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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY	DISTRICT 8, DIVISION 6 FLOTILLA 06-09 Lake Conroe, Texas
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Commander's Comments:

Congratulations to all those that were recognized for their achievements by the District. Flotilla 69 did well for receiving member awards as well as some Flotilla recognition. We are also well underway with our busy season now upon us. We have begun our patrols on Lake Conroe, our Public Training classes, the Vessel Inspections and even gotten some Marine Dealer accomplishments. We have some really energetic, highly motivated members. But with that high energy & focus we need to make sure that our Number 1 goal is Safety. In everything we do from our patrol, our various outside & public activities and going to and from our various activities, being safe must be our #1 focus.



ANC Course Going Well

The USCGA member Advanced Navigation Course is going well. This is a long hard course that we haven't done in awhile. Pierre and Bing have done a great putting it together, coordinating the class activities and instructing the course. Every now and then, Al shows up to help instruct and even attend a class periodically.

The class has been well attended. It has been every Wednesday night what seems like forever. But the end is near. All the attendees are glad because they are anxious to pass the calls and use the skills. They also would like to have something different to do on a Wednesday night. It has been a great educational experience. Everyone got the realization early in the class that Coastal Navigation wasn't as easy as it looked. It takes some skill to read that charts, determine LOP (Line of Position), know how to plot a Fix. To do the above you need to know how to correct for Deviation and Magnetic Compass reading to get the True Compass. Then you have to know what to do with a Relative bearing. Factors such as recognizing and the visibility of landmarks, current and wind add to the complexity of all the things that were just mentioned. If you didn't understand many of the navigation terms that were just mentioned, maybe you need to tale the class, though this class isn't offered very often.

IDES of March

By Jim Pokorski

I'd like to remind you as the March winds blow across the blue waters of Lake Conroe, you'd better heed the following I'ds....I'd wished I'd called over to the San Jacinto River Authority's office (936-588-1111) earlier and renewed my MSD(Marine Sanitation Device aka "on board toilet") Sticker(Clean Water Fee)! Now you'll have to keep lookin' over your shoulder while you try to enjoy a day of boating wondering if you're going to get the big FINE(money paid as a reminder for offending the public interest)--now you need not worry about the MSD STICKER unless your vessel(a boat that floats) is over 26 feet in length(now that may include your bowsprit--how about that over hang aft known as a dive platform)with sleeping quarters---that means you skippers of those pontoon boats(a vessel that floats)are exempt unless you have an on board head(no--not the skipper, a toilet!) So does that mean if your craft is less than 26 feet and has a bathroom on board you don't need to pay the FEE for the MSD? Well I'd like to be able to answer that with a simple YES and that would end the discussion and it would most likely remove the risk of a FINE. Well--(another deep subject) I'd rather err on the safe side and have that STICKER and not have to spend an enjoyable day sharing my opinion with those who know the answer(the lake patrol)....AND, if you have a "house boat", regardless of length, you'd better get the STICKER if you have any on board water systems for showering, shaving, or cooking even though the system may be a closed and self contained device. Now hear this, my sources have confided in me that the "Lake Patrol" will have a stepped up surveillance for all lake offenses including the dispersion of "HYDRILLA"! If you think this is NOT an issue, I'd challenge you to consider the consequence of contaminating the lake with this weed or any other substance that is NOT a part of the natural ecological Lake Conroe history. Do you know the name of the only NATURAL lake in TEXAS?--(hint--INDIAN heritage)..And here is another reminder to check the

www.sjra.net link on the internet and check the current lake conditions---today, the water temp is a cold 56 degrees(great hypothermia conditions) and the level is 201.24ft with a release rate over the dam(device holding back streams)of 755cfs--I'd like to see you measure that flow rate---how do they do that? Okay one last thing today---sign up for that "SAFE BOATING" class at the Coast Guard Auxiliary (936-588-3322) and bring your crew! Skipper! This is also a great time to get that other STICKER from "AMERICA'S VOLUNTEER LIFE SAVERS" Coast Guard Auxiliary Courtesy Marine Vessel Examiner---go ahead and pick up the phone and make those calls and not wish you'd had!

**Summerizing,
The Opposite of Winterizing**

Our patrol season is upon us. So what does that mean to all of us? For those that Winterized their vessels at the end of the 2003 patrol season, it is time to Summerize (Un-winterized) them. Make sure you use a good checklist so you do not forget anything.

