

Coast Guard Auxiliary District 9-West Division 35 Flotilla 12 Newsletter

February Edition

Relaxing Ride turns into Lifesaving Mission

Article written by Justin Spencer

July 4th weekend always gets crazy on Lake Michigan, as we all know. I happened to be entertaining my colleagues and their family for July 4th aboard my vessel. We managed to enjoy a fun and safe morning and afternoon on the lake. We had just come back into the harbor from a trek several miles into Lake Michigan. We were taking a final lap along the edge of the lake in Monroe Harbor as we headed North towards the Chicago Yacht Club. Two kayakers were teasing each other by trying to tip each other's kayaks in the passage between the mooring cans and the lake front trail. Their fun quickly turned to panic when both had flipped their kayaks and they were unable to get back into them. With some help from my colleague's middle school sons' keen eyes, we noticed this series of events quickly turn sour for the kayakers.



Neither of the kayakers had their PFD on, although one finally managed to get their arms into the life jacket, but it still was too loosely fitting to keep their head above water. Their frantic struggles to stay above water, coupled with their futile efforts to get back into their kayak, left them severely exhausted in only a matter of minutes. One man began to yell that he couldn't swim.

As I quickly began to rotate my vessel 180 degrees to head back towards the scene, I quickly established communications on channel 16 to relay the location and nature of the incident. After that, I immediately triaged the scene and identified that the man without the lifejacket was most at risk and began to communicate with him my plan to bring him aboard. I explained to the others on board where the throwable flotation

device was located and had them retrieve it from storage. I relied on the knowledge I acquired from Crew class about how to properly tether and throw a flotation device to someone and quickly explained to others on board the method that I learned. Someone aboard was able to successfully follow all instructions and got the flotation device to land within arm's reach of the man on the first attempt. We then used the line tied to the flotation device to pull the man towards the aft platform of my vessel. It was there that the others aboard had to pull him up onto the platform. Because he had so little energy left, he was unable to climb the ladder on his own.



By this time, a USCG vessel had arrived and the other kayaker was able to make it onto their vessel as well. We transferred the man we brought aboard to the USCG vessel upon their request. Both men were rescued from the lake with no medical complications present.

The diverse knowledge that I learned in Crew class as well as the determined attitude of the others aboard was instrumental in making an efficient and safe rescue happen on-the-fly in so many ways.

Need a Relaxing Getaway? Look no Further!

Information provided by Bob Allen

During these long days of winter, I sometimes like to remind members of some of the lesser known benefits of serving in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. One of these perks is access to the Morale Cottages of Door County, Wisconsin.



This morning, I confirmed with Anna Rutz of Sector Lake Michigan that Auxiliary members have full access to these two cottages at this time. There is a fee of \$70 per night during cold months and \$90 per night during the rest of the year.

To avoid bed bugs, the bunks no longer come with mattresses. Anna sprays her bunk down with Lysol. She lets it dry. Then, she puts the air mattress down and the sleeping bag on top of it.

Active duty has priority over Auxiliary. But, since almost no one in the Auxiliary is aware of them, the cottages are almost always available.

Here is the link:

https://www.atlanticarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-9/Ninth-District-Units/Sector-Lake-Michigan/Services/MWR_Cottages/

You can use google maps to see how beautiful and secluded these locations are. Please call Anna at (1-414-747-7166) for more information.

An Interview with Herb Spohr

Herb has over 45 years in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and 4 years in the Marine Corps. Article by FSO-PB Carolyn Parages

Why did you join the Coast Guard?

I started doing radio watches. Mike Scott and I started together at Wilmette. I worked at all the west coast [of Lake Michigan] units, Kenosha, Wilmette, Chicago, Milwaukee group, etc. I worked at all of those stations. Everybody I worked with was great. The Coast Guard is great.

What is your favorite memory about the Coast Guard Auxiliary?

I love it. I've had great memories. Curt made me in charge of Youth Programs Liaison of Coast Guard on the west coast [of Lake Michigan] for the auxiliary. He made me Youth Programs liaison officer. And for years I connected young kids with units on the west coast, including, Ice breakers for training. My son jumped out of a helicopter right at Wilmette. I was heavily involved.

How is the Auxiliary of the 1970s different than the Auxiliary in 2020?

It's more intelligent. In the 70s, we were kinda loose. Today, the Auxiliary is more learned, if that's the word I want to use. It's making the Auxiliary more responsible.

Were you ever in a lifesaving rescue?

Yes, several. Each person was a life I tried to save.

What qualifications have you earned in 45 years in the Auxiliary?

I have 29 ribbons and I have also received the recruiting award last year. I received the award for the Ninth Western and I've had this award three years in a row.

Do you have any advice for current or future members?

Pay attention to the Coast Guard laws. The Coast Guard is coming up with good advice: pay attention to it. That would be my advice.

Do you have any fun facts about the Coast Guard?

