



The Public Affairs UPDATE

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Como.Ted Neale Jr., DC-A

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A Time for Preparation

This time of the year is customarily a time of *minimal official activity* for most Auxiliarists around the country. Minimal activity is not synonymous with idleness which means inactive.

Auxiliarists should take advantage of this period of *minimal official activity* to employ their minds in reviewing their duties and performance during the past year.

As Public Affairs Officers we are generally responsible for the promotion of the **Coast Guard Auxiliary Public Image** utilizing a variety of communication channels to achieve that goal. Because we generally lack adequate financial resources to purchase paid commercials or newsprint space, we must rely primarily upon public service announcements and press releases.

This mean that we are usually in competition with other, often similar organizations for promotional space. To be successful, we must do our best to convince those whom we count upon to provide us space or time for our programs that we meet their standards for community support.

Let's examine our potentials. There are 12 months in a year. That means we have twelve monthly meetings on the average. Most of us would have at least four good months for operations, vessel examinations, marine dealer visitations and other operational activities. Some can do these things all year around. Public Education classes can be scheduled just about any time that is convenient to the instructors and the supply of

students.

Public Affairs Officers can use their skills to inform the public of all of these activities in which the members are employed. *Assuming the monthly meeting, operational activities, public education efforts, elections, Changes of Watch, member awards, special events, courtesy marine examinations and member recruitment successes are **worthy of a press release**, each flotilla unit Public Affairs Officer could expect to prepare and release an average of four press releases each month.* If we also take photographs, we could have at least four photographs each month that are worthy of inclusion with each press release.

You may not always get all four press releases published every month. The chances are good that at least one of them will be used. If you include a usable photograph of the activity, you can probably double the success of your publication efforts. The old adage that "a picture is worth a thousand words" is true. *Four press releases each month will total forty eight press releases a year.*

If that is too much for you to accomplish, consider the prospects of recruiting an assistant or two. With two or more persons working on the public affairs missions, the chances are you can be even more successful.

Remember, your friends and neighbors are usually the members of your unit and they most likely do like to see their name in print together with a photograph that tells a story. Take advantage of this and publish!

Unit Publications

Does your Division or Flotilla have its own periodic publication? It is not mandatory, but give some thought to the very definite advan-

tages of having your own publication.

There is an obsolete Coast Guard Auxiliary Publications Guide, COMDTPUB P5600.7. As far as we can determine, this publication is no longer available. It's last known date of publication was 27 May, 1986. The Guide was a useful tool that outlined a number of considerations in producing a unit publication. In addition, it contained a guide on the rules of grammar, punctuation and capitalization, word usage and other useful information on acronyms, abbreviations and initials.

The Auxiliary Public Affairs Manual, COMDINST M5728.3A and the Coast Guard Public Affairs Manual, COMDINST M5728.2B contain important information that would be useful to any unit Publications officers seeking to set up and publish a unit newsletter.

The Coast Guard Public Affairs Manual, Chapter 4, pertaining to "internal Relations" states the objectives of internal communications as :

- Mission Support. The Coast Guard's internal relations program supports Coast Guard Missions by keeping our "family" aware of what (and why) things are happening. Specifically, the goals include:
 1. Awareness of benefits and opportunities.
 2. Awareness of requirements, obligations and changes in policy or procedures.
 3. Awareness of issues and challenges facing the Coast Guard.
 4. Recognition of individual and team accomplishments.

The Coast Guard Public Affairs Manual is more comprehensive than is the Auxiliary Public Affairs Manual. While some of its provisions are not especially applicable to the Auxiliary, it is none-the less an excellent reference.

UNIT PUBLICATIONS National Awards

Every Auxiliary Unit should have a newsletter, newspaper or some other instrument to provide essential internal communications.

We often hear complaints that too many members are not adequately informed about Auxiliary business and news. One only has to review the Members Forum page to learn that there are some members out there who post controversial material on the page that has no redeeming value to the furtherance of Auxiliary Interests.

The generation of controversy for the sake of controversy is destructive of and counter to the concept of teamwork, the basis of Auxiliary success.

A unit publication, open to contributions from all members of the unit, is a great place for members to learn about important Auxiliary developments and policies. It could very well be the absence of such publication in many units that enables the seeds of misinformation and malcontent to germinate and grow.

