

11 North- wind

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
District 11, Northern Region

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Apr – Jun 2021

VADM Fagan
joins the crew of
OpFac Servant

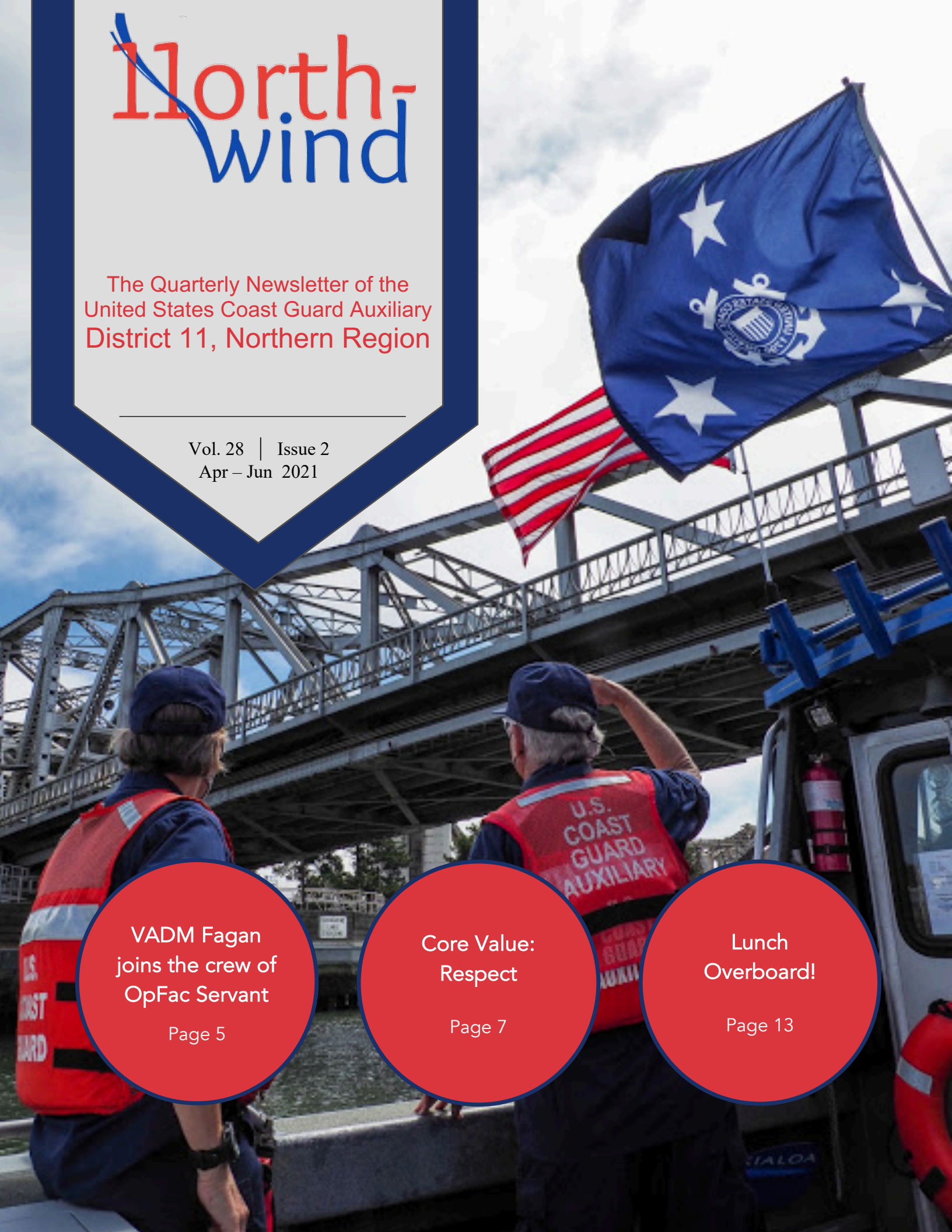
Page 5

Core Value:
Respect

Page 7

Lunch
Overboard!

