Virgil Allmond  
Flotilla Commander  
May Report

What an active month we’ve had. FSO Operations Officer, Robert McNamee and I met with Master Chief Jensen and our new Auxlo (Auxiliary Liasson Officer) Colt Fairchild.

Master Chief Jensen is leaving in June and it has been a pleasure to work with him. He has fostered a relationship between the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard, that is second to none. Every Thursday now, one of our Auxiliary Facilities is working with a Coast Guard boat, either a 33’ or the 45’.

We are finishing up the galley project this month and FS1, Tamekia Wright, (Food Services) is deciding how many days the Auxiliary members will be needed to cook during May and June.

In addition, Tom Anderson and I took my facility down to Key West and joined a boat from Flotilla 13-2 and one from Flotilla 13-01, in working the “Paddle Board Race”, along with two Coast Guard Vessels. Tom and I took the boat down on Friday, worked the race on Saturday and returned to Big Pine Key on Saturday afternoon.

National Boating Safety Week starts for us on Friday the 16th. At 8:50 A.M. I will be on the radio at 104.9, talking about our activities during the following week. Following is the schedule for our Big Pine Key, Mobile Trailer locations for the week.

Saturday  17May Public Boat Ramp at Bogie Channel 0800 –1200 hrs.
Sunday    18May Winn Dixie Parking Lot 0800-1200 hrs.
Monday    19May Big Pine Fishing Lodge 0800 –1200 hrs.
Tuesday   20May Sugarloaf KOA Campground boat ramp 0800-1200 hrs.
Thursday  22May Venture Out Marina, Cudjoe Key 0800-1200 hrs.

May Commander report continued on page two.
We've made a “ginormous” 5ftX8ft sign to go on top of our mobile trailer to draw attention to our activity. Stop by and enjoy the fellowship with us while we work with the boating public stressing pre-launch checklists, float plans, PFDs (Personal Floating Device) and do vessel safety exams.

There are many other things going on around the Flotilla, but these are the things I have been directly involved in this month. We are looking forward to a great “Boating Safety Week”. See you at one of our booth locations.

Photo above left: Dick McCausland receives an award for outstanding performance for vessel exams, as well as a Certificate for Leadership Course from FC Allmond. Above middle: Three new Water Surface Crew, Bill Downes, Phil (Doc) Stern and Dale Gittings. Whoops! Did Jan really take this photo in black and White? Above right shows the two Quality Examiners, Brodie and Chester, making their test plans.

Photo Above left: Doc Stern and Dale Gittings two of the boat crew candidates are qualifying for crew by showing use of PFD device. Middle above Doc is testing the coldness of the swimming pool at the home of a neighbor of Don & Jan and in photo above right: What happened to Dale? He jumped in but all we saw was a splash!
Minutes for May 8 meeting

The Flotilla Staff Officer portion of the meeting opened at 1815. Vice Commander Ken Nelson brought us up to date on plans for the Safe Boating Week.

The regular meeting was called to order at 1900, with the Pledge to the Flag. Our new Auxiliary Liaison Officer from Sector Key West, LTJG Peter Bermont was introduced. The minutes from the April meeting were read and approved with the following correction, The word “refresher” to be inserted before TCT in reference to the TCT instruction by Bob McNamee, at our April meeting.

Martin Mara, Flotilla Staff Officer of Finance, presented the April treasurer’s report, stating that all bills are paid. The report approval was unanimous. Martin also presented the report the Treasurer report for March and that was accepted as well. Martin requested that we transfer $5000.00 from our Checking account to the savings account. A motion to grant that request was made by Donna Moore, seconded by Doc Stern and approval was unanimous.

Other Staff reports were heard. Don Kittsmiller asked if our MMSI number was registered for our Mobile One Radio. Discussion followed and we will hear further at a later date.

Martin Mara mentioned that he had found a Garrison Cap that was left at our Change of Watch, December, 2013 and if anyone had misplaced theirs, to give him a call.

