

## Watercraft and Vessel Safety

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF BOATING

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### FROM THE CHIEF

John Potts, DC-B

This issue of WAVES features liaison efforts between the Coast Guard Auxiliary and state governments. Most Auxiliarists probably aren't aware that two Auxiliary liaison officers, appointed by the District Commodore, are assigned to each U.S. state and territory.

The first is the Legislative Liaison Officer (LLO), supervised by Chris Ware, N-LL. The LLO deals with local, state, and national elected officials regarding upcoming *legislative matters*.

The other is the State Liaison Officer (SLO), supervised by Pauline Longnecker, DVC-BS as part of our National Boating Department. Her article in this issue, "Operation Safety First", gives an excellent overview of the ways in which a well-trained and motivated SLO can join forces with state boating entities to become a strong RBS force multiplier. The extensive State Liaison Officer document library is available at: [http://auxbdept.org/documents.php#\\_stateliasion](http://auxbdept.org/documents.php#_stateliasion).

Upon close examination, it is easy to see why there are two separate liaison officer positions for each state; the duties for each are wide-ranging and demanding.

Don't miss the other interesting articles keeping you abreast of partnerships negotiated and maintained by your National Boating Department. Winter is a great time to increase knowledge and creative thinking to implement strategies for the boating season ahead!

Also, don't forget that January is the month for all 2009 Flotilla Commanders and PE staff officers at the Flotilla, Division, District, and National levels to sign up for free subscriptions to *Soundings Magazine*! Log into <http://shopauxiliary.com>, click on "Members Only", enter your member number and E-directory password, and click on the logo to access these terrific benefits.



On November 8, 2008, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources awarded Pauline Longnecker, DVC-BS, the Outstanding Individual Volunteer Award.

The award recognized Mrs. Longnecker's length of service, scope of work, special project accomplishment, and leadership within the realm of her extensive boating safety education efforts in



Iowa under the auspices of the USCG Auxiliary. Due to Mrs. Longnecker's tireless work, countless Iowa boaters received meaningful safe boating education, contributing directly to fewer on-water casualties.

Mrs. Longnecker is very active with the Auxiliary on Iowa's rivers. She is frequently called upon to facilitate boating emergency efforts on the Missouri River. She continues to work with the Iowa Boating Safety Coordinator to increase public participation in boating safety.

Through her duties as Auxiliary Boating Department's States Division Chief, Mrs. Longnecker coordinates the efforts of all of the Auxiliary's State Liaison Officers (SLOs).

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## 2009 RBS Initiative Launched: **Operation Safety First**

Pauline Longnecker, DVC-BS

*Operation Safety First (OSF)* is a motivational initiative to help Auxiliary State Liaison Officers (SLOs) coordinate Auxiliary resources with those of their respective states' Boating Law Administrative staffs.

*Liaison efforts with each state must not be taken for granted – they are an important Force Multiplier!*

Every state has an Auxiliary State Liaison Officer (SLO). The SLO focuses on Recreational Boating Safety, whereas the Legislative Liaison Officer (LLO) focuses on legislative matters. The SLO Handbook (available online at: <http://auxbdept.org/documents.php#stateliason>) takes several pages to list the duties of the SLO. Those duties include the following:

“Arrange and coordinate an annual meeting between the Boating Law Administrator, DCO/DCOS and the RBS Specialist and/or the DIRAUX. This meeting should be arranged early in the year and should focus on:

- a. Reviewing the previous year's accomplishments with a view towards making improvements during the current year.
- b. Discussing the Auxiliary's current objectives and initiatives.
- c. Planning for the upcoming year.
- d. Coordinating Auxiliary support to the state's boating safety programs including enhancing the State-Auxiliary activities in support of National Safe Boating Week.
- e. Reviewing the state's educational goals and determining additional support needed from the Auxiliary public education (PE) program and the State's boating education program.
- f. Resolving any misunderstandings and problems. Establish guidelines for the handling of complaints from either the Auxiliary or the state with a goal of settling the complaints at the lowest level possible without damage to the Auxiliary-State relationship.



- g. Encouraging the BLA to schedule an annual vessel safety check (VSC) of all state vessels as a demonstration of the State's support of this valuable safety program.
- h. Reaffirming guidelines for conducting VSC at state launching ramps.
- i. Identifying areas where Auxiliary patrols are needed on sole-state waters. Inform the BLA and state officials of the proper request procedures including the documentation required by the DIRAUX for authorization of official orders for Auxiliary patrols on sole-state waters. Additionally discuss any funding issues pertinent to Auxiliary patrols on sole state waters.
- j. Requesting the BLA's support in publicizing the Auxiliary public education course using state publications to disseminate information to news media, marinas, game wardens, marine police, etc. “

As you can see from the above excerpt, the SLO needs a broad working knowledge of all facets of the District-level Auxiliary organization. Also, the SLO must have extensive organizational skills and be willing to work in planning sessions, both at the USCG/Auxiliary District level and at the state boating administration level.



