

MARINE SAFETY UPDATES

SUMMER 2020, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

From the Director

Like much of the rest of the world, the current pandemic has affected our program and outreach to mariners, mostly in terms of direct delivery of training. A very aggressive agenda of over fifty-eight courses in ports across Alaska and the rest of the U.S. were in different stages of coordination, only to have most of these courses canceled or postponed indefinitely in March.

We have adapted to the general social and economic shutdown by refocusing some of our education and training. We are adjusting our marine safety education efforts to include more distance delivery methodologies. We are also adopting in-person training guidelines that will help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. This includes reducing instructor-student contact time (especially indoors), use of face masks, social distancing, frequent handwashing, sanitizing of training gear, deep cleaning of training areas, and following other public health guidelines.



AMSEA Buiding in Sitka

AMSEA's office in Sitka, Alaska has been and will continue to maintain regular office hours. Usually, only one person is in the office at a time, however. Overall we have reduced staff coverage. However, with recently upgraded phone system, are able to take calls remotely and you can leave a voice mail message for any staff member that may be unavailable. We are being responsive to questions and needs of the public without missing a beat. But, pardon us if there is more of a delay in response at times.

Speaking about the location of our office, and in the context of our rapidly changing social awareness and public conversations, we find it important to remember the land and adjoining waters where we live and work was not originally "ours". Although AMSEA has been doing work in reducing the risk in the marine environment since 1985, we are relative new comers compared to the indigenous peoples of our region. For thousands of years, they have dealt with marine safety risks in their far ranging maritime trade routes, in cold water and often difficult weather.

Our office in Sitka is on the traditional territory of *Sheet'-Ka' Kwaan*, the people who live outside of 'Shee' or branch. Its name is geographically descriptive since our island is shaped like a branch and outside of it is the sea. It is a lyrical and appropriate place name for the ocean dwelling/dependent people who have lived here. Our offices are on the outside of the "branch" and whenever we look out the window, we are reminded of the gifts and the risks the waters offer.

As it has been for eons, the population of this vast stretch of coastal Alaska still depends on its waters for commercial uses, hunting and gathering, recreating, and transportation. When I transplanted to Alaska in the late 1970s, I was fortunate to immediately have as my mentors, tribal members who taught me my first marine safety lessons. These mentors were generous in sharing their... *(continued on page 2)*

From the Director (continued from page 1)

... knowledge and resources and I always felt invited and welcomed. I was told more than once, "Since we are sharing this life together, you are part of the history of this place now."

Now more than ever, we recognize that we indeed need to be "in this together". We are evolving and adapting to meet these new challenges in reducing marine casualties on many coasts of the U.S. despite the restrictions the pandemic has imposed. With the help of our instructors, supporters, board and staff we look forward to reinforcing past and present partnerships and making new alliances and projects. To everyone who has helped in this effort across the nation, a hearty *Gunalchéesh* (Thank you!) for your support. Together we will get through this.

We look forward to some new marine safety education projects in the works that we will be excited to tell you about later this year! In the meantime, be kind to each other on land and at sea, and wear your flotation!

Managing Sleep Deprivation Risks

Is there anything harder to get on a commercial fishing boat than sleep? The pressure to keep the gear in the water and working, whenever possible is relentless. Between short seasons, tides, bad weather, and mechanical breakdowns, it's no wonder that sleep often takes a backseat to whatever task is at hand.

We all know that sleep is important, but most of us overestimate our ability to perform when short of sleep. Studies have shown that after nineteen hours of wakefulness, your ability to perform mental and physical tasks are equivalent to someone that is legally drunk.



Sleep Deprivation Contributes to Many Mishaps at Sea

One of the first casualties of sleep deprivation is concentration. Sleep researchers have coined the term, "microsleeps" for the momentary periods of inattention we experience when sleep deprived. During a microsleep, we briefly lose sensory awareness and muscular control. While lasting only seconds, microsleeps can cause one to lose control at critical moments, such as when driving. Fatigue related accidents kill one person every hour in the U.S.

