



The Public Affairs UPDATE

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Como. Ted Neale Jr., DC-A

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COMO. Tucker on PWC

Safety Instruction

NACO, Everette L. Tucker, Jr., recently wrote to the Auxiliary National Board requesting that the all District Commodores immediately emphasize to their units the necessity and importance of including PWC safety instruction as part of the Auxiliary's existing safe boating courses.

He also informed the DCOs that the Auxiliary had received an excellent video on PWC safety entitled, "You Are A Boater - PWC Safety" that can be used effectively to provide PWC safety and proper operation instruction.

In addition, he requested that all means possible be utilized, to disseminate the information, including the VE staff channels.

While not specifically mentioned in the July 6 memo to the National Board, **this request would also apply to every Public Affairs Staff Officer in each Auxiliary Unit.**

As a unit PA officer, you do have an obligation and responsibility to prepare and disseminate factual information regarding PWC safety to members and the public through unit publications and press releases directed to print and radio and TV broadcast media.

The increased public awareness of PWC safety issues generated by special media reports,

the NTSB study and adopted or pending regulations regarding PWC safety make the publication of Auxiliary news releases by the media more likely, especially if the releases are positive in nature and indicate the availability of appropriate safety courses.

PA officers must remain alert to issues and developing policies to take appropriate advantage of publicizing the events to the public and the membership.

NSBW REPORTS

Perhaps the most comprehensive report on National Safe Boating Week activities That We've seen in several years was filed by **Nick Nicholson, BC-ALA** covering the 1NR, 1SR, 5NR, 5SR, 7th, 8CR, 8ER, 8WR, 9CR, 9WR in the Atlantic Area.

Nick, it took a great amount of effort on your part to prepare such a comprehensive report. Not only did you do a great amount of work, but your report also shows that a great many people around the country are doing a great job and doing lots of good PA work.

For those of you who have not yet completed your NSBW efforts, there is still time to report your area activities to **Harriet Howard** to get your unit's efforts on the record.

MEDIA LISTS

The maintenance of a media list and contact file is an important responsibility for any PA officer. It is not uncommon for some PA Officers to deal only with the media they receive in their home. Each of the printed and broadcast media that have a presence within your area of operations should be on your list.

That media list can be developed from several sources. The telephone book, the public library, state or local publisher and broadcast associations and the Internet.

Each of the media should be contacted on a regular basis, preferably by in person visits so they get to know you. Also, so that you can get to know them.

You need to find out many things about the media in your area. You want to know their deadlines. What are their policies regarding the kinds of information they will want from you? Who is your contact person? In what kind of format do they want your material submitted? Are articles to be limited by the number of words? Do they want pictures? In what format should they be submitted?

One of the major complaints we hear from units in larger metropolitan areas is that the media is too big, has too much territory to cover and just isn't interested in the activities of a specific unit.

One of the first things you want to determine is whether or



not that media has a localized or regionalized publication that is devoted to news from or for a specific geographical area.

If the unit(s) are situated in a metropolitan area in which there are a limited number of publications, it would appear prudent to have the flotillas, for example, coordinate and cooperate with each other in planning and releasing news items. This could be done using the Division PA officers. Such an approach would be preferable to providing the media the impression that there is no organization or internal discipline. Maybe a weekly news release could be offered giving important news about PE courses, CME stations, member advancements and other announcements that would help the public to know the role of the Auxiliary in their community

PA officers, ideally, should maintain a log of their activities, press releases and clippings to provide essential history of their respective units.

PA BOOTHS

Last April, **Harriet Howard** published some tips on setting up a Public Affairs Booth and announced that **West Marine** and other affiliated marine supply retail stores, had granted permission to the Auxiliary to set up Public Affairs Booths within their stores.

We haven't heard any more about it and would like to hear from anyone who has in fact set up such booths and a report as to how successful they were.

Unfortunately many Auxiliarist seem to think that a PA booth is fine only when there is some other coordinated activity such as CME's taking place.

Properly set up, PA booths are a great tool for recruiting potential PE students. If permission is sought, they can be probably be set up at just about any marina

and major retail outlet. These include **Wal-Mart** and **K-Mart**.

For the new members, all you need, is to wear your uniform with all the bells and whistles, a card table, a set up close to the foot traffic and some sign(s) announcing your purpose. You will attract attention.

When people pass by, try to make eye contact. Ask them if they are a boater. Ask them if they are familiar with the latest changes in law within your jurisdiction. Tell them the reason you are there. Most people will respond, even if it is to ask you questions about your ribbons.

The main thing is that when you are through, more people will have heard of the Auxiliary and will go away with a favorable impression.

On one recent weekend, my wife and I donned our uniforms, went to a marina and over a Saturday and half a day on Sunday, we talked to about 300 people and obtained the names, addresses and telephone numbers of 37 persons who expressed a desire to take a safe boating course.

We had no date set, but told the prospects if they gave us their name, address and telephone number we would get in touch as soon as we had dates set up.

We even got into a nice discussion with the owner/operator of a PWC rental who also took people out for rides on a parasail attached to a speed boat. He want's to work with the Auxiliary in educating people about PWC's.

It's easy to get people involved if you are pleasant to them and provide them with current information about what is happening at the state level that might affect their boating activities. Check the activities calendars in your area for public events that would be appropriate for setting up a PA booth.

BACK WHEN

When visiting with some friends recently, I noticed some old boating magazines in an antique magazine rack. They were July 1948 editions of **Yachting** and **Motor Boating**. In reviewing them, I was surprised to notice that each had a featured column, "*Under the Blue Ensign*".

The **Blue Ensign**, of course, was the **Coast Guard Auxiliary Ensign**. The columns carried a rather full report of Coast Guard Auxiliary activities for the preceding month. It was great reading them.

I was too young at the time to be aware of the publications (I was only 17) or to recollect them today, but I wondered to myself why we can't get a similar relationship with magazines of today.

The country has grown considerably since then, so has the interest in boating. These national magazines today are published in regional editions to permit advertisers a better chance at reaching targeted markets.

We could prepare monthly reports on a regionalized basis of Auxiliary activities to report in the regionalized magazine editions. It would have to be good, sound "news" of specific and general interest to boaters.

We might even have to consider changes in the structure of our PA Department in order to publish such material on a regular basis, but it might be worth it. We would need someone with a contact at these magazines and we would have to show them some samples of what would be offered on a regular basis. Lets hear from you all out there on this. Are you prepared to contribute?

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