

# Whittier Soundings



Newsletter of the Whittier Flotilla 170-02-04 District 17 Alaska

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## BECOMING a CREWPERSON on 611

*By Tom Kane*

Have you ever wondered what it takes to become a crew person on the SAFEBoat? Do you think you might like to become crew qualified? Well last summer Bill Holzheimer and Rae Delay felt like they would like to give it a try. That was the first step. It was a big decision for Bill and Rae to try to become Crew on the NSB or Non Standard Boat (also called the SAFEBoat or 611) this past summer. It took a lot of determination on their part to come down to Whittier, week after week, to serve as trainees on the 611, in order to learn the "ropes" or should I say lines, so that eventually they could schedule an exam from one of our Qualifying Examiners, Sig Murphy or Stewart Sterling. It was near the end of summer when the two felt ready to schedule a QE. Rae's QE took place on the last day that 611 went on patrol for the year. On the QE days, the necessary components for a QE were assembled. Needed for each QE is an Operational Facility (OPFAC), which is a boat that has been offered for use to the Coast Guard and has been inspected and found suitable. The OPFAC must be under Coast Guard Orders during the exam. The OPFAC in both of these QE's was the Dolci, with Tom Kane and Mary Southard as crew. Also needed is the 611 with a coxswain and a crewperson. The Qualifying Examiner has to be scheduled in advance. The Dolci acted as a vessel in distress and had called

for help. The 611 crew with the trainee will come to our assistance and proceed through the evolutions of a Long Tow, Side by Side Tow and Man Overboard. During the evolutions the trainee is given the opportunity to do all of the operations under the watchful eye of the examiner.



Coxswain Russ Lyday, Crew Bill Reiter,  
Trainee Bill Holzheimer, QE Stewart Sterling

On the SAFEBoat are Coxswain Russ Lyday and Crew Bill Reiter with Trainee Bill Holzheimer. Stewart Sterling, in the Tilley hat, is the QE. (The pictures are mostly from Bill's exam, I got only one picture during Rae's QE before the camera battery died). The 611 has responded to the distressed vessel and is conducting a survey of the Dolci, looking for things that might present a hazard to the tow. They are looking for the placement of cleats on the Dolci. The condition of the distressed boat and its occupants are evaluated. Is the boat listing and possibly taking on water? Are the occupants okay, any injuries, are they wearing lifejackets? The coxswain is talking to the skipper of the distressed vessel finding out as much info as possible about the conditions onboard the Dolci. After a careful examination of

the Dolci, made while circling the boat from a safe distance and “checking it out”, the 611 pulls away from the Dolci to brief the crew and do a GAR risk assessment (This stands for Green, Amber, and Red and is a method of evaluating the risk to an event. The crew then decides on ways to reduce the risk.). The plan is shared with the Dolci skipper and the evolution proceeds. The trainee will tell the Dolci crew what they need to do on their boat to facilitate the process. Below, Bill has prepared a heaving line which is connected to the bigger towing line. He is describing to the skipper what he plans to do and where he will be throwing the line. As the coxswain pulls the 611 closer to the bow of the Dolci, Bill throws the heaving line to the skipper who then pulls the attached tow line aboard and connects them to the cleats of the Dolci. The trainee is keeping up a constant stream of information to his coxswain letting him know everything that is going on back there (the coxswain can’t see back there). Things can go wrong at any time during these evolutions and this is a critical time for the trainee.



Coxswain Russ Lyday

The distressed vessel must be taken under control quickly and safely and as can be seen in the picture the towline sometimes drags in the water during the setup. The coxswain has to be informed of the tow lines status at all times so that he can assure that it does not foul 611’s prop or somehow foul the distressed vessels prop. The coxswain maintains situational awareness during the evolution as he listens to his crew person relate the status of the tow.

The Dolci has safely been taken into a Long Tow and Bill is paying out line through the Samson Post so as to get a “good tow length”, one that is in sync with the wave condition and produces a nice curve in the towing line called a catenary curve. The tow line will eventually be secured to the Samson Post for towing, another critical and dangerous part of the evolution. Fingers can get caught especially with cold hands.