Some basic items to do:

- Check all the engine fluids
- Remove any preservation compounds you applied during Winterizing
- Check all the lights and electrical connectors.
- Is your water pump impeller due for preventative replacement?
- Check out all the electronic devices
- Check the batteries and battery connections
- Check the fuel for unusual color or odor.
- Put all safety equipment back on board
- Remove any protective covering on critical safety equipment (PFD, Flares, etc.)
- Check the pressure and shake up your fire extinguishers.

- Change the oil & filter if it wasn't done as a part of Winterizing
- Check the Flame Arrestor air intake for contamination.
- Re-install any thru hull fittings that were removed.
- Start/check the engine operation after you have properly prepared it out.
- Check for outdrive proper operation and fluid levels.
- Check the outdrive hydraulic hoses for good condition.
- Put all needed charts, registration forms, insurance forms and other important papers back on board.
- Verify the vessel registration is current.
- Put all USCGA needed equipment back on board.
- Check out the trailer; wheel bearing, brake fluids, lights, rollers, slides, springs, brakes, hitch condition, tire condition, tire pressure.
- Make a dry run using your underway checklist to make sure everything is where & how you want it.
- Check hull and internal conditions for any dry rotting, cracking, etc.
- Watch out for critters than found a home during the winter; spiders, rodents, bees, birds, etc.
- Other things you determine that needs to be done or is recommended by the engine & vessel manufacturer.

Best way to have a good boating season is to properly prepare for one. We know from experience that most of the assistance we give to others having operational problems is in the Spring and early Summer. We want to be the solution, not add to the problem.

**Lake Conroe 2004 Patrol's
Underway**

The 2004 Lake Conroe Patrol Season has begun. Denny Jones is the FSO=OP this year. He has worked hard getting us ready for the season's activities. He has determined who is qualified as Boat Crew and Coxswain. Pierre Catala, our FSO-CM, has worked with Denny to ensure we have the right number of COMMS qualified individuals.

Due to a good training effort in the Fall of 2003 and earlier this year, we have a number of new individuals now qualified as Boat crew, Coxswain and Watchstander. This has made Denny's and Pierre's jobs allot easier. Having a lot of qualified people reduces the burden on all of us in filling the dates for the patrols.

We will have a Lake Conroe Safety Patrol each Saturday from the 1st weekend in April to the last weekend in September. In addition we will have patrols on Memorial Day, 4th of July, at all the 4th of July fireworks activities, and Labor Day. There will also be patrols added as we are requested and approved to support any local organized Regatta or other similar activity.

Denny will issue the schedule a couple of week before each quarter. Make sure to let Denny know of any Saturdays that you are not available or a particular weekend you would like to patrol. In particular, Denny will need some people who are available for the two Monday patrols. The 2nd quarter schedule is;

DATE	COX.	CREW	COMS.
APRIL			
3-Apr	LaMASTER	McPHERSON	WHARTON D.
10/11Apr	BURDGE	COLLINS	BUFORD
18-Apr	JONES	MOORE	CATALA
24-Apr	OHLIGER A.	SMITH	HASTINGS
MAY			
1-May	COFFMAN	CATALA	BASS

9-May	SMITH	COLLINS	BURDGE
15-May	OHLIGER M.	CLEMONS	COFFMAN
22-May	STEIN	McPHERSON	ELLEN
29-May	WHARTON G.	BASS	HODGE
30-May	JONES	BUFORD	MORSE
31-May	ZATZKIN	WHARTON D.	LaMASTER
JUNE			
5-Jun	OHLIGER A.	CLEMONS	PETERSON J.
12-Jun	WHARTON D.	BASS	
19-Jun	POKORSKI		JONES
20-Jun	JONES	BUFORD	OHLIGER A.
26-Jun	SMITH	STEIN	PETERSON M.
27-Jun	BURDGE	COLLINS	POKORSKI

The Coxswain will fill out the orders after the patrol and mail them in within two weeks of completing the patrol. The Coxswain will also complete the Mission Activity Report for the patrol hours of all individuals on the vessel doing the patrol. The Watchstander will complete a Mission Activity report for those work hours. Each member doing patrol time must put there preparation time and travel time on their monthly Member Activity Report.

If you availability has changed and you cannot make your scheduled patrol, please find a substitute. Then let Denny know since he is responsible for the orders and ensuring each patrol is manned.

Just a reminder about the logistics for a patrol. About one week before the patrol, the Coxswain will get the orders from USCG. If the Coxswain has swapped with someone, make sure to get them the orders. Around Wednesday, or sooner, the Coxswain should contact the Boat Crew and Watchstander to ensure they are ready for the patrol. The Coxswain will also let everyone know the uniform, and the times for getting the patrol underway. The standard patrol time is 11:00 till dusk. But certain situations may change these times.

