

FROM THE CHIEF

Bob Melvin, DC-B

It is an unemotional experience to remind boating class participants that hunters are one of the most accident-prone groups of amateur mariners. Watching your 14-year-old grandson and his 14-year-old buddy (your "adopted grandson") depart the pier on their first "adult-unsupervised" waterborne duck hunting expedition...now that will get your heart pumping.

As I watched the boys depart downriver in the afternoon, with nothing but a 12-foot flat bottom boat between their young lives and the perils of the deep, all I could think was, "Have I taught them everything possible to help them survive whatever they may encounter? What if something happens to them?!"

The water temperature was in the fifties, and it would be after dark before they planned to return. I ran through my mental checklist of boating gear: firm instructions NOT to remove their inflatable PFDs, boat cushions, paddles, flashlights, radios, a cell phone, decoys, guns, and ammo. I found myself wishing for a *really long* piece of line that I could tie to the boat and hang onto for dear life! Oh well...you have to let go sometime.

Before they got underway, I insisted on giving the boys a full pre-departure briefing (to them, probably just "another of Grandpa's lectures"): their intended route, a radio check, a comms schedule, a review of safe gun handling, proper distribution of the boat load, and of course, a stern warning not to stand up in the boat! If I'd had a GAR (green-amber-red) checklist available, I'm sure I would have subjected them to a risk assessment as well (Hmm, too dangerous, guess you'd better stay at the pier today...). Of course, both boys have been through the Hunter Safety Course, and my grandson is a member of a Hunter Safety Shooting Team.

The final issue I addressed in my "navigation brief" was how to survive a fall overboard in chilly

water while clad in hip boots. Sometimes we forget to cover this issue in our classes – we forget that most waterborne hunters do not consider themselves "boaters"; the boat is only a means of transportation for them. Consequently, they can give little thought to water safety or especially unexpected falls overboard.

One of the best resources for duck hunters that I have found is listed below. This is a two-page brochure that is essentially a short course for duck hunters' survival. I would strongly suggest using it in your classes in areas with an open duck hunting season. It demonstrates very graphically the value of always wearing your PFD and how to stay afloat while wearing hip boots or waders:

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/safety/boatwater/duckhunterbrochure06.pdf

Luckily, my story has a happy ending! Long after dark, I still sat cold and anxious on the pier, squinting downriver, when at last I saw the shaky beam of their flashlight bend around the point. I watched eagerly, but the closure rate seemed painfully slow. When they arrived at last, I found out why: their electric trolling motor had died! Good thing I had reminded them to carry paddles.

And perhaps not as luckily for the intrepid hunters, the ducks also made out swimmingly: they all survived the adventure as well. But then again, they've had a lot more experience on the water.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Ohio Improves Boating Access.....	2
Uniformity of State Boating Education.....	2-3
NSBC Local RBS Grants Available.....	3
Auxiliary Beyond the Numbers	3-4
Kids Learn Boating Safety in Oregon.....	4-5
NTSB Safety Alert	5

OHIO IMPROVES BOATING ACCESS

Pauline Longnecker, BC-BSI

Boating access is one of the primary concerns for Ohio's recreational boaters. Well-managed, well-designed, and modernized marinas are of utmost important to the boating community. In response to this priority, the Ohio's Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft recently announced a new low-interest loan program to improve recreational boating access across the state. The program is called the Recreation Marine Loan, or "RML", Program.

The Recreation Marine Loan Program aims to help develop new recreational marinas and enhance existing marinas statewide, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. In simple terms, the program is a three-way partnership between a marina owner, the Division of Watercraft, and a private lending institution.

By obtaining pre-approval from the Division of Watercraft, a marina owner becomes eligible for a low-interest loan from a private lending institution. This economic stimulus encourages marina owners to undertake projects that they might have otherwise considered "unaffordable".

In return, the Division of Watercraft provides an economic incentive for the private lending institution to lower the interest rate to the borrower by placing a linked deposit with the lending institution.

In order to maintain the linked deposit, participating marinas must meet standards for maintenance and operation on an annual basis, standards designed to meet the recreational boaters' needs for safety, functionality, access, and enjoyment. Failure to comply with these performance indicators can result in termination of the linked deposit by the Division of Watercraft and the loss of the lower interest rate to the borrower.

Prior to endorsing a marina, the Division of Watercraft reviews the owner's application to ensure that the proposed project will benefit Ohio's recreational boaters.

The Program focuses on large projects, such as transient or seasonal marinas, where the public pays fees to cities or to private organizations in order to use their boating facilities. A sampling of projects eligible for funding through the RML Program include docks, breakwaters, riprap and erosion control, car/trailer parking, boating facility infrastructure, "one-time" construction dredging, and land acquisition. The RML does not support general planning or feasibility studies, conceptual

engineering and design, or ongoing administrative or maintenance costs.

"By obtaining pre-approval from the Division of Watercraft at any time, a marina owner can now apply for a low-interest loan from a private lending institution, making marina development more affordable," said Michael E. Quinn, acting chief of the ODNR Division of Watercraft. "This program offers a very creative solution to the biggest problem identified by Ohio boaters, which is improved boating access."



