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## Commodore's Message

**David Starr**

### MEMBERS OF 8TH WESTERN RIVERS REGION

Greeting Shipmates. Well we just about have half of 2015 marked off the calendar. They say time passes fast when you are busy, so I must be extremely busy, as it seems yesterday was 1 January 2015 when I was officially given the helm as Commodore of the 8<sup>th</sup> Western Rivers Region.

Reading reports, attending meetings and visiting with fellow Auxiliarists from around the District, I feel we are making way.

A lot of thought, work, and effort went into promoting National Safe Boating Week. Thank you.

While Boating Safety classes are still being conducted, we are shifting into more of an operational on the water mode.

Some of our divisions have been blessed with too much rain too fast, limiting or preventing boating operations, while other divisions are full speed. Whatever the speed, I urge everyone to think first and be careful. Your safety and the safety of your fellow Auxiliarists are Job One.

Lets talk "OPPORTUNITY". The dictionary defines it as an "advantageous chance" and/or "favorable conditions".

I look at the Coast Guard Auxiliary as an opportunity to do many, many things. The list exceeds my vocabulary but the easy ones are training, education, skill development, travel, socializing, verbalizing and yes, some folks' favorite ... criticizing.

(cont. from page 1)

For the deep thinkers, how about the opportunity to discover your purpose through service and contribution? We serve our communities and our country through our contribution of time, treasure and effort. Always remember that, as Auxiliarists, some of us literally save lives while others do it in a more figurative manner! I would challenge you to find a more worthy purpose.

Short story. This past weekend I was part of a two day, three surface facility operation on our local waterway. To find an adequate launch/recovery ramp. we had to operate from an out of the way state park located in a very rural area.

As the last boat crew was recovering their boat and getting it secured for trailering home, I was discussing the weekend events with a coxswain from another crew when a fisherman came walking by us. This individual looked like he had been camped on the river a day or two...shorts, unbuttoned shirt, tennis shoes, and a buckled life jacket.

In his left hand, he had his rod and reel. In his right hand, he was holding a can of beer and a stringer with one single catfish that weighed maybe 3 pounds. His grip on the can of beer and the line, which held the fish, was such that his arm was extended out at almost shoulder level giving the appearance he was showing off his catch...or maybe the can of beer.

The fisherman was clearly proud of his catch and we complimented him on his catch and jokingly asked when the fish fry was going to happen. He responded he had to work for that fish all day and was really going to enjoy his meal.

Then the coxswain took the OPPORTUNITY to say, "I want to compliment you for wearing your life jacket while you were near the water. Because you are safe, you will be able to go fishing again and again." The fisherman grinned, agreed, and continued on his way.

In the last six weeks in my home area, we have had two lives lost because people got too close to the water's edge and the bank gave way under them due to all of the rain we have received. They weren't wearing life jackets and they drowned.

I am proud to be associated with Auxiliarists like the coxswain mentioned above, as well as other Auxiliarists throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> Western Rivers Region, who have clearly found their purpose in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

When will an OPPORTUNITY come before you, and more importantly will you take it...to possibly save a life?

Semper Paratus,

David Starr  
Commodore



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**District Captain South** - Tracy Delaughter

**District Captain East** - Butch Luhrsen

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Article sent *directly* to  
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## Publication Deadlines

**Midnight:**

**March 25**

**June 25**

**September 25**

**December 29**

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<https://auxofficer.cgaux.org/auxoff/index.php>

# Director of Auxiliary

**Kristina Dell'Orco**

**Greetings Western Rivers Region Auxiliary!**



I hope everyone survived the cold winter and enjoyed the short spring. I know a large portion of our region is experiencing high water but I hope that when the opportunity arises, you will all get underway and actively promote the RBS mission. We still have plenty of SAMA funding this year, so please get out there and promote recreational boating safety and represent the Coast Guard.