Page 13



In this Issue:

From the District Commodore.....	- 3 -
From the Gold Side.....	- 4 -
VADM Fagan Supports AUX Mission	- 5 -
Spotlight Question	- 6 -
Coast Guard Core Values: Respect	- 7 -
Lake Sonoma Patrol	- 8 -
Safety Message T-shirts	- 9 -
Auxiliary Chaplain Support	- 10 -
Those Who Have <i>Crosted the Bar</i>	- 11 -
The Loan of the <i>Melroy</i>	- 12 -
Lunch Overboard!	- 13 -
Wear a Life Jacket	- 14 -

Contributors to this Issue: Terry Blanchard, CAPT Marie Byrd, Vicky Hudson, Ron Kelley, COMO Dean McFarren, COMO Wally Smith, Wil Sumner, Tiffany Townsend, and Greg Schaefer

Photos herein are provided by the author, by the subject, or by Roger Bazeley, or are in the public domain or free to use.

Cover Photo: See our Feature Article on (then) VADM Linda Fagan joining the crew of the *OpFac Servant* – page 5.

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From the Editor:

I went for a walk this afternoon, farther than I've walked in sixteen months. And the changes were amazing. Buildings have been torn down. New buildings have been built. Some people have moved away. Some people have been born.

Sixteen months.

Of course, the neighborhood isn't the only thing that's changed. I've changed. The world has. Maybe you have. Some of these changes we might like; others we might not be so fond of.

I wonder if it's sometimes helpful to think about things that are constant. Depending on your worldview and several other things, you might be able to think of things that have remained the same – some of these constants we might like; others we might not be so fond of.

What has the Auxiliary been doing over the last 16 months? In short, contributing to the safety of our waterways and the people who use them. For some of us, that's been from in front of a computer screen, on a phone, or at a desk. For others, it's been aboard a boat, in a plane, or in the marina. For all of us, I imagine it's been a constant in one way or another.

In this issue of *Northwind*, you'll read about some of the work we have been doing, the creative ways we've been doing it, and the joy of service. Enjoy the glimpses into what some of us have been doing, and please consider sharing your stories with the District through this publication.

Peace,

Gregory O. Schaefer, *NORTHWIND* editor
Flotilla 46, Redwood City
DSO-PB, FSO-MS, D-AD (Awards),
ACS Chaplain, Sector San Francisco



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From the District Commodore

Ahoy, D11N Shipmates! It is hard to believe we are already half-way through 2021 as we continue making progress toward returning to normal as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

What's happened in past three months? Like the first three months of the year, these past three have been incredibly busy. On 26 April, we entered into Phase III of the D11 Coast Guard Reconstitution Plan, which allowed us to return to just about all of our original pre-COVID mission set, eliminated COVID bubbles, and authorized meeting in groups. It makes me smile that we can once again meet for monthly meetings and enjoy all four cornerstones of the Auxiliary. Speaking of smiling, it was an honor to hold our first Virtual District Awards Ceremony, recognizing those who won District Program or District Leadership awards, or achieved AUXOP status or new qualifications, in 2019-20. (These awards normally would have been given at 2020-21 DTRAIN events, which were cancelled due to COVID-19.) In attendance were 65 members!

Phase III couldn't have come at a better time as we prepared for our first premier event of the year, National Safe Boating Week (NSBW). With just three weeks to pivot from solely virtual events, our District rallied and put on a multitude of in-person events starting with "Wear Your Lifejacket to Work Day" on 21 May. Just about every Division set up Public Affairs booths to get information to the public, some members performed vessel and paddlecraft safety checks, and many got out on the water for patrols. In addition to the in-person events, we held virtual PE classes, accepted proclamations from various cities and counties, educated high school students on boating safety and the USCG Academy AIM program, and visited service clubs virtually. I look at NSBW 2021 as a resounding success that shows our creativity and resiliency. Bravo Zulu to all who took part in NSBW events.

