



A Measure of Service

On any given meeting night, visitors to Flotilla 79 will note a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. The meeting rarely takes two full hours including New Business and visitor's comments or announcements. Most "interruptions" to *Roberts Rules of Order* consist of gentle touches of humor. The respect that members have for each other is self-evident. Members seem to genuinely enjoy each other's company. It is no wonder then that many Family Nights are nearly as well attended as the meetings.

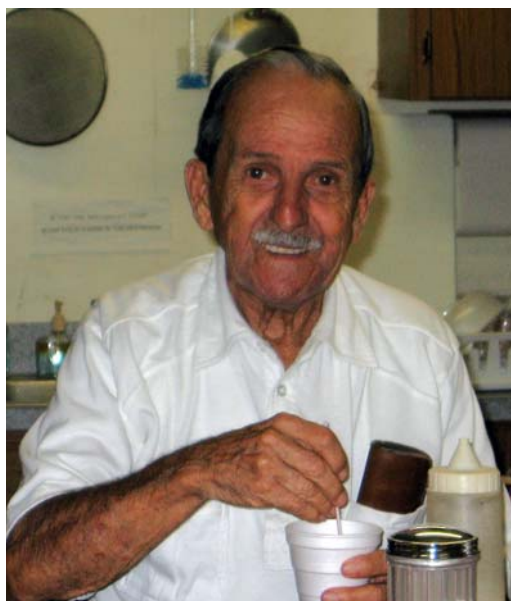
The flotilla's membership is diverse: rich, poor, young, old, male, female; differences melt away as twenty-five to thirty people gather every month to conduct Auxiliary business. What is less evident on the surface yet an integral part of group dynamics is our member's level of dedication to the Auxiliary. Several members report serving more

than 500 hours every year. Of the 17,597 hours reported for Division Seven in 2005, over 6000 hours, or nearly 35% were reported by members of Flotilla 79. That figure would increase dramatically if every member reported their hours!

Hours reported are but one measure of service. A stronger measure is the diverse range of duties and responsibilities that members are willing to assume not just at Flotilla level, but also at Division, District and National staff levels.

This issue of the "Seven-Niner" is dedicated to featuring the men and women of Flotilla 79 who serve these offices, and to highlight who they are and what they do when they are not wearing those blue uniforms. Both in and out of uniform, what we have is a group of diverse, ordinary, and yet extraordinary men and women!

Our Contributions to the Division



Cliff Martin, SO-OP, FSO-MT, is one of the most highly visible and widely recognized members within our entire Division. During his twelve years of service to the Auxiliary he has held so many positions and won so many awards that to list them all would fill an entire page. Most notably, he earned the

Auxiliarist of the Year Award twice, and two years ago earned the Governor's *Hero* Award for his many hours of volunteer service. Cliff is a past FC and VFC, and served as FSO-OP several years.

Cliff is a common sight at the Prevention Department (formerly MSO) where he assists in coordinating all Auxiliary operations. He is a Qualified OPS Watchstander for the Coast Guard and is a Qualified Crew Instructor for the gold side. In addition to his other tasks, he serves as Security Officer for our Division, an office that is appointed by District Seven. Retired from the Marine Corps after 22 years of military service, he currently devotes most of his free time to the Auxiliary. It is not unusual for him to work seven days a week, especially when major boating events fall on weekends and he is needed to coordinate Auxiliary operations. His only other major interests are his grandchildren. When on-the-water events fall on evenings and weekends, one of his grandsons will often tag along with him. Little happens in our district that he has not helped plan, coordinate or train for. Were Cliff to retire, we would need several dedicated members to replace him!



Flotilla Officers

Commander:
Newton Anderson

Vice Commander:
Burnie Wilhelm

Finance Officer:
Thomas Elarbee

Secretary & Publications:
Dorothy Joan Riley

Communications & Operations:
David Rusinko

Information Services:
Amos Johnson *1

Aids to Navigation:
Brian Dobson

Communications Services:
Kathi Kruczek

Marine Safety:
J. Michael Shea, IPFC

Materials:
Richard Rioles

Member Training:
Cliff Martin

Public Affairs:
Bradley Ware

Public Education:
Steve Plass

Marine Dealer Visitor:
Raymond Bost

Personnel Services:
R. Tim Manning

Vessel Examinations:
Paul Schweikhart

*1 Acting FSO-IS

From the Helm



The approach of Safe Boating Week is an excellent time to shine the spotlight on those activities directly involved in the Auxiliary's prime directive - promoting safety among the boating public. The Flotilla needs your help in carrying out this responsibility.

