



Whittier Soundings



Whittier Flotilla 02-04, District 17, Alaska

May 2006 Sig Murphy FC, Russ Lyday VFC, Cathey Sterling FSO-PB Volume XVI Issue 5

The Coxswain Academy

By Tom Kane

The Academy was held in Homer at the Lands End Hotel on the Homer Spit, where our rooms overlooked the water. There were seven students from Alaska and one from Canada. Attending from Alaska were Don Brand- Juneau, Chris Conder - Juneau, Mike Coffing -Homer, Tom Kane -Whittier, Marie Scholle- Fairbanks, Pat Fairbanks- Anchorage and Dean Terencio- Anchorage.

The academy lasts 10 days with the first and last used for travel. The days in between are spent in the classroom and/or on the water. Toward the end of the week the schedule called for night Ops for two nights and an optional third night if anybody wanted or needed more time in the dark. The classes were taught by different instructors and this year the instructors were Mike Folkerts, Gary Taylor, Bob Gross, Kevinn Smith, Shane Taylor and Stewart Sterling. There were about 15 subjects taught during the week and the instructors would rotate through them. Most of the days were broken up between classroom and underway time.

We went to the Homer Fire Department for a CPR/AED class



Photo by Stewart Sterling

and we also took a tour of the Hickory, a buoy tender that was in port at the same time.

This year we had 594, 610 and 611 to practice with. Unfortunately, 594 was out of service for 2 days while a coil was replaced and about 12 people jumped on the other two boats. There were plenty of drills outside the harbor that included towing the Adak Adventure around the bay and pulling Bob Gross out of the water.





We did search patterns and pacing and became real familiar with the electronics on board these boats.

Then we would move inside the harbor and hammer away at close quarter maneuvers with everyone taking turns at side by sides and parking the tow into and against the wind.



We were given lots of homework to keep us busy at night.

Wednesday night we did our first night Ops. While up against the clock we had to plot a course correctly on charts and then get down to the harbor and have the boat ready to go with the six waypoints installed in the GPS when the instructor arrived. We left the harbor in the pitch black at midnight. We had to decide what speed to run at and then you had to calculate the time it would take you to finish half the course. You were expected to be within a couple of minutes of your estimate and very close to your waypoints. You rely totally on your partner and the electronics to navigate because you can't see a thing out the window except the lights of buoys and buildings. Inside the cabin the night lights are on which makes it difficult for the coxswain to see the display. He must depend on the navigator to watch the instrument and communicate all the info he needs to steer to the waypoint. When you reached the mid point you would stop and debrief. The coxswain and navigator would switch positions and then head back to the start point via a new route, so you would have to calculate the distance and time for the route home.

Saturday there was a simulated SAR case out by Seldovia and a search pattern had to be run while our GPS was experiencing real time difficulties.

This meant you could not rely as heavily on the instruments but had other means like using RPM's from the tach instead of speed from the GPS, and the compass for course legs instead of the GPS and a stopwatch for measuring the time of the legs instead of the GPS. The rest of the day was drills inside and outside the harbor. On Sunday morning we had another lecture followed by signoffs and Certificates. At 1300, we were dismissed and headed for home.

I would recommend this course to anyone who is interested in becoming a coxswain. The instruction is first rate and the course is very thorough, giving the student the opportunity to experience what being a coxswain is all about. You will return with a new self confidence in your abilities and be much better prepared for the unexpected things that will arise when you are out on the sound on a real SAR case.

Coast Guard Safety Day

By Virginia Thomas

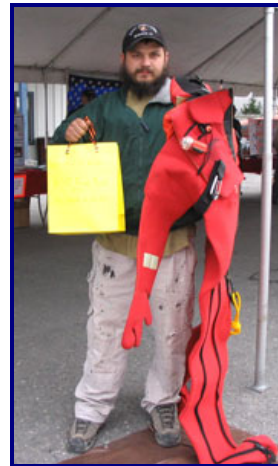
On May 13th, USCG Cutter Sycamore held the First Coast Guard Safety Day in Cordova. This will be an annual event. Whittier Auxiliarists Virginia and Richard Thomas helped organize and run the event. The Coast Guard partnered with local organizations to highlight various safety issues from boating to fire safety for the community. There were many displays, pamphlets and freebies from the following entities: AMSEA, USCG Auxiliary, Cordova Police Dept., Cordova Harbormaster, Native Village of Eyak, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska State Troopers, Cordova Fire Dept., Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game and U.S. Coast Guard.

