



The newsletter  
for AMSEA's  
community-based  
cold water & boating  
safety training network



# Marine Safety UPDATE

## AMSEA 2007 Membership Drive Underway

With 2007 fast approaching, AMSEA's staff and board of directors thank members for their support of the organization last year and during the 22 years since AMSEA's inception. With the generous support of members, 2006 was a banner year for AMSEA. Such success is only possible with the assistance of many members and supporters.

It is now time to renew memberships in AMSEA for 2007 or join as a new member so that we can continue to offer quality boating and cold-water safety training and educational materials.

Our membership is not only an important source of funding. The number of AMSEA members is an indication to the agencies and foundations that help fund AMSEA, as well as to our staff, board of directors, and volunteers that what we do is important.

In fiscal year 2006 AMSEA's work included:

- Delivering boating and outdoor safety training to at least 7,376 Alaskans across the state.
- Training 658 individuals to conduct emergency drills onboard commercial vessels as required by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Providing comprehensive, six-day Marine Safety Instructor Training

to 39 individuals from 12 different Alaska communities, six other states and Great Britain.

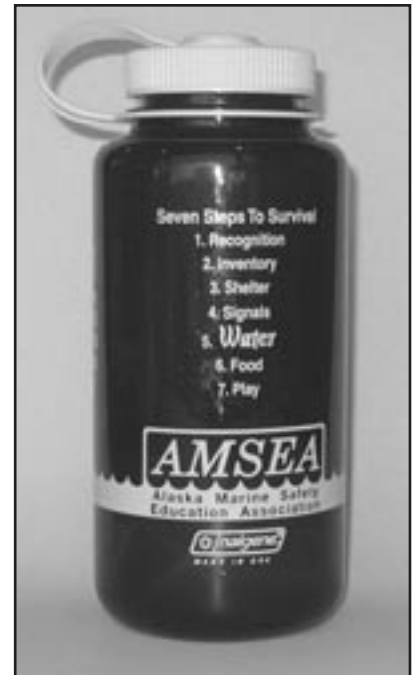
- Training 23 schoolteachers and other youth educators from five communities to effectively use AMSEA materials with children.

- Seeing 906 adults participate in AMSEA training for recreational and subsistence boaters.

- Delivering boating and cold water safety training to 5,490 Alaska children from 33 different communities.

- Providing customized AMSEA training for government agencies and private businesses, reaching 669 individuals.

The year 2007 promises to be even more busy and challenging as we continue our mission of reducing injury and death in the marine and freshwater environment



Join or renew your membership at the \$100 level or above and receive AMSEA's new 32 ounce Nalgene sports bottle!

through education and training provided by a network of qualified marine safety instructors.

AMSEA membership can help make a difference in the lives of everyone who works or plays on the water. Your support is what makes AMSEA's work possible. Please continue that support by renewing your membership. It's as easy as returning the form on page 9, which outlines some of the more tangible membership benefits, or by calling 907-747-3287.

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# AMSEA Training & Events Schedule

Contact AMSEA for information about events listed, to register to attend or to inquire about training in other communities. Visit [www.amsea.org](http://www.amsea.org) for an always-up-to-date calendar of upcoming AMSEA training and other events.

- November 16 - 18, **Seattle**: Exhibit and workshops on risk management and operational stability at Pacific Marine Expo. See [www.pacificmarineexpo.com](http://www.pacificmarineexpo.com) for more information.
- December 4, **Tooksook Bay**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- December 5, **Scammon Bay**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- December 6, **Quinhagak**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- December 9, **Homer**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- December 9, **Sitka**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- December 16, **Palmer**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- January 6, **Homer**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- January 11, **Kodiak**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- January 13, **Juneau**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- February 2, **Petersburg**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- February 10, **Kodiak**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- February 22 - 25, **Juneau**: Exhibit and workshop at the Alaska Library Association conference. See [www.akla.org/juneau2007/](http://www.akla.org/juneau2007/) for more information.
- March 13 - 19, 2007, **Seward**: Marine Safety Instructor Training designed for those interested in teaching marine safety and survival to commercial fishermen, professional mariners, teachers, children, government agency personnel or others.
- March 29 - April 1, **Anchorage**: Exhibit and hands-on workshops at the Great Alaska Sportsman trade show in the Sullivan Arena.
- April 10 - 11, **Cordova**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*
- April 13 - 14, **Valdez**: Survival Equipment, Procedures & On-Board Drill Conductor training.\*

\*Meets USCG requirements for fishing vessel drill conductors.

