

SCA

small craft advisory



- Mobile Sobriety Checkpoints
- Operation Dry Water
- Life Jacket World Inflation Day

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ON THE COVER: An officer with the El Dorado County (California) Sheriff's Department administers a breathalyzer to estimate a boater's blood alcohol content (BAC).
California Department of Boating and Waterways photo



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BUI Enforcement Remains Critical



Terry West
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John Johnson
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Across the country we're ramping up for another recreational boating season. And again this year, state marine law enforcement and other agencies continue to face their worst budgets in decades. Despite the tightening of budgets, the critical need remains for boating safety enforcement.

In 2008 (the latest data available), the Coast Guard reported 4789 accidents that resulted in 709 deaths, 3331 injuries and approximately \$54 million in damage to property. Alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in those 709 boating accident deaths.

That's unacceptable. And increasingly, it's becoming more and more unacceptable with the boating public.

Last summer, NASBLA, state marine law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard and other partners launched the first-ever Operation Dry Water. Operation Dry Water is a coordinated, national weekend of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) detection and enforcement aimed at reducing the number of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities and fostering a stronger and more visible deterrent to alcohol use on the water. Through the combined efforts of more than 2,400 enforcement officers over 283 drunken boaters were removed from the water.

Throughout the weekend, the media picked up the story and reported on our efforts with more than 550 television reports, more than 220 newspaper articles published, and countless mentions on blogs and Internet discussion forums. Plus, with much of this coverage, the public chimed in with their opinions about alcohol and boating and the coordinated efforts to remove drunks from the water. Not all comments were positive but for every negative

post, more people supported our efforts. One example is this exchange from two boaters on one message board:

Hopefully, here in NC, they will close down all the schools they fired the teachers from due to budget cuts and they move that tax revenue to the Wildlife [Resources Commission] so they can run around harassing boaters every weekend.

Gee, hope your family is never the recipient of a boating accident due to excessive drinking! This forum is about boater safety and education. I posted this for all as a reminder to be careful out there. Maybe you have other priorities...I wouldn't call it harassment.

"Operation Dry Water is a coordinated, national weekend of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) detection and enforcement..."

We also got encouraging e-mails from boaters:

I am not an organization, just an individual who enjoys boating. I applaud your program and wish you great success. I use alcohol on occasion but limit it to situations where i won't be operating any type of equipment that will endanger anyone or anything. As far as I am concerned, any alcohol use connected with boating should be strictly banned and violators should be severely punished. Once again, I wish you great success!

B.W. (Ohio boater)

We and the majority of the boating public seem to agree – alcohol, water and boating just don't mix. So, the last weekend of June and throughout the boating year, our members and partners in marine law enforcement will be on the water, enforcing boating under the influence laws. ☺

Successful education strategies available online

NASBLA has recently added a new resource to its website. Geared toward boating safety instructors, the NASBLA Successful Instructional Strategies for Face-to-Face Boating Safety Course Instructors offers innovative and creative tactics for improving delivery in the classroom.

For example, when discussing Standard 1.1: Boat Capacities, an instructor could place a couple of chairs in the front of the classroom to represent a boat. Next, ask for two volunteers to sit in the “boat” and add gear (real or imaginary) to the “boat.” List the weight of everything added to the boat (plus people) and see if it is too heavy for the boat using the capacity equation: length of the boat times width of the boat divided by 15. (This exercise also ties in with Standard 2: Boating Equipment.)

Compiled by NASBLA’s Education & Awareness Committee, the list of successful strategies was created as part of a 2009 NASBLA grant project to conduct a risk-based analysis and update of the National Boating Education Standards. It is not intended to be a complete list of all teaching practices nor will using the strategies guarantee an excellent course experience. Additional ideas and strategies are welcomed and will be added to the document on a periodic basis. To submit a strategy, e-mail Gail Kulp, director of education and standards for NASBLA, at gail@nasbla.org.

To view the list, click on the Education tab www.nasbla.org.



NASBLA hires BOAT Program Director

NASBLA has contracted with Mark DuPont, formerly a Coast Guard Warrant Officer and, most recently, the Senior Intelligence Officer for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, to deliver and administer the Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program.

DuPont brings 30 years of subject matter expertise as a primary trainer of tactical operations within the Coast Guard and in law enforcement. He has helped author the Coast Guard’s Response Boat Tactics, Techniques and Procedures Manual and pioneered the Florida Exclusionary Zone Tactical Operators Course, which has been adopted by NASBLA and accepted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency as the national standard for training federal, state, county and local maritime law enforcement.

The NASBLA Tactical Operators Course (TOC) is the first offering under the BOAT Program banner and additional course presentations will be unveiled later this year, including Basic Crew Qualifications and Boat Operators Search and Rescue

courses. Visit the NASBLA BOAT Program page at www.nasbla.org/boat to learn more about this exciting new program element of NASBLA.

NASBLA plans 2010 conference

Mark your calendars! The 2010 NASBLA Annual Conference will be held September 10-14 in Honolulu, Hawaii. This conference will close out NASBLA’s yearlong 50th anniversary celebration.

This year’s conference will officially open Saturday night, rather than on Sunday as in past years. The tentative schedule has the Opening Ceremonies beginning at 5 p.m. on Saturday evening, followed by the President’s Reception.

The BLA Work Session will take place Sunday morning followed by NASBLA’s Business Meeting and Awards Banquet. General sessions will take place throughout Monday and again Tuesday afternoon. Tuesday morning will feature a variety of breakout sessions.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Waikiki (2255 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu), a modern oceanfront monument to Hawaiian hospitality. Make reservations by calling 866.716.8109. Additionally, the Sheraton has created a special event page for NASBLA’s conference – the page is linked off NASBLA’s website, www.nasbla.org. Please mention “NASBLA 2010 Conference” to receive the conference rate of your choice: City/Mountain View: \$200; Partial Ocean View: \$216; Direct Ocean View: \$243. These group rates are available until Aug. 9 (subject to availability).

Please join us in Honolulu for a momentous week of learning and celebration. Additional conference information as well as online registration is available at www.nasbla.org.

NASBLA committee assists with UCOTVA

For the last five years, NASBLA has been working with the National Conference of Commissioners of Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) to standardize the process of titling boats. Boyd Walden (FL) and Sharron Carrick (MD), members of NASBLA’s Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling Committee, met with the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act (UCOTVA) drafting committee in Chicago on March 5-6. Boyd and Sharron bring the practical side of registration and titling to the discussions and help the commissioners realize what’s reasonable and sensible in titling vessels. E.M. Miller, director of the Division of Legislative Services for the commonwealth of Virginia and chair of the UCOTVA Drafting Committee, has been invited to speak at the NASBLA annual conference. ☺

NASBLA welcomes new boating law administrators

With a number of people retiring in recent months, new boating law administrators have come aboard the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. We welcome these BLAs and encourage them to become involved in NASBLA and reap the benefits of their membership.



David Pfiffner
Nevada

David Pfiffner graduated from Minnesota's Winona State University in 1979 with a degree in recreation administration. Hailing from Lansing, Iowa, he put himself through college by managing a marina in his home state.

After graduating college Pfiffner went to work for Navajo County Parks in Arizona for his first law enforcement position. After almost four years, he left to become a park ranger at Lake Pleasant, a massive boating recreation area managed by Maricopa County Parks. After three more years in Arizona, he left the state to take a newly created lieutenant job for the Nevada Department of Wildlife on Aug. 1, 1988.

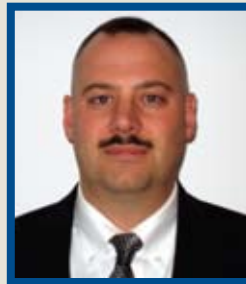
As the lieutenant in the Southern Region, Pfiffner coordinated and supervised game wardens patrolling the Lake Mead National Recreation area that sees millions of visitors each year. The area included Lake Mead, Lake Mohave and the Colorado River. Pfiffner was awarded the NASBLA Boating Officer of the Year Award in 2008. After more than 21 years in this position, he stepped into the role of acting boating law administrator (BLA) on June 2, 2009, following the retirement of longtime BLA Fred Messmann. On Nov. 4, 2009, he became Nevada's fourth BLA.

While he doesn't currently own a boat, Pfiffner gets plenty of time on the water patrolling lakes Mead and Mohave and the Colorado River.

Nevada has always been a leader in the area of OUI enforcement. Pfiffner has been at the forefront of the gains NDOW has made in sober boating, and the department plans to continue focusing on this crucial area. Drinking and boating continues to trouble the reservoirs of Southern Nevada, surrounding the "anything goes" culture of Las Vegas, and NDOW has much work to do to change this.

Education is also a core strength of NDOW, and with a seven-year-old mandatory education law, more and more Nevada

boaters have a better idea of what they are doing. Despite the gains, this law is still unwieldy and complicated. Making this issue easier for boaters – and for officers to enforce is a near term future goal.



J.R. Underhill
Vermont

After graduating from the State University of New York at Albany, J.R. Underhill joined the Vermont State Troopers in July 1988. Upon completion of State Police Training, Trooper Underhill was assigned to Troop A (Northern Vermont) as a road trooper.

In 1993, he applied for a position on the State Police SCUBA Team. After completing the rigorous hiring process and training, Trooper Underhill began his diving career as a State Police Diver, responsible for the recovery of crime scene evidence as well as the recovery of drowning victims. He rose through the diving ranks and earned his professional diving rank in 1999. During this same year Trooper Underhill became assistant coordinator for the State Police Marine Division and was responsible for assisting the boating law administrator (BLA) with the operations of the statewide program.

In April of 2000, Trooper Underhill obtained his National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) rating from Hall's Diving Institute in Marathon Key, Fla. Upon earning certification as an instructor, he began teaching scuba courses for all State Police Diver recruits. He remained in the Marine Division until 2005, when he was promoted to detective sergeant within the State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Sgt. Underhill was assigned to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) at the Burlington Field Office, Boston Field Division as a task force trooper. After spending several years investigating major federal gun trafficking crimes in New England, Sgt. Underhill was transferred back to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation where he investigated major crimes including sexual assaults, robberies, accidental deaths,

drownings, suicides and homicides. Sgt. Underhill was transferred back to the State Police Marine Division on Dec. 15, 2009, and appointed as the state's BLA.