Our BS&S instructor corps has been depleted over the past few years and there is a serious need for new primary and backup teachers. We have been fortunate that several of our present instructors are versatile and can teach more than one course, but they need relief.

A second area needing substantially more participation by the membership is in

vessel examinations. We have a paltry number of qualified VE's for a flotilla of our size. Knowledge of vessel safety requirements is so basic to our mission, I have often thought VE qualification should be a requirement of membership, similar to BS&S class attendance. Any time an Auxiliarist appears in public, most of the questions they are asked have to do with safety requirements. Every member should be able to answer such questions with accuracy.

Anyone willing to assist in these areas can contact the FSO-MT, Cliff Martin, and he will help you with the requirements. Your participation is important!

Newt Anderson, FC



Bob Stribling and Tom Ford from NASA shown in front of the relief center in Foley, Alabama following last year's deadly hurricane season. (Photo courtesy B. Stribling)

the flotilla could manage without him. We had a small taste of that last year when Bob spent two months in Alabama providing relief after the hurricanes. He was sorely missed! Bob's qualifications include Watchstander, Instructor, Coxswain, Crew, and ATON verification. He maintains the galley and looks after the day to day details of maintaining our building. Between these duties, attending the weekly BS&S program, and assisting Cliff in operations, it is difficult to imagine that he has any time left for personal interests, yet he still finds time to fly and can paint boats and airplanes. He also has a fascinating background in photography, printing and offset presses. Bob is one of those rare individuals who, once he finds a new interest, will follow through until he has mastered the field. Maybe that is how he came to be such a god cook. Did we mention that he prepares one mean spaghetti sauce?

Robert Stribling, ASO-OP, wears so many hats that it is difficult to imagine how

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Bradley Ware , ASO-PA



Bradley assists a child in with her PFD at a safety fair in Bradenton last year. *Photo courtesy of Janet Percha, FL 85, Palmetto, FL.*

Bradley has held the position of FSO-PA for the past seven years as well as having served as FSO-MT and FSO-PV. He is retired from the Coast Guard and is a familiar sight at Group St. Pete's Prevention Department Programs, especially when those programs are geared towards children.

He is a natural with younger audi-

ences and also attends the annual Boy Scout Jamborees.

When asked what was most important to him, Brad immediately told us about his 11 year old niece, Rachel, who is presently a level eight gymnast. Brad is also an air observer, an Instructor, and VE Qualified.

Theresa Johnson, SO-IS

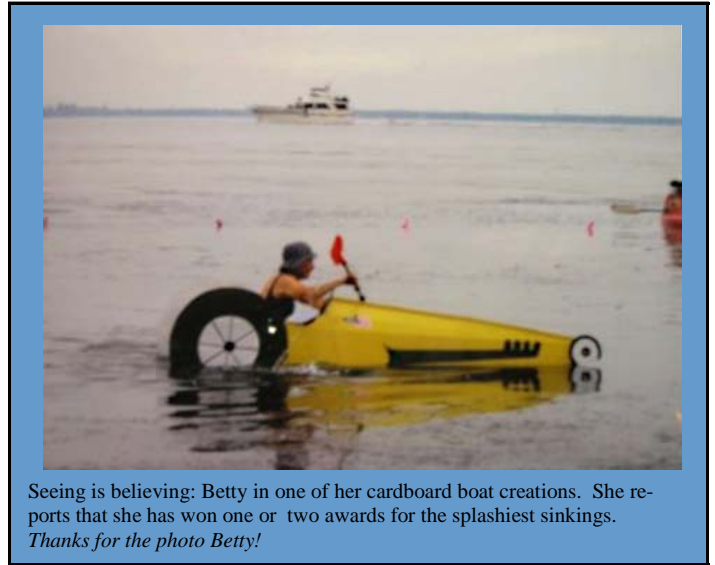
Known by all as "Bunny", she and her husband are unquestionable one of the most dedicated couples within our Division. Bunny claims that her strong suites are people and money... fund raising that is! She has devised many special programs for the Auxiliary which generate income. Those same skills are prized by her church where she raises money for their school, and to *Ruth Eckerd Hall Leading Ladies*, where again, she assists in programs which raise money for children. Bunny truly is a "people person". Her kind and gentle persona has drawn in many new members and represents the Auxiliary well at the numerous boat shows she attends.



