

the LOOKOUT

Voice of the **NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION**
P.O. Box 4111, Annapolis, Maryland 21403-4111

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David L. Goodman, Editor

NBF ATTENDS WSBAA MEETING

BY

MARGOT BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Western States Boating Administrators Association (WSBAA) met in Juneau, AK on July 9 - 12, 2000. All States, as well as the Marianas Islands and Guam were represented, except California and Wyoming.

The National Boating Federation has been a member of WSBAA Education Committee for many years, and this session, on Sunday, July 9, proved interesting, as usual.

Chairman Fred Messman (Nevada) read the eight charges to the Committee. It says something of the intensity of the opinions represented at the meeting that we never got beyond Charge #1, reconsider the NASBLA model act for mandatory education. Chairman Messman proposed an entirely new version, which "ran aground" on paragraph 1: Proctored vs. unproctored examinations for Operators' licenses. No agreement could be achieved on this issue.

Also of import: Continuing reciprocity with Canada; Canada's licensing procedure has a ten-year window, and there is no problem anticipated in the foreseeable future for U.S. boating visitors, licensed or not. However, there MAY be problems regarding travel WITHIN the United States unless a firm U.S. policy is in place.

Again, it seems that the Coast Guard should set such a policy on a national level. There are no "customs taxes" in interstate travel, nor local restrictions for automobile or airplane travel.

Speaking of reciprocity, I suggested, and the WSBAA Executive Committee agreed, that Associate Membership be exchanged annually by their organization and NBF.

Of exceptional interest: The incredible differences between concerns of the various BLAs, depending on their location:

In Alaska, due to the very cold water and great distances the Coast Guard must cover, boaters are expected to take charge of their safety and self-rescue capabilities. Also in Alaska, "recreational boating" is generally defined as "non-commercial fishing"!

It has been incredibly difficult to promote the use of PFDs to youngsters. Elders in many villages are afraid that the COLOR of the PFD may scare seals. Language barriers are enormous, as are distances. Fatalities are ten times the national average.

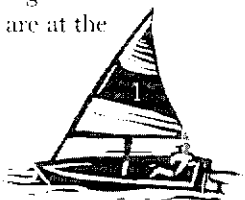
A bit different from Guam, where filing a float plan has been the major subject of instruction.

By the way, it would appear that all WSBAA members are receiving (and reading!) the LOOKOUT...an excellent record!

HYANNISPORT TO HOST NBF FALL MEETING

Hyannis Yacht Club in Hyannis, MA will host the NBF fall meeting on 27-28 October. The yacht club is located at 490 Ocean Street. A block of rooms is being held at the Hyannis Harbor Hotel, 213 Ocean Street, less than a mile from the yacht club. Hotel reservations are to be made by calling 1-888-810-0044. Be sure to mention that you are with the **NBF**. The cost per night is \$69.00 and up. The fall is the best time on Cape Cod: the weather tends to be warm during the day and cool at night with a limited amount of bad weather, and most tourists have departed! You may wish to do some sightseeing while you are at the Cape. All delegates are encouraged to join us for a great fall meeting and a great time.

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FROM THE BRIDGE

BY BOB DAVID, PRESIDENT

As you can tell, we delayed this issue of The LOOKOUT in order to provide more timely information about our fall meeting and try to work around busy summer travel schedules.

Here is the specific information about the meeting, which will be held at the Hyannis Yacht Club on beautiful Hyannis harbor, Cape Cod, MA, 27 and 28 October 2000. The Executive Committee will meet Friday, 27 October from 0830 to 1700. Friday evening we will meet for a social hour, cocktails, and dinner at the Club open to all members. Reservations and a menu selection for dinner (\$25) are required prior to 15 October. Please contact me for reservation details. Our general meeting will be held from 0830 to about 1700 on Saturday, 28 October with guest speakers from the Coast Guard, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and others important to recreational boating. The Club will provide lunch for \$15 and advance reservations are required. Hotel rooms have been blocked at the Hyannis Harbor Hotel less than a mile down the street from the Club for \$69 to \$129 per night plus 9.7% tax. You must make your reservations by contacting the hotel at 1-888-810-0044 before 25 September after which the rooms will be released. Ask for Gene Schroeder and indicate you are with **NBF**.

