

# Alaska Marine Safety Education Association

*A community-based cold water & boating safety training network*

Volume 18, Number 1  
Spring 2002



# MARINE SAFETY UPDATE

## *Marine Safety Instructor Training Goes to Maine*

From April 22 to 17, 2002, AMSEA held a Marine Safety Instructor Training (MSIT) course in South Portland, Maine to help form a network of Marine Safety Instructors in New England. Maine fishermen have seen an increase in fatalities in the last few years, so that state's governor formed a fishing vessel safety task force to recommend solutions. It was decided that a community outreach effort was needed and AMSEA was invited to hold an MSIT course to further this goal. Maine's Senator Collins and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, an AMSEA supporter for the past ten years, provided financial support for this class.

The success of any MSIT course is due largely to local support. In Maine, support was graciously provided by the Southern Maine Technical College, the U.S. Coast Guard Portland Marine Safety Office and the Maine Marine Patrol. The course was taught by John McMillan of McMillan Offshore Survival Training of Maine, Kit Van Meter of KVM & Associates of Massachusetts, and Jerry Dzigan of AMSEA .

The students displayed diversity in experience and backgrounds. Sixteen people took part including fishermen, Coast Guard fishing vessel examiners and auxiliary members, a marine pilot, Maine Marine Patrol officers, University of Maine research vessel operators, Search and Rescue personnel, school teachers, Department of Maine marine resources personnel, the North Atlantic Marine Association, and kayak guides. This varied and spirited group represents a great talent pool for a Maine instructor network, and some of them have already co-taught survival classes for fishermen since taking the MSIT class.

Another MSIT class is tentatively scheduled for early next year, perhaps in Ellsworth, providing fishermen and others all along the Maine coast access to quality marine safety instruction!



*Students in the Maine MSIT class learn **not** to launch signal flares where wind would blow them onto oil tankers.*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AMSEA Instructors Keep Busy .....	3
Surprising Boat & Alcohol Study .....	4
Child PFD Requirements Stalled .....	5
Languages Can Challenge Teachers .....	10



## *Marine Safety Training Available*

### **DRILL INSTRUCTION COURSES IN ALASKA**

Contact AMSEA, (907) 747-3287 or [amsea@alaska.com](mailto:amsea@alaska.com) for information about any course mentioned here, or to set up one elsewhere.

Cordova — Early June 2002, Dates TBA

Hoonah — June 12 through 14

Kodiak — Ongoing. Contact Joycrafts, (907) 486-6293

Petersburg — Early June 2002, Dates TBA

Sitka — On demand

St. Paul Island — June 9 through 15

Unalakleet — June 2002, Dates TBA

### **OUT-OF-ALASKA DRILL INSTRUCTION**

Bellingham & Seattle, WA — Fremont Maritime Services,  
(206) 522-5377 or Washington Sea Grant,  
(206) 543-1224

California — Coastwise Marine Safety, (707) 464-2934

Florida — Florida Marine Career Institute, Frank Myers,  
(727) 937-5924

Maine — McMillan Offshore Survival Training, (800) 379-6678

New Jersey — Thompson Maritime, (908) 899-7990

Oregon — Clatsop Community College, (503) 325-0910 or, in  
Newport, Ginny Goblirsch (503) 265-3463

Rhode Island — Vessel Safety Corp., Paul Helland,  
(401) 641-6598

Texas — Israel Linarte, (956) 943-7935

Westport, WA — Washington Sea Grant, (360) 875-9331

## **Sitka to Host Marine Safety Instructor Training Course**

AMSEA's next scheduled Marine Safety Instructor Training (MSIT) course will take place in Sitka **September 16-23, 2002**. In conjunction with the MSIT class, AMSEA will also offer an STCW Train-the-Trainer endorsement for those training professional mariners, as well as a one-day *Alaska Water Wise* instructor course for those working with recreational boaters.

MSIT courses are also planned for Maine early in 2003 and Seward, AK during the first week of April 2003. For more information, contact AMSEA or visit [www.amsea.org](http://www.amsea.org) to register online for the Sitka course.

*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, or can be purchased for \$10.00 per year. (\$20.00 outside the U.S.)

Sustaining, supporting and donor memberships receive recognition in this publication.

Funding for this publication is provided by the members of AMSEA. Memberships and all contributions to AMSEA are tax-deductible. Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Dues received after October 1 are credited to the following year.

Contributions to this publication and letters to the editor are most welcome. Please submit them to:

Editor

*Marine Safety Update*

P.O. Box 2592

Sitka, AK 99835

or fax (907) 747-3259

or e-mail [amsea@alaska.com](mailto:amsea@alaska.com)

Articles printed in *Marine Safety Update* are © 2002, by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association, and may be reprinted only with prior permission from AMSEA.

Editing, layout and design of *Marine Safety Update* provided by Kristie Sherrodd of Sound Strategies, Sitka.

Printed on recycled paper.

## AMSEA Instructors at Work On Many Shores



*Lisa Stanyk helps students at the Voznesenka school of Russian Old Believers don immersion suits.*

In April **John McMillan** helped teach an AMSEA Marine Safety Instructor Course in South Portland, Maine along with **Kit Van Meter** and **Jerry Dzugan**. Afterwards he conducted two Drill Instructor courses Down East. (Ask John about the “Millbridge nod.”) Also in April, **Marian Allen** taught Teacher’s Workshops in Rockport and South Portland, Maine. **Sharon Miller** has been training researchers and assistants at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

On the West Coast, **Britt Elliot** trained 55 cadets in marine safety at the California Maritime Academy. **Bev Noll** completed a course in Crescent City, CA for 13 Vietnamese fishermen. (See photo, page 10.) The hands-on training was very important to this group since their English was minimal. Bev said it was a challenging but rewarding group with which to work. She also reports that their newly formed USCG Auxiliary flotilla just rocks!