At every navy ship, there is one Coast Guard [member on board]. It's because the Coast Guard is the only one [branch of the military] that can arrest civilians; Navy cannot arrest civilians. Which is why at every navy ship in the world you will find one Coast Guard [member on board]. I was on the Iwo Jima when we had the Navy fly over in Kenosha.

DuSable Bridge Part Two

Hello Shipmates,

In reference to our most recent DuSable Bridge article, my friend sent me some interesting incidents that took place at that spectacular structure. Shortly after the beginning of the grand opening of the Michigan Avenue Bridge in 1920, there was a narrow escape from a disaster. The Herman H. Hettler, a harvested wood steamer, tooted a blast to pass the bridge during the enthusiasm of the gathering, navigation having the right of way of course. The bridge tender didn't see four occupied cars still on the bridge and began to open the Southern leaves. A calamity was avoided after patrolman got the attention of the tender. It was a close call! Pay attention out there!

The Herman H. Hettler was built in 1890, the original name was Walter Vail. On the Great Lakes she was known as Lumber Hooker. The vessel measured 200' long and had a beam of 35'. She had several owners in her lifetime and was sold to the Hettler lumber company of Chicago in 1913.

In November of 1926 she was attempting to find a safe harbor in Munising Michigan while en-route to Duluth Minnesota. She slammed into a rock reef near Trout Port Michigan! The captain kept his sixteen-man crew on board to work the pumps but to no avail. Then they launched lifeboats and were towed to shore. Northwestern finished the destruction of the Herman H. Hettler. Remnants of the wooden hull created a navigation hazard along the rock reef and the Coast Guard dynamited the remaining timbers and planks. Today it is an acclaimed scuba dive spot, and I would like to maybe dive it myself. If anyone is interested, please let me know. To be continued...

Your Ship Mate,
Michael McGaughan

Auxiliary Seamanship Gets Strong Results

Article written by Bob Allen

Flotilla 35-12 opened the Auxiliary Seamanship course on January 12 with 26 participants. The roster grew to 28 for the second class on January 14. Auxiliary Seamanship is led by instructors: Mike Scott, Chas Hague, Rhonda Rush, Paul Bornstein, and Bob Allen.

AUXSEA, the Auxiliary Seamanship Specialty course, is designed to present the Auxiliarist with a thorough knowledge of vessels and proficiency in their operation. An AUXSEA Specialist has extensive knowledge of how vessels are constructed and operated. The AUXSEA Specialist understands marine engines, how to perform minor repairs, is knowledgeable about vessel handling, and knows how to approach distress situations.

For many students, it was their first Auxiliary Operations Specialty course. The attendees included longtime members and new recruits. Many flotillas from throughout the district were represented. There also was a student who joined from Florida. After the rousing success of December's Auxiliary Communications course with 12 students, this is a leap forward for member training. Members who complete Specialty courses often move into leadership positions of the Auxiliary.

In February, Auxiliary Weather will be presented by Flotilla 35-12. The course will be taught on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Of the 12 students who took Auxiliary Communications, ten successfully completed the online test within three days. Those members qualify to wear the Auxiliary Specialty ribbon.



AUXWEA, the Auxiliary Weather Specialty course, is designed to present the Auxiliarist with a thorough knowledge of weather, its importance in the marine environment and to the conduct of safe and effective operations. An AUXWEA Specialist is able to make accurate and valuable short range (several hours) weather forecasts to enable crew mates to avoid dangerous weather conditions while performing their patrol activities. Long range (two or more days) forecasts are also developed to assist in planning operational activities.

The Auxiliary Weather Specialist develops a keen sense of weather processes, including those which have an element of danger: the thunderstorm, the squall line, fog,

tornadoes, and other severe phenomena. A comprehensive knowledge of weather processes and effects is essential to the competent mariner, whether on the high seas, the coastal areas, lakes and rivers or local reservoirs.

Many of the AUX SEA students are signing up for AUX WEA. More members would be very welcome!

To sign up for AUX WEA, please send an e-mail to Bob Allen at "uphigh63@aol.com" The first class will be a ZOOM on February 9 at 1900 hours. It will be fun!

As of February 3, 21 of the 25 students had successfully passed the AUX SEA exam on the National Testing Center.

Also, as of February 3, 45 Auxiliary members have signed up for AUX WEA. That leaves 5 slots available before registration is closed.

In Memoriam of Auxiliary Commodore Edmund Baran

Brother Edmund Baran joined the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary on October 19th, 1984.

During his thirty-six years of volunteer service, he qualified as a Boat Crew Member and Coxswain, providing mission support for Marine Patrols and Search and Rescue.

As a Surface Operations Qualification Examiner and Auxiliary Instructor, he mentored new generations of Shipmates in their Auxiliary careers.

As a qualified Vessel Examiner and Boating Safety Partner Program Visitor he provided mission support for public boating safety outreach.

