



Training for "Elizabeth"

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As noted many times, we often speak about the "next 9/11" as being inevitable. We have to be perfect every day. "They" have to be lucky just once. With a constant eye for that, it is still more likely that it will be a natural disaster that will affect more of us and potentially in a deadly fashion. Back on November 7, 2007, we wrote here that even more likely than "another '38 hurricane," it is far more likely and far more common for us to get one like Noel in '07... and Beryl in '06... Cindy in '05... Ivan in '04... So, this past weekend (April 26-28), under the direction of District (ISR) USCGAux Commodore Thomas Venezia and USCG Commander E. D. Young, director of the Auxiliary (ISR), USCG Forces conducted an exercise—a Cat-4 hurricane called Elizabeth. This is about that day.

The Wind-Up...

The day started the night before when our automated emergency notification system started calling auxiliaries, as well as emailing them, with the

following simulated emergency message:

The following is a message from USCG Auxiliary:

This is a drill. This is a drill. This is a drill.

On Saturday April 26 all flotillas and divisions are asked to participate in a drill. An Incident Action Plan has been distributed via the Chain of Leadership.

The scenario is as follows:

Hurricane Elizabeth is expected to make landfall on 26 April along the south shore of Long Island and metropolitan New York including NY harbor. The system is projected to follow a NNE track, impacting Long Island Sound. It is also forecast to be an extremely large storm system with strong winds and extended periods of heavy rain. Flooding is predicted throughout the First Southern area of operations.

Rear Commodores are expected to work closely with Auxiliary Sector Coordinators and Division Captains to implement plans for their respective areas.

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And the Pitch...

So, starting the next morning, the "butchers, bakers and candle stick makers" that comprise the civilian component of the USCG, i.e., the USCG Auxiliary, a.k.a. the "Minutemen of the 21st Century per USCG Captain Boynton, were requested to get to work. This form of exercise, called a "Table-Top" drill, means that no one moves a vessel or themselves. The exercise is an exercise to test our ability to communicate with each other, to care for our community if, as and when asked, and to care for each other. Here is what we were asked to develop via our phone-chains:

1. USCGAux crews and vessels available, if selected and directed, to assist some search-and-rescue/distress situation.

2. Auxiliaries who can, if selected and directed, travel to marinas and other marine-

related facilities to advise dock masters and private boaters to take proper actions regarding impending high winds, surge tides and coastal flooding.

3. Auxiliaries who can monitor AUXNET radios and emergency VHF channel 16.

4. Keep track of the number of our thousands of USCGAux members who have been reached as a data point, from the standpoint of taking care of our own, with respect to potential evacuation orders from civil authorities.

As follow-on, we were tasked with a post-storm simulation regarding our plans are for going forward with steps to check on the status of our fellow members and being able to report on HAZMAT (hazardous materials or conditions created by the storm) and vessel distress...

This simulation lasted much of the day and was a great success. This summer, I expect that we will do this

again and that exercise will be a full-scale drill involving the deployment of vessels to simulated distress situations, utilization of emergency radio procedures and the like. Practice makes perfect. And we have to be perfect every day while the other guys, even in the form of a hurricane, need to be lucky "just once."

Summary

Was it fun? Absolutely. Was it sobering to think about what we were training for? Absolutely. Is it necessary? One thousand percent absolutely. As Admiral Allen has tasked USCG Forces, "All Threats, All Hazards, Always Ready."

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members' matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

County Highlights First-Time Home Buyers with Down Payment Assistance Program

Hopeful first-time home buyers in Suffolk may be eligible for as much as \$14,000 in down payment assistance from the Suffolk County Community Development Agency, potentially helping them clear that last hurdle toward home ownership.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy detailed the county's program—which has helped more than 1,000 homeowners since its inception—at a press conference last week. Levy has allocated \$1 million in down payment assistance in 2008, the highest level ever in Suffolk.

Levy and county officials were joined by the Stears family who benefited from the program with the purchase of their Mastic home in October 2007.

"One of the largest obstacles to home ownership for young working families is that large down payment," said Levy. "Upon taking office in 2004, I lobbied the federal government to double the maximum allowable grant for this region, in recognition of the high cost of housing." Levy also lobbied to change the maximum appraised value for a home from \$279,000 to \$396,150 on Long Island.

"We had been living with my in-laws and saving money for three and a half years just for closing costs," said Vita Stears. "Without this program, it



Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy joined with the Stears family of Mastic (Joseph, age 13, Grace, age 4 and Vita Spears) to promote the county's HOME Down Payment Assistance Program.

would have taken another three or four years of saving to be able to cover the down payment."

Eligibility is determined by family size and gross annual income, with families earning 60 percent of the area median income eligible for grants of up to \$14,000 and families at or below 80 percent of the area median income eligible for grants up to \$12,000.

Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis beginning May 1 and can be obtained by written request or by calling the Suffolk County Office of Community Development at 853-5705. Requests for applications may be sent to the Office of Community Development at the H. Lee Dennison Building, 11th Floor, P.O. Box 6100, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788-0099.

Motorcycle Poker Run & Family and Friends BBQ Lunch to Benefit Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck

The Rotary Club of Brentwood and the Rotary Club of Ronkonkoma will sponsor the second annual Motorcycle Poker Run & Family and Friends BBQ Lunch to benefit Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck on Sunday, June 1. Proceeds from the event will go to the Moriches Rotary Health Camp Inc., Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck and other rotary charities.

Registration for the Motorcycle Poker Run will take place at the Clubhouse of Suffolk Inc. located at 939 Johnson Ave., Ronkonkoma, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. while coffee and breakfast are being served. The object of the Motorcycle Poker Run is to obtain a playing card during each stop of the race and make your best poker hand to win the game. A barbecue Pig Roast Lunch will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. at Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck. A donation of \$10 per person is required to gain access to the lunch. A duck race and live music will also be featured during the day.

Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck's history began in 1941, when the Rotary Club of the Moriches made a donation to the County Welfare Department Camp at Yaphank, a camp serving children afflicted with polio. With the money collected from the Rotary Club, children were taken to an ocean beach where they enjoyed a day of picnicking and boating. Inspired by seeing the joy the outing brought to the children, Rotary Club members decided children with disabilities needed a place to enjoy the summer and experience a variety of recreational activities. In 1946, the camp

was incorporated as the Moriches Rotary Health Camp Inc. DBA Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck. Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

"We are very excited that for over 60 years, Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck has remained a special place where children with a range of challenges can enjoy a variety of summer recreational activities," said Bill Dalton, director of Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck. "Fundraisers such as these make it possible for these children to enjoy a week-long camp experience where they can be just kids for awhile."

For more information on this event, contact Paul at 631-499-0971 or visit the rotary websites: www.ronkonkomarotary.org or www.brentwoodrotary.com. For more information about Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck, call 878-1070 or visit www.camppaquatuck.com.

Located on the shores of Kaler's Pond, Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck is funded entirely by donations and is a special place where children with physical and developmental disabilities can experience firsthand the pleasures that an active life has to offer. Children participate in a wide range of activities especially designed for youngsters who are in wheelchairs as well as those who are ambulatory. These activities include swimming, boating, arts and crafts, a petting zoo, talent shows, cook-outs, games and a Carnival Day. The program also provides educational activities in areas such as nature, arts, fire safety and communication skills.