

## U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 17, Anacortes, WA

# Island Time

**Calendar:**

- Flotilla 17 Meeting 1800 Tuesday, 17 November, Flounder Bay Restaurant, Anacortes. **Election of Officers.**
- Flotilla Procedures Academy 0800-1200 Saturday, 21 November, Anacortes Senior Center.
- Division 1 Change of Watch ceremony, Sunday, 6 December, Cranberry Tree Restaurant, Mount Vernon.
- Flotilla 17 Staff Meeting 0900 Monday, 7 December, Anacortes Bowling Alley.
- Flotilla 17 Christmas Party, Saturday, 12 December, home of John and Lee Bermingham, Anacortes. (Note: No membership meeting in December.)

## Busy Times Ahead for C.G. in Puget Sound Area

From ramping up security ahead of the Vancouver Winter Olympics to reconfiguring the Coast Guard's organization in Puget Sound, the next 12 months promise to be busy ones for both active duty and Auxiliary members, according to the CAPT Suzanne Engelbert, Commander of Coast Guard Sector Seattle.

CAPT Engelbert took time out of a jam-packed schedule to visit with Auxiliarists at the 22 October Division 1 meeting in Mount Vernon. Accompanying her was CDR Andre Billeaudeau, D13 Director of Auxiliary, and Master Chief Petty Officer Jim Savinski, D13 small boat manager.

The Coast Guard, along with other Federal law enforcement agencies, will be heavily involved in security surrounding the Winter Olympics. Missions will involve both assisting Canadian authorities in identifying individuals who may try to cross into Canada



CAPT Suzanne Engelbert, Commander, Sector Seattle,

from Washington in order to engage in illegal, disruptive or destructive activity aimed at

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## Coast Guard Pulls Plug on "Sea Ark" Program



Photo by Dave Martens

The "Sea Ark" on patrol at the Anacortes Workboat Races 18 July.

One major reason for the visit by Sector Seattle Commander Suzanne Engelbert to last month's Division 1 meeting (see above) was to explain the Coast Guard's abrupt cancellation, also last month, of the "Sea Ark" program.

"Sea Ark" is the nickname given a Coast Guard-owned boat that, about four years ago, was transferred to Bellingham for use by the Auxiliary and more accurately designated Auxiliary Facility 245564. (Sea Ark was the name of its manufacturer.) The boat was moored at Station Bellingham and crewed by Auxiliarists from flotillas within Division 1, including Flotilla 17.

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*CAPT Engelbert, Continued from page 1*

the Olympics, and in guarding against attempts to illegally enter the U.S. from Canada as part of the extremely heavy cross-border traffic that is expected.

“I do foresee there will be a role for the Auxiliary in these operations,” CAPT Engelbert said. One possibility is patrols of recreational boating facilities such as marinas, fuel docks and launch ramps — mostly by land — “to see who’s coming and going.” There might also be some Auxiliary on-the-water patrols.

*Organizational Change to Sector Puget Sound*

The much-discussed move to Sector Puget Sound from the current Sector Seattle organization could be accomplished by the end of next June. The most visible change would be to do away with the Group Port Angeles organizational structure.

Currently, five Auxiliary flotillas, including Flotilla 17, come under operational control of Group Port Angeles rather than reporting to Sector Seattle as do most flotillas in the region. Flotilla 17’s operational chain of control goes through Station Bellingham, which in turn reports to Group Port Angeles. Under the Sector Puget Sound organization small-boat stations such as Bellingham currently under Group Port Angeles would report director to Sector headquarters at Pier 36.

The most noticeable affects would be in the Operations area. Currently, the operations budget, standard operating procedures and other guidelines that affect surface patrols for Flotillas 17, 11 (Bellingham) 19 (Blaine) and two Division 4 flotillas on the Olympic Peninsula are set by Group Port Angeles. One consequence is that we must apply for orders to two different commands according to whether we are operating in the Port Angeles or Seattle areas of responsibility. There also are differences in patrol priorities and reporting procedures.

*New Inspection Programs*

A new program that CAPT Engelbert would like to establish is a regular audit of smaller passenger carrying vessels, such as charter boats, to assure that they have in place drug testing procedures for on-water employees. She envisions a role for the Auxiliary.

“I am infusing the intense desire for uninspected passenger vessels (six passengers or less) to have a visit, she said. “We hae a very large community of them and they need to have a little oversight.”

