



AIS - An Update

by VINCENT PICA

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



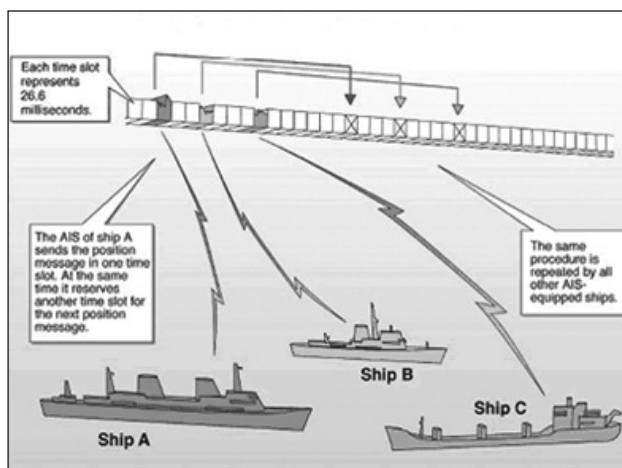
Back in December '11, we ran this column on AIS as a follow-up to the prior column from June 9, 10 (see SSP, "Electronics & Comms - AIS - Say What?") Well, here is another update - and the US Coast Guard isn't happy. Or are they?

AIS is what?

AIS is the Automatic Identification System, operated by the US Coast Guard here in the United States. The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) "requires AIS to be fitted aboard international voyaging ships with gross tonnage of 300 or more tons, and all passenger ships regardless of size." It is estimated that more than 40,000 ships currently carry AIS class A equipment. Clearly, by the prior description, it is and has been intended for the "big boys." What does it do? It links all AIS-equipped vessels together via satellite/GPS technology.

Well, doesn't my radio do that essentially? Not unless you or the opposing skipper see each other and decide to open up a channel. AIS broadcasts continuously. And it broadcasts plenty - directly on to your radar screen, or chart plotter or GPS screen. It will tell you, for any AIS-equipped ship within VHF-radio range, its speed and heading, which is critical in understanding if there is a threat of collision. It will also tell you when and where it will happen if both of you maintain your present course and speed (that's when the "CPA", i.e., Closest Point of Approach, is zero...)

The US Coast Guard has noted that AIS might replace RACONS, or radar beacons, currently used for electronic navigation aids. And, if buoys and beacons can transmit their data, it will be a further aid



when aid is mostly needed - poor visibility and crowded seaways. And don't be surprised if you hear about Virtual AIS. In one example, an AIS transmission describes the position of buoy but the signal itself originates from a transmitter located in a USCG station miles away and on land. For example, an on-shore base station might broadcast the position of a string of channel markers, each of which is too small to contain a transmitter itself. In another example, AIS could transmit the image of a marker which does not exist physically but now marks a transient situation, like a sunken vessel or channel that had shoaled over. Although such aids would only be visible to AIS-equipped ships, this would be a lot cheaper - and faster - than physical markers.

The US Coast Guard Is Unhappy - or Are They?

Recently, social media has been full of notices like this one:

Specifically, the U.S. Coast Guard is unhappy with the pace of mariner compliance when it comes

to the regular and timely updating of a vessel's navigational (nav) status (anchored, moored, underway using engines, etc.). Typically, AIS units are set to "underway" and then left on that setting permanently. The problem is a technical one. AIS units broadcast updates over VHF-FM radio every two to 10 seconds when set to "underway," versus once every three minutes when set to anchored or moored. There's only so much bandwidth available for any given radio frequency and with most workboats and ships leaving their nav status setting the same when they anchor or moor, the "pipe" has gotten clogged.

And because "AIS users are compelled to properly operate their AIS at all times," the Coast Guard is nonetheless threatening mariners and operating companies with civil fines of up to \$40,000 for failure to comply. With all the talk about reducing the federal budget deficit, I hope this doesn't become the equivalent of an end-of-the-month parking ticket blitz by the local police department.

Well, the USCG has been warning mariners at least since 2005 (earliest reference I could find), that they need to use the AIS system properly. Of note, despite all the recent traffic in Facebook and Twitter, the USCG has not issued such a reminder in 2012's Local Notice to Mariners. As such, I would characterize the periodic reminder as just that, akin to saying, "look both ways when you cross the street." Which you should do...

