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June 2003

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUX. (M) INC.



COAST GUARD AUXILIARY CELEBRATES 25th SILVER ANNIVERSARY

August 9th, 1978 the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Maritimes was incorporated. In recognition of our anniversary, National CCGA are giving all members a pin to commemorate our 25th anniversary. This pin is enclosed with your newsletter. Also, in honour of this occasion we will provide you with the history of the CCGA Maritime region. This is how it all began:

With hundreds of thousands of miles of coastline around Canada and a limited number of government search and rescue facilities there has been a steady reliance upon volunteer services to assist those in distress at sea. Often in the past, valuable time was wasted by those individuals co-ordinating a search and time involved while attempting to contact willing volunteers who were properly equipped or knowledgeable to assist in Search and Rescue (SAR). No mechanism was made available to compensate those volunteers for expended fuel, wear, nor for the wear and tear to their vessels. Also, there was no insurance coverage for the members or their boats while rendering assistance to others in distress on the water.

To address some of these shortcomings, in 1978 concerned mariners in various parts of Canada met with the Canadian Coast Guard and agreed to form themselves into five associations, one in each Coast Guard Region. Each association or Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, then signed a contract in the fall of that year with the CCG, Maritimes signing in December. This concept of an independent corporate body with a contract to provide Search and Rescue services allows the Coast Guard to provide training, insurance, and compensation to CMRA members without losing their volunteer status. Auxiliary members are not government employees and are under no

more compulsion than any other vessel owner to assist in Search & Rescue as required under the Canada Shipping Act, but because of their participation in the CMRA details such as name, phone numbers, type of vessel and location are readily available to the Rescue Centre. This greatly reduces response time to SAR incidents in areas far removed from other rescue resources at a cost far below that of deploying a full time SAR vessel and crew at the many localities served by the CMRA.

With signing of the contract between the CMRA, Maritimes and the Coast Guard in December of 1978, the newly incorporated Auxiliary, often referred to informally as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, existed only on paper, its sole membership being the President, Mr. John E. S. Briggs of Mahone Bay, N.S. and three Directors, Commodore W. P. Hayes of Oakland, N.S., Vice-President, Mr. John A. Harwood of Halifax, N.S., Secretary- Treasurer and Peter Mellish of Summerside, P.E. I. Two Coast Guard Officers were appointed, one as Coordinator, Jim Cormier and the other as a Training Officer, Joe Murphy, to look after the day-to-day business and running of the Auxiliary, who began the task.

By the end of 1979 the original six CMRA units had been established, the first at Summerside, P.E.I., followed by Pictou, N.S., Bridgewater, N.S., Baddeck, N.S., Alder Point, Cape Breton, N. S., and in the Magledeine Islands, P.Q. Membership stood at 48 and CMRA vessels performed approximately 20 rescues. In 1980 there was little progress in the way of expansion. Mr. Harwood replaced Mr. Briggs as President and annual meetings began with the other CMRA associations to discuss common goals, problems, and progress. In 1981 the pace of expansion accelerated and the Auxiliary's membership surpassed the 100 mark. Mr.

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Harwood was succeeded as President by Mr. Leo MacDonald of Halifax. 1982 brought close to eight CMRA resolved SAR incidents. Units were added in various parts of the Maritimes but notably on the Bay of Chaleur, the St. John River and the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. Enrolment, by the end of 1982 reached 160 members in twenty units.

These local groups called units are made up of fishermen and/or yachtsmen from one or more local communities who organize themselves in an area for volunteer rescue work with their own vessels, chose a leader, undergo SAR training, First Aid Courses, exercises and the like, then decide on how to put themselves best at the disposal of the Rescue Centre.

In May 1983, Mr. Charles R. Clarke of Pictou assumed the Presidency. By this time the Auxiliary embraced twenty-five units operating out of almost fifty fishing wharves, marinas, yacht clubs, and private docks around the Maritimes. Over 200 fishermen and yachtsmen actively assisted providing SAR coverage for their fellow mariners in distress. In that season the Auxiliary composed of 68% fishermen and 32% pleasure boaters responded to 160 calls for assistance from people on the water. A number of these credited the CMRA with having saved lives of those in distress.

By the Spring of 1984, the Auxiliary's numbers had expanded to over 300 with over 40 units sailing out of more than 60 wharves. A Committee of Unit Leaders was formed and their recommendations approved to divide the Region into 15 zones, enabling improved membership representation on the Board. By the end of December 1984, the membership in the Maritimes Region CMRA increased to over 450 with 359 vessels based at 98 wharves. 81.3% are fishing vessels

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reflecting the characteristics of the mariners around the coastal waters of the Maritimes.