The Coxswain and crew should arrive at the dock at a time that will ensure they are at the COMM Center dock ready for the patrol by 10:45. The Watchstander needs to arrive at the COMM center early enough to put out the flags, crank up the radio's and get the mission briefing from the Coxswain. It is recommended for the Watchstander to bring their lunch and adequate drinks. The Watchstander will call into Group Galveston to activate the patrol when it begins.

Dakota Indian Tribal Wisdom

The tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians, passed on from generation to generation, says that, "When you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount."

However, in government, education, and in corporate America, more advanced strategies are often employed, such as:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
2. Changing riders.
3. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
4. Arranging to visit other countries to see how other cultures ride horses.
5. Lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included.
6. Reclassifying the dead horse as living-impaired.
7. Hiring outside contractors to ride the dead horse.
8. Harnessing several dead horses together to increase horsepower and speed.
9. Providing additional funding and/or training to increase dead horse's performance.
10. Doing a productivity study to see if lighter riders would improve the dead horse's performance.
11. Declaring that as the dead horse does not have to be fed, it is less costly, carries lower

overhead and therefore contributes substantially more to the bottom line of the economy than do some other horses.

12. Rewriting the expected performance requirements for all horses.

And of course,

13. Promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position.

The Importance of Drinking Water

One glass of water shuts down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University study.

Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.

Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.

A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen

Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.

Are you drinking the amount of water you should every day? Are you drinking the amount of water you should while on patrol? Inadequate water intake is a very common cause of hyperthermia, (Heat Exhaustion). While on patrol, even in these milder Spring temperatures, you are sweating. You need to drink enough water to replenish this water loss.

A simple rule of thumb is to drink at least 8 oz of water each hour for 80 degree F temperatures. Drink 14 oz of water each hour for 90 degree F temperatures. Of course each of our personal physical conditions and activities while on patrol may require an increase in the Rule of Thumb quantities.



New Boat Crew & Coxswain Qualified Members

Congratulations to Brad Bass, John Peterson, Michelle Peterson, Ron Smith and Pierre Catala. Each of these members has completed training and the QE patrol to perform as qualified members on our patrols. Brad Bass, John Peterson, Michelle Peterson are now qualified for Boat Crew. Pierre Catala and Ron Smith are now qualified as a Coxswain.

It wasn't an easy task either this year. Weather was not our friend. Denny Jones and Al Ohliger worked to schedule four patrols before the QE activity actually occurred. Seems each time the QE patrol was scheduled, bad weather rolled in causing the patrol to be cancelled.

Fortunately, Denny, Al and our QE George Wharton were patient and finally made it happen. Also, big thanks goes out to Dave Feray, DS-OP and Gary Schroeder who worked with us issuing all those orders and

then having to delete them from the system due to the weather cancellations.

Just the Facts

By Jim Pokorski

Yep, Skipper, that's what you need! --- those of us who watched and listened to Joe Friday carrying badge 714 know that it is important to have the FACTS to make the important decisions we face all too often. Now how do we get those FACTS? Well, not to be too sarcastic, you could learn by your own mistakes or you can learn by the mistakes of others....Now here is a FACT! If we choose to learn by our own mistakes, we will often spend more time trying to understand the mistake, correct the mistake, and we will have to wait for the mistake to happen before we can experience the discomfort of the mistake which often make us somewhat tentative in our actions (aka frightened). Whew What Words We Wail While We Wait.... Where as, if we learn (aka take a SAFE BOATING COURSE) we can read, listen, and understand the pitfalls of the actual experience without the discomfort of the actual experience nor do we have to wait for it to happen (NOW THAT'S SMART). Of course, there are those who enjoy the thrill of the unknown and the excitement of waiting. Well here is an add on to that FACT! Most all insurance companies that insurance boats give a significant discount for a skipper who has taken a safe boating course! In FACT, I know of a company that gives a 15% discount for a Coast Guard Auxiliary Course and only a 5% discount for any other course. Well here is a FACT that you should consider---15% or 5% why is one course get a bigger discount? Gosh Skipper go and do the math---maybe the insurance company knows something--yes, they have done the math and they know that all