Getting only four hours of sleep per night for six days has the same effect on your performance as going twenty-four hours without sleep. The same is true of sleeping only six hours per night for ten days. Getting caught up on lost sleep often takes more than a single night of good sleep. Multiple studies have shown that it can take several nights of eight or more hours sleep to fully recover performance after getting only four to six hours of sleep for a period of days.

The effects of chronic sleep deprivation increase, the longer you go without adequate sleep. There's no point where it stops getting worse. Keep going and chronic sleep deprivation turns into acute sleep deprivation, where someone falls fully asleep. Every year boats go aground due to an overtired helmsman falling asleep during a wheel watch, often with tragic results.

Another casualty of sleep deprivation is judgement. There is a strong body of... (continued on page 3)

Sleep Deprivation *(continued from page 2)*

... evidence that sleep deprivation can be a factor in poor decision making. Sleep deprivation has been implicated as a factor in the meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the grounding of the Exxon Valdez oil tanker, and the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle.

A 2015 study conducted at the Washington State University Sleep and Performance Research Center, suggests that poor decision making when sleep deprived results from a degradation of the brain's ability to take in, process, and respond to new information. After 52 hours of wakefulness, participants in the study showed almost no ability to respond accurately to new information in a rapid decision making, go/no go task.

Managing the risks of sleep deprivation requires a vessel operator to prioritize adequate sleep in their operations. Adequate sleep is 7 to 8 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Here are some things that can help with that.

Keep up on your boat's routine and scheduled maintenance. Breakdowns don't just cost fishing time, they also cost you and your crew time in the rack.

Take a pass on the bar. Time spent socializing will be better spent catching up on your ZZZs when you are short of sleep. Moreover, the effects of alcohol compound the effects of sleep deprivation. Consider whether it's really worth it to make that last set. Those extra fish might turn out to be pretty expensive, if you fall asleep and run aground on the way to the cannery.

Follow up periods of short sleep with periods of adequate rest. You may go a few days on 4 to 6 hours of sleep without a problem. But, follow it up with an adequate recovery period of rest or you may push yourself and your crew to the point where an accident is inevitable.

Risk management is a big part of any commercial enterprise and fishing is no different. Getting adequate sleep for your crew and yourself will make everything else you have to manage, that much easier.

AMSEA Lifesaver Awards

There are so many people in the AMSEA network who deserve to be honored for their work in marine safety, but at this time we wish to honor two women in different parts of the U.S., who have had a long history of providing access and direct training to mariners and future mariners: Sara Fisker and Marian Allen.

Marian Allen

Marian began as a volunteer, then worked at AMSEA in the 1980s, when our office opened in Sitka. She volunteered to manage our growing inventory of training gear and to maintain and repair immersion suits, PFDs and life rafts, sometimes at her own expense. She soon became involved teaching AMSEA's Mariner's First Aid and training marine safety skills to children.

With a degree in childhood education and teaching experience in public and private alternative schools, Marian brought professional children's education experience to AMSEA. She understood that today's children will be tomorrow's mariners and that it is easier to instill good habits on the water at an early age. She also brought many years of skiff, kayak, commercial fishing, and remote, off-the-grid living experience to her classes. *(Continued on page 4)*

AMSEA Lifesaver Awards (continued from page 3)

Along with Alaska Sea Grant agent, Dolly Garza, Marian was instrumental in working with Sitka School District parents and teachers, advocating for and teaching AMSEA training in rural communities. Due to their efforts over the last 25 years, every 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th grade student in Sitka public schools receives marine safety training. AMSEA's marine safety training partnership with the Sitka School District has been a successful prototype for a maritime community. Many of the children she taught in school programs, have gone on to take over their parent's commercial fishing operations. She also co-wrote AMSEA's hands-on, children's marine safety curriculum and trained hundreds of teachers in Alaska schools and in Maine.

Marian made her own marine safety puppets for training young children and gained the rapt attention of first graders when she taught marine safety in her marine safety puppet plays, during the Super Saturday programs she taught. She co-wrote AMSEA's Cold Water Kids (CWK) curriculum with Sue Jensen and AMSEA staff, which contained many interdisciplinary shore survival and hands-on boating safety activities. Eventually, CWK evolved into the Kid's Don't Float training program used by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Alaska State Boating Program. Many of these CWK lesson plans were incorporated into AMSEA and Alaska Sea Grant's four-volume, *Surviving Outdoor Adventures*, which Marian helped write and field test. Curriculum from *Surviving Outdoor Adventures* has been taught in 80% of Alaska schools.