Through his death investigations and recovery details, Sgt. Underhill sees firsthand the direct results of the boating public not wearing life jackets while recreating on Vermont's waterways. Under his command, the State Police Marine Division will continue to educate the boating public about the use of personal flotation devices through mandatory education classes, online courses and contact with troopers working in the marine program.

Sgt. Underhill enjoys power boating and paddlesports at the family lake house in Assembly Point, Lake George, New York.



Jeff Parrish
Texas

After growing up in Indonesia, Singapore, Utah, New Mexico and Texas (his father was a geologist, so the family moved around a lot), Jeff Parrish now hangs his hat in Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M - Corpus Christi with a bachelor of science degree in parks and recreation administration in 1979.

Parrish has worked with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department since 1982 as a park manager at Choke Canyon State Park; wildlife biologist in the South Texas District; and Texas Game Warden, assigned to south Texas, where he gained a good deal of boating experience working Lower Laguna Madre and the Gulf of Mexico. He became assistant chief to the state's boating law administrator, Alfonso Campos, in February 2009. Following Campos' retirement on Dec. 31, 2009, Parrish was appointed as BLA effective January 1, 2010.

Parrish, who owns a completely restored 1979 Boston Whaler 20' Outrage, loves to fish. He's a member of the Texas Game Warden Association as well as two NASBLA committees: Engineering, Reporting & Analysis and Governmental Affairs & Administration.

Parrish says the most pressing need in boating safety today is a mandatory boater education program. "We have been fighting this battle in the legislature with no success so far, but hopefully with boating safety being placed on a high priority list for the next legislative session, we will make headway in that endeavor," he says. "One of my concerns is in personal watercraft. It seems with each new year the manufacturers are developing faster and faster machines. The speed at which these new PWCs can travel, coupled with a lack of boater education of the primarily young and inexperienced operators, will lead us down a path to more accidents, injuries and fatalities."

As the BLA for Texas, Parrish is placing some emphasis on

the following boating safety measures for Texas:

- A mandatory boater education program.
- Designation of TPWD, by statute, as the lead agency in Texas for Marine Enforcement.
- New registration and license requirements for charter vessels, to include stricter penalties and license suspension for operators of vessels for hire who violate boating safety laws.



Susan Kavanaugh
Washington

Currently living in Olympia, Wash., at the southern tip of Puget Sound, Susan Kavanaugh was born in Seattle and has lived in Washington most of her life. She attended school and worked on the East Coast for several years.

An avid boater, Kavanaugh and her family own two sea kayaks and a canoe, paddling mostly on Puget Sound and occasionally further afield. Over the years, she has enjoyed sailing and motorboating with family and friends. She also has connections to Olympia Area Rowing (OAR) through her teenage daughter, a competitive rower, and spends time volunteering at regattas.

Kavanaugh came on board as the boating law administrator for Washington in January 2010. Her education is in public policy and public administration, a field in which she has worked over the past 25 years. She has worked for several agencies in Washington state government and as staff to the legislature. She's also worked in local government, been an independent consultant and run a nonprofit agency, gaining experience in managing programs and staff and collaboration among agencies and organizations.

"I have not worked in the boating field before, so I am in a steep learning curve right now," says Kavanaugh. "I am fortunate to work with a team of dedicated professionals who have many years of experience working to support safe and clean boating through education and outreach, training and grants for marine law enforcement, accident reporting, and clean vessel grants."

Kavanaugh sees boater education as a top priority. "We are pleased to be phasing in a mandatory boater education requirement because we understand that boaters who know the dangers and the rules are less likely to have accidents and more likely to survive," she says. "Increasing life jacket wear is also important and reducing boating under the influence of alcohol and drugs is critical."

With Kavanaugh as BLA, the Washington Parks & Recreation Commission will continue to focus on successful implementation of mandatory boater education and the agency's partnership with local marine law enforcement agencies. **(Cont. pg.9)**

NASBLA BOAT Course delivers immediate dividends

By Ames Holbrook, Writer, U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boat Forces

North Charleston Police Department's Pat Mullings is running his boat full-throttle while his partner barks insistently over the loudhailer for the terrorist in the Zodiac Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) to stop.

The terrorist – so identified by the explosives strapped to his body and his transparent objective of reaching the high-value maritime asset Mullings is charged to protect – ignores the commands and jockeys for an angle in a series of cross-wake charges and loops.

Mullings manages to keep pace with the terrorist craft for several minutes – muscling the terrorist outside before radioing Coast Guard Boatswain's Mate Dylan Skidmore to take the handoff. BM2 Skidmore cranks his 25' Response Boat in a hard turn and slips right in next to the terrorist craft in a high-speed controlled maneuver while Mullings falls back.

The handoff is a thing of beauty. Seamless. Entirely orchestrated over the radio between local and Coast Guard enforcers who have never performed such a maneuver in concert before, yet now speak identical language and share the same tactical set. This is exactly what it

takes to fight threats to maritime security in America. And this is what is being taught in the NASBLA Tactical Operator's Course today, part of their national Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program being instituted throughout the country.

The above scenario – with Officer Mullings, Boatswain Skidmore, and the “terrorist” in the Zodiac RHIB – happens during an on-water exercise. It is just one of dozens that will play out during the BOAT Program's Tactical Operator's Course that took place the first week of November 2009 in Charleston, S.C., on the campus shared by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and the Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement Academy.

New training opportunity from NASBLA

For those who missed the early stages of the revolution, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators' (NASBLA) BOAT Program represents a national standard for the training, qualification, and typing of maritime law-enforcement and rescue personnel. Having come into existence, over the course of

years, with help and blessings at various turns from the likes of parent NASBLA, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), United States Coast Guard Office of Boat Forces, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the NASBLA Boat Program is now officially under way – with the explicit design of delivering interoperability at the federal, state and local levels to respond to America's maritime disasters and threats that no single entity can handle on its own. The BOAT Tactical Operator's Course that took place in Charleston is the latest flashpoint of the revolution.

The course lasts five days. All morning, every morning, in the classroom, the students learn tactics from videos and blocks of instruction wherein teachers draw diagrams of boat maneuvers on a dry-erase board like a football coach's x's and o's. A team spirit pervades the class, despite the fact that the 21 students hail from different agencies. Roughly half the class is active duty Coast Guard, with the rest of the students wearing uniforms of state and local departments: Charleston Police Department, North Charleston Police Department, Charleston County



Interagency teamwork improves with each drill.



(LEFT) Boatswain Mate First Class Chris Pere, BOAT Program Manager Mark DuPont and Jeff Wheeler; deputy chief of the Office of Boat Forces, oversee training.

(RIGHT) North Charleston Police Department's Pat Mullings reacts to the simulated threat provided during an on-water exercise during the NASBLA BOAT Program. USCG photos

Sheriff, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), South Carolina DNR.

Participants for the course were intentionally selected for their geographic proximity. There is a particular benefit to Coast Guard, state, and local law enforcement from the same territory learning side by side. Many have already worked together across agency lines. Some met for the first time on day one, when they broke the ice with introductions, learning random details about each other. There's a golf pro among the enforcers, and a Vietnam veteran, and a man who pours hot sauce in his beer. And now the 21 study together, earnest in their desire to get on the same page to defeat the common threat. Eventually they will have to react to that threat, from the hurricane to the chemical spill to the terrorists hell-bent on blowing up the cruise ship, and they will have to work alongside other agencies, using identical tactics and vocabulary to get the job done. This interface is what the BOAT Program's Tactical Operator's Course is all about.

The visionary presently carrying the ball for the NASBLA BOAT Program is Mark DuPont, a former Coast Guard boatswain and current Chief Intelligence and Domestic Security Officer in the Florida FWC. In September, DuPont received, on behalf of the Florida FWC, the first-ever NASBLA Compass Award, chiefly for FWC's valuable leadership assistance in the launch of the BOAT Program.

Elite cadre of instructors

For this BOAT Course – an early, inte-

gral component of the BOAT Program – DuPont has established the curriculum and hand-picked his cadre. The course's primary instructors during this week in Charleston are lieutenants on loan from Florida FWC. To highlight his instructors' credentials to the class, DuPont plays a video of their exploits in the FWC's Special Operations Group (SOG), a break-glass-in-case-of-hell contingency force renowned for success in cop-killer manhunts and disaster response. SOG's method of responding to hurricanes, in fact, has become a national model.

The video features a driving rock soundtrack, fast boats and guerrilla action in the swamp. The students in the classroom are not by nature an easily impressed bunch, but the video holds the veteran enforcers' attention and many give an approving nod as it concludes. When instructors Scott Pearce, Jay Chesser, Eric Johnston and Drew Nelson jump back into their lessons, there are no doubts as to their qualifications.

A Coast Guard advisor is on hand as well. Boatswain Mate First Class Chris Pere stands along the back wall, decked out in the tan camouflage that sets him apart from even the other Coasties on site (the camouflage ODU is the staff uniform at the Joint Maritime Training Center at Camp Lejeune, where Pere teaches the Tactical Coxswain Course). He has been assigned to JMTC for the past five of his more than 10 years in service. BM1 Pere talks infrequently in this BOAT Course setting, but when he does speak, any chatter in the room stops abruptly as the ears tune in. Pere simplifies his own role in the class

(“Break bad habits”), but the importance of his Coast Guard knowledge is underscored every time a debate breaks out. When classroom disagreements reach an impasse, eyes turn expectantly back to Pere for his adjudication.

