

Waves

Watercraft & Vessel Safety

The Newsletter from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
RBS Outreach Department

Paddles Up Great Lakes

A local safety campaign becomes the catalyst for broader paddlesports safety education

By the Navigator Staff
Photos by Paul Leuchner,
Flotilla 35, Grand Island, New York

In the last year alone, more than 340,000 kayaks and canoes were sold in the United States. With an investment of only a few hundred dollars enthusiasts can get out on the water, but an increase in fatalities of nearly 70 percent between 2005 and 2009, indicates most are doing so without the benefit of proper safety equipment and training. Recognizing the need to reverse this trend, the Coast Guard Auxiliary recently expanded its boating safety education to include the paddlesports community. "Paddlers are eager for safety training, but often unaware that the Coast Guard Auxiliary can help in this area," said Paul Leuchner, and experienced paddler and member of Flotilla 35, Grand Island, New York. "Reaching the paddlesports community is easier now because of a Memorandum of Agreement between the American Canoe Association and the Coast Guard Auxiliary which unites the two organizations in supporting paddlesports through public education, vessel examinations, water safety education and volunteer support. The Auxiliary has shown it's ability to adapt to

meet the changing needs of the boating public no matter the vessel. After all, a boater is a boater."

Leuchner and Dave Celani, another experienced paddler of Flotilla 35, Grand Island, New York, decided to take up the challenge at their local level. Borrowing from a similar event called "Paddles Up Niagara" established five years ago by Leuchner while serving on the Niagara River Greenway Commission, they enlisted longstanding partners including law enforcement and

special interest groups devoted to paddlesports for a new, expanded initiative they called "Paddles Up Great Lakes."

The event kicked off with a series of public affairs events surrounding Labor Day in 2010 at which volunteers promoted safe boating awareness to the paddlesports community. They met paddlers at local canoe and kayak launch sites and distributed to them safety liter-

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BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK, GRAND ISLAND, New York – Honoring a long standing Native American custom, paddles are raised skyward in a gesture of peace at Paddles Up Niagara 2010, Beaver Island State Park. It was this event that inspired the Ninth Coast Guard's "Paddles Up Great Lakes" safety campaign.



The 1964 Bob Dylan song had the refrain, "The times, they are a'changin'." The refrain certainly couldn't be more true of the Auxiliary. As of August 1st, the National staff has reorganized. One change is that the RBS Affairs Department changed its name to "RBS Outreach," which is a much more descriptive name for what we do. Another change is that the RBS Outreach Department (the "B" Department) is now in the Recreational Boating Safety Directorate with the Education and Vessel Examinations departments. Since the B Department works closely with the E and V departments, this change makes lots of sense. This should help us help you more effectively.

Another change this month is that WAVES has a new editor. Our previous editor, Heather Bacon-Shone, has done a wonderful job for the Auxiliary for many years. She is also doing a wonderful job for the U.S. Coast Guard, where she is an active duty Lieutenant, where she is currently serving as the commanding officer of a CG patrol boat. Since this commitment will be a more than full-time job for the next eighteen months, the time seemed right for a change in the WAVES Editor position.

I am very pleased to announce that Tory Boroff of Flotilla 22-4 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, has been appointed WAVES Newsletter Editor by National Commodore James Vass. Tory has been a skilled graphics designer and editor for Fort Wayne newspapers by day, and newsletter editor for her flotilla when off the job. She has past experience as a designer for the National Public Affairs Department, and is also very active in the AUXCHEF program. This is Tory's first issue of WAVES. I know we have much to look forward to in working with Tory.

Another change is the arrival of Victor Silvestrini, Jr. of Flotilla 5-6 in Fort Pierce, Florida as our new U.S. Power Squadron liaison. Vic splits his time between his homes in New Jersey and Florida, and is active with the Auxiliary in both locations. Vic is an AUXOP member, Coxswain, Instructor, and Vessel Examiner. He is also a 27-year member of the Power Squadron, and is uniquely qualified to help us work with our U.S. Power Squadron partners.

