

SHOALS BEACON

Vol. 17, No. 10

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 08E-24-04, Florence, Alabama

November 2008

Flotilla leaders' election Nov. 4

It is again time for the process of electing flotilla commander and vice flotilla commander for 2009. The nomination committee continues to look for qualified candidates willing to run for these offices. The election will be held at our flotilla meeting on Nov. 4, 2008.

The qualifications for both commander and vice commander are as follows:

1. Must by the date of nomination, have a favorable OS PSI determination recorded in AUXDATA; and,
2. Must be a member of the Auxiliary for one year prior to date of election (the time that an individual is in AP status awaiting a PSI determination counts for this purpose); and,
3. Must, by the date of nomination, successfully complete the Administrative Procedures Course (APC); and,
4. Must, by the date of nomination, successfully complete IS 100 and IS 700 courses; and,
5. Must, by the date of nomination, be a member of the flotilla to which they seek elected office; and,
6. Must, by the date of nomination, meet one of the following requirements:
 - A. Have obtained an Auxiliary qualification (interim certification acceptable) and be current in one of the Auxiliary programs or mission area as defined in Auxiliary Manual sections



Christmas dinner set for Dec. 2

Our annual Christmas dinner meeting will be held Tuesday evening, December

2. It will again be held at the Hospitality House on the campus of Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC) in Muscle Shoals.

The NWSCC Singers will perform. Thank you to Bob England for obtaining the use of the facility and the NWSCC Singers as our entertainment and to Ray Styles for the arrangements with the caterer and decorating the facility.

You are encouraged to bring your spouse and friends to the dinner. Dress is casual and no uniforms are expected, but if you wish to wear your uniform feel free to do so. Appetizers, refreshments and setup will be furnished beginning at 6 p.m. If you desire alcoholic beverages you must bring your own. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The menu is below.

The cost is \$20 per person. It is important for you to indicate on your check the doneness of your steak or that you want chicken. Make your check payable to USCG AUX 24-4. Ideally we would like payment at the November 4 Flotilla meeting. But you may mail it no later than November 14 to the finance officer at the following address:

Sally Akin, FSO-FN
2701 Mall Dr STE 7 PMB 205
Florence, AL 35630-1547

MENU

12 oz Ribeye Steak or 8 oz. Parmesan Chicken
Twice Baked Potatoes
Vegetable Medley (Broccoli, Carrots & Cauliflower)
Tossed Salad & Dinner Rolls
Tea and Coffee
Choice of Two Desserts

Klein gives tips on passing APC test

Anyone who has taken the APC (Administrative Procedures Course) exam knows the difficulty and frustration it can present. It commonly requires several attempts to pass. There are many possible reasons for the difficulty. Recently Cliff Klein took the exam and began with some advice he received from the FSO-MT and others. Cliff has offered some commentary on his experience in hope it will benefit others, or as Cliff stated it, "my intent was to erase the "fear factor" in attempting the test." Cliff's commentary follows.

OBJECTIVE: From the outset, it is evident that the primary objective of the [APC] course and testing is to enable the student to become thoroughly familiar with the Auxiliary Manual [AUXMAN], its content and organization. The course is more of "how to locate an item in the manual" rather than "knowing everything that's contained in the manual." (I think Jim Jackson stated this very accurately in a recent member training discussion about the course at our flotilla meeting.)

TEST CONTENT: The test, although very "intense", is fair, objective and thorough (unlike some other AUX testing I've experienced where the question/answers are either ridiculously obvious or completely "devious".) Initially, I thought there were one or two questions concerning new membership procedures that were not covered in the Auxiliary Manual. After a very in-depth search for the subject matter, I finally found the answer provided on the test, but in a different section of the manual, not really related to new member induction. (It was in AUXMAN, but not where you'd expect to find it).

TEST METHOD: The testing is HARD and many of the questions require very close scrutiny to ensure understanding of the question before selection of an answer. (In my first test attempt I did not pass simply because I hastily selected answers to questions I thought were obvious only to find out after that I "misread" the question.)

TEST PROCEDURES: Having the built-in ability to "flag" questions in order to quickly return and re-check answers is very helpful. (Use it to your advantage!) The test is open book (Thank heavens!) and answer look-up is a necessity (keyword searching is a sure method of speeding up the process, but make sure to carefully choose a keyword that does not produce an abundance of responses). I wonder if this test could ever be reasonably passed if it were closed book.

TEST CONTENT: My two testing sessions displayed a very broad range of topics covering almost every section of the Auxiliary Manual. The blend of questions was good but not what I would call optimum. Personally, I think both

test sets that I was dealt had a little too much emphasis on "Uniforms" and "Protocol," but so be it. There was definitely a strong emphasis on topics of "Organization" and "Procedures." (The available question pool must be fairly large since my two test sets had no repeats whatsoever. Curious, how large might the question pool actually be?)

PREPARATION: Don't attempt to take the test without first using the Student Study Guide available on the National Testing Center website, as it gives you a "flavor" of the format and what to expect in depth of information. Reading this guide also forces you to practice information look-up using the manual before attempting to take the test. (Practice does help uncover additional knowledge!)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Do not fear attempting the course! The course can be easily self-administered on-line and accessing the guide and test is fairly straight forward. I recommend it. Caution: Allow a full three hour block of time for your initial testing session. You may need it!