It's extremely useful to have a Coast Guard authority in the room, but it's worth noting that this is not a Coast Guard course. While the NASBLA BOAT Program enjoys Coast Guard support at the highest levels, it is NASBLA's baby for good reason. With its history of adeptly coordinating resources and interacting with diverse agencies on a national level, NASBLA is uniquely poised to oversee a program like this one and the training it entails. We can even point to a historic parallel. In America as late as 1970, state and local agencies rarely enforced boating safety law. Casualty rates were high, relative to today. But following the passage of the Boating Safety Act in 1971, with NASBLA's help and orchestration, local and state boardings went up and casualties went down. The plan today is that NASBLA will help local units identify the kind of training they need and the grant money they're eligible to receive in order to become force multipliers in disaster response, just as it has helped local entities qualify for grant money to enforce boating safety law over the past three decades. In years ahead, federal grant money, including new boat procurement, may even be tied to BOAT Program certification – a national credential that will be recognized, and utilized, by FEMA.

In addition to BM1 Pere and the FWC-loaned instructors, there are other

experts in the room. Among them are Jeff Wheeler, a veteran driver of the BOAT Program, who is auditing this early BOAT Course on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boat Forces, and Billy McCloud, who is observing the course for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Both the Office of Boat Forces and FLETC are members of the Council of Partners that helps advance the BOAT Program objectives. Wheeler, a retired Coast Guard boatswain who is currently deputy chief of the Office of Boat Forces, and McCloud, a former boat captain of fifteen years who now teaches boat driving to a range of agencies – including the FBI, the DEA, and the Secret Service, as well as state and local marine enforcement units – further add to the vast store of knowledge on the site.

Classroom and on-water instruction

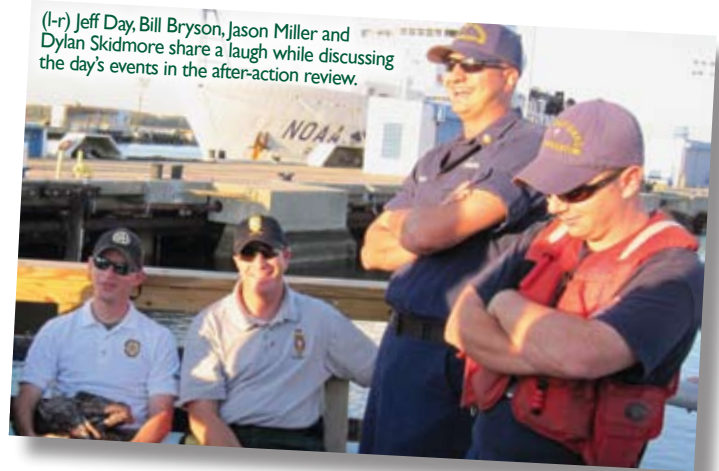
There is much wisdom to be absorbed in the classroom, but that's not half of the BOAT Course. In another innovation, Mark DuPont has split the training in dramatic fashion. Mornings are academic blocks of schoolroom training. Afternoons are all outside – underway in the brisk wind with sunglasses on and the boats up on plane – putting the good lessons to use in realistic, actual-speed scenarios on the waterways. It is training as the god Poseidon intended. Students pay rapt attention through the morning instruction with the awareness that they'll apply it in an after-lunch climax of thrilling boat driving and tactics. Every afternoon is loaded with action-packed scenarios like the one detailed in the opening of this article with Officer Pat Mullings, Boatswain's Mate Dylan Skidmore, and the explosive-strapped "terrorist" in the Zodiac RHIB.

Boatswain Skidmore holds the inside angle with the terrorist, reacting to every move the RHIB makes. Skidmore has been serving in the Coast Guard for seven years – 13 months of it in the Persian Gulf in 2007 – but he is every bit in the moment as he steers his Response Boat to keep the terrorist RHIB away from its target.

The RHIB finally retreats from the action. The "terrorist" at the wheel is actually FWC Lieutenant Jay Chesser, whose bombs and guns are inert training props that serve to enhance the realism of the exercise. Chesser is a native of Perry, Fla., who now works in Panama City where he's lived for the past 20 years. Along the way he graduated from Auburn University and served in the Coast Guard reserves.

Like the other instructors, Chesser urgently wants the students to get the maximum benefit from this training, which means pushing the exercises hard enough to keep the students fully engaged, but not so hard that they get discouraged. While playing the terrorist, Lieutenant Chesser gauges the students' skills in order to test each boat driver to his own level. "Honestly, there are some on the water who can beat me," Chesser says. "And there are some I can beat – but I'm not going to." His intent is to get the students to work fluidly through their stress in these dramatic exercises.

As the exercises play out, Chesser's success is evident. Radio conversations start out nervous, while students find their



(l-r) Jeff Day, Bill Bryson, Jason Miller and Dylan Skidmore share a laugh while discussing the day's events in the after-action review.

comfort zone in using the standard language this interoperability requires, but as the exercises continue, the language gets increasingly natural. The students' performances improve not merely day by day, but markedly with every drill. This is the team concept at work, keeping safe with high levels of communication and trust.

And just as the training doesn't end in the classroom, neither is the training day over when the boats dock following the on-water exercises. Once the boats from the drills are tied off, the students and teachers gather on site for perhaps the most important component of the BOAT Tactical Operator's Course: the after-action review (AAR). One at a time on the dock, all 21 students weigh in on what they've learned. Back and forth with their instructors, some of whom have been playing opposing forces in their exercises, the students discuss equipment and boat capabilities, communications, tactics, pride, trust, and the value – and challenges – of working together. Without exception, the students are positive about their experience. The NASBLA BOAT Tactical Operator's Course has been invaluable to them. But as Mark DuPont is quick to remind everyone, this course is only a beginning. "Go back and practice this," DuPont tells them. The students nod, apparently determined to take that advice.

In the late afternoon sun, class is dismissed and the students pull away in their vehicles, but the instructors stay dockside for another 30 minutes. Under assault from Charleston's notorious no-see-ums, the cadre barely seems to notice the bites as they hash out the lessons the BOAT Tactical Operator's Course has taught them. They continue to refine, exploring ways the course can be even more effective. There is a lot riding on this, after all. The goal of enhancing America's ability to **protect** our maritime domain is both noble and essential.

Fortunately, with the advent of the NASBLA BOAT Program and this Tactical Operator's Course in particular, the fulfillment of that goal is already under way. ☼

Ames Holbrook is a full-time writer for the U.S. Coast Guard's Office of Boat Forces, in the Department of Homeland Security.

"We also hope to make better use of accident and inspection data to support our education and outreach efforts," she adds. "We also want to look at enhancing our Internet presence."



Austin Callwood
U.S. Virgin Islands

Born in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Austin Callwood left home 35 years ago with the idea of later returning to become a conservation officer with Conservation and Cultural Affairs. His plan was to be a part of the team that protected the beaches, plants and wildlife and helped reinforce/retain the islands' cultural heritage (music, dance and art). Callwood says this aspiration stemmed from his early years as a Sea Explorer teaching swimming, sailing and other aquatic sports and safety classes and as a student of Calypso.

Callwood served 29 years with the U.S. Coast Guard, retiring in 2003. He joined the Department of Planning and Natural

Resources staff in September 2009 as director of Environmental Enforcement after learning of the opening from one of his Explorer mentors. In this position, he serves as the territory's boating law administrator.

In addition to his association with NASBLA, Callwood serves as operations sections chief in the district's All-Hazards Center and co-chair of the local emergency planning council. He is also active with the St. Croix Fisheries Advisory Council, the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council and the Law Enforcement Training Standards Council.

Since the Virgin Islands enjoys a relatively accident-free community, Callwood says the biggest challenges to boating safety deal more with waterways use and management, particularly among the competing fisheries entities (commercial and recreational divers/trap and line fishermen/commercial and recreational sportfish anglers). Another area of concern is the misuse of the islands' resources, particularly by the extensive live-aboard community in the territory. Callwood says education, outreach and enforcement of the marine sanitation device requirements are going to be a focus in the upcoming months through the next high-volume boating season. ★

Look. Listen. Learn. Play.

(But not necessarily in that order.)

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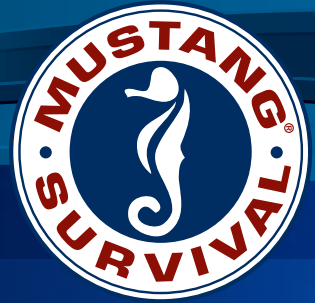
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Mustang Survival work vest deemed 'above board' by Coast Guard, anglers



Drowning after a fall overboard is the second leading cause of death among all commercial fishermen, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Although the risk of drowning is high, most of these anglers opt not to wear life jackets, complaining that they are bulky, heavy, hot and generally uncomfortable.

Fishermen have also voiced concern that life jackets can snag on fishing equipment.

Taking these concerns into consideration, Mustang Survival, a longtime associate member of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, worked to develop a life jacket that would be acceptable to commercial fishermen as well as marine patrol officers, Coast Guard personnel, first responders, and others who work on the water. The resulting product is the Mustang Survival MD3188 Inflatable Work Vest. The innovative life jacket was introduced at Seattle's Pacific Marine Expo in November 2009; it received U.S. Coast Guard approval for Type II and Type V work vests around the same time.

With a comfortable, low-profile fit, the MD3188 Inflatable Work Vest offers enhanced mobility and reduced heat stress, allowing crews and professionals to work more efficiently throughout the day. Its 35-lb. buoyancy rating also means it provides the wearer the added safety of extra flotation when needed. Made for the most severe marine environments, the MD3188 contains Hydrostatic Inflator Technology that offers reliable inflation in a low-maintenance design that will only automatically inflate when submerged in four or more inches of water. It will not inadvertently inflate due to rain, spray or humidity. This technology is exclusive to Mustang Survival in North America and renders the life jacket maintenance-free for five years or until inflated. The MD3188 also features the patented SecureZip™ closure system to ensure the vest will stay closed during even the most rigorous activity and still open effortlessly upon inflation.

Preliminary findings from a study commissioned by NIOSH show that Mustang Survival MD3188 Inflatable Work Vest is the top rated personal flotation device (PFD) among commercial fishermen. Multiple products were included in the study and rated in eight categories that anglers find most important when selecting a life jacket.