The drive for the event was to educate boaters and encourage them to get vessel safety checks. The Cordova fleet is about 80% commercial fishing vessels that were gearing up for the first salmon opener on May 15th. Both Virginia and Richard are recreational vessel inspectors but are currently working on obtaining the commercial fishing vessel inspector qualification.

Chief Machinery Technician John Hawkins of MSU Valdez came to perform inspections and instruct the Thomases. The only other inspector in Cordova is USCG Reservist Jerry LeMaster (retiring in 2007) who has also been working with the Thomases.

This was also a great opportunity to introduce the Auxiliary to Cordova, including missions, inspections and classes. Virginia and Richard are currently working with two prospective members and hope to create a stronger Auxiliary presence in Cordova. They also plan to use their new 22 foot C-Dory Cruiser as an Auxiliary Operational Facility when it is delivered in July.

Survival Race



Richard ran the survival suit donning race which was sponsored by Redden Marine who donated a fifty dollar prize packet. Foma Reutov (pictured) won with a time of 24 seconds!

Stability



Chief Machinery Technician John Hawkins from Marine Safety Unit Valdez uses a large model to demonstrate ship stability to a family during Coast Guard Safety Day.

Color Contest



Virginia put together a "Kid's Don't Float" coloring contest sponsored by the Harbormaster for grades pre-K through six judged by local artist Paula Payne with the top artists receiving new lifejackets.

Display



Richard and Virginia created this display to highlight Auxiliary missions with a focus on vessel safety checks, float plans and the ABC course.



Public Education

Charlotte Jones, FSO-PE

Public Education is slowing down and taking a little break for the summer boating season but we ended the 2005/2006 PE season with a bang. **BOATING SKILLS & SEAMANSHIP:** We had 73 pre-enroll in the Boating Skills & Seamanship Course, 62 students the first night of the course and 58 students the remainder of the class evenings. Of those 58 students 12 decided – for one reason or another to not take the test. Of the 46 students who took the test, everyone passed on the first time except for one young boy who later admitted he hadn't studied. When he retested, he passed with a 97. Three points higher than his father had gotten. When I congratulated him I mentioned that he had obviously studied for the test this time. He grinned and stated – “I don't like to fail”.

“An instructor's skill can be measured by the success of his or her students”. Our highly skilled instructors for BS&S were: Sig Murphy, Lou Jones, Tom Kane, Stewart Sterling, Bob Renke, Bob Harvey, Kathy Lyday, Russ Lyday Bill Morris, Jim Chase and Paula Krebs. Congratulations (and a big thank you) to all of you.

Our **Americas Boating Course** classes, while small, have resulted in producing several people who will be a lot safer on the water. Sig Murphy, Dave Brubaker, Dave Goldstein, and Lou Jones presented the ABC class to 8 students in Whittier in April. Then, Dave Brubaker did another presentation in Whittier for 3 students including an Auxiliary member in May. On 13 May, Claude Barker, Lou and I put on an ABC class with 5 students in attendance. I'm pleased to say everyone passed. That's 16 people who are a lot safer on the water for the 2006 boating season..

We are already planning for the **BS&S** class that starts on Tuesday, 12 September 2006.

For starters, I'm looking for a Host. Lou and I have acted as hosts for several of the classes in the past but this year we are leaving on September 1st for an extended trip (vacation) to the “Lower 48” so I'll need someone to come forth who is willing to “be there” every Tuesday evening for the 8 weeks. I have a great list of things the Host is expected to do so if you're at all interested, please give me a call (332-4441) and I'll send it to you.

