



Homeland  
Security



February 2006

## **BITS & BYTES**

Issue: 2006-02

**Bits & Bytes** is distributed electronically on a monthly basis to all DSO, ADSO, SO, and FSO-IS and CS Officers.

### **New Appointments Announced**

We're delighted to announce two new appointments! **Mike Merriman** is our new Deputy Chief (DC-Id) for our newly named Information Technology (IT) Department. Mike is from D9WR having served recently as RCO, as well serving on the Department IS Division staff. Mike is well known within the "IS" community, and will be very helpful with respect to AUXDATA.

**Daren Lewis** has also been appointed to serve as our new Division Chief - Special Projects (DVC-IP). Daren is from D13 and has been very active with creating and supporting new online resources. The Special Projects Division will also expand our capability to better serve our Customer needs that come from outside the Department, particularly at the National level.

We would like add our thanks to **George Engel**, for his service to the Department during his term as Deputy.

**Jeff Mahl**, [DC-I](#)

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### **A Word from Our New Deputy Chief**

Greetings all:

With a lot of excitement and more than a bit of trepidation I accepted appointment as your deputy chief of the IT department. As I've been in the position only a few hours now there isn't a lot of wisdom I have to share – but think it's worthwhile to introduce myself.

My computer background goes back to 1962 when we programmed on paper tape (until advancing to IBM punch cards) and memory cost about a dollar a byte. You could actually see each bit of memory made of ferrite "donuts" and division was accomplished by repeat subtraction. I bore you with this only to lay a foundation for sharing the wonder I've experienced with the awesome continuous advanced made in both the hardware and software upon which the department is propelling the Auxiliary into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (willingly or not).

Though the tools we work with continue to evolve according to Moore's Law, it is the unbelievable ingenuity, expertise and dedication of those in the IT department that is truly awesome! The IT department has accomplished a lot in a very short amount of time, and seems to be bent on continuing this pace. (Perhaps we should consider recruiting a department historian as most of us have a tendency to take last month's miracle for granted and wonder what have "they" done for us lately?)

IT folks tend to live more in the future than with history and I believe the future is definitely bright if not always clear. There are more ideas percolating than we have time or resources to accomplish at the pace we would like. From those in the department I've worked with as a branch chief we certainly have the talent to use the well-built foundations to continue to make life easier and more efficient for those in the membership and departments we serve.

I'm truly honored to continue with the department in a different capacity and look forward to being able to help us reach new levels of service and to do so with the high degree of professionalism that is your hallmark.

Mike Merriman, [DC-Id](#)

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## Authorized Auxiliary Websites

Every website that carries the name "U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary" or uses the logos for the Auxiliary are required to meet the CS Site checklist at <http://csguide.auxservices.org/2.4.php>. The checklist covers the items that make a website '508 compliant'.

A snip from ALCOAST 090/00 reads as follows:

The Workforce Investment act dated August 7, 1998 includes a revised version of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This newly revised Section 508 imposed strict requirements for any electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by Federal Agencies. Federal Agencies must take steps immediately to insure that persons with disabilities can use these technologies.

The ALCOAST is posted on the CS Guide website at <http://csguide.auxservices.org/4.4.2.php>.

If your website uses the logos or the words, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary you are bound by federal law to be 508 compliant. Section 508 requirements are sometimes referred to as "Bobby" Requirements.

*Bobby* analyzes HTML pages for conformity to Section 508 and the Web Access Initiative (WAI)'s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and translates them into instructions for improving their accessibility. Within seconds of typing in a URL, *Bobby* delivers a full accessibility report on the Web page being analyzed, specifying each barrier and explaining how to eliminate it. A site that is deemed accessible can display the "Bobby Approved" icon. There is an online story about the Bobby/CAST rating at <http://www.exploit-lib.org/issue3/bobby/>

You can receive a free scan of your site at <http://webxact.watchfire.com/>

The sites that are done for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and not a direct unit site should still be given to the DSO-CS to check for compliance. If you have built an ATON or training website to help the members in your district or division, it still needs to meet the checklist mentioned above. Your DSO-CS will review the site and then forward it via a Site Notification Form for a final check by the "I" department staff.

Meeting the 508 requirements is not at all difficult. A good HTML title in plain English for text reader hardware to read and alternative text on all images are the key items. The ALT should be descriptive. Saying 'my.gif' in ALT meets the law but not the intent. If the ALT were to read "My new boat" it tells the handicapped viewer enough of a story to help them understand the graphic even though they can't see it.

Jerry Turley, [BC-IWT](#)

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To: ALAUX

Frm: CHDIRAUX

Subj: 2005 WORKSHOPS AND REYR STATUS -005/06

1. In 2005, completion of the Instructor (IT), Vessel Examiner (VE), and Operations (OPS) workshops were required for currency maintenance in their respective programs. In 2006, none of these workshops are required for currency maintenance.
2. Auxiliarists who were placed in Re-Year (REYR) status at the start of 2006 because they did not complete the workshop that was required in 2005 must complete the 2006 workshop in order to get out of REYR status and re-gain their currency in 2006. Completion of online versions of the workshops is acceptable to meet this requirement.
3. For all Auxiliarists who maintained their program currency through 2005, the 2006 workshops are optional.
6. The purpose of this list is to keep Auxiliarists as well as all other interested parties abreast of current developments, policies, manuals, etc. All information contained herein and linked is OFFICIAL policy and information.
7. Internet Release and Distribution is Authorized.
8. G-PCX-1, sends.



## Bits & Bytes

A resource of the Department of Information and Communication Services Ricardo Birmele, Editor, [bc-isn@cgaux.org](mailto:bc-isn@cgaux.org). If you have any complaints about the contents of this newsletter, please write them clearly in the box provided below.

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