



UPDATE

Internet address: www.cgaux.com/memframe.htm

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VOL. IV No. 12

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS IS HARD WORK

Last month we promised more tips on how to succeed at your public affairs duties and responsibilities. We discussed basics dealing with media contacts and general concepts on topics. First, know what is going on in the Auxiliary, both Nationally and locally. Policy originates from the National but the execution of that policy takes place at the local level. You need to know and understand both if you are going to communicate effectively about them to members and the public.

Of course, if you are one of those people who shun "hard work", then what follows is not for you. If you have a desire to be an effective Public Affairs Officer, read on.

In previous issues, we reported on *How To Get Better Media Coverage*. While not new ideas, they were summarized by Jeanette Wells, FC-11 of Division 1, District 13. Unless you have undertaken the steps outlined last month and previously in Ms. Wells summary, you are working hard at avoidance of the hard work associated with Public Affairs. Believe us, it is easier and more gratifying to do the job correctly, as described.

We have a great many more resources available today than we had even a year ago. One major resource is the Coast Guard Auxiliary Web Site and its links to the Coast Guard pages and other boating pages. Almost every Department now has its own timely Department News Letter. Read them. If you are not receiving them, start with your own Flotilla Commander. His job is to make certain that the communications channels remain open. If he is not getting the news letters out, and that includes the Public Affairs Update, talk to him about getting it. (Most are now published on the Coast Guard Auxiliary Web Site. (www.cgaux.org))

We have made it easier to recruit new members. If you feel that you need a new person in your flotilla with a better "nose" for public affairs, recruit one.

The **PRIMARY** mission of the **Public Affairs Department** is to communicate to the public *and* our membership about the purpose and objectives of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. We have a great deal to tell. The number of recreational boaters keeps growing every year. The number of boat owners taking approved safe boating courses generally has not kept pace with the rate of growth in boat ownership. It is the job of the PA officer to motivate boat owners to take an approved safe boating course. You should be able to enlist the help of your unit's Public Education Staff Officer.

Every official act of the Auxiliary is worthy of dissemination to the Public and the membership. This is what we hope to impart in future issues of this publication. ■

NOTICE

Accuracy is important. Public Affairs and other staff officers who contribute to or cause to be published newsletters or other formats for the dissemination of Auxiliary related information should check or have their information checked for accuracy. In recent months there have been several instances where incorrect information has been released resulting in some embarrassment to the Auxiliary. This is especially a problem if your newsletter or other publication has wide circulation or is published on the Auxiliary Web Site.

DID YOU KNOW?

Effective January 1, 1998 there will be a new designation for all Member Resources Officers (MR). The new designation will become Personnel Services (PS). The new acronyms applicable will be FSO-PS, SO-PS and DSO-PS.

Also, other changes can be expected. For example, the Marine Dealer Visitation Officer's name has been changed to that of Marine Industries Visitor.

There are also some new newsletters being published. They include **WAVES, UP TOP IN OPERATIONS and Advisory Circulars** issued by the Department of Education. Each of these publications contain important member information that should be widely distributed to flotilla members. If you are not getting them, let your FC know.

The Coast Guard Wants Your Opinion

The Coast Guard regularly publishes notices in the Federal Register. Two important ones published recently are seeking the public's input regarding the wearing of PFDs and another seeks your input on Boating Education requirements. The Coast Guard indicates that public input is imperative if they are to promulgate new rules and regulations that truly serve the public interest and which are in keeping with their statutory mission.

Auxiliarists are invited to give their reaction as private citizens and not as spokespersons for the Auxiliary. The issues are controversial and a reading of many popular boating magazines will prove that observation.

In its November 1997 edition, **Boat/US Magazine** carried a reasonably objective article on Life jackets and invited their members to complete a "survey" which they promised to forward to the Coast Guard.

If you are not a member of Boat/US or would prefer to express your own views, write to:

Executive Secretary
Marine Safety Council(G-LRA, 3406)
CGD 97-059
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 Second Street, SW
Washington, D.C.

The format for response can be found in the Federal Register, 25 September 1997, Vol. 62, No. 186, Proposed Rules, page 50280-50281, CGD 97-059.

Similar requests are outstanding for comments on Educational Requirements for Recreational Boating Safety CGD-97-066 FR Vol 62 1997, FR 23 Oct 97 55199. and Standards for Navigational Lights used on Recreational Boats, CGD-97-060 Oct 9, 1997, 62 FR 1997 52673.

Persons interested in commenting can obtain copies of the requests from the Federal Register. Copies can be obtained from your Congressman, U.S. Senator or your public library. It is recommended you read the request to ensure your comments are responsive.

MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

Jeannie Brenner, FSO-PA Flotilla 56, 5 NR has submitted an article on Membership Promotion. An edited version follows:

"I've been hearing a lot of talk lately about member recruitment and retention. Both subjects are important, but we must keep some critical issues in sight.

The first issue is "**honesty**". Don't "con" potential members into joining. Once they find out all the facts, and they have been conned, they are potentially "dead weight" and prime candidates for disenrollment. Inform them about our mission, what they will need to learn and just where their expertise or experience can be utilized and the benefits of membership; knowledge, training, experience and fellowship.

People are attracted to the Auxiliary primarily due to their interest in boating or water activities. Don't allow the workload to outweigh the fun. All work and no play usually leads to discontented members.

Learn what the members enjoy about boating and their experiences with the Auxiliary. Provide opportunities for experience sharing. Some persons may be great on patrols but no so good on Vessel Safety Checks, Public Education or Public Affairs. Others may prefer one of these other cornerstone programs to performing patrols. Some may be the "shy type" and would prefer "behind the scenes work" in support of more experienced members, at least initially.

Every member is a potential recruiter of new members. The secret? **STOP, LOOK and most of all, Listen!**

Take time to be friendly with other boaters. Inform them about your membership and, whether on Patrols, Vessel Safety Checks or some other mission, take the time to be friendly. Don't try to impress them with your superior expertise.

You can help build our PE classes, promote vessel safety checks and let your boating friends know they belong because we are all interested in safe boating and improving our knowledge and expe-

SAFE BOATING CAMPAIGNS 1998

We know that in 1998, the National Safe Boating Campaign will be expanded to include Boating Under the Influence. The purpose of the annual safe boating campaign is to gain the support of the media in getting the message out to boaters. The overall experience across the nation in 1997 is not yet known, but some states experienced no significant increase in the number of accidents or fatalities while other showed significant and worrisome increases.

As the PA officer of your unit or the NSBW Special Projects officer, it is not too soon to initiate plans for the 1998 annual event. The limelight will be shared between wearing PFDs and Boating Sober.

Some new PSA's will be available. Work with your state agencies and other non-traditional boating organizations. The might include a state alcoholic beverage regulator, a Local Mothers against Drunk Driving group (MADD) and other state or local organizations seeking to lower injuries to persons, especially children. Check in with the local Red Cross, The State Safety Council the organization for Safe Kids and yes, even Alcoholics anonymous for support. Present your case in a professional way and they will join you in support.

When you get all this talent organized, plan a media event with a press conference. With an impressive group such as has just been outlined, how can the media resist?

Let each supporting organization contribute a spokesperson who will succinctly state their reason for participating.

Start planning now! Next spring may produce too little too late. This is a great opportunity for you all to do a great job and to bring public attention to some of our missions. You might also help "sell" some boaters on membership opportunities.

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