

Whittier Soundings



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

Volume XVII
Issue 1

Russ Lyday, FC **Bill Morris, VFC**
Cathey Sterling, FSO-PB

January 2007

District Conference

Ahoy, Matey! Set your course for three days of training, sharing, fun and fellowship at the District 17 United States Coast Guard Auxiliary's Annual Training Conference and Awards Banquet. This year's conference will be held Feb. 16-20 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, not far from the inlet that shares its name with that famous mariner. The hotel and the conference are the perfect setting to meet with Auxiliarists from across state — old friends and soon-to-be friends — to learn new skills, sharpen the ones you have, share what you know, satisfy some requirements and find out what's happening in flotillas across Alaska and the United States. The conference promises something for everyone.

Guest speaker: Stay tuned for the announcement of who this year's featured speaker will be at the opening ceremony on Saturday.

New to the Auxiliary: You've come to the right place. There's a conference session created with you in mind. It will help answer that mind-numbing question, "Now what do I do?"

Crew training: For the first time, the conference is offering land-based crew training for all Auxiliarists ready to step off dry land and get out on the water. If you're an Auxiliarist that has already taken that step, consider participating as a mentor and sharing what you know.

Operations: Fresh from national training in St. Louis, COMO Gary Taylor brings the latest information to those attending the Operations Workshop.

This workshop fulfills a training requirement for all Coxswain and Crew.

Safety...safety...safety: Marine safety takes the spotlight, with sessions examining what it takes to become a vessel examiner, the ins and outs of uninspected passenger vessels and commercial fishing vessels and a look at recreational boating safety.

Coastie: Behind every good boat is a good brain. Coastie is no exception. Carry the safe-boating message to young and old by becoming the brain behind this popular, remote-controlled teaching wonder.

AUXINFO: What is it? Why do we use it? How does it work? Fret no more. What is unknown and sometimes frustrating will be made clear.

Getting in the news: Wondering how to get the Auxiliary's good deeds recognized by the press? This workshop offers training on the do's and don'ts when being interviewed by the press, television crews or when in front of the camera.

Shopping: Need one of these or a couple of those to make your uniform complete? The District Store will be open at the hotel throughout the conference. Hours will be posted.

Then there's the ...

Fellowship: Get reacquainted with Auxiliarists you haven't seen for awhile and meet new friends at Saturday evening's "**Pirates of the Arctic,**" a swashbuckling affair if ever there was one. It's time to sort through your closet for prize winning pirate attire. Sharpen your pirate vocabulary. Wet your whistle with a bit of grog. And limber up you seagoing joints to the tunes played by DJ Ken.

Awards banquet: A Saturday Luncheon and Sunday Banquet offer an opportunity to honor the accomplishments and commitment of District 17 Auxiliaries. This is the "payday" for our dedicated volunteers!

Go to the D-17 web site:

<http://a170.uscgaux.info/index.htm>

for the registration forms.

Article from the D-17 Conference Flyer

Coastie Training

By: Rae De Ley, FSO-MT

On January 13, 2007 there was Coastie Training at the Diamond Center Mall.

Some of you know that Coastie is the USCG Auxiliary's mascot and youth education ambassador. Coastie teaches school age children about safe boating. It takes two people to operate Coastie, a "front person" to help Coastie communicate boating safety messages to kids, and a "behind the scenes person" to be Coastie's voice and manipulate his radio-controlled movements.

Three people from the Auxiliary and two people from the State Office of Boating Safety took the time to learn to be Coastie Operators. Training was given in two sessions. First Doris Thomas talked about the history of Coastie, the various uniforms one can wear while operating Coastie, and about Coastie missions to locations such as boat shows, schools, and the Air Force air show.

Andy Buhler then took over and ran a power point presentation on how to unload Coastie from his trailer, set him up, operate him, and trouble shoot his problems if any arise.



We then put Coastie together and put him through his paces.

The students were then given a chance to operate Coastie in a vacant retail space in the mall and a chance to go out and meet the public with Coastie.



Coastie plans to attend the boat show later this year. If you are a Coastie Operator and would like to give Coastie a hand, let me know. I will put you in contact with Doris who is one of the Coastie schedulers.

Photos provided by Andy Buhler

Member Training

By: Rae De Ley, FSO-MT

If you have been keeping up on reading your emails, you might have noticed that the USCG has changed the Auxiliary (Aux.) Crew, Coxswain, and Personal Water Craft (PWC) Manuals. These new manuals and the appropriate sign off sheets can be down loaded and printed from the Aux. website. Given that we have some opportunities coming up for land based sign offs, it is important that every one working toward Aux. Crew, Coxswain, and PWC Operator gets a copy of the new materials.

Currently I do not know if the USCG will provide paper copies of these manuals. Lou Jones, who is our Materials Officer, is looking into the subject. For now the sure way to acquire the manuals is to down load them yourself and print them off.

Currently there are two chances for land based sign offs. The first will be the week end of February 17th and 18th at the USCG District Aux. Conference.

The other opportunity will be on Saturday, March 17th. If you are unable to attend either of these sessions, don't feel you have missed out. Any person who is already Aux. Crew, Aux. Coxswain, or a PWC Operator 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.

“A Eulogy to Mark Poe”

May 16, 1946 – January 17, 2007

We are gathered here today in this church to mourn the loss of Mark Poe, and in doing so to honor him.

The fact that we are cognizant that death is the inevitable reality of life does not assuage the pain caused by the loss of someone we love. The sudden death of Mark shocked us all, and now we are here to remember Mark and, in doing so, thank him for all the love, help and friendship he gave to each of us.

