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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATORS

**Promoting the Use of
Life Jackets**

New PFD Label in the Works



Produced under a grant from the Aquatic
Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund
administered by the U.S. Coast Guard





Steve Hall
NASBLA President



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE
BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATORS

Welcome aboard. As boating safety professionals, when we think about the time and energy we've spent supporting legislation for mandatory wearing of life jackets and reminding boaters that life jackets are required in all vessels, it's scary to realize how many boaters put themselves in harm's way by going on the water with no life jackets. In examining the fatal boating accident statistics across the nation, we find that in many cases there were no life jackets in the boat. We have a long way to go.

Last year, Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management collaborated with BoatU.S. on an interactive project. While on patrol, our officers approached vessels and "bet" the occupants that they couldn't get their life jackets on in 30 seconds. If the boaters were able to beat the clock, they received a BoatU.S. gift certificate. The results were almost comical as people scrambled around looking for their life jackets. In many instances, the test ended with adults trying to put on children's life jackets or finding no life jackets at all. We didn't give out many certificates, but several boaters now have a better knowledge of what an "accessible life jacket" is.

One of the most significant victories in the life jacket battle has been the development and approval of inflatable life jackets. The main reason people say they don't wear life jackets is the lack of comfort. That excuse no longer works since inflatables are very comfortable.



In December NASBLA's Executive Director George Stewart and I made a whirlwind tour of Washington, D.C., and met with several key people.

We spoke with Marion Blakey, the new chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, who was very receptive to our message about boating safety and wants to keep recreational boating safety on the NTSB's "Most Wanted" list as the second leading cause of transportation-related fatalities in the United States. We feel confident that we will receive Chairman Blakey's support in our safety efforts.

I presented Larry Innis of the Marine Retailers Association of America with the NASBLA President's Award for 2001. Larry has always been a great friend and supporter of NASBLA and boating safety.

We met with Jim Muldoon, chairman of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, who is another great supporter of boating safety. It was during Jim's watch on the Council that they passed a resolution supporting a 50/50 split of the motorboat fuel taxes between the Sports Fish Restoration account and the Boating Safety account.

We also met with Derrick Crandall, co-chair of the

American League of Anglers and Boaters. Derrick is very familiar with our funding dilemmas and concurs that NASBLA should receive a realistic percentage of the motorboat fuel tax rather than being stuck at a fixed amount and losing money to inflation every year.

I presented NASBLA's report at the National Recreational Boating Safety Coalition chaired by Tom O'Day. This group has also come out in support of our efforts to receive 50 percent of the motorboat fuel tax.

We visited U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters and met with the boating safety staff headed up by John Malatak. They are very busy doing more with less but remain very effective helping with state issues, including the bicentennial commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Scheduled to start January 18, 2003, this event has the potential to make great demands on our resources and our state marine patrols will be very involved in the related activities.

We concluded our visit to the headquarters by speaking with Vice Admiral Thomas Collins who stood in for Admiral Loy. The admiral was very receptive to the needs of the boating safety programs and pledged the Coast Guard's support in the reauthorization process.

While the U.S. Coast Guard does support an equitable split of the Wallop-Breaux appropriation of motorboat fuel taxes, the organization is not yet on board in supporting a 50/50 split of the funds between the Boating Safety and Sportfish Restoration accounts.

Organizations that do support the 50/50 split include the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, National Recreational Boating Safety Coalition, National Water Safety Congress, National Boating Federation, National Safe Boating Council, U.S. Sailing Association, Marine Retailers Association of America, American Council of Marine Associations, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, United States Power Squadrons and International Association of Marine Investigators.



The Numbering and Titling Committee met in January, and we're gearing up for a round of committee meetings in April.

The most important work of NASBLA takes place in committee meetings. The committee members put their heads together to formulate solutions to problems the states face. My hat is off to all members of the committees, but especially to the committee chairs who dedicate endless hours for which they receive no compensation and who often deal with a sense of frustration as they seek elusive solutions to these problems.



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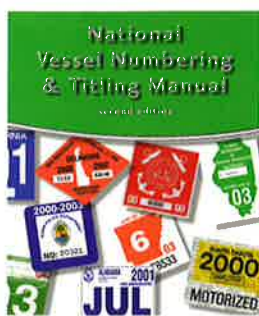
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ABOUT THE COVER

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring this nation's aquatic natural resources. The cover shot is from their successful **Water Works Wonders™** campaign. If you have questions about the campaign and available products, please contact Kristen Chambers, the RBFF program manager, at 703.519.0013 or send her an e-mail at kchambers@rbff.org.

Water works wonders
FOR FISHING, BOATING, AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

National Vessel Numbering & Titling Manual



NASBLA is pleased to announce the availability of the National Vessel Numbering & Titling Manual, second edition. This 448-page book is chock-full of information

that anyone who deals with the registration and titling of vessels needs.

The manual contains a section for each state that includes:

- State contact information
- General titling/registration information
- Taxes & fees
- Title terms and signatures
- Repossession & salvage
- Leases

Also included in the manual are:

- Summary tables for easy state-by-state comparison
- NASBLA Numbering & Titling Model Acts
- NASBLA Numbering & Titling Model Procedures
- What is required to be numbered & titled in each state
- Copies of actual state forms
- Information on Canadian licensing of vessels

Copies of the book are available for purchase for \$39 each. Government entities receive a 30 percent discount off the regular price at \$27 per copy. Shipping and handling charges are \$4.95 per book. Please inquire about bulk shipping.

To order, simply e-mail the quantity, billing and shipping addresses, phone number and contact name to joan@nasbla.org. Or call the NASBLA office at 859.225.9487 9:00 am - 5:00 pm EST. NASBLA accepts checks, purchase orders, and most major credit cards.

NASBLA Committees

NASBLA committees have begun the 2002 year of policy work. The Numbering & Titling committee had a successful meeting in Las Vegas immediately following the International Association of Marine Investigators annual conference. The committee worked on issues ranging from 17-digit HIN to Vessel Identification

System (VIS) to registering non-powered vessels.

April will be the big month for NASBLA committee meetings with all of the other policy committees meeting in either Del Mar, Calif., or in Daytona Beach, Fla., See the Recreational Boating Safety calendar on the back page for more information.

All committee membership and charges information is available on the NASBLA website at www.nasbla.org. Minutes from committee meetings will be posted to the respective committee pages as they are available.

NASBLA Directory

The NASBLA 2002 Directory is available for download on the NASBLA website at www.nasbla.org. The directory contains state-by-state listings of state boating safety professionals, NASBLA associate members and U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety contacts, among others.



WSBAA Annual Conference

The Western States Boating Administrators Association will hold its annual conference April 18 & 19, 2002, in Del Mar, Calif. Accommodations are available at the Doubletree Hotel Del Mar by calling 858.481.5900 Hotel reservation cutoff date is March 21, 2002. Early conference registration is available at \$200. For more information call 859.225.9487.



2002 International Boating & Water Safety Summit

The sixth annual International Boating & Water Safety Summit is being held at Daytona Beach, Fla., April 28-May 1, 2002. Accommodations are available at the Adams Mark Hotel by calling 800.444.2326. Early conference registration is available at \$295 before March 29, 2002. For more information, visit the National Safe Boating Council website at www.safeboatingcouncil.org or the National Water Safety Congress website at www.watersafetycongress.org.

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2002 NORTH AMERICAN SAFE BOATING CAMPAIGN

Memorial Day Weekend starts the summer boating season with an anticipated 80 million boaters on the water. While only 27 percent of these boaters wear life jackets, many tragedies are preventable. Life jackets can be the determining factor between life and death in many boating safety accidents. Each year around 700 people die in boating-related accidents, and nine of every 10 victims were NOT wearing a life jacket.

In an effort to combat these statistics, the National Safe Boating Council has partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and other boating organizations for the fourth annual North American Safe Boating Campaign during the National Safe Boating Week (May 18-24, 2002).