What is happening now? As we move into the heart of boating season, we are seeing the effects of the continued drought in our AOR, leaving most of the lakes and inland waterways with much-lower-than-normal water levels. This presents a special challenge as boaters, relieved of COVID restrictions, flock to places where they can relax and enjoy

themselves. With water levels getting lower, snags and other obstructions normally safely covered, become dangerous obstacles. We must find opportunities to be present at marinas and boat ramps to educate the boating public (via our PE, VE, PA, and PV programs) of this new threat. We should also be factoring this new variable into pre-mission briefings and risk ranking. Safety should always be our mantra.



Commodore Dean McFarren

It is great seeing members reengaging and submitting Requests for Assignment (ROA) from all over our AOR for all types of activities. Please remember, for your ROA to be approved, you must have an Auxiliary High Risk Assessment Form on file with DIRAUX and be current in Core Training (CT) and the appropriate Risk Management class(es). Both the CT and Initial Risk Management classes are available anytime on AUXLMS, and TCT Refresher classes are offered almost weekly as part of our virtual training program. See the District Training calendar or the monthly email from our DSO-MT, Ann Zocchi, for dates and details.

Our active-duty Coast Guard partners are also reassessing COVID restrictions and are now allowing Auxiliarists back on bases. This is great news for Watchstanders and those supporting other programs. Coast Guard Island is now fully open, including the pool, galley, and gym. If you have questions about access to a particular base/unit, reach out to the Auxiliary Unit Coordinator for that location.

What is coming up? As we move into the third quarter of the year many Divisions have scheduled OPTREXes to provide members with opportunities to requalify or initially qualify as Coxswain or Boat Crew. Fortunately for us, BSX provided guidance that allowed qualifications to "push forward" one year due to the pandemic. If you were scheduled to requalify in 2020, you are now required to requalify in 2021 to stay current. Please take a look at the District Calendar on the D11N webpage for a listing of locations and dates.

The Auxiliary National Convention (NACON) is scheduled for mid-August in Orlando, FL. This is exciting as it is the first time National Board Members, Directorate Chiefs, and District personnel have gotten together in-person since January of 2020. Several of our District Staff Officers or designates will be going to learn about what is new in Marine Safety, Emergency Management, International Relations, Vessel Examinations, and Public Education, so look for new information from our District program leads going forward.

Lastly, we have scheduled our first in-person PCA fair in a year and a half, this coming September 18th and 19th at Coast Guard Island. I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone and enjoying the great classes we're in the process of scheduling. The September District Board and Staff meeting and our Annual Auxiliary Memorial will also be that weekend. PCA President Jim Losi and PCA Fair Coordinator Michelle Thompson will be sending out more information including registration options and class offerings in the coming weeks. This is a great opportunity to reunite with old friends, make new ones, and increase your knowledge base. So please save the dates and join us for our fall PCA fair.

Overall, we continue to sail towards normalcy and reengage in Auxiliary activities. Phase III has allowed us to resume doing what we're passionate about, but we must remember that COVID-19 has not gone away...yet. It is still incumbent upon all of us to ensure we take appropriate safety precautions to safeguard ourselves, our fellow Auxiliarists, and the general public.

Before closing, I would like to take a moment to remember two of our Auxiliary family that passed over the bar in the past three months. Both were dedicated Auxiliarists that made lasting contributions to our District: James Dragon (FL 17, Pt. Bonita) and Peter Todebush (FL 12-91, San Ramon Valley). Fair winds and following seas.

I look forward to seeing everyone hopefully soon. Please remain safe and *Semper Paratus*.

V/R

COMO Dean McFarren, DCO

From the Gold Side

To our Sector San Francisco Auxiliary family, it has been my greatest pleasure to serve amongst you all for the past three years as Deputy Commander and Commander of Sector San Francisco.



Captain Marie Byrd

My tour at Sector has come to an end, and this summer my family and I will be moving to Jacksonville Beach, FL. I could not have wished for a more exciting, high performing and satisfying last tour to close out my Coast Guard career.

With each passing year, I am astounded by the missions our Auxiliary forces complete. From the everyday assistance performed by water patrols and helo operations, to Station watchstanding and chef duties, the Auxiliary has proven time and time again to be a significant force multiplier for the USCG.

