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# The Public Affairs UPDATE

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## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

We always knew there were problems in getting the word out to the members in a timely manner. Now, someone has reviewed the problems and has indeed verified we do have some problems, but that they can be corrected.

The Long Range Planning Committee has recently completed an intense review of Communications Within the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Committee has made 11 "do-able" recommendations that, if followed through upon and implemented should go a long way in improving internal communications. After all, if we lack the ability to communicate effectively among ourselves, how can we hope to communicate effectively with outsiders as to what our missions and purposes are.

### The 11 recommendations are:

1. Rethink editorial philosophy of *Navigator* and District publications. Consider adding more "need to know" information.
2. Publish "Pocket Guides" of selected manuals and give to members in lieu of complete editions. The unabridged version will still be required to be sent to specific people.
3. Review layout of all publications (margins, type, organization, etc.) and make appropriate modifications to conserve paper and reduce mailing costs.
4. Establish a Flotilla Staff Officer Web Watcher position.
5. Districts, Divisions and Flotillas create an Aux Mail System and send important information to all on the list.
6. Encourage all levels of organization to create Web pages.
7. All Auxiliary manuals should be on the Internet with search capabilities.
8. Distribute Flotilla meeting minutes to all Flotilla members.
9. Develop a list of materials that must be maintained by elected officers and

passed on to newly elected officers.

10. Improve the AUXMIS II system:
  - Develop a multi-mission reporting form;
  - Consolidate CME, PWC, CFV and UPV reporting on to one form;
  - Make all forms two part so the member can keep a copy of what is being reported;
  - Provide opportunity for electronic submission of forms;
  - Program system to eliminate multiple mailings;
  - Directors' Offices should provide support to SOs-IS by supplying paper, labels and ink cartridges.
11. Leaders at all levels must market the transition from paper to electronics. They must ensure that the majority of members who don't have access to e-mail or the Internet will still be informed of what's happening in the Auxiliary and must know information.

The report, twelve pages in length, recognizes and attempts to address a number of commonly heard and often spoken criticisms of the "system" as it is now constituted.

The report invites all members to review the report and to offer their potential solutions. The report is available on "The What's New" page of the Auxiliary Web site. Tony Morris, DC-ID has appropriately posted it upon the "Members Forum" page and has invited all to enter into the discussion. This certainly promises to be a lively, but productive use of the Web site's members forum page.

This report deserves serious study and discussion followed by implementation of recommendations as soon as practicable. This report also holds the potential of identifying significant reductions in the cost of administration of the Auxiliary.

## Cold Weather Boating

With the possible exception of Florida, Southern California, and other all year round warm weather and water, much of the country is bracing for the onslaught of **Cold Weather**.

Every now and then, our PE department publishes an **Advisory Circular** that covers some important and highly relevant topics. Number 3-97, 1 October 1997 dealt with "**Off- Season Boating, Cold Shock and Hypothermia**". It is a highly informative two and one third page report of the dangers of cold shock and hypothermia and how to protect one's self from its dangers.

As we enter this cold season around the country, thousands of persons who do not consider themselves "boaters" get out their "john" boats, don their cold weather clothes and go out on the water to hunt water fowl and to fish.

Sometimes, these good neighbors become so intense about their seasonal activity they sometimes forget its dangers and often fail to take very necessary precautions to protect their lives.

Now that we all know about the advisory circulars, we are in a great position to review them and to prepare a great public service column for our favorite local newspaper or outdoor sportsmen's magazine to warn our friends of the dangers and what they must be prepared to do to protect themselves from the dangers.



Fisherman & Hunters are Boaters Too! Let's reach them.

## The Little Kids

**El Niño** and **El Niña** are Spanish for "Little Boy" and "Little Girl" respectively. Anyone who has felt their impact on the water temperatures of the oceans on weather conditions may tend to think of them as something more ominous, such as poltergeists or worse.

Literally billions of dollars in property and scores of lives have been taken by these storms caused by the weather aberrations these "kids" have brought with them.

