

**MINUTES
RECREATIONAL BOATING ADVISORY COUNCIL
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

**CONFERENCE CALL
OCTOBER 24, 2011
8TH FLOOR BOARDROOM, 10 BARTER'S HILL**

In House: Brian Avery, Manager, Office of Boating Safety
Gary Case, Canadian Power & Sail Squadron
Gerry Carrigan, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
Sharon Andrews, Boating Safety Officer, Avalon Peninsula
Kayla Kirby, Boating Safety Officer Intern, Y-Enterprise

On Line: Harry Blackmore, Co-Chair, NLSARA President
Wayne Young, Canadian Red Cross
Brian Stone (for Ray Browne), Canadian Coast Guard
Ross Pitcher, Canadian Red Cross
Barry Nash, NLSARA Western Region
Natasha Fudge, Boating Safety Officer, Labrador

Regrets: Scott Kennedy, Co-Chair, Marine Safety Atlantic Regional Director
Winston Pitcher, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary
Jeannette Jobson, Lifesaving Society
Neil Burgess, Kayak Newfoundland and Labrador
Peter Watkins, Lewisporte Marina
Hannah Mahoney, Transport Canada Communications Manager
Sharon Sellars, Boating Safety Officer Avalon Peninsula
Joyce Ryan, Administrative Assistant, Office of Boating Safety

1. Meeting was called to order by Brian Avery at 1400h.
2. Brian advised that he wished to add "Contraventions Act" as an agenda item. There were no further additions.
3. There were no errors or adjustments made to last meeting's minutes. Brian commented that much of the last meeting (Fall 2010) was taken up with Marine Day.
 - One of the action items from the last meeting was the issue of Compliance Labels on imported boats. Ottawa is giving full attention to this issue, especially for US boats coming over the border. There is quite a backlog, but progress is being made.
 - Another item outstanding was the idea of Mentorship for Boathandling. Gary Case advised the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron are looking at on-water

courses, but this is a few years away. Intentions are that borrowed boats would be used for these courses.

4. SUMMER OVERVIEW

- **Licensing**

As everybody is probably now aware, pleasure craft licensing is no longer delivered at local Service Canada offices. OBS sends out application package to clients upon request, and completed applications must be mailed to Service New Brunswick. The interruption in service was minimal. New applicant numbers have dropped off a little, but NL applications are equal to all the other Atlantic Provinces. Gerry Carrigan said he has had a number of inquiries from people wondering where they can pick up application forms. These can be printed from online site, from Service Canada offices, or from local OBS Marine Information Awareness Program racks located at various retail and government outlets throughout the province.

- **PCCC Program**

People are becoming more at ease with receiving a courtesy check. The boater likes the one-on-one opportunity to discuss safety. Volunteers like the program too, finding that people are more accepting if they don't have to sign anything. Gary Case wondered who is having the courtesy checks. Harry replied that most people they approach are willing to partake, while most often people are asking for them. Brian commented that in the past, PCCCs were promoted more often in the media than they have been recently.

- **Waterway Management**

Brian is giving a presentation to the Harbour Authority conference in a couple of days at the Battery Hotel in St. John's. He hopes to explain basics of sharing waterways, to find out what to do with complaints, to help them understand why there may be problems now when fishing vessels are less active than ever, and why there seem to be more complaints. The dynamics of the harbour activity has been changing. More recreational boaters, leaving harbours at all times during the day, where fishing boats generally all leave at the same time of day and are generally gone the same amount of time and come back generally as a group, coming home for the night. Pleasure boaters are living aboard boats, going from harbour to harbour at different times of the day. Some wake is not a big deal, but when someone falls overboard or falls down stairs, there are possibly more serious consequences. Usually TC gets a call after problems have been ongoing for a couple of years. There is a need to resolve these problems earlier on. Brian hopes that as the ties with harbour authorities are strengthened, each of them can work to implement a waterway management plan for their respective harbours. There are a few harbours where "No Wake" signs, posted at a distance from the

harbour, seem to make a difference. Other harbours have signs which aren't seen until the boat is inside the harbour limits, which is often too late to prevent a large wake. We also have to remember that some of the larger boats cause a wake even at slow speeds. Brian added that the on-water boat operation is technically not the purview of harbour authorities, but they can be invaluable as the eyes and ears, and spokespersons in the community.

- **Enforcement**

Levels of compliance are about the same as in the past couple of years. Some patrols went ahead; others were cancelled due to weather. Some charges were laid. Some warnings were given out. There are many areas where the police have zero tolerance for certain deficiencies or behaviours, such as no PFDs onboard.

5. **All NL Enforcement meeting** – held in May, as mapped out in the previous Fall Marine Day. It has been noted by a few stakeholders that there is some inconsistency throughout the province in how enforcement is delivering messages. There are some differences in the level of understanding of the regulations and requirements, leading to differences in what is being said to the public. It was agreed that sharing data was very important. Brian is hoping to put a lot of time and effort into sharing data over the upcoming winter.

ACTION: BRIAN AGREED TO SEND A COPY OF THE MINUTES OF THE ENFORCEMENT MEETING TO ALL RBAC MEMBERS.