I've already had some of our instructors let me know which class or classes they would like to teach so if you have a favorite or if you want to try something new just give me a call and we'll work it in. We have a great Instructors Guide with a PowerPoint presentation and other material to assist you.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary A 20+ Year Adventure for Us!

Jim and Yvonne recently celebrated 20 years as members of the CGA. This is their story.

They were married in 1983. At that time Jim had a camping trailer that he hooked to his truck for weekends in Seward and other fishing places. Seward was a favorite because he could go out on the boats that the Air Force camp kept for summer recreational purposes. Now “camping” was not exactly high on Yvonne's list, so when Jim suggested getting a boat, she thought “How much work could that be?” Those were “famous last words” because they bought their first boat a few months later and the rest is history.

It was Jim's suggestion to take a boating safety course so that they would both be able to handle the boat. He was really concerned that someone raised on a farm in Michigan wouldn't have a clue about boating. In fact, they both had previous experiences boating in Alaska with those who knew less about boating than they did.



Yvonne survived a boating weekend in Juneau in the late 1970's when she went out on the water with a group of friends. No one had checked the weather and the boat she was on didn't even have a radio to call for assistance. She doesn't remember seeing any PFD's on board and there certainly was no safety briefing.

In any case, a storm blew in and with "no skill" but only "luck", the boats all made it back safely. The owner of the boat that Yvonne was on was so frightened by the incident that she never took the boat out of the harbor again.

Jim's story started out in 1969 when he had been assigned as the Commander of the coastal radar station at Cape Newenham, Alaska with Bristol Bay on the south, Kuskokwim Bay to the north and the Bering Sea to the west. He was given a Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) grant of \$15,000 to purchase a watercraft for the station. He came into Anchorage and at a marine dealer on International Airport Road purchased a 21 foot, Fiberform cabin cruiser, Volvo I/O, with trailer, a boat hook, a depth finder, ten PFDs, a VHF fixed land station marine transceiver and two mobile marine VHF radios with antennas. His purchase was delivered to Elmendorf Air Force Base where it waited until Jim could convince an Air National Guard C-124 crew to fly it to this barren location. With the promise of Cape Newenham's famous deep dish pizza being served, the boat arrived as a part of a week-end air guard mission.

None of the 104 men at the station claimed to know anything about boating including Jim, the commander, so he made himself the boat operator and offered his services as tour director and driver. Having ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of all, this arrangement made it easy for him to monitor the on-water activity and to provide the maximum number of safe recreational boating outings.

Luckily, the workweek was rather flexible at this remote station and whenever the weather was right it was the right time to go for a sight-seeing cruise. Everyone wore the PFDs and used common sense as the guide to safe boating. Radio

contact with the shore station was maintained and those remaining on land always knew where the boat was. Initially there were problems with the engine overheating and on occasion they had to be towed in by the original fifteen foot run-a-bout the station owned. No one was ever heard on the radio other than the folks at Cape Newenham.

Even though Cape Newenham is prime halibut fishing waters, no one even tried. The depth of the water was just amazing to those landlubbers. The boat could be within six feet of a rock wall and still have two hundred feet of water under her. Some salmon were recovered on one occasion in Security cove, but not from the boat. The cooks gathered enough to feed the whole station by literally picking up about 20 kings as they filled the shallow stream bed moving to their spawning grounds.

There is also something to be said about the experience of surfing for long distances in Bristol Bay on the top of a huge ocean swell with the power pulled back to idle. It is scary and exhilarating at the same time. The questions that were most pertinent at that time were:

1. How did the boat get way up here in the first place and
2. How does it get down?

The working answer was and still is, "Carefully and at a 45 degree angle!" That came from the use of common sense and no formal boat operations training. There was also a bit of 'luck' involved in on-the-water operations out on this portion of the desolate Bering Sea coast.

The Chases named their first boat (a 25 foot Bayliner) "Instead of" and as a result had many questions about that choice. They used to tell everyone that they were able to have the boat "instead of" going to Europe on vacation, "instead of" planting a garden at home, etc. After purchasing this their first boat, neither wanted to rely on 'luck' to survive, so a boating safety course seemed sensible for them both, and the Auxiliarists teaching the course made a good case for joining the Auxiliary and continuing to acquire more specialized training.