This hotel is superbly located on Hyannis inner harbor across the street from the ferries to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and a short walk from excellent restaurants and the village. You can contact me also about travel and touring options. I hope many will join us for an interesting meeting and the delights of fall on Cape Cod.

There have been a number of recent meetings and I am pleased that other members of the Executive Committee have taken time from their summer boating fun to attend on behalf of NBF and myself and to represent the interests of recreational boaters. The boating law administrators have held several meetings. P/P Margot Brown represented us at the western states (WSBAA) meeting, at the northern states (NABA) by Rolf Tinge, and at the NASBLA national meeting by Secretary/Treasurer Bill Heider.

Earl Waesche was our representative to the Coast Guard Auxiliary National Conference since I was out of the country. Earl had the honor to present the NBF 1999 Outstanding Flotilla Award for Public Education to Flotilla 65, 7th District, Cutler Ridge, Florida, Frederico Jaca, Flotilla Commander. My sincere congratulations to Flotilla 65 and all the Auxiliary flotillas that make such major contributions to recreational boating safety.

EDITOR'S LOCKER

Executive Committee Appointment

NBF President, Robert P. David, with a concurrence of the majority of the Executive Committee, has appointed Roger K. Brown, from the U.S. Sailing Association, to the NBF Executive Committee 2000.

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

The NBF continues to receive many questions about the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program the nature of which indicates that misinformation and confusion still exists about this important program. The NBF has contacted the Program Manager of this program and learned that there will be a delay in implementation. Earl Waesche, the NBF National Legislative Director is conducting this research. More details to follow.

NBF MEMBERSHIP SWELLED

The ranks of National Boating Federation membership increased significantly over the summer with the addition of the U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary National Board, Inc., joining as an Associate member and Sue Haven Yacht Club, Baltimore, and Pickwick Boaters Association, Pickwick Dam, Tennessee, both joining as Club members.

All members of the NBF are encouraged to solicit new members from their boating communities, Bill Mitchelson, vice-president and membership director of the large volunteer recreational boating organization, said. He urged officers, committee members and other membership at all levels to encourage boaters to join the NBF to help the federation pursue its mission of working for the benefit of boaters across the nation.

The organization essentially monitors legislation and rulemaking at the federal level with the goal of protecting mariners from overzealous government agencies and politicians. Where appropriate, other legislative activity also is watched, Mitchelson explained. State and local legislative bodies frequently single out boaters for lawmaking without thinking through all the ramifications of issues.

For example, Mitchelson, who lives in Milwaukee on the shores of Lake Michigan and represents the Lake Michigan Yachting Association, explained that a Wisconsin state legislator had proposed an annual

"horsepower tax" in 1999 that would have taxed all boaters with engines from 50 cents to a dollar per horsepower every year. His goal was to target so-called go-fast offshore race-style power boats for annoying him as he fished on the bay of Green Bay. He had not considered what the tax would do to powerboat owners of all types some of which had several hundred horsepower engines driving large and slow moving cruising boats.

A mailing alert about the tax plan was sent to boat and yacht clubs in the state warning of the plan and through the written protests of several boaters who wrote to the legislator and his associates, the proposal never saw the light of day and never got out of committee.

It is proposals like this that must be guarded against, Mitchelson said. If the NBF isn't watching out for dangerous legislation that can affect boaters, no one else is looking out for our interests, he said.