Between October 2008 and June 2009, NIOSH commis-

sioned a study with 400 fishermen in Alaska to investigate the current opinions of six life jackets currently on the market. The study's main objectives were to find out if the selected life jackets were in fact more wearable in actual fishing conditions and to increase awareness of life jackets in the commercial fishing community.

Of the six life jackets involved in the study, Mustang's MD3188 Inflatable Work Vest with hydrostatic technology was the highest rated PFD. Its lightweight design, easy to clean fabric, and hydrostatic activation system made the Inflatable Work Vest a favorite on deck and the only life jacket in the study to receive a four-star rating. The MD3188 Inflatable Work Vest is also the first and only USCG-approved inflatable work vest on the market.

For more information on NIOSH and its commercial fishing safety initiatives, visit <http://cdc.gov/niosh/topics/fishing>. For a copy of the preliminary results of the NIOSH report, visit www.mustangsurvival.com/resources/NIOSH_prelim_report_summary.pdf

About Mustang Survival

Mustang Survival has been providing lifesaving solutions for over 40 years. Through constant innovation and application of new technologies, Mustang is the leading supplier of quality flotation and hypothermia protection products to the most demanding users - from fishermen, sailors and commercial mariners to the Coast Guard, jet fighter pilots and even NASA astronauts. ★



Arizona launches successful mobile sobriety checkpoint

By Kevin Bergersen, Law Enforcement Coordinator, Arizona Game and Fish Department



easiest violators to detect, so operational deployment of sobriety checkpoints provides officers and agencies with arguably the biggest and most effective tool in their OUI abatement tool chest. However, the practicalities of OUI enforcement and checkpoints together are at times complex. For example, Arizona's OUI laws require evidentiary chemical tests to be

obtained within two hours of a subject's physical control of a watercraft. That's why early generation checkpoints occurred mostly at aid stations or marinas where evidentiary testing equipment and support facilities were available in

close proximity to the operation.

With the advent of mobile command post technologies, sobriety checkpoints began to appear in more remote locations, much to the surprise of scores of impaired operators who mistakenly expected enforcement officers to remain close to populated areas or boating facilities. But even mobile command posts have their limitations. Agencies must have the ability to position their support equipment remotely on hard surface access points via roadways that don't always reach to identified OUI problems areas.

Officers think outside the box

That is until now. Enter Dee Pfleger and Jodi Niccum, two forward-thinking AGFD boating officers from Lake Havasu and Yuma. Together, they pondered a

rather simple proposition: Why can't a remote checkpoint consisting of a mobile infrastructure be pieced together such that "middle of nowhere" checkpoints can be effectively and safely deployed?

These officers quickly realized that meaningful solutions to any such remote site checkpoint would call for creative thinking, extensive collaboration, and innovative process development. Jodi and Dee assembled a small team of like-minded, innovative thinkers who worked tirelessly to identify and then sequentially address a wide variety of issues, including suitable location, barriers, risks and challenges. The result was the creation of a pioneering mobile checkpoint concept.

Critical to any successful checkpoint operation is identifying a suitable high-traffic yet safe location for the checkpoint. Such a location was identified early on in the planning process – a side cove located at river mile 218.7 just two miles north of Lake Havasu on the Colorado River. The cove provided a sheltered location that was out of the current and safe from boat traffic yet astride the major travel corridor between Topock Gorge and the busy launch ramps of Lake Havasu. There was just one small problem with the location – no dock existed in the isolated cove.

Docks are critical to all checkpoints as they provide a safe, level platform to contact significant numbers of boaters, conduct vessel safety inspections and perform waterborne field sobriety tests (FSTs). However, docks aren't generally mobile, particularly if one intends to accommodate 15 vessels at once. Yet, individual segments were available if one exercised a little creative thinking. The team located, begged, borrowed and

Detecting and removing impaired boat operators from the waterways is a major performance objective for all watercraft law enforcement agencies. The reason is simple: Alcohol continues to be a major contributing factor in national accident statistics. Since 1998, 40 percent of all fatal boat accidents in Arizona have involved alcohol. This prevalence of alcohol-related fatalities is the primary reason that Arizona watercraft agencies have been conducting sobriety checkpoints for more than 16 years.

Arizona has had a rich history in the development of Operating Under the Influence (OUI) best practices. In fact, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), in cooperation with local marine enforcement agencies, conducted the state's very first sobriety checkpoint on Lake Havasu in 1993. Since then, dozens of multi-agency cooperative efforts up and down the river, as well as on several inland lakes, have removed several hundred impaired boaters from Arizona waterways and resulted in thousands of watercraft citations.

Impaired boat operators aren't the



appropriated a wide variety of mobile dock sections from several different government entities across the state.

The task of finding and ensuring transport of materials and segments to the location involved Herculean efforts from the AGFD's Boating Access Unit. This single logistical project element was in itself an incredible task and called for huge amounts of interagency coordination with the City of Lake Havasu, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and AGFD personnel, as well as two local private entities. The amount of interagency coordination to gather all logistical support items was critical and demanded many hours of phone calls and e-mails from the team. The team and partnering entities then collaborated to transport these segments to a launch point downstream from the checkpoint location, transport the pieces "barge-style" up current, and then construct and safely anchor the dock sections onsite in technically challenging current and wind conditions.

One at a time, hurdles and daily logistical obstacles were overcome so that, on checkpoint day, a 130-foot T-shaped section of dock was securely anchored and ready to go. In addition, the team had located and obtained two large pontoon boats to serve as stable and separate locations for conducting FSTs away from public view. And a local marina donated an air-conditioned houseboat that provided an ideal dual-operations command post and logistics center where subjects underwent evidentiary breath testing and arrest processing. Until this project, there had never been a checkpoint in an extremely remote locale where vehicular access or aid stations were unavailable. One day the checkpoint site was a remote cattail cove, and within 48 hours it became the first site in the state to see over 40 officers and boating safety specialists operating from an impressive impromptu base of operations for the detection and removal of impaired boaters from the busy waters of the Colorado River.



Innovation breeds success

Everything came together on Aug. 15, 2009. The first of its kind mobile-dock, interagency sobriety checkpoint kicked off at 3 o'clock that Saturday afternoon. Jodi and Dee successfully recruited a small army of 40 watercraft officers and personnel from Mohave County Sheriff's Office, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Lake Havasu City Police Department, the Bureau of Land Management, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Coast Guard.

While there is no doubt that sobriety checkpoints are effective in detecting and removing impaired operators, there is also an ancillary "halo" affect for several weeks after a checkpoint. In fact, the event created quite the buzz, including an increase in the percentage of designated "sober skippers" encountered by some area marine officers. Plus, various sources reported hearing boaters up and down the river continuing to talk about the operation in bars, ramps and restaurants for more than two weeks after the event. The reasons were clear - this checkpoint was an extremely effective and high-impact event that contacted over 1294 boaters on 247 vessels and resulted in 91 safety violations detected, and ultimately eight OUI and two other boating-related alcohol arrests. The mobile nature of this event allowed deployment of watercraft officers at a location where boaters had no real expectation of an operation to occur.

The success of the checkpoint was a complete function of the massive interagency collaboration required in all aspects of the operation. Working together, those involved raised awareness, promoted safe and sober boating, increased designated operators and no doubt reduced the risk of alcohol-related boating accidents that day and in the following weeks. The truly amazing thing was that the timing of the entire project from conceptual idea to actual project day was a little over two weeks. Jodi and Dee and their crack logistical team that made this checkpoint a reality and all clearly went beyond the regular logistics and administrative demands for conducting a sobriety checkpoint. As a result, they created a new process for creating an effective process and safe mobile checkpoint system that was, to my knowledge, the first of its kind in the nation. ★

San Bernardino Sheriff's Department photos/Greg Blair



Campaign finds success in combating drunken boating

By Kimberly Jenkins



A law enforcement officer conducts a standardized field sobriety test on a boater to determine his blood alcohol content (BAC). California Department of Boating and Waterways photo

During three days last June, marine patrol officers across the country made more boating under the influence arrests than had been made in half the states combined during the entire year of 2008.

How did these officers manage such a feat? Simply by participating in Operation Dry Water.

Devised by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), Operation Dry Water is a coordinated, national weekend of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) detection and enforcement. The goal of the event is to reduce the number of alcohol-related boating accidents and fatalities and foster a stronger and more visible deterrent to alcohol use on the water.

“Despite the fact that 21 percent of all boating fatalities are alcohol related, boaters still do not consider drinking while boating to be as serious as drinking and driving,” said NASBLA Deputy Director Ron Sarver, who initiated the concept of Operation Dry Water and coordinated the event. “We also know that there is a correlation between drinking on the water and accidents on our highways. This is why NASBLA mapped out a pervasive approach to remedy the problem of drunken boating.”

Operation makes a splash

Operation Dry Water was a tremendous success in its inaugural year. During the weekend of June 26-28, 2009, 51 states and territories, along with numerous Coast Guard Stations, participated in this enhanced boating under the influence enforcement campaign.

It was expected that the number of BUI citations and arrests would increase during the Operation Dry Water weekend simply as a result of increased emphasis on BUI saturation patrols and checkpoints. However, the magnitude of the event's impact was astonishing. Based on reports from the participating agencies:

During the 2009 Operation Dry Water weekend, 2,442 officers:

- Issued 283 BUI citations
- Issued 5,320 warnings
- Issued 1,127 citations for other violations
- Contacted 36,277 boaters on 17,695 recreational vessels

Reports from agencies that participated in the 2009 event show that there were more BUI arrests in that one targeted weekend of enforcement than there were for more than half of the states combined for the entire 2008 year.

Though the intensified enforcement had the direct result of removing nearly 300 impaired boaters from the waterways, just as important was the publicity that Operation Dry Water generated, which further increased awareness of BUI and other boating safety issues.