In March 1986, the Presidency changed from Mr. Charles Clarke to Mr. David Muggah. The membership at that time stood at 567 with 426 vessels at 99 unit locations. 64% of the vessels are involved in fishing activities. CMRA (M) vessels resolved 20.8% of all marine incidents reported through RCC in this Region. Training of members became a priority, the first of a new two day course called Rescue Boat Masters 1 began early in the year at Lunenburg, N.S., and is planned to be conducted in all zones by the end of the year. In 1986 Rescue Challenge Competitions was initiated.

John Waldron then became President. March 1987 to March 1989
The first part time employee (our Secretary) was hired for the CMRA during this time.

George Lohnes became President March 1989 until September of 1993. George enhanced revisions to the By-Laws, Standing Orders.

In September of 1993 Gary Masson assumed the role as President until 1998 and in August of 1998, Gary was employed as the Regional Business Manager for the CCGA Maritimes. Gary had the Rescue Challenge Competitions reinstated in 1996. The Auxiliary started to take on a more active and independent role in looking after their own affairs in both Administration and SAR Prevention.

In 1997 the Auxiliary officially had its name changed from Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary to Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Prevention Program was greatly enhanced under Gary's direction. In 1997 the first full time employee position was created. Funding was applied and received under the New SAR Initiative Program for

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SAR equipment of which First Aid Kits, Strobe Lights, Floater Suits and SAR Pumps were received. A Business Plan was created and implemented, putting project managers in charge of different aspects of the Auxiliary.

In August of 1998, Frank McLaughlin took on the role of Acting/President until elections were held during the AGM in Saint John, N. B. on March of 1999, at which time Frank was elected as the President of the Auxiliary. Also, Frank played a very important role on the National CCGA committee who helped develop and implement the International ISAR Competitions.

As of May 1999, there are three paid staff positions within the Auxiliary. Elaine Bennett our Secretary Bookkeeper still holds her long time employee position. Harris Backman was hired as the Auxiliary's Operation Officer and Gary Masson was hired as the Regional Business Manager for the CCGA Maritimes.

EMO HONOURS CCGA IN RECOGNITION OF OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY



During a ceremony on May 6th at Province House, Halifax, N. S., Tim Olive, Nova Scotia Minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Act, presented an award to the CCGA, Maritimes in recognition of our 25

years of volunteer service in the field of search and rescue. Harris Backman, our Operations Officer, accepted this plaque on behalf of the Auxiliary. The plaque will be hung on the “Wall of Honour” outside the Joint Emergency Centre at EMO Nova Scotia’s headquarters in Dartmouth. The “Wall of Honour” is dedicated to those who have contributed to community preparedness and disaster response throughout Nova Scotia history. Minister Olive said, “This year marks a very important milestone for the Coast Guard Auxiliary as it celebrates its Silver Jubilee. In recognition of this anniversary, we thank the Maritimes Division for providing exemplary search and rescue services to the people of Atlantic Canada.”

Permission to Exhibit The Blue Flashing Lights During SAR



Changes to Shipping Act Regulations Affect CCGA vessels

On January 30, 2003 Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels were extended permission to exhibit the Blue Flashing Light during SAR operations, as per Rule 45 of the Collision Regulations.

Rule 45 allows a 'government ship' to exhibit as an identification signal a blue flashing

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light when providing assistance in a search and rescue operation or when engaged in law enforcement activities. The amendment to this Rule allows CCGA vessels to also exhibit the blue flashing light while engaged in SAR activities.

Rule 45 was amended in response to a request from the CCGA that was fully supported by the Canadian Coast Guard. The CCG felt that the number of SAR incidents to which CCGA vessels respond (approximately 1700 each year) supports and justifies the use of the blue flashing light by CCGA vessels.

Use of the blue flashing light by the CCGA will identify CCGA vessels to other vessel and aircraft operators during SAR operations. It is particularly important during night operations and during searches in poor weather conditions. This issue has arisen on numerous occasions when the distressed vessel had difficulty identifying the CCGA vessel. In addition, other search vessels or aircraft have also had difficulty identifying a CCGA vessel as a search and rescue vessel. This is especially important when an aircraft wants to direct a CCGA vessel towards a stricken vessel.