With the long tow complete the rear deck is made secure and prepared for a side by side tow, which is a tow that is used to get a boat into a marina where it can be safely maneuvered up to a dock and secured. In the photo below, the 611 crew has broken down the long tow and has retrieved the tow line back from the water after being dropped by the Dolci. The heaving line is being returned to the pouch and the lines that will be necessary for the side by side are being made ready. Again the coxswain and crew evaluate the Dolci for its cleat arrangement and do another GAR risk assessment before proceeding with the evolution. The QE has been watching the performance of the trainee the entire time and is an independent observer. During the exam everyone treats him as though he was not there. He tells you what he wants to see next; then the crew acts as if it is the real thing.



Bill Holzheimer with heaving line



Stewart Sterling, Bill Holzheimer, Bill Reiter on deck, Russ Lyday at helm

He can stop the exam at any time for safety reasons if a situation was to arise.



Preparing for an along side tow



Crew reassessing the situation

During Rae's QE, she is preparing to take the Dolci into a long tow using the skiff hook and the Dolci's trailer eye.



Rae De Ley attaching tow line with skiff hook

Notice that the towline is neatly faked out on the hatch cover of the 611 facilitating the procedure while minimizing some of the risks during this part of the evolution. The two boats come very close together during this process so a skiff hook attached to the end of a boat pole is used to extend the reach of the crew person and secure the towline. Because she was correctly following CG procedure she is on the correct side of the tow line and thereby minimizing danger to herself by not

becoming caught up in the line if Murphy's Law came into effect at this time.



Flaked line on 611 deck

As 611 approaches the Dolci for the side tow, Bill is preparing the #2 line or the Power Strap for connection to the rear cleat of the Dolci. The line is set up in advance on the 611 so that when connected to the Dolci, the stern of the Dolci will be in line with the Samson Post. This arrangement of the boats will give the best maneuvering control to the 611. When the power strap is secured the trainee will inform the coxswain that it is secure and he is going to the bow to attach the #1 line. The QE is present to watch for the correctness of the attachment to the cleats and listens to the dialogue that should be flowing all the time between the coxswain and crew.



Working tow lines during qualifying exam



QE observing crew line handling skills



Setting up the along side tow

When he has the bow line secured, he yells out that the #1 is secure and asks if it need tightening. They continue to secure the two boats by adding the #3 and #4 lines and then adjusting any that might be too loose. When all is perfect, the coxswain will test the arrangement for maneuverability by going forward and backward and turning left and right to see how this combination of boats respond. Another GAR and they are ready to tow. As we get under way, a life ring is thrown from that back of the boat to simulate a man overboard (MOB). The ring is spotted by the trainee who then hollers the phase “man overboard” and while pointing at the ring and not removing his eyes from the MOB, he continues to point until the coxswain acknowledges that he has the MOB in sight. Then the crew prepares to retrieve the MOB. Mission accomplished. The ring is back aboard and the tow resumes.



Man overboard drills (both photos)



After the Dolci has been towed for a while she is untied and the 611 pulls off into the distance where a mission debriefing takes place. Everyone has a chance to discuss the positives and negatives of what took place and offer suggestions on how things could have been improved. I holler out my thanks for a fine rescue and get a congenial wave from the crew.



Wave from the Crew

The QE continues until all the necessary topics are covered and the examiner is satisfied that he has seen enough to make a determination about the suitability of the trainee to be certified as a Crewperson in the NSB program. Both Rae De Ley and Bill Holzheimer were certified as Crew and will be serving as such in the years to come. Their presence on the NSB operational staff will be highly valued by us and the boating public we serve. Thank you for having the determination and perseverance to follow through on the program. I'd like to thank the entire staff of the NSB program for all they do to make it work, for volunteering countless hours to keep this vessel on the waters of Prince William Sound and helping to save the lives and property of our neighbors. You are an amazing group of people who deserve much thanks and praise.

