



U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Flotilla 81

Ocean City, N.J.

KENNETH WILDE , FC
HARRY NORCROSS, VFC

July 2010

Editor: FSO–PB Bob Babezki

Flotilla website: www.uscgaux-ocnj.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 14, 2010: Division 8 Meeting
FL 85, Brigantine Community Center,
Brigantine, NJ @7:30 PM

July 15th, 2010 Flotilla 81 Meeting
St. Peters Church, 8th & Central Ave., Ocean
City, NJ @7:00 PM

July 24th – Night in Venice

August 11, 2010: Division 8 Meeting –
FL86, Lower Township, NJ @7:30 PM

August 12th, 2010: Flotilla 81 Cookout, Log
Cabin, Margate, NJ

August 24 & 25, 2010 – Atlantic City Air
Show

September 8, 2010: Division 8 Meeting
Flotilla 81, St. Peters Church, 8th & Central
Ave., Ocean City, NJ @7:00 PM

September 9, 2010: Flotilla 81 Meeting
Flotilla 81 Meeting
St. Peters Church, 8th & Central Ave., Ocean
City, NJ @7:00 PM

September 10th, 11th & 12th
Fall Conference - Seaview Country Club
Galloway Township, NJ

FROM THE BRIDGE

COMMANDERS COMMENTS

Kenneth Wilde FC 8-1



We've reached our 70th birthday and what
a party we had. From all feedback we've

received from inside and outside the flotilla it was a great success. The anniversary committee did a huge job. Thanks to Marilyn Hughes, Bob Babezki, Jim Earle and Bill Quain for their planning and to Walt Alsegg for being MC.

We are in the middle of the 2010 boating season and are busy with VE's and patrols. I want to encourage all to continue this important work. I want to encourage those who haven't been on a patrol to go on one to see what happens and coxswains and boat owners to invite trainees aboard. Don't wait for an invitation. Let it be known you want to go on a patrol.

Shortly we will work with the Coast Guard and others in "Nights in Venice". This is a big event and encourage all to help with this endeavor.

I wish you all have a happy and safe remainder of summer of 2010.

Semper Paratus Ken Wilde, FC 81

2010 Fall Conference

This year, the Fifth Northern Fall Conference will be held locally at the Dolce Seaview Country Club and Resort in Galloway Township, NJ near Smithville. This places the event within easy commuting distance for almost all members of the Flotilla. There are 20 breakout rooms reserved, so there will be many sessions of interest to all members. There will be AUXOP courses offered, along with many technical sessions and a few Flotilla business related sessions. The conference is scheduled to take place Friday, September 10th, Saturday September 11th and Sunday, September 12th. It is strongly recommended that all members make an effort to attend at least some of the sessions. It's a

great way to get a lot of training with a small commitment of time. Watch your mail for the registration flyer.

WHAT IT ALL MEANS

Robert Babezki, FSO-PB

It is not often that we, as individuals, get the opportunity to participate in what could be considered an historic milestone. Normally, we do not even perceive the magnitude of an event that we may be witnessing. Such events tend to get lost in the hectic rush of our daily lives.

However, we are fortunate to be able to experience and savor a unique experience with our fellow shipmates. I refer to the 70th anniversary of the founding of Flotilla 81, Ocean City New Jersey, of the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Our flotilla recently celebrated this event with a gala dinner at the Flanders Hotel on June 3, 2010.

But what was so special about this event and the circumstances it celebrates? In 1939, with war clouds gathering in Europe and the Far East, visionaries within the U.S. Coast Guard saw a need to mobilize resources from the public to begin providing safety and security to the growing fleet of recreational boaters along the coasts of the country. Seeing that the Coast Guard was the only member of the nation's armed forces without a reserve component, Congress enacted legislation in the summer of 1939 to organize a volunteer force of private boat owners into what was then known as the Coast Guard Reserve. This was the beginning of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The first organized flotilla in the auxiliary was formed at the Downtown Athletic Club in New York City in November of that same year. Flotillas were later organized during the spring of 1940 in Atlantic City, two on the Delaware River in

the Philadelphia area, and the fifth in Ocean City on June 1st, 1940.