North American Safe Boating Week is designed to educate boaters that wearing life jackets saves lives. The national campaign includes a major one-day kickoff event to take place in Washington, D.C., hosted by the National Safe Boating Council. In addition, hundreds of local volunteers will offer activities in thousands of communities across America. For the second year, the theme is "Boat Smart from the Start. Wear Your Life Jacket," but the campaign will have a new look.

Campaign kits are sent out in late February. New items in the kit include information on the dangers of carbon monoxide, facts about lightning, A Guide to Marine Weather from NOAA, a special publication from the American Canoe Association covering knowing your paddling limits, emergency call procedures sticker, pamphlet covering marine radios and cellular phone usage, and a few other handout items.

Visit these websites for updates:
www.safeboatingcampaign.com and
www.safeboatingcouncil.org.

What's in a Label?

PFD Classification and Labeling

By Steve Young, Applied Safety and Ergonomics Inc.

Concerns have been raised by boating safety officials in the United States, the boating industry and the boating public about the readability and understandability of personal flotation device (PFD) labels. With the introduction of fully inflatable PFDs, the clarity of labels has become even more critical.

The U.S. Coast Guard has funded a two-year grant to redesign the labeling for PFDs. The goal of this project is to provide the recreational boating consumer with more accurate and comprehensive information about design, uses, quality, fit and types of PFDs. With better information, the public will be able to make more informed decisions regarding the selection, purchase and use of PFDs. Awareness of the benefits of wearing PFDs will lead to higher wear rates and a decrease in the number of drownings that occur each year on our nation's waterways.

NASBLA has secured the commitment and support of Applied Safety and Ergonomics Inc. (ASE) of Ann Arbor, Mich., one of the top safety and ergonomics engineering firms in the nation. In addition to working on the redesign of the labeling, ASE is undertaking a project to examine the need for and feasibility of restructuring the type classification system currently used for PFDs.

Concern over Classification

The current classification system for PFDs includes five Types (I, II, III, IV and V). Over time, there has been growing concern about the extent to which recreational boaters understand this classification system especially as it relates to Type V PFDs. The purpose of this phase of the project is to determine the extent to which the current classification system needs to be modified and the feasibility of changing it. In considering this task, it is helpful to consider several questions:

1. What is the goal of classification? That is, why classify PFDs at all?
2. What, if anything, is wrong with the existing system and would such problems suggest that reclassification is warranted?
3. Is there a "better" system? That is, would a new scheme solve the problems of the old one without introducing new problems?

In general, there appear to be two uses for the classification system. The first is "statutory/regulatory"—different regulations specify the types of PFDs that

are required for different applications. The second is "informational"—classification can be used by consumers as a source of information when selecting, purchasing and using PFDs. Classification can be helpful to recreational boaters by simplifying and reducing the number of variables to consider when comparing PFDs and by highlighting or emphasizing the most important variables. Since the goal of the overall project is to enhance the utility of information for recreational boaters, it is important that any classification system be useful to consumers while, at the same time, meeting the needs of statutory/regulatory concerns.

There is evidence that the current system is potentially confusing to recreational boaters, but fixing the "problems" associated with the current classification system is not without its own pitfalls.

ASE, in conjunction with others, is working to outline the different strategies for classifying PFDs. Current standards and regulations have been collected and analyzed, along with existing and proposed European standards. Classification systems from other domains (e.g., fire extinguishers, ladders, etc.) have also been examined. Finally, data has been collected from industry experts and from laypeople to determine how best to group and classify PFDs. Work on this phase of the project is ongoing and no final decisions have been made on whether the current classification system will be modified or what it will look like if it is.

Looking at Labels

As stated earlier, the goals of the labeling phase of the project are:

- to make labeling content more uniform in content and/or format; and
- to provide recreational boaters with information they need to make informed purchase, selection, and use decisions regarding the appropriate type of PFD within a class based on their use patterns and needs.

To accomplish these goals, ASE has identified individuals and groups that will serve as participants and contributors to the redesign of the labeling. These individuals come from the government, standards organizations, boating industry groups, and so on.



Photo courtesy Mustang Survival

In addition, concepts that might be addressed on revised labeling have been identified based on an analysis of existing PFD labeling, PFD literature such as ads and catalogs, boat and water safety publications, federal regulations and Underwriters Laboratories documentation related to PFD labeling, accident data and the like. To date, over 140 concepts have been identified for potential inclusion on the revised labeling.

The next stage of the project involves making decisions about how to pare this list of concepts to those that are most important to convey to recreational boaters. In addition, these concepts will need to be grouped and organized so the information can be presented in a coherent and readily understandable manner. Finally, decisions will have to be made on the format to use in presenting the information.

What to Expect

Once this work is completed, preliminary draft labeling will be developed, evaluated and revised. Evaluation will be performed by project members and other interested parties. In addition, empirical testing will be conducted to determine how recreational boaters perceive and interpret the labels.

The result of this work will be the production of revised labels and the delivery of a draft standard to the Standard Technical Panel for PFDs at Underwriters Laboratories. This work is expected to be completed by the late 2002–early 2003 time frame.

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Increasing the Use of Life Jackets

By Kimberly Hermes

According to a 1999 study by the JSI Research & Training Institute, less than one-quarter of U.S. boaters wear their life jackets while on the water. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that up to 90 percent of drownings could be prevented if every boater would wear a personal flotation device (PFD) while boating.

Since the majority of boating-related drownings result from individuals not wearing their life jackets, a challenge facing boating law administrators, the U.S. Coast Guard and other boating safety professionals is increasing the use of personal flotation devices (PFDs) by recreational boaters.

"A key issue is how to get people to understand that wearing a PFD can save your life," says Charlie Kearns with Stearns Manufacturing. "The biggest issue is how to get people to **wear** life jackets. From listening to people talk about why they don't wear PFDs, it seems to come down to one key word: perception. The boater's perception often runs along the lines of 'It could never happen to me,' 'I only need a life jacket in stormy or rough conditions,' 'I've always done it this way' and 'I'm a good swimmer. If I fall in, I'll put my life jacket on then or swim to shore.' These perceptions can be addressed only through education."

Efforts are being made across the nation to educate boaters about the value of wearing PFDs. Boating professionals are incorporating both traditional and innovative methods of getting their messages across.

For example, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) just completed an advertising campaign that marked the first time the state used paid advertising and professionally produced commercials.

Using this approach made the state's two-year "Sport the Vest" campaign very successful. Marketing research demonstrated that about 60 percent of those surveyed, half of whom were boaters, remembered the message at the end of both summers that the ads aired.

"By adding this medium to our traditional education methods," says Ann Van Buren, IDPR boating education coordinator, "we increased our reach from 20,000 to nearly 300,000 people a year – about a third of

the state's population – at a cost of about 30 cents per person."

IDPR is making its radio and television spots available to other states and provinces to reproduce for local use. Idaho will continue to use the theme "Sport the Vest," but the commercials can be modified with different slogans. Written permission is needed to make modifications due to copyright and talent contracts. Contact Van Buren at avanbure@idpr.state.id.us for details.

Most government agencies are hesitant to use paid advertising due to limited resources. "Internal critics worried we would take money away from law enforcement salaries," says Van Buren. "The truth is that it is probably the **most** cost-effective method we are using to change the attitudes **shaping** risky behavior. Yes, we had to **commit** funding to get it done, but we reached hundreds of thousands more people than with previous campaigns, exposing each person 28 times to a minute-long message."

Officials with IDPR noticed the traditional education methods were reaching a fraction of the boaters, succeeding in getting more people to wear life jackets and reducing drownings related to not wearing PFDs by 10 percent in a decade.

But they saw the need to infuse the message with new life.

They also felt they needed help reaching adult sportsmen who comprise most of Idaho's fatalities.

Sport the Vest.



