



Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council Newsletter
SERVICE CONTINUES

Council co-chairs: CAPT Bud Schneeweis and YNCS Mike White

Issue 14

29 September, 2008

FALL IS HERE READY OR NOT

Your Council continues to be active, meeting Friday 26 SEPT 2008 at USCG HQ.

Key issues were:

Comments by Headquarters Support Command representative

Schedule 2009 Council Meetings

Recruiting and Membership Outreach

Review of Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council Google Group List Mail

Help Desk Utilization

Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council WEB site update

Review Security Procedures for Building Access and Parking 2008 Holiday Party

Holiday Cards

*** Local Capital Area Coast Guard Retirees are welcome to serve on committee.

A copy of the Council meeting Agendas and minutes are posted on the Council web site, <http://www.uscg.mil/ccs/carc>, and can be downloaded, or may be requested from CAPT Chuck Glass, ph (301) 598-6590 or e-mail: cjglass@verizon.net.

Our objective is to publish a quarterly newsletter and provide you, the **Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree, military and civilian**, with information on Council activities and items of interest to Retirees in the Washington DC, Maryland and Northern Virginia Council area. In addition, we may send out items that are time-critical using our E-Mail list.

All are invited to contribute to the **Newsletter**, attend a Council meeting, and are welcome to communicate with Council members prior to the Council meetings, or to provide informational items of interest to retirees. Please send an e mail, call, or write to our Council Co-Chairs, CAPT Bud Schneeweis and YNCS Mike White, the Council Secretary, Chuck Glass, or to our **Newsletter** editor, (Norm Lemley) 703 528-1660; e-mail: nlemley2@comcast.net. Please "Pass on" this Newsletter to other USCG military and civilian retirees that may be interested. We welcome additional e-mail /or snail mail addresses and phone numbers for our mailing list.

All are urged to look at the Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council a WEB site, <http://www.uscg.mil/ccs/carc>. The Council believes that access to this WEB site will enable Retirees to become better informed on the current Coast Guard

**organization and operations. Suggestions for items to be posted are welcome!!!!
Send them to the Retiree Council webmaster, CAPT Bob Warakomsky, at
bpwarakom@cox.net**

We look forward to serving all Coast Guard Retirees, military and civilian, and continue to extend an invitation to attend our meetings, to participate in Council projects and to keep us informed of your issues and concerns.

Council Meeting Schedule for 2008 and 2009

Fri 5 Decemebr 2008

Fri 27 March 2009

Fri 26 June 2009

Fri 25 September 2009

Fri 4 Decemebr 2009

Meetings are normally held at USCG Headquarters in Conference Room B718 beginning at 0900.

2nd Annual Retire Council Holiday Party to be at Vinson Hall 14 Decemeber

The 2nd Annual Retire Council Holiday Party to be at Vinson Hall Sunday, 14 Decemeber from 4-6:30. The Commandant and the CG Master Chief of the CG have been invited again his year. Last year's Holiday Party was a great success and it was a great opportunity to see old friends and make new ones. The Council looks forward to a large turnout and a festive time.

If you wish to attend please respond by E-mail to PaulPeak@aol.com. Please provide your Name, Address, Home Telephone Number, E-mail address, and name of accompanying spouse and/or guests, and make the subject of your E-mail "*SEMPER PARTY*". Please confirm your reservations by mailing a check (\$30 per person) covering payment for the party to:

CAPT Paul Peak, USCG (Ret)
Vinson Hall, Apt. 306
McLean, VA 22101-4807

A list of those indicating they will attend will be posted on the Council web page.

Coast Guard Day A time for Reflection

August 4, 2008 marked the 218th anniversary of the enactment of the law establishing the Revenue Cutter Service – the forerunner of the US Coast Guard. The Service is as vigorous and important to the nation now as it was in the early days of the Republic. It is appropriate, though, to reflect on some of the advice provided by Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, in his Letter of Instruction to Commanding Officers of the Revenue Cutters:

While I recommend in the strongest terms to the respective officers, activity, vigilance and firmness, I feel no less solicitude, that their deportment may be marked with prudence, moderation and good temper. Upon these last qualities, not less that the former, must depend the success, usefulness and consequently continuance of the establishment in which they are included. They cannot be insensible that there are some prepossessions against it, that the charge with which they are intrusted [sic] is a

delicate one, and that it is easy by mismanagement, to produce serious and extensive clamour, disgust and alarm.

They will always keep in mind that their countrymen are freemen, and, as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of a domineering spirit. They will, therefore, refrain, with the most guarded circumspection, from whatever has the semblance of haughtiness, rudeness, or insult. If obstacles occur, they will remember that they are under the particular protection of the laws and that they can meet with nothing disagreeable in the execution of their duty which these will not severely reprehend. This reflection, and a regard to the good of the service, will prevent, at all times a spirit of irritation or resentment. They will endeavor to overcome difficulties, if any are experienced, by a cool and temperate perseverance in their duty--by address and moderation, rather than by vehemence or violence. The former style of conduct will recommend them to the particular approbation of the President of the United States, while the reverse of it--even a single instance of outrage or intemperate or improper treatment of any person with whom they have anything to do, in the course of their duty, will meet with his pointed displeasure, and will be attended with correspondent consequences.

The foregoing observations are not dictated by any doubt of the prudence of any of those to whom they are addressed. These have been selected with so careful an attention to character, as to afford the strongest assurance, that their conduct will be that of good officers and good citizens. But, in an affair so delicate and important, it has been judged most advisable to listen to the suggestions of caution rather than of confidence, and to put all concerned on their guard against those sallies to which even good and prudent men are occasionally subject. It is not doubted that the instructions will be received as it ought to be, and will have its due effect. And that all may be apprized [sic] of what is expected you will communicate this part of your orders, particularly, to all your officers, and you will inculcate upon your men a correspondent disposition.

On August 7, 1789, the First Congress of the United States adopted the Lighthouse Act,

On August 7, 1789, the First Congress of the United States adopted the [Lighthouse Act](#), assuming responsibility for all lighthouses in the country. This marks the commencement of what is known today as the Aids to Navigation (ATON) mission, the oldest of the numerous missions performed by the US Coast Guard. Although the [US Lighthouse Service](#) (USLHS) did not officially become part of the Coast Guard until July 1, 1939, the two entities and their predecessors worked cooperatively from the earliest days. Over the years, the ATON mission expanded to include lightships, buoys, daymarks, ranges, sound signals, and numerous forms of electronic aids to navigation. As waterways become more congested and ships become larger, the mission only grows in importance.

