



**U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY**  
**FLOTILLA 085-02-08**  
**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WISCONSIN**

**Serving the Recreational Boating Community of the Upper Mississippi Valley**

**Comments from Our Flotilla Commander**

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Howdy from the Helm

There is no doubt about it....its summertime on the Mississippi. The weekend boat traffic on the river has been thick, the mayfly hatch up and down the river has been thick, and let me say the weather is HOT. Remember it's July and we waited for this all winter long. This is the time of the year we should be at our best, focusing on Boater Safety and Education. We have seen some reports on Recreational Boater Safety visits and Vessel Safety Checks. Thank you all for the effort you have put out so far this year. It is greatly appreciated and noticed in a big way up the Chain of Leadership. Keep up your visits so we can keep our safety brochures and boater regulations in front of the boating public. If our displays are full the boater will take the information.

With all the boat traffic our marina's and boat launches has been very busy. Looking at recent reports from Sully, you guys are just not watching the busy launches....we are providing a great service to our

boating community by conducting Vessel Safety Checks. We have conducted over 95 VE's so far this year and we have plenty of time to increase the numbers of checks we do. This year the Flotilla invested in two double sided portable signs advertising "FREE VESSEL CHECK TODAY" I really think it helps in getting the people interested in doing the check. I have been out a number of times this year using the signs and wearing my PFD and had no problem keeping busy. Come out and join the fun we have two events scheduled in the near future. July the 19th we will be at the Beer and Brat McGregor doing inspection from 10am - 2pm and in Bagley at the marina on July the 22nd at the marina from 10am -2pm.



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**Flotilla Floats New Facility**



Steve Gress and Dan Brewer aboard the Kaylee-Annie

At the July meeting the flotilla showed off its newest asset the Kaylee-Annie. Our new facility, a 22 foot Misty Harbor pontoon boat, is owned by Flotilla Commander Steve Gress. The vessel has been accepted as a Coast Guard Auxiliary Facility and was officially placed into service on Saturday. She is ready to receive orders and begin operations.

Members are encouraged to get involved in the boat crew program. Currently we only have one coxswain, Steve, and two crewmembers, Dan and Joanie. That puts a big limitation on availability and what we can accomplish. We currently have two more members working on their boats to get them accepted as facilities but with only one crew we can still only send out one boat.

## Public Affairs

What is “Public Affairs and who’s responsibility is it? The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a public service organization and as such our customers and our supporters are one – the boating public. We need their support and co-operation in order to accomplish our mission. To that end we need to earn the respect and trust of the public. That is where public affairs comes in. But just who is “public affairs”? The answer is simple, we all are. Sure the PA officer represents the Flotilla,

writes articles and is in contact with the media but each of us impacts our public image by our performance, actions, the way we wear our uniforms, and by our accomplishments. Should a reporter or citizen ask about your involvement in an Auxiliary operation you may answer as long as you are accurate. Otherwise refer them to the proper person. Be proud of the Auxiliary and feel good about what you do, it shows.

## My Two Cents Worth By: A J Sullivan

I have been listening to various complaints, both mine and of others, about the changes we keep seeing in the Auxiliary. Changes can be good, if it betters the operation, or bad, if it makes matters worse. And either way change is stressful. However before one decides good or bad one must first decide if “change” is really taking place.

In any organization each “generation” teaches the new generation how to conduct business. The problem is the routine tasks tend to erode over time and become more of what we think it should be instead of what the policy really is. As time goes on this erroneous policy or procedure slowly becomes the standard which is what is passed on to the upcoming generation further establishing it in the organization as correct policy. The rub comes when someone actually reads the manual and realizes what we have been doing is incorrect, and probably has been so for years, and brings that to everyone’s attention. Now we make the necessary “correction” which comes rather suddenly, compared to how we got there to begin with, and we are faced with that dreaded “change in policy” which in the end it is not. Having been there before in other organizations I have a tendency to read the manual which has caused interesting conversations with those senior members who hadn’t read the manual at least in a long time or are simply doing business as they were taught. Some gracefully read the manual and agreed with me or were able to point out where my interpretation was in error. Some on the other hand had no sense of humor at all. I could read their mind, “who is this new guy think he is telling me I’m not doing things right?” Or “read the manual? Heck I wrote the manual!”

