

# ***The Thirty-Niner***

Newsletter of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
Chicago - Wilmette Division 39, 9<sup>th</sup> Western Region  
Flotillas 39-02 (Des Plaines), 39-04 (Chicago), 39-06 (Wilmette), 39-08 (Air), 39-10 (Ten Chicago)



***Safe Boating Week***



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DCDR: Tin Darrey  
Volume 10, No.2

VCDR: Shawn Landa

DO-PB: Chas. Hague  
June July! 2019

## COVER PICTURE

Division Commander Tim Darrey, as Coxswain on 251090 off Highland Park, IL. On patrol.

## DIVISION MEETINGS

Meetings of Division 39 are held at Station Wilmette, 10 Harbor Drive (in Gillson Park) on the first Wednesday of the month. (except this July, when the meeting was held 10 July) Guests are welcome. New this year is a light dinner before the meeting at 1830. Donation covers cost of food for CG station members as well as Auxiliarists.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**13 July Race to Mackinac** The premier freshwater sailboat race. Usually the cutter Mackinaw or one of her sisters comes down to give the yachts a sendoff, with tours on the Friday before. (already took place)

## 22-28 July: EAA AIRVENTURE, OSHKOSH



Not to be missed! Auxiliarists from Illinois and Wisconsin operate a radio net, do Public Affairs and patrol the seaways off the seaplane base to protect planes and boaters. Plus airshows, displays, bombing runs, and fellowship with great people.

**15-18 AUGUST CHICAGO AIR AND WATER SHOW** Lakefront at North Avenue. Once

again we will have a canopy in with the other recruiting outfits to push Boat Safety and the Coast Guard. There will also be on-the-water patrols.

## 39-02 AT 60!



Mike Valente (39-02) and Ed Brooks (39-04) with D-Capt South Sonny Thatch at 39-02 60<sup>th</sup>

Des Plaines Flotilla 39-02 was founded in June of 1959. Amazingly enough, it has held together for the 60 years since. A special celebratory brunch was held Sunday, 9 June, at Club Casa in Des Plaines. D-Capt South Captain Sonny Thatch was on hand to watch DCO Tom Mullally present the Flotilla with a certificate and flag streamer for the Flotilla's 60 years of supporting the Coast Guard mission.





Plank Owner of 39-02 Bill Robinson at a “Miss Safe Boating” pageant back in the 1960’s. Bill provided the proof that 39-02 has been in service for 60 years by producing his first Auxiliary Dues check, dated 1959, for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## **On Guard for Democracy – Remembering a Cold War Local Connection**

By Joe Conte VFC 39-10 9WR



Recently, I was reading the obituary of a deceased veteran from the Chicago area when something interesting jumped out. During the ‘50s, the vet had

been assigned to duty right here in the Chicago area, tasked to maintain the watch on a Nike missile base. Now many locals have heard of the launch pads along the Chicago Lakefront near Montrose and other harbors, but I had never heard of the site on the Cal-Sag Channel near Alsip, Illinois. I have passed by that area many times over the years on river patrols, but was unaware that many years ago, a Coast Guard patrol (if they actually did them back then) in this area would have likely been a high priority security mission. I decided to look into a little history of these lesser-known sites.

The control site for the Cal-Sag battery was located between the Cal Sag and I-294, just west of Laramie Avenue and north of 127<sup>th</sup> Street, now occupied by a truck dealership. The actual launch site was just to the west, apparently on the south riverbank along the site of the Cal-Sag Trail, a popular jogging and nature trail through the Cook County Forest Preserves. A little-known tract of houses built for the military who served at the base existed all the way into the 1990’s. A Chicago Tribune article from May of 1990 stated:

“The homes were originally built to house full-time Illinois National Guard soldiers whose mission was to operate a battery of Nike missiles positioned nearby along the Cal-Sag Channel. Nike missile units were on alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

The Nike program continued at some Illinois sites until 1974, and military personnel assigned to other duties in the area continued to live at the housing development until the mid-1990’s. The military base closings of that era included this small development, as well as Fort Sheridan, the headquarters of the Fifth Army Air Defense Command. Military families that were renting the homes were notified that they had to find alternative housing. The small cold war-era community had finally outlived its original mission.

One final note. Another Nike launch site in Orland Park, approximately 5 miles to the southwest, is now the location of a **Target** store. Pretty ironic, don’t you think?

Editor note: I wonder if they ever live-fired from one of the Chicago launch pads? Sounds like a dumb thing to do, but how would they know for sure that it was going to work?

## VE BLITZES

Reminder, 9WR has Chicago Harbor VE blitzes coming up, and all VE's and trainees are welcome to attend:

20-JUL 1000-1400 Jackson Park Harbor  
10-AUG 1000-1400 Belmont Harbor  
24-AUG 1000-1400 Burnham Harbor

Contact info:

Glenn Nystrom - FSO-VE 41-11 (630) 935-0682  
or [gnystrom33@gmail.com](mailto:gnystrom33@gmail.com)  
Ed Jakubas - FSO-VE 35-12 (630) 532-7630  
or [ed.jakubas@gmail.com](mailto:ed.jakubas@gmail.com)

Please contact either of the above coordinators no later than Thursday prior to the event to confirm your attendance. We ask that you contact us in advance as we need to keep the harbormaster aware of how many of us are coming, make sure we have enough mentors for any trainees and be sure we can accept appointment requests and dispatch VEs as needed. What we need from you is to be currently VE qualified (including completion of the new Risk Management course), wearing the ODU uniform, a life jacket and boat shoes. Please bring your own decals and forms. Free parking will be available (we need to know you are coming), car pooling is encouraged.