Commandant Formally Introduces the "Guardian Ethos."

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SUBJ: THE GUARDIAN ETHOS

1. THIS ALCOAST FORMALLY INTRODUCES THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS." AS THE COAST GUARD MODERNIZES, THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" WILL ASSIST THE SERVICE IN TYING OUR MILITARY, MARITIME, MULTI-MISSION CHARACTER TO A MORE TANGIBLE SERVICE IDENTITY; AN IDENTITY THAT WILL RESONATE WITH OUR PEOPLE, OUR EXTERNAL PARTNERS, AND CUSTOMERS ALIKE.

2. WE HAVE AN INCREDIBLY RICH HERITAGE AND I BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO OFFICIALLY DEFINE OUR "ETHOS." ABOUT A YEAR AGO TRAINING CENTER CAPE MAY WAS CHARGED WITH REFINING THEIR CURRICULUM TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE PHYSICALLY FIT APPRENTICE WHO HAD INTERNALIZED THE COAST GUARD'S CULTURE, CHARACTER AND CORE VALUES AS DEPICTED IN PUBLICATION NUMBER ONE. DURING THIS PROCESS THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" WAS CREATED:

"THE GUARDIAN ETHOS"

I AM AMERICA'S MARITIME GUARDIAN.

I SERVE THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

I WILL PROTECT THEM.

I WILL DEFEND THEM.

I WILL SAVE THEM.

I AM THEIR SHIELD.

FOR THEM I AM SEMPER PARATUS.

I LIVE THE COAST GUARD CORE VALUES.

I AM A GUARDIAN.

WE ARE THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD.

3. THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" IS NOT INTENDED TO REPLACE THE COAST GUARD CREED. THE CREED IS A CONTRACT AN INDIVIDUAL MAKES WITH THE COAST GUARD; THE ETHOS IS DIFFERENT - IT DEFINES THE ESSENCE OF THE COAST GUARD AND COULD BE VIEWED AS THE CONTRACT THE COAST GUARD AND ITS MEMBERS MAKE WITH THE NATION AND ITS CITIZENS.

4. THE COAST GUARD HAS SERVED THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR OVER 200 YEARS. THE SURGE CAPABILITIES INHERENT IN A MILITARY ORGANIZATION COMBINED WITH MULTIPLE AUTHORITIES/COMPETENCIES DUE TO OUR MULTI-MISSION NATURE MAKE US UNIQUE IN GOVERNMENT AND OF GREAT VALUE TO OUR NATION. HOWEVER BECAUSE WE ARE SO MULTI-FACETED, FROM TIME TO TIME WE ARE NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD.

5. THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" IS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE COAST GUARD'S CAPSTONE DOCTRINE, PUBLICATION NUMBER ONE.
[HTTP://WWW.USCG.MIL/TOP/ABOUT/PUB1.ASP](http://www.uscg.mil/top/about/pub1.asp) THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR SERVICE - IT IS WHO WE ARE. DATING BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE STEAMBOAT INSPECTION SERVICE, THE U. S. REVENUE CUTTER SERVICE, THE U. S. LIFE SAVING SERVICE, AND THE U. S. LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE, WE HAVE A PROUD HISTORY OF SERVING THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE MARITIME DOMAIN, PROVIDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND STEWARDSHIP. AS AMERICA'S MARITIME GUARDIANS, WE PROTECT THEM, WE DEFEND THEM, AND WE SAVE THEM. WE ARE THEIR SHIELD, AND WE STAND ALWAYS READY FOR THE CALL TO DUTY. WE LIVE THE COAST GUARD CORE VALUES. INDIVIDUALLY, WE ARE EACH GUARDIANS, WHO HAVE SWORN

AN OATH TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION AND WHO ADHERE TO THE COAST GUARDSMAN'S CREED. TOGETHER, WE ARE THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD.

6. THE ADOPTION OF THE "GUARDIAN ETHOS" PROVIDES US WITH A CONSISTENT SERVICE WIDE TERM FOR OUR PEOPLE. WE ALSO KNOW GUARDIANS HONOR THE PAST BUT MUST CONTINUALLY LOOK TO THE FUTURE AND ADAPT. TO PROTECT, DEFEND, AND SAVE TODAY AND TOMORROW WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION ARE CONSISTENT WITH OUR GUARDIAN ETHOS. AS GUARDIANS WE WILL CONTINUALLY CHANGE AND IMPROVE OUR COAST GUARD.

7. WE ARE GUARDIANS.

8. ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN, COMMANDANT, SENDS.

9. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

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From: Allen, Thad Admiral Subject: ALL HANDS - Commandant's Corner 2.0 To the Men and Women of the United States Coast Guard, September 29, 2008

Today I am excited to announce the next step in our efforts to participate in the increasingly relevant and collaborative social media environment. The intent is to expand the Coast Guard's ability to reach a wide audience, and communicate in various ways that may appeal to different individuals. As one of my Facebook friends told me, "Communication is the beginning of understanding," and we hope to enhance understanding of the Coast Guard through maximum transparency.

Rather than spamming you with the details here, you can read about it at the new Commandant's Corner 2.0, (www.uscg.mil/comdt), on the iCommandant feature. You will notice that you are able to leave comments. Let me know what you think and how we can use this new information environment to enhance our ability to work together, take care of one another and better serve the public.

Stay Tuned!

Admiral Thad Allen

Annual Tyler Chair Leadership Address delivered by Admiral Loy at the Academy Institute for Leadership September 18, 2008

"Thank you, Jim (1/c Daffer) for that very nice introduction. I look back on our little bit of time together and I'm delighted with the responsibility that you have shouldered as the Regimental Commander. I'm sure lots of good things will come along as you and your class take over the responsibilities to lead the Corps.

It's great to be back at CGA and in the familiar confines of Leamy Hall. I was talking with LT Smith today that these mass lectures, in my day as a cadet were in the splinter village, barracks-like auditorium. It sat where the new wing of Chase Hall sits now.

I know from my experiences from those many lectures that my challenge is to keep your attention for 45 minutes to an hour or so, realizing the call of Chase Hall, the call of Fluid Mechanics and the call of sleep deprivation are my competition!! So let me see if I can.