**Marine Safety Update** is published quarterly by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association to provide information that furthers the safety of everyone who spends time on the water. Subscriptions are free with paid memberships in AMSEA. Sustaining, supporting and donor memberships receive recognition in this publication.

Memberships and all contributions to AMSEA are tax-deductible. Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Membership dues received after October 1 are credited to the following year.

Contributions to this publication are welcome. Please submit them to:

AMSEA  
**Marine Safety Update**  
 2924 Halibut Point Road  
 Sitka, AK 99835  
 or fax 907-747-3259  
 or via [www.amsea.org](http://www.amsea.org)

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## CVRF Facilitates Training in Western Alaska

The Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) Community Development Quota (CDQ) group includes 21 villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta area of western Alaska. Since the spring of 2005, CVRF has been working with AMSEA Training Coordinator Steven Campbell and the U.S. Coast Guard to provide training for their small vessel fishermen, who

increasingly work far from shore due to resource allocations.

Last March, survival training classes were taught in the communities of Toksook Bay, Tununak, Eek, and Quinhagak for local fishermen. In the next two years, CVRF plans to train 400 or more fishermen in all 21 villages, starting in December with the ten villages with the most fishermen. This

year's training season will wrap up when bird and seal hunting starts. As an incentive to attend, CVRF offers fuel vouchers to permit holders who take part in training. Other incentives are being discussed. CVRF's goal is to have all fishermen who sell through the organization to take part in safety training. They are also working to provide needed safety equipment such as EPIRBs.

An important part of this instruction is training marine safety instructors who live in these communities. Currently, four CVRF members have been trained in AMSEA marine safety instructor courses and are co-teaching with Steven. CVRF's intent is to have their safety trainers self-sufficient within four months and to take over all training.

They also plan yearly refresher training for their instructors. The U.S. Coast Guard has been an active partner in this process, supporting the efforts of CVRF to get safety training to their fishermen as resource allocations and fisheries expand to untraditional areas and techniques. AMSEA salutes CVRF managers who are far-sighted enough to build in safety training as their fishing fleets expand.



Residents of Cheforak took part in a safety workshop held in November 2005 for fishermen associated with the Coastal Villages Region Fund.

## Infant Lifejackets continued from page 10

the water is important, but can prove to be uncomfortable. A strong loop of fabric, usually found behind the neck, that can be used as a handhold is important. A bright, contrasting color makes it easier to find the handle. Crotch straps are important to prevent PFDs from riding up. Children should be a part of the purchase decision. They are more likely to wear something they like. In **Powerboat's** test, children preferred red over other colors. Stickers of favorite characters affixed to PFDs make them more fun to wear.

Remember, in Alaska children under 13 are required to wear PFDs on the decks of boats. This is also an excellent idea when on docks. Be sure to try a PFD on your child before each boating season or before purchasing one to determine how well it fits and how well your child will tolerate wearing it.

## Dive Tenders' Skills a Measure of Divers' Safety

by Tim Clepper

U.S. Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Safety Examiner, Ketchikan, Alaska

It's autumn in Southeast Alaska, but actually we should call it "blow." You go to bed and the leaves are on the trees; when you wake up the leaves are blown off. Autumn also is dive harvest season. It is the time of year when divers jump off perfectly fine vessels to pick sea cucumbers off the bottom of the ocean or to blast geoducks out of sand 30 feet underwater.

This is no job for the weak! Diving two and a half days a week takes a toll on the body and sometimes irreversible damage can occur. We all know divers who have pushed the safe dive "envelope" to the point that even he doesn't know how he dodged the "bubble." Those guys have been throwing the dice since the day they got into the fishery. We all know that when playing the odds, the odds eventually catch up. Dead fishermen don't get paid; only safe divers live to fish another day.