"It used to be that you could count on news releases and public service announcements to do the trick," Van Buren says. "Today, reaching the public is much more competitive. You need great ads that are aired when the majority of your target audience is listening. Most importantly, we are competing for the public's attention. People are technologically sophisticated and are bombarded by multiple messages all day. You need something that will grab their attention."

There are multiple benefits to adding paid advertising to the mix. Unlike public service announcements, advertising lends itself well to evaluative measurement. Once its appeal wears off, the ad can be



used again in other parts of the country. Another benefit to hiring an ad agency is that those people involved in the ads learn the messages they are publicizing and use those with other clients. For example, the agency used by IDPR is featuring boaters wearing PFDs in ads for other clients.

The bottom line is that professional advertising costs more upfront but can be an effective tool when used wisely. Paid advertising works because the majority of people get their news from TV and radio – media that play a key role in determining what will become the salient issues of the day.

Boating safety professionals in all states and territories are finding new ways to encourage the use of personal flotation devices. Many boating safety programs include teaching boating safety courses, speaking to schools and other groups, organizing boating safety events, collaborating with local restaurants for reward programs and coordinating media blitzes.

A popular tactic is a life jacket loaner program. While some states operate their own loaner programs, others participate in the program managed by the BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety & Clean Water. For information about the BoatU.S. program, contact Catherine Whitehouse, program administrator, at (703) 823-9550 x3201.

Another approach gaining popularity is to require officers to wear PFDs while on patrol. This sets a good example. And with more states allowing officers to wear inflatable PFDs, this strategy elicits much interest from people with whom the officers come in contact.

Following are additional ideas to promote the use of PFDs.

Alaska

Kids Don't Float: Sponsored by a coalition of agencies, this grassroots effort aims at reducing

drowning among children and youth. It includes providing loaner PFDs to boaters, a presentation available for educators and a unique peer program. The KDF Peer Educator Program involves high school students in learning key safety concepts and teaching these concepts to elementary school students.

California

Life jacket trade-in: This event encourages boaters to throw away old, deteriorated life jackets and buy new ones. The motivation is that Department of Boating and Waterways will

Poster contest: Students in grade levels K-8 are invited to submit original artwork depicting aquatic and boating safety themes.

Media: The department partners with the Adopt-A-Beach program to place safety posters at marina entrances, on docks and in picnic areas. To continue reaching boaters, the department places posters at launch ramps, fuel docks and park entrances. Articles and ads aimed at anglers are placed in fishing publications reminding folks that "Fish have Gills...Fishermen Don't" – wear your life jacket.

Connecticut

PFD Fashion Show: As part of Boating Safety Week, the Department of Environmental Protection Boating Division presented a PDF Fashion Show. The major themes were 1) there is a WEARABLE life jacket out there that is comfortable for every water sport and 2) PFDs must be WORN in order to keep you afloat. The agency also conducts demonstrations of Coast Guard approved inflatables.

Kentucky

Media: The Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources is planning an outing for their weekly television show in which the importance of wearing PFDs while hunting or fishing on the water is discussed.

Maryland

Parades: Each year the Department of Natural Resources participates in three Christmas Boat Parades. The department's float displays a lighted sign stating "Life Jackets Save Lives." The patrol boat is decorated with an array of lights, PFD Panda, life jacket-wearing-wavers and

Frosty the Snowman.

Youth events: In the fall, Maryland hosted a youth event for nearly 100 children to educate the children about boating safety and hunting safety issues.

Minnesota

Media: The Department of Natural Resources is producing a new series of humorous TV and radio public service announcements to sell boaters on the idea that it is "stupid" not to wear a PFD. In May, the state begins producing weekly press releases on boating safety issues. These releases are widely carried by the state print and broadcast media. Observational studies shows that PFD wear rates have increased from 13% overall in 1984 to 51% overall now. For children the rate went from 47% in 1984 to 88% now – all without a mandatory PFD law.

Mississippi

Media: In addition to news releases about PFDs, Mississippi Department of Wildlife,

Fisheries & Parks produces a TV show promoting the use of different types of PFDs.

Montana

Public information: The Montana Safe Kids coalition distributes water safety packets to families throughout the state. The packet contains safety information about boating, dams, swimming and life jackets in addition to information on the different types of PFDs and how to fit them, Montana's PFD laws, a PFD sticker, and an iron-on decal kids can color and wear on their shirt.

Nevada

It Pays to Wear Your Life Jacket: Since Nevada does not have a mandatory wear law, Division of Wildlife designed this campaign to reinforce the voluntary wearing of life jackets by rewarding boaters with gifts and cash. (Editor's note: See details in the State Briefs section beginning on p. 10.)

Oregon

Media: The Marine Board provides life jacket safety information online. It routinely publicizes the state's accident statistics, noting how many of the fatalities involved PFDs. PFD safety will be a key component in the state's "Coastal Boating Task Force" in 2002 focusing resources and educational and information efforts on boaters in coastal areas.

South Dakota

Media: Among other media outlets, the department used billboards along major highways for the first time last year to urge people to wear PFDs.

Texas

Junior Boater: This hands-on program targeted for youth under 13 uses a station-by-station, activity-based format to teach water safety. At one station, kids have fun learning how to properly put on and secure a PFD in a race and at another station they learn how to throw a Type IV PFD in the PFD Toss.

Partnerships: TPW collaborated with several local, state and federal agencies and organizations to develop a poster/video public service announcement titled "It only takes a second," reminding people that a drowning happens very quickly.

Vermont

Public relations: The Recreational Enforcement & Educational Unit received a grant from the National Safe Boating Council to promote the wearing of life jackets by paddlers. The department purchased water bottles containing the message "Paddle Smart" and "Wear Your Life Jacket." Officers give the bottles to paddlers as they encounter them.

Virginia

Public relations: Virginia's mandatory wear law applies only to personal watercraft (PWC) operators, so the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries developed a consistent three-part message to use for every media or other educational opportunity. The parts of the message are: Wear a Life Jacket; Do not Drink and Boat; and Take a Boating Safety Course. The life jacket theme is expanded by referring to life jackets as the seat belts/air bags of boating.

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Sporting various life jackets, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Boating Staff hosted a PFD Fashion Show to raise awareness of personal flotation devices. Participating in the show were (clockwise from bottom) Anna Sbatzer, Jacky Gorman, John Byron, Amy Rytz and Andrea Lane. (Photo courtesy Maryland DNR)

give a new donated life jacket to persons who bring a worn-out life jacket for trade. When the supply of donated life jackets is depleted, representatives encourage boaters to purchase new PFDs at local marine or retail stores. They sometimes have coupons from local retailers.

AquaSMART LIVE: In conjunction with the Department of Education, the department developed grade-specific boating safety education curriculums for the state public school system. These programs were introduced in 1985 and currently make boating safety education available to 8,568 schools having a total student population of nearly 6,000,000. The department also tours a high quality show titled *AquaSMART Live* which teaches children in kindergarten through sixth grade how to be safe when in or around the water. The show works in tandem with the department's current *AquaSMART* curriculum, video and website.

Building Bridges for Reauthorization

By George Stewart, Ed Carter and Charlie Clark

January 2002 began the second session of the 107th Congress. What we need to accomplish during this session is building bridges among the Bush administration, Congress, the states, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) associate members, other water-oriented associations and, most of all, the boating public we serve to let them know where we are and where we expect to go in 2004.

To construct these bridges, we need to lay a good foundation on the positive use of the boating safety trust funds to reduce boating fatalities and make our waters safe. At the same time, we must convey to Congress and the boating public the states' projected use of the additional revenue they would get if they received 50 percent of the total federal fuel tax revenue attributable to motorboat fuel tax in FY04.

Of utmost importance as we build these bridges is to let all concerned know that the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (BSAC), which is mandated by Congress to advise the U.S. Coast Guard on boating safety issues, is on record supporting a 50-50 split of the motorboat fuel tax receipts between the Boating Safety and Sportfish Restoration accounts. This council is comprised of seven members from the public sector, seven members from the boating industry and seven state officials in boating safety, usually boating law administrators.