If any of you can picture yourselves in the photos above then you need to get the process started and get involved. We need you and your skills in the program. Find out how easy it is to get started. Talk to the LinC (the Leader in Charge) of the SAFEBoat, Tom Kane and he will help put you in the picture. Rae De Ley, The Flotilla Staff Officer –Member Training, will get you the materials to study and schedule your time on the SAFEBoat as a trainee. You could be crew on the SAFEBoat this summer and perhaps have plans to become a Coxswain after that. All is possible if you take the first step. **Take the first step.**

# LORSTA St. Paul

*By John Bury*

What a thrill to be at Hangar #1, Air Station Kodiak, and be invited to join Admiral Arthur "Gene" Brooks, Commander, Dist. 17, and General Douglas Fraser, Commander, Alaskan Command, for their weather and operations briefings before they headed out to the Aleutians. Both are very interested in and knowledgeable of USCG Auxiliary, and Admiral Brooks is very knowledgeable of and supportive of the LORSTA St. Paul Auxiliary volunteer program. Great guys!



Admiral Brooks, John Bury, General Fraser

The only "non-blizzard" day when I was at LORSTA - St. Paul and it was the day I left!



Only non blizzard day – the day I left

When LCDR Albright tells you that going to St. Paul in February is just like going to Hawaii, DO NOT BELIEVE HER! Typical 0 F with 30 knot winds is a day at LORSTA - St. Paul. The guy in front is wearing snowshoes and using ski poles. Using a "BobCat", I moved snow for about 30 hours hardly making a dent.



Barely a dent in moving snow

"Welcome to your home away from home" The front door of the living quarters and mess at LORSTA - St. Paul.



The front door to living quarters and mess

On reporting to duty to LORSTA CO Chuck Thompson I requested permission to install my Ham station and antenna which he immediately approved. ET3 Frank Tobar volunteered to put up my 130 foot all band HF Windom.



ET3 Frank Tobar putting the up 130 foot tall all band HF Windom

Ham Radio Station KL7QZ is up and running in the LORSTA - St. Paul Watch Room. This is ET3 Frank Tobar at the station. Every part of these two weeks was a good experience but the very best part was getting to know the "kids" in the Watch Room. I say "kids" only to indicate that their ages of 20-30 would make them my grandsons at my age of 66. Every one of these young men: Frank, Parker, Sean, Justin, Richard and James carried out their responsibilities at the highest level of performance and treated me with absolute kindness and good manners and as my direct bosses they were excellent supervisors. Most of all they accepted my assignment and that of the Ham station to be located in the very small Watch Room which they worked out of with nothing but the very best of good graces. I really enjoyed being around them and would be proud to have anyone of them as my grandson.



ET3 Frank Tobar with radio

Here I am, the "old geezer", John Bury, USCG Auxiliary Volunteer, Whittier Flotilla, Dist. 17, operating my Ham station, KL7QZ. The Ham operation was a moderate success with some of the problems being eliminated in the future. The station consisted of my sea kayaking battery operated station made up of a Yaesu FT-817 all mode, all band 5 watt miniature transceiver driving a Tokyo Hi Power 50 watt final amplifier feeding into an 80-10M Windom antenna with its center about 30' high. My main problem was with very poor receiving conditions. The LORAN 750,000 watt transmitter and tower were only 300 meters away and really wiped out my receiver's front end. This can be easily solved by either bringing out my main base station transceiver, a Kenwood TS-2000 with its much better receiver with better filtering and 100 watts RF out for

transmitting and with a built-in antenna tuner. Or, I could have brought the same station and connected it to an MFJ Noise Canceling Filter, MFJ-1026. My transmitted signal at around 20 watts got out very well considering the low power, and I feel the Windom had the most to do with this. Since we were at the very bottom of the 11 year propagation cycle and there was some negative sun spot activity negatively affecting the HF bands when I was at St. Paul I think we did OK. I had the most success on 20M digital, especially RTTY talking with stations in Russia, Japan, Canada, Hawaii and "Lower 48". I was also able to check in on the evening Alaska-wide 75M LSB nets. Also the two Ham satellites AO-51 and SO-50 were totally dependable with at least 4 passes a day. The only problem was that to operate them I had to go outside with my "handheld" for about 20 minutes for each pass which I did not do very often so that I wouldn't get too much of my skin ripped off by the blizzards (Ha Ha).



Here I am, the "old geezer", John Bury  
Snow level when I got there and...



Snow level upon arrival

...and snow level a week later.