Safe divers know that they are as safe as their dive tenders allow



them to be. What's that mean? It means that the guy they hired to protect their lives while underwater possesses the following skills:

- First aid/CPR
- Dive rescue techniques
- Recognizes decompression sickness
- Recognizes when a dive emer-

gency exists

- Basic seamanship and boat handling
- Nautical weather, or at least how to read the weather
- How to make a distress call on a VHF radio
- Small engine maintenance
- Recognizes the signs of moderate or severe hypothermia
- Is reliable
- Is sober

These are just a few in a long list of skills a dive tender should possess. There are several recognized organizations that teach dive safety skills, including pre-dive briefing, diver rescue, pre-dive equipment check and diver-tender communications. Each one of these topics could fill several pages of instruction. A couple of publications that come to mind are, **Essentials of Diving Safety** and **On-Site Management of Scuba Diving and Boating Emergencies**. Both of these excellent

continued on page 6

## Join AMSEA At Pacific Marine Expo



**pacific marine**  
e x p o

AMSEA products and services will be on display at Pacific Marine Expo at Qwest Field Event Center in Seattle from Thursday, November 16 through Saturday, November 18. Visit with staff and see our new DVD, **Fishing Vessel Stability: Operational Practices** at booth #541 in the Alaska Pavilion at Qwest Event Center.

Pacific Marine Expo welcomes AMSEA members and supporters and extends a free invitation to attend the show. Simply mention code 9982 when pre-registering to secure free admission to the exhibit hall. Visit [www.pacificmarineexpo.com](http://www.pacificmarineexpo.com) or call 800-454-3005 to pre-register.

AMSEA will also provide two presentations at the event. Steven Campbell will speak about the effects of operational practices on small fishing vessel stability from 3:30 until 5:00 pm on Thursday, November 16. Jerry Dzugan will give a presentation on risk management for vessel operators on Saturday, November 18 from 10:30 am until noon.

For show information, including online registration, event schedule, session descriptions and speakers, the complete exhibitor list, special events, parking information and more visit [www.pacificmarineexpo.com](http://www.pacificmarineexpo.com).

# Summer And Fall AMSEA Training Noted

Summer and fall are traditionally slow times for AMSEA training, although much planning for the busy training season that starts in March and continues through June takes place during this time.

For those thinking about starting programs, fall and winter are the easiest times to get the gear that you want and to have undivided attention from staff for support. This summer and fall the AMSEA instructors reported training 253 adults and 337 children in 32 courses.

A Marine Safety Instructor Trainer course in Sitka was taught by Jerry Dzugan, Steven Campbell, Marian Allen and Mary Chambers, resulting in twelve new AMSEA instructors from Seattle, Ketchikan, Sitka, Valdez, Anchorage, Dutch Harbor/Unalaska, Kodiak and Nome. Three of these also completed the STCW Train-the-Trainer course during the weeklong course. Kawarek Corporation, Norton Sound Economic Development Council and Kodiak Area Native Association all funded participants from their communities.

Emergency Procedures and Onboard Drill Conductor courses were taught in Sand Point by Jason Bjornstad and by Jerry Dzugan in Sitka. Dug Jensen provided an Emergency Procedures and Onboard Drill Conductor course for inmates at Spring Creek Cor-

rectional Facility in Seward. Drills courses were also taught by Chris Lopez in Homer, Ron Bowers in

taught in Seattle by Dug Jensen, and training for the Connecticut Department of Environmental

Management provided by Dan O'Connor. AMSEA presented two courses in Colorado for Raytheon Technical Services Palmer and South Pole Stations Search and Rescue personnel. These were taught by Rick McElrath and Mike Motti. Also, Paul Randall provided training for Alaska State Troopers in Sitka.

Jennifer Lincoln worked with Girl Scouts in Anchorage and Trish Herrmann worked with homeschooled children and their parents in Palmer and Chickaloon. Alison Dunlap, Nancy Cavanaugh and Mike Morris provided training for Sitka School District's third, fifth and ninth grades. Christine Righter and the Sitka-based U.S. Coast Guard aids-to-navigation team assisted.

Courses were also provided at summer camps in Craig and Aleknagik by Dug Jensen and Ward Jones respectively. Ward Jones also taught in Kakanak and Greg Mercer held an Alaska Water class for recreational boaters in Anchorage.

AMSEA staff believes that even more training is occurring but we do not know about it unless you tell us! Let us know what you

are doing and we will include your work in the next **Marine Safety Update!** Visit [www.amsea.org](http://www.amsea.org) and click on Report Training.



Above: Joseph Kulp, standing, demonstrates the use of a life vest to fellow MSIT course participants (l. to r.) John Hawkns, Gary Bullock and Devin Lucas.