In addition to NASBLA and BSAC, the following organizations have voiced their support of the 50-50 split:

- American Council of Marine Associations
- International Association of Marine Investigators
- Marine Retailers Association of America
- National Boating Federation
- National Recreational Boating Safety Coalition
- National Safe Boating Council
- National Water Safety Congress
- United States Power Squadrons
- U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
- U.S. Sailing Association

We need to lay a good foundation this year showing justification for the 50-50 split of the revenue generated by the federal excise tax boaters pay on fuel used in their boats. We who are close to the programs easily see the need, but

others may not be as familiar.

For instance, the events of September 11 have brought to the forefront our historical but lesser known role in homeland security for dams, hydroelectric and nuclear power plants, water supplies and other facilities. We need to highlight that these are not new duties for us but that the increased emphasis is placing a significant drain on our already-tight budgets.

In addition to the focus on security, boating-related electrocutions and carbon monoxide poisonings are receiving national attention. This also results in added duties in meeting greater demands for public safety and awareness materials.

Again, our success in reauthorization of the Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund depends on the building of bridges in 2002 with the key Congressional committees and subcommittees that will draft the legislation for reauthorization. All members of the House are up for re-election in 2002, and there may be some changes to the committee makeup. The committees responsible for initiating reauthorization of Wallop-Breaux are the Senate Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee within the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee within the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

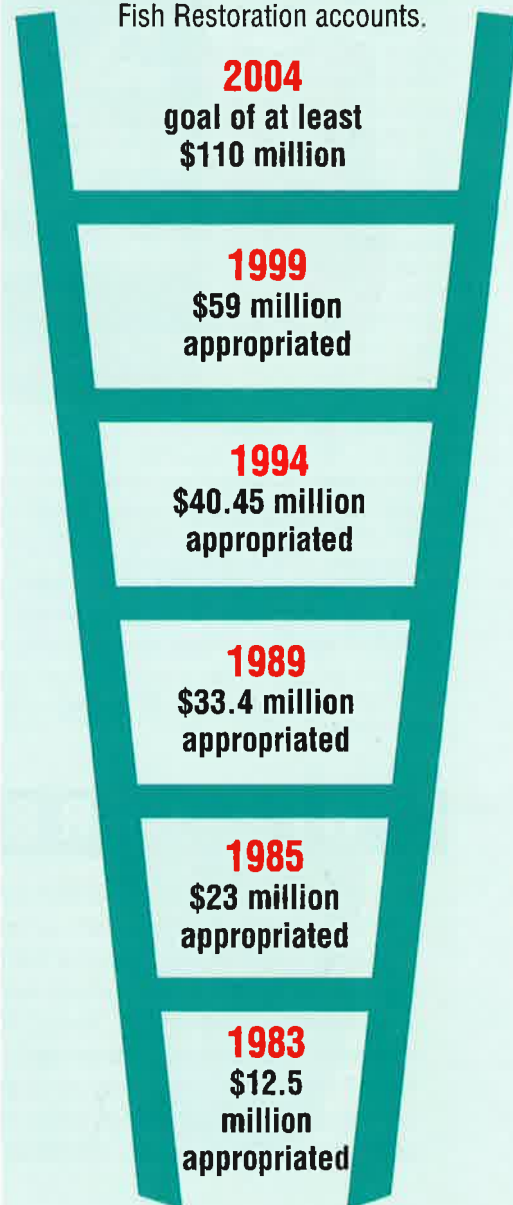
Boating law administrators who have made inroads with their U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives, especially those in the two subcommittees mentioned above, need to keep NASBLA Executive Director George Stewart updated on these contacts so he can have the information available for the Reauthorization Committee in dealing with the subcommittees in 2003 when the 108th Congress convenes.

The purpose of any bridge is to unite two sides by spanning an obstacle. If we are successful, our bridges will bring together a united boating community and eliminate many of the obstacles that have stood in the way of safer and more enjoyable boating. That's a phrase you've heard before, but what better cornerstone could there be?



In reauthorization of the Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund, we have a good track record in overcoming the many obstacles in our path. This is illustrated below as steps we have made up the funding ladder.

The next step on the ladder will be the reauthorization coming up in 2003. Our goal is a 50-50 split of the federal fuel tax attributable to motorboat fuel between the Boating Safety and Sport Fish Restoration accounts.



Dollar figures represent the average amount for each authorization of the trust fund.

Picking a PFD

By Kimberly Hermes

When it comes to choosing the right personal flotation devices, there are many decisions to make. Five types of PFDs are available to consumers; however, the general boater population usually encounters only Types I through IV when using or purchasing these essential pieces of equipment. Three of these four types are wearable PFDs. But even among wearable PFDs, there exist varying uses, advantages and disadvantages. In addition, PFDs come in a variety of shapes, colors and materials, adding to the list of choices for the consumer.

PFDs are available in different USCG Approval Types, and not all PFDs are suitable for all activities. To make the task of choosing the right PFD less complicated, consumers need to keep in mind the type of on-water activity for which the PFD will be used.

In 1994, the Coast Guard received reports of 6,906 recreational boating accidents which resulted in 784 fatalities, 613 of which were drownings. Coast Guard-approved life jackets could have saved the lives of at least 550 boaters who drowned in 1994, including approximately 30 children who were 12 years of age or younger.

Although the law states that all recreational boats must carry one

wearable Coast Guard-approved PFD for each person aboard, during this year's National Safe Boating Campaign, the Coast Guard and other recreational boating safety organizations will urge all recreational boaters to wear their life jackets.

Historically, the major obstacle to encouraging the recreational boating public to wear life jackets while boating was the fact that the Coast Guard-



approved inherently buoyant life jackets were too bulky and deemed uncomfortable by consumers.

On March 28, 1996, the U.S. Coast Guard published a final rule in the Federal Register establishing structural and performance standards for inflatable life jackets for recreational boaters, as well as the procedures for Coast Guard approval of inflatable life jackets. The regulations in

the final rule allow approval of life jackets which may be more appealing to boaters, thereby increasing the percentage of life jackets actually used by the boating public and saving lives. Several manufacturers now have Coast Guard-approved inflatable life jackets on the market.

An important factor to consider in choosing a PFD is the level of flotation it offers. There are three basic kinds of flotation among the five types of PFDs:

• **Inherently Buoyant** – Primarily constructed of foam, these PFDs are the most reliable. They are available in wearable and throwable styles and they are appropriate for both swimmers and non-swimmers. Inherently buoyant PFDs are available in adult, youth, child and infant sizes. Some are designed for water sports.

• **Inflatable** – These PFDs are the most compact and are available only in wearable styles. They are available in adult sizes and are recommended for use by swimmers only.

• **Hybrid** – Combining foam construction with inflation capabilities, these reliable PFDs are available in wearable styles for adults, youths and children. Some hybrids are designed for water sports.

With continual advances in technology, the market now carries PFDs for a variety of activities and personalities. Consumers simply need to determine which style fits their needs best while adhering to Coast Guard and state/territory regulations.

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OFFICERS, PFDs & INFLATABLES

For nearly a decade, NASBLA has urged its member states to establish a written policy requiring marine law enforcement officers to wear personal flotation devices while on patrol in an enforcement vessel. Today, 40 states and territories require their marine patrol officers to wear PFDs while underway on a patrol vessel. Of those that require PFD wear, the following allow their officers to use inflatable PFDs:

Alaska
Arizona
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Illinois
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts

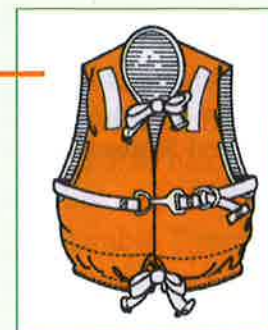
Michigan
Minnesota
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma

Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Dakota
Texas
Vermont
Virginia
West Virginia

Types of PFDs . . .