**Operation Safety First** provides a descriptive name and logo (logo designed by Noreen Folkerts, D17) as tools for the SLO to use during 2009 in coordinating his/her RBS efforts. OSF also reminds District leadership of the advantages of coordinating RBS efforts with their state-level RBS counterparts.

Here are some examples of what close cooperation between the Auxiliary and various states accomplished during 2008:

### **STATE ONE**

A joint State/Auxiliary Water Safety Task Force assembled to prepare for an RBS thrust in 2008, focusing on recreation areas, education and

publicity, and teamwork with partners. Goals included

- Add new life jacket loaner boards
- Stencil “Wear It” messages at boat ramps
- Use Scouts and other volunteers to promote water safety
- Take water safety posters to all marinas
- Issue news releases and provide photo opportunities to promote RBS
- Expand the number of water safety programs in schools
- Establish a water safety poster contest for children
- Promote seven days of water safety during National Safe Boating Week
- Provide RBS exhibits at special events
- Promote a monthly water safety tip to news media
- Promote VSCs



The Auxiliary plans extensive training during 2008 for State Two’s Rangers in the areas of Advanced Navigation and SAR.

### **STATE THREE**

During extensive flooding in the center of the State Three, the Auxiliary established joint communications and worked side by side at marina checkpoints with the state’s Department of Natural Resources, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several other federal, state, and local agencies.

One Auxiliary Division assisted with a cleanup on the river where they saved three lives from a capsized boat.

Joint Auxiliary/State public affairs outreach continues, along with an increased number of state lakes where the Auxiliary provides operational support.

This year, several Auxiliarists received Service of Excellence Awards from State Three to recognize their many years of dedication to boating/water safety education.

Auxiliary services to State Three continue to grow as the State’s education program expands.



### **STATE TWO**

The Auxiliary SLO of State Two made a presentation to the State Park Ranger Conference where 70 Rangers were in attendance.

The presentation focused on the overall Auxiliary mission in that State, and the level and diversity of support provided by the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary conducted over 4000 safety patrols on that State’s waters, resulting in over \$200K in cost savings to the State.

## **What's In YOUR Legislature?**

Bill Griswold, BC-BLN

Auxiliarists are serious boaters, yes? We joined this outfit to learn more about boating, to help the Coast Guard, and to meet and befriend other folks who enjoy boating. This holds true all over the U.S.

OK, but, how informed are we about boating issues in our states or regions? How do you or I stand on matters like mandatory boating education, life jacket wear, navigation regulations, shore side facilities, fees and taxes on fuel, environmental impact, registration for non-powered boats, and many more boating-related issues?

Boaters, in general, are avid about their boating, but often not very informed about the issues that affect their pastime. Time and time again, state after state, when boating-related regulations surface, they often float by unnoticed by the majority of the recreational power-boating community – largely because the power boaters simply didn’t take the time to find out about or impact the legislative process.

In Florida, a mandatory boater education bill was defeated six years running, until a star singer was

involved in a fatal accident and personally lobbied the legislature to break the legislative logjam. We can't afford to wait.

So, you're an Auxiliarist and you heard about the fact that you can't directly lobby the legislature or Congress. But, you think, I'm also an American who has the right to speak up on any issue I feel is important...how can I do that? True, as an individual, you can't represent yourself as an official voice of the Auxiliary or the Coast Guard – you can't identify yourself with an official Coast Guard title or use Coast Guard stationery. But, you certainly can write, call, email or communicate as a "private citizen" American.

Legislators do take interest in boating matters. They are barraged with opinions from industry representatives, commercial fishermen, paddlers (who by the way are very active letting folks know their opinions), marinas and other special interests. But the largest "boating issues" group is power boaters (including Auxiliarists), and that silent majority seems to be pretty silent most of the time.



My message today, then, is to urge you to find out "what's shaking" in your legislature, either through your **Auxiliary Legislative Liaison Officer (LLO)**, your state's website, or your state's marine law enforcement officers. Once you find out, tell your friends in your flotilla, and make some noise. Our elected representatives deserve to hear our side of the issues.

Recently, BoatUS successfully campaigned to pass legislation in Congress exempting recreational boats from a variety of regulations and steep fines intended primarily for large commercial vessels, via the Clean Boating Act of 2008. BoatUS did it by mobilizing boaters across the country, urging them to communicate with their elected representatives.