According to VOCUS, a media tracking service, Operation Dry Water resulted in the following media placements during June 26-28, 2009:

- 563 television news stories
- 273 online mentions
- 224 newspaper articles
- 4 magazine articles
- 11 international mentions
- 104 wire stories/hyperlink mentions

Though funds for the campaign's first year were limited, Operation Dry Water was undoubtedly big news. With efficient media relations practices, “pick up” was extensive. Good results in the initial year help to provide a strong foundation for expanding and intensifying Operation Dry Water in future years.

Operation Dry Water increases BUI enforcement

Here are some ways to participate in Operation Dry Water:

- Increase patrols on a particular body of water
- Increase patrols in several locations
- Conduct BUI checkpoints in one or more locations
- Make BUI the focus for already-scheduled patrols
- Issue press releases to increase media attention and public awareness

"We are confident that as we build this program over time there will be a reduction in accidents and fatalities associated with boating and alcohol," said Sarver.

Considering the remarkable success of the first Operation Dry Water, plans are under way to make Operation Dry Water an annual event, with NASBLA at the helm on the national crackdown. NASBLA hopes for participation from all 50 states and six U.S. territories.

The campaign will continue to combine increased patrols and BUI checkpoints, high-visibility enforcement and heightened public awareness through publicity. The campaign's website, <http://www.operationdrywater.org>, will also remain an accessible clearinghouse for a variety of Operation Dry Water resources, including press releases, fact sheets, report forms, public service announcements, flyers, brochures, photographs, and talking points. ★

A boater's blood alcohol content (BAC) registers above the .08 legal limit of alcohol consumption. Arizona Game and Fish Department photo



Officers collected these bottles as evidence in a boating under the influence investigation in California. California Department of Boating & Waterways photo

BUI course accredited by ANSI

By Kimberly Jenkins

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) has enhanced the credentialing component of its Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement Program by gaining third-party accreditation.

NASBLA was one of just 11 national organizations chosen to participate in a pilot program conceived by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), a private non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standardization and conformity assessment system. ANSI's new Certificate Accreditation Program (ANSI-CAP), provided neutral, third-party accreditation that a given certificate program meets ASTM E2659-09, Standard Practice for Certificate Programs. This American National Standard, developed by ASTM International, was selected by the ANSI-CAP Accreditation Committee, a group of volunteer leaders who were chosen for their expertise in the field.

By demonstrating compliance to this standard, certificate programs will further the development of a well-educated and qualified workforce. The accreditation program is also expected to provide quality benchmarks for the design of future certificate programs. With these evaluations and benchmarks in place, workers and employers will be better able to determine the value and meaning of training and educational certificates.

"The ANSI-accredited certificate program will strengthen our BUI curriculum and further standardize our training regime and record-keeping systems to bolster the professionalism of NASBLA-trained MLEOs," said NASBLA Executive Direc-

tor John Johnson.

The accreditation process included using assessors to review documents submitted by applicants against defined requirements, onsite assessments and recommendations. NASBLA submitted initial paperwork in late August 2009, with the on-site audit occurring in November.

The on-site audit went very well, according to NASBLA Training Director Chris Moore.

"The ANSI auditors found no non-conformities with our BUI program. They pointed out one opportunity for improvement and suggested we do an annual on-site observation evaluation of our instructors," said Moore.

"They also gave us one commendation, which recognizes an organization for going over and above what is required of a standard," added NASBLA Deputy Director Ron Sarver. "We received a commendation for our BUI Course Program Management Plan. The assessors were effusive in their praise and compliments of Chris Moore and the work that he has done in pulling everything together for our credentialing. His organization made things go very smoothly and helped eliminate a full day of assessment time."

The Certificate Accreditation Program Accreditation Committee (CAPAC) met on Jan. 15, 2010, and made the final decision on accreditation. CAPAC voted to approve the auditors' recommendation to award NASBLA accreditation under ASTM E2659-09 for its Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement Program. ★

NASBLA's Boating Under the Influence Detection and Enforcement training includes classroom instruction and a live wet lab and/or wet lab videos. *Maine Marine Patrol photos*





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NASBLA treasures its member states PART 4

This is the fourth installment in a series of articles to feature our member states and their boating safety program. We greatly appreciate the contributions these agencies continue to provide in the ongoing journey to reduce boating-related fatalities and make the nation's waterways even safer and more enjoyable.

ALABAMA

Alabama's Water Safety Division was created on Nov. 19, 1959, by a legislative act. The Division initially consisted of a director (division chief), a secretary, 10 officers and patrol boats, and two supervisors. That first year, 66,000 boats were registered.

In 1971, the Water Safety Division was renamed the Marine Police Division and the officers were given full police powers statewide. In 1978, the first emergency shutoff switch regulation was promulgated, making Alabama one of the first states in the nation to implement such a regulation.

The Boating Safety Reform Act, also known as the Roberson-Archer Act, was passed in 1994. This Act enhanced safety laws that were in place, established blood alcohol levels for intoxication on the water, and required all vessel operators to obtain an operator's license.

The Boating Safety Enhancement Act of 2001 further refined the alcohol levels for intoxication, aligned the fines and penalties with the DUI fines and penalties, and raised the legal age to operate a vessel alone from 12 to 14.

With 75 full-time employees, the Marine Police Division is tasked with law enforcement, boating safety education and public outreach, in addition to overseeing the regulatory marker program and the marine sanitation program.



(TOP) Alabama's Water Safety Division was established in November 1959. William Garner (left) began his career in boating safety as an enforcement officer with the Marine Police Division in 1962. He moved up through the ranks and served as director of the division and boating law administrator for the state for 27 years. *Alabama Marine Police photo*

(BOTTOM) The Alabama Marine Police Division is tasked with law enforcement, boating safety education and public outreach, among other duties.

ARIZONA

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) became the lead state agency for recreational boating safety and law enforcement when the Federal Boat Safety Act was passed by Congress and signed into law in 1971. Through this act as well as the authority granted within Arizona Revised Statutes § 5-311, AGFD and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission conduct their Arizona boating safety mandate through the law enforcement, boating safety education, aids to navigation, registration and watercraft administration sub-programs that comprise the AGFD's Watercraft Program.

AGFD's Watercraft Program is designed to promote safe and responsible use of Arizona's waterways through proactive law enforcement and effective boating safety education statewide as summarized in the following vision statement:

"To be the leader in Arizona boating safety and education efforts by providing effective boating information, education and watercraft law enforcement programs that encourage and promote safe, ethical and responsible watercraft use across Arizona."

AGDF has five full-time and 75 part-time employees involved

with the state's recreational boating safety program. Administration of the enforcement portion of the Watercraft Program is managed by the Field Operations Division and the Law Enforcement Branch and housed at Phoenix headquarters. The boating law administrator is responsible for providing oversight and coordination in the areas of law enforcement, boating safety and education coordination for all Department program personnel across the state. The watercraft registration function is administered by the Finance and Accounting Branch. The Special Services Development Branch is tasked



The Arizona Game and Fish Department provides boating information, education and watercraft law enforcement programs that encourage and promote safe, ethical and responsible boating.



On the forefront of boating under the influence enforcement, the Arizona Game and Fish Department began using a 28-foot Operating Under the Influence mobile command post in 2005. Arizona Game & Fish Department photo

with carrying duties related to navigational aids.

Given that watercraft activities transcend agency and state boundaries, all 29 watercraft enforcement agencies (including AGFD) collaborate to accomplish a variety of recreational boating missions including Operating under the Influence (OUI) special projects, training, water patrol, sharing of best practices, and boating safety education courses. In addition, these agencies investigate and report watercraft accidents to AGFD for annual USCG required reporting purposes. As a result, the USCG requirements for "adequate" law enforcement and boating education are met for the state.

Significant milestones in Arizona's recreational boating safety program include: 1972: Life jacket and safety equipment carriage laws

1992: Mandatory juvenile life jacket wear

1994: Mandatory personal watercraft (PWC) life jacket wear and reckless PWC operation laws enacted

2007: Operating Under the Influence statutes revised to mirror Arizona DUI laws and penalties

2008: Interagency Boating Safety Grant Program Initiated

MICHIGAN

Michigan is surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes – the world's largest freshwater lakes – and has ap-

proximately 3,288 miles of Great Lakes coastline. The state also contains more than 10,000 inland lakes and ponds and is interwoven by a 35,000-mile web of freshwater rivers, streams and wetlands. Accordingly, Michigan is one of the top states for number of registered boats.

The Michigan State Waterways Commission was created by Public Act 320 of 1947 to address issues concerning public boating opportunities in the state of Michigan, including the acquisition, construction and maintenance of recreational harbors, channels, docking and launching facilities, and to advise on regulations and grant funding requests. The advisory group was transferred to the Department of Natural Resources on January 1, 1966.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources began enforcing boating safety laws in the 1970s. At that time, the department employed 180 officers, all of whom were certified to teach boating safety courses.

Today, all DNR officers as well as sheriff's deputies enforce marine safety act ordinances. The DNR officers are also certified in teaching boating safety courses.

NEBRASKA

The state of Nebraska started registering motorboats in 1961 as a result of the Federal Register (vol. 23, Number 251) dated December 25, 1958. The agency charged with the task was the Nebraska

Game, Forestation and Parks Commission, which is now the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The first boating law administrator of any sort for Nebraska was a secretary named Evelyn Beaver who served from 1961 to 1983. Andy Nielson served from 1983 to 1988, followed by Leroy Orvis from 1988 to 1996. The current BLA, Herb Angell has been the BLA since then.

The three major areas of responsibilities of Nebraska's boating program are:

- Administration – Boat registration data entry and monitoring, new legislation for boating safety, issuance of Marine Event Permits, and general overseeing of the program budget.

- Boating Safety Education – Certification of instructors, distribution of education materials, certification of students, and certification of education classes. "Most of our classes are taught by volunteers certified by our staff. We certify about 1,900 students per year," said Angell. In 2000 boating education became mandatory for PWC operators aged 14-16. In 2001 the law was changed to include all boat operators 14-18 and that requirement remains the same today.