– Cliff Klein

Election of flotilla officers set for November meeting

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- 8.B.2.-8.B.7.; or,
- B. Have served as a staff officer or elected officer at any organizational level for two years; or,
 - C. Have twenty-five (25) hours of documented activity in Auxiliary programs or mission areas authorized in Auxiliary Manual section 2.B. and as reported on Activity Report forms, not including Member Activity forms (ANSC-7029), for the previous year.

If you desire to run for FC or VFC and meet the above qualifications, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you are lacking either (or both) APC or the IS courses, and still wish to run for office, contact FSO-MT (Jim, Jackson) for assistance.

*Nominating Committee
Betty Jackson, Chair
Emily Stewart*



Breakwater at J. P. Coleman State Park Marina with water below normal pool. Good example of value of local knowledge and reason not to take any structure too close aboard. Note position of last PATON on breakwater. Safe water is to the left of the leaning pipe. Photo taken under way from inside harbor by Gary Akin.

Boat crew activity on increase this year

The flotilla activity in the Boat Crew Program this year has been much greater than in recent years. Earlier newsletter articles chronicled the training and certification of new boat crew members John Finch and Cliff Klein, and Tracy Kramer's return to certified boat crew status.

On September 20, activity continued on Wheeler Lake with operations out of Joe Wheeler State Park Marina. It was a multi-flotilla effort to recertify Bill Yancey as coxswain and Carolyne Yancey as boat crew, and for Division Captain Sandra Merlo from 24-2 to complete her 3rd year recurrency requirement.

Duncan Wilkinson from 24-7 served as the Qualification Examiner (QE). It required two OPFACs and a sizable boat crew team to conduct this effort. Bill Yancey's OPFAC 34365 (aka Tennessee Rover) and Johnny Henry's OPFAC 40790 (aka About Time) provided the platforms for coxswains Jim Jackson and Terry Merlo (24-2) and boat crew members Ed Breland (24-5), Dave Duca, John Finch, Johnny Henry, Betty Jackson, and Lois Wilkinson (24-7).

With the wind blowing and a good bit of a chop on Wheeler Lake, the activity was primarily in Second Creek off Wheeler Lake where calmer conditions made the evolutions safer to conduct.

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Photo by Betty Jackson

Bill Yancey tends the helm of OPFAC 34365 while QE Duncan Wilkinson and Jim Jackson look on.



Photo by Duncan Wilkinson

Sandra Merlo, Carolyne Yancey and Bill Yancey smile after finishing their QE evaluation.



Photo by Duncan Wilkinson

Sandra Merlo heaves a line to John Finch.

Upcoming events

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| Nov 1 | Division Board & Staff & Division Elections, Huntsville |
| Nov 4 | Flotilla Meeting & Elections |
| Nov 8 | Pickwick Detachment Meeting |
| Nov 11 | Veterans Day |
| Nov 22-23 | FC Academy, Chattanooga |
| Nov 27 | Thanksgiving |
| Dec 2 | Flotilla Christmas Dinner, NWSCC, Muscle Shoals |
| Dec 5 | Pickwick Christmas Parade, Counce, TN |
| Dec 6 | Pickwick Detachment Meeting |
| Jan 3 | Division Change Of Watch, Huntsville |
| Jan 6 | Flotilla Meeting |
| Jan 10 | Pickwick Detachment Meeting |



Photo by Sally Akin

Jim Jackson receives 15-Year Service Certificate from Flotilla Commander Gary Akin.

Activity on increase

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The exercise went very well, and all were able to enjoy being out on the water on a beautiful fall day. And Bill, Carolyne, and Sandra passed their QE evaluation!

On October 10 and 11, Cliff Klein and Tracy Kramer began their coxswain training with Gary Akin during two days under way on the upper Tenn-Tom Waterway and lower Pickwick Lake.

During the two outings the trainees explored parts of the waters they had not experienced and were acquainted with known hazards like underwater ledges, shallows, and sleepy-looking sloughs hiding numerous residential marinas and boat ramps. Other boats gave ample opportunity to discuss navigation rules and sound signals.

Approaching nightfall gave all a refresher in the increased difficulty of visual navigation and the importance of positive identification of aids to navigation and geographic features. A night transit through the most heavily trafficked portion of Yellow Creek stressed the value of having a mental image of the area while correlating observations with the charts.

Returning the next morning through the same area reinforced why there is the task for coxswain candidates to sketch from memory a chart of the local operating area. With nearly 13 hours under way the two trainees are ready to serve as boat crew in 2009 without delay and have a number of new experiences to carry them through a winter of studying the navigation rules, operations policy manual and the boat crew seamanship manual as they work toward their coxswain qualification.

More underway activity is expected before the end of the year as other boat crew members in the Flotilla complete their required hours for 2008.

— Jim Jackson
Gary Akin

Send comments
and articles to:
Bob Stansell, 1105
Sunset Beach,
Florence, AL 35633
Email to
pierpost@juno.com
Fax to 256-767-
2327



Member accomplishments

- John Finch—Completed APC
- Jim Jackson—15 -Year Service Ribbon
- Jim Jackson—Completed APC (again!)
- Roy Nagle—Meritorious Team Commendation Award for AUXMON (Auxiliary Monitoring of CG High Frequency Broadcasts) Service
- Bill Yancey—Recertified as Coxswain
- Carolyne Yancey—Recertified as Boat Crew