The Ocean City Flotilla is now the oldest, continually active Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla in the State of New Jersey. The service provided by our Flotilla during the early years of World War II stand as a bold testament as to what can be accomplished by a band of volunteers working towards a common goal. The Ocean City Flotilla provided more hours of patrols during 1942 than any other Auxiliary organization. Ocean City also had the only Flotilla operated and staffed hospital in the country.

When we gather as a group each month, and address our normal tasks that have been assigned to us, we tend to forget those that have gone before us and what they achieved. Our 70th anniversary party was a chance for us to glimpse what our organization means to others in our community, in local government and to the Coast Guard itself. Invited guests US Congressman Frank LoBiondo, NJ State Senator Jeff Van Drew and NJ State Assemblyman Nelson Albano all praised the outstanding work that Flotilla 81 has provided to the Ocean City community over its seven decades of service.

What we do in the Auxiliary is important. It is important to our community as a whole. It enriches our lives and positively impacts the lives of many other people. Our teamwork with the active duty Coast Guard further proves that we can and do make a difference to our country. So, take this opportunity to enjoy the thanks that we have earned from the people whom we serve. *Semper Paratus!*

Change in Communications Procedures

Walter Alsegg, FSO-OP

Coast Guard Station Atlantic City has changed over to digital communications between their station and their boats. This was done for security reasons to avoid the general public from knowing when they were underway and their location. This means they no longer routinely monitor channel 21A. When we go out on a patrol and call in by cell phone, we need to ask the watch stander to maintain our radio guard on channel 21A. Also be sure to give them your cell phone number in case they can't reach you by radio while underway. Should we need to communicate with a Coast Guard boat, we would need to ask the watch stander to have them switch to 21A from digital, or contact them direct on Ch16.

While underway, we should always monitor Ch 16 for boats in distress on a second radio or by scanning. If you are unable to raise the station on 21A you can try hailing them on 16 and asking them to switch up to 21A, or reach them by cell phone.

If we have a marine event such as fireworks, regattas etc, channels would be established ahead of time so all units can communicate. For those involved in Helo OPS, Channel 21A is used as the Helos do not yet have digital radios

If we need the NJ Marine Police, we go through station AC. If we need to communicate with a CG boat, we call the station and ask them to have the CG boat switch to 21A. We still need to monitor 16A by scanning, handheld or 2nd radio so if we are close to a distress call we can respond. On other calls if they need us and they know we're on patrol, they will call us.

Concept of Fellowship

Robert N. Babezki

The concept of fellowship in the Coast Guard Auxiliary extends beyond the bounds of our local flotilla. On Saturday, June 18th the Ocean City Flotilla (FL-81), Absecon Island Flotilla (FL-84) and Brigantine Flotilla (FL-85) joined together for a day of joint activities at the Atlantic City Coast Guard station. In the morning, Vessel Examiners gathered to perform Vessel Exams on some of the boats docked at Farley Marina. VE's walked the docks offering complementary exams to boat owners.

While the Vessel Exams were taking place, Ernie Philips, FC-84, launched his facility from the ramp at Station AC. Together with crew Pete Furman (FL-84) and Bob Babezki (FL-81), this facility performed a safety patrol on the waters around Gardner's Basin, and Absecon Inlet.

Later in the morning, Station AC was opened to the Public for an Open House. Activities included demonstrations of use of safety flares and tours of the station and base. A helicopter from the Atlantic City Air Station came to the event and provided a demonstration of dropping a rescue swimmer into the water. The Facility that was doing the safety patrol was called in by Station AC to provide security for the area where the helicopter was performing its swimmer evolutions. The Auxiliary facility ensured that spectator boats did not approach the area where the helicopter was dropping the rescue swimmer. In addition, the pilot of the helicopter contacted the AUX facility directly to obtain information about water depth in the drop zone.

Later, after the conclusion of the Station Open House, members of Flotillas 81, 84 and 85 joined with members of Station Atlantic City

for a great cookout. The food included burgers, hot dogs, scallops on the half shell, shrimp, crabs and spicy meatballs. This event provided an opportunity for members of the individual flotillas to meet and get to know members of other flotillas, and members of the Station AC staff. It was a great day for fellowship.