Below: Trish Herrmann shows children how to use trash bags as emergency shelters.



Chignik Lake and Steven Campbell in Kodiak.

AMSEA trainers provided several customized courses for businesses or government agencies. These included a class for NOAA

# Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Advisory Committee Meeting Held

The 26th meeting of the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Advisory Committee (FISHSAC) took place over three days in Washington, DC on September 12-14, 2006. FISHSAC alternates its meetings between Washington, DC and other fishing ports. This year's agenda was full and a number of U.S. Coast Guard regional fishing safety coordinators attended. The following is an unofficial summary of the three-day meeting.

The Coast Guard reviewed its past legislative package and noted that Congress did not authorize a mandatory dockside exam program. The Coast Guard gave a presentation on falls overboard, PFD advances, risks on deck and risk management. Dr. Jennifer Lincoln from the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health gave a presentation on her work in fishing vessel safety. She demonstrated a strong correlation between survivability and use of EPIRBs, liferafts and immersion suits. The U.S. Marine Safety Association presented what they have done and can do to further fishing vessel safety. Public comments were heard on several topics and standing committees on communications and risk management were formed. Presentations of the eight risk-by-fisheries reports were also made.

Day two consisted primarily of subcommittee meetings. The communications committee listed ways in which the Coast Guard can improve communication with the fleet and recommended creation of a damage control DVD for fishermen. Another committee began

work on fire protection safety standards for new vessel construction. The deck safety committee recommended interventions to prevent falls overboard, which consistently account for about 25% of fatalities, despite reductions in other causes.

Also, recommendations were made to further standardize between districts, the requirements concerning excess, out-of-date lifesaving equipment on vessels. Recommendations were made regarding needed Coast Guard publications covering the topics of fishing safety and on improvements in safety equipment.

On the third day, subcommittees' recommendations were presented and adopted. Alaska Coast Guardsmen presented their safety program for the "head and gut" fleet. That fleet has been given a waiver from loadlines in exchange for other requirements to "achieve

an equivalent level of safety."

The Coast Guard gave a casualty analysis report and then discussed the status of its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) that will primarily concern itself with stability of vessels between 50 and 79 feet. Some form of stability guidance (less than a stability book) may be considered. In addition, this rulemaking may consider crew preparedness, equipment familiarity, crew competence, immersion suit use in areas with seasonally cold water, vessel maintenance, owner/master accountability for compliance and enforceability. The NPR is making its way through the bureaucracy and is not expected for public comment until the summer of 2007.

The next FISHSAC meeting will be in the first half of 2007 and will be formally announced when dates are set.

## Dive continued from page 4

publications are by Dr. Wesley Y. Yapor. AMSEA has produced a fine training film that focuses on what a dive tender should know. The Divers Alert Network has publications and brochures available to aid a diver in developing a safe diving program. The Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fishermen's Association (SARDFA) has a standing safety committee, established to assist divers in developing safe diving practices. If you are a member of SARDFA or any other dive harvester association, I urge you to contact your safety committee to see what training is available in

your area. If you have ideas about how to make the industry safer, share them with fellow divers.

When I am invited to conduct a safety exam on a dive vessel, one of the first questions I ask the diver is, "Does your tender have a First Aid and CPR card?" Almost to a person, the reply is, "No, he doesn't, but I do." I then quip back with, "Give the tender the dive gear, throw him in the bay and you stay on the boat."

Dive safety starts with the diver. It's the diver's responsibility to insure that his dive tender is trained and willing to accept responsibility for the diver's life.

## New DVD Released



AMSEA's new DVD Fishing Vessel Stability: Operational Practices is now complete! The U.S. Coast Guard provided funding for the project, which AMSEA produced in cooperation with Deborah Mercy of the University of Alaska Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Sea Grant.

This 20-minute DVD focuses on the operational practices that any crewmember should be aware of that affect stability. The film serves as an excellent review for operators and experienced fishermen, as well as a good introduction for new crew. Footage of actual vessel capsizings and survivor interviews illustrate the tragic results of instability. This film covers proper loading, free surface effect, watertight integrity, icing, lifting and shifting loads, weight creep, hang ups and seamanship. Complete with illustrative graphics, this DVD will be a useful non-technical introduction to stability practices for any vessel owner, large or small, commercial or non-commercial.

Copies may be purchased for \$20.00 each from AMSEA or at the Alaska Sea Grant online bookstore.

