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Coast Guard Aux NEWS ▶

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**Coast Guard
Auxiliary News**

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Sponsorship of this column is available. All fees raised will be donated by The Independent to Division 18 of The USCG Auxiliary for use in boating safety.
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National Safe Boating Week runs from May 16th to May 22rd this year. US Coast Guard Forces nationwide and especially here "Out East" have a lot of plans to take and make safety a daily, year-long event. This column is about that.

National Safe Boating Week – Why?

By 1958, boating "by the millions" rather than "by millionaires" was in full swing. What Coast Guard statistics showed was that the democratization of boating was coming at a cost - and it wasn't the 29-cents per gallon for the gasoline. It was accidents and fatalities. The US Congress passed the Federal Boating Act and the National Safe Boating Week was born upon President Eisenhower's signature. It was initially run as a committee - US Coast Guard as chairman, with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Power Squadron and the Red Cross as its informal members. It still took some time for the focused attention of the Coast Guard on boater safety to work its way through long habits and aged traditions. It wasn't until 1973, when 1,754 people died in boating accidents, that the trend started to reverse. Today, the death rate per 100,000 boats is less than 1/3rd of what it was at the turning point - 18.3 deaths in 1973 versus 5.6 deaths in 2006. Why? Why else - money, people and untiring focus!

Safety First – The Big Picture

Safety isn't something you put on like an over-coat. Safety, to be truly effective, needs to be part of your daily habit and part of that is education - day-in, day-out. US Coast Guard Auxiliary Division-18 is all about that. Division 18 is comprised of 4 flotillas and it is at the flotilla level where the work gets

done.

Division-18, which supports three Coast Guard stations "Out East" - SFO Moriches, Station Shinnecock and Station Montauk, is putting on/coordinating/participating in Open Houses at those US Coast Guard Stations, "kayak-a-thons" and other maritime "fests" all summer long.

Open Houses

More than just grilling hot dogs and hamburgers, the Open Houses provide opportunities for the local community to visit and experience "their" Coast Guard station. As Andrew Jackson noted, even the White House was the "People's House" and he served as their "steward" and so it goes with the Coast Guard. As importantly as creating that bond between the private boaters and US Coast Guard Forces, it creates the forum for education of a direct nature - Public Education classes, Vessel Exams and, given the statistics, a direct message on the Coast Guard's Operation Paddle Smart initiative. Discussions about America's Waterway Watch, where the Coast Guard asks the "average Joe or Jill" to keep a sharp-lookout for suspicious characters on our waters, will go on. If past experience is any indication, hundreds of fellow citizens will "see and be seen" - and hear and experience. And come Saturday, June 6th, the Coast Guard Station in East Moriches will be open for visitors! Come one, come all!

Kayak Races and TrawlerFests

At \$4/gallon for fuel, we can expect the explosion in the use of paddle sports to continue and the Coast Guard's Operation Paddle Smart is key to curtailing the injuries and even deaths that these pastimes are piling up statistically. Division-18 will have shore-side booths/tables to continue the story from the Open Houses - Public Education, Vessel Exams, Paddle Smart, America's Waterway Watch and, hopefully, recruiting more citizens to join the USCGAux!

Life Jacket Statistics

World War II brought us the inflatable life jacket, as worn by sailors, pilots and Submariners. The fabric, which looked like rubber, dried out easily. Talcum powder was used to keep the fabric pliable. Later on, military technology was applied to making consumer life jackets. These have developed through the years to the various styles we see today. But any life jacket, inflatable or otherwise, must be worn to work. Here are the stats: 16 people go in the water with life-jackets on and 15 come out. 16 people go in the water without life jackets on - and one comes out.

Don't be a statistic. And do be a visitor to the Open Houses. Our first one is on June 6th at the Coast Guard Station at 100 Moriches Island Road in East Moriches.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2009@aol.com or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

If you'd like a copy of any of the columns cited, email me and I send it to you.