This is a fitting place to be since this is where he and his beloved wife Natalie were married in 1983. Natalie is a great and generous lady. She has suffered an irreparable loss but she has enduring memories, happy memories of Mark. We share her sorrow but I know she wishes us to share with her those rich memories which thoughts of a great man like Mark evoke.

I too loved him as a best friend. Love is not an easy feeling to put into words – nor is loyalty, or trust, or companionship. But Mark was all of these. He loved life completely and lived it intensely.

Mark lived a remarkable life – his adventurous attitude, his broad range of interests, and his happy demeanor made him a wonderful person to know. He always took an interest in the people he met and was able to engage them in a discussion at any time or place. He was philosophical in his approach to life and had a great perspective when it came to sensing someone needed help, and helped us all with dignity and humor, never impatience.

Mark pursued his many endeavors diligently, and always rose to meet the challenges of life. His father and brother and many of his old friends will remember Mark during his youth growing up on the homestead at Lake Louise, or during his four years of service in the U.S. Navy followed by his ten year career as a surveyor that took him all over the state. I only know of these events from the colorful stories he told of those times and the lessons he learned along the way that he would impart as gems of advice.

Many will remember Mark as a master craftsman who turned a hobby into a career creating one-of-a-kind wooden works of art including his home furniture and cabinets and woodworks found in many homes, businesses and even boats across our

city and state. And more recently, as an artist painting scenes from his favorite places in Prince William Sound.

I have had the honor of knowing Mark for the years we have shared together in the Coast Guard Auxiliary during which time we became the best of friends. Soon after we met, based on his humor, skill, generosity and intellect, I realized that Mark Poe was one of those rare individuals that, if you are truly fortunate, you will meet in your lifetime. It is impossible to describe all the rich adventures, discussions and other moments I had with Mark over the past years; however, knowing these memories will always remain with me, I share a few of mine now.

When Mary and I joined the Auxiliary, we bought a boat like Mark and Natalie's. On its maiden voyage, it stopped. And minutes later, here comes Mark to the rescue riding in on White Raven like the Lone Ranger. He had an uncanny ability to take one look at anything mechanical and immediately diagnose the problem. That evening he fixed the engine, heater and about five other things, and that was a good thing because Mary was threatening never to go out on the boat with me again unless Mark and Natalie's boat, White Raven, was in sight. I believe that almost everyone here today that owns a boat has had something fixed on it or additions added to it over the years by Mark.

He was always generous with his time and talent. When the unique concept of converting a railroad Caboose to be the Flotilla's Station at the Whittier Harbor came to fruition, it was Mark that put in hundreds of hours scraping off the old paint, building the inside cabinets, the platform and porch, the lighthouse storage shed and helped with everything else.

Mark loved to teach others. He taught many of our Coast Guard Auxiliary classes to the public and advanced courses to members. Even though he was a master instructor for numerous subjects, his favorite was teaching maritime Knots. In front of the class his hands flew like a magician and he would almost instantly produce a perfect knot, and then he would patiently take the class through all the steps until everyone understood. Once, when we had been out on White Raven, we stopped at the fuel dock and suddenly he was surrounded by a group of children who were calling “Knot Man!

Knot man!” until, with a smile on his face, he showed them how to tie some really neat knots.

His shop was always a gathering place for his many friends. I have often wondered how he got any work accomplished because I do not believe a day went by without friends stopping to talk to him or just for genuine camaraderie. He would always drop what ever he was working on and give advice or share adventures with his guests. I realize now that we where all drawn to him, in part, because he always made us feel good about ourselves and, no matter what problems we brought to him, he invariably had an excellent solution and we left free of our burdens and happy with life.

All of us have shared so many wonderful weekends and boating adventures with Mark and Natalie over the years that it is hard to select one that stands out from the rest. Whether it was his help with his brother fending off a Sea Lion which would not give up our halibut, which resulted in Mark injuring his arm, or taking lessons from him on lassoing icebergs, or laughing over his insistence that you had to spray WD40 on the bait if you wanted to catch the really big halibut, or discussing the attributes of releasing the octopus that just ate all his shrimp, or simply enjoying the calm and beauty of a sunset in the evening while floating together in one of his favorite bays, all together, they have shaped our lives for ever and heightened our love of nature.

Mark was a man who admired all the beauty of Creation from the fine grain of exotic wood to the towering cliffs of Granite Bay. But above all else, he loved and cherished Natalie and Dawn and Amelia and the rest of his family. With the birth of Amelia, he became a proud grandfather sharing her pictures at every opportunity.

There was another side of Mark - his keen intellect. Early in our friendship, I mentioned to him that I had just finished a book on space anomalies, and he began a dialogue between us that lasted for years about Creation, Black holes, quantum gravity, the physics and causation of the expansion of the universe, and the natural reality of life and death. He would have made a fitting intellectual sparring partner for the likes of Carl Sagan or Stephen Hawking and he helped sharpen my own awareness and joy of being part of a boundless Creation and heightened my love and humble respect for God.

The memories of all that Mark did and said have moved us deeply and will always be with us. He has “passed over the bar” and returned to his Creator and the sorrow and the aches of all of us have been lightened and brightened by his friendship.

The tides of life have ebbed for a shipmate. We will miss his hand on the helm, his shoulder next to ours, his encouragement and counsel as we meet the storms and strife of life.

We will still ply the waters of Mark’s favorite places on the Sound, and we will always remember the call of the White Raven and the joy of life that Mark has given to us all.



<http://a1700204.uscgaux.info>

<http://a170.uscgaux.info>

*FSO-PB Cathey Sterling
P.O. Box 210643 Anchorage, AK 99521
907-529-7353 alaskaaux@gci.net*

Crossing The Bar

by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourn of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

