

NBF Meeting Report
Portsmouth VA
October 21, 2006

President's Message:
By Marlene Barrington

A trip to Newport News, VA and the Mariner's Museum for the NBF Executive Committee members was a great way to usher in the close of our 40th anniversary celebration. We were privileged to have a private tour that included viewing of the turret, canon, and anchor of the USS MONITOR. This exhibit will be open to the public on March 9, 2007 and it comes highly recommended.

The Executive Committee meeting on Friday covered much ground with many issues being discussed and presented. We cannot say enough about all the volunteer hours this group expends on behalf of the over 2 million boaters that we represent in America. The heart of your Executive Committee is very visible.

The guest speakers on Saturday included Member Debbie Hersman with the NTSB. She gave a very interesting presentation regarding the NTSB and its efforts in the areas of PFD usage (making life vests look cooler, being more comfortable and trying to change people's behavior toward accepting and wearing them); the NTSB Most Wanted list (critical changes needed to reduce transportation accidents and save lives); and the emerging issue of sole state vessels (these are vessels not operating on Federal Navigable Waters and therefore not regulated by the USCG). Member Hersman also discussed the Ethan Allen capsizing and summarized the Marine Accident Report compiled by the NTSB on that accident. The mission of the NTSB is to improve transportation safety in any way possible and they do appreciate any assistance in that regard. It is important to realize that the NTSB does not issue orders or mandates. Their charter is to investigate and suggest.

Bill Gossard addressed the group and spoke about the NTSB as it relates to NBF and our partnership. Education and life jacket wear are the best things we can do to make boating safer. Boats themselves are made much safer than they used to be, which has helped, now the issue is modifying the behavior of boaters. We must be a catalyst for change. We have a moral and ethical responsibility to reduce boating fatalities.

Howard P. Danley, Division Chief of the Navigation Response Branch of NOAA traced it's history back to Thomas Jefferson, who commissioned a survey of the coast to promote commerce. 95% of the goods entering the United States comes by ship. NOAA is in charge of creating nautical charts, marine forecasts, tides and currents, and also manages reference datum's for the country both vertical and

horizontal. NOAA was instrumental in augmenting GPS for civilian use. About half of the NOAA charts printed each year are provided to the military. Hydrographic surveying is performed with NOAA ships. Electronic charts are free on the internet for downloading. Survey teams travel with a 30' boat and compare charts to reality in order to make chart corrections. If there are accidents they are dispatched to look for obstructions or to check for damage to a channel after an accident. After Katrina and Rita, NOAA quickly surveyed the Mississippi River so that navigation could be reopened. The Navy followed the NOAA survey vessel and pulled out underwater obstructions.

Captain David L. Lersch, USCG District 5 Chief of Prevention, gave a presentation on his District and efforts on their behalf. He spoke about hurricane relief efforts and the frustrations and successes they realized at the time. The Maritime Security Committee was formed to implement a plan while elevated security risks are present. The plan covers the waterway used by both commercial and private interests, so all should be part of that plan implementation. In Hampton Roads they had a separate recreational boating committee to provide input into the plan. A security zone might be implemented over a section of waterway, whether it is to stop all activity whatsoever or just to limit activity. If you don't have that information, you might not know about it until a CG vessel will intercept you and give instructions. When a vessel is being escorted, a security zone exists.

John Malatak, Chief of Operations, USCG Office of Boating Safety, spoke about many boating safety issues. The 2005 boating statistics are out and released: 695 fatalities, 3000 plus injuries, and property damage in excess of \$35 million. 70% of all fatal accidents were from drowning, 80% of those were not wearing a life jacket. The National Recreational Boating Safety Program provides a strategic plan for implementing boating safety programs. Goals have been revised and casualty target set objectives have been set. The goal is: "To ensure the public has a safe and secure recreational boating experience implementing programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury and property damage." BUI on our waterways is a large societal cost. He suggested that \$3.5 to \$5 million dollars per loss of life would not be out of range. Wallop Breaux Recreational Boating Safety funding for FY 06 State grants were \$91 million, nonprofit grants were \$4.7 million. The estimates for FY 07 are \$101 million for State grants and nonprofit grants of \$5.4 million.

Margaret Podlich, VP of Government Affairs for BoatU.S. spoke about the changes that are afoot. Everyone should be able to go boating who wants to. Practical access, practical PFD laws, practical safety laws, education laws, etc. are the goal of BoatU.S. They do wish to cooperate with NBF on issues on which we can agree. They recently worked on a bill in FL that gives marinas rights to protect

boats if the boat owner isn't there or doesn't protect himself adequately before a storm. The access issue is a big one for BoatU.S. They are worried about counties not allowing marinas to rebuild after a hurricane and related issues. They are increasing their communication with members. Recently Delaware passed a law regulating boat storage on residential property. She advised all BoatU.S. members in that state by email of the meeting, and they showed up in force and had their rightful say on the issue.

Charlie Sledd, Virginia Boating Law Administrator, spoke of how boating laws evolve from everyone wanting safe and effective enjoyment of boating. The goals of NASBLA are to be actively involved, fully engaged, and thoroughly knowledgeable about the business they are in. He spoke of the agreement of American League of Anglers and Boaters with NASBLA and explained it. The letter basically says NASBLA and AFLA are committed to working together directly through ALAB for the continuing benefit of anglers, boaters, and all those who value healthy aquatic systems and the many recreational opportunities they provide. To build on our collective, historical accomplishments and to prepare for future challenges we agree to immediately initiate a review process. In Virginia we need boaters who are voters. That's what gets things done. We all know the challenges of education, access, PFD wear, funding, etc. the bigger issue is we have to get boaters involved in what we are doing.

Chief Charles Hamlin of the USCG spoke about Rescue 21. The old system the Coast Guard used had no DF capability. The new system does and uses a CPU with 2 monitors with one monitor showing a map of the involved scene. The new system has just 3 antennae instead of 4 in one representative installation and they have been able to talk to commercial fishing vessels 50 miles out. The capabilities of Rescue 21 are such that they have more available channels to talk on. DSC is now onboard; by pushing the panic button on a DSC radio you have solved ¾ of the Coast Guard's problems with rescue. It also enhances clarity of distress calls, and allows for more simultaneous transmissions. Even if there is not a transmitted fix, if the signal is picked up by 2 towers, they can still do a cross-fix and locate the vessel. Rollout of the system over the next 5 years is expected.

The following additional reports can be viewed at our website:
www.n-b-f.org

- National Boating Federation Legislative Director, Earl Waesche
- European Boating Association

The Spring Meeting of the National Boating Federation will be hosted by the Carlouel Yacht Club in Clearwater, FL on April 28, 2007. We look forward to knowing about your boating concerns and most of all we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Marlene D. Barrington
President