

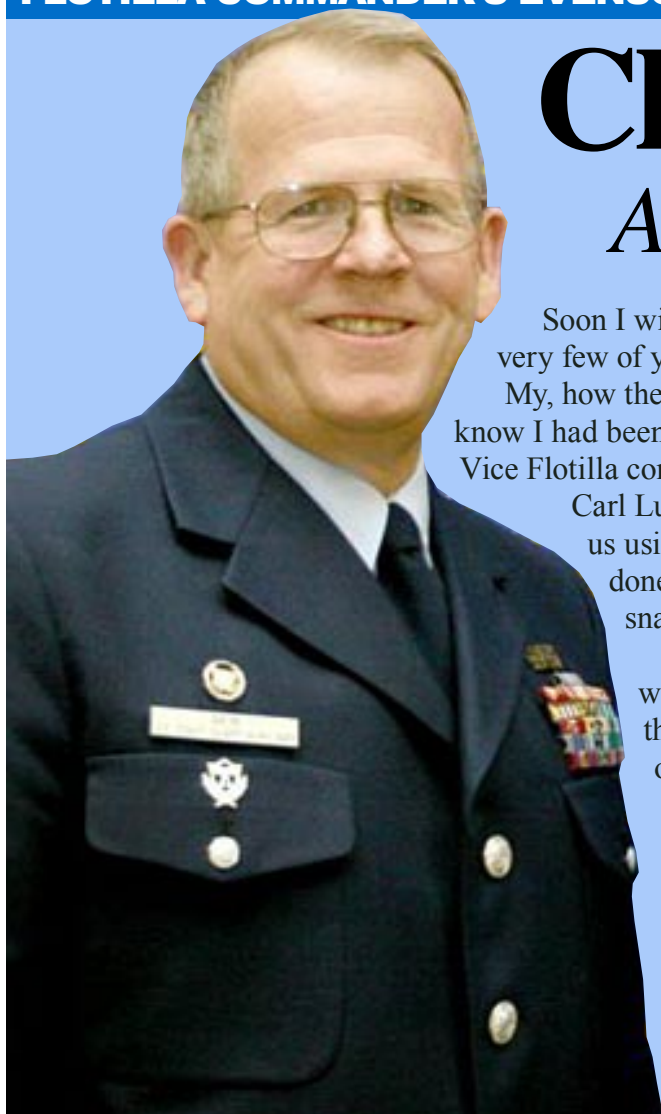
# SHOALS BEACON

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## FLOTILLA COMMANDER'S EVENSONG



FC Gary Akin, who is ending his third term as Flotilla commander this year, has seen numerous changes in how Auxiliary operations are carried out.

## Changing times *Auxiliary reflects impact*

Soon I will conclude my third term as Flotilla commander. There were very few of you in the Flotilla when I served my first term in 1992.

My, how the Auxiliary has changed. I cannot recall 1992 clearly, but I know I had been a member about six months when first elected to serve as Vice Flotilla commander in 1991.

Carl Luckey was the Flotilla commander. There were not many of us using e-mail from home in 1991-1992. Auxiliary business was done over the phone and by what we now commonly hear called snail mail.

You had to wait to get forms or manuals in the mail. There was no such thing as getting on the internet in the middle of the night and downloading to your heart's content and limits of your bandwidth.

In some ways, things were easier then. Certainly, the pace was more relaxed than it is sometimes today. Fast forward to the past few years. The pace is quicker. The requirements are often more stringent. Email brings messages of all sorts, manuals, and forms very nearly 24/7.

I remember 7-11s, but cannot recall hearing the term 24/7 in the early 90s. I think we have to work harder to have fun than we did in the early 90s. Alas, and not unlike the transition from the horse and buggy to the automobile, we have been morphed for better or worse and it has become

unimaginable that we will ever revert to the old ways.

There is a piece that has been around the internet, and through my inbox several times, that foretells how many new occupations will be around in 5-10 years that aren't known to exist today. There will be problems to solve that we don't even know as problems today. It is definitely an exciting, and sometimes frightening, time to be alive.

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Coast Guard photo/Petty Officer 2nd Class Lauren Jorgensen

**CHATHAM, Mass. – From left, a Coast Guard 42-foot motor lifeboat, 36-foot motor lifeboat and 44-foot motor lifeboat gather in front of Coast Guard Station Chatham Friday, Oct. 3, 2008, for what will probably be the last opportunity for the three lifeboats to ever be under way together again. The 36-foot lifeboat, which is now owned by the Orleans Historical Society of Orleans, Mass., is scheduled for dry dock, and the maintenance may not be completed before the 44-foot lifeboat is decommissioned. The most notable rescue by the 36 was in 1952 when the boat crew rescued 32 men from the tanker Pendleton after it broke in half in 60-foot seas.**

## 5 members leaving at end of the year

Five members are saying farewell at the close of 2008. The members departing and their length of membership are: H.L. Brinkley (4 years), Elizabeth and Larry Griffin (3 years), and Johnny and Sue Henry (6 years).