Vice Commander, Ken Nelson reviewed the activities planned for “Safe Boating Week” and members were were asked to confirm what shifts they are able to cover in manning the Stations.

After a brief presentation, by Flotilla Commander. Virgil Allmond, a motion was made by Martin Mara to join the Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce. Doc Stern provided the second and the vote of approval was unanimous.

Dale Gittings suggested that the Flotilla make a concerted effort to make the “Live aboard Communities” aware of the free (paid by property owners taxes) pump-out service that is available for everyone, on the water or dockside at home. The company has flyers that we could distribute with our Partner Visitation Program. To contact them on line here is their website: pumpoutusaflkeys.com

The Commissioning of the newest Cutter is scheduled for this Saturday, May 10, In Key West. Members who would like to attend are asked to contact LTJG Bermont or Dewey Jackson.

Secretary Report continued on page four
Secretary Report continued from page three:

Don Kittsmiller requested approval for purchases for paper, ink and a gift for Master Chief Jensen for his Change of Watch at Station Marathon.

Lynda Haring, (who was not present at the meeting) has asked about the possibility of taping our meetings for the absent members. Dale Gittings advised he can help with this and will look into the feasibility of how this can be done and report back to us in June.

Phil Goodman of Flotilla 13-01 and Elsie Metcalf are participating in a CPR program and hope to become certified to teach that class themselves to our members.

LT Bermont spoke for a few minutes, telling us how much the auxiliary has meant to him wherever he was stationed. He said the Auxiliarists bring a sense of family to a Military environment, especially during holiday seasons when they are all away from home. He hopes to keep our bond with Station’ Marathon strong. Senior Chief Jeff Graham is leaving May 9th and his replacement, BMC Michael Coccitto is already in place at Station Marathon.

Dick McCausland was presented the Auxiliary Performance Award for Vessel Exams, as well as a Certificate of training for the Leadership Practices workshop.

Martin Mara was presented the “Caught Ya” award for his ingenious line storing system idea.

This month’s rendezvous is at Michael and Nancy Bloch’s home on Sunday, the 11th. 1757 Watson Blvd, Big Pine Key.

Motion to adjourn was approved at 2015.
Martin Mara    FSO-FN
Financial Officer
May 2014 Report


CD (First State Bank) $3,547.90
Savings $  654.72
Checking $10,730.35
Total $14,932.97

1. All known bills are paid.
2. There are now 8 members in arrears for 2014 dues.
3. I have $70.00 in un-deposited funds (dues) since end of month,
   Which will be reflected in next month's summary.

During the boat crew training, a new idea was suggested for handling tow lines. Use a bucket to hold lines instead of coiling them on deck to reduce potential tripping hazards. Martin Mara, Crew member on facility #549, (Jan's Choice) went to work on this new technique and came up with the line handling bucket. It is screwed through the base with silicon filler, to ensure water tightness. The PVC pipe can be removed to allow the bucket to revert back to a water bailer.

Photo above left: The bucket as described herein. Photo above right: Martin Mara received the “Caught Ya” Award at our meeting on May 8, 2014 for his inventive idea for The Bucket. He was also given an Auxiliary Challenge Coin.
My goals for this year have not changed, but not much has been accomplished other than getting all our radios inspected and into AUXDATA. We had Mobile 1 radio changed from the past Commander, to the present one of Virgil Allmond.

We now have our sign on the rear of the trailer, showing that it is an Emergency Communication Center, Mobile 1, Big Pine Key.

Our radios are still dormant with little interest and no other use other than for new boat crew training.

We can still offer anyone going out to sea a chance to call any of the radio operators for a standby and we can assist if needed. I will be gone for the summer, so have a great year.

Dick McCausland in “Frail Whale, taking part in two boat training with the USCG, January, 2014.
Neil and I have returned to Pennsylvania. Unpacking is never fun and the weather is COLD, but we look forward to returning to Paradise in 8 months. Meanwhile, I will continue the project of making telephone contacts with members during the summer months.