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They learned that membership in the Auxiliary would allow them to utilize the skills and knowledge gained about boating, to teach others and to provide safety patrols during the summers. Their journey with the Auxiliary began as they joined Flotilla 2-2 and started boating out of Seward.

In 1987, they moved to Juneau to accept positions in state government. They planned to sell their boat and their home and buy in Juneau. The boat sold in three days. The price of oil was falling rapidly and the house took 3 years to sell! They transferred to Flotilla 1-1 in Juneau, and were active but “boat less”! In 1990, because of a change in administration, they moved to Olympia, Washington. They joined the local Flotilla 3-8 and continued to stay active in the Auxiliary. While in Olympia, Jim served a year as Flotilla Commander and Yvonne served a year as Vice-Commander. Jim also completed all of the specialty exams and was awarded his Aux-Op medal. They purchased “Antigony” a 38 foot twin-diesel Bayliner which they had barged up to Whittier a few months after returning to Alaska in March 1995.

While Seward is a beautiful place for boating and whale watching, Yvonne and Jim had already spent several summers making the drive from Anchorage to Seward on a weekly basis and decided to try Whittier. They don't miss the drive to Seward and boating out of Whittier made it so much easier to go down for a few hours and work on the boat whenever they had time. They transferred to Flotilla 2-4, and found the experience of boating in Prince William Sound to be something that no one should miss. They also joined an incredible group of auxiliaries in 2-4, the largest flotilla in Alaska; and found them to be a group that exemplifies volunteer service, friendship, fellowship and camaraderie.

Alaska is a safer boating state with the presence of the Auxiliary and the Chases are better for their experience as members of 2-4.

They look forward to many more years on Alaskan waters and in the Coast Guard Auxiliary!



U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary **Public Affairs**



NATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES NEW NSBW DIGITAL PHOTO ALBUM CONTEST



Do you enjoy taking pictures? Here's an opportunity for you to “tell the story” and help show what your flotilla or division has done during NSBW.

The National Department of Public Affairs invites flotillas and divisions to submit their entries for its **NEW NSBW Digital Photo Album Contest**. All entries will be submitted digitally in accordance with the procedures below.

- Submissions can be from flotillas or divisions. All entries will be uploaded to **PhotoWorks**, so the judges can view the photos online. Go to the login at <http://www.photoworks.com/>. Login if you are already a member, or Join if you are not. Create an album with your unit number as shown in AUXDATA (i.e Division 3 in District 11NR would be listed as 113-03). Follow the instructions and upload your photos. **PhotoWorks** allows captions for your photos, so it is recommended that you provide captions that tell your “Story”. When you are finished, click on the Share button in the toolbar and follow the instructions to send your photo album to the judges whose email addresses can be obtained from Bob Dennis BC-AIP at rjdennis5@cox.net. Bob will also be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the procedure



U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

- Alternatively, a CD of the entries can be sent to Bob Dennis BC-AIP (email him at rjdennis5@cox.net for his address) and he will upload them into **PhotoWorks** for the judges to view.

The maximum number of photos per unit's album = 50. The photos do *not need to have been published*. They may be black and white or color.

- Criteria for judging will be (1) creativity (how unique was the event or photos); (2) variety (of NSBW participation - parades, booths, VSC stations patrols, etc), and (3) photo composition (do the photos follow the basic photo rules of composition we teach in our online photo courses). There will be five judges from the Photo Corps participating. Each judge will review the album, and grade each album (using a scale of 1-10) for each category: (1) creativity, (2) variety, and (3) photo composition

The three highest average scores per region will be submitted to the respective ARCO. They will pick who is number 1, 2, and 3. Winners from each region will be announced at NACON and posted on SITREP's coverage of NACON.

The deadline to submit entries is July 31, 2006.

REVISED RULES AS OF 22 MAY 06



<http://a1700204.uscgaux.info>

<http://a170.uscgaux.info>

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