Ohio marinas such as this could benefit from the RML program.

Applications for the RML program have been so popular that they are now accepted year-round. Additional information is available on their website:

<http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/grant/default.htm>

What is your state doing to benefit its recreational boaters? I encourage you to get involved with your state liaison and share this "best practice" from Ohio.

Editor's Note: Information for this article was taken, in part, from Ohio Department of Natural Resources press releases.

HOW UNIFORM IS STATE BOATING EDUCATION?

Anthony Lorenc, DVC-BS

In 2005, the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) updated the Model Act for Mandatory Boating Safety Education. This was done in pursuit of uniformity among the various state boating education programs that exist across the country. NASBLA's "Model Act" for mandatory boating safety education provides guidelines for states to use when writing their own education laws.

The Model Act, as approved by the NASBLA education committee on September 21, 2005, advises states to create boating education laws that apply to operators born on or after a given date,

and to require motorboat operators to carry evidence of successful completion of a NASBLA-approved safe boating course (or equivalent test).

The Model Act also recommends that motorboat operators either

- Possess a valid license to operate a vessel issued by the United States Coast Guard or a maritime certificate issued by the Canadian government; or
- Possess a state-approved, non-renewable temporary operators' permit to operate a motorboat. The permit, valid for 60 days, should be issued with a certificate of number for the motorboat (whether the boat is new or was sold with a transfer of ownership); or
- Possess a rental or lease agreement which lists the person as an authorized operator of the motorboat; or
- Are not state residents, are temporarily using state waters for a period not to exceed 60 days, and meet any applicable requirements of the state of residency (or possess a Canadian Pleasure Craft Operator's Card); or
- Are authorized by the state to operate a vessel under supervised training.

So the guidelines in the Model Act are sound, but what about the results? Well, in 2000, only 17 states had some type of mandatory boater education. Six years later, this number has more than tripled, with 47 states or territories requiring some type of mandatory education. (Only Alaska, California, Idaho, Wyoming, South Dakota and Arizona still lack such laws.) Of the states and territories with boating education laws,

- 20 target only teens and children,
- 18 apply only to operators born on or after a specific date,
- 9 include all operators (or will include everyone after a phase-in period),
- 7 require education for PWC operation,
- 13 issue temporary certification for new boat owners, or those renting boats; and
- 7 require paddle craft registration.

The top 10 states with fewest fatalities per 100,000 boats have issued over 100,000 boating certificates. In contrast, the bottom ten, or the states with the most accidents per 100,000 boats, only issued 7,500 certificates. The connection is clear: boater education helps prevent accidents on the water, and mandatory boater education, while sometimes perceived as burdensome, clearly improves recreational boating safety.

LOCAL RBS GRANTS

AVAILABLE FROM NSBC

William "Griz" Grizwold, BC-BRG

The purpose of the National Safe Boating Council's (NSBC's) Local RBS Grant Program is to further the North American Safe Boating Campaign's efforts to reduce accidents and enhance the boating experience through public education, marketing and outreach, and expanding on the North American Safe Boating Campaign. Local projects of national significance will be considered as well. With funding from the Program, local efforts addressing boating safety concerns will be identified and grants of up to \$1,000 will be awarded to selected organizations to support those efforts.

According to the NSBC, their grants are designed to support programs such as "developing and printing posters, purchasing billboard posters and leveraging additional free billboard space for a local flotilla...educational displays, or promotional items with safe boating messages. Programs expanding on the North American Safe Boating Campaign will be given preference. The NSBC will not consider applications proposing to purchase items such as laptop computers, projectors, and other non-expendable equipment."

The closing date for the NSBC Local RBS Grant applications is January 25, 2007. For more information, including NSBC's specific program goals for their grants, see the NSBC's website:

<http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/rbs/guidelines.htm>

USCG AUXILIARY: BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Robert Fiedler, BA-BRI

The front page of the Coast Guard Auxiliary's national website states: "Each year, Auxiliarists volunteer more than two million hours benefiting boaters and their families". This is certainly an

impressive number, but what lies beneath that vast quantity of donated time? Who makes up the Auxiliary, and what specific value do these hard-working volunteers contribute to the Coast Guard's many missions?

Recently, I was asked by Robert Melvin, DC-B, to research this very topic, collecting several items of demographic information for one of our commercial partners. As I already knew (as a thirty-year-plus member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary), the Auxiliary contributes a great deal of time, money and activity to aid our parent organization, the Coast Guard, in ensuring effective Homeland Security. So what did I find? Read through the specifics below and see if you can find where your efforts fit into the puzzle.

As of the close of 2006, we have on the books approximately 30,600 members who range in age from 17 to over 90 years young!