My staff has been really busy as we begin assuming the administrative duties for the Auxiliary members of Eighth District Eastern Region. In early May, Ms. Laura Simpson assumed the financial aspects of D8ER as we lost our billeted Active Duty Storekeeper. Laura has been working tirelessly to learn the new job and assist both regions. You should continue to see minimal impacts to our region but please be aware that some administrative items may take a little longer than normal so please be patient.

Thank you to the members of Division 5, who planned and executed an amazing Spring District Training event in April in Branson, MO. We had really good participation and some highly beneficial training. I look forward to our next District Training event scheduled for the Spring 2016 in Peoria, IL with Division 8 as the host division.

Thank you for your continued volunteerism, service and dedication to helping others.

Stay safe and keep up the good work! Semper Paratus!

# Captains' Reports

## Stephen Bein - District Captain North

WOW, what a month this has been with constant on and off rain storms along with the wailing of storm sirens. I spent a week at Boy Scout Camp with my scout troop, and it rained most of the time. On my way home, I observed that the Rock River was out of its banks in several places along with the Mississippi. It looks as if high tide has arrived and then some.

Atta boys are in line for DCDR Neil McMillin and the members of Division 11 for their work on video PSAs for National Safe Boating Week. They teamed up with Jason Davis, a former KSTP TV reporter, the USCG MSD, USACE, MN DNR, and the St. Paul Power Squadron. The videos are showing on Facebook.

The division also conducted ramp days, and this effort will continue into June. In addition, they also participated in the Minnesota Safety Council Safety Safari day. Featured were life jacket demonstrations for kids and the distribution of safe boating literature. Estimated outreach was approximately 500 children and adults.

Division 2, under the leadership of DCDR David Cassell, is conducting a Boat Crew Training Academy. They are conducting many hours of "underway training" on the mighty Mississippi River. When not training, they have set up many booths at different events along their AOR in support of safe boating and the recruitment of new members. They are also expecting Coastie to appear at some upcoming events.

Division 9 is planning an OPTEX for 25 July at Sunset Marina, Rock Island, IL. The exercise will commence after the division meeting and OTO Kvistad's PPE presentation. A QE event is being planned for Flotilla 9-6 on 18 July. Several crew/coxswains will be given their three-year check rides. This will be a division-wide effort due to the need for sufficient crew and coxswains to assist.

It is also noteworthy that the three divisions have approximately 20 new members in the pipeline awaiting SECCEN clearances.

Stephen Bein DCAPT-N

## Tracy DeLaughter, District Captain South



“When two turtles showed up with their rolling luggage I knew it was time to order the Gopherwood.” Noah

Well, In the South we had a very interesting May and early June with the weather of biblical proportions i.e. rain for 39 days and nights, tornados, flooding on a truly massive scale and that was just in Oklahoma! Divisions 5 and 15 did not get off much lighter themselves, as what was left over from Oklahoma we just sent on to them to “share” the rain / pain.

Even so with the wettest weather ever, Oklahoma is now just about out of the drought and has only three lakes that did not get 100% full. All the other lakes are so full you can’t get on them. See Photos (links to photos to get FULL picture and see construction diagram of the “Ark”)  
[http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=red+river+flooding+at+I+35&ei=UTF-8&fr=w3i&type=W3i\\_DS.202.0\\_0.Search.20131251.20034.0.77.0](http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=red+river+flooding+at+I+35&ei=UTF-8&fr=w3i&type=W3i_DS.202.0_0.Search.20131251.20034.0.77.0)



Even with all the monsoonal rain that came down, we still accomplished a lot of training, establishing new certification/ qualifications and getting members on the track to serve in operational mission areas. I’ll start with the first activity I attended in April which was a really great OPTUNE event on Lake Dardanelle in Arkansas with Division 15. There was training in the evening, NOTE: This should have been a foreshadowing of events to come as it rained almost all night that Friday night except that we were lulled into complacency as the weather on Saturday was absolutely gorgeous! Pat Lewis, the DCDR, must have sore knees as she prayed for better weather along with the rest of her operations team.