Snow level a week later

And, I got to do some significant work. The Group Captain from Kodiak assigned me to a complete photo assessment of broken helo door that had trapped the helo inside. I took dozens of pictures that were immediately sent out up the channels and to manufacturers and contractors.



Group Captain from Kodiak

Outside that EXIT door it is a cold blowing blizzard but inside during the day is hard work and at Liberty there is always good fun and great fellowship.



Liberty fun and fellowship

Back left is Mandy on temporary FS duty from Kodiak. She had just graduated from Boot Camp and said it was the best time in her life. She is Whittier Flotilla 170-02-04 District 17 Alaska

finishing her BA degree in the sciences, will go to Med school on the Coast Guards dime and serve in the Coast Guard as a flight surgeon. How's that for a plan? Next to her, back right, is Ms. Laura our famous baker who is a resident of St. Paul. She is always helpful and kind. Front left is our XO, Chief Minicks who along with CO Thompson provided constant support and positive leadership at all times. He's a super great guy. Front right is MK1 Leaton always ready with a slicing sense of humor as he keeps all the mechanicals working.



Monday morning crew meeting

The Monday morning crew meeting held in the Mess. Back left standing is Mr. Thompson, CO, and sitting in front of the CO is Mr. Minick, XO. This was an unexpected day for me. I got up at 6 AM ready for reveille at 7 and breakfast and then to work. Well, no reveille and no breakfast and no work! This was to be a Liberty Day with meetings, games and mid-morning brunch. Games? Liberty? We just had Liberty for the weekend so why one more day? This picture is of most of the on-site crew which runs of 13 to 15 from non-rated to the CO. There are 10 more folk or two helo crews staying here also but they are not part of these meetings since they are in a way guests but are always part of the fun and games later. Lt. Bill Friday and his crew make up one of these crews that include another pilot, the swimmer, 2 mechanics and the fuel person. At the crew meeting the plans for the day are laid out with a requirement for all to participate in a group game in the afternoon. Then we had a presentation on inappropriate relations, as in sexual, by ET1 Carter. Well presented with some anecdotal examples from the CO on folks who messed up their careers. This was all very low key as in "this is on the station education program for this week". Then it was liberty day with brunch, personal time and games. At noon we started this most crazy

group game called Vampire. Was it corny and did we have to act stupid and about halfway through the afternoon as we were all laughing as hard as we could I realized why this day was important. Whoever, maybe the CO or XO or both, must have realized during the weekend that the constant and on-going blizzard and perhaps a difficult work assignment the week before may have put some folk on edge, extra tired or depressed so this unexpected day was necessary. Well, it worked and by dinner we were a very loose crew. I give this example because the CO and XO seemed to be excellent leaders in what could be a very difficult environment. They lead by example, are sensitive to individual crew needs and appear to always be constant and stable in carrying out their duties. One thing that was obvious to me was the CO's and XO's in-depth involvement with their crew, with the larger St. Paul community including the village, the school, the NOAA installation, crab boat captains visiting, and so on. LORSTA - St. Paul is essentially a hotel tasked specifically to serve the rotating air crews, LORAN repair crews, visiting CG VIP's and so on. It also serves very successfully as the informal social outreach agency to the Island-wide community whether in coordination with St. Paul Health Center and NOAA, putting a basketball team together to play the high school team, working with the village corporation on all sorts of shared projects and so on. The CO and XO seemed to be particularly good at this and LORSTA - St Paul was very much central to all aspects of Island life in many positive ways. This is a great place to visit; blizzards or not.

Thanks for this great opportunity, John Bury

For more information about the Auxiliary volunteer opportunities, contact your Flotilla Commander. For more information about LORSTA St. Paul, go to their website:

<http://www.uscg.mil/d17/loranStPaul/>



## Team Coordination Training

*By Mark Parmelee*

Team Coordination Training, TCT, is one of the steps to become crew/coxswain qualified with the Auxiliary. If you wish to go out on the water in a crew capacity or your current TCT session is about to expire after 5 years please consider joining Mark Parmelee and Gary Taylor for this spring session.

Through discussion, case studies, videos, and examples; attendees will cover topics to reduce human errors leading to boating accidents. All Auxiliarists are invited to attend. One does not need to have final status as an Auxiliarist nor be involved in the crew program. The boating lessons learned have applications for all.