As I said, I congratulate Cadet Daffer for his appointment as Regimental Commander and congratulations to all of you who have completed your Summer Programs and now return for a new chapter in your academic pursuits. Fall is a time of newness at the Academy and is always very exciting... a new fall sports program, this year a new Commandant of Cadets and new Assistant Superintendent, a new class of cadets, a new wing of Chase Hall and thankfully fresh starts at the 2008-09 GPA race for the entire corps!

We've had some great new things happen at the Institute for Leadership as well as we begin the academic year with you.

Most importantly, we have Don Trone on board as our new director. Don is first a member of the class of 1977. Secondly, a very successful businessman who among many other accomplishments has become known, if you will, as the ethics conscience of Wall Street. Given the last several days, Wall Street may need him and maybe desperately over the next few weeks. Don has written and published a set of fiduciary standards for the entire industry segment and remains in high demand to share that guidance to companies across America. He has brought great energy and endless ideas to the Institute and we count ourselves very fortunate to have landed him.

Two other new faces at the Institute are Angela Munson and Michelle Beale. Together with LT Jamie Smith, these folks provide a constancy of presence here on the Academy grounds we never had before. They have joined this great network that includes Jim Sylvester and John Maxham at the Alumni Association as well as Ann Brengle, the new president of the Coast Guard Foundation to be constantly concerned about making contributions to the Academy.

That constant presence also offers a serious addition for the Superintendent to task and to gain counsel from when appropriate, as he considers the leadership development challenges always present at the Academy.

We certainly thank Admiral Burhoe and the Academy staff for their support of our initiatives and the sharing of his vision the Admiral has laid out for all of us here the Academy. There's an old aphorism which goes "if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." Admiral Burhoe certainly knows where he and the Academy are going and has very clearly laid out both strategic and immediate tactical direction for us all. That kind of clarity offers the Institute the guidance we need to make solid contributions to his direction and we are pledged to do that, Sir.

Lastly, we offer our annual thanks to Dr. Jim Tyler. As I said in my address last year, our work at the Institute is about bringing to life Dr. Tyler's vision for complimentary leadership development here at the Academy. He challenges us to complement, not

displace, the excellent efforts already in place. This annual address is the place I choose to repeat publicly our two-fold original tasking from Dr. Tyler.

1) Make cadets realize, while they are here to optimize the experience, that CGA is truly a great Foundation for Life, Life as a Coast Guard Officer, Life as a citizen. and

2) Find a way to market this extraordinary place, to the rest of the parents of America as a prime place to send their sons and daughters for leadership development.

I am very proud of the efforts we've undertaken to make progress in both areas over these last four years, and personally re-pledge to Dr. Tyler our dedication to keeping the pressure on.

This is also my annual opportunity to share last year's accomplishments at the Institute. In the interest of brevity, let me simply list some highlights and invite any and all to visit us in the Alumni Building, third floor, for any kind of lengthy discussion you would like to get engaged in on these items or any you know we are involved in.

Cadets and faculty members enjoyed off campus experiences, funded by the Institute, and brought lessons back to the Academy and the Corps.

Don Phillips and I had "The Architecture of Leadership" published by the Naval Institute Press, finally! This book becomes the product, if you will, of our Institute and the curriculum elements developed from here will be based on "Architecture." I'm personally very proud of the book and appreciate all the input that we, both Don and I, received from the Academy family as we tried ideas and concepts on many Academy audiences as we wrote the book. And now it is here for us to use.

We taught a course in the spring at the Institute on leadership and public policy. LT Smith and LT Brewer and I will teach an Entrepreneurial Leadership course in the spring semester this year.

The annual Tyler chair trip to DC provided 15 cadets with a unique glimpse behind the scenes of Congress, DHS, the White House, and CG headquarters.

With Don's leadership, the Institute and the Alumni Association have championed a network of organizations focused on replacing the 44' Luders for the coastal sail-training program.

The Academy graduates panel has become an annual event and this year's panel offered great testimony about the Foundation for Life program provided for those who attend CGA.

Lastly, we extended our outreach to many elements at the Academy and to others interested in leadership development. We put on three CG field day experiences for Senior Executive Service (SES) students at the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) in Charlottesville, Virginia, hosting them at our Training Center in Yorktown, VA. I was personally asked to bring the lessons of "Architecture" to several colleges and

universities and several company boardrooms of Fortune 500 companies as the means to incentivize those audiences to better personal or team leadership development experiences. The CG Training Center in Yorktown engaged us to help them with leadership curriculum elements. The Department of Homeland Security asked me to address their transition planning team and their professional executives identified as future department career service leaders.

We actually received the first royalties check from the Naval Institute Press for the book as a means to begin to build a self-sustaining funding stream for the Institute as well.

Well those are all good things; some of them are great things.

But, enough history - let's be proud of what we've done, but let's concentrate on where we are going.

These annual addresses are fundamentally designed to offer leadership lessons. This is the fourth one I've been privileged to do. We've talked in the past about "We the Privileged Few" and a "Foundation for Life." Catch phrases I hope you will take away and use them to recall what we were trying to get across from these speeches. We examined the link between COMMITMENT, one of the dimensions from "Architecture" and SACRIFICE, the behavior that is associated with that dimension. We discussed in another speech INTEGRITY, another dimension and EXPECTED DUTY, the behavior that results. Last year we discussed HARD WORK dimension and RESULTS, its corresponding behavior.

The logical extension for tonight would be to select another leadership dimension from the "Architecture", examine it carefully, tell you why it's important to include it and identify the behavior that is expected from the leader who is a 10 on the scale of that dimension. We still have many to select from..in fact we have three down and 31 to go!! As much as I love doing this job each year, something tells me I don't have 31 more years on the job!!!

Given that is an unrealistic probability, I'm going to suggest this: Having used Commitment, Integrity and Hardwork as examples of how to conceptualize and project recognizable behavior on the part of leaders who are good at any of those dimensions, I'm actually going to leave the other 31 to you.

It's also a challenge for Don and the Institute on curriculum development elements, working on the GOLD program with Captain Bill Kelly at the LDC to shape any of those lessons we think would be helpful to the Corps. Tonight I want to do something a little bit different. I want to dig a bit deeper into WHY, it's such an amazing word, WHY it's so important for us to put in whatever work is necessary to acquire the leadership skills here as Cadets of the CGA recognizing they are the specific skills and competencies we need to succeed in our Coast Guard work.