## EPIRBs Cause Alarming Trash

In ports around the nation, the U.S. Coast Guard regularly responds to EPIRB signals indicating vessel emergencies. SAR (Search and Rescue) follows the signals to . . . garbage dumps.

As old-model EPIRB batteries expire, many mariners just buy new EPIRBs and throw the old ones in the trash. If activated, they send out false alarms, costing much money and diverting SAR resources. Owners are responsible for these false alarms and can be fined and even jailed. The signals broadcast identifying information so the law instantly knows who is responsible. You've just busted yourself!

Before disposing of an EPIRB, cancel its registration with the FCC, remove or break the antenna and remove the battery. The EPIRB is then dead and can be thrown out. The lithium battery, however, is a hazardous material and should be disposed of separately and properly.

## Cell Phone Service Providers To Discontinue \*CG Outside Alaska

Effective immediately, the U.S. Coast Guard has asked all cell phone service providers in states **other than Alaska** to deactivate the keying sequence \*CG as a method of requesting maritime emergency assistance. The Coast Guard has requested that cell phone service providers reroute all \*CG calls to the nearest 911 operator.

Boaters should use VHF-FM radios as their primary means of making distress calls on the water. Cell phone calls to 911 should be used only as a secondary option.

VHF-FM radio provides superior alerting capabilities in an emergency. When a distress call is

made via VHF-FM radio any nearby boaters with a radio can hear the distress call and offer immediate assistance. VHF-FM radios will further enhance boaters' safety as the Coast Guard expands its Rescue 21 system, which uses technology that tracks the precise location of distress calls, enabling the Coast Guard and other rescuers to narrow the focus of search and rescue efforts.

The \*CG feature was introduced by some cell phone service providers in the early 1990s but never developed into a nationwide service. As providers moved to digital systems, some did not migrate \*CG, creating

a confusing patchwork of service that can add significant delays in the Coast Guard response. The sole exception to the change is in Alaska, where the \*CG feature will

remain active. Cell phone service providers operating there all have the \*CG feature available and routed to a single Coast Guard emergency line. Calls to \*CG in Alaska are not missed and cannot be misdirected.



# Thanks!

The 2006 memberships purchased by people and organizations listed here help keep AMSEA's marine safety training programs afloat. Please join them!

## Sustaining Memberships

CDC NIOSH, Alaska Field Station,  
Anchorage  
Pacstar, Inc., Kodiak  
S/V Wyldewind, Sitka

## Organization Membership

LTR Training Systems, Anchorage

## Supporting Memberships

Craig F. Campbell, Anchorage  
Paula Cullenberg, Anchorage  
Dwight & Leslee Downer, F/V  
Bavaria, Haines  
Aaron "Pat" Dye, Cooper Landing  
Educational Training Company,  
Sitka  
Wayne Engle, Chugiak  
David & Maggie Herbert, Seward  
Ryan Hill, Anchorage  
Charles & Christine Horan, Sitka  
H. Daniel Hull, F/V Gretchen S,  
Anchorage  
Sue Jorgensen, Juneau  
Michael LaGuire, ReMax of Sitka  
Jennifer Lincoln, Anchorage  
Fred Mattera, F/V Travis & Natalie,  
Narragansett, RI  
Thomas Millman, F/V Four  
Daughters, Mankato, MN  
Michael Morris, Sitka  
Nick Olmsted & Molly Kemp,  
Tenakee Springs  
Yakov Reutov, F/V Dynasty, Homer  
Dick & Judi Rice, Back Country  
Sports, Skagway  
Mark Severson, F/V Odin,  
Petersburg  
Kristie Sherrodd, Sitka  
Troy Tirrell, Tirrell Marine  
Surveyors, Cordova  
Robert M. Whitcomb, Sitka

## Donor Memberships

Torie Baker, F/V Chagvan,  
Cordova  
Ray Cammisa, Anchorage  
Chesapeake Marine Training Insti-  
tute, Hayes, VA  
Bruce K. Cornwall, Solomns, MD  
Alan & Elizabeth Horoschak, S/V  
Jubilo, Sitka  
Maureen Knutsen, F/V Jenny O.  
Daun, Naknek  
Felicia McAuley, F/V Amber J,  
Juneau

Liz McKenzie, Sitka  
Greg Mercer, Anchorage  
Beverly R. Noll, Crescent City, CA  
Pacific Ocean Producers,  
Honolulu, HI  
Susan Schrader, M/V Corvid,  
Juneau  
James Stegall, Seward Adventure  
Charters, Anchorage  
Susan Sugai, Fairbanks  
Virginia Institute of Marine  
Science, Gloucester Point, VA  
Wally & Kathleen Warm, Sitka

THANKS ALSO to AMSEA'S many 2006 individual members and the others who teach and contribute to marine safety education!