The California wildfire season and COVID-19 pandemic posed many obstacles in our path, but it is through your dedication and resiliency that our Sector remained mission ready. Each and every one of you showcased outstanding support during the COVID-19 reconstitution phases which led to successful execution of Opening Day/Blessing of the Fleet, National Safe Boating Week, tax assistance, educational services, and ICS training. Our Prevention Department thrives due to your unwavering efforts involved with UPV exams, CFV exams, and dispatch assistance. Our Response Department relies heavily on the many patrols, SAR cases, derelict vessel searches, and kiteboard surfer patrols which our Auxiliary facilities conduct. Without you, our Auxiliary force, we would not be the successful Sector we are today.

Lastly, I would like to personally thank Sue Fry for her work as the Sector San Francisco Auxiliary Sector Coordinator to plan joint missions with our Auxiliary and Active Duty personnel. I will miss working alongside such leaders, and I know, even on the East Coast, I will hear of the many accomplishments completed by the Flotillas in Sector San Francisco's AOR.

Thank you for your devoted Service to the USCG and our Nation!

Ed.'s Note: CAPT Byrd assumed command of Sector San Francisco in March 2019, which entailed being Sector Commander, Captain of the Port, Federal On-Scene Coordinator, Officer in Charge of Marine Inspections, Federal Maritime Security Coordinator, and Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator. She was relieved by CAPT Taylor Q. Lam, entering retirement, on 24 June.

VADM Fagan Supports AUX Mission by Tiffany Townsend

Vice Admiral Linda Fagan Joins Aux OpFac Servant on ATON Mission

On a sunny day on the San Francisco Bay, a group of Auxiliarists had the distinct honor of supporting Team Coast Guard with a special crew member in attendance. The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Operational Facility *Servant* welcomed Vice Admiral Linda Fagan to participate in an aids to navigation verification patrol, assessing bridges in the Oakland Estuary on Saturday, May 1, 2021.



The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Operational Facility Servant welcomes U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Fagan to participate in an bridge verification patrol on the San Francisco Bay.

The goals of the day were operational training and mission excellence, with a focus on service to the public and Coast Guard active duty stations. This mission was accomplished with a focus on HOPE:

- Health: Maintenance of health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Opportunity: Continual training in order to exceptionally serve
- Perspective: Gratitude for being able to return to duty during the Phase III Rollout
- Expectations: Continual improvement of skills and teamwork through service

"Once the [excitement] of having her aboard wears off a bit," says Coxswain Jim Losi, "she has a way about her where she simply fits in as just another crew member making for a very enjoyable time." Highly interested in the missions she joins, she asks engaging questions and offers patrol advice.

Losi met Vice Admiral Fagan six years ago while serving on the Coast Guard Academy Board of Trustees. "As I was an Auxiliary member and delegate to the Board of Trustees," Losi relates,

"VADM Fagan would often ask me questions about the Auxiliary as she was a true advocate of the Auxiliary and its mission. As we got to know one another, she asked if she could join an Auxiliary patrol..." That was the start of an annual tradition of Admiral Fagan joining an Auxiliary patrol.

Coxswain James Losi conducts a pre-underway briefing with U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Fagan prior to departure for a bridge verification patrol in the Oakland Estuary.

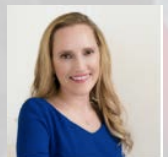


Photos: Tiffany Townsend

As Pacific Area Commander, VADM Fagan serves as operational commander for all U.S. Coast Guard missions from the Rocky Mountains to the East Coast of Africa. According to her biography, she has served on all seven continents, from the Antarctic to Africa, Tokyo to Geneva, and in many ports along the way, during her 36 years of service. As the officer with the longest record in the marine safety field, she is the Coast Guard's first-ever Gold Ancient Trident.

Admiral Fagan is President Biden's nominee for Vice Commandant, making her the first woman to achieve a four-star rank in the Coast Guard. During the Coast Guard Academy's 140th Commencement Exercises on May 19, President Biden remarked, "We need to see more women at the highest levels of command. We have to make sure that women have the chance to succeed and thrive through their careers... Women hold up half the world."

