



# Whittier Soundings



Whittier Flotilla 02-04, District 17, Alaska

November 2006 Sig Murphy FC, Russ Lyday VFC, Cathey Sterling FSO-PB Volume XVI Issue 11

## Whittier Flotilla 2006 A Very Good Year

*By Sig Murphy, FC 2006*

As the famous Sinatra song says, the Whittier Flotilla had “a very good year” for 2006. As the out-going Flotilla Commander, I wish to thank all of our members who contributed their time and talent this year. What makes our organization so special is that members from all walks of life and with varied interests work together in a cohesive fashion to achieve great accomplishments.

I especially wish to thank Russ Lyday for his support as Vice Commander and all of the Staff Officers for their dedication and the long hours they put into our flotilla programs and activities. The following is a highlight of some of the same.

We were at least a year ahead of the National and District call for emphasis on contingency planning with the dissemination in January of the Whittier Flotilla Emergency Action Plan followed in the summer with the Emergency/Disaster Exercise (EMDEX).



2006 EMDEX action photo by Roy Stoddard

This exercise, the first in the District, involved over 46 of our members, and the Director of the Auxiliary (DIRAUX), active Coast Guard from Sector Anchorage, the Maritime Safety and Security Team Anchorage (MSST) and the Helicopter crew from Cordova, police, fire, emergency medical technicians and leaders from the City of Whittier, members of the Alaska State Defense Force and others who worked together to test our ability to extract “victims” of a simulated marine disaster from Prince William Sound waters and then provided mass casualty emergency medical assistance to them using ICS protocol. Then, this month we exercised our Flotilla Emergency Call-Up Plan for members in Alaska with about an 86% contact rate in 29 minutes. It was all a great success!

Also, during our first Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) and thereafter,



2006 SAREX photos by Stewart Sterling



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we were able to help a number of members achieve their Crew and Coxswain ratings and Tom Kane worked hard at the Academy and became a Safe Boat Coxswain. Even though the summer weather was poor (unless you were a duck), with Mark Poe in charge of 611 after it was finally returned from the factory, and with the help of many Operational Facility (OPFAC) owners and crew, we had a significant number of SAR cases this year.

No one that we assisted died or had serious injuries. Lowering the injury and death rate of boaters in Western Prince William Sound is no accident (excuse the pun).

It is in part a result of the excellent Public Education Program



*Photo by Stewart Sterling*

this year implemented by Charlotte Jones and her crew of wonderful Instructors as well as the Vessel Inspectors organized by Bill Morris who took the time to talk to the boaters before they had trouble. The future looks great in this area since we added a number of new Instructors and Inspectors to the Flotilla this year.

Member training was also excellent this year as developed by Rae De Ley. For example, our recent Auxiliary Weather (AUXWEA) class, an AUXOP requirement, was entertaining and enlightening thanks to the instruction by Commander Robert Forgit, a Coast Guard reservist who has been called back to active duty. As part of the class, he offered a fascinating back stage tour of the Channel 2 Studio which culminated in class members being able to sit a few feet away from the reporters as they presented the weather and daily news.

One of the wonderful realities of our Flotilla is that every member, no matter what their personal interest may be, has the opportunity to join in an activity of their choice. As an example, for those

interested in marine environmental protection, our Flotilla again sponsored the Annual Whittier Harbor Cleanup which is now recognized by District 17 as an approved annual event.



Even though the Flotilla does not directly sponsor it, a number of our members also participated in the Prince William Sound Cleanup in the spring and we doubled the number of members in the Trident Program which delves into important marine environmental issues, among others, and provides a great opportunity for members to expand their knowledge of, and assistance to, the Coast Guard.

Thanks to Deanna Barbarick, our Fellowship Director, and all the members who lent the use of their home or boats and provided food, we had a number of wonderful fellowship gatherings, on the water,



*June SAREX Fellowship Raft photos by Stewart Sterling*

and on land, including our most recent



*Photo by Stewart Sterling*

held at Roy and Terry Stoddard's home.