I have always maintained that all of us live in a FORCE FIELD. I ask you to hold onto that phrase as the take- away reminder of our time together tonight. Again, I have always maintained that each of us works inside a Field of Forces.

Our individual capability to absorb or deflect those forces can be seen as our leadership productivity. Each of you can list the forces at work on your personal capability. for example on one hand parents love and affection and on the other hand are hopes and maybe even expectations; teachers offer you forces of respect and encouragement, but they invariably balance those with real grades at the end of the semester; classmates offer you friendship and help, invariably balanced by their competitive instinct to outperform you along the way; your own ambitions and intentions and your wondering about if you really can succeed. Those are all pressures working on us in this Force Field. How we cope with these forces and many others produces our performance in life. Our objective here at the Academy is to try as hard as we can to net you out as positively as we can, so that the citizens of this Nation can be served well by your leadership when it's your turn on watch.

These are trying and critical times for our country. The economic news of the past week adds yet another layer of concern to an already highly stressed environment.

The popularly held impression is that Washington, DC has become a place where decisions of consequence just can't seem to be made. The President's approval rating is 33%. He and his Republican administration seem to be attacked daily by the Democratic Congress.

Their (the Congress) approval rating is 12% which means Americans in general have more respect for used car salesmen than they do for their elected representatives. And I would offer, that isn't a very good thing.

One of the responsibilities of Congress is simply to pass 13 appropriation bills to fund the government each year.

We will be lucky if the 110th Congress can even pass one. The business of government overall, all the branches, is to do the business of and for the people of America.

Last year Washington debated immigration policy for seven months, often in ugly derisive language, and in the end not a single element of the policy was decided.

Where are the John Calhouns? Where are the Daniel Websters? Where are the Lincolns and where are the Lyndon Johnsons! Where are the leaders? And where is the leadership that takes these challenges and forces them to closure decisions?

These are the kind of times to reexamine fundamentals. In the best of times and in the worst of times, what are the fundamentals of and about America that leaders can always depend on? What prompted our Founding Fathers to decide what they decided? And decide they did. The decisions made by our Founding Fathers are the same things that are still there for us as foundation blocks today.

We need to understand and reaffirm our allegiance to every one of those. What should resonate for us today as the list of absolutes; things worth fighting for; .things worth working for everyday things worth dying for?

Three years ago we took great pride in the performance of our Coast Guard during Katrina. We were immensely proud of Admiral Bob Duncan as a leader who performed so well as a tactical commander in New Orleans. We were proud of every helo crew and every boat crew; each with their aircraft commander as the leader or coxswain as a leader responsible for the saving of over 33,500 lives. We were proud of ADM Allen who walked into chaos and restored some semblance of order and performance. Outstanding results, no injuries, no serious CG equipment lost.

This year, we are again proud of the CG crews who performed so magnificently just last weekend during Hurricane Ike's run through Texas and the heartland. But sadly, we also mourn the loss of the crew of CG-6505 .Commander Tom Nelson, LCDR Andy Wischmeier, AST Dave Skimin and AMT Joshua Nichols. These too are Forces in our FORCE FIELD pressure to perform, enormous pride on one hand and enormous sorrow on the other. ADM Allen's All Hands note to the service on the loss of 6505 closed with these two sentences:

"Each person grieves in their own way and I encourage you to keep a weather eye towards the people you live and work with on a daily basis. Thank you for your devotion to the Coast Guard..AND TO EACH OTHER."

At this great moment of sorrow, these too are elements in our FORCE FIELD, responsibility to each other for our service but, note that in this instance I said our force field. Every one of us lives with forces that work on each of us alone and forces that work on us the collective.

So I ask again, what are these fundamentals that inspire leadership behavior? What is it about America that leaders count on as being worth any sacrifice? To what end did the signers of the Declaration of Independence pledge in that last extraordinary phrase... their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor?

What if we tried to make a list of those things? What if I challenged you right now, that the list should perhaps only have three things on it? That, of course, would be my list!!

But since I have this mic, I get to make the list! But, I would be interested in hearing from you as to what you think ought to be on that list. I am more than willing to just pause for a moment to let you think and then hear you shout out. What are those fundamental building blocks that identify America and identifies Americans, and makes them unique. There are only three of them, what are those things that we are willing to die for? [engaged audience to produce the list]

Cadet Response: Freedom, Justice, Equality

What else is in there - in the Constitution, in the Declaration, like Freedom it is extraordinarily important fundamentally to who we are and what we are to people?

Cadet Response: Opportunity, Democracy, Equality

Let me give you a little bit of a hint; if you were all lawyers what would you be telling me?

Cadets: Money, Justice.

You can't even imagine that, I know!

That's a good thing. But if you were, I heard Justice, and if you will, the phrase that captures it the best for me is the RULE OF LAW. Freedom, the Rule of Law and one other.

What must be there actually inspired more by our own founding father Alexander Hamilton than any of those other founding fathers. What was he fundamentally concerned about?

It's a Strong Economy. The economic foundation that allows us to concentrate on the others as well. It gives us the economic vitality of freedom to be willing and able to concentrate on Freedom and the Rule of Law and make them what they can possibly be.

FREEDOM
RULE OF LAW
STRONG ECONOMY

OK, we have our list of three. Now let me offer you two links... first to recall again that these three fundamental notions are what defines America and they are the things we hold most dear.

They too are forces in our field. They are our obligations in our generation to sustain America's Freedom, to sustain the Rule of Law, to sustain a Strong Economy. These are the things we have watched Americans fight and die for through history; not just soldiers and sailors. Americans in jeans and T-shirts,

Americans in marches, Americans in courtrooms and Americans on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Second, I selected three because I really want to come back next year!! Three gets me away from 31 and toward a reasonable expectation of return!

So, tonight I want to talk about FREEDOM.

FREEDOM is such a fundamentally crucial part of what has made America great for 232 years. FREEDOM is why we work so hard to arm you to be the leaders and caretakers for your generation. Let's think a bit more about FREEDOM.

The Random House College edition says FREEDOM is the "state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint." There are 12 other definitions for this concept called Freedom.

My favorite is "FREEDOM

is the right to enjoy all the privileges or special rights of membership in a community." Juxtapose that with the Constitutional fabric or the Bill of Rights. The things we see in there are absolutely what they are talking about.