This particular session will be the first for the Whittier Flotilla on the "Reduced PowerPoint" diet. PowerPoint slides have been reduced to make time for more discussions. New videos have been added and the end result should be a more interesting program for everyone.

The next TCT class will be held at the Morris Communication Building (Behind Schlotsky's Deli off Dimond Blvd. or King Street. 301 Arctic Slope Avenue 1st Floor Conference Room (enter through the west parking lot entrance).

**April 5, 2008, 0800 to 1630.**

Please RSVP to Mark at [potterview@gci.net](mailto:potterview@gci.net). Those who sign up with an email will get a chance to review case studies ahead of time.

## Member Training

*By Rae De Ley FSO-MT*

There are a few member training opportunities coming up in the next month.

There is an 8 Hour Team Coordination Training (TCT) on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you are interested in signing up. Every one in the operations program needs the full 8 hour TCT every five years and you must complete TCT prior to making Crew.

There will be another round of Shore Based Sign Offs for Aux Crew on April 26th. Practice your skills, learn new skills, or show what you know to a mentor and collect a sign off. If you are working toward Crew this is the perfect chance to

keep working on your sign offs or to just get started. I know a number of you are excited by the Crew Program. Don't let the snow stand in your way. This is a joint training session with the District Staff Officer Member Training (DSO-MT) and the Anchorage Flotilla. We will meet in Anchorage at Highland Tech High. Please let me know if you are interested in taking part, and I will get you the details.

The First Aid and CPR class on April 19 is full. If you have signed up and you have not paid for the class yet, please bring your money to the next Flotilla meeting. I need to pay the instructor so he can order exams and the cards, and get the equipment. Cost is \$12 a person. Payment may be made by cash or check.

I was glad to see a number of you have already completed the 1 Hour TCT Refresher or the Operations Workshop. Good job members!

## Spring Fellowship

*By Deanna Barbarick*

The 2008 Spring Fellowship, hosted by Deanna Barbarick, will be held Saturday April 12, 6:00 – 9:00 PM.

This will be a potluck with Deanna supplying the main dish. Please bring your favorite side dish, salad, or dessert.

Deanna will send an e-mail reminder asking for RSVPs and coordinating the food as the date approaches. We'll also need volunteers to bring folding tables and chairs if they have them, as Deanna is awaiting delivery of her new living and dining room furniture in May (It wasn't planned this way, but that's the way it worked out). We'll have plenty of room to mix and mingle.

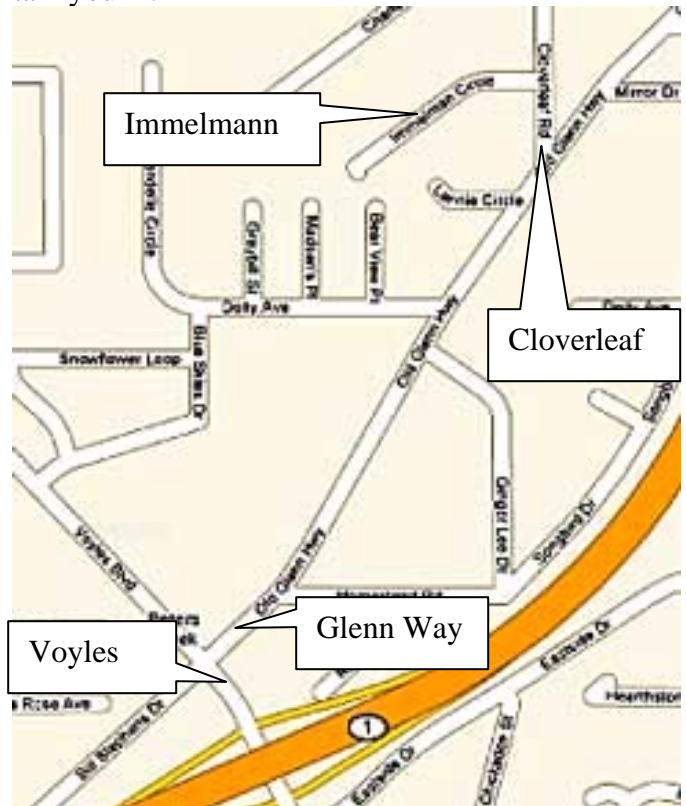
Directions to Deanna Barbarick's – 23943 Immelmann, Chugiak, AK

