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Another successful National Auxiliary Convention (NACON) was held in Orlando, Florida. It included the election of the senior Auxiliary leadership. Congratulations to Commodore Mark Simoni on his election as the National Commodore. Also elected were Richard Washburn as Vice National Commodore, Kenneth Brown as Deputy National Commodore for Atlantic East, Larry King as Deputy National Commodore Atlantic West, and Rodney Collins as Deputy National Commodore Pacific. The new leadership team includes Fred Gates as the appointed Deputy National Commodore for Information, Technology, and Planning; and, Immediate Past National Commodore Tom Mallison who begin their new terms of office on November 1st. With Commodore Simoni’s election he also becomes Chairman of the Board for the Association; Vice Commodore Washburn becomes Vice Chairman and Commodore Mallison remains as a Board Director.

The Association conducted its election of Board Directors for terms commencing November 1, 2014 through October 31, 2016. Viggo C. Bertelsen, Jr.; Clay Maitland; and Roderick Mitchell were each elected for addition two-year terms while Vincent T. Pica was elected to serve his first term of office as an Association Director. Congratulations to each Director. They will join with current Directors Gene Seibert, Terry Cross, Chris Edmonston, Carleen Lyden-Kluss, Ross Roeder, and James Woodward to comprise the Association’s Board of Directors. We all look forward to their leadership and direction as we pursue our primary mission in support of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and its programs.

Recently, we have experienced some misunderstanding of our mission and purpose by our members. Our efforts are directed at providing support for the Auxiliary and you as members. We seek and offer a number of benefit programs for you, the member. The benefits vary and you choose those that interest you. Most of the benefits offered generate royalties from our partners. Those royalties, at no cost to you, help to support your Auxiliary program. With the government’s sequestration and the continued tightening of the Coast Guard’s budget and its funding support for the Auxiliary, the benefit programs help in maintaining critical support.

The Auxiliary’s National Training meeting (N-Train) is scheduled for the end of January in St. Louis. Specific training is planned for the District Staff Officers Public Affairs, Marine Safety and Incident Management from each District/Region. Information concern N-Train 2015 may be reviewed at www.cgauxa.org/ntrain.

Mark your calendars for the next National Auxiliary Convention. NACON 2015 is scheduled to be held in San Antonio, Texas in August. Plan now to attend and enjoy this special event and the greatness that San Antonio offers. Information should be posted on the website at www.cgauxa.org/nacon early in 2015. Check it out join us for a great time with its wonderful four cornerstone activities.
Three decades ago, Max Fletcher, then in his 20s, was getting ready to captain a Westsail 32 from New Zealand back to the East Coast of the United States by way of the Southern Ocean and Cape Horn. He happened to meet up with sailing legend Eric Hiscock who had completed three circumnavigations of the globe with his wife Susan, the first in the early 1950s. When Fletcher asked for advice about his upcoming voyage, Hiscock replied, "Keep the water out!"

Indeed, boats — and boaters — are in a constant battle with the water all around them, and more often than we would like, the water wins. Hurricanes aside, sinking is the costliest source of claims for the BoatUS Marine Insurance program, so we undertook a thorough analysis of a year's worth of claims to see what lessons we might find for our readers. Because we expanded our net to look at boats that sank as a result of some previous incident — a collision or grounding, for instance — our findings are somewhat different than in 2006 when we last looked at our sinking claims. The low-cut transoms that were so common in the 1990s have largely been replaced by splashwells separated from the interior of the boat by a high transom. This time around, only

From an insurance perspective, a boat is sinking if it must be actively pumped out to remain afloat and undamaged.

This definition highlights two key issues. First, a sinking boat is not watertight. There is always a source of water that must be located and stopped to keep the boat floating. The second is that well-designed boats do not sink due to failed bilge pumps. A boat should stay afloat in the conditions for which it was designed without water having to be pumped out of it — even in heavy rain and big seas (relative to the size of the boat).

That's not to say that adequately sized, functioning bilge pumps are not important. In addition to removing nuisance water, they can keep your boat afloat long enough for you to find a leak and fix it. But that time should be measured in minutes and hours, not days and weeks. When it comes to gradual leaks due to slowly failing parts, too many of the boats in our claim files existed in a zombie state somewhere between floating and sinking, completely dependent upon the bilge pump to keep them on the water instead of below it. The bilge pump merely postponed the sinking until it failed, lost power, or was overwhelmed by the volume of water. Had someone fixed the leak in those days, weeks, or months, that boat would not have become part of these statistics.