Improper Competition with Commercial

Towing

CDR Glenna T. Tredinnick, DIRAUX, D5NR

Issue - With the increase of boating activity, there has been a marked increase in the number of complaints nationwide being filed by commercial towing companies that the CG AUX is interfering by taking disabled vessels in tow after the disabled vessel has already requested the commercial towing service assistance. In many of the cases the AUX Facility didn't contact and advise the Operational Commander /OLA/Sector on the situation which is required (see references below). It is extremely important to ensure the operational commander is made aware when the Aux is planning to render tow assistance, including if the disabled vessel has contacted commercial tow.

Risk - Anytime actions are taken that exit written CG policy, the offending party assumes liability for any and all claims. That means the CG may not cover the offending Aux member legally in a claim because they acted outside of CG policy. The offending party could then be liable for all claims and payment of restitution to the towing company for loss of business.

Direction - Review the references below and keep the operational commander aware to ensure you act within the guidance of CG policy when rendering assistance. We can what "if this" but the bottom line is, Keep

the Operational Commander/OIA/Sector aware. Include asking the disabled vessel if it has contacted commercial tow and advise the Operational Commander/OIA/Sector for clarification before assuming a tow when the disabled vessel has in fact made a request for commercial towing.

In cases when a Coast Guard Auxiliary facility under orders arrives on scene nearly simultaneously with a commercial provider, the Auxiliary Coxswain should report to the SMC, remain on scene until it is confirmed the provider is capable of providing the required assistance and safely completing the case and the disabled vessel owner/ coxswain accepts the assistance; then clear the area and take no further part in the incident.

When a mariner requesting assistance rejects the first arriving commercial assistance, Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary units should not assist in these cases so long as the situation remains classified below the DISTRESS phase.

In cases involving towing by the Coast Guard Auxiliary where no emergency exists, the assisted vessel may be released to another provider who appears capable provided that; * The SMC and coxswain of the assisting vessel determine that a hand-off can be carried out safely, and either * Alternative assistance is desired and arranged by the operator of the vessel being assisted; or * The Operational Commander has a higher need for the Auxiliary resource.

When an Auxiliary vessel on routine safety patrol or otherwise on orders discovers a vessel requesting assistance, but not in radio contact with the Coast Guard, the Auxiliarist will relay the request for assistance to the Coast Guard operational commander and may undertake to provide assistance, if capable. If a tow is undertaken, the Auxiliary vessel is

required to notify the operational commander of the identity of the vessel, the location of the vessel, and the destination to which the vessel is being towed. No Auxiliary vessel may undertake the tow of another vessel unless the Auxiliarist is reasonably assured of the safety of both vessels and the persons onboard. If the Auxiliary vessel cannot safely tow a disabled vessel that is standing into danger, it may endeavor to remove the persons from the threatened vessel and stand by until a more capable resource arrives on scene.

PAYBACK

By Richard Sorokin, AFSO-MT

It was a beautiful evening. The sky was clear, temperature in the low 80's and the sea nearly flat. We had the duty of chaperoning the fireworks barge for the Atlantic City Fourth of July celebration. We were a mixed group of Auxiliarists, some from FL81, some from FL-85 (Brigantine) and our resident member from Arizona. We mixed well and got along fine. Good idea to mix the crews.

Our vessel was a 46 foot cabin cruiser. Twin screws and a luxury head. It was beautiful. When the Sea Tow towboat brought the barge into Absecon Inlet, our facility, along with the 27 foot helo-ops boat, the 47 footer and 25 footer from Station Atlantic City, left the Atlantic City Coast Guard Station to set-up a security area to keep civilian boats away from the barge while the Atlantic City Fire Marshall inspected the barge for safety.

Once the Safety inspection was complete, we escorted the barge out into the ocean. Our facility took station to seaward of the barge, which was positioned a quarter mile off of the beach. Our role was to keep the small flotilla of spectator boats from approaching the fireworks barge. We arrived

on station early and watched a most beautiful sunset sky. The colors were spectacular, watching the sun set behind Atlantic City.

At 9:30 sharp the show began. Fireworks dominated the sky. What a show! Never was there only one rocket up. It was always in groups of rockets. I've been around for a while and have seen many fireworks shows, but this was the best.