This issue includes a couple of articles that will be of great interest to Auxiliarists. Paul Leuchner's article, "Paddles Up Great Lakes," shows what D9E Auxiliarists are doing to reach out to the hundreds of thousands of paddlers in their district. This exciting area of boating presents Auxiliarists with a great opportunity to spread the recreational boating safety message to a boating community that we have traditionally under-served. This means not only pushing boating safety, but recruiting from their ranks.

Also in this issue is a wonderful article by Don Metz of West Virginia on sharing the boating safety message to children as a part of literacy outreach. This imaginative program introduces young people to wearing life jackets and other boating safety gear. Read more about it.

As you probably already know, the U.S. Coast Guard approved its new 5-year RBS Strategic Plan. Many of our boating safety efforts over the 2012-16 time period will be tied to this plan. Read more about it on the Coast Guard website at http://www.uscgboating.org/assets/1/workflow_staging/News/489.PDF.

So the times they are a'changin'. Have you helped out your local Sea Scout or Sea Cadet group? Did you participate in National Safe Boating Week? Have you done your fair share of vessel safety checks? Have you participated in boating safety expos? If you haven't done some of these THIS YEAR, then maybe times need to change for YOU!

Where can you get more information for reaching out to your community's boating community? Have a look at these websites:

- The Coast Guard's Boating Safety Resource Center, <http://www.uscgboating.org/>
- AuxBWiki, the Auxiliary's Boating Safety Partnership Center, <http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org>
- The Auxiliary's Education Department, <http://cgauxed.org>
- The Auxiliary's Vessel Examinations Department, <http://safetyseal.net/index3.asp>
- North American Safe Boating Campaign, <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com>
- Resources for Instructors and Vessel Examiners, <http://bdept.cgaux.org/peveresources.php>

Let us hear from you about your success stories and any problems you may have with promoting boating safety. The B Department is here to help. Write me at dir-b@bdept.cgaux.org.

It's time for a change. The time is NOW. If not you, WHO?

- Bruce Johnson, DIR-B

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ature. They showed paddlers how to fill out and attach waterproof owner identification labels with critical information a first responder would need to the inside of the hulls of their boats. Leuchner and Celani discussed with paddlers the importance of wearing life jackets, filing a float plan and preparing for cold water immersion. They also used the occasion to recruit students for the Auxiliary's new Paddlesports America course and they developed a list of contacts for future paddlecraft vessel safety checks. Through these public affairs activities the Auxiliarists interacted with nearly 300 paddlers.

Elsewhere in the Great Lakes area, other Auxiliary units actively promoted the "Paddles Up Great Lakes" safety campaign with boating safety partners that included the Army Corps of Engineers, the Lake County (Ohio) Metroparks and private outfitters.

"The importance of the Auxiliary in spreading the word about paddlesports safety cannot be understated. Working as a team has made a difference," said Frank Jennings, Jr., recreational boating



GRAND ISLAND, New York – Dana Kirk, Flotilla 76, Fairport Harbor, Ohio, demonstrates the proper adjustment of kayak foot pegs to Jacquilin Delker, Flotilla 61, Akron, Ohio.

safety program manager, for the Ninth District.

At the conclusion of the campaign Nancy Rudiger, Ninth Eastern district commodore, decided to add Paddlesports Safety to the fall 2010 training conference agenda where Leuchner, with Dana Kirk, Flotilla 76, Fairport Harbor, Ohio, presented the new Paddlesports Amer-

ica course to instructors and vessel examiners. After the course, members were treated to an on-the-water demonstration of safety and self-rescue techniques and were invited to test their own skills using paddlecraft loaned by a local outfitter. In evaluating the material, members agreed that the subject matter was not difficult to master and that the transition from traditional boating safety education to paddlesport education was quite easy. With new enthusiasm, members departed, ready to promote the Auxiliary's paddlesports safety initiative. ■



GRAND ISLAND, New York – Ron Baker, Dana Kirk, Flotilla 76, Fairport, Ohio, Douglas Hamernik, Flotilla 32, Hamburg, New York and Roger Kish, Flotilla 76, Fairport, Ohio discuss kayak performance characteristics and check out safety equipment used for self-rescue.



BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK, GRAND ISLAND, New York – Dave Celani, Flotilla 35, Grand Island, New York discusses paddlesports safety issues with local kayakers.