As the pie chart shows, more than two-thirds of the reasons why boats sank could be considered preventable. Half of those preventable claims, or one-third of the total, involved boats that sank due to the gradual failure of a part below the waterline. This is the single most common reason boats sink at the dock. While failed parts also cause sinkings underway, it's much more common that they result from the boat hitting something, whether another boat, the bottom, or something floating in the water. Failing to secure an otherwise working fitting, such as a drain plug or a sea strainer, when the boat is in the water comes third on the list.

One big change we have seen is that swamping, responsible for eight percent of the sinkings in our files, is much less likely to occur underway than it was in 2006 when we last looked at our sinking claims. The low-cut transoms that were so common in the 1990s have largely been replaced by splashwells separated from the interior of the boat by a high transom. This time around, only

(Continued on page 4)
one boat sank as a result of a wave swamping the boat from astern. Instead, boats were swamped at the dock when tied stern to open water in chop or waves raised by strong winds. Finally, as was the case in 2006, five percent of the boats that sank got caught under the dock by waves or tide due to problems with their dock line arrangements.

You can greatly reduce the chances of your boat sinking due to wear, tear, and corrosion by adhering to a regular maintenance schedule. While all maintenance is important, the first six items in the list below represent the most common maintenance-related failures that led to sinking in our claim files. The additional four items in the list could be considered good seamanship, and will help to prevent boats from sinking due to causes other than age and deterioration.

These 10 items address the 10 most common causes of sinking in our year of claim files.

1. Inspect your sterndrive bellows annually and replace them every 3-5 years.

The bellows on sterndrives are required to remain watertight for years while withstanding flexing and bending, exposure to water and marine growth, and extremes of temperature. Talk about a difficult job! The shift bellows is the smallest, which makes it most susceptible to cracks that start in the folds. By tilting and turning the sterndrives, you can inspect the bellows, and this should be done annually. Marine growth can puncture the bellows, so remove any that you find. Replace the bellows if you see any sign of wear, but at least every five years. If one bellows is worn, chances are all of them are, so replace them as a set.

2. Check your stuffing box every time you visit the boat; repack every spring.

Stuffing boxes are one of the few thru-hull fittings designed to allow some water into the boat, at least when the motor's in use. But it's way too easy for that one to two drips a second to turn into a stream. The only way to prevent it is with diligent maintenance, repacking the stuffing box rather than simply tightening down the packing screw again and again, and possibly damaging your prop shaft in the process. And make sure to check your stuffing box every time you visit your boat. If the bilge pump is running regularly on an older boat with a stuffing box, you can almost bet that it will be the source of the water.

3. Replace your engine raw-water hoses at the first sign of wear.

A ruptured raw-water hose or one that has come off a fitting due to a corroded hose clamp or deterioration on the end of the hose can sink the boat at the dock if the problem is below the waterline. But even cooling hoses above the waterline can bring lots of water into the boat if the problem is downstream of the raw-water pump and the engine is running. Hoses should be replaced at the first sign of wear with the appropriate type and size. If your hoses are 10 years old or more, why not give your boat a spring treat and replace them before putting the boat back in the water?

4. Replace your impeller every 2-3 years.

Your cooling system can sink your boat without even springing a leak. If your impeller deteriorates due to age and wear, the amount of water it can move through the water pump will decline and eventually it won't be pumping anything at all. Well before that point, your engine will overheat. If you don't shut it down right away, the hot gases can melt the hose, allowing water to enter the boat. Changing your impeller every few seasons — whether it needs to be or not — is cheap insurance indeed.
5. Make cockpit and live-well plumbing accessible and inspect regularly.

A large cockpit is nothing more than a bathtub when rain starts to fall. If the cockpit drains don't do their work, the boat can be overwhelmed by a heavy downpour. Problems in the claim files include missing hose clamps, broken drain fittings, broken thru-hulls, and loose hoses. In several small powerboats, hoses were never fitted to drains when the boat was built. It pays to inspect everything from the drain to the waterline at the beginning of every season. And don't forget live-wells, bait wells, and fish boxes. Inundating suspect areas with a hose and seeing where the water goes will uncover any problems. Unfortunately, on many boats all of these drains, hoses, and thru-hulls can be difficult to get to. If that's the case on your boat, you'll have to create access and cover the openings with watertight deck hatches.