Each District, Division and Flotilla that regularly publishes a newsletter, newspaper or magazine promotes a better understanding of the missions and objectives of the Auxiliary and its fourth cornerstone, fellowship. The more accurately members are informed of their business, the better they will feel about their organization.

Marion Seaman, Internal Publications Branch Chief is to gather and maintain copies of all district, division and flotilla publications until such time as judging is to occur for National Awards. She is to catalogue all publications and to submit them to the judging committee no later than 1 August of the year they are to be considered for awards.

Under the guidelines, all district, division or flotilla publications are to obtain the approval of the Director as to the content of the publication. More often than not, this responsibility is delegated to some other individual by the Director. The point here, is that this person to whom the responsibility is delegated would be the ideal person in each District to gather and forward the publications to our Inter-

nal Publications Branch Chief.

While it may come as a surprise to some, *internal communications* is an important function of the Department of Public Affairs. If there were no internal publications efforts, the value of the Auxiliary would be diminished considerably.

Send a copy of your publications to **The BC-ANI, 19009 South Laurel Park Road, SPC 6 4, Dominguez Hills, CA 90220-60504** or as otherwise directed.

Our BC-ANI, as mentioned is **Marion Seaman**. Her telephone is 310-632-4748. Her FAX is, 310-609-3913. Make it a habit. Your publication could be the next winner of the National Award.

60th Anniversary Flags Wanted

If you haven't read or heard about it by now, you may have been reading the wrong publications. The **National Board** has requested that each Division design and produce a **District Flag** that would be part of the 60th Anniversary pageantry at NACON 99.

It is also suggested that the District would display the flag at all district functions following NACON 99.

The flag dimensions are to be 48" on the fly and 30" on the hoist. The design must be visible from both sides and should have 2" fringe on the other three sides of the flag. The pole must be 88" tall with a spear at the top of the pole.

The material is at the option of the designer(s), but is expected that nylon would be the most serviceable.

The deadline for submission of flag designs is 1 March, 1999. Submissions should be made to the Department Chief, National Department of Legal Affairs.

It is suggested that the design phase be conducted between September 1998 and February 1999, followed by submission of the design to Legal and, following approval by Legal, be completed by August 1, 1999.

By the way, what is your unit planning for the 60th Anniversary observation. We sure would like to hear from you all. AND, don't forget to also plan your PUBLIC AFFAIRS EVENTS to publicize

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

"Team Work Doesn't Get Better Than This"

(The following is reprinted and edited from *TOPSIDE*, the 5th District Northern Region Publication, Fall 1998)

By: Gil Finkelstein, VCP 8, Linwood, NJ

This was a typical Sunday morning doing watchstanding at CG Great Egg with the normal calls on VHF 16 of boats breaking down and minor problems. It was getting close to lunch and the crews were getting hungry. They had been out for six hours on patrols covering the events of the morning.

Bang!, 1315 hours, VHF channel 16, vessel reports taking on water 3 miles off Atlantic City. "Captain what is your position?" "I am off the casinos." "Captain please put on your PFDs at this time."

Communications were not optimal, and this person sounded in real trouble, besides the fact he really didn't know where he was. Both Station Atlantic City and Station Great Egg had the vessel on the radio trying to get an accurate position. Both stations had had boats underway by now, a 41Ft out of Atlantic City, a 21 ft from Great Egg. Just to cover all the bases. Auxiliary vessel 28394, Coxswain Marc Brody, Flotilla 85, came out of Great Egg. The transmissions were getting louder and clearer as the boats entered the cut around the Longport jetty. Finally another boat spotted the distressed vessel and gave his position. As expected, he was not off Atlantic City, but off the Margate/Longport area. AUX-FAC 394 was just minutes away and now had a visual on the sinking vessel. "Station Great Egg, Auxiliary Vessel in sight, ETA 1 minute. Vessel is off Margate City not Atlantic City" "Station Great Egg, AUXFAC 394 on scene, 8 POBs vessel going down fast. We need assistance at once, taking 3 children off at this time."

The seas were 4 to 5 feet with winds 15 to 20 knots. The 41 footer and the 21 footer arrived in just in time to start dewatering and to rescue the balance of the people. Minutes later a rescue helicopter was overhead, dropping another pump to help out and standing by. One other Auxiliarist, Bob Balke, who was not on patrol at the time also helped by taking two of the people back to shore., What could have been a disaster, turned out to be eight lives saved. The USCG and the Auxiliary working together to save lives and property.