It was an outstanding night and a nice payback for all the burdensome events we take on as the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

EDUCATION AND THE VESSEL SAFETY CHECK

Charles Wilkins, FSO-VE

The Vessel Safety Check is an important function of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary – a unit dedicated to boating safety. Over the years, many boats have been examined and a multiplicity of problems have been discovered which could impact the vessel and its passengers. Statistics are available that demonstrate the need and effectiveness of the boating safety course, however, there are no such statistics available when we consider the Vessel Safety Check alone. Nonetheless, it's reasonable to assume that correcting deficiencies in a vessel should lead to a safer situation.

The Boating Safety Resource Center reflects the United States Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division and its activities. Statistics are compiled yearly and are available to us and to the boating public as well. In the most recent numbers available to us, it's remarkable to note that of all the fatalities that occurred in 2008 in boating accidents, only 10 % occurred in situations where the boat operator had received boating safety instruction.

So, statistics are available that highlight the effectiveness of the Boating Safety Course in reducing the incidence of injuries and fatalities. If handled correctly, the Vessel Safety Check can be considered a one-on-one boating safety course. We have the full attention of the boater and they have ours as well. The boater benefits from the encounter. Sometimes, we don't know the answer to a boater's question and have to research the topic. The process then turns into an educational event for the examiner. Everybody benefits.

One of our goals is to make the public aware of the Vessel Safety Check and the benefits that it provides. We want the boater to be eager to undergo a safety check. In the absence of nationwide and statewide publicity, we rely on word-of-mouth, local press releases, our boating courses, and the Auxiliary's presence at public functions, such as boat shows and community festivals.

Opportunities to educate the boater via the safety check are unlimited. Take, for example, the PFD – in the course of our exam, we look at it, verify its condition, and make sure it's readily available. We check off "yes" and proceed to the next category. If this is all the examiner does, he has missed an opportunity to teach. Is the boater aware that 2/3 of all accidental boating deaths occurred from drowning? Does the boat operator know that 90% of those drowned individuals were not wearing a PFD? Most of the children who died in boating accidents in 2008, died from drowning. If there is a child on board, does the PFD fit?

Proceed down the Vessel Safety Checklist and you'll find teaching opportunities in almost every category. Take the fire extinguisher, for example. If it's onboard and in the green, we check off "yes". But,

does the boater know how old the extinguisher is? Does he know how to work it? Can he look for and recognize signs of wear?

On a personal note, I found the Auxiliary boating safety course that I took to be interesting and informative – even after 50 years of boating. The Vessel Safety Check gives every examiner the opportunity to administer his own boating safety course on an individual basis.

A View From The Blue

By Bill Quain

Vigilance! This is our word for the summer of 2010. Recent events remind us that accidents can happen in a heartbeat, and that neglect and carelessness can cause incredible damage. As Auxiliarists, we need to be watchful, prepared, and vigilant.

A few days ago, an Army Duck stalled on the Delaware River and was run down by a Barge. Conflicting accounts continue to come in at this point. Some say the Duck was drifting, others say it was anchored. In any event, the mishap caused the loss of two lives. It could have been much worse, but two lives lost is bad enough.

In Ocean City, a group of 7 people were in a 16-foot boat when it hit a channel marker. Two passengers, including a father and son, were air lifted to the hospital. How did the boat hit the marker, at what speed? Why were 7 people in such a small boat? Did the operator have a Boating Safety Certificate?

On July Fourth, in Ocean City, a young man drowned while swimming off the beach at night. I was standing on my porch when the emergency vehicles streamed by. How did he drown?

The work we do with the Coast Guard to protect America's boating public is important. However, the line between a close call and a tragedy is only a split second wide. We must be ever vigilant when we are on the water, looking *ahead* for possible dangers. As trained volunteers, we are obliged to anticipate problems, not merely respond to them. Our vigilance may well save lives and each of us should take that notion seriously. I know you do. I hear it in the monthly Officers' reports.

Finally, we must be vigilant for gross negligence that can lead to a disaster of epoch proportions. The BP oil spill in the Gulf is just such an event. Surely, there is nothing that the average person could have done to prevent that spill. But, how many employees and managers knew that the basic safety procedures were not being followed? Could someone, some vigilant person, have stopped the collapse of the rig before it happened by reporting the safety lapses??

We can be immensely proud of Admiral Thad Allen of the USCG. He was placed in command of the operation after the incredible mishandling of the cleanup efforts that took place shortly after the spill. I just heard him on television today, correcting BP's over-optimistic assessment of the relief wells being dug now. If the Coast Guard had been watching the operations, instead of uncaring executives and in-attentive bureaucrats, would it have even occurred?