TYPE I PFD – OFF-SHORE LIFE JACKET

Provides the most buoyancy. Geared for rough or remote waters where rescue may take a while. Effective for all waters. Designed to turn most unconscious wearers face up in the water.



TYPE II PFD – NEAR-SHORE BUOYANCY VEST

Intended for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. Inherent buoyant PFDs of this type will turn some unconscious wearers face up in the water, but the turning is not as pronounced as a Type I. This type of inflatable turns as well as a Type I foam PFD.



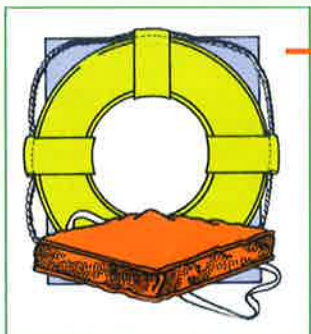
TYPE III PFD – FLOTATION AID

Good for conscious users in calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. NOT for rough waters since they will not turn a person face up. The Type III foam vest has the same minimum buoyancy as a Type II PFD. Some Type III PFDs are designed to inflate when the wearer enters the water. Generally the most comfortable type for continuous wear. Float coats, fishing vests, and vests designed with features suitable for various sports activities are examples of this type PFD. This type inflatable turns as well as a Type II foam PFD.



TYPE IV PFD – THROWABLE DEVICE

Intended for calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic where help is always present. Designed to be thrown to someone in trouble in the water. NOT designed to be worn. NOT appropriate for: long hours in rough waters, non-swimmers or the unconscious. Type IV devices include buoyant cushions, life rings, and horseshoe buoys. There are no inflatable Type IV devices. Type IVs do not fulfill the one-per-person requirement. However, at least one Type IV PFD must be kept onboard, immediately available for a person overboard.



TYPE V PFD – SPECIAL-USE DEVICE

Intended for specific activities and may be carried instead of another PFD only if used according to the approval condition(s) on its label. A Type V PFD provides performance of a Type I, II or III PFD (as marked on its label). Some Type V PFDs are designed to inflate when you enter the water. If the label says the PFD is "approved only when worn," the PFD must be worn, except for persons in enclosed spaces, and used in accordance with the approval label to meet carriage requirements. Some Type V devices provide significant hypothermia protection. Type V PFDs include deck suits, work vests, wind surfing vests and hybrids.



Ohio's Operation Overboard Begins Second Year

With the traditional start of the boating season yet to arrive, Ohio's state watercraft officers are beginning their second year for Operation Overboard. Initiated last year, the safety program consists of early season watercraft patrols, vessel safety checks at boat ramps and on waterways, and providing safety information to boaters.

"It is never too early to remind people about boating safety, especially in cold climate areas of the country during late winter and early spring," said Jeff Hoedt, chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Watercraft.

A specific focus of Operation Overboard is to contact watercraft operators and inspect their vessels for proper loading in addition to required safety equipment. Many fatal boating accidents result from persons falling overboard and boats capsizing. About 80 percent of all boating fatality victims were not properly wearing an approved life jacket at the time of their accident.

"It is never too early to remind people about boating safety, especially in cold climate areas of the country during late winter and early spring."

Seventeen fatal boating incidents claimed 19 lives last year on Ohio's waterways, including three men who died last May on Lake Erie when their boat broke apart and capsized. The victims were each wearing a life jacket but succumbed to the effects of hypothermia in the 49-degree water.

Though Ohio saw a reduction in boating fatalities from 25 in 2000 to 19 in 2001, 14

of 19 fatality victims last year were not wearing an approved life jacket and 13 died as a result of drowning.

Operation Overboard directs watercraft officers to specifically look for potential hazards such as improperly loaded boats during vessel safety checks. The program primarily targets people using small boats on inland waters from late winter through spring. Only one boater fatality occurred in Ohio between January 1 and April 30 of last year.

Ohio's state watercraft officers performed 14,500 written and 8,500 visual inspections of watercraft during 2001.

"Programs such as this are intended to reduce boating fatalities, enhance boating safety and increase awareness regarding safe boating practices," said Hoedt.

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Utah State Boating Program Season in Review

As the 2001 boating season ended, Utah's drowning statistics were a sobering reminder of the importance of life jackets. Eight of the state's 12 boating-related deaths could have been prevented had the victims been wearing life jackets.

For 2002, the Division of Utah State Parks and Recreation is creating a new marketing plan to encourage boaters not

only to have personal floatation devices (PFDs) on board their boats but also to wear them.

The first fatality occurred at Jordanelle State Park. It was early May and the water was extremely cold. A spring storm came up, creating choppy, hazardous conditions. Two young men were out in their canoe when the storm hit. The canoe capsized, and the two were thrown into the freezing water. Though one man was pulled to safety by a nearby kayaker, the other man drowned. Their life jackets were later found inside their parked vehicle.

With this tragedy in mind, Utah State Parks Boating Coordinator Ted Woolley began working with a local public

relations firm to create the new PFD marketing plan.

"We want people to view life jackets as they do seat belts," stated Woolley. "My hope is that all boaters will know 'buckle up' applies to life jackets, too."

Woolley plans to launch the campaign at Safe Boating Week 2002 when Utah State Parks boating rangers host Boating Safety Demonstration Days on May 17, 18 and 19. This family event is part of Utah Safe Boating Week (May 18-24), which coincides with National Safe Boating Week. All state activities are a cooperative effort between Utah State Parks and Recreation, North America Safe Boating Council, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Utah Marine Dealers and U.S. Power Squadrons.

Also in 2002, Woolley will propose legislation that will require licensing for motorboat operators. The legislation would require boat operators to pass a written test at a driver's license office and prohibit children under the age of 12 from operating a boat with a motor greater than 10 horsepower. The legislation would also merge boating-under-the-influence (BUI) law with the driving-under-the-influence (DUI) law.

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(l-r) Utah Lake Park Manager Bob Foote, State Boating Coordinator Ted Woolley, Utah Governor Michael Leavitt and Park Ranger Chris Miller are accompanied by several local children on Utah State Parks Rescue One – the Great Salt Lake rescue boat – to kick off the state's 2001 Safe Boating Week.

Photo courtesy Utah Division of Parks & Recreation

Oregon Marine Patrol Officers Get Unique Training

With the September 11 terrorist attack still fresh in their minds, Oregon marine officers spent part of a post-season conference in October practicing their skills in a unique venue designed to prepare them for the unexpected.

"We wanted to give them training they hadn't had before," said Pat Rowland, law enforcement training coordinator for the Oregon State Marine Board. "We hold this conference every year in a different location, and this location – on the shores of Klamath Lake in southern Oregon – gave us the opportunity to try some new things. And it worked very well."

New to the conference this year was a full-day rodeo designed to test marine officer skills and provide critical training. Groups of officers rotated through a series of stations where they participated in a "simulated" boat-to-boat gun battle, live fire training from a patrol boat at an onshore target (the first such training in Oregon), boat operating and trailering, and knot-tying.

This training is conducted by the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in much the same manner as other police training, but it is customized for the Marine Board. Safety is critical. Officers are not allowed to bring firearms into the training area. No live ammunition is allowed in and all trainees are patted down and checked with a metal detector for live ammunition, knives or other possible weapons. All training firearms are clearly marked with blue grips and all trainees wear the required safety equipment.

Officers also were trained on "Range 2000," a state-of-the-art computer training

aid specifically customized with boating scenarios. In this training, officers face a large video projection screen and are presented with scenarios such as a routine safety check or a violation stop. Depending on the officer's response to the video suspect, a computer operator can escalate the situation or resolve it peacefully. If escalated, the video suspect may fire on the officer, forcing the officer to return fire. The unit records where the officer's "bullets" hit and adjusts the video suspect's response accordingly. If fatally wounded, the fight is over. If not, the fight may continue. The officer's reactions are also monitored.