## Public Education

By Charlotte Jones, FSO-PE

For inspiration, all new members need is to consider the magnificent job done this year by Terry Stoddard in finance, Bob Harvey in information systems, Lou Jones in materials, Sue Whitney in personnel services, Linda Shogren in public affairs, Cathey Sterling in publications, Stewart Sterling in communication services, Tom Kane in operations, Paula Krebs in aid to navigation, Claude Barker in communications, Tony Hillegeist and Loren Warner in dealer visitation, John Whitney in marine safety and environmental protection, Jean Holzheimer as secretary and the others mentioned above as well as all of their assistants.

New members are the life blood of our Flotilla and we added many gifted individuals during 2006, including those involved in the establishment of the Detachment lead by Dave Brubaker in Whittier. Recruitment is only the beginning, so we now have the Whittier Flotilla Member Recruitment and Retention Committee, chaired by Sue Whitney, which will develop specific plans to ensure that when new members join, they will be assigned a mentor to answer their questions and help them to be participants rather than observers by selecting interesting programs and activities.

For those who like statistics, the following are some of the current hours volunteered by our Whittier Flotilla members this year through October in certain categories:

Administration:	9,811
Patrol Hours:	3,230 (2,608 for all 2005)
Member Training:	316
Public Training:	269
Public Affairs:	458
SAR:	182 (64 for all 2005)
Marine Environment:	66 (117 for all 2005)
CG Op. support:	38

This is a reflection on all of you, the members of the Whittier Coast Guard Flotilla. Thank you all for your support during 2006.

It was A *VERY GOOD YEAR!*

Whittier Flotilla's **Boating Skills & Seamanship** classes have concluded for 2006 and I'm pleased to report that the March/April and September/October classes had a total of 110 students. Of those 110 students, for one reason or another, only 64 decided to take the final test. All 64 students passed. That's a **100% pass rate**. The average score for the spring class was 88% and 87% for the fall class. I'd say those were pretty good average scores and scores such as these reflect how well our instructors have done their jobs. I want to congratulate all the instructors for their commitment to making our boating public as safe as possible on the water.

I think what surprised me the most was how many students came to every class and then **did not** take the test. Several were husbands and wives who took the class together and then only one took the test. Others simply did not show up. Those that I've contacted said they either didn't feel ready to take the test or didn't feel a certificate was necessary for them. I guess we can take comfort in the fact that even though those students didn't take the test, they did gain important and potentially lifesaving knowledge.

**WE NEED MORE INSTRUCTORS** – The latest list of instructors that I have contains 21 names. Of those 21 names, 2 are in Cordova (the Thomas's) and 2 are elsewhere (the Wells). That leaves 17 instructors. Of those 17, one of those is heavily into Member Training, leaving 16 to do the PE training. Of the remaining 16, 3 would prefer to assist with classes, leaving only 13 to actually teach the classes and 2 of those are currently out of state, which leaves 11. **We need more Whittier Flotilla members to become certified instructors.** We maintain a very aggressive Public Education schedule and we must have qualified instructors who are willing to teach the classes. It's getting harder and harder to fill the slots. I don't want to see instructors burn out but I'm afraid with only 13/14 available instructors it could very easily happen.



## Whittier Flotilla Operations 2006

*By Bob Harvey and Tom Kane*

This was a very good year for Whittier Flotilla Operations.

The year began with the mentoring of seven individuals for the crew program. In March, the mentoring continued with the land based crew workshop at Mark Poe's shop, which was well attended by students and mentors. Tom Kane went to the Coxswain Academy in Homer in April and was Qualified in May as a Safe Boat Coxswain. As summer approached, Operations was in high gear, planning and organizing the events of the SAREX, Search and Rescue Exercise in June, and the EMDEX, Emergency Disaster Exercise, scheduled for July 15.