These and other events are currently posted on the District VE Blitz Calendar at <http://www.cgau9wr.com/programs/ve/ve-calendar.php>

## TRASH GAME STILL IN ACTION

By Ron Dziagwa, Flotilla 39-08

For the first time ever, the Chicago Air flotilla (39-08) was able the end Safe Boating Week at the Niles-Maine District Public Library. They welcomed us there giving us a Free table right by their front door entrance and numerous public address announcements that we were there:



Paul Luna and Ron Dziagwa on a Friday Night Mission.



Three against one, but they only got one right out of twelve playing the "Do You Know Where Your Litter Is" game. They all went home with Bookmarks from Ron, because they were told they needed more book learning.

## TAKING WATER SERIOUSLY

By Bianca Sanchez

(This article was edited from a piece that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* July 7, 2019. It makes some important points that we should be passing on to young people at our Public education classes) Dave Benjamin, co-founder and executive director of the Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project, usually starts his water safety classes by talking about fire. "What do you do in case of a fire emergency?" He normally asks the crowd of children. "Stop, drop and roll," they say. "Now, how often do you play in fire?" He asks. Heads shake. "And how often do you play in water?"

For many children and teens, the answer to this last question is: Every. Single. Summer. All season long, parents, caretakers and camp counselors drive crowded cars, minivans and buses of kids and teens to lakefront beaches and packed park district pools. As Benjamin has seen, many of these young would-be swimmers know little about water's danger and even less on how to survive a water emergency.

Water safety, Benjamin said, "is **not** common sense." Even the most advanced swimmers could be at risk.

In 2010, with 40 years of swim and surfing behind him, Benjamin found himself separated from his surf board and surrounded by big, rough waves.

After resisting the panic, Benjamin floated for 40 minutes before he reached the shore. He survived. The same cannot be said for Matthew Kocher. On July 27, 2013, the 15-year-old was away from home on a camp trip to New Buffalo City Beach, earning community service hours for school. While standing in the shallow Lake Michigan waters, Kocher got caught in a rip current..

“We were basically pool people, like most people,” John Kocher, Matthew’s father, said. Matthew had little experience in open water. Kocher suspects his son and several other people in his camp group, were unaware that the waving red flags on the beach signaled hazardous water conditions.

After Matthew’s funeral, John and his wife, Kathy, set up a foundation in their son’s name. They have since partnered with Benjamin and the GLSRP to sponsor more than 300 water safety talks in Illinois. Here are the water safety tips they hope will save a life.

### **Know before you go**

“Check the weather reports, check the wave reports and check for a rip-current warning. See if any flags are up,” Kocher said. All of this information can be found on the National Weather Service’s website **weather.gov**. It is updated each day with watches, warnings and other advisories. When at a beach, red **flags** signal hazardous conditions that would make swimming more dangerous. Yellow flags indicate rough but non-life threatening water conditions and green flags signal normal conditions.

### **Keep an eye on your child.**

Whether at the beach or pool, the National Drowning Prevention Alliance suggests parents designate a water watcher or water guardian. “Even if you are with a group of people, have one adult whose main responsibility is to keep an eye on the kids in the water.”

### **Flip, float, follow**

In a water emergency, **GLSRP** recommends swimmers flip, float and follow. First flip over onto your back to float. Keep your head above the water, remain calm and conserve energy. If in open water with a current, swim perpendicular to its flow, parallel to the shore, until you reach an area free of the current. If you see someone who appears to be drowning, toss a flotation device into the water then alert lifeguards.

### **Learn to swim**

Swimming is an essential skill. However, 64% of African American children, 45% of Hispanic

children and 40% of white children cannot swim. This statistic becomes even more harrowing when it is revealed that of all nonswimming children 87% plan to visit a beach or pool at least once during the summer.

### **YOUR FLOTILLA BRIDGES**

39-02: FC Chas. Hague  
VFC Bridget Darrey

39-04: FC Adam Klein  
VFC Moshe Tishel

39-06: FC John Lenhard  
VFC Dan O’Connell

39-08: FC Richard Grinius  
VFC Ron Dziagwa

39-10: FC Brent Barker  
VFC Joe Conte



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!** ( L to R) Flotilla 39-04 member Matthew Praznowski, 39-02 members Tim Darrey, FC Chas Hague, VFC Bridget Darrey, camp follower Barbara Hague and Bob Reczek with Facility 222033 waiting to march in the Des Plaines 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade.

After marching in the parade, the Darreys and Bob Reczek went to Station Wilmette and headed out on patrol. Great Lakes Naval Training base yacht club required assistance with visitors coming in by water. Identification needed to be checked for incoming boats (and not everyone had their ID's on them)

### **GOOD LUCK, COMMANDER**

DCDR Tim Darrey and VCDR Shawn Landa attended the Change of Command of the Marine Safety Unit in Bolingbrook in June. Commander Merchant is leaving after 2 years to attend Harvard. She has been great to work with, and we wish her the best.

*Thanks to Ron Dziagwa, 39-08, Joe Conte, 39-10 and Bianca Sanchez for content*