

There is something planned for everyone. The Public Affairs Workshop sessions will stress the importance with working with other units staff officers to enhance the reporting and communication of essential Auxiliary activities. We hope that you will make it a point to attend these important workshops.