6. Inspect all below waterline fittings at the beginning of each season.

While you're at it, take a good look at all below-waterline thru-hulls, hoses and hose clamps inside the boat, paying particular attention to transducers and sensors. These penetrate the hull well below the waterline, and unlike most below waterline fittings, they do not have a seacock. Any sort of a failure will bring water into the boat. If you see dampness around a transducer, use epoxy only for a temporary fix. Water may have intruded into the hull itself, resulting in saturation or delamination. Haul the boat and deal with the leak as soon as possible.

7. Don't forget the drain plug.

OK, so it sounds like something you would never do. But you can be fairly certain that's what the people who forgot to put in the drain plug before launching thought too — until they did it. We all make mistakes, some are just more embarrassing than others. The drain plug in the photo was found right where you see it when the boat was raised. To make sure you never have to 'fess up to sinking your own boat, figure out a way that will keep you from ever forgetting. One option is to keep the drain plug on your boat key ring or, better yet, on the stern tie-down strap.

8. Keep a proper lookout and know where you are at all times when underway.

About 15 percent of the sinking claims in 2012 were the result of hitting something while underway. But in many cases, the sinking did not occur until later, in some cases hours, and in others, days. Sterndrives are particularly vulnerable to a minor grounding or to hitting something floating just below the surface of the water. If you have any doubt about whether your boat is still watertight after you hear a thud, bump, or crunch, do a short haul and check everything below the waterline. In most cases, your BoatUS insurance policy will cover it, but check in with the claims department first.

9. Remove trailerable boats from the water when storms are forecast.

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While a few boats were swamped underway, usually by waves in shallow water, most cases involved trailerable boats left tied to a dock with the stern open to the fetch. If the forecast calls for strong winds and your dock is not well-protected, the best course of action is to put the boat on its trailer. If that's not feasible, then tie the boat with the bow facing open water and put the cover on it. Make sure the batteries are charged and the bilge pump is working.

10. Use a line management system to keep the boat centered in its slip.

It seems like if there is a way for a boat to find its way under a dock, it will do so. When boats are refloated and no source of water intrusion can be found, investigators start looking for scratches and dinged gunwales, indications the boat got wedged under the dock as the tide came back in. In several cases, one or more docklines were tied to a ring meant to slide up and down a metal pole attached to a piling as the tide rose and fell. The ring got caught at the top or bottom of the pole, and the boat was left unable to move with the tide. A line management system like TideMinders can remedy this situation, allowing you to keep your lines relatively taut and letting the movement up and down the piling deal with the tide. Long spring lines can also help keep the boat centered while allowing it to rise and fall with changes in the water level.

Beth Leonard is the Director of Technical Services for BoatU.S. and editor of Seaworthy, the BoatU.S. Marine Insurance Program's publication dedicated to keeping you and your boat safe on the water.

Article and photos provided by BoatU.S.
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In a deliberate water parachute drop into Lake Lanier, Georgia the U.S. Army 5th Ranger Training Battalion tested the proficiency of over 100 jumpers, jumpmasters and pathfinders. Operational facilities from Flotilla 29, Lake Lanier, Georgia were at the drop zone to establish a safety zone for the soldiers. Local public safety personnel and equipment provided support to the exercise. Georgia DNR Rangers and Army Corps of Engineers Rangers provided additional law enforcement capability.

After months of careful and detailed planning by the Training Battalion a landing zone (LZ) recon and rehearsal was conducted at the LZ in War Hill Park for members of all units participating in the exercise. The drop zone was identified with markings and large buoys. Auxiliary coxswains were provided a copy of the exercise plan prior to the rehearsal.

The execution of the exercise was on May 8 and utilized 6 Army zodiac boats as personnel pick-up vessels. All boat operators were trained Army personnel and each boat was also staffed with a safety swimmer prepared to dive in the event of an emergency. Each boat was equipped with a portable radio and orange panels for signaling. Boats had predetermined starting positions and pick-up assignments.

A Joint Command Post was located in War Hill Park with full communication capability and mapping. The rehearsal scenario tested the communication plan with all of the agencies participating. All agencies not having the proper Army standard field radios were loaned radios for use in the exercise.

Army UH-60 helicopters and T10-D parachutes were used in the exercise. The Drop Zone Safety Officer was responsible for the overall safety of the event. The Pathfinder communicated directly with the heli-
(Continued from page 8)

copters and initiated the drop of six jumpers per sortie once an aircraft was in position and the LZ was safe.