Guidelines on Use of Blue Flashing Light by CCGA Vessels:

Strict adherence to the proper use of the blue flashing light is essential. CCGA vessels are only permitted to exhibit the blue flashing light during authorized response to SAR incidents when tasked by the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre/Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre. CCGA vessels shall only exhibit the light when the CCGA vessel needs to identify itself while providing assistance to any vessel or other craft, aircraft or person that is threatened by grave and imminent danger

and requires Immediate assistance. CCGA vessels shall only exhibit the light at or near the scene of the SAR incident. The blue flashing light is NOT to be exhibited during transit to and from an incident. The blue flashing light is NOT a towing light. CCGA Vessels no longer involved in SAR operations shall not exhibit the blue flashing light. It should be noted that the blue flashing light provides no special privileges with respect to rules of the road. The blue flashing light is also used as an identification signal by Canadian and United States law enforcement ships when engaged on law enforcement duties. Any misuse of the blue flashing light will not only detract from its effectiveness both as a safety and an enforcement identification signal, but may create confusion, distract vessels or have other serious consequences. Since in the United States, the blue flashing light is only permitted to be exhibited by law enforcement vessels, proper use by CCGA vessels in boundary waters is particularly important.

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels are not required to outfit their vessels with a blue flashing light. Installation of the light by CCGA vessels is strictly voluntary and contribution funds are not to be used to purchase these for members' vessels. The change to the regulations will facilitate the identification of CCGA vessels and help Auxiliarists carry out SAR operations more effectively. Penalties for contravening the Collision Regulations are prescribed in the Canada Shipping Act with fines of up to \$2,000 for vessels up to 20m in length.

MEMBERS CAN VISIT OUR ONLINE WEBSITE

Visit the CCGA Maritime region website at:

www.ccg-m.ca

ISAR 2003



The International SAR Competitions

This year ISAR 2003 will be held in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador on Friday, September 26th at the Canadian Coast Guard Base and on Saturday the 27th at the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club (RNYC) in Conception Bay South.

There will be 6 US and 6 Canadian teams competing. Each team will have four members, one of which to be designated as team coxswain. From the Maritime region, the overall winners of Rescue Challenge 2002, Zone 5 members, Allan Elliott, Lorne Heighton and Jason MacDonald will represent CCGA Maritimes. As in 2002 ISAR, there will also be competition for the 4th team member who will be chosen at random by the event organizers on Thursday, September 25th, 2003. From these 12 Auxiliarists, 4 International Teams of 3 participants will be created. These 4 International Teams will compete in the following 5 events: Chartwork, Marlinspike, Water Rescue, Heaving Line 3, and a Mystery Event. Good luck team Maritimes. Some of the events that the teams will be

competing in will be: Search and Rescue Planning, on-Water SAREX, SAR Pump,

Heaving Line 1, Heaving Line 2, and a Mystery Event.

ISAR 2003 will be judged by Canadian standards using two judges (CCG & USCGA) for each event. The highest scoring Canadian and US team will be awarded the Canadian US 1st place team trophies respectfully.

COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (CAPP)

Ships pumping bilges just off our shores, leaky fuel tanks, accidental discharges of chemicals. These are examples of how some of the thousands of oil and chemical spills occur in the Maritimes each year. These incidents have the potential to cause serious harm to our environment and our way of life.

Maritime communities and the Canadian Coast Guard are working to develop plans for responding to environmental accidents in coastal waters. The main purpose of the Community Action Partnership Program is to have communities develop a resource guide for oil spills. The resource guide is designed so communities can respond as quickly as possible to environmental accidents.

Resources ranging from accommodations to helicopter landing sites are identified. Volunteers are listed, and environmentally sensitive areas are flagged. Copies are then distributed to industry spill response organizations and government agencies.

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Volunteers are the foundation of the CAPP Program by providing the local support during a response. Volunteers will not be used during cleanup of oiled shoreline, but instead could be hired by the Coast Guard and/or Response Organization. CAPP volunteers are involved only in very low risk operational roles and will be utilized solely to the extent of safety limitations. Some of the tasks that could be assigned are clerical and administrative support, cleanup of sandy beaches prior to spill impact, shoreline surveillance and translators. Anyone 18 years and over may be a member of CAPP and the information provided on the registration form is kept on the CAPP database.

Another part of the program is what is called "Vessel of Opportunity" which is a revenue generating role for fishermen registered with the CAPP program. The information of fishing vessels is kept on a database and shared with Response Organization and the Coast Guard. When there is a spill and waterside support is required, the database is consulted for the appropriate vessel within the area of the spill. The vessel could then be hired for an agreed price; this agreement is between the owner of the vessel and the Responsible Party. When the vessel is hired, it must come with a master and crew.

Please note that the CAPP Program is not an authorized CCGA activity. Therefore, if any CCGA member would like to participate in this program, please fill out the attached registration form. If you are a vessel owner, a registration form has to be completed for the vessel also. Please send the completed application(s) to the address shown on the form. Registration forms are included at the back of this newsletter. Send your forms to the attention of Deanne Simpson, CAPP Coordinator at the address shown on the forms.