Let me offer a couple insights to help us reignite what I think must be our passion for FREEDOM. My wife and I traveled with friends to Scotland this summer and as I usually do before such an adventure, I read a bit of Scottish history. I became enamored with the story of William Wallace, the great 13th century Scottish hero who was born the landless second son of an obscure Scottish knight. Wallace lived as an outlaw, yet raised an army of common people and drove an occupying English army out of Scotland. This was an age when men owed allegiance to their feudal lords, who in turn were constantly fighting among themselves to hold onto their property and wealth.

Wallace gave the people a sense of national, rather than feudal loyalty and lit the torch of Scottish independence. For almost a year he was considered the Guardian of Scotland. Isn't that an amazing phrase? The "Guardian of Scotland." But the landed nobles had no taste for this low-born champion of the people and betrayed him to Edward I of England, to save their own skins and estates. He was eventually taken to London, tried in Westminster hall and convicted as a traitor to the crown he had never acknowledged. Then tied to the tails of two horses, he was dragged thru the streets to his place of execution. He was barbarically hanged, drawn, and quartered. This summer I stood right on the spot in the great Hall of Westminster where an engraved tile marks the very spot of Wallace's trial.

You may have seen Hollywood's version of his life in the movie BRAVE HEART. It is said that just before the executioners' sword fell, Wallace was given one last chance to swear allegiance to the King. Rather, at the top of his lungs, he screamed one word that had become his purpose in life. FREEDOM, he screamed, FREEDOM!!!

FREEDOM is the great envelope that holds liberty as well as those elements of the Bill of Rights including freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and the right to bear arms. It contains freedom from things like fear or a release from ties or obligations.

It's about civil liberty, as opposed to subjection to an arbitrary or despotic government. FREEDOM is political or national independence.

The Great Russian novelist, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, died last month. One obituary writer described him as the literary giant of his age in Russia. He was to his time what Pushkin was to the 1820s and what Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were to the second half of the 19th century. He was a writer who most eloquently and effectively spoke truth to power to the Soviet Communist Party. His "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" drew

heavily on his personal experience in the cruel and mindless world of Stalin's prison camps. His "Gulag Archipelago" documented the stories of hundreds of prisoners in those camps so vividly that the world will never forget them. Their Force Fields deeply are beyond our comprehension. The ultimate irony is that Solzhenitsyn deplored the American way of life. He felt we had far too much freedom and not enough responsible restrictions on our lives. So his life and writing suggest perhaps we need an adjective like "responsible" in front of this FREEDOM concept we hold so dear.

George Will, one of our country's premier political journalists, suggests America is the foremost upholder of the idea of liberty. The idea of liberty. Just a moment ago, we included liberty inside the FREEDOM envelope. If so, then understanding the real scope of liberty is very important. Liberty, at root is a respect for the dignity of the individual. This is the essence of America. In the old world of 1776, and in still far too much of the world today, the individual accounted for nothing then and accounts for very little now. America was founded to be the land of the free, where the individual was more important than the state. Life was important, so individuals should be able to pursue happiness - pursue their dreams, their values, and their visions. These are things to fight and die for. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. What a fascinating phrase.

These are things we need a new generation of leaders to internalize, not as academic lessons, but as passionately held commitments. All these forces are the elements of FREEDOM.

Such commitment to be responsible for FREEDOM during your turn on watch can be recognized in the great leaders of every generation. Listen to these words, from President Franklin Roosevelt as he delivered his address to Congress in January of 1941.

"In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression - everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship

God in his own way - everywhere in the world. The third is the freedom from want - everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear..everywhere in the world."

Later that year at Harvard, FDR said further:

"We, too, born to freedom, and believing in freedom, are willing to fight to maintain freedom. We, and all others who believe as deeply as we do, would rather die on our feet, than live on our knees."

These are notions of an American leader before Pearl Harbor. We all know that many Americans in that extraordinary generation actually did die on their feet fighting for FREEDOM.

Are you ready to stand up and be counted on your watch?

FREEDOM! - That great common denominator to the essence of all that is America. George Will wrote a column a while back suggesting that change is the promise of history. No doubt he is absolutely correct. Given that CHANGE is a given, our capability to embrace and directly respond to CHANGE becomes a very important dimension of our leaders. The Coast

Guard has historically been very good at that. There are countless stories of both tactical and strategic agility and adaptability being demonstrated by our service. It's one of our greatest strengths.

ADM Allen is currently leading one of the most dramatic periods of organizational and functional changes in our history. He gets it. He understands the dramatic differences in the Coast Guard's FORCE FIELD and is ensuring the service is properly organized and motivated to keep our service index to America high. What he's not challenging is any of the reasons like FREEDOM we have in place that require such adaptability. They remain as current as the day Jefferson offered the first draft of the Declaration.

FREEDOM
RULE OF LAW
STRONG ECONOMY

Given our military character, let me offer one last piece of context behind why it's so important for us to be focused on cultivate leaders of consequence here. I read a column by Paul Greenberg a while back. I couldn't find it again as I prepared these remarks but I'll not soon forget his thesis. He had overheard a conversation where someone commented about reading a book on the Iraq War. He thought he overheard the person say "seventeen lost in one day. It was the worst loss in American history." Greenberg said he surely misheard the comment but that it prompted him to think about which, between war and peace, was the anomaly and which was normalcy.

The misunderstood comment made him think of Belleau Wood, Normandy beaches, the Battle of the Bulge, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Tet Offensive, Desert Storm and several hundred thousand soldiers and sailors deployed as we speak. To fail to remember such moments causes one to forget the famous memoir from a Union soldier after the slaughter in front of the stone wall at Fredericksburg in 1862: "I never realized before what war was. I never before felt so horribly since I was born. To see man dashed to pieces by shot and torn into shreds by shells during the heat and crash of battle is bad enough, God knows, but to walk alone amongst the slaughtered brave in the 'still small hours of the night' .God grant I may never have to repeat my last night's experience."

The ahistorical people think of peace as the normal state, rather than as a prize won for a precious and often short time by war. We Privileged Few cannot miss the terrible irony here as we prepare the leaders of the future. Leaders, who are adequately conscious of the past, make the best leaders and represent our best chance against the surprise that will otherwise be there. We'd all prefer to be just tourists in history rather than participants. But, when you put your hand up here, that option is taken away.