*These folks have already purchased  
2007 memberships! Please join them.*

## Organizational Memberships

Alaska Sea Grant, Marine  
Advisory Program  
Sitka School District  
Southeast Alaska Regional  
Health Consortium, Sitka

## Supporting Memberships

Aaron "Pat" Dye, Cooper Landing  
Steve Fish, F/V Kariel, Sitka  
Yakov Reutov, F/V Dynasty,  
Home  
Kristie Sherrodd, Sitka  
James Stegall, Seward  
Adventure Charters,  
Anchorage  
Robert M. Whitcomb, Sitka  
Charles E. Wood, F/V Talon,  
Petersburg

## Donor Memberships

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Alan & Elizabeth Horoschak, S/V  
Jubilo, Sitka  
Maureen Knutsen, F/V Jenny O.  
Daun, Naknek  
Susan Sugai, Fairbanks  
University of Alaska Southeast,  
Ketchikan Campus

## Individual Memberships

Marlene Campbell, Sitka  
Mary Chambers, Sitka  
Diana Chauhary, Ketchikan

# JOIN!



# JOIN!

AMSEA membership benefits:

- Subscription to AMSEA's quarterly publication Marine Safety Update
- All members receive 15% off all retail price purchases from the AMSEA store: books, videos, survival kits and more!
- Memberships of \$50.00 or more are given recognition in Marine Safety Update
- 2007 memberships of \$100.00 or more receive a thank-you gift of a 32 ounce Nalgene sports bottle imprinted with the AMSEA logo and the Seven Steps to Survival
- Organization and business members are eligible for AMSEA training at special rates
- Contributions to AMSEA are tax deductible (less the value of thank-you gift)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization/Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Please check here if this is a renewal

### Individual and Small Business Membership Levels

- Individual Membership ..... \$20.00
- Donor Membership..... \$50.00
- Supporting Membership..... \$100.00\*
- Sustaining Membership..... \$500.00\*

Method of payment:

- Check or money order, payable in U.S. funds, enclosed (Please make check payable to AMSEA)
- VISA or  MasterCard

Account number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

### Organization and Business Membership Levels

- Organizational Membership . \$250.00\*
- Sustaining Membership ..... \$500.00\*

*\* Eligible for a 2007 thank-you gift of a 32 ounce Nalgene sports bottle imprinted with the AMSEA logo and the Seven Steps to Survival*



Thank you! for becoming a part of the

## ALASKA MARINE SAFETY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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## Effective Infant Lifejackets Difficult To Find

Finding a proper fitting lifejacket for an infant or toddler that performs well in the water and that a child will wear without screaming and squirming enough to attract any child welfare worker within a quarter mile can be a challenge. The October 2006 issue of **Powerboat** magazine reports on field tests they conducted with 10 different styles of child personal flotation devices (PFDs). The article highlights some of the problems with finding an adequately sized PFD for a child under 50 pounds.

In all fairness to manufacturers, designing effective lifejackets for small children poses unique problems. Infants' and toddlers' heads are much heavier and larger in proportion to their bodies than adults' and their neck muscles are poorly developed. Thus, it is difficult to keep their faces out of the water. In addition, they are less able to help themselves and self-right in the water. PFDs that are comfortable enough to wear often do not exhibit strong performance characteristics.

A major paradox is that a pillow behind the head is important to keep the head out of the water, but it also makes it harder for an infant or toddler to self-right in the water. Finally, there is price. The better performing infant PFDs are the most expensive, and there may be resistance to buying a high quality PFD that a small child will soon outgrow.

The article outlines several things to look for when buying a PFD for



an infant or toddler. Good quality clips or buckles were preferred to zippers, which tend to be too small for quick and easy donning of some, but not all, models. Clips were also found wanting on some models. A snug fit around the neck to prevent ride-up when in

Continued on page 3