- Boating Law Enforcement – 56 conservation officers conduct patrols, accident investigation and safety examinations. These duties comprise about seven percent of their time. Three officers, including the BLA, have boating safety as their primary duties.



New Mexico's State Park Division is the state's lead agency for marine enforcement, boating safety & education, outreach, marketing, reporting and financial program management. With 21 full-time employees the Division is the only agency in state that has dedicated marine enforcement officers and instructors for recreational boating enforcement, safety and education. New Mexico State Parks photo

NEW MEXICO

The New Mexico Boat Act was enacted in 1973, establishing the state's boating program. The New Mexico State Park Division (SPD) took the lead in administering and enforcing the state boating laws and regulations in 1978. The division is also the primary agency charged with managing recreational boating safety and education within the state.

SPD is the state's lead agency in regards to marine enforcement, boating safety & education, outreach, marketing, reporting and financial program management. With 21 full-time employees the Division is the only agency in state that has dedicated marine enforcement officers and instructors for recreational boating enforcement, safety and education. The agency implemented boat registration fees in 1984 and established the boat access program the following year and the Clean Vessel Act Program in 1990. New Mexico enacted boating under the influence legislation in 2004 and mandatory education and the child life jacket laws in 2007.

VIRGINIA

Virginia's geography includes a wide variety of waterways, combining the excitement of whitewater rivers and the dynamics of tidal waters with serene lakes and reservoirs. Virginia has 3,200 miles of rivers, 160 man-made and natural lakes, and 500 miles of coastlines. Many recreational boating sports have become popular as a result.

Chapter 500 of the 1960 Virginia Acts of Assembly was "An act to require and provide for the safe operation of certain motorboats on the waters of this State over which the State now has or hereafter obtains jurisdiction." This act marked the beginning of the recreational boating program in the



Virginia's recreational boating safety program began in 1960, placing the commonwealth's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in charge of vessel registration and titling; boating law enforcement; boating safety education; boat accident investigation and reporting; approval of regulatory marker zones; and boating access development and maintenance. Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries photo

commonwealth of Virginia. It established a numbering requirement, safety equipment carriage requirements, boating under the influence enforcement, and the authority for the "Commission" of Game and Inland Fisheries to make rules and regulations in connection with the "safe and reasonable operation of vessels on any waters within the territorial limits of this State."

Since 1960, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has witnessed a number of milestones concerning the commonwealth's recreational boating program:

- watercraft titling in 1981
- watercraft dealer licensing in 1988
- implied consent and .10 BAC for BUI in 1989
- personal watercraft statutes in 1991
- .08 BAC for BUI in 1994
- zero tolerance for BUI in 1996
- stronger laws for personal watercraft operators in 1998
- a phased-in boating safety education compliance requirement in 2007

Currently the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is in charge of vessel registration and titling; boating law enforcement; boating safety education; boat accident investigation and reporting; approval of regulatory marker zones; and boating access development and maintenance. The agency has 12 full-time and 10 part-time employees in registration/titling and two full-time, three salaried part-time and five hourly, part-time boating safety education employees. The agency also has 182 salaried, part-time sworn law enforcement officers. ★

ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A WORLD RECORD? JOIN US ON MAY 20, 2010!

Prepare to participate in the boating safety awareness event of the year! In conjunction with National Safe Boating Week (May 22-28, 2010), the National Safe Boating Council and its partner, the Canadian Safe Boating Council, will be holding the first-ever Life Jacket Inflation World Record Day! To make this event a success, your help is needed.

These safe boating councils ask you - the boating safety educators and partner organizations - to organize an inflatable life jacket event in your area for May 20, 2010. The focal point of each event will involve having boaters bring their own inflatable life jackets and then, at 11 a.m. EST / 8 a.m. PST, boaters across North America will simultaneously inflate their inflatable life jackets. The hope is that enough boaters will participate to establish a world record.

As part of Life Jacket Inflation World Record Day events, organizers can plan safety talks and demonstrations to help heighten awareness of these life jacket types and boating

safety issues and show boaters how to properly inspect, rearm and repack their life jackets.

Not sure you can organize an event? Visit the event's website at www.ReadySetInflate.com (this will also be linked from www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com) to find an event in your area and come along as a participant!

It's always a good idea to inspect and test your inflatable life jacket each year - now you have a chance to do it in a fun and educational way! All of the information and details you need to organize and participate in this event can be found online at www.ReadySetInflate.com. Help us establish the world record for the most life jackets inflated at once!

If you have any questions, please e-mail Rachel Burkholder, outreach manager for the National Safe Boating Council, at outreach@safeboatingcouncil.org. ☘



During the 2005 International Boating and Water Safety Summit, held in Newport Beach, Calif., over 100 attendees lined the beach with their Mustang inflatables to try to establish the world record for most life jackets inflated at one time. With the first-ever Life Jacket World Inflation Day, organizers are sure to surpass that record. NSBC photo

NMMA asks Obama to clarify remark on boat buying

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) has called on President Obama to clarify remarks he made on Feb. 2 in Nashua, N.H., while announcing his new Small Business Lending Initiative.

"When times are tough, you tighten your belts," Obama told a town-hall audience. "You don't go buying a boat when you can barely pay your mortgage. You don't blow a bunch of cash on Vegas when you're trying to save for college. You prioritize. You make tough choices."

"The recreational boating industry is one of the last remaining American manufacturing businesses and net exporters, contributing nearly \$30 billion in new sales and services to our nation's economy each year, said NMMA President Thom Dammrich. "We don't believe the President meant any harm by his comment, but we encourage the President to join us in celebrating the U.S. recreational boating industry and to stay focused on creating conditions for a strong business environment, including his own remarks."

NMMA sent a letter to the President encouraging him to visit a boat manufacturing plant and describing the U.S. boating industry.

The U.S. recreational boating industry creates more than 200,000 jobs in the United States, and has a total annual economic impact of \$100 billion, including nearly \$30 billion in new sales and services each year. Boating is a middle-class activity where 75 percent of boaters have an annual household income of less than \$100,000, and 95 percent of boats are under 26 feet in length.

Recreational boating has been impacted by the distressed American economy, notably waning consumer confidence, tightened credit and banks' unwillingness to support floorplan lending and the housing market crash. New powerboat sales decreased an estimated 28 percent in 2009 and 24 percent in 2008, leading to tremendous job loss and a decrease in boat manufacturing activity across the U.S.

Missouri dive team earns national award

The Missouri State Water Patrol Dive Team was recently awarded the Silver Fin Award for 2009 by the International Association of Dive Rescue Specialists (IADRS). This award is handed out annually for the most improved dive team in the nation.

The Water Patrol Dive team has seen considerable advancement in the technology of the equipment they use over the past few years. Divers use underwater cameras, scanning sonar, voice communication, and metal detectors in the course of their work. These new technologies have greatly increased the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of dive recoveries.

The Missouri State Water Patrol Dive Team first formed in 1979 with eight divers and the most rudimentary equipment. Today the team consists of 10 officers and is available to assist local agencies throughout the state of Missouri. Lt. Wayne Talburt, dive team supervisor for the Water Patrol said, "Our divers were very deserving of receiving this award due to their expertise, dedication, and the use of modern technology to perform the best job possible in an environment that is not at all conducive to the human body."

IBEX to relocate to Louisville in 2010

The International Boatbuilders' Exhibition and Conference (IBEX) will relocate to Louisville, Ky., this year.

After seven years in Miami Beach, Professional BoatBuilder magazine and the

National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), along with an industry-based advisory committee, decided to relocate following months of site reviews and analysis. IBEX 2010 will be held September 28-30, 2010, in Louisville, Ky.

"Over the years, our attendees and exhibitors have expressed increasing concerns about the high costs in south Florida," said Carl Cramer, IBEX show co-director and publisher of Professional BoatBuilder magazine. "Our primary duty as show producers is to keep our constituents happy, and to produce a high-quality trade show. We are confident our location in Louisville will prove to be a successful new beginning."

Cost savings for exhibitors and attendees was the primary motivation for the show's change in location. Lower producer facility costs will provide exhibitors a reduction in exhibit space and labor costs. Labor rates at the Kentucky Exposition Center will be down as much as eight to 10 percent from the Miami Beach Convention Center. In addition, Louisville hotel rates, as well as food and beverage costs, often chief concerns with the Miami Beach venue, will likely see more than a 20 percent reduction with the new location.

The Kentucky Exposition Center is the sixth largest convention facility in the U.S., currently hosting seven of the country's top 30 tradeshow. The facility, which was recently expanded, can easily accommodate IBEX exhibitors, attendees, and activities, as well as the new MAATS Aftermarket Pavilion, while allowing the show room for future growth.

American Boating Congress a wealth of information

The 2010 American Boating Congress will be held May 5-6 at the Liaison Capitol Hill hotel in Washington, D.C.

This annual gathering of boating industry leaders brings together advocates from all over the country to formulate public policy and present a unified front on issues that impact marine businesses.

Produced annually by the National



Marine Manufacturers Association, ABC offers participants an opportunity to discover how current state and federal regulatory issues affect their operations and learn the status of key federal legislation concerning the marine industry. The legislative conference also provides updates from experts about pending legislation and regulation and firsthand knowledge from state and federal regulators, key congressional staff and industry experts as to trends that impact the marine industry.

For information, visit nmma.org/abc.

Discover Boating launches national video campaign created by boaters

Discover Boating has released four videos created by the winners of its 2009 video contest, i-Discovered Boating, which showcases Americans' love of the boating lifestyle.

The videos creatively communicate why boaters are passionate about being on the water via real-life boaters who captured their passion on video as part

of the national contest. The four videos address different segments of boating – fishing, powerboating/cruising, sailing, watersports – with each video telling a unique story about boaters' love for boating.

"Through this campaign we will leverage Discover Boating's extensive social media program to reach a broad base of consumers," notes Carl Blackwell, chief marketing officer for Discover Boating. "Each video is seen through the eyes of an actual boater and illustrates their emotional connection to the boating lifestyle and these videos help us share that message with millions of potential boaters."