Betty Hagan, ACH-FEL

Never under-estimate soft spoken Betty! Her quiet demeanor and diminutive size belly a woman tougher and more competent than many. Betty was our first female coxswain and can proudly wear the AUX-OP device. Her previous offices include ASO-PA, FSO-PB, FSO-OP, VFC, and FC. Betty grew up on a lake and was a member of the Marine Scouts and Girl Scouts. Her range of talents and interests is astounding. She enjoys many types of crafts including stained glass, ceramics,

china painting and silversmithing. Even more interesting, she builds cardboard boats which she takes out on the bay. After 30 years of marriage, Betty proudly asserts that her favorite activity is still boating with her husband, Joe.



Seeing is believing: Betty in one of her cardboard boat creations. She reports that she has won one or two awards for the splashiest sinkings. *Thanks for the photo Betty!*

District Officers

Amos Johnson, ADSO-OP/QE West

Amos requires no introduction. His past offices include VCP, FC, VFC, FSO-PS, FSO-OP, and currently is out "acting" FSO-IS. With Bunny, he spends numerous hours as instructor in regular and special programs and won the award for most member training hours in 2002. During the Cuban Missal Crisis he was a member of the US Army 82nd Airborne Division, after which he returned to college and changed his degree from premed to engineering. This led him into auto-racing and a 25 year successful career as president of his own professional racing team. What may be less known by his fellow Auxiliarists is his love for little theatre. So far, Amos has acted in five little theatre productions. While he played a guitar and sang in "*Bus Stop*", Bunny refuses to allow him to take a leading role in a musical. *(Was his song that bad, Bunny?)*



Amos in *Van Helsing*, a popular Dracula production. *Photo: A. Johnson*



More District Offices and Appointments...

Richard George, ADSO-AN, SO-AN

After thirty years of service, Colonel Rick George retired from the USAF only to start a second service career as a volunteer for the USCGAUX. In the five years since he and his wife, Nita, joined the Auxiliary, Rick has held a number of positions including FSO-AN, FSO-OP, and FSO-MT. His qualifications include Coxswain, AN Verification and Instructor. His years as an officer and an airline pilot are apparent in his overall bearing, but that professional façade melts away when Rick talks about, or is in the presence of his grandson, Ian, now nine months old. Rick is genuinely a doting grandfather who adores that cute little bundle of pink skin and bright red hair. Ask him anytime or anywhere; he is sure to have a picture of Ian with him, and he beams with pride and pleasure when he talks about the most recent developmental milestone that Ian has reached. Rick provided this photo which he calls, "Ian's first boating lesson."



Burnie Wilhelm, ADSO-PS /W, VFC

Burnie joined the Auxiliary nearly six years ago. He is our former FSO-PS, consequently, he is one person our newer members know well. He is a coxswain, VE Qualified and qualified by the Auxiliary to fingerprint new members. Retired from Cargil after 26 years, when Burnie is not logging Auxiliary hours, he volunteers for SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), a program of

the Small Business Association dedicated to teaching and mentoring small business owners. He is Chair Emeritus of the Hillsborough County Chapter, and assistant director of the western division of SCORE. Burnie is a good business person and a good manager of people. His management style allows people to apply their own special talents to achieving set goals. Like many of our members, one of Burnie's primary interests in his life are his grandchildren— eleven of them. He is committed to putting all of them through college and is well on his way to achieving that goal. Six of them are presently attending college. The next five look forward to a higher education once they are old enough and graduated from high school.