Early in June, we had the SAREX. The boats involved met in North Granite Bay and participants were divvied up onto Operational Facilities so that the Qualifying Examiners could run the potential crew through the paces. It was a very busy day, and at the end we signed off seven members as new crew. One was premature since his security paperwork had not been processed completely. When the paperwork came through, he was officially made a crew person. There were eleven boats at the SAREX, accompanied by the SAFEBoat, 611. There were 3 QE's present that day including the Operational Training Officer, Chief Bob Gross, who went on his first SAR case as an Auxiliarist on the second day of the SAREX. Other Crew and Coxswains were able to maintain their currency for the year. A great fellowship followed when all the boats rafted up in the bay to provide a platform for a giant potluck on the water.

The morning of the EMDEX came and the weather was cold and rainy with 3 to 5 foot seas at the beach. We spent three hours in the City meeting room going over all the aspects of the exercise and then met at the head of the canal with Operational Facilities, rafts, the SAFEBoat and two PWCs. Volunteers from the active duty Coast Guard donned their dry suits and went in the water awaiting rescue by the crew of the raft which was made up of a permanent coxswain and a rotating

crew person from the group of crew people waiting their turn on the beach. The exercise coordinated the efforts of the City of Whittier's Police and EMTs and the Auxiliary as well as potential responders from Providence Hospital and Girdwood firefighters, in their combined effort to rescue and treat large numbers of victims from a fictitious tour boat accident.

In July, it became necessary to make a schedule for the SAFEBoat to ensure that it got out every weekend for the rest of the summer. The price of fuel at the dock also came into play. The fuel budget limited operational facilities to five vessels a weekend assigned to specific geographical areas.

As the summer went on more people became crew and some went on to become coxswains, see data below for exact numbers. This year our "fleet of Operational Facilities" consisted of 16 privately owned vessels, two PWCs (on loan from the dealer) and the Coast Guard owned/ Flotilla operated SAFEBoat 611. With these vessels we conducted 233 Safety Patrols, 13 Marine Environmental Patrols and 37 Marine Safety Missions. We also conducted 15 Search and Rescue Missions (SAR) that resulted in 41 people being assisted and \$686,000 in property saved (or the loss being avoided).

These efforts took over 1300 hours of Coxswain time and 1760 hours of Crew time. Members being trained were involved in many of these missions and their time totaled 150 hours. Training is necessary to support this level of activity and the Flotilla qualified two new Coxswains and 10 Crew in 2006. We now have 16 Coxswains, 24 Crew and 3 PWC Operators current and qualified.

Additionally, one member completed the requirements for AUXOP this year giving us a total 12 AUXOP members and one member earned the Trident Certification this year.



## From our Auxiliarists in Cordova

*By Virginia Thomas*

Stacy Thomas advanced to Boatswain's Mate First Class on August 1st while CGC Sycamore was underway in the Aleutian Islands.



*Stacy Thomas is "pinned" during his promotion ceremony on board CGC Sycamore*

Due to the shortage of BM1s in the Coast Guard, the Thomas family is transferring a year early. They will move to Port Angeles, Washington during the 2007 transfer season. Stacy will be the Executive Petty Officer onboard CGC Swordfish, a 87 foot patrol boat.

Virginia Thomas was awarded "Volunteer of the Year" by the Cordova Historical Society at their annual dinner on October 28th. Since arriving in Cordova, Virginia has provided general office help to the museum but also worked on special projects.

The theme of this year's annual dinner was "World War II in Cordova."



*Stacy and Virginia Thomas in 1940s costume at the Cordova Historical Society Annual Dinner*

Both Stacy and Virginia were able to teach the ABC course to new Auxiliarists Matt and Sonia Hoppe in early November.



*Stacy Thomas points out the differences between the Auxiliary and active duty uniforms to Matt and Sonia Hoppe*

Matt is a Chief Health Services Technician (HSC) on CGC Sycamore and Sonia is prior Coast Guard. Matt recently advanced to Chief, and the Hoppe family will also be transferring from Cordova in 2007.

## Reporting Your Time

*By Bob Harvey FSO-IS*

Members are encouraged to keep track of the time they devote to auxiliary activities and to report it to their FSO-IS. It's best if you report your time periodically during the year but you may keep track of it and turn it all in at year end. The final deadline for reporting your 2006 time is January 6, 2007.