The weeklong conference also included classroom lectures, team-building exercises and discussions on the issues of the day. However, the field training drew the most praise. "Our goal is that officers be well trained to respond confidently and appropriately in all the situations they may face," says Rowland. "We really don't expect Oregon to become a terrorist target, but we do occasionally run into drug enforcement or other issues that could result in confrontation. We hope this training will help them be ready."

For information on the training exercises, contact Pat Rowland at (503) 373-1405 x242.

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Marine patrol officers participate in a combat simulation exercise during Oregon's annual post-season conference. In this activity, the officers act out a routine stop which might resolve peacefully or escalate into conflict, depending on cues from the training supervisor. The scenario uses real handguns but the guns' barrels have been modified to shoot paint balls. All "players" wear protective gear. The officers have no prior information on how the scenario will play out. Despite the fact that this is just training, officers agree that it is realistic and very tense.

Photo courtesy Oregon State Marine Board

Nevada Awards Family of Nine \$1,000 for Wearing Life Jackets

A Utah family went home \$1,000 richer after spending a day on Southern Nevada's Lake Mead. Clay Cottam, his wife, and seven children were all voluntarily wearing their life jackets when checked by game wardens at an OUI (operating under the influence) checkpoint held at Overton Landing. The cash reward was the top prize in the "It Pays to Wear Your Life Jacket" campaign sponsored by the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW).

"The kids want us to buy water skiing equipment. We'll probably use it to make three or four boat payments or pay some bills," Cottam said.

Ironically, as the Cottams were receiving a reward for wearing their life jackets, officers were taking another boater to jail for OUI.

The campaign began Memorial Weekend and ran throughout the summer boating season, ending with Labor Day weekend.

Two other \$1,000 prizes were also given out – one at Sand Harbor on Lake Tahoe and the other on South Fork Reservoir near Elko.

In all, about 100 prize envelopes were distributed by game wardens on waters throughout the state. In addition to cash

prizes, boaters received certificates from such businesses as Blockbuster Video, Port of Subs and the Mandalay Resort Group.

"From the beginning, our goal with this campaign has been to increase the voluntary wearing of life jackets by boaters," explained Fred Messmann, Nevada's boating law administrator. "I think we have done that, but we would like to see all boaters and their passengers wearing their life jackets. As many as 90 percent of all boating fatalities could be prevented if boaters would wear their life jackets."

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Lifetime Achievement Award Presented

Each year, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) recognizes those persons or groups who have significantly contributed to boating safety. One of the esteemed awards presented is the NASBLA Lifetime Achievement Award, an honor given to a person who has contributed to boating safety throughout his or her life. In 2001, five recipients were selected for this award, and during the organization's annual conference, which was held in Anchorage, Alaska, last October, four of

these awards were presented. (*Editor's note: For information about these four recipients, see "North to the Future" in the January/February 2002 Small Craft Advisory.*)

The fifth lifetime achievement award was presented to Major Larry Rhinehart of Indiana in December. Rhinehart worked as a conservation officer for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources from 1971 until his retirement in 2000. He also served as that state's boating law administrator (BLA) from 1987 through

1999. As BLA, Rhinehart emphasized both boating education and enforcement in Indiana by initiating a number of new programs. During his tenure he served on several NASBLA committees and the Executive Board, being elected president in 1994. Rhinehart also served two terms on the U. S. Coast Guard's National Boating Safety Advisory Council. In 1995 he was presented with NASBLA's Bonner Award.

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Washington Marine Enforcement Officers, Agencies Honored

Exemplary marine law enforcement officers and enforcement agencies were recently presented with Marine Law Enforcement Merit Awards by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Boating Programs. The award presentations capped the 2001 Fall Marine Law Enforcement Conference in Spokane.

Officer of the Year honors went to Sgt. Mike Sanford, Chelan Police Department, for his tireless efforts in making the waters of Lake Chelan and Chelan County safer places for recreational boaters. Sgt. Sanford will now represent Washington in the regional Marine Law Enforcement of the Year competition.

Sgt. Sanford's agency was a double-winner, with the Chelan Police

Department winning the Marine Enforcement Agency of the Year award.

The Marine Education Merit Award for 2001 was presented to Deputy Gary Velie of the Clallam County Sheriff's Department.

The Marine Life Saving Award went to Officer Dale Johnson and Cadet Ryan Jackman of the Bainbridge Island Police Department.

Also recognized at the awards banquet was Pierce County Sheriff's Department recent retiree Sgt. Pat Lemagie, who was named Washington's Marine Officer of the Year in 2000 and went on to take both regional and national Officer of the Year honors in 2001.

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Sgt. Mike Sanford (right) of the Chelan Police Department accepts Washington's Marine Officer of the Year Award from Terry Rudnick of Washington State Parks' Boating Programs office. The award presentation capped Washington's 2001 Fall Marine Law Enforcement Conference in Spokane. Photo by Mark Kenny

Florida Officers Lose Lives in Line of Duty

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) law enforcement officers Charles T. Randall and Roy R. Burnsed were killed in late October when they were involved in a head-on collision with each other while patrolling at night in the Holely Land Wildlife Management Area just south of Lake Okeechobee.

Randall, 32, of Plantation, began working for the FWC in 1999 after completing law enforcement training in Quincy. His father described him as having "a serious interest and concern about wildlife," one that developed since he was a young boy growing up in New Jersey and upstate New York.

"Officer Randall was very well-liked by fellow employees and the hunters and

fishermen that he routinely encountered," said Col. Robert Edwards, director of the FWC law enforcement division. "He was very dedicated and loyal to his supervisors, fellow officers and the Commission. He was known for always being willing to participate, and he never said 'no' to any unfamiliar task."

Friends and relatives described Burnsed, 25, of Blountstown, as a positive role model for young people and an outstanding high school football player. The son of Roy Burnsed Sr., a 29-year FWC law enforcement veteran, Burnsed Jr. was hired by the FWC in June after he completed law enforcement training in Quincy.

"He (Burnsed) absolutely epitomized what you are looking for in a 'modern day' conservation officer," said Edwards. "While at the academy, he shared his knowledge and outdoor experience freely with others, including taking at least two of the recruits turkey hunting for the first time in their lives. Even in the short time he worked for this agency, he touched many people."

Edwards said that he pondered a long time about what happened and why it happened. "The only thing I can come up with," he said, "is that the Big Man up there needs two fine officers."

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Wearing PFDs: Buckling Up on the Water

By CDR Kim Pickens, U. S. Coast Guard, Operation BoatSmart Project Officer

You've probably heard the slogans above and many others. Some slogans about life jackets are catchy and others are corny. But what do boaters "hear" when they see or hear those slogans? What do those of us in law enforcement and boating safety "hear" when we use these slogans? Is it the same? Is it different? Does it depend on the person?

Like many boating safety programs, the focus in Operation BoatSmart is life jackets. Our first principle is "**Wearing** life jackets saves lives." Notice that the emphasis is not on "life jackets" but rather the **wearing** of life jackets. Why? Because life jackets by themselves do nothing other than float. They float whether they are empty or full, whether someone is in them or not.

It's not life jackets that save lives – it's people **wearing** life jackets that saves lives.

As we talk to boaters and those in the boating safety and law enforcement fields about life jackets, we are struck by the fact that what people seem to hear is often more like "**Having** life jackets saves lives" or "Carrying PFDs in good condition within easy access onboard your vessel saves lives." Or they take it to mean: "**Children** should *always* wear a life jacket" or "Non-swimmers, people engaged in dangerous boating activities, boaters out in bad weather and boaters whose boats are taking on water and in imminent danger of sinking should probably put life jackets on if they have time."