The four videos are scheduled to run on cable television on the Outdoor Channel and on national websites, including AccuWeather.com, Marinas.com, OutdoorChannel.com, TakeMeFishing.org and more. Discover Boating is encouraging the industry to help extend the reach of the campaign by posting the videos to their company or associa-

tion websites and sharing them through social media outlets. All videos are available now and can be downloaded from GrowBoating.org.

The i-Discovered Boating contest received nearly 300 video and photo entries during the summer of 2009. Boaters across the nation took to the water to show how they 'Discovered Boating' and why life is better with a boat for a chance to win up to \$10,000 and to have their work featured in a national Discover Boating campaign.

Homeland Security boating funds outlined from Trade Only

In the Dec. 18 Federal Register, the Department of Homeland Security outlined spending on recreational boating safety projects, programs and activities.

These programs were funded under the Provisions of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. The law makes \$5.5 million available for these programs.

Continued on page 24

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Expenditures included \$789,019 for the Recreational Boating Safety Outreach Program; \$335,624 for the Boating Accident Report Database Web System and \$224,625 for a National Recreational Boating Survey.

Of the \$5.5 million available for fiscal year 2009, more than \$3.5 million has been committed, obligated or expended, in addition to more than \$1.5 million of prior fiscal-year funds that have been committed, obligated or expended.

Approximately \$7.9 million has not been committed, obligated or expended from previous years and is being reserved for a multiyear national boating survey.

Boat registrations down 1.4 percent

The National Marine Manufacturers Association's (NMMA) 2008 U.S. Recreational Boat Registrations Statistics report shows that U.S. recreational boat registrations in 2008 decreased an estimated 1.4 percent compared to 2007. A total of 12.8 million vessels were registered by U.S. states or documented by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) in the United States in 2008, compared to 13 million in 2007.

"The Boat Registrations report provides an incredibly detailed look at trends within the recreational marine industry, especially on a state level," says Jim Petru, NMMA director of Industry Research and Statistics. "Our

2008 report helps us better understand the impact on boat registrations and the overall state of the industry at the start of the U.S. economic recession."

The 2008 U.S. Recreational Boat Registration Statistics report, released in October 2009, offers specific detail on registration totals throughout the U.S. (by hull, size and propulsion type) and documented totals by size. Registrations

are also broken down within each U.S. region and state by hull material, size and mechanically propelled vs. non-mechanically propelled. In addition, the report provides insight on each state's commercial boat registrations, and documented vessels by the USCG. Boat registration statistics are the basis for allocating Aquatic Resources Trust Fund dollars among the states each year.

Electronic copies of the study are available at no charge to NMMA members by accessing the Members Only section of www.nmma.org. Non-members can order the report for \$600 by contacting the fulfillment department at 312.946.6200 or orderdesk@nmma.org.

NASBLA-trained instructors honored by North Carolina MADD

By Geoff Cantrell, Public Information Officer, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina's Boating Under the Influence Instructor Team, specifically trained for instructing fellow law enforcement officers in boating while impaired detection and apprehension by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), has been recognized by the state chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

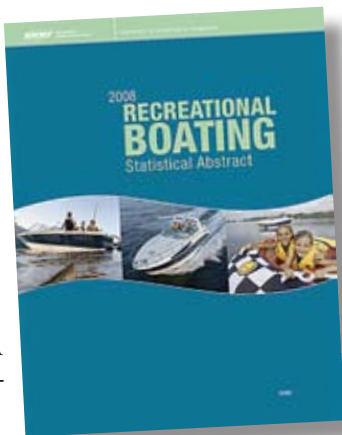
Wildlife officers Sgt. Reggie Barker of Chatham County, Master Officer Allen Carlisle of Catawba County, Lt. Todd Radabaugh of Pender County, Sgt. Brad Stoop of Bertie County and Master Officer Ryan Taylor of Carteret County accepted Agency of the Year honors at the MADD Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Awards of Excellence banquet held Jan. 22 in Raleigh.

The award goes to a law enforcement agency that has demonstrated excellence in implementing innovative and creative techniques in the detection and deterrence of impaired driving. "In this case, that driving was on the water," said Lori Brown, development officer with the North Carolina office of MADD. "Law enforcement is the first line of defense, and the role of Wildlife Resources Commission officers in both enforcement and instruction is exemplary."

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission continues its "Boat Safe, Boat Sober" public awareness campaign combined with stepped-up enforcement and training efforts to reduce the number of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities on the water, as well as on the road after drinking while boating. All officers have been certified in Standardized Field Sobriety Tests. New lesson plans have been developed in the past year with assistance from the Forensic Testing for Alcohol Branch of the N.C. Division of Public Health.

The BUI Instructor Team, led by Lt. Radabaugh, has received a great deal of media attention, MADD noted in presenting the award. News coverage included how the agency led the nation with 41 operating-while-impaired arrests during Operation Dry Water in June 2009.

MADD sets as its mission to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking. The nonprofit organization states a goal to eliminate drunk driving and emphasizes high-visibility law enforcement, including use of sobriety checkpoints. ★



Accepting the Agency of the Year honors at the MADD Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Awards of Excellence banquet are (from left) Master Officer Allen Carlisle of Catawba County, Sgt. Reggie Barker of Chatham County, Lt. Todd Radabaugh of Pender County, Sgt. Brad Stoop of Bertie County and Master Officer Ryan Taylor of Carteret County, along with state boating safety coordinator Capt. Chris Huebner. N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission photos/Geoff Cantrell



Matthew Long
NASBLA Government
Affairs Director

Strengthening law enforcement capabilities improves safety

Second only to the wearing of life jackets, boating under the influence (BUI) is a leading factor in thousands of accidents and deaths nationwide. Our ability to recognize this fact and to create public policy to counteract this behavior is an important arrow in the quiver of the boating safety advocate.

Statistics from the U.S. Coast Guard show that the percentage of boating accidents, injuries and fatalities caused by alcohol – those in which alcohol was reported as a contributing factor – has steadily risen over the past several years. Roughly half of all boating accidents are alcohol- or drug-related. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that 60,000 or more nonfatal boating accidents take place annually, with a cost of \$240 million. Bodies of water are the second most common scene for accidental deaths in the United States, the first being highways.

The use of alcohol is perhaps most dangerous on water. The motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray all accelerate and increase a drinker's impairment. Boaters also usually become tired at a faster rate than those driving a car, which then can lead to a decline in coordination, judgment and reaction time. Combined with the fact that boaters do not usually spend a lot of time on the water, especially compared to driving a car, and are generally less experienced and not as confident on the water and there exists an extremely lethal situation.

To their credit, legislatures around the country realize this danger and boating under the influence is illegal everywhere. However, the penalties for this most reckless behavior unfortunately vary widely.

Because boating is a recreational activity, it has been difficult to convince lawmakers that the effects of boating under the influence are just as deadly as driving under the influence. However, some states have taken the initiative and created laws linking BUI with one's driver's license. This penalty is perhaps one of the most effective means of deterring boating on the water.

Indiana is a great example of the effectiveness of this law. Indiana law prescribes fines and jail times for those who violate state BUI laws. BUI convictions could have points assessed on the violator's driver's license and boat operating privileges may be revoked.

The simple linking of BUI with motor vehicle operation is a powerful deterrent. It elevates boating from merely a recreational activity to one that demands sobriety and a complete understanding of the on water environment. With prosecutors and the courts now viewing boating violations much more seriously, the importance of boating laws are elevated in the minds of the public as well.

If a state adequately educates the boating public that a BUI carries the same penalties as a DUI, then one will see drinking on the water numbers drop precipitously. DUI carries a certain social stigma, along with the criminal charges. Traditionally, not only has boating and drinking not had a stigma attached to it, but drinking while boating has actually been encouraged. This paradigm that one must drink while boating is what must shift in order to achieve safer waterways. Treating BUIs the same as DUIs and then educating the public about this linkage is the best way to achieve an alcohol-free environment.

Along with promoting greater awareness of the dangers of drinking and boating, NASBLA believes that the best way to reduce boating under the influence is to strengthen law enforcement capabilities on the water. Linking one's ability to operate a boat with their ability to operate a motor vehicle is a logical fit and is a vital legislative change to help reduce on water death and injury. ✪



Jeff Hoedt

Chief, Boating Safety
Division Office of Auxiliary
and Boating Safety U.S. Coast
Guard

Responsibility and innovation – a winning combination

Whether a person operates a car, truck, train, plane, boat or other means of transportation, responsibility is the name of the game. That operator assumes not only the responsibility for themselves but also for those in their craft and those near their craft.

Over the years, one of the most irresponsible acts that results in severe injuries and deaths is the drinking of alcoholic beverages and the use of drugs by a craft's operator. In this article, we'll focus on alcohol.

For years, many people have put forth great effort to get boaters to not drink and drive. There have been countless dollars spent on advertisements in an effort to gain voluntary compliance. There have been organizations formed (MADD, etc.) and great effort performed by them to reduce drinking and driving. There have been, and continue to be, more strict laws enacted to further penalize violators. And, there has been a substantial increase in enforcement of these laws, using new and innovative techniques to enhance compliance. Together, these initiatives are having very effective results.

Like automobile drivers, when the operators of boats consume alcohol, the end result is often a collision, or – with the added risk of being on water – a fall overboard, or some other extreme accident. Unlike highway laws, the efforts to enact safety laws relative to boating under the influence (BUI) have taken longer to gain ground. Many felt that boating was a recreational activity where laws should not be present or enforced, saying, "It's the last bastion of freedom." In fact, I recall one instance in the late 1980s when working on state legislation relative to their first drunk boating law when the bill failed in Committee. Outside of the Committee room, an opposing legislator stated, "If you can't get drunk in a boat, where can you get drunk?" Thankfully, shortly after that day, the

state did enact the legislation, and they have a very good set of BUI laws now, as does nearly every state.