VADM Fagan's Biography: <https://bit.ly/2RWgw9i>
 Additional Photos: <https://bit.ly/2RPzaQk>



Tiffany Townsend is our district's Deputy DSO-PB and Flotilla Vice Commander of Flotilla 12, Sausalito-Tiburon.

Spotlight Question

by Greg Schaefer

This page encourages you to explore Auxiliary websites. The first one to answer correctly will be spotlighted here in the next issue. Good luck!

Last quarter's question: Leadership competencies are the knowledge, skills, and expertise the Coast Guard and Auxiliary expect of their leaders; 1) how many leadership competencies are there, 2) into what four categories are they grouped, and 3) where did you find this information?

Answer: There are 28 leadership competencies, grouped into these categories: Leading Self, Leading Others, Leading Performance and Change, and Leading the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Our winner reports finding them in a few places, including the leadership competencies page, which is easily accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3w6bNzM>.

This quarter's "question" begins with a fill-in-the-blank sentence:

According to the website of at least one District, Auxiliarists nationwide save nearly ____ lives, assist ____ boaters in distress, and graduate _____ students from safe boating classes every year! And, as always, where did you find this information?

Send your answer in an email to gregschaefer.uscgaux@gmail.com.

Congratulations to the first person to submit the correct answer last quarter, COMO DALE FAJARDO!



COMO Dale Fajardo is a member of Flotilla 19, Coyote Point. He has an interest in Marine Safety and served as a Flotilla Commander four times and a Division Vice Commander (twice). Currently he is the Division Commander for Division 1. On National Staff he held various roles to include Assistant National Commodore-FORCECOM (Force Readiness Command) responsible for the Human Resources, Public Affairs, and Training national directorates, and most recently was the Senior Advisor to the National Commodore-FORCECOM. During his free time, he enjoys traveling with his wife (prior to the pandemic, transatlantic and river cruises), taking care of two Schipperkes, getting on the air as an amateur radio operator (callsign: AH7D), and sailing on San Francisco Bay.

Coast Guard Core Values: Respect

by Vicki Hudson

We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other with fairness, dignity and compassion. We encourage individual opportunity and growth. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team.

Looking at the Coast Guard definition of Respect, let's notice that while it discusses individual opportunity, the key word in each sentence is the first-person plural pronoun – we. A word that is, by definition, inclusive. Each of us in the Coast Guard – Active, Reserve, Auxiliary, Civilian – are part of Team Coast Guard. As part of Team Coast Guard, we render our teammates “fairness, dignity, and compassion.” Maybe it's a little language geekiness, but sometimes it's worth looking at definitions.

What is fairness? According to the online Cambridge dictionary: “the quality of treating people equally or in a way that is right or reasonable; considering everything that has an effect on a situation, so that a fair judgment can be made.” On one hand, this indicates we should treat people equal, or according to the Cambridge, the same or identical. This inherently raises the question is equality the same as equity? The remainder of the Cambridge definition for fairness addresses this distinction by including “considering everything that has an effect on a situation.” To render fair judgment, one should consider all factors beyond the one standard of identical conditions. Fairness requires a holistic view of the individual.

What is dignity? Cambridge dictionary states the dignity is “the importance and value that a person has, that makes other people respect them or makes

them respect themselves.” Dignity is a two-way process; one's actions may render respect or remove respect from self as well as others. There is significant power in the value of dignity. Failing to treat someone with dignity is an emotional violence to their inner sense of self. This concept is so important, that it is found within the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the very first sentence of Article one: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

What is compassion? This aspect of the value of RESPECT is different than the first two, and fitting that it ends the statement about how we treat each other. While the first two deal with result of the lack of respect, compassion is a response to lack of respect; “a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for other people's suffering or bad luck and a desire to help.” Key here is the desire to help because we feel something for another who is suffering or experiencing misfortune. Compassion drives us to do something.

Another key factor of RESPECT is that while we function as a team, individual worth is recognized and encouraged to continue growth and development. Empowerment supports providing resources to build individual as well as team skills. The team becomes more because the individuals develop to form a greater whole. The core value of RESPECT is the holistic foundation of Team Coast Guard.