Drownings account for more than 70 percent of all boating deaths. This means that on average, eight out of ten boating accident victims were not wearing life jackets. According to a study of boating accident reports by BoatU.S. Foundation's Sportsman's Forum, that figure is over 90 percent for hunters and anglers.

In addition, over 70 percent of all drowning deaths are precipitated by

unexpected entry into the water. This means that Mr. Joe Boater has no time to grab his "readily accessible" life jacket – he's in the water before he knows what happened. So if we suggest to all the Joe and Jane Boaters out there that they keep a life jacket **handy**, we may inadvertently perpetuate a false sense of security. They think keeping their PFDs handy is good enough, when in truth it isn't. My colleague Steve Phillips, the Coast Guard Recreational Boating Safety Specialist from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Fifth District, likes to say, "That's like saying, 'I'm going to buckle my seat belt before the car crashes.' It just doesn't work that way!"

A seat belts analogy is something that people on the law enforcement and safety side can appreciate. Think about seat belt use for a moment. Like many folks

1. Refinements in seat belts made them easier and more comfortable to wear.
2. There was a big media focus and public affairs campaign to encourage seat belt use.
3. Police and reporters began including information on whether the victims in car accidents were wearing seat belts.
4. Children were taught about it in school and other public venues, and were "encouraged" to nag their parents into buckling up.
5. Eventually, more stringent laws came into effect that pushed some of the more resistant folks into compliance.

Remember when only lap belts were available and you had to install them yourself? Remember when shoulder belts first became available, which meant now you had to buckle TWO belts instead of one? Remember when car manufacturers had to practically put them on for you as the car door closed? Seat belts have come a long way.

Similarly, PFDs have been available for many years, and they have done their job well keeping boaters afloat in an emergency; that is, if the boaters could reach them in time! The problem was nobody actually **wore** them because they were hot and uncomfortable.

But today's more "high-tech" jackets are easier and more comfortable to wear than ever before. PFDs are now available that are so lightweight and non-binding, you can forget you have them on. Some are so stylish or inconspicuous that no one would ever guess they are life jackets. If we are to get people **into** life jackets, we need to offer them something they will wear. And today's life jackets are comfortable enough for anyone to wear.

It took huge media campaigns, costing enormous amounts of money and energy, by several agencies and organizations and by car manufacturers themselves to finally get the majority of Americans to wear seat belts.

Similarly, Operation BoatSmart is primarily a public affairs and education campaign. A key strategy is to encourage all of the partners to take information about the latest technologies in PFDs to the boating public at every opportunity to show there are great PFDs they can wear. Information is crucial here. Most boaters don't know these jackets exist; we need to publicize them!



Photo courtesy Yamaha Motor Corporation

nowadays, I feel anxious and vulnerable if I'm not firmly buckled in whenever I'm in a car. But I can remember years ago when I NEVER wore a seat belt – and I was not alone. Today a little over 70 percent of all Americans wear seat belts.

Observed PFD wear nationwide is around 23 percent. (If PWC operators are excluded, that number goes down to about 17 percent.) If we could increase the observed PFD wear rate 50, 60 or **70 percent**, fatalities would be cut dramatically – with one simple behavior change.

What caused that behavioral change regarding seat belt use within our culture? Here are a few probable factors:

"That's like saying, 'I'm going to buckle my seat belt before the car crashes.' It just doesn't work that way!"

One of the most innovative and effective methods developed to "sell" the public on using seat belts occurred when police officers and reporters were asked to include information as to whether car accident victims were wearing seat belts at the time of the accident. What a difference that little change made in a very short period! Even now, don't most of us look for that part of the story that says whether car occupants were wearing seat belts?

This is something that might work with PFD wear, too. As part of Operation BoatSmart, all Coast Guard public affairs officers include information in all press releases on whether the persons involved in a boating accident were wearing PFDs. We would like to see state and local agencies adopt this approach. This

strategy could help shape public opinion to associate PFDs and boating the same way the public now associates seat belt use and driving.

Another big push to make seat belts more socially acceptable was through various programs that targeted children. Many schools incorporated car safety programs into the curriculum, police and fire departments developed their own special programs, and Mr. Rogers and everyone on Sesame Street talked about the need to buckle up.

What is clear in these efforts, however, is that children were never taught to distinguish the importance of their wearing seat belts from the importance of their parents wearing seat belts. Children were taught that **EVERYONE** needs to buckle up.

Similarly, while Operation BoatSmart believes we need to encourage children to wear PFDs, we do not distinguish between the importance of encouraging children to wear PFDs and the importance of encouraging **all** boaters to wear PFDs.



Photo courtesy Mustang Survival

We send a clear message that wearing PFDs is important for **everyone**.

One of the latest moves to get people to buckle up has been to pass legislation on the issue. And new state laws have made a dent on seat belt use, at least when it comes to having children buckled in. While Operation BoatSmart doesn't advocate federal legislation, it does encourage all of the program's partners to assist state boating law administrators who want to pass laws within their states for increased PFD wear, mandatory boater education, licensing and stronger boating under-the-influence enforcement.

The primary goal of Operation BoatSmart is for all of the program's partners to push with our collective might to bring about a cultural change in the recreational boating community so that, among other things, wearing a life jacket while boating feels right, natural, responsible – and expected. We believe this is a realistic goal, and we believe that – together – we can achieve it.

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Those Marvelous Inflatable Life Jackets

By Commodore Warren E. McAdams USCGAUX, National Directorate Commodore for Recreational Boating Safety

At times, good news moves at a snail's pace. After several years of challenging work by manufacturers and the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety, we now have approved inflatable personal flotation devices (PFDs), or life jackets as they're commonly known.

For folks who must wear PFDs while they work, including many law enforcement officers, inflatable PFDs provide safety with a degree of comfort. Now, when summer temperatures and humidity are high, it is possible to wear a PFD without feeling like you're wearing a thermal jacket.

But how will these innovative devices fare with the boating public?

As is often the case with innovations, inflatable PFDs create some issues that must be addressed by potential users.

Inflatables come in several forms and types. The manual inflatable is often rated as a Type III PFD but must be activated with a lanyard or ripcord. The manual/automatic is generally rated as a Type V, with Type II or III performance when worn. In addition other models have appeared on the market.

Compared to the five-dollar and up foam vests, inflatables are expensive.

Further, inflatables require maintenance. Whether manual or manual/automatic, inflatables require careful attention to maintenance. Inflatables should be inspected regularly to verify that the carbon dioxide cartridges are in place and the manual activation system is in working order. For those vests that also have the automatic inflation feature, the water sensitive pill that causes the vest to inflate when in the water should be inspected and periodically replaced. Since the pills are sensitive to prolonged exposure to humidity or accidental wetting, the life jacket may deploy at an inopportune time. Exposure to humidity

can cause a gradual degradation of the pill which is why periodic replacement is a good idea. A rearming kit for each inflatable on a boat should be stocked on board.



Photo courtesy Stearns® Manufacturing

Currently, inflatables are not suited for all activities. For example, for those who water ski, ride PWCs or partake in other situations that have "impact" considerations, a vest suitable for the activity should be chosen. For those who need a safety harness, some inflatable models have them built in. If a conventional safety harness is worn with an inflatable, the harness should be worn under the inflatable vest in a way that the harness will not interfere with the life jacket. On the other hand, if an inflatable is constrained by a harness, activation of the inflatable vest could cause injury.

Since further developments in the inflatable life vest category are sure to come, there will be additional elements of

flexibility and concern to discuss. For example, there are inflatable waistbelt PFDs on the market. While not for everyone, this style of PFD may offer advantages to some boaters. Undoubtedly there will be other developments to increase the number of activities where inflatables may be worn.

Also under active development are inflatables suitable for children. Currently, inflatables are rated for those over the age of 15. (One PFD manufacturer has developed a hybrid foam/inflatable for children, but the Coast Guard has not yet approved true inflatable PFDs for use by children under the age of 16.) After all, if comfort is a key issue for adults, why not make that advantage available to younger people?

