

THE LIFE LINE

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U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
District 5 SR - Division 23
Flotilla 23-07 Herring Bay, Maryland

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THE AUXOP AWARD

SUMMER 2023



The AUXOP, or "Operational Auxiliarist" Program is an advanced training program available to members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary who wish to increase their practical relevance to Coast Guard missions and better assist the Coast Guard to fulfill needed skill sets. Members who successfully complete their training are authorized to wear the prestigious AUXOP device, shown below, and their membership level advances from Initially Qualified (IQ) or Basic Qualified (BQ) to Operational Auxiliarist (AX).

The program has sometimes been referred to as the "Ph.D of the Auxiliary" and members who attain AUXOP status should be justly proud of their accomplishment which increases their utility to the Auxiliary as well as the Coast Guard and in their ability to serve as a role model for their fellow Auxiliarists.

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In order to qualify as an Operational Auxiliarist, the member must successfully obtain a minimum of seven (7) credits from three categories of courses. Each of the courses requires a proctored, closed-book final examination with a minimum passing grade of 75%.

Course categories and requirements are as follows:

1. Required core courses, worth one credit each (3 available, all are required);
2. Leadership course, worth one credit (5 available; credit given only for one)
3. Elective courses, credits vary (Numerous courses available)

Our own Flotilla 23-07 member, Joseph DiStefano, recently completed all the required training and was officially designated to wear the AUXOP device on his uniform. Bravo Zulu, Joe!



F. Voltaggio, FSO-PB

HERRINGTON HARBOUR SOUTH SAFETY DAY

Herrington Harbour South partnered with Flotilla 23-07 to host their annual Marina Safety Day on May 20, a vibrant event aimed at promoting safe boating practices and fostering a strong sense of community among boaters. The day was filled with educational activities and engaging fellowship, leaving attendees with valuable knowledge and unforgettable experiences.

Throughout the day, Auxiliarists from across the Divisions worked together to conduct 26 vessel safety checks, ensuring that boats were equipped with essential safety equipment and met necessary regulations. Additionally, 7 paddle craft inspections took place, emphasizing the importance of safety measures for all types of watercraft.

One of the highlights of the day was the "Suddenly In Command" course, which drew an impressive attendance of 22 people. This course provided a comprehensive education on handling emergencies at sea and equipping boaters with the necessary skills to act confidently when unforeseen circumstances arise.

However, it was the real-life stories shared by experienced boaters that resonated the most with attendees. These narratives offered practical insights and valuable lessons, leaving participants inspired and more aware of potential challenges and solutions on the water.

After a day of learning and safety checks, the event concluded with a delightful fellowship where Auxiliarists enjoyed mouthwatering burgers while engaging in lively conversations. The camaraderie among boaters was evident as they exchanged stories, shared tips, and strengthened their bonds within the maritime community.



VFC Brian Shrift firing up the grill.

The success of Herrington Harbour South's Marina Safety Day highlights the value of proactive safety initiatives and community engagement in promoting responsible boating. By providing education and opportunities for meaningful interactions, the event has undoubtedly contributed to making the waters a safer and more enjoyable environment for all boaters.

As the boating season continues, the impact of this event is expected to resonate throughout the Herrington Harbour South community, ensuring that boaters of all levels of experience can navigate the waters with confidence and a strong commitment to safety.

YARD SALE EVENT

On June 3, Flotilla 23-07, including Auxiliaries across the Divisions, attended Herrington Harbour North's annual Yard Sale event. In addition to our presence, talking to and distributing boating safety materials, we also conducted vessel safety checks.

Throughout the day, fellow Coast Guard Auxiliaries in partnership with the Maryland Department of National Resources Police, conducted 22 vessel safety checks (VSC). Boaters were provided with expert guidance and information to ensure their boats complied with essential safety regulations. Additionally, those unable to participate in the safety checks on the day were given the opportunity to sign up for future appointments, emphasizing the commitment to accommodating everyone's safety needs.

The collaboration with the Maryland Department of National Resources Police brought added expertise and knowledge to the safety checks, further emphasizing the importance of responsible boating practices.

Beyond the VSC, a prominent booth was set up to engage the public, providing an opportunity to interact with the community and address any questions or concerns they had about boating safety. This direct communication allowed for valuable exchanges and spreading awareness about the significance of safe boating practices to a broader audience.



Auxiliary Kimberle Zimmerman of Flotilla 24-04.

By combining the fun of a yard sale with the importance of VSC and community engagement, Herrington Harbour North effectively created an event that not only provided valuable safety resources but also strengthened the bond between boaters and their neighbors.

As the positive impact of this event reverberates through the community, it is expected to inspire more boaters to prioritize safety and responsible practices while enjoying the beauty of the waterways. The collaboration with the Maryland Department of National Resources Police and the active involvement of the community will continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring safe boating for everyone in the region.

Gini Shrift, FC



ELECTIONS

As the chair of the screening committee for our upcoming Division elections, I wanted to share some information along with important dates.

Division 23 is scheduled to hold elections on 05 OCT during our regular business meeting. As the elections will be held electronically, no nominations from the floor will be allowed.

Candidates must submit a letter of intent to Margaret Butler, DCDR, and myself, no later than 14 days in advance of the election (21 SEP). The Division elections will be held electronically, with more information to come on electronic voting during our business meetings.

Important Dates:

06 AUG Letter of Intent (Standing Rules 6.2) and Candidate Bio (optional) Due

21 AUG Submission of Screening Committee Report to the Division Commander (Standing Rules 6.3)

05 SEP Division Commander notifies Board of Committees Report (Standing Rules 6.4)

21 SEP Letter of Intent (extended due to the electronic meeting policy) and Candidate Bio (optional) Due

If you have been on the fence, you still have time to consider running for office. And remember, your flotilla is running through this process right now, so if you are not ready to put your name forth at the Division, we ask that you consider supporting your flotilla by standing up for Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander or one of the several staff office positions.

Thank you for your consideration in helping to lead Division 23.

Brian Shrift, VFC

AWARDS

Joseph DiStefano - Auxiliary Operations and Sustained Auxiliary Service Award for over 1500 cumulative hours of Outstanding Service and Support since 23 April 2020.

Christopher Jensen - Auxiliary Annual Service Performance Award for service in excess of 60 Program Visits during the year 2022.

Brian Shrift - Sustained Auxiliary Service Award for over 1500 cumulative hours of Outstanding Service and Support since 13 April 2017.

Paul Manicone - Membership Service Award for five years of dedicated service as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Gini Shrift - Membership Service Award for five years of dedicated service as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

PASSING THOUGHT

The needs of the many far outweigh those of the few, or the one.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 14 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

September 11 - Flotilla meeting, virtual, 1900

October 9 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

November 13 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

Visit us at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=054-23-07>

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Photos by Gini Shrift.