courses are NOT the same! Well here is another FACT---Lake Conroe loses an average of 40 million gallons of water on most summer days---no the water isn't seeping out nor is it going through the flood gates, it is rising to the call of the atmosphere as it evaporates and forms new clouds that will provide rain on another parade somewhere here on our earth. Now that's a lot of water in just one day when you consider our neighbors down stream will soon be asking for 30 to 60 million gallons per day some day soon. FACT is that a half inch drop in lake level is about 30 to 40 million gallons of water. So enjoy the APRIL showers and let it rain not only for the flowers but for the fish and friends downstream needing the water. Another FACT is that you can take the Coast Guard Auxiliary Safe Boating Course(save 15%on insurance) by calling 936-856-2526.....Yes I know I mentioned it earlier, but like Joe Friday, I want to be sure you get just the FACTS(Fundamental Activity Creating Tremendous Synergisms). As well, you just may save a life (including your own). Another FACT is that Ayers Island will soon be bulk headed ,mowed and cleaned up by mid summer---the SJRA will be doing this to enhance this island and provide an environment for all to enjoy. FACT is that all of the action in the DAM SITE area occurring on 28 April will be a joint exercise of the Homeland Security forces. Probably a good idea to give a WIDE berth (STAY AWAY) of the area as there will be numerous boats, vehicles, and airborne facilities with a whole lot of people underwater, on the water, and above the water training to keep our Homeland Secure. So please know that this is a planned event and not a replay of Orson Wells radio broadcast! One more important FACT is that YOU as Skipper are the ONE who is totally responsible for the well being of your crew, don't be a disappointment!

Call 936-588-3322 and Join your friends as a member or student of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.



Sunscreen – Maybe Your Best Friend
By Al Ohliger

Warm weather is now upon us. So are our duties various outdoor duties. These include patrols, VE Inspections, Marine Dealer inspections, and taking care of the COMM Center just to name a few. All these activities have one thing in common, the Sun.

With the sun, come its UV waves. UV is part of the electromagnetic spectrum that can have some serious effects on our skin. This is called sunburn. Even on a cool cloudy day you can get very serious sunburn. The UV waves can easily penetrate through the clouds. The cool weather will prevent us from feeling the heat from the UV waves. Suddenly, pink skin becomes red skin and the slightly warm feeling becomes pain.

The best prevention is avoiding direct sunlight. This can be done with the Bimini top, shelter or similar device. This is not always possible for many of our duties. So the best alternative is Sunscreen. Sunscreen comes in many brands and shade preventors.

Each brand and type also has different scents, application types and skin conditioners. For the most part pick the sunscreen brand you like, the spray of hand apply, lemon or other scent, etc.

Two things are important. First is the shade preventor. The other is the longevity of the application.

The shade preventor is an indication of the sunscreens ability to block the UV waves and prevent the resultant skin burn. The shade preventor is indicated by a number. The higher the number, the better for you. How high a number you use is dependant on how much protection you need? The number range from 10 – 70 (the highest I have seen).

Each person has different sensitivities to UV. Allot has to do with skin tone. The lighter your skin tone, usually the easier you will get sunburned. But this is not always true. Some individuals with darker skin tones can also get sunburned. Past experience is usually the best way to determine how sensitive you are to getting sunburned.

Another determinant to how high a number to use is your plans to get a suntan and the amount of exposure you will have. Use good judgment. And if using a low number, be very observant of your skin color. When the pink tone gets bright, take preventative action to prevent sunburn.

The longevity of the Sunscreen application has a couple of determinants. One important one is if the sunscreen is waterproof. Being waterproof is very important if you will be in contact with water. It also helps to prevent the sunscreen from wearing off do to high sweating. How long the sunscreen will last also depends on your activity. The

more activity you have, the more the sunscreen will be worn off. This means that you will need to have multiple sunscreen applications in the course of a long active day.

Let your friends take preventative care of you in preventing sunburn. One of these friends is Sunscreen. Sunburns hurt for awhile (2 – 4 days or longer) and usually occur in areas that will affect your quality of life for that period. It is best to prevent rather than having to treat.

11 December Flotilla Meeting/Christmas Social

NEXT FLOTILLA 69 MEETING

Our May meeting will be on Saturday the 8th at the Comm. Center at 09:00. Our June meeting will be on Saturday the 12th at the Comm. Center at 09:00. If you have volunteered to bring the Breakfast snacks, please be there 30 minutes early.

FLOTILLA 69 CALENDER

(as of this edition publishing date)

8 May	Flotilla Meeting
22 May	Red Fish Training Activity
12 June	Flotilla Meeting
10 July	District Meeting
17 July	Flotilla Meeting
14 August	Flotilla Meeting
11 September	Flotilla Meeting
9 October	District meeting
16 October	Flotilla Meeting
30 October	Safety Patrol Season Ends
13 November	Flotilla Meeting

EDITORS NOTE:

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