Particularly over the past 25 years, the federal government and the states have enacted very effective laws to reduce BUI activity. Blood alcohol content (BAC) restrictions have been set, procedures for testing BAC are implemented, officers receive excellent training on the enforcement of the laws, and the public and administrations have done their best to support the efforts to gain either voluntary or legal compliance with the restrictions.

The job is far from done

With all of these great initiatives, we have witnessed a significant reduction in alcohol-related boating casualties. However, the job is far from being done. Drunk boating is still found to be one of the leading contributing factors in over 21 percent of the annual recreational boating deaths (2008).

To continue to combat this irresponsible behavior will take new and innovative ideas. Thankfully, our partners in boating safety are developing just those new types of approaches. NASBLA, as a great example, has been working on two such initiatives. One is a Coast Guard grant project to develop standardized field sobriety tests that will be readily acceptable as evidence in judicial proceedings. The other is the Operation Dry Water campaign, whereby nearly every state and territory, the Coast Guard, and other partners conduct a targeted nationwide effort to more strictly enforce the BUI laws.

Promoting responsible behavior and implementing innovative initiatives will undoubtedly make boating an even safer and more enjoyable recreational activity. Keep up the great work! 🌟

Boating under the influence – why do we care?

By Joseph Carro

Boating Safety Division, Office of Auxiliary and
Boating Safety, U.S. Coast Guard

Not as simple a question as first thought. Some might say it would be better captured in a statement: Why we do care.

Regardless of our personal thoughts, opinions and positions regarding this issue, while occasionally different from some boaters, it is clear – we do care. In fact, we are here for the common good of all who recreate on our waters and along the shoreline to ensure they have a safe and enjoyable boating experience. This may seem simplistic, and in many ways it is. There are, however, other factors that influence our Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement efforts and why we do care.

First, it's the law. Many of us have chosen a career path that includes enforcement of many different types of laws and regulations. BUI enforcement is one of many. Specifically, it begins in the United States Code (USC) with 46 USC 2302, Penalties for negligent operations and interfering with safe operation. This section addresses the prescribed civil penalties for individuals who operate a vessel in three different dangerous conditions:

2302a - Operating a vessel in a negligent manner

2302b - Operating a vessel in a grossly negligent manner

2302c - Operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol or a dangerous drug

Regulation

I mention the law, and the law references “regulation.” BUI regulations can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), specifically 33 CFR Part 95. These regulations establish the standards and prescribe the restrictions and responsibilities for personnel on all vessels. Nearly all aspects of federal BUI enforcement are addressed. They speak to the Purpose, Definitions, Adoption of State Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, Evidence,

Chemical Testing and more. This part does not pre-empt enforcement by a state of its own applicable laws and regulations concerning operation of a recreational vessel while under the influence of alcohol or a dangerous drug.

The U.S. Coast Guard, like many law enforcement agencies, is further guided in their BUI enforcement efforts by policy. These three guiding principles – law, regulation and policy – provide the first reasons why we care. If you choose a law enforcement career path and don't have strong feelings regarding BUI enforcement, this makes it easy for us. We will enforce the law. It is that simple.

Statistics

Another factor influencing our BUI enforcement efforts is in black and white – statistics. It is said by some that statistics don't tell the whole story or can be crafted to suit an agenda. I believe statistics regarding BUI enforcement, and as a causal factor in boating accidents, injuries and fatalities, are not given to any agenda-driven efforts. There may be room for improvement in the capture and use of the BUI data, but the best numbers available are captured and analyzed in the best way possible to provide the most accurate representation of BUI-related incidents.

The U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics for 2008, the latest data available, contains statistics on recreational boating accidents. In 2008, the Coast Guard counted 4789 accidents that involved 709 deaths, 3331 injuries and approximately \$54 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents. They further report that alcohol use was the primary contributing factor in fatal boating accidents, where it was listed as the leading factor in 17 percent of deaths. That's right, alcohol use was the number one contributing factor in recreational boating fatalities. With 276

accidents resulting in 124 deaths and 246 injuries, the results of alcohol use are glaringly apparent and just one more reason that illustrates why we do care!

Finally, you don't have to be a law enforcement officer to care. Many of us have been touched by boating accidents, or a fatality that may or may not have had alcohol use as a contributing factor. If you or someone you know was involved in one of these accidents, you care. When you have seen how lives have been changed by the devastating loss of a family member, you care. When you see how everything changes in an instant, you care. You can exhibit this care in many ways, from educating the boating public about the dangers and the law regarding drinking and boating to insisting that only non-alcoholic beverages be brought along for a day on the water.

Remember, it doesn't take much for the effects of alcohol to be compounded on the water. Wave action, sun, medication or the pounding of the boat can all affect your ability to safely operate the vessel. Vision, reaction time, and the ability to make sound judgments can all be adversely affected by alcohol. Don't become a statistic. Don't become someone who knows a statistic. Choose not to consume alcoholic beverages while boating. Don't put yourself in a position to say “just one more.” It is no laughing matter when you hear these words – it's time to take action and show you care.

Remember, we do care. ☘



Robin Freeman
National Directorate
Commodore for Recreational
Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Summit provides high-value resources

One of my favorite events of the year just occurred – the International Boating and Water Safety Summit was held in Daytona Beach, Florida, on March 28-31. I was so glad to be able to attend.

Why is this event such a great experience? In addition to spending time with many other boating safety educators, enforcement and other professionals, which is fabulous, the amount and quality of information that is shared is amazing. I never have enough room in my luggage to bring home all the useful materials that are available.

We as a community struggle annually with the reduction of boating accidents and casualties. They are up one year, down a little the next, but for the most part seem to stay about the same. The reasons behind the accidents and fatalities stay the same, too, and constantly we're searching for ways to reach the public with the safety and awareness messages.

This brings me back to the Summit. The annual conference is loaded with breakout tracks in education, outreach and communications that showcase programs from around the country that work. I never get tired of attending these sessions to see what fresh new take someone has developed. This issue of Small Craft Advisory focuses on boating under the influence, and one recent breakout session really stood out for me in driving home that message.

“Drinking and Boating: It's Your Choice”

The breakout featured a video titled “Drinking and Boating: It's Your Choice,” produced by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. At just a little over 17 minutes long, the video tells the story of a day at a lake – a grandfather

and grandson out fishing, a family enjoying a lakeside picnic, and a group of young adults out partying. As you might guess, alcohol and tragedy are involved.

The presenter ran the video with a limited introduction. When it was over, people were swallowing hard and nobody said anything for several seconds. The video effectively grabbed the viewers' attention and portrayed the tragedy that can – and often does – result from combining drinking and boating.

I took a copy of the video home with me and have shown it at public boating classes as well as Auxiliary training events. The reaction is always the same. This hard-hitting resource I discovered at the Summit makes a difference. People become believers in boating sober.

If you haven't seen the video, it's available online on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website, at this link: <http://bit.ly/92XOoo>.

This is but one resource available to us as we keep fighting the battle of educating boaters of the dangers of boating and drinking, the importance of wearing life jackets, the need for boating education, and so on. The Summit has just ended and I was eager to attend, learn and bring home more outstanding programs to use. I'm glad I packed light so I had plenty of room in my suitcase to bring back all the great materials! 🌟

Real stories. Real lives saved.

Without question, alcohol is the number one factor in boating fatalities. Boat Ed's dedication to saving lives on the water goes far beyond a simplistic "drive sober" message. We developed the nation's first and only online course required for boaters convicted of boating while intoxicated. It's filled with real-life video footage of those who narrowly escaped death as well as those who tragically lost loved ones as a result of mixing boating with alcohol. As a public service, many of these videos have been posted to our YouTube (TM) channel.



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boat-ed

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2010

RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY CALENDAR

APRIL

26-30

NASBLA National Boating Accident Investigation & Analysis – Level I Training
Denver, Colorado
www.nasbla.org
chris@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

MAY

5-6

National Marine Manufacturers Association
American Boating Congress
Washington, D.C.
www.nmma.org/abc

11

NASBLA Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee Meeting
Lexington, Kentucky
www.nasbla.org
deb@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

17-21

NASBLA National Boating Accident Investigation & Analysis – Level I Training
East Syracuse, New York
www.nasbla.org
chris@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

20

Life Jacket Inflation World Record Day
www.ReadySetInflate.com

22-28

National Safe Boating Week
www.safeboatingcampaign.com

23-25

Personal Flotation Device Manufacturers Association Annual Conference
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
www.pdfma.org

JUNE

5-13

National Fishing & Boating Week
www.rbff.org

12

National Marina Day
www.marinaassociation.org/nmd

12-13

American Canoe Association Board of Directors Meeting
Fredericksburg, Virginia
www.americancanoe.org
kcosgrove@americancanoe.org
540.907.4460

13-17

Western States Boating Administrators Association Annual Conference
Park City, Utah
<http://bit.ly/bxID2k>

25-27

Operation Dry Water
www.operationdrywater.org

AUGUST

25-29

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary National Conference
Scottsdale, Arizona
www.cgauxa.org/nacon

30-SEPT. 4

United States Power Squadrons Governing Board Meeting
Bellevue, Washington
www.usps.org
888.367.8777

SEPTEMBER

10-14

NASBLA Annual Conference
Honolulu, Hawai'i
www.nasbla.org
ron@nasbla.org
859.225.9487

26-29

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies 100th Annual Meeting
Grand Rapids, Michigan
<http://fishwildlife.org>
info@fishwildlife.org
202.624.7890

28-30

International Boatbuilders' Exhibition and Conference
Louisville, Kentucky
www.ibexshow.com

OCTOBER

1

National Boating Federation Annual Meeting
Annapolis, Maryland
www.n-b-f.org
410.573.1494

18-21

States Organization for Boating Access Annual Conference
Park City, Utah
www.sobaus.org
312.946.6283

20-23

US Sailing Annual General Meeting
Phoenix, Arizona
KatieOuellette@ussailing.org
401.683.0800

NOVEMBER

5-7

American Canoe Association National Paddlesports Conference
Asheville, North Carolina
www.americancanoe.org
aca@americancanoe.org
540.907.4460