Johnny and Sue were boat crew, Johnny and Larry were vessel examiners, Johnny was an aid to navigation verifier, and HL was well on his way to becoming AUXOP. We regret their departure and wish them happiness, health, and peace in all they do.



Photo by SO-PA Lynn Miles

**24-2 Coxswain Bickie Raspilair is relieved to be done after completing her 3<sup>rd</sup> year currency maintenance check ride on Nov. 15 with QE Gary Akin of 24-4. With a little wind, wet air, and water temperature in the low 60s and air temperatures in the low 50s, no one complained about wearing antiexposure suits. From left are Terry Merlo, coxswain, Bickie, Gary, and Richard Miles, crew.**

## Horton, Finch elected to lead 24-4 in new year

At the November meeting, we elected our officers for 2009. Del Horton was unopposed in the bid for Flotilla commander. John Finch and Cliff Klein competed for the position of Flotilla vice commander and John was elected.

All three are to be thanked for running. Congratulations to Del and John. They are already at work selecting staff. Del, John, and Troy Bates from

the Rogersville Detachment will have attended the Flotilla Commanders Academy in Chattanooga on Nov 22-23 by the time you receive the newsletter.

The fact that all three have the opportunity to attend is a wonderful development and should aid them and the flotilla in getting the New Year underway. Congratulations Del and John!

## Award selection nearing

The process of determining Flotilla and individual awards for 2008 will be under way on December 15. All missions completed prior to this date must be reported and entered into AUXDATA to be considered in the award process. I must have the reports in my hands no later than December 9 in order for

me to get them entered into the system.

Any hours reported after December 15 will not be counted in the 2008 awards process. These hours will be counted in 2009 awards, and will be used for individual year end totals.

– Betty Jackson, FSO-IS



The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Ouachita, based in Hixson, receives the Semper Paratus award for reliable, efficient service throughout the year.

# Inaugural award goes to Quachita

The following article by Rebecca W. Miller appeared in the Chattanooga Community Times Free Press on November 5, 2008. It is reprinted here with permission.

The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Ouachita is the first to receive the Semper Paratus, a new annual award honoring exemplary performance within their sector.

Commander Dennis Evans, the administrative and legislative supervisor for the Sector Ohio Valley headquarters, traveled to Hixson from Louisville, Ky., to present the Semper Paratus award to the 13 sailors and their chief.

"They are certainly an outstanding unit," Mr. Evans said. "They've done a great job over the past year."

The award itself is only a year old and Tony Economy, senior chief of the Ouachita, said that it is a great honor to be the first Coast Guard unit to receive the award in their sector.

"The award has more to do with leadership and sound training practices than anything," Mr. Economy said. "We have an annual inspection where we have to do drills and such, they call that Ready for Operations, that's a big part of what they look at when they do the criteria."

For the annual inspection, Mr. Evans came to the Ouachita to inspect everything from the kitchen sinks to how fit the new crew members are.

It was in the inspection of personnel training where Mr. Economy said his crew came out in the best light.

"It's not easy to keep the people qualified," Mr. Economy said. "Half the crew stays on as general crew for three years, but the other half changes out irregularly."

At any given time, the Ouachita might have half a dozen new Coast Guard recruits fresh from boot camp who must be taken through everything for the first time. Mr. Economy said that on most Coast Guard cutters it takes nearly six months for the new arrivals to qualify.

"Qualified means if there is flooding, loss of steering or an emergency of any kind they have learned how to respond to that," Mr. Economy said. "Whereas it usually takes six months for them to learn it, we do it in one to two. I can't wait six months for them to learn how to fight a fire."

With a small crew of 13, Mr. Economy said training is both easier and harder. Easier because the petty officers can have more one-on-one time helping train the new recruits, and harder because nearly half the time there is someone in training.

However, Mr. Economy has worked out a program sequence that keeps his cutter and its crew operational and prepared for anything.

"When you have a good program set up it doesn't matter if you have one new person coming in or six," Mr. Economy said.

"Our strength is consistency, eagerness and motivation — the willingness to give the public our best service out there."

Mr. Economy said that he only has one and a half more years to serve on the Cutter Ouachita and does not want to leave when his time is up. He said that patrolling the 655 miles of the Tennessee River and working with the small crew is one of the best positions he has been in yet

## Crew puts emphasis on operational readiness

Article and photo taken from November 2008 (0901) SOHV newsletter "One Sector, One System."

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. - USCGC OUACHITA WLR 65501) has won the inaugural Sector Ohio Valley Semper Paratus Award for Outstanding Readiness.