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles exploring the Coast Guard's Core Values.

Vicki Hudson serves as ADSO-PB and is a member of Flotilla 12-1, East Bay.



Lake Sonoma Patrol

by Wil Sumner

New Low Water Restrictions make for Busy Patrols

In normal years, 15-mile-long Lake Sonoma (near Geyserville, CA) sees over 9000 boaters. But, with the lake only filled to 58% capacity, many hazards have emerged -- What once were islands are now peninsulas, and many new islands have emerged. Roughly 60% of the lake is now a *no wake* zone due to exposed hazards, trees, and shoals, water skiing areas have been reduced to one arm of the lake, and the swim area and small boat launch in the other arm are closed entirely due to there being no water at all. These new restrictions led the three Agencies that operate on this lake (Sonoma County Sheriff, US Army Corps of Engineers, and US Coast Guard Auxiliary) to hold a meeting. The most important boating safety item was reduction of speed and the no-ski areas.



Underway missions of the Auxiliary on Lake Sonoma include boater education on no wake zones, life jacket use, kayak safety, etc. This Memorial Day weekend, Flotilla 55, Sonoma County, had two facilities on the water: *Margarita* and *Sea Scum II*, whose crews almost immediately had to start holding up “No Wake” signs to slow boats down in areas that had been ski- or high-speed zones. We educated 15-20 motor boaters and PWC operators per day (many of whom were not aware of the new restrictions, despite all boaters receiving them at the mussel check) and gave them maps of the lake showing new speed requirements, and safety flags or life jacket coupons.

We were also tasked by the Corps to relocate a PATON that had parted its anchor line, and gave a Good Samaritan towing a boat some things to keep in mind when volunteering to offer assistance (all persons on the distressed boat wear PFDs, staying seated, steering center, staying off the bow until the boat is ready to be untied).



Lake Sonoma receives most of its DUI cases in the afternoon, and most SAR cases either on Sunday morning (when the boat camper has a dead battery or is out of fuel) or afternoons starting at 1600 hours. So, we run our patrols from around 1000 until 1700 or 1800. If the Sheriff has a DUI case and removes the operator, and if there is no operator to run the boat, the Auxiliary may be needed to tow the boat and remaining passengers. Flotilla 55 has other types of SAR cases such as responding to boats taking on water, shoreside fire response (transporting fire personnel), and medical emergencies.

At 1600 on Sunday, *Margarita* had a SAR case that involved a pontoon boat. Pontoon boats have unique challenges for towing -- not all have bow eyes on each pontoon, and most have no cleats at either end or beam – so a normal towing bridle will not work. We made a bridle specifically for pontoon boats: a 12’ nylon line with a large carabiner spliced on each end to attach to the pontoon bows, deck eye bolts, or railing stanchions, and a center loop to attach to a regular tow line.



Therese Van Weile, AUXCOM, and John Zowalki at the helm

Communications on Lake Sonoma is also a challenge, as there is not VHF communications or cell phone service to Sector. Patrols are initiated ahead of time by cell phone and remaining comms are via digital handheld radio to the ACE Visitor Center dispatch or Sheriff Dispatch.

Flotilla 55 normally conducts patrols on Lake Sonoma during very busy summer weekends and special events, when it is not uncommon to have 5 or more SAR cases. We welcome other flotilla members and facilities to join us for patrols on Lake Sonoma.

Wil Sumner serves as FSO-OP, and is a member of FL 55, Sonoma County.

Safety Message T-shirts

by COMO Wally Smith

"I Got Caught Wearing A Life Jacket!"

For the past several years, Division 6, District 11N, has been presenting youth sized t-shirts to children on the water wearing a life jacket. Below the Auxiliary logo is printed "I Got Caught Wearing A Life Jacket". Most have been given out of Santa Cruz where paddlecraft are very popular.



The T-Shirts reward not only the child but also the parents for protecting their child in the marine environment. It is not only an immediate reward and important message, it is also a "Command Message" that is conveyed every time the child wears the T-Shirt in the presence of others ... "Wearing a life jacket saves lives." This exemplifies the Auxiliary's primary mission of RBS ... Recreational Boating Safety.