I hope to stay informed of the total “HR” picture from this remote location in PA (Pennsylvania) and will continue to report monthly. To that end, goals for Human Resources include: 1. Enrollment of 10 new members to our Flotilla. 2. Increased efforts in the area of recruitment and member retention.

Goal #1: Paperwork has been sent in for one additional new member for our Flotilla. We are also happy to have a candidate from Coast Guard Station Marathon, who has expressed a desire to join our Flotilla. He and some others are in the discernment process.

Goal #2 As always, members of the Auxiliary are the best recruiters of new candidates. If you know of individuals who have interest and would like to be an asset to our Flotilla, please let me or any Flotilla Leader know.

The project of contacting all Flotilla members will continue during the summer and fall. These calls provide a sense of care and concern for each member. So far those who have been called have welcomed the contact.

If Human resources can be of help to you in any way, please let me or any other Flotilla Leader know. Feel free to call me at home in Pennsylvania, at 484-794-0773. I appreciate being “kept in the loop” especially during these months of northern exile.

To my knowledge, we are still seeking someone, preferably a full-time keys resident, to assist in the Human Resources task. If you might be interested in helping in this important aspect of Flotilla life, please call me, or let Virgil Allmond know.

Lynda Haring receives her Certificate of completion of Watchstander Training from Master Chief, Michael Jensen, USCG Station Marathon.
We have come to the summer months now, when some of our Flotilla Officers are going back to their various homes in colder climates. For those of us who are still here, but trying to help out with the continuation of our Flotilla responsibilities and still maintain somewhat of a private life, it is quite a balance.

It is important to remember that not only do we all have the responsibility to make the entire team look good, we have to maintain a little “down time” keep our family team functioning while still keeping a positive attitude. It is important to know that this “reporter” considers the team members we have in Big Pine Key Flotilla a particularly strong “family” unit and one of the reasons I think this is.... the experience that I have encountered during the nine-plus years, that I have been fortunate enough to be a member of this group.

Let us all take a deep breath this summer and assist those that need help from us while maintaining the integrity of our Beloved Big Pine Key 13-3.

If I may assist anyone with anything they need from the informational side of my two jobs, or with help to maintain our link with the publications, please feel free to call on me. Don and I will be out of the area from July 9 through 20, (to hopefully make some money) but both of us can be contacted via our email or cell phone. I know we have some talented “writers or authors” that could contribute some interesting articles for the Channel Marker. Please feel free to send me articles of interest to keep our newsletter more enlightening and enjoyable to read.

Both numbers and email are available from our own Flotilla 13-3 roster publication. This roster can also be found on our Flotilla website under “members only”. Should you need a new up-to-date roster, let me know and I will send you a copy.
DON’S AWARD CORNER

This month I will describe how you can earn the:

AUXILIARY EXAMINATIONS-MARINE DEALER VISITATION SERVICE AWARD

The VE/RBSP Service Award is awarded for completing a total of 60 or more vessel examinations, of any combination, including auxiliary surface facilities, recreational boats, paddle craft, personal water craft, commercial fishing vessels, uninspected passenger vessels, and uninspected towing vessels (a total of 20 or more examinations, of any combination, commercial fishing vessels, uninspected passenger vessels and uninspected towing vessels will also earn the award). It may be awarded for conducting a total of 60 or more RBSVPs. It may also be awarded for conducting a total of 60 or more RBSVPs and vessel examinations identified above.

For full details consult the Auxiliary Manual, Chapter 11, page 11.
Ted Giesbrecht and Don Way have agreed to assist me in developing a Big Pine Key Flotilla Logo. We would like to use this on T-shirts, coins and stationary if possible. Anyone with a good idea for the Logo or how we can utilize it, I would like to hear from you.