Where does all of this lead us? As technology delivers a broader array of products to the boater, someone must teach boaters how to choose the proper equipment from among the many items that are offered. In our public education classes, we not only need to teach legal requirements but we should also inform students on how to make the correct choices in equipment selection. In some cases the answer may be to purchase, and have on board, more than one type of PFD to meet the requirements of different on-water activities. In the classroom setting an inflatable PFD should be activated. If possible a student model should be fitted with the inflatable PFD and instructed to inflate the life jacket. Demonstrations such as this are sure to convince many students that the extra expense of an inflatable is a good investment.

In a similar fashion, discussions conducted during vessel safety checks can educate boaters and encourage them to seek more information on what types of equipment are available. The vessel examiner, by observing the types of recreational equipment (toys) on board, can engage the boat owner in a discussion of what types of PFDs may or may not be better utilized for different types of activities. In addition, where appropriate, the boater can be encouraged to sign up for a boating safety course for more in-depth information on PFDs and other safety equipment.

As should be the case, better safety equipment can lead to safer boating and more enjoyable boating. Part of our job is to sell the advantages of better equipment and offer instruction how to properly use the equipment.

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Capt. Scott Evans
Chief Office of Boating Safety

We need to concentrate on getting the public to **WANT** to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs). I would like boaters to have items they want to wear while boating to act as flotation devices in an emergency. Good examples include having specialized equipment, such as fishing vests, hunting vests, and so on, that are actually inflatable PFDs.

To improve the wear rate of PFDs, the U.S. Coast Guard supports the development of new and unique PFD designs that will provide the necessary flotation but may use novel means to encourage boaters to wear them more often. To this end, the Coast Guard has been conducting several projects that promise to provide the flexibility to PFD manufacturers to explore unique designs:

- We are entering the last phase of developing a risk-based compliance approval process for personal flotation devices using performance models. This will replace the current Life Saving Index (LSI) used to evaluate new and unique PFD designs. The new approval process will provide a more objective method for making trade-off decisions on design features while maintaining an equivalent level of safety.
- We are creating a family of mannequins (male, female and child) to further develop and validate a computer simulation program. The program will provide a way to test PFD designs in virtual wave situations based on the design parameters of the PFD. This simulation, coupled with the new approval process, would allow a PFD manufacturer to beta test a design all the way through the approval process based solely on the specifications without having to construct a prototype.

The Coast Guard continues to approve an increasing number of inflatable PFDs. Currently, there are 22 Type III **manual** inflatables approved, four Type V **manual** inflatables approved, and 19 Type V **automatic** inflatables approved. Initial perceptions are that inflatable PFDs, because they are much more comfortable than inherently buoyant PFDs, will increase the PFD wear rate.

Additionally, the Coast Guard has approved the first 1F inflator mechanism



for inflatable PFDs. This device provides an almost-foolproof method for the user of an inflatable PFD to determine if the PFD is properly charged and ready for use. It will also greatly improve the reliability of inflatable PFDs.

The Coast Guard continues to provide financial support to the PFD Standards Technical Panel (STP) coordinated by Underwriters Laboratories. The STP continues to explore ways to improve both the performance and the wear rate of PFDs either through technical recommendations or changes to the standards.

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The Coast Guard recently said "good-bye" to one of the founding members of the Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) program, Al Marmo. Al realized that there was more to life than the Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety and decided to retire after a truly amazing 39½ years of federal service – 35 years involved with managing the RBS program.

Al joined Coast Guard in 1967, after five years in the Department of Commerce. He played a significant role in establishing the RBS program by helping develop the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971; developing policies and procedures for the initial State Grant Program; and coordinating development of policies and procedures for implementing the Boating Safety Program. (*Editor's note: For more information on Al Marmo's role in the RBS program, be sure to read the feature on him in the May/June 2002 issue of Small Craft Advisory.*)

Another of Al's challenging responsibilities and notable accomplishments has been keeping tabs on me! I cannot thank him enough for his friendship, guidance and mentoring. The entire boating community owes this great American much for the unyielding support. The RBS program has been very successful, saving an estimated 27,000 since 1971, and Al was an important part of that success. On behalf of all boaters, thank you, Al, for 39+ years of truly outstanding community service and getting us to where we are today. We wish you fair winds and following seas in your future endeavors!

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2002 RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY CALENDAR

MARCH

11 - 15
NASBLA
National Comprehensive Boating
Accident Investigators
Level One Training
Las Vegas, Nevada
859.225.9487

25 - 29
NASBLA
National Comprehensive Boating
Accident Investigators'
Level One Training
Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky
(Greater Cincinnati area)
859.225.9487

APRIL

Annual EMS Conference in Alaska Spotlights Cold Emergencies

This year, the Southeast Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council is being joined by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA) and the State of Alaska Section of Community Health and EMS in co-sponsoring the council's annual conference in Sitka, Alaska. Scheduled for April 10-13, 2002, this year's symposium focuses on cold emergencies.

Scheduled speakers include Dr. Nemiroff and representatives from the Harborview Injury Prevention Program, National Ski Patrol, University of Washington, U.S. Army, University of Lancaster and AMSEA.

The symposium will consist of three tracks – search-and-rescue (SAR), clinical and pre-hospital – as well as general sessions covering altitude and cold, rescues, avalanches, cold weather decontamination (relating to biological contamination), hypothermia and more.

For more information, contact Sarah at the Southeast Region EMS office at 907.747.8005.

APRIL

15 - 17
NASBLA Committee Meetings
Boats & Associated Equipment (April 15)
BAIRAC (April 16)
Law Enforcement (April 17)
Del Mar, California
859.225.9487

16 & 17
NASBLA Committee Meetings
BAIRAC (April 16)
Law Enforcement (April 17)
Del Mar, California
859.225.9487

18 - 19
Western States Boating
Administrators Association
Annual Conference
Del Mar, California
859.225.9487

20 - 23
National Boating Safety Advisory
Council Meeting
Baltimore, Maryland
202.267.0950

22 - 26
NASBLA
National Comprehensive Boating
Accident Investigators'
Level One Training
Springfield, Massachusetts
859.225.9487

26 - 27
NASBLA Committee Meetings
Waterways Management (April 26)
Education (April 27)
Daytona Beach, Florida
859.225.9487

28 - May 1
International Boating & Water
Safety Summit
Daytona Beach, Florida
740.666.3009

MAY

13 - 17
NASBLA
National Boating Accident
Investigators'
Advanced Training
Lexington, Kentucky
859.225.9487

15 - 19
U.S. Power Squadrons
Governing Board Meeting
Houston, Texas
888.361.8777

18 - 24
National Safe Boating Week
Nationwide
740.666.3009

JUNE

1 - 6
Southern States Boating
Law Administrators Association
Annual Conference
Knoxville, Tennessee
615.781.6682

15 - 18
Personal Flotation Device
Manufacturers Association
Annual Conference
St. Pete Beach, Florida
312-946-6200

23 - 26
Northern Association
of Boating Administrators
Annual Conference
Omaha, Nebraska
515.281.6154
402.471.5579

JULY

No scheduled dates

NASBLA welcomes information about boating-related conferences that would appeal to a national audience. Please e-mail information to editor@nasbla.org.

AUGUST

29 - September 1
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
National Conference
Orlando, Florida
940.321.2395

SEPTEMBER

7 - 11
NASBLA
Annual Conference
Cleveland, Ohio
859.225.9487

11 - 15
U.S. Power Squadrons
Governing Board Meeting
Des Moines, Iowa
888.361.8777

30 - October 4
NASBLA
National Boating Accident
Investigators' Advanced Training
Lexington, Kentucky
859.225.9487

OCTOBER

26 - 29
National Boating Safety
Advisory Council
Meeting
TBA
202.267.0950

11 - 15
U.S. Power Squadrons
Governing Board Meeting
Des Moines, Iowa
888.361.8777



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