Flotillas in Division 6 purchase the t-shirts from a local shop in Santa Cruz. The t-shirts are distributed to the coxswains based on their anticipated needs. All shirts are white and ordered in youth sizes S, M, & L. The Flotillas pay based on their allocation.



This has been and continues to be a very popular and successful method of "getting the word out" that wearing life jackets saves lives. We don't see an end to this program!



Spread the Command Messages: stay safe out there, wear a mask, and maintain a social distance of at least one fathom!



COMO Wally Smith serves the District as DSO-OP, and is a member of FL 6-10, Capitola.

Editor's Note: Why are the kids hiding from Wally? It's important to remember that, when photographing children, their faces must not be recognizable - note that, in all of these photos, children's faces are covered.

Auxiliary Chaplain Support

by Greg Schaefer

Expanding Religious Ministry capacity to better meet Coast Guard needs



The United States Congress authorized hiring the first Army Chaplain in 1791. As with many things, the timeline of subsequent developments might seem odd to us now: only Christians were able to be military chaplains for the first 70 years of the program, until Pres. Lincoln appointed the first Jewish chaplain in 1862; the first female chaplain in the US military *served* in the Civil War, but she was not *paid* until 1876 and was not *recognized* as a chaplain until 2002 (when she was posthumously given the rank of captain); and the first Muslim chaplain wasn't appointed until 1993.

“Coast Guard Chaplains” are actually Navy Chaplains assigned to serve the 80,000 members of Team Coast Guard. But, with only about 45 billets, chaplains can be delayed or prevented from responding in a timely manner to Religious Ministry (RM) needs. As some Auxiliarists have clergy credentials, the Chaplain of the Coast Guard established the Auxiliary Chaplain Support (ACS) program to expand RM capacity.

ACS Chaplains meet the same requirements as Navy Chaplains (Bachelor's degree, Master's in theology, Ecclesiastical Endorsement, and a Moderate Risk Background Check) but are also Basically Qualified, active Auxiliarists in good standing, current in Core Training, and not subject to any investigation by DIRAUX. An application accompanies letters of recommendation from one's Flotilla Commander, a CO/OIC, District Chaplain,



District Commander, and Area Chaplain. Then the Commandant convenes an administrative board and makes a determination.



We complete annual training under the supervision of a Coast Guard Chaplain, such as Confidential Communication, Religious Accommodation, Crisis and Referral Resources, and Chaplain Support of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. The Supervising Chaplain submits an annual evaluation of the ACS Chaplain with a recommendation as to our continued participation.



ACS Chaplains have tripled the number of chaplains available to CG stations, cutters, and personnel. An ACS Chaplain might be called in to respond to personal or professional stress and struggles, financial issues, Critical Incident Stress Management, suicidality, crisis situations, visitations, burials

at sea, weddings, baptisms, religious elements for official ceremonies (e.g. retirements, changes of command), blessing of the fleet, memorial dedications, cutter underway periods, maritime ceremonies, pastoral counseling with Coast Guard member or family member, faith-specific religious rites or studies ashore or at sea. (In order to fulfill these duties, ACS Chaplains begin with two stripes.) As such, our work has remained “Mission Critical” this past year.



My work has included pastoral visits to Station Monterey and the CGC Hawksbill, a Change of Command aboard the CGC Bertholf, and teaching suicide prevention at Air Station San Francisco (below). I'm so glad to have been selected for this program and to serve others in this way.



Those Who Have Crost the Bar

“Crossing the Bar” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.*

James A. Dragon
FL 17, Pt. Bonita
April 17

Peter C. Todebush, FL12-91
San Ramon Valley
June 14

Rest easy, shipmates; we've got the watch.

The Loan of the *Melroy*

by Ron Kelley

An under-used OP FAC gets a new lease on life

Growing up near the ocean, you get a respect for the water, for boating safety, and for the Coast Guard. When I grew up, I wanted to give back. I tell you that as an introduction to this. We all have a reason to volunteer; one of the main ones is to assist others.