Reimbursement of your expenses are paid by the CAPP Program.

Interim Disposal Program for Expired Marine Flares (Recreational Boaters and Small Commercial Vessel Operators)

Depending on the size of your boat, and the type of activity you participate in, you may be required to carry pyrotechnic distress signals (flares) on board. All pleasure craft over 6 meters in length require flares and are exempt only if the vessel is operated in a river, lake or canal and can at no time be more than one mile from shore, or if the vessel is involved in any official competition.

Since marine flares are an item one hopes never to use, many questions are asked regarding what to do with them after they have expired. The following are a sample of commonly asked questions, and a brief description of The Expired Marine Flare Disposal Program currently in place for maritime recreational boaters and mariners.

When do my flares expire? Marine flares expire four years after the date of manufacture. When looking for the expiry date on your marine flares look closely for the date of manufacture and calculate four years from that date.

Why can't I keep my expired flares? Flares contain chemical substances designed to create a controlled explosion. As flares age their chemical composition may break down. Common effects of this include; misfiring,

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not firing at all, and discharging incorrectly. All of these effects can result in injury or death.

Why can't I use my flares for practice? Under the Canada Shipping Act it is illegal to send a false distress signal. A flare sighting must be treated as an authentic distress signal by all search and rescue resources, including fellow boaters and volunteers. If you use a flare for practice purposes you may be putting the lives of these people in danger. As well, you may be taking valuable resources away from an authentic emergency. You can be held responsible for any of these services and billed accordingly.

The Expired Marine Flare Disposal Program is effective immediately and is designed as an interim measure. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Coast Guard, RCMP the Nova Scotia Provincial Government and CIL Orion represent private, provincial and federal commitments to a temporary solution to flare disposal needs. The Nova Scotia department of Environment and Labour is investigating alternatives for a more comprehensive long-term strategy for disposal of flares. In order to make use of this program, recreational boaters and mariners may drop off their expired flares to the nearest RCMP detachment or the nearest Canadian Coast Guard base.

Remember: If you are operating a pleasure craft fitted with a motor you may be required to show proof of operator competency this boating season. When operating a motorized pleasure craft, you must show proof of operator competency if you were born after April 1, 1983, or if you operate a vessel that is under 4 meters (13.2 feet) in length. All other operators will be required to show proof of competency by September 15, 2009. For more information on the Interim Program for the Disposal of Marine Flares, or to obtain a list of approved course providers in your area,

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please contact the Canadian Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety in Dartmouth at 1-888-670-0771.

MERCHANDISE FOR SALE



Beautiful rose-handled Knife with the CCGA name laser engraved on it. There is a partial serrated edge on the blade. Comes complete with a nylon carrying case. Works great for rope cutting. This would make an excellent gift.

All proceeds from the sale of this knife will go to our slush fund to help pay for flowers, fruit baskets, etc. for members who are in need of some comfort during times of illness or in some cases a death in family. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Price \$20.00 includes taxes & shipping
Please send cheque or money order payable to:

*Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary
c/o Gary Masson, CCGA Business Manager,
223 Chamberlain Road, Quispamsis, N. B.
E2G 1A9*

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO REQUEST AN AUTHORIZATION NUMBER

Also, again we would like to stress that all activities must have an Authorization Number in order to be reimbursed for

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expenses and also, to be covered by insurance coverage during this activity.

RBM 8 – Search By Electronic Aids Course

On February 3rd – 7th, 2003 in Zones 12 and 13, Canadian Coast Guard offered the Auxiliary the use of their Mobile Electronic Radar Simulator on a trial basis. Rather than members having to attend the Coast Guard College or the Fisheries School for this course, Coast Guard offered the use of their Mobile Simulator. This course worked out really well. Also, by using the Mobile Simulator, we were able to keep overall costs down for training for the RBM 8 course. This course entailed part classroom work and on-water exercise. For the on-water part, both Coast Guard and Auxiliary vessels were used. We appreciate the support Coast Guard has given us with the use of their simulator, however, the simulator is only available when Coast Guard are not using it themselves. We hope that more courses can be offered by Coast Guard using their simulator in January, February and March of 2004 to other zones, as the members who took the course already were very pleased with this type of training course. Thank you very much Coast Guard for your support in this training program.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If you have any articles that you would like to have published in our newsletter, please send them to:

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Or by e-mail to: gary.masson@ccga-m.ca

Your comments or suggestions are greatly appreciated. Thank you