



Whittier Soundings



Whittier Flotilla 02-04, District 17, Alaska

April 2006 Sig Murphy FC, Russ Lyday VFC, Cathey Sterling FSO-PB Volume XVI Issue 4

Coast Guard Sectors

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On September 10th, 2001, the primary maritime focus of the Coast Guard was on the safe and efficient use of the waterways of the United States. That changed the next day!

Since 9/11, the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard, working as members of Homeland Security, have defined their primary security goal as preventing the exploitation of, including terrorist attacks within, America's maritime domain. This includes the reality that our maritime transportation system contributes around 750 billion dollars annually to the US gross domestic product and contains approximately 95,000 miles of coastline with 51,000 ports of call, all of which needs to be protected. The Coast Guard recognizes that providing this security needs to be accomplished while striving to balance each of its other missions in order to ensure minimal degradation in public service and to enhance interagency cooperation and assistance from international, state and local governments, and the private maritime industry.

Hence, Coast Guard units are reorganizing, with many Marine Safety Offices (MSOs) converting to a new Sector plan. On May 5th, 2006, Anchorage MSO becomes Sector Anchorage with Juneau MSO converting a few days thereafter.

They comprise the only Coast Guard Sectors for District 17, Alaska, with Anchorage having responsibility for the northern half of the state including Prince William Sound, the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak, the Aleutians and everything north, while Juneau will cover Southeast Alaska.

What does this mean for the Whittier Flotilla? For Public Education, Member Education, Vessel Examination, Dealer Visits, and other activities besides Operations, there should be little change initially except for more centralized interest in what we do by the new Sector. For Operations in Prince William Sound, we will still have the same mission; however, MSO Valdez will become a Marine Safety Unit (MSU) and UTS (what is a UTS?) under Sector Anchorage. Temporarily, actual operations will be run by the District Command Center and we will still talk to Valdez while on Patrol, but this could change in 2007 or later with Sector Anchorage developing a Sector Command Center and taking over management of the three Auxiliary Stations. According to the DIRAUX, who has engaged in weekly Sector planning meetings, the Officers at both Sector Anchorage and Sector Juneau will engage their respective FSO-Ops and OPFAC owners in operation and patrol planning.

Our Safety Patrol and Search and Rescue missions should remain the same, but with the additional request by Anchorage Sector to conduct patrols called: Maritime Observation Missions (MOM).



This mission category has been designated to best describe the Auxiliary's operational patrols in support of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). MOM was created to clearly delineate the Auxiliary MDA patrols from the Coast Guard Port Waterways and Coastal Security Missions (PWCS) which are law enforcement missions. As Auxiliarists, we are not authorized to conduct enforcement patrols, but our MOM patrols on the water are critical as an extension of the Coast Guard's MDA eyes and ears on the water.

While change is inevitable and necessary, it can make people nervous. However, the addition of Sectors in Alaska is a true win-win situation for the Auxiliary. It means that we will have more Coast Guard members interested in what we do and helping us do it. The Operational (or Response Branch) personnel at the new Sector Anchorage office will be actively involved in scheduling patrols, directing SAR, attending some of our training and SAREX's, and helping to support our operations.

Operations 2006

By Tom Kane

As summer approaches at an ever quickening pace and the sun melts the snow of winter, I'm sure your thoughts are returning to the hours you will spend on the water this year. I hope those hours are safe, pleasant and plentiful. Some of those hours will be spent in the company of other Auxiliarists participating in the SAREX(Search and Rescue exercise) slated for the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of June and the Disaster Readiness Training scheduled for the 15th and 16th of July and the Fellowships that follow.

This year we have 11 individuals participating in the Crew and Coxswain program and we will be trying to get them all to the levels they want to reach, hopefully during the June SAREX and the Emdex (emergency disaster exercise). Going for their Boat Crew Crewmember certificate are; Deanna Barbarick, Sylvia Condy, Jean Holzheimer, Jerry Jenkins, Lou and Charlotte Jones, Curtis Markley, Bob Renke, Craig and Lisa

Woolard, and Bill Holzheimer will be going for Coxswain. Craig Woolard and Lou Jones will continue on to Coxswain after getting crew. Good Luck to all.

In March there was a hands on workshop at Mark Poe's Shop. Attendance was high and many people advanced in their check offs to the point where just the water based tasks remain before getting qualified.

The location of June SAREX will be announced at an upcoming meeting. Participants usually gather at the meeting place on Friday and anchor up for the night. In the morning, boats will move out to the exercise area and begin the training. We will train in towing and "person in the water" exercises. Qualifications will follow. When the quals are done the boats will move back to the anchorage and setup for the debriefing and fellowship.

The "EMDEX" or Emergency Disaster Exercise will be held on July 15th and 16th the location will be announced at an upcoming meeting. We will train for the rescue of multiple people from the water after a large ship begins taking on water. The ICS system will be used to handle the rescue units involved (Op-Facs, dinghies, Safe boat and PWCS, as well as people on the beaches). The training will involve the use of rubber dinghies and hand held radios and pulling actual people out of the water therefore there will be instruction first in the proper use of the equipment... A debriefing and fellowship will follow. On Sunday, any remaining qualifications can be done.

If it is necessary a Mini-SAREX can be put together for August. Have a Great Summer!!!