Membership in NBF is inexpensive at all levels, said Mitchelson, and no one with a boat or who is interested in boating should not be a member of the National Boating Federation. A membership application appears in every issue of *The LOOKOUT* or applications may be obtained from Bill Mitchelson, Membership Department, 9483 N. Fairway Circle, Milwaukee, WI 53217-1316.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MAIL TO: National Boating Federation
70 Garfield Lane
West Dennis, MA 02670

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: National Boating Federation

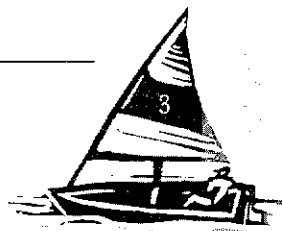
MEMBERSHIP TYPE: Associate (\$100), Club (\$50), Individual (\$20), Family (\$30)

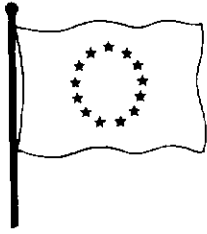
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BOATING SAFETY

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

In January 1988 operating a vessel while intoxicated became a specific Federal offense. Standards for determining when the operator of a vessel is intoxicated were established. When the blood alcohol content (BAC) of the operator of a recreational vessel is 0.10% or higher, that person is considered to be legally intoxicated. The Coast Guard has proposed a revision to the Federal law to lower the BAC standard to 0.08%. This would bring the Federal regulation into alignment with the 0.08% BAC regulation of many States. They also propose to replace the term "intoxicated" with "under the influence of alcohol or dangerous drugs". This would bring the regulations into conformance with current statutory language.

Boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not only illegal, it is dangerous. Alcohol is a depressant to the nervous system. It can cause a degradation of balance, coordination, judgment, and vision. When exposed to sun, wind, engine noise, and the rolling and pitching of a vessel, a boater drinking alcoholic beverages can become fatigued much more quickly than normal. Alcohol can also accelerate the loss of body heat, which can bring on the effects of hypothermia more rapidly if an intoxicated person is immersed in cold water. Half of all boating accidents are alcohol or drug related. Over a quarter of all boating deaths recorded since 1986 have involved the improper use of alcohol or drugs or a combination of both.

The penalties for a person operating a recreational vessel while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are severe. Such a person

can be subjected to a civil penalty of an amount up to \$1,000, or a criminal penalty up to \$5,000, one year imprisonment, or both. Lawsuits arising from boating mishaps that involved excessive use of alcoholic beverages can result in pecuniary damages that are orders of magnitude larger than such fines. The risks involved with boating while under the influence far exceed any pleasure that might be derived from drinking alcoholic beverages.

HOAX DISTRESS CALLS

Every year during the boating season there are a large number of distress calls made over VHF radio channels. Most are heard on channel 16, the hailing and distress channel, and most are legitimate. Unfortunately there are some people who think it is funny or just a harmless prank to make a false distress or MAYDAY call. Unsupervised children sometimes make prank distress calls. What pleasure or satisfaction they can derive from making such calls is hard to understand. The Coast Guard responds with all possible haste whenever a distress call is received. There is no way to determine whether or not such an incoming call is legitimate. No matter what the weather conditions may be, the Coast Guard dispatches assets to conduct search and rescue operations, often putting their personnel at risk. The cost for conducting a search and rescue operation is expensive.

The cost to operate the average Coast Guard Cutter is about \$1,500 per hour. A Coast Guard Aircraft costs about \$4,000 per hour to conduct a search operation. When

Coast Guard assets are committed to responding to a hoax call their ability to respond fully to a legitimate distress call is diminished. For example, a man and his son died when their boat sank. They had made a distress call at the same time that a hoax call was made. The Coast Guard heard and responded to the hoax call that blocked the true distress call and the result was a tragedy. The hoax caller was never identified, but one must wonder how much pleasure or satisfaction this prank gave him.

A few years ago an intoxicated man made a hoax MAYDAY call repeatedly on a VHF radio from his home. Using radio direction finders, the Coast Guard was able to locate his house and he was promptly arrested. When someone is caught making a hoax distress call they are in for some severe punishment. They can receive up to six years in prison, and be fined up to \$250,000. Furthermore, they can be held accountable for all the costs incurred by the Coast Guard in responding to the hoax distress call. There is nothing funny about a false distress call. It is not a harmless prank, and in some Courts it is treated as a felony. If you know and can identify someone who is making a false distress call on a radio, call your nearest Coast Guard Unit and report it. The hoax caller is costing taxpayer dollars and putting the lives of people at risk.

These articles were reprinted from the CBYCA Chartroom Chatter. Appreciation expressed to Nancy Harper