Boating Advisory Trailer Public Awareness Kit (BAT-PAK)

An outstanding recreational boating safety training aid

By Bruce Wright, RBS Specialist
District 7; Stacey Wright, 070 06 11 and
Bill Griswold, 070 04 03

In 2005, Bruce and Stacey Wright conceived the BAT-PAK, and within two years, the dream came true. Funded in part by the Office of Boating Safety, CG Headquarters, the 24' Wells Cargo trailer took shape. Two large doors reveal the boating safety display, put together by Bruce and Stacey, building it by hand and adding smart graphics explaining various pieces of equipment and their capabilities.

Initially, the display included a hydraulically operated boat simulator requiring a lanyard attached to a life jacket to operate and a TV screen to give realistic on water "feeling". Unfortunately, the hydraulic system proved to be a high maintenance item and that display was retired. BAT-PAK also has a built in bunk room so it can be set up at remote parks without nearby lodging. An on board generator keeps the display humming, and powers computers, cell phones, etc.

The trailer weighs in at 10,000 pounds and is pulled by a GSA leased Ford Dually Crew Cab truck. Wrapped graphics which prominently display the Wear It logo, plus other messages such as Boat Responsibly and America's Waterway Watch cover the trailer. The Wrights form the 2 person crew and wear Tournament Shirts, resembling NASCAR drivers, matching white pants and tennis shoes. The display logs about 100 days a year on the road, car-



ATLANTA – BAT-PAK Crew Bruce & Stacey Wright pose with Sammy the Sea Otter.

rying the boating safety message to a wide variety of events throughout the Seventh CG District. It is designed to fit in a C-130 cargo bay in case funds are available to take it to the islands of the Seventh.

Some of the events have included Boat Shows in Atlanta, Tampa, Fort

Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Savannah and Charleston, SC. The BAT-PAK is on the road during National Safe Boating Week, the July 4 holiday, career days, seafood festivals, antique boat shows, sporting events and at retail outlets featuring boating equipment, such as West Marine stores and Bass Pro shops. The thrust of the display is to attend events local flotillas are engaged in, supporting them while reaching out to the public.

Annually the display is refined to represent the latest in safety concerns. Most recent are displays on dive safety, paddle sport, flare safety and an interactive Digital Selective Calling Panel Display to help boaters to gain a better understanding of DSC. In addition to adding this to the BAT-PAK, Bruce has arranged to send a similar display to each District Sector.



ATLANTA –The BAT-PAK display is shown in full at the Atlanta Boat Show in January, 2011.



LABELLE, FL – Bruce Wright, along with the Swamp Cabbage Princess, demonstrate the proper way to wear a PFD during the Swamp Cabbage Festival in February, 2011.

Currently, the display features:

- Flare Display and interactive panel
- CO and Propeller Danger Display – with a mock up transom, exhaust, prop
- Various Inflatable Life Jackets are displayed, one has one half inflated, the other half stowed
- EPRIBS & PLB's, with descriptions of their capabilities
- Strobe lights and Fire Extinguishers

The two person BAT-PAK crew can be augmented by local volunteers who have current knowledge of State and Federal Boating Laws and regulations.

Replacing the boat simulator is Sammy's Den, an interactive Kids Center located in the aft part of the trailer. Sammy the Sea Otter lives here, he is an interactive remote controlled Robot Character that can speak to children, adults, and converse with them. In addition, there is a full size Sammy the Sea Otter costume on board. Sammy's Den also features a Flat Panel 52" monitor for using DVD and interactive gaming consoles. Navigation related Wii games provides kids opportunities to understand navigation buoys and life jacket wear.

Other Sammy activities include coloring books featuring water safety and soap boat building to understand buoyancy.

The diving display features Oscar the Dive Mannequin displaying all the latest in dive safety gear, and of course Jack, the 8 foot inflatable life jacket. An external sound system helps at boat show presentations.

The BAT-PAK has been featured in conjunction with Florida Fish and Wildlife's Life Jacket for Life Tour and has logged an average of 17,000 miles annually over the last 4 years. 900,000 people experienced a Venue Impact Awareness (persons who view the various safety messages) by seeing the display last year, over 2.5 million over the last 4 years. A new coloring book will be launched, designed from entries to a contest for school children throughout the District during a Safe Boating Week/BAT-PAK initiative.

