



# Whittier Soundings

Whittier Flotilla 02-04, District 17, Alaska



August 2005 Brad Wells FC, Sig Murphy VFC, Cathey Sterling FSO-PB Volume XV Issue 8

## SAREX July 16 & 17, 2005 By Tom Kane

The July Sarex was another success story with all going well except the weather, which would not cooperate that first day. We awoke Saturday morning to some poor conditions for doing exercises. Jim Chase took a peek outside of Surprise Cove and reported that the inclement weather would make it tough to do the planned exercises. We decided to do the towing exercises inside the bay. This worked until the wind really picked up and was blowing us around inside the bay. Brad set his anchor and most of the boats rafted to him. The down time was used prosperously to mentor some of the aspiring crewmen. The fellowship was excellent as always, with some interesting dishes to sample from.

In attendance were: Sig and Mary Murphy, Tom Kane and Mary Southard, Brad and Linda Wells, Lou and Charlotte Jones, Craig and Lisa Woolard, Jim and Yvonne Chase, Mike and Deanna Barbarick and friend, Sandy Jones, Rae Delay, Sylvia Condy and Cort, joined on Sunday by Mark Parmelee and family.

Food included turkey, lasagnas, salads, spinach casserole, smoked salmon, salmon carpaccio, Tequilla gravlax, salmon and caviar dip. Desserts were watermelon and chocolate cake, home made Baclava.

Sunday brought some beautiful weather and calm seas. Boats participated in a search and rescue mission that Sig designed and implemented. Sector searches were transferred to multi vessel parallelograms when the helo was due. The helo arrived promptly at the entrance to Blackstone Bay and commenced operations with the SOTA allowing the persons on the SOTA to practice working with the basket. They also sent a diver in the water several times to practice different types of raises. After that the group split up to do their own thing.

As a reminder, the August Sarex has been cancelled due to its proximity to Northern Edge. Please strike it from your calendars





## Northern Edge in Whittier, Alaska August 17 & 18, 2005

By Dave Brubaker

Northern Edge in Alaska is an annual occurrence; however this year's experience in Whittier had many new wrinkles.

This year the exercise occurred in many parts of Alaska and the focus was on Federal, State and Local government coordinating during times of natural disaster or terrorist attacks. A simulated train hijacking and terrorists aboard a state ferry were the primary scenarios in Whittier. The Coast Guard's MSST 91111 were the primary players along with other Federal, State and Local government agencies. The Coast Guard Auxiliary found themselves coordinating activities with the MSST, providing opposing force activities, providing security for the CG helicopters and lending their Auxiliary Station to the exercise.

Whittier Flotilla Commander Brad Wells and crewman Linda Wells aboard the M/V SOTA worked alongside three armed MSST SAFEBoats.

Two bus loads of VIPs observed the ferry scenario which included members of the MSST boarding the Ferry Kennicot from a helicopter.

Although the exercise was much shorter than the two week long extravaganzas in year's past, a lot of real world familiarization, communication and coordination took place during these three days in Whittier.



Aux Station Whittier becomes the Command Center for MSST, FBI and the Captain of the Port in Whittier – Aug '05



M/V SOTA, OpFac 277 works with MSST in Passage Canal during Northern Edge '05



AMSST SAFEBoat observes alongside the Kennicot while SOTA stands by.



Low hanging clouds did not prevent the helo insertion aboard the State Ferry Kennicot.

Valdez Flotilla members Bruce Painter, Don Young and Ray Gaither used Bruce's 65 foot M/V Northern Sage to escort media during the Ferry scenario while newly appointed Coxswain Tom Kane and Sig Murphy played the part of opposing forces. Russ Lyday, Rae De Ley and Stew Sterling provided security for the H-60 helicopters which were parked on Whittier's small runway at the head of Passage Canal.



## LESSONS LEARNED

By: Rae De Ley

While taking part in Northern Edge I had the task given to me to go up to the main road out of Whittier and stop the traffic. The object was to keep people and cars from getting too close to the helicopters when they were ready to take off. In part so they would not be pelted by flying rocks and in part for just safety. A helicopter taking off is a big, loud, and potential dangerous machine. Loose items like caps and rocks have the potential to take flight and cause damage to the helicopter and to near by items and humans. My directions were very clear.



Photo by Stewart Sterling

When I saw the helicopters tail rotors begin to spin, I was to keep traffic stopped on the far side of the bridge.

So I went up to the road in my bright orange float coat and stood by. The tail rotor began to spin and I stepped out to play my part. A human on the pathway and a few road vehicles were very content to stand by and enjoy the view of the helicopters getting loaded up and then take off. But this peaceful scenario was too good to last.

I had a car swing around my stopped traffic and proceed to question me. They asked "What right do you have to stop traffic?" and "What are you going to do if I refuse to stop?" They stated "the Coast Guard has no authority in this situation". They were concerned that they would miss the tunnel out of Whittier. They demanded that when I released traffic that I return to the command center and file a report on this issue.

I held my ground, and stated that I had my directions. I tried to be cool but firm.