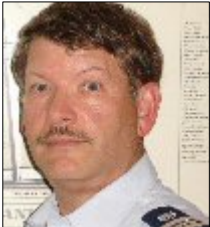
The more communicating we can do, the louder our collective voice will be. Please join the effort to pass sensible laws that will help the boating safety message, by learning the issues and voicing your opinions – as a private citizen.

## Welcome Aboard Bruce Johnson, BC-BLB

David Delich, DVC-BL

The Boating Department recently welcomed Bruce Johnson to its staff. Bruce is assigned as the liaison officer to two of our partners - BoatU.S. and Boater's World Marine Centers.

Bruce Johnson, PhD (cand.), MA, MSLS is a Boat Crew Coxswain, an Operations Mentor, a qualified Instructor, a Vessel Examiner, an Uninspected Passenger Vessel Examiner, and an Aids to Navigation Verifier. He has served as a Flotilla Commander and Division Vice Commander, as well as serving in staff positions at the Flotilla, Division, and District levels.



Mr. Johnson is a 24 year veteran of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. He has held a variety of management and team leadership positions, and is the principle developer of *Cataloger's Desktop* <[www.loc.gov/cds/desktop/](http://www.loc.gov/cds/desktop/)>, an online documentation tool used worldwide by professional catalogers and library automation specialists.

When not working on Auxiliary projects, Bruce is active in the Sea Scouting program of the Boy Scouts of America, and cruises the central Chesapeake Bay on his Catalina 30 sailboat.

## District 8 partners with HEARTLAND Boating Magazine!

Margaret Schultz, BC-BLB



The safety-oriented *Heartland Boating Magazine* recently signed a new agreement with the Auxiliary Association. This partnership specifically benefits the Auxiliary and Association members in all three regions of District Eight. District Eight member benefits include the following:

- Discounted annual subscription (now just \$13!)

- Free 3-month subscription for current Flotilla Commanders & PE officers at the National, District, Division and Flotilla levels.
- Free magazine copies for family anticipated to attend PE classes, upon request by FSO-PEs (subject to availability)
- Complimentary PE course listings in *Heartland Boating*...to list your courses, click on the "Contact Us" tab and then the "Submit Course Listings" option at the bottom.
- Publication of RBS-related articles...*Heartland Boating Magazine* has agreed to review submissions for publication promoting America's Waterway Watch, Vessel Safety Check, and other Auxiliary membership and opportunities to promote boating safety.

To access the Auxiliary *Heartland Boating* "Members Only" website: go to <http://shopauxiliary.com/> and click on "Members Only"...enter your member number and E-directory password...then just click on the *Heartland* logo!

# Paddle WHAT?

John Potts, DC-B

Paddleboarding? You're probably wondering, "What in the world is a paddleboard?" Paddleboarding has been gaining popularity; the sport may soon come to an area near you!

Traditionally, paddleboards were used to surf in the ocean, but now they're being used out past surf zones, and in lakes and rivers. Basically, to paddleboard, you stand up on a surfboard-looking device and propel yourself using a single-bladed paddle. You might wonder if that makes you, well, vulnerable to having a boating accident. Here's a photo taken by Linda Vetter during San Francisco's 2008 Fleet Week (used by permission):



Yep, you guessed it, the guy in the black wetsuit standing up is busy enjoying(?) the sport of paddleboarding!

It didn't take long before the U.S. Coast Guard was asked about paddleboarding – "Is a paddleboard a boat? Should a life jacket be worn? What about navigation lights and other safety equipment?" On 24 October 2008, the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Public Affairs issued the following news release:

"The U.S. Coast Guard in a decisional memo dated Oct. 3 classified paddleboards as vessels in accordance with Title 1 United States Code, Section 3."

This classification means that when used beyond the narrow limits of a swimming, surfing, or bathing area, no person may use a paddleboard unless in compliance with the Navigation Rules and applicable carriage requirements for this type of vessel. Carriage requirements include a Coast Guard-approved life jacket for each person on board, a sound producing device, visual distress signals, and proper navigation lights. A police-type whistle and a flashlight comply with these requirements. The Coast Guard has exempted the hull identification number requirement from the manufacturing standards.

It is important to note that paddleboards in the surf zone will not be affected by the decision and that the Coast Guard does not define the limits of surf zones.

As Auxiliarists go about performing RBS missions, we may encounter paddleboarding and will need to educate the boating public about this new sport... and how to make it safer and in compliance with Coast Guard regulations.



**Distribution: All FC's, DCO's, DCOS's with email addresses in AUXDATA, plus NEXCOM, CG-542, CG-5422, and CG-54222 via direct email from DC-B. Upon receipt, FC's are asked to copy and provide copies to Flotilla members.**