

The First Line



Commander's Corner

By Harry Ota, Division Commander

I feel very good about the transition from the outstanding year 2011. I offer my sincere thank you to Maggie for her outstanding job of leading us, and giving us a solid foundation for the new Administrative Year 2012.

And thanks also to the membership for the privilege of serving you as your Division Commander. Thank you also for giving us an outstanding group of flotilla leaders and division staff officers. How could any commander feel anything but very upbeat and proud as we begin the new year?

As many of us know, I've selected a tagline, '**Beyond Imagination, Fun and Fulfillment, with More Members**'. That's '**BIFF**' for short. Many famous taglines were born on Madison Avenue. Mine was auspicious. I believe that there is really no limit to the fun and fulfilling experiences we can have in the Auxiliary if we don't constrain ourselves. An example of Fulfillment is when we experience something warm inside for having done something good, even when the other person doesn't know about it.

The 'More Members' idea has two components – existing members and new members. For those who are doing about all you can for the Auxiliary, it's hard to ask for much more, except one. Help us Encourage, Empower and Inspire

The next Division Staff Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23rd, at 1900 hours, at Max Dale's Steak and Chop House, 2030 Riverside Drive, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. Also, at your option, please join us for dinner at 1800 hours at the same location.

(EEI) the existing members, who might otherwise be looking to have a fulfillment experience. To Encourage is to mentor. To Empower is to train to get requisite qualifications. Finally, to Inspire; nothing really happens until the engine of the heart is turned on. Help us give them that spark.

It's been said succinctly that any organization which is not growing is dying. It's harsh but I think it is true. Plus, if we want to do more, it's going to have to be with more members. Our active members are maxed out. Please consider this for a moment: even with the Power Squadron and the Auxiliary working together, we are only accomplishing vessel safety checks on about one percent of the recreational boats out there. So, we developed a BIFF Growth Awards Program to encourage flotillas and detachments to pursue growth as an objective. The basic BIFF Award is for 5% net growth, the Super BIFF Award is for 10% net growth, and the Platinum Super BIFF Award is for a whopping 15% net growth. We have something to offer and it's worth sharing with prospective members. Let's invite them to our meetings and give them that opportunity. A good indicator of membership growth is how many prospective members are present at each flotilla meetings, and are being cordially welcomed by all members.

With that, I'd like to share my 'vision' for 2012, which is: 'Where members of the Division are working together, encouraging each other, helping and being helped, regarding one another with courtesy and respect, sharing the exciting experiences and fulfillment opportunities, being trained and prepared competently for various tasks, having fun, and feeling good and wholesome about themselves to serve the boating public and the United States Coast Guard.'

Thank you for all that you are doing for the Boating Community and the Coast Guard Auxiliary! **BIFF**



David Tribolet, right, joining a Defender 33 crew out of Station Bellingham. Left to right: MK2 Adam Aguilar, MK2 Alex Phelps, and BM1 Troy Sutton. This photo was taken on the county dock at the Orcas ferry landing by a friendly but anonymous CBP officer.

Underway in the San Juan Islands

By David Tribolet, San Juan Island Detachment

Having qualified as crew, my goal was getting my boat approved as a facility. In the San Juan Islands there are only two of us who are current in our qualifications. Gary Ford (Coxswain) lives on San Juan Island and I live on Orcas Island. But, since my boat only required a crew of two, I was quite anxious to have "Puffin" approved. It took a while; but she was. The motive was to be able to secure patrol orders, satisfy mission requirements, and accumulate the underway hours needed for currency/qualification requirements. As one might expect, the game plan was foiled. There was the bureaucracy, the budget, the inter-island logistics, the weather, and a bunch of etceteras that conspired to nix this well thought out plan! Ultimately, the "Conditions" of Task COX-01-01-AUX which states "Performed while underway as a certified crew member on ordered patrols on an Auxiliary facility or Coast Guard boat" encouraged me to request permission to augment the Station Bellingham crews patrolling the San Juan Islands. With nods of approval from the Flotilla Commander and DIRAUX, the Station's Commanding Officer (BOSN3 Christopher Robinson) enthusiastically supported the concept. Since November 2011, I have been underway with three different 33' Defender crews operating here in the San Juan Islands. I have gained a great appreciation for the teamwork and professionalism that they exhibit. On my behalf, I offer my own set of experiences on these waters... and, of course, my grey and wrinkles. **BIFF**



Navigations Systems Report

By Pam Chelgren-Koterba, SO-NS

The Navigations Systems (NS) Division has four programs for: Federal Aids to Navigation (ATONs), Private Aids to Navigation (PATONs), Chart Updating (CU), and Bridge Administration Program (BAP).

Qualified Auxiliarists and their facilities are authorized assignment to duty to support and augment the USCG's Aids to Navigation program. This includes verifying the location and characteristics of PATONs and Bridges – after qualifying as an Aids Verifier (AV). Auxiliarists may also help NOAA/NOS in updating nautical charts and publications. Training is available in all four Auxiliary NS programs.