You can bet that the Auxiliary has been involved in helping the people who have been suffering from the ravages of this bad weather. Some of the Auxiliary activities may be the source of great pictures and articles on just what the Auxiliary means to the Community.

Send in your photographs to the *Navigator* for consideration. Be sure to attach an appropriate caption to identify the participants and describe what it is they are doing.

Interview those who participated in the activities. They may have a great story to tell. Submit that to the *Navigator* also. They still like and want well written stories, especially with pictures, about the Auxiliary and their service to the community. You may also want to try your hand with the local media. They too might like to have it. It is all **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**.

## BOAT SHOWS

This fall, winter and spring will be the season for **boat shows**. Whether in the water or dry land boat shows, they are usually well attended by boat lovers who are looking forward to thirsting about their latest attack of boatmania.

As a public affairs officer, you may be able to really put the VE examiners and PE instructors on the fast track to reaching their personal and unit goals with a properly set up, well "manned" and effective public affairs booth.

You don't need the biggest and most expensive, but you do need to develop one that is cost effective, attracts the attention of boaters and "**would be boaters**" so that you can engage them in discussion about boating and boating safety. A properly worked boat show can build up your membership, fill your PE classes and permit you to get your CME quotas.

## US AND THE PC

Whether we like it or not, the personal computer is now an integral part of our communications arsenal. This newsletter could not have been so easily produced were it not for the PC. Yet we still hear members referencing the use of computers as if they were conjured up from the dark deep recesses of the earth.

Just a few short years ago, before windows and the user friendly software, a personal computer took some effort to operate. It was based upon the old IBM DOS (Disk Operating System) program used by most PCs. You had to know the various commands to load the programs to get the computer to do the work you wanted done.

If you don't have a computer or if you have one, but are intimidated by it, face up to the problem. It can and will make your life more interesting and more productive. You can also have access to the Internet and with that, access to all kinds of boating information from the Auxiliary and other organizations promoting safe boating and boating related information.

A PC is an essential tool for the Public Affairs Officer. We invite you to communicate with the Editor on your use of and concerns about obtaining and maintaining a PC for use in and about Auxiliary business, particularly in Public Affairs.

## Charting Your Course for Service

The Department of Personnel has produced a New member Handbook that is now available and will be given to each new member as they enroll in a flotilla.

Public Affairs Officers should obtain a copy of this 10 page handbook and become familiar with it's contents. The handbook covers the new members responsibilities in joining the Auxiliary, what the Auxiliarist does and the benefits received by the member.

This handbook may be useful to PA officers in helping them prepare releases promoting membership in the Auxiliary and making the public more aware of the Auxiliary and its purposes.

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

## RECOGNITION

It is often said that our "pay" is the recognition we receive for the work we perform. Often, that recognition is provided in the form of ribbons and other awards for meritorious work.

There are many non-auxiliary persons and organizations that have provided the Auxiliary with significant and substantial support in many ways unique to their organization or their individual skills and talents.

Too often we do not remember to take that extra step to **RECOGNIZE** those persons or organizations in an appropriate manner.

One method available to us as Public Affairs officers is to arrange for that **recognition** by the creation of a Certificate of Appreciation or similar award to be given to the person or organization that has supported us in some significant way.

For example, you have a cable or broadcast TV station or local publication that has consistently promoted our Public Education program with PSAs announcing the dates and location of the courses offered.

A special Certificate of Appreciation specifically recognizing the contribution of the recipient in promoting boating safety education could be made and delivered to the person or organization (or both).

The presentation of the Award should be photographed and, if appropriate, videotaped and released through your customary news outlets. Ask the person or representative of the organization if they have any particular news outlets they would like to inform of the award.

People do like to read and hear about themselves. How can you bestow greater recognition to the individual than by letting his whole world know just how much you (and we) appreciate his(her) unselfish contributions to our aims and purposes? Try it! They and you just might like it.

remember our 60th  
anniversary celebration  
in 1999