That is a luxury We Privileged Few simply cannot afford. As military leaders, America counts on us not only to fight the war that comes but to be a part of eliminating the need for war in advance. Such leaders recognize that America's great foundational strengths must be protected everyday. When we forget for awhile, we can or even will suffer those surprises. One day thereafter, when you forget, one very ordinary day planes crash into tall buildings or Zeros come in low and fast over Battleship Row.

On June 13, 2008, just an hour down I95 toward New York, the Coast Guard cut the ribbon on a new Sector Long Island Sound Command building. The name on the side of the building is CAPT Quentin R. Walsh. I encourage you to read the latest edition of the Quarterdeck Log, the newsletter of the Coast

Guard Combat Veterans Association. In that newsletter which covers the ribbon-cutting ceremony in New Haven, there is a reprinted report from CAPT Walsh covering his exploits in Normandy in 1944. I challenge you to read that article asking these kinds of questions along the way:

Does this officer embrace change?
Did this officer represent adaptability at the conflict
Does this officer have a sense of history?

My guess is that we would all answer those questions with a resounding "Yes"! My affirmation to you is that during demanding times, the Quentin Walshs and Bob Duncans step forward to serve.

Whew! It seems I'm always asking you to absorb some pretty heavy material. I've always been convinced we all learn better or a little more easily with a bit of smile on our faces so let me lighten up for a minute. I've recently begun to really enjoy Country

Western music. Unlike most of the trendy material being set to music these days, I can actually understand the words to Country Western songs. Some of them really crack me up! Listen to a couple of these great titles:

If I'd a shot her when I met her, I'd be out'a jail by now!

Or

The beer that made Milwaukee famous is making a fool out'a me

Or

If my nose was full of money honey, I'd blow it all on you!
And just think what would happen to you if you played your
Country Western music backwards..you know, in reverse:
If we did that, at the end of the song: You get your dog back
Your truck ends up fixed You're still married
You're no longer in prison
You're sober, and You can still choose whether or not to buy the gun

How many remember the Country Western song that was played just after the jazz band finished this evening? It's a tune by Toby Keith called American Soldier. I listened to those words pretty carefully.

"You can bet that I stand ready when the wolf growls at the door
Yeah, I'm solid, I'm steady, I'm true down to the core
I will always do my duty No matter what the price
I don't want to die for you But if dying is asked of me
I'll bear that cross with honor CAUSE FREEDOM DON'T COME FREE
When Liberty's in jeopardy I will always do what's right
I'm out here on the front lines Sleep in Peace tonight"

Not a lot of humor there. Those are the words of passionate commitment.

ADM Allen has asked us all, each and every one of us to be passionately committed. He recently issued the Guardian Ethos as a contract the Coast Guard and its members have with the nation and its citizens.

I am America's Maritime Guardian
I serve the citizens of the United States
I will Protect them I will Defend them
I will Save them I am their shield
For them I am Semper Paratus
I live the Coast Guard Core Values
I am a Guardian

In his remarks at the service honoring the crew of 6505, he suggested that the crew's voices had been terminated so early in life and had been taken away from us far too soon. But, if they had been there, he suggested, they would have said together, "We protected you, we defended you, we saved you, we were your Guardians."

We've covered a lot of ground tonight. How do we sum all those things up? What is it we really expect of you?

We want to remind you to count yourselves among the PRIVILEGED FEW and to internalize the responsibility that comes along with that privilege. We want to remind you that your four years here provide a very solid FOUNDATION FOR LIFE but only if you recognize it now and optimize that time. And, we want you to think about the FORCE FIELD concept I introduced tonight and internalize the importance of passionate commitment to what makes America so very special,...

FREEDOM being our FORCE of choice discussed tonight. Why do we build leaders at this Coast Guard Academy? Because there is a perpetual handoff in May each year to the newest infusion of officers in our Coast Guard who will protect and sustain these things, like Freedom, that Americans hold most dear.

Thank you for your attention, good luck as you start another year and GO BEARS!

Guard, Vets Pay Tribute to WW II Hero Munro

Members from Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, the U.S.S. Spencer Association, and local veterans groups saluted Signalman First Class Douglas Munro on the 66th anniversary of his heroic actions during a dedication and remembrance ceremony Saturday, Sept. 27, in the training center's gymnasium.

The Coast Guard Cutter Spencer's mast was permanently displayed on the training center's parade grounds Sept. 10, and dedicated at the ceremony.

The Spencer served the nation for more than 37 years and when decommissioned in 1974, the Spencer was the most decorated cutter in the Coast Guard's fleet.

Payment of Retroactive CRDP to 50 - 90% Disabled Vets

From: RADM Fred Ames USCG RET

Members of the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council: This is a revised text of my CG Day email. Added are Summary and Expectations paragraphs as well as a rewording of the Background paragraph in another attempt to minimize the potential for possible misunderstandings or misperceptions. Apologize for any inconvenience (just shows you how complex this all is!). New email follows:

I've recently seen a number of emails between veterans and PSC concerning the process and timing of retroactive Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) for 50 - 90% disabled veterans. Although I knew about the issue, frankly I wasn't up to speed on the specifics as to where we are in the process. Hence, I corresponded with PSC and CGHQ to understand the issues to see if I can address the concerns of our veterans.

Summary. CRDP is not simple. It is surprisingly complicated. It creates the appearance that retroactive CRDP is pending from the Coast Guard. In general, retroactive disability compensation is pending from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is in routing for final approval so the two agencies can share private information reliably and with security. Each retroactive case requires individual research and calculation—sometimes very intricate calculations.

Background. CRDP began as a simple concept: When the VA pays disability compensation to a retiree; there should be no reduction in military retired pay. By law, VA disability compensation “offsets” retired pay, dollar for dollar. The monetary advantage to the veteran is that the VA portion is not taxable. However, the final version of CRDP was much more complicated. Congress chose to retain the offset that has long been a part of the law. They established CRDP as a new tool to restore what was taken by the offset. In other words, CRDP is an offset to an offset. Beginning in January 2004, CRDP increased the monthly payment to retirees with at least 20 years of active service (or the Reserve equivalent), if their VA disability rating was 50% or higher.