The NS Division program encourages the checking of every Federal ATON by any Auxiliarist at any time. Members are allowed to check Federal Aids and report any observed discrepancies to the Coast Guard per Chapter 2 of the Auxiliary Manual. Provision for taking credit for your underway time and for all your activity in AUXDATA, whether or not you find a discrepancy, is through use of a 7030. Checking ATONs can be a year-round Auxiliary program and can be extremely rewarding. New members are encouraged to join their local Auxiliary NS team. Your skill, knowledge, and desire to make a contribution to a worthy endeavor are what are needed.

In 2011, Division 1 AVs were able to verify all 48 assigned PATONs, with 6 reported as discrepant. Division 1 AVs also inspected 18 of the 20 Bridges assigned, with 2 reported as discrepant. This reporting is crucial to USCG-D13's Prevention Department, Waterways Management Branch ability to carry out their required duties.

Note: Our National NS Program directors instituted new AV qualification requirements as of late 2011. Materials have been developed to assist prospective AVs in meeting those requirements. Your contact for information as well as member training for these programs is your SO-NS – Pam Chelgren-Koterba, 360-647-9715. **BIFF**



Tintin and Snowy go after the bad guys, without life jackets. Tsk, tsk. From "The Adventures of Tintin: The Black Island", a comic book by Georges Remi (1907–1983) (aka Hergé).

Editor's Report

By Chris Doutre, Division Staff Officer for Publications

This is my first issue of The First Line and I sometimes wonder, "What is the purpose of a newsletter in the Internet age?" Well, I certainly do not have all the answers, but I'd like to offer a few basic ideas. First, I'd like to foster a sense of connectedness. It's always a pleasure to get a letter from a friend; sometimes the information is interesting and useful, sometimes not so much. But it's the thought that counts, and it's all a part of keeping in touch.

Second, we can use this as a vehicle to inform each other. If you have a burning issue that you would like to share with the entire division membership, send me an email and we can reach out together. For example, our Division Commander, Harry Ota, has written and spoken widely about his BIFF proposal for 2012. And now, if I have done my job right, you can read and digest Harry's words in a visually-appealing and memorable package, a package that is suitable for sharing with prospective members.

Similarly, every division staff officer is tasked with supporting their flotilla counterparts in the achievement of their goals. This newsletter is one possible vehicle for doing just that. Many flotilla staff officers are new in their jobs and can really use a lot of help. For example, in my own publications department, we have some flotillas that have excellent newsletters and some that don't have any. What better way to encourage us all to improve than to demonstrate our efforts and openly discuss our goals and methods? I would encourage every staff officer to think about what information needs to be shared and to think of a way to assemble words and pictures to achieve that. You don't have to worry about layout and format; I'll take care of that. And don't be shy; a 200-word email is all it takes to get started.

Attention: Flotilla Staff Officers for Publications (FSO-PB): I will be hosting a PB staff meeting just prior to the division staff meeting. Please join me at Max Dale's at 1700 hours to meet your counterparts and discuss all things PB. – Chris

Finally, since this newsletter will be distributed primarily by email, it is in fact a part of the Internet age. But it arrives electronically and you can print it out and show it to your friends. Maybe your friends would like to know more about the Auxiliary; you can use this newsletter to start a conversation and explain what we do. **BIFF**



Team Building & Goal Setting

By Tony Ford, Vice Division Commander

On Saturday, January 21st, the division staff gathered in Mount Vernon for an all-day planning session. The following are a few excerpts from that meeting.

Vision Statement: After general discussion about vision statements, the group agreed the following was appropriate for Division 1. The vision we agreed on was supportive of the published Vision Statement of the National Commodore.

National Commodore: The Coast Guard Auxiliary will continue to meet America's changing maritime safety and security challenges, through a balanced allocation of resources towards our recreational boating safety and maritime domain awareness missions.

Division 1 Vision Statement: Supporting flotillas and providing leadership to help them achieve the goals of the Com

mandant and National Commodore.

COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

Working with the "Gold Side" needs to improve. Contact with Station Bellingham (Blaine, Bellingham, Anacortes flotillas) should be one on one. This situation should be improved by appointment of an Aux C as the main conduit with Station Bellingham. Direct contact with Station Seattle (Everett & Edmunds flotillas) should be by Flotilla Commanders and Operations Staff Officers. To help define our role, flotillas need to seek out key Gold Side personnel and invite them to flotilla events.

The Division 1 training calendar on the website must be edited to reflect Division 1 training events. Currently, the calendar is a copy of individual flotilla training events. Expect further discussion of this topic in the Member Training section of this report.

Email discussions: Participants expressed concern about email volume and receiving the same email multiple times. At times, the sender (or forwarder) does not make it clear to whom the email is sent. We need to make an effort to improve this situation. Chris Doutre offered some specific ideas that will be discussed in a future report.

Tony Ford pointed out the Division website now had a "Policies & Procedures" section which memorializes important subject that have a degree of permanence. The policy for using flares, budgeting and awards are examples.