Bruce and Stacey Wright have contributed countless hours and weekends taking this marvelous display around the District. Visitors, young and old learn so much by looking at the displays and talking to the crew. This has been a terrific asset to the boating safety message, and could be copied in your area. If you ever get the chance to see this BAT-PAK, don't pass it up. ■



The RBS Outreach Department

Mission Statement

The RBS Outreach Department, under the program guidance of the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety and the direction of the Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Directorate, provides assistance to Coast Guard units, Auxiliary National Departments and Auxiliary District organizations in their efforts to promote and support recreational boating safety programs. RBS Outreach provides both informational and fiscal resource services to the Auxiliary membership. In addition, the RBS Outreach provides liaison with State Boating Law Administrators and other recreational boating safety organizations, i.e., state, federal and the public sector.

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Literacy Council Story Walk

By Donald J. Metz, II BC-BSA

Each year the Marion County Literacy Council holds a Story Walk for Parents and Children in Marion County, WV. The Story Walk consists of parents and children walking from station to station and being read a story from various groups and guest organizations. My wife Donna is in charge of the event and every year it gets larger and larger. The event is held in downtown Fairmont, WV on Main Street if weather is permitting. There are different stations with storyboard drawings of the books being read. This year I was helping her with ideas when I suggested that it would be a good teaching event for water safety. I called Jim Martin and Jeff Sencindiver from our Flotilla 082-09-07 and plans were made. I ordered all the comic books and water safety books, stickers, bookmarkers and coloring books for children that the National Supply center would let me have, the National Supply Center loaded me up.

The event was held April 2, 2011 from 1000 to 1400. The weather was bad so it was held indoors. The children and their parents went from booth to booth in groups of 10 and had to get a sticker to win prize for visiting all the attendees. Wal-Mart a girls and boys bikes for a drawing and other merchants supplied drawing prizes. Our Flotilla brought life jackets and other items for demonstration. We talked to around 15 groups for over 150 children on water safety. During one of the other story

sessions I listened to had a drawing of a boy in a row boat and a little boy named Robbie said to his mother. Look Mom that boy does not have his life jacket on. Did we make an impression, you bet. I am writing about this event cause it does not fit the classic arena that we appear in. As it turns out it was one of the most successful events that our Flotilla has been a part of. I am sending with this pictures of the event, I hope that we continue to search out of the box to spread our message. ■



FAIRMONT, West Virginia – Jim Martin, a member of 082-09-07, is shown teaching boating safety from the *Boating and Water Safety for Kid's* publication at the second annual Literacy Story Walk Event. This event is held to promote literacy among elementary and middle school age children.

Gold Medalist Mark Spitz Joins National Safe Boating Council as National Spokesperson



Gold medalist Mark Spitz

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) is excited to announce that Mark Spitz, nine-time gold medalist swimmer and motivational speaker, will serve as the spokesperson for the 2011 North American Safe Boating Campaign. In addition to his support

of the "Wear It!" campaign, Spitz will appear in a Public Service Announcement on behalf of the NSBC reminding people to always wear a life jacket while boating or participating in other water activities.

"Being a swimmer isn't just a hobby, it's been my life's passion. I know the importance of boating safety and how important wearing a life jacket is," Spitz said. "I want to encourage everyone who spends time on the water to always wear a life jacket."

Spitz has been a swimmer his entire life. He started swimming at the age of two when his family lived in Hawaii. He began competing at the age of six and grew into one of the most successful swimmers and decorated athletes of all time. A two-time Olympian, Spitz won nine Gold medals and numerous Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and NCAA medals.

After a successful career in the water, Spitz is now a motivational speaker, author, parent and avid boater.

The National Safe Boating Council is elated to have such a decorated athlete like Mark Spitz to participate in the "Wear It!" campaign. We know Mark's positive message will serve as inspiration that there's no reason why everyone can't have fun on the water while also choosing to always wear a life jacket. Even the most experienced and talented swimmers in the world like Mark Spitz still choose to "Wear It!"

Remember, always wear your life jacket each and every time you are on the water.

If you haven't already, follow us on Facebook and Twitter and help us spread the word about life jacket safety.

For more information, visit www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com.