Ken Nelson and I are preparing for the upcoming National Safe Boating Campaign starting May 17 to May 23. We are going to set up our Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) trailer at boat ramps and Winn Dixie. We are shooting for five days, 3 to 4 hours each day and will need a lot of help with the Booth and to conduct Vessel Examinations. We will be distributing bags of literature to the public. They will include a sample float plan, a boaters check list, decals for boats (Aids to navigation, radio procedures and water way watch) how to obtain a complimentary recreational vessel exam, different safe boating brochures, state and federal regulations and a flyer on who we are and how to join the USCG Auxiliary.

We are asking local radio stations if they would like to participate. I’m preparing several news releases to local media. I spoke with Bill Becker from radio station 104.1 and we are slated to promote National Boating Safety week on his show on the 16th at 8:50 A. M. Virgil will be on that.

The Flotilla also took part with the Bahia Honda State Park Officials and other organizations with the annual “Earth Day Celebration”, with 20 auxiliarists assisting with meeting the public and contributing their expertise with the kids and conducting vessel Safety examinations.
The following article was contributed to our Big Pine Key Channel Marker, at the urging of Don and Jan Kittsmiller. Doc Stern is a former Chief (E-7) with the US Navy and served as Chief Hospital Corpsman. Don, Doc, Ken Nelson, Frank and Carolyn Fasano represented Flotilla 13-3 at the Commissioning of the USCG Cutter Kathleen Moore. Photos for this commissioning were taken by FSO-PA (Public Affairs) Don Kittsmiller for Flotilla 13-3. For non-military such as I, it is good to have someone explain the significance of the ceremony. (Editor: Jan)

“A SHIP IS A LIVING THING”

A ship is a living thing. It has a pulse. It breathes. Its lifeblood is the crew that mans her. Ships are born and the Commissioning Ceremony is the event that brings it to life. While at this ceremony, I was reminded of being a part of the crew for a de-commissioning of the USS Corry DD-817. A de-commissioning is like the commissioning, but in reverse. Both are steeped in tradition and emotion, with the commissioning being the happier.

The official commissioning ceremony began with the announcement of the Official Party, playing of the National Anthem by the Key West High School Band, Invocation, Speakers, which included the President of Bollinger Shipyards (Chris B. Bollinger) and the presiding Official, Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard (Vice Admiral John P. Currier), placed the Ship in commission. This is the official turnover from the civilian builder (Bollinger Shipyards to the Coast Guard). These speakers spoke of the really close partnership between them. Bollinger shipyard even found the unmarked grave of Kathleen Moore and erected a marker for her. "(Kathleen Moore was the Lighthouse Keeper from the age of 12, at Black Rock Harbor Lighthouse at Fayer-Weather Island, in Long Island Sound and was credited with saving over 21 lives during her rein of 60 years as lighthouse keeper)."

The Vice Admiral turned the ship over to the “Prospective” Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Gregory E. Higgins and he gives his remarks. The Prospective Commanding Officer ordered the Executive Officer (XO), Lieutenant Junior Grade, Curtis A. Gookin to set the First Watch. Master Chief of the Coast Guard, Charles (Skip) Bowen (retired) presented a Long Glass to the Command Chief of the Kathleen Moore, Chief Petty Officer Erik A. Gonzalez, who then assumes duty as the Officer of the Deck (OOD). The long glass is a telescope that is the symbol of the OOD. It signifies that he is in charge of protecting the ship in port and to act as the CO’s direct representative. This is a tradition that is hundreds of years old and is seen on many of the ships of Naval Forces around the world. The OOD walked on the ship and took station outside the wheelhouse on the deck above the main deck with the long glass tucked under his arm.