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The operations members in Division 15 set a course of action that took many boats and even more crew to perform on Lake Dardanelle. It was quite interesting being on the lake with the lock and “Nu-clar” power plant so close. I had a great crew that knew what they were doing and were learning as much as I in doing it. We got sorta lost on the get go but quickly made up on the backend and finished with a perfect score. That’s my story and I am stickin’ with it. Thanks Division 15 for a really great training opportunity!! It was muchado apreciado! “Hey crew! Remember to flemish those lines now. Ya Hear?!”

After Division 15’s event, Divisions 5, 15 and 16 sent members to the first Active Duty / Auxiliary Boat Crew College in Sallisaw, OK where the USCGC MUSKINGUM is homeported. Mike Boyce, Julie Rush and Bob Evans from Division 5 and Monte Anderson from Division 15 along with Stephen Lange from Division 16 attended. They worked with SN B.D. Shuler, SN J.H. Derryberry, Sn D.P. Stevens and FA J.A. Minervini from the cutter. We team-taught the course using the experience and knowledge of the cutter senior personnel as well as Auxiliary team members to complete the 6 day course. We broke it into two weekends and by the end of it we were checking each other for webbed feet because of all of the rain we had endured at that point.

Week two brought us assistance for the on-the-water work from Division 15 in the form of Curtis Cutler and Blaine Selby and from Division 16 Michael Chesser and Elbert Bently. We launched the Aux facilities and then tied up to the cutter as we broke bread together before the cutter launched their Skiff facilities to come out and participate in the training. We practiced stern and side tows, Man overboard (MOB), search patterns, compass steering, etc. We had much fun and accomplished a great deal for the crew program, but more importantly, we gained new friends and opportunities to serve together for the common good. We are looking at doing another training opportunity with the cutter in the fall or spring if we can get the material together. We are looking to do an AtoN training either underway or shore side at Sallisaw, Ok for those that want to help with the AtoNs on the MKARNS. If you are interested, keep your email boxes open to receive the information when it arrives, and sign up quick, as the spots will most likely go lickety-split when it starts.

Logistics was an issue since there is no lodging really near the cutter. To keep the cost reasonable to the attendees, located not too far from the cutter is the 6X6 Ranch with more than enough lodging for all at minimal cost.

Training was the word and getting it done was the mission. The following photo essay is the training that went on at the Boat Crew College-



(cont. from page 8)

TCT training for the BCC members both Active Duty and Auxiliarists at the 6x6 Lodge after dinner.



Courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

Courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

Day one- getting ready to go to the cutter for the first day  
Left to right- Mike Boyce, Tracy DeLaughter, Stephen Lange, Bob Evans, Julie Rush



Courtesy of James DeLaughter

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We arrived at the Shore Side station that is going through a refit.

And we started our class sessions indoors out of the wet weather – Note rain on the window. It lasted all day and the room was buzzing as everyone’s “weather alerts” were going off all the time.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

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After a morning of Powerpoint training, it was nice to get to the galley on the cutter for some of FS1 Michael Chattin's excellent offerings. Michael at the sink on KP while Rush, Lange, Stevens and Schuler clean their plates.



After the lunch, it was going to be hard to stay awake so we went straight into knot tying / marlinspike activities that got a little competitive ... to say the least but it was all in good fun and learning. The students showed each other several different ways to get the same knot and by the end most could do it eyes closed behind their back style with no hesitation at all. Auxiliarist Evans and SN Shuler took on Auxiliarist Anderson and SN Stevens in a "will this knot hold" tug 'o war. SN Stevens looks to make sure he has a Square Knot while SN Shuler and SN Quade look on to make sure it was done correctly.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

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SN Quade shows Auxiliarist Boyce and SN Shuler how to make a loop correctly for a Bowline. SN Stevens, FA Minervini, Auxiliarists Lange and Rush listen to BM 1 Howard, a Heavy Weather Coxswain, go over the basics of navigation with lessons he had learned in Alaska. One group was working on marlinspike while another worked on navigation in the other room so no one was left twiddling their thumbs.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

A break in the rain on Sunday brought us this sight. The small boat dock completely covered up with the rain of the night before and today. Swimming is put off until next session.