Let's take a careful look at these age groups:

- 17- 29: 1100 members and a mean age of 24
- 30- 39: 1800 members and a mean age of 39
- 40- 49: 400 members and a mean age of 49
- 50- 59: 7800 members and a mean age of 59
- 60- 69: 9000 members and a mean age of 63
- 70- 79: 5000 members and a mean age of 70
- 80- 89: 1400 members and a mean age of 80
- 90- 99: 80 members and a mean age of 90

As you can see, the bulk of the Auxiliary membership is clustered around the 55-70 age group (just a bit older than the baby boomers). The interesting part about the age group breakdown is that contrary to stereotype, the Auxiliary does not consist wholly of the "white-haired". While many of that dedicated generation continue to support Auxiliary operations enthusiastically, there are an equal number of Auxiliarists under 35 years old.

These volunteers are members of local flotillas across the United States, including Puerto Rico, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands. The Auxiliary currently boasts 1077 flotillas total. In terms of membership distribution, Florida leads the nation with 4,100 Auxiliarists. California has 3,000 members; New York, 2,600; Massachusetts, 1,800; and New Jersey comes in fifth place with 1,700.

In support of the Recreational Boating Safety mission, which benefits "boaters and their families", in 2006, Auxiliarists:

- performed 115,000 Vessel Safety Checks

- graduated 86,000 students from our Public Education Classes
- assisted 6,500 boaters on the water
- saved the lives of 237 of those boaters

It is important to remember that every one of those Vessel Safety Checks represents "prevention in action" – time spent educating boaters who might otherwise need assistance on the water.

Our members also volunteer the use of their own vessels and radio facilities in support of Coast Guard missions. In 2006, the Auxiliary offers

- 4,200 Vessel Operational Facilities
- 2,550 Radio Operational Facilities
- 270 Aircraft Operational Facilities.

Auxiliarists, if you are curious about the makeup of your state's membership, try looking in AUXINFO's Demographic Cube. For other statistics, if you need additional information regarding the USCG Auxiliary, or you want to coordinate your commercial or non-profit program with the Auxiliary, contact our department chief, Bob Melvin, at deptchiefboating@gmail.com.

Auxiliarists, stand tall and be very proud of your accomplishments! – you are doing great work. And the next time you are sitting around the lunchroom at work and someone asks what you did last year, take out your copy of the Department of Boating's **WAVES** Newsletter and show them.



For the second year in a row, the Portland Boat Show will host the "Lifejackets for Juniors" Program where free life jackets will be given away to children age 12 and under. Children will learn key water safety skills through hands-on activities, provided by the Oregon State Marine Board.

The PFD Charitable Foundation – Keep Hope Afloat is providing 5,000 life jackets to kids attending the boat show (while supplies last). The Foundation was created for two specific reasons: Oregon law mandates children 12 and under must wear a U. S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times when on an open deck or cockpit of a vessel that is underway or being towed; and, water-related deaths and injuries are preventable if children wear life jackets when they are in or around the water.

The Foundation conducts fundraising throughout the year in order to purchase life jackets. These life jackets are then given to children during public events.

At the Portland Boat Show, children will take part in three activities focusing on boating safety: why it's important to wear a properly fitting life jacket; how to enter and exit an unstable boat and what to do if the boat capsizes; and basic rescue techniques highlighting why you don't jump into the water to rescue someone. The goal is for the child to understand the importance of wearing a life jacket and to feel comfortable on the water. All of the activities are fun and interactive. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children through the activities. Marine Board staff and other volunteers will also be available to answer any questions parents have during the activities.



A young girl tests various PFDs at a previous year's Boat Show

The Portland Boat Show is also hosting a new program – the PFD Exchange. Boaters can bring their used, outgrown, or unserviceable (broken straps, rips, tears, etc.) life jackets to the show for a tax-deductible donation. Coast Guard personnel will be on hand to determine which life jackets can be discarded and which ones can be recertified for use in statewide PFD (Personal Flotation Device) loaner programs.

"Many water-related fatalities are preventable if people wear life jackets," says Ashley Massey, Public Affairs Specialist for the Oregon Marine Board. "Life jackets help keep your head above the water and will help keep you warm a little longer." In 2006, 19 boating-related fatalities occurred in Oregon. Eighty-five percent of the victims were not wearing life jackets. "This is a tremendous opportunity for the entire family to learn water safety, have fun, and kick off the 2007 boating season with new life jackets for their kids," Massey adds.



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

Practice water safety daily!

- An average of 714 recreational boaters die each year – 508 of them by drowning
- About half (51%) of the drowning victims were in open motorboats
- Most of the victims (71%) were in boats under 21 feet in length
- The Coast Guard estimates 84% of these boaters would still be alive if they had worn PFDs
- About 80% of recreational boat operators involved in accidents had never completed a boating safety education course
- PFD wear works!! Boating accident data shows that when mandatory PFD requirements are adopted, boating fatalities go down.

For more information, visit www.nts.gov and click on the "Most Wanted" section under "Marine".



Distribution: All FC's, DCO's, VCO's with email addresses in AUXDATA, plus NEXCOM, G-PCB-2, and G-PCX-1 via direct email from DC-B. Upon receipt, FC's are asked to copy and provide copies to Flotilla members.