Photo by Stewart Sterling



Photo by Stewart Sterling

I stated that I was to keep everyone a set distance from the choppers until they took off; my job was to keep people safe; this was part of the military exercise called Northern Edge; and if they refused to stop I'd have to let them through, but did they really want to be that close to a helicopter with a spinning tail rotor? I further explained that the tunnel was open from the top of the hour until 15 minutes past and that there was still plenty of time. And I assured any one who asked that they would make the tunnel out of Whittier. After I reopened the road, I provided a report to my Flotilla Commander and the USCG Captain in charge at Aux Station Whittier.

So what did I learn? I should have had this person who claimed to be a high-ranking State of Alaska official provide identification. In an emergency or a terrorist attack there will always be someone in a big hurry, too busy to be concerned with safety. Our job is to do our best to carry out our mission, in this case keeping the public safe even if they are in a hurry. Over all, I'd say I had an excellent training exercise



## Northern Edge Whittier Alaska



Photo by Jerry Jenkins



Photo by Jerry Jenkins



Photo by Jerry Jenkins



Photo by Jerry Jenkins



Photo by Stewart Sterling



Photo by Stewart Sterling

## Reporting Hours

By Bob Harvey

A good way to report your hours (both "99" and Missions) is to do it via email on the Aux's website. Just go to [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org) and click Forms, Email Forms and then the form you want to use (usually either 7029-Member Activity Form or 7030 - Activity Report Mission). The Form comes up; you fill it out, add my email address (bnharvey@gci.net) and click Send. That's it. Quick and paperless. You are automatically using the latest version of the form, there are a number of pop-up boxes that help speed things along and you can print off a copy for your records if you want to. Let me know if you have any questions.



## Member's Corner

### Change GPS Lithium Battery Back up Waypoint Coordinates

By Paula V. Krebs of the Turquoise Lady

Procrastination may result in "rough seas" for your GPS. My planned schedule for replacing the internal lithium battery on my GPS was this fall. The system had a schedule of its own and the battery went dead in mid-August. ***This meant I lost all of my waypoints and coordinates to never be automatically retrieved.***

Not only did I lose the waypoint data but the system would not retain the last chart setting and would come up as 0 Lat. 0 Long. Then the message "No GPS Signal" would plague me and I couldn't even manually bring up my location. This put me in the situation of applying navigation techniques with charts learned many years ago. I keep at all times a hard chart copy at the helm just in case the system went down. I've made it a routine practice to manually go through the navigation process and use the GPS to confirm my calculations. This habit paid off for me when the GPS stopped working due to the dead battery.

What I had failed to do was to keep a manual list of my waypoints and their coordinates as a "just in case" scenario. I have identified a page in my Log Book and each time I enter a new waypoint I immediately copy the information down in this list. I'm able to re-establish the waypoints used for navigation. However, I lost those waypoints for anchorage locations, the fishing holes, shrimp pot spots, hazardous rocks not on charts, safe passage points across moraines, and who knows what else I had way points for.

The bottom line message is keep a manual list of waypoints, their coordinates and have the lithium battery replaced every two years. This replacement costs less than \$100 and is better for your well-being than a bottle of aspirin.



## Operational Updates

4.2.6.4 Cases Discovered By Auxiliary Facility. When an Auxiliary vessel on routine safety patrol or otherwise on orders discovers a vessel requesting assistance, but not in radio contact with the Coast Guard, the Auxiliarist will relay the request for assistance to the Coast Guard operational commander and may undertake to provide assistance, if capable. If a tow is undertaken, the Auxiliary vessel is required to notify the operational commander of the identity of the vessel, the location of the vessel, and the destination to which the vessel is being towed. No Auxiliary vessel may undertake the tow of another vessel unless the Auxiliarist is reasonably assured of the safety of both vessels and the persons onboard. If the Auxiliary vessel cannot safely tow a disabled vessel that is standing into danger, it may endeavor to remove the persons from the threatened vessel and stand by until a more capable resource arrives on scene.

NOTE: Cases discovered by the Auxiliary are a particularly sensitive section of the policy. How the situation is dealt with is the end product of sustained negotiations and compromise effort on the part of all concerned parties. It intends that the Auxiliarist, not the SMC, will make the judgment as to whether the Auxiliarist can safely assist. When the Auxiliarist notifies SMC that they intend to assist the vessel, it's not "asking for permission". The Auxiliarist has already determined that he/she can safely provide assistance, and the notification to SMC is a courtesy. This policy does not reduce the operational commander's authority and responsibility to exercise command and control over all assigned forces, including Auxiliary vessels on ordered patrols. The operational commander may override the Auxiliarist's decision if warranted by an evaluation of the circumstances. However, unless there is a specific reason to do so, such as an indication of unusual risk or hazard, or an operational need to assign the Auxiliary vessel to a higher priority mission, the decision to assist should be left to the Auxiliarist.

*From the Coast Guard Addendum to the SAR Manual*

## Safety Stand Downs

Recently all District 17 US Coast Guard Auxiliary Operations Personnel were asked to attend a Safety Stand Down. A Safety Stand Down is initiated when mishaps and/or casualties trigger the need for all to review procedures. The specific incidents are reviewed and discussed to help minimize future incidents.



<http://www.uscgaux.org/~170/>

<http://www.uscgaux.org/~1700204/>