There are various ways and forms for keeping track of your time but it does not need to be complicated or time consuming. In many instances, a simple e-mail is all that is necessary.

The time you contribute to the auxiliary is important – to you, the Flotilla, the Auxiliary, and the Coast Guard but it needs to be documented and entered in the "system" in order for it to be usable information for budgeting, awards, individual recognition, member training programs, etc.

Please let me know if you have any questions. My e-mail address is: [bnharvey@gci.net](mailto:bnharvey@gci.net) My home number is 345-0932. Thanks for your cooperation.



## GET TO KNOW COASTIE

*By: Rae De Ley, FSO-MT*

Coastie, the Auxiliary's mascot and youth education ambassador needs operators; both "front persons" to help Coastie communicate boating safety messages to kids, and "behind the scenes" individuals who are Coastie's voice and manipulate his radio-controlled movements.

Whether you are out front working with the kids and their parents, or fielding their questions as the voice of Coastie, it's a lot of fun and very rewarding. Members who can work with Coastie during the day or in the evening are equally welcome to become part of Coastie's team.

Coastie regularly appears at Kid's Day at the Egan Center, local boat shows, and at public schools. You might have even seen Coastie at the Air Show, in the Fur Rondy Parade, or taking part in a Search and Rescue (SAR) Mission! Some years back, the Whittier Safe Boat Auxiliary Vessel 611 was in need of a tow, and Coastie was happy to lend a hand!

In addition, Coastie is a great way to acquire Mission hours in winter. It is a Public Affairs (PA) Mission which is coded under category 10J on the Mission Report Form. Interested in being a Coastie Operator? There will be Coastie Training on Saturday, January 13, 2007. Let Rae De Ley, your Member Training Officer know, and she will get you signed up.



## Flotilla Fall Fellowship

*By Deanna Barbarick*

Roy and Terry Stoddard's home was the site of the fall fellowship event on October 28. This was another potluck success, and our thanks go to Roy and Terry for hosting this affair.

## Holiday Party and Change of Watch

*By Deanna Barbarick*

You are cordially invited to attend the 2006 Whittier Flotilla Holiday Party Saturday, December 9, 2006 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM UAA Student Union Den (see link to map) <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/map/index.cfm> The student union is building #13.

This will be a potluck dinner. Those who are not bringing ham, turkey, potatoes, green vegetables, and the other essentials, please bring your favorite potluck dish.

6:00 – 7:00 Arrive, set up your dishes and mingle

7:00 – Dinner

8:00 – Program and gift exchange

We will have the Change of Watch, swearing in our new officers, raffle drawing, and the fun gift exchange.

If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, please bring one gift per person, cost not to exceed \$20.00.

We have an alcohol permit for this event. There will be a two-drink per person limit, which must be monitored and enforced under the rules of the permit.

RSVP with your name, how many will attend, and what you plan to bring by December 1 to [dbarbarick@gci.net](mailto:dbarbarick@gci.net)



## New Members

Welcome to our new members and recent applicants.

Welcome Katie Parmelee, introduced by Mark Parmelee.



*Katie Parmelee*



Welcome Lance Welsh new transfer from Valdez, currently working active duty on Katrina.

Welcome Tim Moyer, introduced by Dave Brubaker.



*Sue Ann Shogren*

Welcome Sue Ann Shogren, introduced by Linda Shogren and Bill Morris

Welcome Matt and Sonia Hoppe of Cordova, introduced by Stacy and Virginia Thomas.

### Guess this flotilla member!

Schooled in Montana, and in own words, long time ago. Still being "schooled" here in Anchorage. Spouse may be the better skipper. Problem-solver by profession; miracle-worker by trade. But, beware, this member is very concerned about what and how much we drink.

Welcome John Lachelt, introduced by Lou and Charlotte Jones.



*John Lachelt*



Welcome Vincent Browne, introduced by Jim Chase.

## COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



## 17th District

<http://a1700204.uscgaux.info>

<http://a170.uscgaux.info>

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