Eventually CRDP will fully offset the reduction in retired pay but initially the increase was only partial due to ten-year phase-in period. Each year CRDP increases until by the end of 2013 it will match the monthly offset. CRDP for retirees with a quantitative rating of 100% has been at the full level since January 2005. Retirees with a qualitative rating of “total” due to Individual Unemployability (IU) were still subjected to the phase-in but Congress recently ordered full CRDP for them, too, with payments to begin in October 2008 (but retroactive to 2005). Due to complexities such as these, along with others such as Chapter 61 disability retirements and division of retired pay with former spouses, considerable data exchange between VA and the Personnel Services Center (PSC) is required, with appropriate data security and accounting accuracy.

The Process -- General. This is an inter-agency process with two sources of pay decisions – one from the CG and one from the VA. Hence there are multiple steps in this process, some within the CG's control and others beyond our control. As with most anything to do with military compensation, which I learned a long time ago, nothing is easy in working those issues, especially when related to "looking back" to resolve retroactive pay issues. Determining the amount due to about 3000 veterans is manually time consuming...complex accounts may involve multiple VA rating adjustments, ex-spouse pay entitlements, and other issues that require in-depth record searches.

The Process – Coast Guard. The CG (PSC in particular) must thoroughly review each veteran's pay record with a rating of between 50% and 90% (about 3000) from 2004 on to create a record of what both the CG and VA paid and what the CG and VA should have paid. It is a month-by-month review that looks for every change that may have occurred. The difference, if any, would be what is owed to the member. PSC is targeting all record reviews for completion by October; they have 2 full-time people assigned and will shortly be ramping up to a team of 5 and using overtime as necessary. This month they will begin paying the CG's portion of the retroactive compensation as they complete the review of each individual's record.

The Process – CG to VA. Next, the pay record information is to be sent to the VA for their review and subsequent payment of what may be owed to the member by the VA. There has been considerable correspondence/discussion about the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) being worked between the CG and VA to facilitate sending the CG's record review results to the VA for their action. PSC will be sending the pay analysis to the VA in the format specified by the VA according to the procedures of an MOA between the CG and the VA. The MOA is a complex process in itself. This MOA is a wholesale replacement for the current MOU that is 33 years old. It is a comprehensive document that addresses much more than CRDP. Also, the CG-VA MOA is largely the same but not precisely the same as the DoD-VA MOA. It is currently in process for approval at the VA. CGHQ is keeping close tabs on its progress. The MOA is critical as it establishes the process of how the information will be provided to the VA so they can take the next step to compare their numbers and pay any difference. Although we certainly cannot predict how long it will take to get the final VA signature, we think it's more on the order of weeks at this point, barring any technical issues. However, PSC indicates they will begin to send the VA the pay record reviews in "batches" as they are completed with the intent that the VA should be able to begin to do their part while the MOA is still being finalized. PSC will make the MOA accessible via their website for those who desire to look at it once it is signed.

The Process – VA. The VA process to determine and make payments involves all 54 VA Regional Offices (VARO). On the plus side, those 54 VAROs have virtually finished processing their backlog from DoD so our retirees' cases should not be delayed by DoD cases. Also, the VAROs should be fairly good at the process by now. Once it gets to that point, our veterans will already have received any CG retroactive pay that might have been pending. Issues with VA action or inaction at that point will need to be addressed directly with the VA.

Expectations. Many people refer to this as "retroactive CRDP." On the whole there is no such thing. In hundreds of CRDP cases that have been reviewed by PSC, the Coast Guard did not owe any pay to a retiree. The money that is pending, that is retroactive, will be disability compensation paid by VA. Think of it as "retroactive disability compensation." Retirees with a VA rating of "IU" are an exception—they will see retroactive CRDP in October because of a change in law this year.

I know we all would like to have had this already resolved. My perspective is that the CG is fully committed to ensuring all veterans receive all back pay due to them in the most expeditious manner and is moving forward with earnest and due diligence. Hopefully this helps...thanks for listening. Please give this wide dissemination. Regards, F.L. Ames

RADM Fred L. Ames, USCG (Ret.) and MCPOCG Vince Patton, USCG (Ret.)
Co-Chairs of the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council

USCG Commissions First National Security Cutter

The Coast Guard has marked its 218th birthday by commissioning the first National Security Cutter,

"I know firsthand that the ship we commission today will be the most capable ship that the Coast Guard has ever sailed," said Rep. Elijah Cummings from Maryland's seventh district and Chairman of the House Coast Guard subcommittee. "Hopefully our children will look back on this day of Aug. 4, 2008 and say that under their watch, they created a great ship, and that ship is going out to defend our way of life, guard our borders, interdict drugs and make sure our nation is safe."

Meryl Chertoff, the ship's sponsor and wife of the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, ordered the men and women of the Bertholf crew to "man our ship and bring her to life." The crew responded with an "aye aye ma'am" and double-timed it through the 2,500 spectators on Coast Guard Island in Alameda, Calif.

"We are in an era of a persistent conflict, with hazards and threats to be dealt with," said U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen. "This ship represents a remarkable step forward, not only in capability and capacity, but also in the competency of this crew. Today, the crew will bring this ship to life and Bertholf will be up to the challenges of the 21st century."

U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Patrick H. Stadt, of Ft. Belvoir, Va., assumed command as commanding officer of Bertholf. The ship will be homeported in Alameda.

Bertholf is named to honor Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf, the first commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. The ship is 418 feet long, with a 54-foot beam. Powered by a twin-screw combined diesel and gas turbine power propulsion plant, the NSC is designed to travel at 28 knots maximum speed.

USCG LCDR Anthony Russell Wins Chairman of Joint Chiefs' Strategic Essay Competition

The purpose of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Strategic Essay Competition is to stimulate strategic thinking, promote well written research, and contribute to a broader security debate among professionals. NDU Press manages the competition in three phases, with assistance from coordinators and faculty judges representing each participating school. First, the JPME schools conduct internal competitions and submit their best essays to NDU Press. Second, judges evaluate nominated essays from other schools at their home station via the Internet. Third, judges travel to NDU for the final round conference to determine winners in each category.

Last year's contest saw a significant percent increase in the number of essays judged, making this year's event among the most competitive in its history. The nominated essays represented a wide spectrum of security education research topics, and the joint, interagency, and international spread of the authors was tremendous.