(cont. from page 12)

Session Two – Two weeks later-

Getting ready to go on the water means that there is more training to do before we GET to the water so the AUXFACs were brought into a “side tow” situation on their trailers and the training began. Remember when on a boat always wear your life jackets!



Julie and Monte were an in-tune team working so quickly they were just a blur practicing their side tow! It was “all ahead full” until the sun started to set and we went to the lodge to keep practicing the marlinspike for the next day’s work.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

Back to the Lodge for rope...uuuhh..er “LINE” work.

Julie and Monte figuring out the bitter end and standing end of their practice line while Jerry Geddes contemplates the meaning of life in the background. Jerry gave the new trainees some very good advice and pointed out some things to think about before he started his work the next day as QE for one that found themselves in the dreaded pit of hell known as REYR, me!( Note: I did get out the next day thank goodness!

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After a 6X6 Breakfast consisting of scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, chili, cheese, biscuits, Blaine Selby and Michael Chesser finish off their coffee in preparation to head to the CGC MUSKINGUM for the day's activities.

Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter



Upon arrival the first activity was to prepare for the swim test, Active Duty must do it in a dry suit and Auxiliary did it in Anti-Exposure (Gumby) suits. BM1 Scott Self gives the safety talk to those that will be making the swim and explains the CG way of doing the swim.



In the water, Auxiliarist Rush and Active Duty SN Derryberry and SN Stevens are trying to figure out how to make the swimmer hook up while Auxiliary Safety boats are in the background ready to come in at a moment's notice to assist. Practicing with the Life Straupe is SN Shuler and Auxiliarist Anderson lifting SN Derryberry out of the water. Practical usage of the safety gear we carry means we need to use it under conditions we will face on patrol such as people that are waterlogged and potentially unresponsive. It isn't as easy as it seems. Blaine says, "Triple dunk 'em then haul them up! Use the buoyant inertia to assist getting them up and out."

If you find yourself in the water through an accident and not "noodling" for some strange reason, you may want to be located and what better way to achieve that than to fire off a few flares. The Cutter crew used the commercial ones that they receive and then used the ones that were provided by West Marine as expired flares for practice so they would know what the general public uses for flares and signaling.

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Flares burn hot and a requirement for the cutter crew was to wear a cotton type glove to ward off the heat of the flare as it burned down the shaft. The Auxiliarists were impressed with the personal pen style signal flares that the Active Duty use to signal when they are in distress.



Auxiliarist Rush, SN Stevens, SN Schuler and another Active Duty member fire off flares over the operational area to learn how they operate. Practical exercises, while not always practical, often lead to a better understanding of real world actions that need to be taken to have a successful mission. Jose Riera DSO-AV and Jerry Geddes QE along with BM1 Howard oversee the activities of the other students and pick up a few tips of their own during the water exercises.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

After a lunch and a rain delay, the activities got us underway for the water portion of the scheduled activities. I am sure that Jose would have shared the table if anyone wanted to sit with him.



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CGC MUSKINGUM lowers the first of its two Skiffs for water operations while Curtis Cutler, Coxswain, Blaine Selby, Crew and Jose Riera, mentor, prepare to get underway with the training of crew-in-training Julie Rush.



Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter

Meanwhile, Coxswain Michael Chesser and Crew Elbert Bently got underway with Mentor Tracy DeLaughter and Crew Candidate Monte Anderson to start learning the finer parts of taking a boat in a stern tow that does not have a tow eye that is reachable.

After studying and working hard for two weekends, the students of Boat Crew College 05-2015 graduated to complete their training at their local units and had a final steak dinner at the 6X6 Ranch with a special cake to signify their accomplishment.



(cont. from page 16)



Special thanks to BMCS Christopher Groom and his daughter that let him work with us and BM1 Scott Self who was my direct contact to keep the project moving forward and BM1 Ryan Howard, a fellow instructor who made the course possible.



Senior Chief Groom and his daughter

BM1 Scott Self XPO

Photos courtesy of Tracy DeLaughter