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2010@aol.com or go direct to John Blevins, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing."



County Clerk Update

by SUFFOLK COUNTY CLERK
JUDY PASCALE

STARTING A BUSINESS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

State law provides that the County Clerk's Office files certificates for persons conducting business under an assumed business name. These are usually referred to as DBAs. DBA certificates must contain specific information. A Business Certificate form for filing can be obtained from various stationery stores, or by visiting the County Clerk's website at www.SuffolkCountyNY.gov/Clerk and clicking on online forms.

There are three basic DBA filings: Original; Amendments; Discontinuances.

Original DBA

Prior to filing an original DBA, the filer should review business names already assigned to ensure that the desired name is available. A list of current DBAs is available for public review on the County Clerk website. After checking on available names, and choosing a name that is available, a completed DBA form is filed in the Clerk's Office with a fee of \$35.00. The fee of \$35.00 covers the filing, a certified copy for the filer's record and a certified copy for a business bank account.

Amending a DBA

A DBA can be amended by filing a copy of the appropriate amendment form at the Clerk's Office. The form can be obtained from various stationery stores, or by visiting the County Clerk's website.

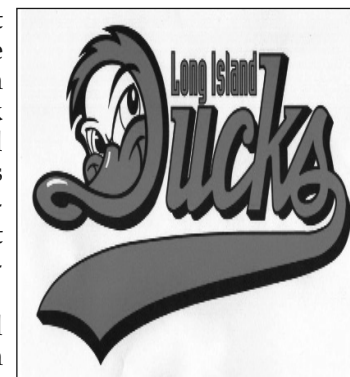
Amendments can only be filed to change the business name, the business address, or to add or remove partners. Amendments and discontinuances require a reference to the original or most recent filing. The filing fee for an amended DBA is \$35.00.

Discontinuing a DBA

A DBA can be discontinued when the individual or partners cease to conduct business. Like amendments, discontinuance requires reference to the original filing and amendments. Again, the form can be obtained from various stationery stores, or by visiting the County Clerk's website. There is no fee for filing discontinuance.

L.I. DUCK TICKETS ON SALE MARCH 24 Ticket windows open at 10:00 a.m.

The Long Island Ducks announced that tickets for individual Ducks games during the 2012 season will go on sale at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 24 at the Bethpage Ballpark box office. The ballpark will be the one and only place to get Ducks single game tickets until 2:00 p.m. that afternoon, so fans are encouraged to arrive early to ensure the best availability for all of this year's exciting promotional dates.



"Opening day of ticket sales is an event all to itself and helps signal that baseball season is right around the corner," says Ducks president/general manager Michael Pfaff.

A carnival-like atmosphere will descend upon Bethpage Ballpark as the Ducks welcome a new season of fun and affordable family entertainment. Players, coaches, and QuackerJack will join emcees The Wiseman & Frank of B-103 to take part in all the morning excitement from the ballpark as they meet fans and sign autographs. Send in the Clowns Entertainment will be providing fun and games for everyone in attendance, including a magician and caricaturist, while Monster Mini Golf will be handing out goodies to fans waiting in line.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union will also be on hand with giveaways and prizes for Ducks fans. Centerplate, the official concessions partner of the Long Island Ducks, and Bethpage will have coffee, hot chocolate, bagels and other items for fans as they wait to purchase the hottest baseball tickets on Long Island. Herr's, the official chip provider of the Ducks, will be on hand with their mascot, ChipHerr, to give out snacks. Pepsi will be providing soft drinks, and Tropical Smoothie Café will be providing smoothie samples for fans as well. More information regarding the 2012 promotional schedule and all of the fun taking place on Saturday, March 24 will be announced soon, so stay tuned to www.liducks.com for further updates.

Fans wishing to skip the lines on opening day of ticket sales are encouraged to contact the ticket sales department at (631) 940-3825, extensions 115 or 116, to find out how to become a season ticket or 10-game mini plan holder today.

The Long Island Ducks are members of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball and play their home games at Bethpage Ballpark. Opening Day is May 4. For further information, call (631) 940-DUCK or visit www.liducks.com.