Flotilla 11-03, Reno, was recently faced with a problem. Between the pandemic and its resultant stand-down, and the Flotilla's lack of Coxswains and crew due to retirements and relocations, Operational Facility *Melroy* was really under-utilized. But, our Flotilla Commander came up with an original idea.

Flotilla 73, Wasatch, was in need of an Operational Facility for their own use. After checking with our members, with Sector San Francisco, and with the District's legal consultants (Who would have thought it would be so involved?), we put *Melroy* back into shipshape and prepared her for loan to Flotilla 73.

It took some time; while she was sitting dry, we noticed the hull was in need of some work: the paint and fiberglass was damaged from earlier repairs that were not fixed correctly, so we went to work making it right. Some of the old repair work the fiberglass was not prepped correctly, it was not sanded for adhesion, and it separated from the substrate, so we set out to correct and repaint it.



We did the job and we got her finished, and some people from Flotilla 73 picked her up in time for Safe Boating week in Utah.

Here she is on patrol:



As you can see, not only did we help their Flotilla, we made new shipmates and friends.

Ron Kelley serves as ADSO-PB, and is a member of Flotilla 11-03, Reno.

Lunch Overboard!

by Terry Blanchard

The most unusual meal ever eaten on a Silver Charm patrol.

Prior to COVID-19, the crew of Auxiliary OPFAC Silver Charm usually enjoyed lunch in the galley at Yerba Buena Island during mid-week patrols. The food was good and Station San Francisco is not far from where we participate in training exercises with Coast Guard helicopter crews on the Bay. With the galley opening at 1100, we just needed to hustle to eat in time for an on-scene time as early as noon.

As operational activities resumed, we initially brought our own food and drinks in compliance with COVID-19 health and safety protocols. As things seemed to be returning to normal, my crew started hinting they would really like to eat in the station galley again. For our patrol on June 9, I felt we were ready. I confirmed that the opening time was still 1100 and the price had not changed, requested an on-scene time of 1230 to give us more time to eat, and moved our underway time up by half hour to make sure we could be at the head of the galley line.

Silver Charm arrived plenty early, but a special barbecue was being held in honor of active duty who were changing assignments. As 1100 approached, active duty members started the normal queue outside the galley and the Silver Charm crew joined in. We were informed that serving time had been moved to 1200 to allow for the special event. With our on-scene time of 1230, that was not going to work. Post-COVID-19, Silver Charm carries some bottled water but no other food or drinks to share. Fortunately, Auxiliary Chef and Coxswain Tommy Holtzman of Flotilla 33 was on board.

Tommy is the most interesting Auxiliarist I have ever met and I consider myself lucky to have him as a friend. There is not much that goes on in the maritime

world that Tommy does not know about. He soon was in contact with various charter fishing boat captains in the area, looking for a particular boat with a cook. Tommy located the vessel, ordered four hamburgers, and determined an ETA of twenty minutes. With Tommy at the helm and a little more than an hour to go before our on-scene time, we set off in search of the charter fishing boat.

As charter captains are reluctant to disclose their fishing spots, their automatic identification systems (AIS) are often turned off. We crossed the Berkeley Flats and around Southampton Shoal in search of the boat, with directions to their location provided by the captain via mobile phone. In order not to disrupt the customers who had lines in the water, the cook placed the burgers in a plastic bag and set it adrift off the stern for the current and wind to move it away from their boat. This was surely going to be the most critical man overboard drill ever conducted on Silver Charm. If we messed this up, we would go hungry for the rest of the patrol.

David Beltran of Flotilla 19 had a boat hook ready, but there wasn't an obvious place on the bag to grab. With some maneuvering by Tommy, COMO Wally Smith was able to reach over the gunnel and recover the precious cargo from the side of the boat.

In the end, the hamburgers were excellent, still warm, and (we all agreed) some of the best we had eaten in a long time. Now I'm concerned that my crew would prefer meeting up with the charter boat whenever possible and skip the galley altogether.

It goes along with a familiar saying on OPFAC Silver Charm, "No two patrols are ever alike."

Save A Life.
Wear It!