A Ship is a living thing continues on page Twelve
A Living Thing  (Commissioning of Kathleen Moore) from page Eleven

Each Ship has a sponsor. It is usually a woman who will forever help provide for the comfort and welfare of the crew. Mrs. Mary Jane Currier, wife of Vice Admiral Currier was selected as the sponsor for the Kathleen Moore. She received a gift from the ship and in turn presented a print of the ship’s “Namesake” including the ship’s history, crest, Ship’s Motto (Honor the Legacy) and the date of the commissioning. This print will hang in a common place, (usually the dining area). This was a very special occasion for Mrs. Currier as Vice Admiral Currier retires within 10 days after the Commissioning. Admiral Currier served in the Coast Guard for thirty-eight years.

Next, it was time to man the ship and bring her to life. Mrs. Currier ordered the crew to man the ship and then the OOD ordered the crew to man the ship. They joined the OOD on the same deck. Now the ship was manned. “She Now has her lifeblood”. This brought a tear to my eye, as I remembered leaving a ship thirty three years before.

Next, Lieutenant Gregory Higgins read his orders to report to Commander, Seventh District and rear Admiral John H. Korn and assumed the Command of the USCG Cutter, Kathleen Moore. They exchange salutes and the ship now has its first Commanding Officer (CO).

The CO now orders the OOD to break out the U. S. Flag and a commissioning pennant from the “Halyard” up on the Mast. This signifies that the CO (Commanding Officer) is onboard. The CO made his final remarks and the XO (Executive Officer) concluded the ceremony after the Benediction.

As you may take, from reading this description of the commissioning ceremony of the Cutter Kathleen Moore, it is that this ceremony is steeped in tradition. It is the delivery of a ship from the builder to the Coast Guard. Then it is passed down the Chain of command to its Commanding Officer and then the manning of the ship and bringing her to life.

I suggest that all members of the Auxiliary, attend one of these ceremonies. It is the men and women who serve every day in the Coast Guard that we are here to support. Auxiliary members in attendance were welcomed as part of the Coast Guard Family.

Note from editor: Please see the following pages for photos of this Commissioning done by our PA Officer. Your humble editor will attempt to place these photos in order of the carrying out of this ceremony. Thanks to Doc for supplying this report. Great writing!
Photos from Commissioning Ceremony for USCG Cutter, Kathleen Moore.
May 10, 2014

Photo above left, USCG Cutter Kathleen Moore at dockside.
Photo above right: Turnover of USCG Cutter Kathleen Moore by Chris B. Bollinger, President of Bollinger Shipyard.

Photo above left: left to right, Retiring Admiral John P. Currier & his wife Mary Jane Currier.
Photo above right: left to right Commanding Officer, Gregory E. Higgins with Mrs. Currier.

Photo above left: The Gift of a print of the Light-House keeper, Kathleen Moore, Namesake of the Cutter.
Photos from the Commissioning Ceremony of USCG Cutter, Kathleen Moore.  
May 10, 2014

Photo above left:  Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Charles “Skip” Bowen, (retired) presents the “Long Glass” to Command Chief, Eric A. Gonzalez.

Photo above right:  Crew of USCG Cutter Kathleen Moore, “Manning the Ship” during Commissioning Ceremony.

Members of Flotilla 13-3 attending the Commissioning Ceremony for USCG Cutter, Kathleen Moore.

Our big event this year was April 12, with the participation in Bahia Honda State Park’s Earth Day Celebration. According to the “Park Rangers” Our booth had more representation than any other booth!

Our PA Officer, Don Kittsmiller reports that 20 of our members participated, many of whom were Vessel Examiners that completed more than 56 vessel examinations at the Marina, on trailers and storage ramps.

In addition, eight children were properly fitted with complimentary PFDs (Personal Flotation devices). We had participation of 11 parents of children who participated in the explanation and demonstration of flotation devices that were already in their possession (We hope to expand this program in the future).

We also had referrals for boat safety examinations that were postponed for a later date, so that the boat-owners could fulfill the guidelines to be presented to us in the future. Education is the Key. Good Going, Flotilla 13-3!

