

## Celebrating summer, new beginnings with local Flotillas

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary held its Summer Celebration at the SARDET station on Sunday, July 26, to mark three auspicious occasions in the organization's history—an anniversary, a dedication and better communications.

Approximately 50 people from Flotillas 84 and 87, along with family and friends, gathered at the Search and Rescue Detachment facility, or SARDET, for a time of fellowship and celebration. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is 70 years old this year after being formed by an act of Congress on June 23, 1939, to support the Coast Guard and recreational boaters. Ed Hollowell, District 5 commander, welcomed the crowd and read a letter of commendation from President Barack Obama setting forth the many instances in the last decade in which the Auxiliarists have been called into duty, such as with Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma in 2005 and during the attacks of Sept. 11, 2009.

"I congratulate you for your steadfast commitment to the highest standards of citizenship, patriotism and community service," the president's letter stated. "On behalf of all Americans, I wish you all the best for a memorable celebration.

May you continue to find happiness and fulfillment in your many contributions to our country."



**Scott Norris (l to r), Victoria Norris, Mary Ix Norris, Jerome Ix Jr. and Nicholas Norris, family of the late Jerome Ix Sr., gather around the sign depicting the SARDET station at Lake Anna in his memory.**

The Lake Anna Flotilla 87 and AUXSARDET was established in 1993 and is celebrating its 16th anniversary serving the boating public in Central Virginia. When the unit was formed, volunteers pulled together whatever equipment and materials were available. An old trailer was donated as the SARDET communications center and

the communication tower was outdated when it was installed, though, it served its purpose initially. But as the trailer further deteriorated, the tower became less reliable. Replacements were necessary, and funding for the volunteer organization was limited until alternate sources were found and community members stepped forward to help with the trailer needs.

Auxiliarist and former commander Virginia Ellis learned about a grant program through Dominion and applied for the monies to replace the tower, continuing to keep the need in the forefront of the decision makers.

"I think I called Al Smith nearly every week to check on our grant status," Ellis joked. "He wasn't going to forget about the Auxiliary's needs. I want to thank Dominion for their generosity."

The Flotilla received the \$19,000 grant in 2008 allowing them to proceed with replacing the dilapidated tower.

Others also worked on the tower project, including Gena Kunz who served as project manager, George Condyles, the technical advisor, and Leigh Pemberton and his son, Harrison, who handled the physical labor of digging the holes, removing the old tower and installing the new one.

The project is nearly complete with fencing left to be installed per Coast Guard regulations, and communications have improved greatly. The auxiliary is now able to not only talk with its patrols on the lake, but with law enforcement agencies such as the Louisa and Spotsylvania sheriff's offices and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

The SARDET station is used for radio patrols when auxiliary boats are on the water and is also utilized for training sessions and other meetings. The building was dedicated on Sunday in memory of Jerome Ix, Sr., a longtime friend, member and financial supporter of the Lake Anna Station.

"Jerome was an active Auxiliarist, often patrolling with his son, Jerome Jr.," said Ellis. "He was recognized as the 2007 Crew Person of the Year by Division 8. Unfortunately, we lost him in 2008 - but we did not lose his spirit or generosity."



**Members of Flotillas 84 and 87 and their guests enjoy the appetizers before the picnic, which was held at the SARDET station on Lake Anna on Sunday, July 26.**



Ix made a bequest to the division earmarked for the Lake Anna station to be used to meet special needs, including a golf cart purchased to help transport people and equipment from the station to patrol boats at the dock.

"To recognize his contributions to the Lake Anna station, the board of Division 8 in 2008 authorized the [SARDET] building to be named the Jerome Ix Sr. Building," Ellis said. "Let's take a moment to remember Jerome Sr."

Ix's children, Jerome Jr. and his sister, Mary Ix Norris, removed the covering from the plaque to applause and tears. The Auxiliary also presented a portrait of the senior Ix and a certificate of appreciation to the family that will be hung inside the building.

"Dad would be so honored and speechless," said Norris. "He loved this organization so much."

Ix and his son were members of Flotilla 84 from Charlottesville who frequently patrol Lake Anna with members of the local Flotilla 87.