Several participants remarked that face to face meetings are the most effective means of communicating, followed by telephone calls and written means such as email. We need to remember meetings and telephone calls may be the best means of solving problems.

MEMBERSHIP

All agreed that a formal Mentoring Program is a very important part of introducing new members and finding out their needs. The Bellingham and Blaine Flotillas said they have formal mentoring programs and would be willing to share them at the February 23rd Division meeting. Tony Ford encouraged Flotilla Commanders to invite the Vice Commanders and their Human Relations Staff Officers to the meeting.

We had discussions about when to swear in new members with the idea of making them feel part of our organization right away. Harry Ota discussed getting the Director of Auxiliary to issue member certificates as soon as Applied Status was given instead of waiting for background investigations and Initially Qualified status. Some flotilla commanders pre-

ferred to wait for the Initially Qualified status; others thought it a good idea to do this right away.

Be honest in recruiting and not make promises you cannot keep. Find out what new members need and do not make assumptions about their needs. We might assume, for example, that every new member wants to be boat crew when they would prefer to contribute in our environmental protection programs.

Public Education programs, especially the 13 lesson Boating Skills & Seamanship course, are prime sources of new members. Some flotillas have formal presentations on the Auxiliary and what we do and have the Flotilla Commander speak as well. The 13 lesson class affords us 13 weeks to work on membership. The 8 hour classes have less exposure and are more difficult.

Several flotillas have found advertisements in local weekly newspapers to be effective. Other sources of new members are public affairs events, vessel examinations, our websites, marinas, and yacht clubs. Use of stickers and business cards is also in common use.

A new source of members may be through the Suddenly In Command public education classes being delivered by several women present at the meeting. This opportunity has attracted a surprising number of women. Tony Ford suggested our Staff Officer, Public Education look at this as an opportunity for meeting a need we did not know about.

MEMBER TRAINING

Our Division Staff Officer, Member Training strongly encouraged all attendees to keep him up to date on member training needs and activities. These activities include, but are not limited to: Team Coordination Training, ICS-210 classes, & all Auxiliary Specialty Courses.

The sponsoring flotilla should control class size, keep the list of attendees and admit members from other flotillas. He will make sure the Division training calendar is up to date so interested division people can keep track of opportunities.

At least one flotilla in Division 1 has reimbursed instructors and vessel examiners for mileage while engaged in authorized activities. Flotillas and Division staff officers will soon be tasked with submitting requirements for the Division 1 budget. Budget allowances for mileage should be considered.

PARALLEL STAFFING

Two methods of parallel staffing were discussed: First method would be meetings called by a Division Staff Officer who would meet with flotilla staff officers. For example, the Operations staff officers have done this in the past.

The second method would have all division and flotilla staff officers in the same location at the same time. Each staff component would meet together at the venue.

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Discussions clearly indicated the first method is preferred and we will move forward with this policy. The decision on which staff functions would have meetings was not entirely clear, so we have left this up to each division staff officer to decide. In all cases, keep the Division Commander and Vice Division Commander informed.

We also discussed division staff officers attending flotilla meetings. This is rarely done but the group felt such a program would result in better communication, promote good will and increase the division staff awareness of flotilla needs.

Division funds could be available to support parallel staffing and flotilla meeting expense. Flotilla commanders, vice commanders and division staff should include any expected expenses in their 2012 budget submissions.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, we have many opportunities to improve, and this report is just a beginning. Please think about these ideas and bring your suggestions to your flotilla and division staff meetings. Thank you for all your efforts in support of these important programs. **BIFF**



Planning Meeting: Back row, left to right: Dave Miller, VFC-12; Walt Barnard, VFC-17; Mike Allert, SO-OP; Lou Herrick, SO-MS; Melin Ford, SO-SR; Ed Madura, FC-18; Art Cummings, SO-IS; Bruce Bottolfson, FC-17; Gary Cordrey, FC-19; Dave Tribolet, Friday Harbor Det.; Michael DeAnnuntis, VFC-19; Barry Daniel, SO-MT. Front row, left to right: Dave Safford, VFC-18; Pamela Chelgren-Koterba, SO-NS; Penny Milczewski, SO-FN, FC-11; Tony Ford, VDCDR; Harry Ota, DCDR; Chris Doutre, SO-PB; Kathryn Wellington, SO-PV; Art West, SO-PE; Maggie Albert, IPDCDR; Dick Gibson, SO-MA. Photo: Richard Coons.

GNATS! GNATS! GNATS!

A message from Harry Ota, Division Commander

Please mark your calendar. We have received the date and location for this year's Great Northern Area Training Session (GNATS). It's Saturday April 14th and Sunday the 15th at Pier 36. As a general rule, there has been an informal social on Friday night, which would be Friday, the 13th. It's an excellent way to meet Auxiliary members, make friends and renew acquaintances. Why not carpool to get to know more folks, better? I'm looking forward to seeing you there. Stay tuned for more information.

'Beyond Imagination, Fun and Fulfillment with More Members.' 'BIFF' for short.

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