



Bringing it Home – Safely

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National Safe Boating Week runs from May 17th to May 23rd this year. U.S. Coast Guard forces nationwide and especially here "Out East" have a lot of plans to take and make safety a daily, year-long event. This column is about that.

National Safe Boating Week – 50 years old

By 1958, boating "by the millions" rather than "by millionaires" was in full swing. What Coast Guard statistics showed was that the democratization of boating was coming at a cost—and it wasn't the 29 cents per gallon for the gasoline. It was accidents and fatalities. U.S. Congress passed the Federal Boating Act and National Safe Boating Week was born upon President Eisenhower's signature. It was initially run as a committee—U.S. Coast Guard as chairman, with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Power Squadron and the Red Cross as its informal members. It still took some time for the focused attention of the Coast Guard on boater safety to work its way through long habits and aged traditions. It wasn't until 1973, when 1,754

people died in boating accidents, that the trend started to reverse. Today, the death rate per 100,000 boats is less than one-third of what it was at the turning point—18.3 deaths in 1973 versus 5.6 deaths in 2006. Why? Why else—money, people and untiring focus!

These improving safety numbers have garnered many accolades. Just recently, The Coast Guard Auxiliary was recognized for 60 years of boating safety education at the 12th annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS) held in San Diego.

Safety First—The Big Picture

Safety isn't something you put on like an overcoat. Safety, to be truly effective, needs to be part of your daily habit and part of that is education—day-in, day-out. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Division-18 is all about that. Division 18 is comprised of four flotillas and it is at the flotilla level where the work gets done.

Division-18, which supports three Coast Guard stations "Out East" (SFO Moriches, Station Shinnecock and Station Montauk) is putting on/coor-

dinating/participating in a "Safety Weekend," three Open Houses and two Kayak Races and a TrawlerFest all within six weeks:

Saturday, May 24, SFO Moriches Open House

Saturday, June 07, Sta Shinnecock Open House

Saturday, June 14, Greenport Kayak Race, Sta Montauk Open House

Saturday, June 21, Riverhead Kayak Race

Saturday, June 28, Trawler-Fest, Greenport

Open Houses

More than just grilling hot dogs and hamburgers, the Open Houses provide opportunities for the local community to visit and experience "their" Coast Guard station. As Andrew Jackson noted, even the White House was the "People's House" and he served as their "steward" and so it goes with the Coast Guard. As importantly as creating that bond between the private boaters and U.S. Coast Guard forces, it creates the forum for education of a direct nature—public education classes, vessel exams and, given the statistics, a direct

message on the Coast Guard's Operation Paddle Smart initiative. Discussions about America's Waterway Watch, where the Coast Guard asks the "average Joe or Jill" to keep a sharp-lookout for suspicious characters on our waters, will go on. If past experience is any indication, hundreds of fellow citizens will "see and be seen" and hear and experience.

Kayak Races and Trawler-Fests

At \$5 per gallon for fuel, we can expect the explosion in the use of paddle sports to continue and the Coast Guard's Operation Paddle Smart is key to curtailing the injuries and even deaths that these pastimes are piling up statistically. Division-18 will have shore-side booths/tables to continue the story from the Open Houses—public education, vessel exams, paddle smart, America's Waterway Watch and, hopefully, recruiting more citizens to join the USCGAux!

Life Jacket Statistics

WWII brought us the inflatable life jacket, as worn by sailors, pilots and sub-

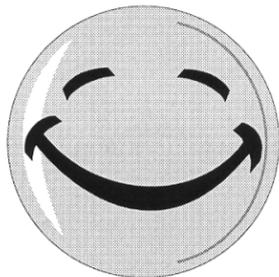
mariners. The fabric, which looked like rubber, dried out easily. Talcum powder was used to keep the fabric pliable. Later on, military technology was applied to making consumer life jackets. These have developed through the years to the various styles we see today. But any life jacket, inflatable or otherwise, must be worn to work. Here are the stats: 16 people go in the water with life jackets on and 15 come out. Sixteen people go in the water without life jackets on—and one comes out (see "Do I Really Need to Wear a Life-Jacket," SSP, Jan. 3, 2007).

Don't be a statistic. And do be a visitor to the Open Houses. Our first one is on May 24th at the Coast Guard Station at 100 Moriches Island Rd. in East Moriches.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members' matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

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Boating Safety

The members of Flotilla 18-06 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will be hosting an open house at the U.S. Coast Guard Station Moriches.

The event will be held on May 24 from noon to 4 p.m. in East Moriches. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed, all volunteer component of Team Coast Guard. We assist the U.S. Coast Guard in all its varied missions, except for direct military or police action. The men and women of the Coast Guard Auxiliary can be found in the classrooms teaching boating safety classes, on the water conducting safety patrols and assisting in search and rescue missions. Auxiliary air units are in the air performing maritime air patrols. The U.S.C.G. Auxiliary is found on the docks conducting vessel safety inspections.

Come down to the open house

and learn about the Auxiliary, boating safety and vessel exams. Find out about upcoming boating safety classes held in your area.

Support us, so we can support you.



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