Alajandro M. deQuesada, ADSO-PAH 7

Alex serves as the Seventh District's historian, a function that falls under the purview of the Public Affairs office. More than just a history buff, Alex is a professional historian. Within this capacity he is often hired as a consultant by film makers to ensure the historical accuracy of movies and documentaries. His credits include a movie about the Spanish American War appearing on the History Channel, and *The Good Shepherd*, a film to be released this year starring Matt Damon and Angelina Jolie, and directed by Robert De Niro. Alex enjoys his work for the National Park Service and State Park Service's *Living History* programs, and once served as the historian for a squadron of the Civil Air Patrol at MacDill AFB. In fact, the only thing that can compete with his passion for history is his involvement in his daughter, Caroline's life. He is a proud father and has brought the charming twelve year old to meetings and family night functions.



Alex provided this photo of himself during the filming of the Spanish American War documentary.



National Offices



Mike Shea, Auxiliary Waterways Management Security Coordinator, attached to the Prevention Department, Sector St Pete. He is also our Immediate Past Flotilla Commander and presently serves as our FSO-MS. Mike's many accomplishments have been written about in several past issues. Most Notably, Mike is our Division's first recipient of the distinguished TRIDENT Award, and one of the few Auxiliarists certified to Instruct the ICS courses. Mike spends as many as twenty-five hours a week investigating marine accidents. His most recent accomplishment: Mike was married a few weeks ago to the lovely Jeanette. She has completed her application to join the Auxiliary and has expressed an interest in Crew training. This will assure Mike of available crew for his Sunday afternoon patrols. Mike provided this photo of him and Jeanne with her nephew, Michael, a JAG officer in the US Army.

National News

Coast Guard Auxiliary Presented with Special Service Award from Association for Rescue at Sea

Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington DC: On 11 April, 2006, the Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) <http://www.afras.org>, awarded an AFRAS Silver Medal to the National Commodore of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary for the heroic efforts of Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel during hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

AFRAS also awarded the Gold Medal to the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard for their heroic efforts. Both medals were presented in glass enclosed cases as tokens of recognition to all members of the Coast Guard.

AFRAS generally award their gold medal to an enlisted member of the United States Coast Guard for an act of extraordinary bravery during a rescue at sea and the silver medal, likewise, is awarded to a Coast Guard Auxiliarist who has performed a rescue under the same criteria as that for a USCG enlisted person. (The silver is to denote the uniform markings of a CG Auxiliarist as opposed to the gold of the USCG).

For the extreme competency and outstanding heroics of such a large portion of the Coast Guard Auxiliary that took place before, during and after the hurricanes in 2005, AFRAS has chosen to make a special presentation of these prestigious medals to the Auxiliary as a whole. Many of these men and women performed these actions while knowing that their own homes and families had also been devastated by Rita and Katrina.



COMO Gene Seibert, National Commodore, USCG Auxiliary and CAPT John Chomeau, USN (Ret), President of AFRAS

\$5,000 to Operation Life Ring <http://www.operationlifering.org> which supports both the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary members who have experienced a personal loss such as those during the hurricanes.

The Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) is a non-profit foundation with charitable status, which supports services concerned with saving lives at sea.

Photo and story by Wayne Spivak, USCGAUX Public Affairs Office, News Release, www.auxpa.org





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Mark Your Calendars...



May

- 6th- 09:00: ICS/FEMA 100 & 700 FL79*
- 13th- DIV Awards Banquet aboard the Starship.
Boarding at 11:30 AM.
- 15th- 07:30: Flotilla Meeting
- 19th- Family Night

June

- 10th- 09:00 Division Meeting at FL 16
- 20th- 7:30 PM: Flotilla Meeting
- 24th- Family Night

*Mandatory Training

Many thanks to Rick George. The idea for this issue was his, and I think it worked out quite well.

This is your newsletter. Your input is appreciated. Tell us what your department/ office is doing, what works and what does not. What are your up-coming activities?

What would you like to do if we ever got a round Tuit?

Ideas but no writing ability? Drop me a call or email me and I will take care of the rest. Remember...

This is Your Newsletter!