- From Anchorage: Go north on the New Glenn Highway (approximately 22 miles from 5<sup>th</sup> and Gambell).
- Exit the New Glenn on the South Peters Creek off-ramp.
- At the first stop sign, turn left (west toward the inlet).
- At the second stop sign (at intersection of Voyles and Glenn Way), turn right (north). (If

you wind up at Granny and Grumpy's Chevron gas station, you have turned the wrong way.)

- Go north on Glenn Way (formerly Old Glenn Highway) approximately .7 mile to Chandelle Drive. You will pass the Baptist Church, then the American Legion.
- Turn left (west toward the inlet) on Cloverleaf Drive. (If you get to Sampson, you have gone too far.)
- Go up the hill until you reach Immelmann Drive. Do not turn left on Immelmann.
- Immediately past Immelmann, you will see a driveway on the left that goes up the hill with an Action Security sign and the numerals 23943. Take that driveway and you will have arrived. You'll know you are there because you will see a three-stall garage with large deck on top.
- If you make the mistake of turning right (east toward Bear Mountain) at the bottom of the South Peters off ramp, you will be seriously lost because that route will take you up a long winding road where you really don't want to go.

If you get lost, call Deanna at 688-3890 and she'll talk you in.





SCREENSHOT COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN OPEN SEA

**A virtual boat lists in the high seas in this screenshot of the “Deadliest Catch Alaskan Storm” video game.** The upcoming game offers wannabe crab fishermen a safe feel for the dangers of Alaska waters.

## **Video game offers armchair entry into deadly crab fisheries**

**By Margaret Bauman**

*Alaska Journal of Commerce*

For video gamers ready to tackle 40-foot waves, arctic storms, sea ice and the prospect of crewmember injuries, if only from an armchair, “Deadliest Catch Alaskan Storm” may be just the ticket. The game, inspired by real life crab fishermen and brothers Sig, Edgar and Norman Hansen, will be released in April for the Xbox 360 video game system from Microsoft and for PC. Release of the game coincides with the fourth season of the Discovery Channel series “Deadliest Catch.”

The Hansens, who fish aboard their family fishing vessel the Northwestern, began game development with Liquid Dragon Studios in Bellevue, Wash., in October 2005. The game has not yet been rated. “It may not be life or death, but chills went up my spine the first time I saw the Northwestern sink in the game,” said Sig Hansen. Weather and fishing conditions in the video game are based on authentic weather and storm data, and get progressively worse each season, increasing the challenge. The ultimate goal is to return safely each season, upgrade your boat and crew, and attempt to break the Hansens’ actual lifetime catch of 20 million pounds of wild Alaska crab. “Deadliest Catch Alaskan Storm” allows gamers to captain their own boat in the frenzied search for an undersea jackpot. Gamers select one of five real crab boats, including the Northwestern, Cornelia Marie and Sea Star - vessels featured

on the series - or create and customize their own boat. Gamers then recruit and lead their own crews from a roster of 20 real crab fishermen, including Kenny Hendricks and Don Huggins, of the Sea Star.

In the game, selecting the wrong boat or recruiting the wrong crew member can spell the difference between landing a lot of crab or disaster. Gamers lead their fatigued, hungry and hardworking crew in a search for king crab and opilio crab to secure their catch before other captains and crews get the catch.

Game features include four real Bering Sea harbors - Akutan, Dutch Harbor, King Cove and St. Paul - and missions that include participation in U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue missions and ice flow navigation. It also has 100 exclusive crew videos and offers Xbox Live multiplayer options.

The crew videos for the game were filmed on location on the Bering Sea by Hi-Five Films. The game is published by Greenwave, a recently established video game publisher based in Seattle.

*This article reprinted by permission of Margaret Bauman, Alaska Journal of commerce.*

Items of particular note are the U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue missions and this game gives the gamer boat handling experiences.



<http://a1700204.uscgaux.info>  
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