Shipmates, this summer, let me offer this thought: Be watchful, remain vigilant. It makes a difference.

Why Is All This Focus On Boating Safety So Important

By Robert Babezki

Most of what we do in the Auxiliary focuses on boating safety. The question is often asked, why the big deal? Aren't boats today safer than before?

To answer that question requires a look into the past, and a look at today, to see if our programs really are worthwhile and make a difference to the boating public.

On June 15, 1904, the vessel General Slocum, a day steamer out of New York city, embarked 1,300 passengers for a day cruise from Manhattan out to Long Island for a picnic outing. The passengers, mostly women and children from a German Lutheran community on the Lower East Side, thought they were going to spend a nice day on the beach.

As the General Slocum was passing between Governors' Island and Rikers Island, a fire broke out in the engine room of the vessel. In the ensuing panic, over 1,000 of the passengers and crew perished. That Lutheran community in Manhattan was literally wiped out.

The investigation that followed found that in almost every case, the safety equipment that the General Slocum had been equipped with had failed. The fire hoses crumbled when they were deployed to put the fire out. Life jackets fell apart after 13 years of exposure to the elements. Lifeboats were painted into position and could not be lowered to permit the passengers to escape the fire. Investigators found fault with the many inspecting agencies that were supposed to make sure the safety equipment worked when needed.

On July 7, 2010 an accident occurred in our own back yard. A site-seeing vessel, a World War 2 DUKW, was struck by a barge in the Delaware River in Philadelphia. There were 37 passengers aboard the DUKW when it sank. Witnesses reported that within moments

after the DUKW rolled over and sank, life jackets started popping up on the river, bringing the passengers of the DUKW to the surface. Only two passengers were reported missing from this accident. If it were not for all the passengers already wearing their life jackets or having them close at hand when the accident occurred, the loss of life would have been much greater.

It was after the General Slocum tragedy that the Coast Guard was given the task to ensure that vessel safety equipment was kept in good working order. Today, we in the Auxiliary carry out that mission with our Vessel Safety exams. Captain Ronald Sinn (Retired) a commercial captain from Wildwood conducted a memorial ceremony that was held on the beach in Strathmere, Upper Township, Cape May County New Jersey on June 15, 2010 to remember the tragedy of the General Slocum and to make sure the lessons learned from that event are not forgotten.



Captain Ronald Sinn, Mrs. Sinn and Robert Babezki at the General Slocum Memorial Service, June 15, 2010.

Awards

April 2010



FC Ken Wilde presents IPFC Alan Wood with the Instructor Service Award.



FC Ken Wilde presents FSO-VE Charlie Wilkins with the Vessel Safety Check Service Award.



FC Ken Wilde presents VFC Harry Norcross with the Operations Service Award.



FC Ken Wilde presents IPDCDR Marilyn Hughes with the Instructor Services Award.

May 2010



FC Ken Wilde presents The Presidential Certificate in recognition of over 500 hours in volunteerism over the last year: (l-r) FSO-CS Bob Babezki, IPDCDR Marilyn Hughes & IPFC Alan Wood.



FC Ken Wilde presents the CG Sustained Auxiliary Service Award to FSO-CS Bob Babezki

June 2010



Lt. Jeff Craig presents the Membership Award for 10 Years of Service to FSO-PV Joe Skutlin.



FSO-OP Walt Alsegg presents award to BM1 Anthony Taibi for Outstanding Service in Support of Flotilla 81 Operations.

Photo Gallery
Scenes at the Flotilla 81 70th Birthday Party



Flotilla Commander Ken Wilde accepts Flotilla Award of Appreciation from the Command of Station Atlantic City. (From left, BM1 Hitchner, FC Wilde, Lt. Jeff Craig & BM1 Taibi)



FC Ken Wilde receives a Resolution of Outstanding Service to the State of New Jersey from State Senator Jeff Van Drew (l) and State Assemblyman Nelson Albano (r).



U.S. Congressman Frank LoBiondo presents FC Ken Wilde with a copy of the unit commendation from the Congressional Record.



FC Ken Wilde accepts Unit Service Recognition Award from Stephen Mc Elroy, DNACO-S.