The 2008 winners:

1st Place, Strategic Research Paper

LCDR Anthony L. Russell, USCG

Carpe DIEM: Seizing the Opportunity in the Arctic with a Comprehensive U.S. Strategy (Marine Corps Command and Staff College)

1st Place, Strategy Article

Maj Daniel T. Canfield, USMC

The Russian Chechen Wars: Three Ominous and Exceedingly Relevant Lessons for Contemporary and Future U.S. Defense Planners (Marine Corps Command and Staff College)

Winning essays will be published by NDU Press in the 4th quarter issue (October 1, 2009) of Joint Force Quarterly, the Chairman's professional military, interagency, and security studies journal. Authors of winning essays will be recognized by the Chairman and awarded prizes donated by the NDU Foundation. If conditions permit, winners may meet with the Chairman for personal congratulations in an awards ceremony. All papers entered in each category will be evaluated for future publication in JFQ. This is a joint, interagency, and international security strategy writing contest; papers must meet rigorous academic standards....

Coast Guard Officer Named Recipient of American Legion Award

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jim Abels, 28, has been named the 2008 recipient of the American Legion Spirit of Service Award.

He is assigned to the Coast Guard Cutter Forward, and is a native of Harrisburg, Pa.

Abels co-founded the Bluejackets, a World War II maritime living history group. He also has volunteered in national state parks, historic sites, museums and functions for veterans across the country.

The award recognizes one member from each military service for volunteer service, according to the release.

Petty Officer Abram Heller receives Distinguished Flying Cross

A Coast Guardsman, who helped rescue fishermen from the Alaska Ranger this past Easter, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. PO Heller was honored Aug. 14, at the Coast Guard foundation awards dinner.

Petty Officer Abram Heller ranks among thousands in the Coast Guard who live the motto "Semper Paratus" which translates as "always ready".

The Distinguished Flying Cross is America's oldest military aviation award. It's given to a select few who show "heroism, and extraordinary achievement." "It's an incredible honor," said Heller. Heller performed his notable heroic act on a frigid Easter morning.

As a rescue swimmer he arrived on scene to find blinking emergency strobes as far as the eye could see. Each ship crew member was clinging to life rafts and others to life itself. Over the next hour he worked to keep victims conscious while waiting for the next chopper to arrive, while risking severe hypothermia. In the end he saved eight people. "Everybody out there really did a spectacular job that morning," said Heller. " Heller is now based in Hawaii.

Coastie the Robot, Meet the Coast Guard's Best Electronic Marketer

Coastie is 5-years-old with a voice that can go deep and scary or shrill like Alvin the chipmunk. He squirts water at his new friends and hums Semper Paratus at the flick of a control.

Coastie the Safety Boat has been visiting area school children and events in the southern part of the Coast Guard's Fifth District for about eight years. The one Dave Thomas controls is Coastie 12. About three weeks ago he received Coastie 45, which will be placed with an operator somewhere in his part of the Fifth District. Thomas, 77, a Camden resident, is the Coastie program manager for the Fifth District's southern region. He's also a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary in that region. About eight years ago, he and the director of the national Coast Guard Auxiliary were at a conference where they saw one of the few Coastie robots that had been created. The director's granddaughter was delighted, so Thomas began the process to get the area its first promotional robot. Coastie runs at about \$9,000 and all four under Thomas' command were purchased with Coast Guard fallout funds. Coastie is especially useful with 5- and 6-year olds, Thomas said. They want to hug Coastie, want to get squirted - though Coastie's stream is more for the surprise factor - and tell him stories. Thomas can respond to them from afar with a small microphone at the front of the boat and will transport Coastie over surfaces that don't include gravel and sand. The robot is powered by a motorcycle battery. Coastie, who can appear ticklish, wink and twirl, has regulation lights a normal Coast Guard craft would have. He greets kids with a modulated voice with words provided by Thomas. "Hi, my name's Coastie, and I'm only five years old," Coastie will say. "And today's my birthday. You want to sing happy birthday to me?" "Most of the time they will," Thomas adds. " ... The small children - 3 years old, 4 years old - may get nervous because it's as big as they are." Coastie has a fog-horn sound and eight marches, including his own theme song, which comes from an Mp3 player inside him. His innards also include a water pump and pitch changer, basically a guitar pedal, that can make Coastie change his voice from a sweet, soft pitch to a high-pitched Alvin or a deep tugboat or battleship tone, Thomas said. And then Thomas will get into the heavy stuff and ask the children if they know how to swim and if they know what they need to always wear on a boat. While the answer is sometimes a bathing suit, the correct one is life jacket. Ultimately, Coastie's mission is the same as one of the Coast Guard's prime missions: boating safety. While the approximately waist-high machines promote the Coast Guard and the auxiliary, they are also eye-catching ways of communicating water safety to young children. "It's what we call preventative SAR," he said. "We try to prevent a search and rescue mission." In 1997, the first Coastie was born, after Mike Robeano, a Coast Guard auxiliary member in Ohio, saw a police car robot at a safety day, according to Coastie's Web site. He

tracked down the robot's producer, Robotronics, and the boat was created. Thomas said the paint scheme for Coastie is copyrighted and that now 45 exist, the most recent one being currently in his possession. In the time he's operated Coastie, Thomas says it has been mostly trustworthy. It hasn't had major crises but sometimes it loses a voice channel or radio frequency interference will lead it to plot a course all its own. "We've never canceled a mission because it hasn't worked," he said. He already has "missions" scheduled for Coastie into 2009 and said eight missions a month is the normal pace. The other two under Thomas' command, but controlled by other operators, are in Alexandria, Va., and Yorktown, Va. The new 45 has already attended two events, including Elizabeth City's National Night Out earlier this month. When Coastie goes out, he has official orders from the Coast Guard base and is also stored there for insurance purposes. Thomas, who retired from the U.S. Air Force about 26 years ago, said he takes Coastie out for the fun of it and his interaction with children. "Oh gosh, yes, it's a heck of a lot of fun," he said. He said the children seem to take in the safety information they receive because it's delivered so interactively. At some schools the pair visits they've been called back every year. The schools they have visited include those in Camden, Kitty Hawk and Suffolk, Va. But so far they haven't visited any in Elizabeth City, he said. He and Coastie venture as far as Cape Hatteras, Raleigh-Durham and Jacksonville, N.C. Thomas does seem to enjoy himself using riffs such as, "Hi, will you be my girlfriend? I need a girlfriend. I used to have one, but she was a little dinghy." For more information on the Coastie program, go to Coastie's Web site at <http://www.coastie.auxpa.org>

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