Member's Corner

When I was 12 years old, my father and I floated the White River in Arkansas to its confluence with the Mississippi River. We had a 14' flat bottom skiff with a 5 HP motor. Our trip down the White River was great but crossing the mighty Mississippi was touch and go. We finally landed on the East side well below our intended take out point. It was my first experience with Set and Drift although I had no idea at the time that there was such a science about the subject! I thought we would end up in New Orleans if one of those massive, muddy boils didn't suck us down first.

In college, I joined the Canoe Club. In the spring of 1959 a friend and I decided to set a record for canoeing non-stop down the Connecticut River from Hanover, New Hampshire to Old Saybrook, Connecticut on Long Island Sound. A distance of 218 miles which we did in 46 hours by taking turns sleeping in the canoe. This adventure made the New Haven Evening Register but our glory was short lived. Two weeks later another team knocked 12 hours off our record by doing the trip in 34 hours. Their accomplishment was reported in Life magazine!!

The Mascoma River in New Hampshire is a great white water stream. I made several canoe trips down it but the most memorable was one when we hit a haystack wrong, swamped and floated out of the canoe. My partner drifted to one side of the stream and I went to the other. The canoe went on downstream broadside until it wrapped itself around a boulder. We were able to retrieve its remains later when the water level dropped but the canoe was a total loss. On that trip we lived up to the Club's Motto; "He Clung to His Paddle".

I met Nancy in Detroit and one of our early dates was an outing to Strawberry Island in Lake St. Clair. I had bought a home-made kayak with a sail. We decided to try it and shoved off on a nice calm day. The two of us were novices and it was tippy but things were going alright until I put the

sail up. We then capsized. Fortunately, this lake is shallow and although we were about 300 yards from shore we managed to walk back dragging the kayak and sail. It was the last time either of us has been in a kayak until a couple of years ago during an Auxiliary get-together. Although the two things are not related, it was shortly thereafter that Nancy took the USCG Auxiliary Basic Small Boat Seamanship course and became the first woman in Michigan to earn a Michigan Waterways Certificate.



Photos by Stewart Sterling

Our activities in Alaska have included set-netting in Cook Inlet using a 21" dory, drift fishing in Bristol Bay aboard a 32' gill-netter, recreational boating around the State and trips across the Gulf of Alaska. But each of these is a story in itself and Cathey says my space here is used up!

Safe Boating to all.



Bob Harvey



We All Have a Hand In Safety

A recent mishap on a cutter highlights an important lesson for all of us who participate in surface operations. In this case, while the member was crossing between two cutters, he grabbed a life ring support. Unfortunately, his wedding ring caught on the support bracket as he swung down, causing his finger to be severed.

CG policy is that no jewelry (including wedding rings, watches, earrings or qualification devices...like a coxswain device) be worn while underway. This unfortunate incident points out why the policy is in place. This policy must be strictly enforced during underway operations.

We are all a part of the solution. We all have a hand in ensuring safe operations. Let's remain vigilant to the little things that may spell disability or worse for a shipmate.

Little things like a wedding ring...

[Posted 30 November 2005.

Source Linda A Nelson, DC-O]

US Coast Guard Auxiliary
Department of Operations

Safety

Be sure to visit the U S Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety website www.uscgboating.org/ for boating safety alerts. You will find the current alerts, information about safety, regulations, recalls and safety defects, statistics and much more.

Member Training

On March 26th we had the National Operations and POMS Workshop. Chief Gross led us in some lively discussions about a sample patrol and about what went right and what went WRONG!! Later in the day some of us went off to the ICS 700 class. I am pleased to say every one who took the ICS 700 class passed with flying colors. Good job members. On April 15th we had an Aux Seamanship class. I do not have exam results yet, but I have faith that every one who tested also passed.

Since summer is just around the corner, it seems like no one wants to be inside more than they have to. As a consequence Member Training is slowing down for the summer. In terms of future training opportunities, we have a Team Coordination Training (TCT) class on May 6th in Whittier. If you are interested contact Mark Parmelee and he will get you signed up.

Recently there has been some interest in starting a more formal program for people working toward Auxiliary Crew and Coxswain. I have had some requests that we start a mentor program where some one agrees to work with someone to help them collect their sign offs. If you are interested in being a mentor or having a mentor, let me know. I'll see if I can match you up. Don't forget, anyone who is already Auxiliary Crew or Coxswain can quiz you and sign off on tasks.

If you have questions about any of these training opportunities, drop me a line at Rae_deley@hotmail.com.



National Safe Boating Week

The National Safe Boating Council has been promoting safe boating since the late 1950's and currently with their signature program National Safe Boat Week.

The United States Coast Guard office of Boating Safety is a long time supporter of this campaign.

The campaign is hoping to continue the steady decrease in fatalities that has taken place over the past few years. The US Coast Guard has recorded the lowest number of recreational boating fatalities in 2004, the lowest in the history of the statistics.

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary supports this program by providing Vessel Safety Check Ramp Days during National Safe Boating Week.

Our flotilla has scheduled a VE Inspection Station at Whittier Harbor May 20 & 21. This is the weekend before Memorial Day Weekend – the traditional start of the recreational boating season. This is a great opportunity for the Vessel Examiners and all Auxiliarists to promote recreational boating safety.



<http://a1700204.uscgaux.info>

<http://a170.uscgaux.info>

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