Flotilla 29 vessels kept the LZ clear of recreational vessel traffic and communicated information the Joint Command Center as was requested.

The exercise was completed as planned and no emergency services were needed. For some of the jumpers this was one of many water jumps in their career. For others this held the excitement and challenge of a first water jump. Approximately 100 jumpers successfully completed the jump and were safely recovered.

Auxiliary operations personnel got to see first hand how the Army conducted a complex exercise with precise planning and safe execution.

Clockwise from below left:
1. DSO-Communications Robert Colee gets a quick lesson on Army Field Radio.
2. Coxswain Roy Crittendon and Flotilla Commander Joe Edwards set GAR score for the mission.
3. Crewmember Robert Quigley listens intently to the vessel safety briefing.
4. Coxswain Gary McClure gets permission to get underway.

(Additional photos on following page)
Air Drop

**Left:** Unit representatives get a final briefing before the start of the exercise.

**Left:** Army pick-up boat and crew get into position for first drop.

**Right:** High visibility markers set the side limits of the LZ.

**Left:** Coxswain McClure and crew head out to take their assigned position alongside the LZ.

**Right:** Coxswain Crittendon checks his current position with the chart of the LZ.

**Left:** Two of the approximately 100 jumpers head for a water splash down.

**Right:** FSO Kerry Eakins gives praise for a job well done.
Debbie and Mike Bennett, Fifth Northern District, took time off from their usual Auxiliary activities to attend the Today Show as part of the audience when Al Roker was appointed an Honorary Auxiliary Commodore. Mike Bennett worked for NBC for over 28 years and during part of that time, Al Roker was a "co-worker."

As Debbie wrote of the experience, "talk about being Auxiliarated."
National Safe Boating Week held annually the week before Memorial Day weekend, is the start of the boating season nationally.

The main focus is to improve recreational boating safety through education, awareness and training. This is a significant focus of Auxiliary members who get involved in public education. A Vessel Safety Check is a complementary safety inspection of a recreational boat or jet ski, conducted by a trained and certified member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or trainee under supervision.

A Vessel Safety Check helps to ensure that the private vessel meets current Federal safety standards.

This year the authors decided to support Flotilla 11-5 Tri-Lakes, and participate in their Memorial Day vessel safety check program at a local public marina on the shores of Lake Elsinore in California.

Flotilla 5, Tri-Lakes, is well known in their community because of their public boating education and vessel safety check program. This program is supported by the city of Elsinore which provides discount certificates for the use of boating ramps into the lake, as well as significant discounts on yearly lake usage fees.

If you are interested in becoming a Qualified Vessel Examiner for the Coast Guard Auxiliary, you will need to do the following:

1. The AUX member must be at least Basically Qualified (BQ), or be in Applicant Status (AP) and have passed a basic boating safety course.

2. Pass the open book Vessel Examiner Test on the National Testing site at http://ntc.cgaux.org. This online exam contains 30 questions and applicants have a 3 hour time limit to take the exam. You have to achieve a minimum score of 90% in order to pass. The test is based on the Vessel Safety Check Manual (COMDTINST M16796.8), Manual Updates, and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Facilities document.

3. Conduct a minimum of five (5) vessel examinations for boats while under supervision of a qualified Vessel Examiner.

4. Once you complete your vessel checks, you will work with your Vessel Examination supervisor to complete a 7038 form(s), listing you as a trainee for at least 5 Vessel Safety Checks. Once the forms are completed and processed by your Flotilla's IS staff officer, your Vessel Examination supervisor will communicate with your Flotilla Commander and certify that you have completed a minimum of 5 supervised Vessel Safety Checks, and that you are qualified to perform Vessel Safety Checks on your own.

5. After your Vessel Examination supervisor has certified your completion, your Flotilla Commander will provide a certification of your training by submitting a Qualification Request Form, which will recommend that DIRAUX process your qualification and award the VE ribbon.

Boats that pass the free safety checks are awarded a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) decal that indicates the boat/jet ski, is in full compliance with all Federal and State boating safety regulations at the time of inspection.
A successful VSC exam may also qualify the boat owner for insurance discounts. If the vessel check does not meet the minimum requirements, the Vessel Examiner will share with the boat owner what corrective action needs to be taken in order to bring the boat into compliance, as well as to receive the VSC decal.