Statistics for the year ending April, 2014 are as follows: Total vessel exams 364, Total for April was 67, and percentage of exams passed were 87.1%. A large portion of our vessel examinations were done for paddle craft. Our outreach and focus on paddle craft has been taken seriously by our Vessel Examiners.

In May, our Flotilla are taking part in the National Boating Safety week under the Leadership of Ken Nelson, Vice Flotilla Commander and Don Kittsmiller, our Public Affairs Officer. Our Flotilla Mobile Trailer is being used for 3 to 4 hour missions on 5 separate occasions and at that many locations. More information about this coverage will be reported in our June newsletter due to the timing of the current newsletter deadline. We know we will have a great cooperative team as always. Due to fewer people visiting in the summer months and a slightly smaller number of members, we will, as always give this a Great Team Effort. Look for our up to date report in June-July newsletter.

This photo is a repeat of one we published in the April newsletter, showing our team at work at Bahia Honda Earth Day.
Members completing training in April 2014 are:
One hour TCT Refresher- Diane and Jim Adam, Michael Bloch, Nancy Bloch, Don and Jan Kittsmiller, Susan Harfield & John Rhode.
4/8 hour TCT—Dale Gittings, Alex Tannucilli and Phil Stern.
Vessel Exam workshop –Ron Jeliff.
Operations Workshop-Virgil Allmond, Dale Gittings, Don Kittsmiller, Robert McNamee and Phil Stern.
RBS Visitor Qualification – Jo Allmond.
Assistant Pollution Investigator-Phil Stern.
ICS 100 and 700-Dale Gittings.
In addition, completing Crew qualification were: William Downes, Dale Gittings and Phil Stern.

Photo above left: On the day of the QE session for boat crew, Phil (Doc) Stern studies the luscious looking tray of pastries Done by Dottie Anderson.

Photo above right, Bill Downes, Doc and Dale on Coxswain Don Kittsmiller’s facility, Auxiliary Vessel 549 for night patrol.
DID YOU KNOW?

As legend has it, during the first World War, a wealthy American pilot presented his squadron-mates with a small bronze commemorative coin, bearing the unit’s insignia. One Pilot placed the coin in a small pouch, he wore around his neck for safekeeping. Later, this pilot was forced to land behind enemy lines. The German’s confiscated all of his belongings, but did not notice the pouch around his neck.

He soon escaped, but was captured and mistaken by the French for a Saboteur. Facing execution and lacking any identification, the pilot showed them his coin. A Frenchman recognized the squadron insignia, buying enough time for the French to verify his story and spare his life.

It became a tradition for pilots to carry their coins at all times. If a pilot did not have his coin, he had to buy his CHALLENGER a drink. If a pilot had his coin, he had to drink instead.

Challenge coins today are given as a special “THANK YOU” from different units and are sought after and to be cherished for something special you did that was recognized by your peers.
FOR THE GOOD OF THE FLOTILLA:

Photo above left: shows Ken Nelson & Dottie Anderson after a trash clean up along our shorelines in April. These missions are reported under Marine Safety category in auxdata.

Photo above right: We always have a varied selection of trash to pick up. This time, it was a dishwasher. Here, you see Ken Nelson wheeling a dishwasher up to be picked up? Donna Moore (Team Leader reports we have picked up 51 bags of trash so far this year).

Our monthly rendezvous for May was held on May 11 and our Host and Hostess were Michael and Nancy Bloch on Big Pine Key. We consider our socials to be one of the most important parts of our Flotilla functions. Below you can see some of our members enjoying a very good meal and good companionship. Thanks to the Blochs for hosting for us.

One of our projects at the moment is the completion at Station Marathon, of remodeling the old bathroom in the galley and making this an office area. We also built a nice new storeroom for supplies. Below left shows Tom Anderson stocking the shelves in pantry. Below right shows Neil Fox & Jim Adam tearing out bathroom, getting ready for the next phase of setting up the office. Work Continues soon.