Marian and other women at AMSEA developed the Boating without the Boys, boating safety workshops. Taught by women, for women, these workshops have been very popular in the communities where we have offered them. Marian also brought AMSEA training into Head Start programs and to rural SE Alaska communities with support from the Crossett Fund.

Although Marian has retired, she still makes herself available to help AMSEA training and education efforts when she can fit it in around her other activities. Marian has played an important role in many of AMSEA projects over the decades. We are so glad to honor her efforts by this AMSEA Lifesaver Award.

Sara Fisken

Since 1982, Sara Fisken, has worked as a Washington Sea Grant agent, affiliated with the University of Washington in Seattle. Sara has commercial fishing experience as a salmon troller off the Washington coast, dating back to the 1970s. She worked on a factory trawler in the Bering Sea and for nine seasons was one of a handful of women in the Southeast Alaska purse seine fleet. She is also a competent sailor. Fishing in the days before immersion suits and safety training, she came to appreciate the value of prudent safety measures. This background helps immensely in her work to improve safety and operations on the water in her classes. (continued on page 5)



Marian Allen



Sara Fisken

AMSEA Lifesaver Awards (continued from page 4)

...Since 1993, Sarah has coordinated and facilitated AMSEA's Coast Guard-accepted safety classes for commercial fishermen. These workshops have been widely credited with reducing fatalities at sea. Of special note is the work she has done in marine safety training with the Makah, Quinault, and Suquamish tribes, and other tribal fisheries. Working with instructors Eric Olsson, Steve Harbell, and Joseph Peterson, Sara has coordinated 131 Emergency Drill Conductor and Survival Equipment and Procedures courses in eleven Washington fishing ports, from Bellingham to Westport, which have trained 1,042 commercial fishermen.

In addition, Sara coordinates classes on marine weather, watch standing, and Coast Guard-approved first aid at sea, a course she helped design. She coordinates hands-on workshops on such essential technologies as marine hydraulics, refrigeration, and small-engine repair, and works with tribal and non-tribal fishermen to upgrade the quality and prestige of their products.

Sara has worked long and hard at coordinating, facilitating, and teaching marine safety courses that have prevented casualties at sea from occurring and helped victims of casualties to survive. In recognition of her hard work and successful training programs, we are happy to honor her with the AMSEA Lifesaver Award. Thank you Sara for your tireless efforts to give fishermen access to hands-on, performance based, marine safety training!

THANK YOU!

AMSEA extends a big thank you to the following donors of goods and services:

Jim Cernak at Thundercat Marketing for the donation of five pairs of Bekina StepliteX boots for trial, feedback, and for use in training.

Antoinee Jeanine at Boarding Ring for a trial pair of their anti-seasickness glasses.

Trident Seafoods for the donation and shipping of twenty-four immersion suits for use in training.

Alaska Department Fish and Game, Sitka office for a donation of used office furniture.

Sitka Sound Ocean Adventures for the donation of ten new PFDs.

Juneau Arts and Humanities Council and Patricia Hull for performances of the play, Mother Jones in Heaven, as an AMSEA fundraiser.

Lummi Fisheries Supply (LFS) for the donation of a new immersion suit.

Garmin International for the donation of an InReach satellite communication device.

Kent Safety Products for the donation of Rogue, Rogue II, and Mesh Deluxe PFDs.

The many commercial fishermen that have made donations of expired life rafts and used immersion suits, usable for training.

Did you know that you can take up to a \$500 tx deduction for donating your used life raft to AMSEA? Your donation of an immersion suit can be worth up to \$100 as a tax deduction. Call (907) 747-3287 if you have marine safety equipment you wish to donate. Sorry, but we cannot accept outdated flares as tax deductible donations.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS!

Memberships provide needed support to keep critical training available to fishermen, recreational boaters, youth and thousands of other mariners. Want to join the ranks of AMSEA supporters? Complete and mail in the enclosed membership form or join online at <https://www.amsea.org/membershipform>.

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ALASKA MARINE SAFETY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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