Boaters are advised to stay compliant with the state and federal requirements or they run the risk of being stopped out on the waterways, and pay significant fines if their boat is out of compliance with federal and state safety laws.

We participated in over 30 vessel checks and 23 boat owners received VSC decals indicating they had all of the required equipment and paperwork aboard their boat at the time of their check on this particular day. Over Memorial Day weekend Flotilla 5, Tri-Lakes, California completed over 80 vessel checks with close to 80% of vessels being in compliance.

Vessel safety checks look for: vessel display of numbers; a current registration for the vessel, personal flotation devices for all persons on the vessel, as well as proper sizes for different ages; visual distress signaling devices such as flags and whistles; fire extinguisher on board; ventilation in closed compartments; working navigation lights; safety placards; overall vessel condition; and safe electrical and fuel systems. There are also non-mandatory items such as marine radio, first aid kits, float plans and accident reporting, among other things that are discussed with the boat owners as well.

The two most common problems found were expired registration with the boat owners as well.

Vessel exams are a prime opportunity to interface with the public and provide education and training, as well as to recruit future auxiliary members.

If you’re interested in joining the cadre of vessel examiners, contact your local Flotilla Commander, or Flotilla Staff officer for Vessel examinations (FSO-VE).

Special recognition goes to John Pecora, Flotilla Commander Flotilla 5, Tri-Lakes, California – (johnpecora100@ca.rr.com) and Peter Dawson, FSO-MT (peterdawson3@verizon.net). This Flotilla has an active and exemplary Public Training and Vessel Examination program, and are happy to share that information with any Auxiliary member.

On the Hackensack River by Alan Albert, Flotilla 014-10-10

One of the reasons I joined the Auxiliary was a rescue assist I provided a year before joining. I was paddling with my daughter on our 16-foot Old Towne canoe on the Hackensack River in Northern New Jersey, mid tide. Weather was sunny, winds and seas were light. The temperature about 75 degrees Fahrenheit. It was a quiet Sunday morning.

As we headed past the pier on our way to the mouth of a brackish tidal marsh and nature preserve, members of the Secaucus police department flagged us down and said, "A guy flipped his boat nearby up the river. Can you check it out?"

I said, one word: "OK", and continued in the same upriver direction using the kayak paddle like I meant business.

Out of view of the police, but not too far upriver near the mouth of the marsh water trail, a man in his 50s was standing on the exposed muddy shore, lined by tall marsh grasses. He was bailing water out of his small fishing skiff. The skiff was outfitted with a giant outboard and I assume the craft capsized due to overloading.

His oar and other debris were floating round and round in an eddy. I retrieved his oar and whatever else was floating, and continued to look for his wallet and keys which were never found. In no time flat, the man was safe and rowing his way back to the pier.

I caught the rescue bug. Now, I am in active crew training as a member of Flotilla 014-10-10, and crew trainee with 1SR-10-13. I still regularly go on "good-Samaritan canoeing", off-duty, at the encouragement of my Flotilla. But now, I also carry 50 feet of rope, a ring buoy, and the CGAUX non-patrol ensign.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer Component of the United States Coast Guard created by an Act of Congress in 1939. The Auxiliary, America’s Volunteer Guardians, supports the Coast Guard in nearly all of the service’s missions.
Sea Partners Outreach

Flotilla 054-10-5 sent these photos from three separate events where they used the “garbage game.” One of the events was ideal for use of the marine debris trunk as it was named, First Crawl Environmental Festival after loggerhead turtles. The items in the trunk provided an opportunity to educate the boating public about the affect plastics, and especially plastic bags, have on marine life. The games in the marine debris trunk drew children to their display where COMO Carol Urgola helped them play the garbage game and FSO-MS David Smith talked to the adults about other marine environmental issues and boating safety topics.

At another event they used Sea Partners materials in a more static display. This provided an additional way to educate boaters.

The marine debris materials can also be utilized in a classroom setting, as illustrated in the indoor photo.

As a note, the marine debris trunk is available from ANSC for use by any unit.
As a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Association, you'll receive a 5% group discount on your VPI policy. Plus, owners of multiple pets are entitled to receive additional discounts!

September is National Pet Health Insurance Month, a great time to reflect on the special bond pets share with us and how important it is to prepare financially for their medical care. VMI Pet Insurance is designed to help pets get the best veterinary care possible—so they can live long and happy lives.

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