Finally, the Sector Commander has begun a pilot program in Neah Bay to have every commercial fishing vessel receive a Vessel Safety Check, and to clean up derelict fishing vessels. If, as she hopes, these programs are rolled out throughout the region, they would certainly present opportunities for Auxiliarists to be involved.

*Promotion for Harry Ota*



Also at last month’s Division meeting, Flotilla 17’s Harry Ota (FSO-AUG), was elected Division Vice Commander. Above, CAPT Engelbert attaches Harry’s new shoulder board while Auxiliarists Joe McClain, D13 DDC-Resonse, and Peter Raiswell, D13 Chief of Staff, look on.

**Leave Those Rings at Home**

On 12 November a new policy was announced for Coast Guard District 13 prohibiting Active Duty, Reserve and Auxiliary members from wearing rings (including wedding bands) while wearing the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU).

The announcement came from CAPT Scott Bornemann, Chief of the Prevention Division. It was forwarded by Director of Auxiliary CDR Andre Billeaudeau who quipped: “Wow — News to share with all — to include spouses!!!!”

*"Sea Ark" continued from page 1*

Qualifying for the program involved first earning Auxiliary boat crew qualification and then meeting additional physical fitness and boat crew personnel qualification standards that were closer to those required of active duty personnel. The "Sea Ark" conducted customary Auxiliary marine observation patrols as well as training evolutions with active duty surface and air units and special missions such as transporting Aids to Navigation maintenance teams. It was often deployed three or four times a week.

CDR Andre Billeaudeau, D13 Director of Auxiliary, said the Sea Ark program was providing the Coast Guard "a lot of bang for the buck (with) good, worthwhile missions."

The problem was that the entire program (the only such one in D13) was apparently done in violation of Coast Guard regulations from the very start.

According to Master Chief Petty Officer Jim Savinsky, small boat manager for D13, when the vessel was transferred to Bellingham it was never officially designated an Auxiliary boat, as regulations require. Since that time its operating and maintenance budgets have been funded by a kind of slush fund with money borrowed from other budgets.

The situation came to a head recently, Master Chief Savinsky explained, because D13 is currently working to comply with Coast Guard-wide policy to discontinue the use of "non-standard" boats, which includes the "Sea Ark." After it popped up on the



Master Chief Petty Officer Jim Savinsky at the Division 1 meeting 22 October.

radar screen it didn't take long to discover that the boat had been operating in violation of policy all along.

In all likelihood the "Sea Ark" will be declared surplus by the Coast Guard and offered to other Federal, state and local agencies, including the Auxiliary. So, there is a chance it could come back to Division 1, but owned by the Auxiliary. However, there are many agencies in line ahead of us.

CAPT Engelbert declared her support for obtaining the "Sea Ark" or another suitable vessel, but warned that the Auxiliary would have to have a good plan to "maintain, sustain and train it."

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## 26 Students Complete BS&S Class in Anacortes

A total of 26 students received certificates for successfully completing the Boating Skills and Seamanship course taught by Flotilla 17 members at the Anacortes Senior Center. The course, which spanned a total of 13 evening sessions, began on 21 September.

Greg Devault, FSO-PE, explained that a new approach was used in this course, enabling students to take exams covering core material after just eight sessions. Those wanting to learn more could then continue on with five “bonus” classes, which some 16 students did.

“I think it worked out well,” Greg said, “and it’s something we should consider repeating.”

The flotilla’s next major public education offering is scheduled to be the “Weekend Navigator” course focusing heavily on electronic navigation, which we will be teaching for the first time.



Flotilla 17 member Lin Folsom teaches class on nautical charts and course plotting during the recent Boating Skills and Seamanship course.

## Keeping Up....



At the 20 October Flotilla 17 membership meeting Gib Moore (above, left) was recognized for challenging and passing the Basic Skills and Seamanship test. Completion of a BS&S course or equivalent is required for new members to become Basically Qualified (BQ). John Slagboom, FSO-FUN and Flotilla 17’s senior member (above, center), received his second Sustained Operational Service award. Harry Ota, FSO-AUG (above, right being congratulated by Jim Engelson, FC), received certifications as Instructor, for passing the Navigation Rules 70 examination and as PWC Operator. Dave Martens, FSO-PA and Sherri McIntosh, SO-SR, who were not present, were awarded Crew certifications and Dave also was awarded his Vessel Examiner certification.