Change is inevitable as we learn new, safer and more efficient ways of doing business. No one is particularly fond of change, including me, but before you get your dander up make sure 1) It really is change and 2) It is purposeful and positive change.

On another note: This weekend I came to a realization. At times my enthusiasm has waned over all the time spent training, learning, and meeting more requirements. It does get old. Our flotilla has been at this for 5+ years now. Then while on a routine patrol in LaCrosse, the fun part of crew training, we received a radio call from a river barge. The captain reported some kayakers playing around dangerously close to the moving barge. We went to check it out expecting to find some kids horsing around unknowingly flirting with death. What we found were three adult women in two kayaks who were caught up in the current and wind and being swept downstream trapped in the main channel. The only one wearing a PFD, though not fastened, was 4-5 months pregnant, unable to swim alone and quite scared. The other two were in a two seater and sitting on their PFDs! They were already a mile and a half down from where they were supposed to be with no hope of ever getting back and darkness was only an hour or so away. Their fate was pretty grim. Their choices were A) get run over by the next barge, B) get swamped by a passing speed boat or C) go over the next dam. D) a night in the woods as mosquito dinner was probably their most favored outcome. We were able to rescue these ladies and return them to their families.

See **Two Cents** – page 4

## **Commander** - continued from page 1

Last but not least we have a new marketing tool to show the community what the Auxiliary is all about. We will now have a presence on the Mississippi on a regular basis. The Kaylee - Annie is ready for patrol, our 1st will be leaving the Winneshiek Marina at 1630 hours on July 23rd. I think having this facility on the water will be a great recruiting tool for our Flotilla.

We are off to a great start this summer.....we got on the water earlier this year, a lot of activities, two new members and plenty of opportunity to promote Boater Safety.

Have a good summer  
Steve Gress ,FC

## **It's Dues Time Again!**

Well it's that time of year again just a tad sooner than in past years. Dues for 2016 are due by August 15<sup>th</sup>. That means you need to get them to Sue BEFORE August 15<sup>th</sup> so she can get them in by the deadline.

The amount is a tad higher also, \$47.00.

Here is a breakdown:

Flotilla: \$6.00  
Division 2: \$2.00  
District 8WR: 39.00

Dues were increased due to shrinking budgets and sequestration. One third of the monies generated are to be used to help fund programs to support members, improve IT services and training materials.

Checks should be made out to "USCG Aux Flotilla 02-08" and sent to Sue Tiller at 524 S. State St. Prairie du Chien, WI. 53821, dropped off at Tiller Furniture or at the latest given to Sue at the August 8 Flotilla meeting.

## **Quote of the Day**

"Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than those you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from safe harbor. Catch the wind in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

— Mark Twain, Great American Writer

**Two Cents Worth** – continued from page 2

My point is, were it not for all those hours of training, studying, personal expenditures and government bureaucracy there would have been no auxiliary vessel and thus the fate of three women and one unborn child would have most likely been quite different. Our Flotilla is finally approaching adulthood, able to stand on our own. My enthusiasm has returned, we do have a grand and honorable purpose. Hang in there for the Flotilla and all those using the river.

Sully

**FSO Positions Filled**

James C. Wenzler of Johnson Creek, WI is taking over the positions of FSO-MT and FSO-HR. While James is fairly new to the flotilla he is not to the Auxiliary. James comes to us with 8 years as an Auxiliarist with flotilla 43-01 in District 9 (Milwaukee). As FSO-MT/HR, James will head our membership efforts in recruiting, personnel and training. Be sure to contact James for your membership and training needs .

**Calendar**

- July 18 – VSC Day
- July 23 – MOM Patrol
- July 28- MOM Patrol
- July 30 – MOM Patrol
- Aug 1 – VSC Day
- Aug 8 – Flotilla Meeting
- Sep 12 – Flotilla Meeting

Note: MOM = Marine Observation Mission (river patrol) Contact Steve for more information



James C. Wenzler, FSO-MT/HR

**SEMPER PARATUS**