

USCG AUXILIARY FLOTILLA 69 – LAKE LIVINGSTON DETACHMENT NEWS

By: Debra Gawron-Rosario and Mark Shield



Mark Shield with the USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 69
Lake Livingston Detachment Operations Vessel,

Friday February 4, 2011 was a freezing cold day that Texas has not seen in a long time. The weather didn't impact the spirit or initiative of a scheduled meeting at Cape Royale Subdivision in Coldspring, TX. The focus of the meeting was to introduce the United States Coast Guard (U.S.C.G.) Auxiliary Flotilla 69 - Lake Livingston Detachment to the invited guests.

Lake Livingston Detachment Leader Mark Shield opened the meeting with introductions of the members of Flotilla 69 – Lake Conroe. Present were Flotilla Commander Jay Schmidt; Vice-Flotilla Commander Debra Gawron-Rosario; FSO-HR Mike Smith, and Immediate Past Flotilla Commander Ben Rosario; along with Randy Hall and Bill Walker - Flotilla 69 members of the Lake Livingston Detachment. Our distinguished guests then introduced themselves individually. Present were: Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens, Melissa Brown, Brandon Mosley, Ryan Hall and Sheriff James Walters, San Jacinto County Sheriff Office; Bob Long, Chief Deputy of San Jacinto County and Mark Waters, Trinity River Authority Administrator.

Mark Shield presented a condensed history of the reasons Randy Hall, Mark Shield and Bill Walker initiated the development of a U.S.C.G. Auxiliary on Lake Livingston. A key point was the growing response by Cape Area Volunteer Fire Department for Search and Rescue (SAR) responses on the lake, which is an indicator that the boaters are in need of structured boater education. Randy sought out the initial contact with Flotilla 69 on Lake Conroe after he, Mark Shield and members of the VFD participated in on-the-water training with the USCG in Houston. In efforts to make the Lake Livingston Detachment effective, they also had a boat donated by one of the Cape's distinguished residents to be utilized on Lake Livingston in the capacity of a USCG Auxiliary Operations Vessel. The detachment is currently seeking to become an independent flotilla once enough members are recruited and trained, which is anticipated to be within 12 to 24 months.

The meeting was then turned over to Jay Schmidt, Flotilla Commander. Jay presented detailed information to assist the guests in understanding the composition, history, and missions of the USCG Auxiliary and how we will interface with them in both normal operations and during times of heightened security. The USCG Auxiliary's motto is *Sempar Paratus* – "Always Ready" and has been serving the country since the 1930's. He also pointed out that "Boating Safety" is the core of the USCG Auxiliary, noting that many people participating in recreational boating do not understand safe, effective boating practices nor do they understand rules of the road on the water.



Jay Schmidt, Commander of
USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 69

Our membership across the United States is a multiplier for the regular Coast Guard. After the events of 9/11, the USCG and USCG Auxiliary became integral components of the Department of Homeland Security. The USCG Auxiliary is not a law enforcement or military branch. It is a volunteer civilian branch tasked with the job of educating the public on the subject of Boating Safety and supporting USCG full-time personnel so they can devote 100% of their efforts toward their primary missions - homeland security and Search and Rescue.

The Auxiliary has Four Cornerstones which are: Vessel Examination, Education, Operations and Fellowship. The Vessel Safety Check is a free no-fault examination available to any recreational boater which helps boaters ensure their craft complies with Federal and State boating regulations. On the Education side, the Auxiliary teaches boating safety to recreational boaters of all ages. Operations include; the Auxiliary operating safety and regatta patrols and is an integral part of the Coast Guard Search and Rescue team. Auxiliarists also stand communication watches, assist during mobilization exercises, perform harbor and pollution patrols, provide platforms for unarmed boarding parties and recruit new people for the Service. And finally, Fellowship is the "glue" and common vision which holds the Auxiliary members together.

After a short answer and question period the meeting was adjourned.



Distinguished guests with members of USCG Flotilla 69 together at meeting.



(l-r), Jay Schmidt (USCGA), Randy Hall, Melisa Brown (TPW), Mark Waters (TRA), Brandon Mosley (TPW), Mark Shield (USCGA)

Efforts to spread the word and recruit members are ongoing. Recreational Boating Visitation sites are in the process of being deployed around the lake at local marinas and businesses. These sites will house free informational materials for boaters. In the next few months look for scheduled free Vessel Exam Days at local boat ramps and marinas.

If any Marina or Property Owners Association in and around Lake Livingston would like an information presentation made at one of their business meetings, set up a Vessel Exam day, or are interested in having a boating safety class, please contact Mark Shield via email at: cgauxllmss@gmail.com.

Anyone interested in joining the Auxiliary can contact Mike Smith, Flotilla 69-Lake Conroe FSO-HR via email (flags12345@gmail.com) for more information. Please indicate that you are interested in Lake Livingston's detachment.

You may also leave a message at the USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 69 by calling 936-588-3322 and your message will be forwarded to the appropriate officer.