An engraved Louisville Slugger bat denoting the accomplishment was presented to the OUACHITA crew, led by Officer in Charge BMCS Tony Economy, by CDR Evans in a ceremony onboard OUACHITA on October 30th.

Sector Ohio Valley places special emphasis on operational readiness and takes great pride in exceeding Coast Guard operational readiness averages.

The Semper Paratus Award recognizes outstanding accomplishment in achieving the highest levels of operational readiness, measured by superior Ready for Operations inspection scores, high medical deployability of assigned personnel, excellent maintenance of Individual Development Plans, and strong completion of Incident Command System and other mandated training.

CGC OUACHITA beat out 12 other Sector Ohio Valley units for top honors in 2008. The program has been expanded for 2009, and re-titled the William McDevan Award in honor of the first keeper of U.S. Life Saving Station 0810, located in Louisville, Ky., at the Falls of the Ohio.

Opened in 1881, the station provided search and rescue services for mariners around the treacherous Falls of the Ohio. Then, as today, strong operational readiness was required.

Additional elements of the Readiness Award added for 2009 include a focus on fitness activities and occupational health and safety. Sector Ohio Valley looks forward to strong competition again in 2009, as the highest levels of operational readiness are achieved Sectorwide.

## Upcoming events

- Dec 2 Flotilla Christmas Dinner, NWSCC, Muscle Shoals  
Dec 5 Pickwick Christmas Parade, Counce, TN  
Dec 6 Pickwick Detachment Meeting  
Dec 6 Rogersville/Bay Hill Detachment Meeting  
Dec 6 Killen Christmas Parade  
Dec 11 Florence Christmas Parade  
Dec 20 2009 Staff Officer Roster due to Division and DIRAUX
- Jan 3 Division Change Of Watch, Huntsville  
Jan 6 Flotilla Meeting  
Jan 10 Pickwick Detachment Meeting  
Jan 22-25 Huntsville Boat Show--Friday noon-9pm; Saturday 10am-9pm; Sunday 11am-5pm  
Jan 29 BS&S Tentatively begins at UNA East  
Jan 31 Annual FN/MA report deadline for reaching Division Commander

## 5 new members join

You may have heard that the Rogersville Detachment has received an infusion of new enthusiastic members.

Joining the Flotilla with the goal of developing a flotilla at Bay Hill Marina are Cindy and Troy Bates, Ed Breland, and Debbie and John Miller.

The Bates and Breland transferred from 24-5 and the Millers transferred from 24-6. All have boats either at Bay Hill Marina or nearby. Cindy and Troy are vessel examiners and partner visitors. Ed is boat crew, and John recently passed his partner visitor exam and will soon be a certified PV.

FC-elect Del Horton has already met with them and a smooth transition into 2009 is expected. They will normally meet at Bay Hill Marina at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month.

## Akin ending third term

Continued from page 1

Our world will continue to change, as will the Auxiliary.

As my year ends I see goals we fell short on, but I also see things accomplished we had no idea would happen. We could not have foreseen the Rogersville Detachment would gain additional energy and enthusiasm from members transferring into the Flotilla. We added two new boat crew and recovered two crew and one coxswain that were REYR.

Yes, we lost some members. The departure of any member from the family is always sad, but the day of departure will come for each of us. We have a quiet unsung member who is but one of three CG Auxiliarists that are physician assistants and ours travels to Aviation Training Center Mobile often to augment the Health Corps there.

There are the many of you who continue week after week, month after month, and year after year performing what I view as "Job 1" in the Auxiliary – the Recreational Boating Safety program. Frequently, the only reward is an occasional thank you and the belief that, what you do to promote boating safety, has made or will make a difference in some boater's experience or perhaps save their life.

I'm pleased to see the leaders that are among our newer members. I am more than pleased that some of them are taking the steps to lead us. I'm delighted that two will lead us in 2009. Soon you will assume the helm. I challenge you to remember you do not have to do it alone, nor in a vacuum; the experience and energy of the flotilla is but a request away.

These last five years in elected office (1 as division vice, 2 as division captain, and the last 2 as Flotilla commander) have had both high and low points.

Overall, it has been a rewarding experience. I have learned and relearned much more than I ever imagined when I began. I have found pleasure in watching you grow in the Auxiliary. Keep up the good work.

I wish you and yours happiness, health and peace in the coming Holidays.

Semper Paratus!

– Gary Akin, FC

## Member accomplishments

John Miller – Completed RBS Partner Visitor exam

Roy Nagle – CG Team

Meritorious Commendation for AUXMON

Gary Akin, Betty Jackson,

Jim Jackson, and Roy

Nagle – CG Team Meritorious Commendation for role in SONS (Spills of National Significant) 07 exercise.

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