6. **Contraventions Act**

This was not discussed a lot at the Enforcement Meeting. Federal Department of Justice official has been in contact with Brian to advise that s/he is working on getting Contraventions Act in place in this province. The Assistant Deputy Minister in the provincial Department of Justice is working with her. From what Brian understood, money is available to put the Act in place here. This is going to free up so much court time in this province. Brian is in the process of getting support from various departments and organizations, and is very hopeful about seeing lots of progress. Wayne Young wondered if it would be of benefit if he and Harry would try to get together to make a presentation on behalf of RBAC. Harry advised that he has already met with the ADM.

7. **Canadian Safe Boating Council Symposium** – This was very successful according to the feedback and comments. The Cold Water Boot Camp was very well-received. It ran for two days. Brian gave a presentation on the origins of the outreach program. There was a panel of local stakeholders giving the NL perspective on boating trends and safety culture. Other highlights of the symposium included a presentation by the United States Coast Guard, tours of the Marine Institute, Basic Offshore Survival Training center, and Navigation Simulators. It was noted by the USCG attendee that

until he had a conversation with the Assistant Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, the United States had been considering making EPIRBS mandatory for certain pleasure craft. He will now have a different idea to present since John Butler advised him that over 90% of the alarms from EPIRBS were false or accidental triggering. Brian Stone confirmed that the ratio is probably close to 98%.

Gary Case mentioned that the United States is looking at mandatory wear for vessels 18' and under. He thought that even making it mandatory for 16' and under would increase the wear rate to about 65%. Brian commented that the US has pretty low wear rate. Many of the states are looking at state-wide legislation, and some have implemented mandatory wear on certain reservoirs. Wayne Young said that where this pilot project was implemented, the wear rate increased to 78%.

Gary Case wondered about the pursuit of mandatory wear in Canada by the CSBC. It seemed to have had a lot of attention a couple of years, but to have faded out more recently. Brian replied that there had never been a formal submission made to the Minister of Transport, and that unless it is brought to Parliament, it will not happen.

Wayne Young requested a copy of the PFD Wear Study. Brian said he would ask Sharon Sellars to send it to him on Friday.

8. TC Update

In the Spring, RBAC meeting will be face to face.

Gary Case wondered if there was any truth to the myth that the NL and Maritimes RBAC will be merging. Brian admitted that he had not heard that specifically, but that the wish to create better communications and information exchange between the two groups exists. Certainly the logistics of having just one RBAC for the Atlantic would be very difficult. Brian felt that our issues differ significantly from the Maritimes', and that it would be very difficult to bring all these varying issues to one table.

Harry mentioned that the NLSARA and RBAC members have sent a letter to the Prime Minister voicing their concerns over the Marine Rescue Sub Centre's closure. He emphasized that Transport Canada was excluded from this letter. Also, he has asked Maritimes RBAC has been asked to do the same. The people who work at the MRSC are local people, they know their area and water movements; and the boaters and fishermen know the workers by name.

9. Round Table

Barry Nash – He sees that many are being asked to do more with a lot less. Brian agreed that with OBS smaller shop, he believes that information sharing and resource sharing is going to be the way of the future. It will be challenging for sure.

Ross Pitcher – Appreciated short meeting. Good to keep in touch.

Harry – NLSARA now has seven boats in the Province. All team members of these teams have received small boat safety training from Coast Guard (thanked Brian Stone). Harry firmly believes that the more safety patrol boats on the province's waters, the more likely a culture of safety will exist.

Wayne Young – The 2010 Drowning Report has just been completed but is not yet finalized. The noticeable trend is that the boating-related drowning are shifting to the more senior (retired) population. Boating safety messaging may have to be changed to target this population to increase their pfd wear. He also mentioned that PFD loans were down compared to 2009, but couldn't say whether this was attributable to the past summer's poor weather. In addition, drownings for 2010 were lower than in 2009. Ross wondered if the reason PFD loans were down might be attributable to the population buying more PFDs. Wayne responded that he believed it was due to the bad weather, not only in NL, but in all Atlantic Canada. The loan program was down by half everywhere.

Natasha Fudge – Reported that summer was pretty good. There was one fatality in Labrador West. A small boat with 4 people on board capsized. The other three people swam to shore. The incident checklist has been completed by the RNC, but Natasha does not yet have it. Wayne Young requested a copy of the checklist when Natasha gets it, particularly would be interested in knowing about the PFD wear.

Sharon Andrews - PCCCs are still hard to "sell" by OBS. It has been difficult to have Boating Safety Officers present when boaters are present (weekends and evenings). There were a good few patrols scheduled around the Avalon, and Boating Safety officers were able to participate. The RCMP gave a few warnings for having no pleasure craft licensing, which generated dozens of telephone calls requesting pleasure craft license application forms.

Gerry Carrigan – Gerry is still receiving a steady number of inquiries about obtaining the Pleasure Craft Operator Card.

Gary Case – Canadian Power and Sail Squadron have not been getting a great number of requests for the Pleasure Craft Operator Card course. The other courses offered by CPS continue to receive a steady number of participants, though. The Radio Operators Certificate is still generating about 2-3 classes a year. This certificate can now also be obtained on line. CPS was engaged to give the ROCM course to all DFO officers across the province this year past. Harry commented that John Gullick (national CPS) and the NLSARA are discussing having the SAR teams teach ROC. NLSARA demonstrated flares to CPS members in May. CPS received some media coverage for other topics in May and another spot with cable tv that is being replayed. He believes it is also on line on Youtube.

10. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 3:20 P.M.