He helped guide the Auxiliary through the Elected Offices of District Commodore 9th Western Region, Division Captain and Vice-Captain, Flotilla Commander and Vice Commander

He provided managerial support as an Appointed Officer for Finance (Division and Flotilla), Human Resources (District and Flotilla), Member Training (District and Flotilla), Materials, Marine Safety, Program Visits, Public Education (Flotilla).

During his service to the Auxiliary he was recognized with Life Membership and awarded: Auxiliary Commandant Letter of Commendation, Sustained Auxiliary Service Award, Presidential Unit Citation, DOT Secretary's Outstanding Unit Award, CG Unit Commendation, CG Meritorious Team Commendation, CG Bicentennial Unit Commendation, Transportation 9-11 Ribbon, Auxiliary Operations Program Ribbon, Auxiliary Examiner Program Ribbon, Auxiliary Instructor Program Ribbon, Auxiliary Membership Service Award, and Auxiliary PE Service Award.

Humor Break!

Now That I'm Older...

Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

If you can't think of a word say, "I forgot the English word for it." That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

At what point can we just start using 2020 as profanity? As in: "That's a load of 2020." or "What in the 2020." or "abso-2020-lutely."

My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 pounds. Only have 14 to go.

Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was a pizza... OK, I ate a pizza! Are you happy now?

I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.

I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in 3 hours and 20 minutes.

A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.

Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.

Senility has been a smooth transition for me.

Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below freezing outside they closed school? Yeah, Me neither.

I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented. I forgot where I was going with this.

I love approaching 80, I learn something new every day and forget 5 other things.

Gary Markle Earns Division 35 Nomination for Auxiliarist of the Year

Article written by Bob Allen

At the Division 35 Change of Watch event on January 31, Flotilla 35-12 member Gary Markle was recognized as the consensus Auxiliarist of the Year candidate from Division 35. The Division Board forwarded Gary's name to the District Board for his outstanding accomplishments during 2020. Gary was involved in a life-saving rescue as a civilian last year. He was responsible for the Prevention services for the entire 9th Western District and acted as an expert witness for a safety event which occurred in the district. A list of his accomplishments will be presented at the online District Training Conference in March.

Flotilla Staff Officer Shelley Markle was recognized at the Division 35 COW for the Commander's Award. Her commendation stated:

Ms. Markle is cited for exemplary service in the performance of duty as Flotilla Staff Officer-Marine Safety, Operations and Finance for Flotilla 095-35-12: Chicago Twelve from January 01, 2020 to December 30, 2020. Her leadership and organizational skills were critical in creating an online test so that Public Education students could complete the required final exam while maintaining safe social distancing in the time of the pandemic. Her knowledge and technological expertise allowed the flotilla to offer instruction to the boating public. Her generous volunteering of her personal ZOOM platform enabled the Public Education team to teach three Public Education courses in 2020, while other flotillas were unable to provide this critical service. During 2020, she was able to complete her Personal Watercraft training for operations. As a pillar in the leadership of the flotilla, she maintained financial records, deposited membership dues via Pay Pal and collected Public Educations fees from students. Shelley completed annual financial reports and materials inventories in a timely manner. She provided insightful direction during regular flotilla meetings. Ms. Markle quickly responds to requests for assistance regarding complex Auxiliary requirements. With her knowledge of mandatory paperwork, she instructed the new flotilla staff officer for secretary records in the format of meeting minutes and submission. Her efforts directly contributed to the success of Chicago Twelve and have enhanced the flotilla's capabilities to meet its goals and to accomplish its mission in service to the boating public. Ms. Markle's dedication and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

On the far left, FSO-FN Shelley Markle. On the far right, FSO-IS Gary Markle in a recent photo.



Getting Your Vessel Ready to Splash in 2021

When the snow melts, it will be time to get ready for boating in 2021. If you were careful in the laying-up process last fall, this will be a reverse of the steps that you took at that time.

1. Remove the cover. You will need to loosen the cover tie downs which kept out the snow and rain. Fold and store the cover in a place where you can easily find it in fall.
2. Inspect the interior of your vessel. Watch for dry rot. Any dry rot must be removed completely.
3. Carefully clean your vessel to make it fresh for the upcoming boating season.
4. Check the condition of your bottom paint. That bottom paint is important to protect the hull and prevent plants and creatures from attaching to your vessel and slowing it down.
5. Change the oil if you forgot to do that last fall. The oil is the life blood of your engine and old oil will not do.
6. Replace the floorboards which you removed to keep the bilge dry.
7. Replace items which you feared might be stolen, such as compasses, navigation tools, radios, oars, etc. Check their condition as you do.
8. Put back all needed clothes, bedding, mattresses, life jackets, etc. Make sure the life jackets are readily accessible and not in a locked compartment when you sail.
9. Re-install the battery. Hopefully, you stored it in a place that was not subject to freezing.

All boats are different, so you may have other steps to take with your vessel. If you have a boating checklist, this will be a time to inspect it.



Flotilla member Michael Spohr provided these lovely photos of his cabin cruiser (Our Chateau) which is a 1989 Regal 280 Commodore. The photos were taken in Racine, Wisconsin.