Further north, Washington Sea Grant agent **Steve Harbell** and **Eric Olsson** held a series of drill instructor refresher courses for 44 fishermen in Neah Bay, Bellingham and Westport.

In Alaska, AMSEA staffers **Marian Allen**, **Julie Butler Doggett**, **Steven Campbell**, **Mary Chambers**, **Jerry Dzugan** and **Michael Jones** taught classes for teachers and instructors in Seward, Soldotna, Sitka, Anchorage and Bethel.

**Kit Van Meter** assisted with the MSIT course in Seward, and Steven also taught drill instructor courses in Sitka, Seward, Homer, Hoonah and Cordova. Safety classes for fishermen in high school were conducted by **Rick Collins** in Ketchikan, **Bill Gablehouse** in Wrangell, **Mike Morris** and **Rick McElrath** at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, **Rich Krupa** in Sitka, **Jane Eisemann** in Kodiak, **Josh Miller** in Valdez and **Jerry Dzugan** and **Jennifer Lincoln** in Petersburg. Drill Instructor classes were also taught by **Brian Flory** in Juneau, **Dug Jensen & Thea Thomas** in Cordova, **Dug** again in Sitka and Angoon, **Anna Borland-Ivy** in Homer, and **Ted Rogers** and **Hank Pennington** in Kodiak.

Other teachers are also extremely busy. Last summer **Brett Gibbons** taught 100 kids in Galena. **Lisa Stanyk** taught marine safety to the Voznesenka school of Russian Old Believers and at fairs in Homer with help from **Cameron Forbes** and **Anna and Don Lane**. Alaska State Parks employees **Bill Berkhahn**, and **Jacqueline Erion** taught hundreds of kids in the Kenai area with help from **Scott Feldmann**. **Ryan Hill** is working with kids and adults in the Kotzebue and Noorvik area. **Sue Hargis** worked with *many* children in Juneau this past spring, and created some exciting new activities in the process.

**Kathy O’Gara** trains many in the SEARHC-served communities of Southeast Alaska. **Kevin Smart** and **Alexie Michael** have trained over 1,000 people in the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta area. **Sande Walter**, **Leslie Lyman** and **Mary Hausler** taught at Dryden Middle School in Juneau. **Jan Bobek** taught Soldotna upper elementary students. **Carol Scott** is busy as always teaching in Fairbanks schools. **Cynthia Trytko** has been teaching cold-water survival in Anderson, as has **Brenda Dolma** in Homer, **JoAnn Lee** in Sand Point, **Natalie Voron** in Sitka, and **Mary Downs** in Unalaska schools.

**Noel Hutton** teaches at the USCG Airstation in Sitka, while instructors **Cheryl Corey** and **Lisa Thompson** are at the Observer Training Centers in Seattle, with **Pete Risse** in Anchorage, **Cheryl Brown** in Florida, and **Stuart Arceneaux** in Hawaii.

Thanks to all of the instructors who report their activities to AMSEA, and who make cold-water survival and boating safety available in many communities!

## AK Non-Commercial Boating Safety Program Up and Running

AMSEA, working under a contract with the Alaska State Office of Boating Safety, is developing a cadre of non-commercial boating safety instructors in Alaska. During Spring 2002, 50 people from many parts of the state learned to teach *Alaska Water Wise*, the state's National Association of Safe Boating Law



Administrators-approved boating safety course.

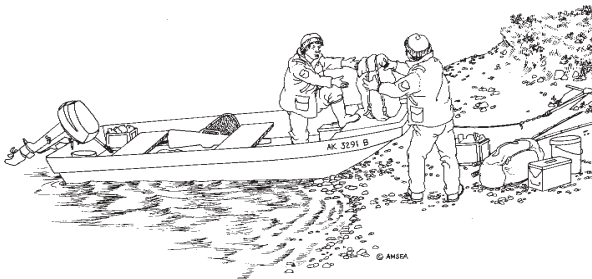
The entry-level course was developed for recreational and subsistence boaters in Alaska. The

instructors trained in this new program include state and national parks rangers, teachers and other educators, U.S. Coast Guard personnel, law enforcement, and Alaska boating organization representatives, as well as people from the private sector.

What sets *Alaska Water Wise* apart from other states' boater safety courses is an emphasis on Alaska-specific concerns such as cold water, the remoteness of many parts of the state, and the great distances from rescue. It is also the first state program to use hands-on training as part of the program and evaluation.

The new *Alaska Water Wise* instructor network is already at work. Participants in the instructor training course have used the program in presentations to schools, professional trainings, and to the public.

To date, instructor courses have been held in Anchorage, Bethel, Seward, Sitka, and Soldotna. Upcoming courses are in the works for Kotzebue, Fairbanks, and other Alaska communities. Anyone interested in becoming an *Alaska Water Wise* instructor should contact AMSEA for information.



## Surprising Results Revealed in New Alcohol & Boating Study

A passenger on a boat has the same risk of being injured or killed as the boat's operator when both have been drinking. This according to a recent comprehensive study by John Hopkins University released in the Dec. 19, 2001 *Journal of the American Medical Association*. This study, one of the most thorough conducted on alcohol and boating, compared the risks to boat operator and boat passenger when alcohol was used onboard. The assumption has been that drunken drivers crash boats. Although some do, most deaths are due to drowning following falls overboard. Half of all fatalities involve operator error and half occur *when boats are not even moving!*

The study showed there was not only identical risk to boat operators and passengers who were imbibing, but it did not matter if the boat was underway or stationary. Risk also does not vary with boat type, gender or race. The risks of boating and drinking are the same no matter who you are or what your role on a vessel.

A boater's risk of dying increased with blood alcohol concentration (BAC). The legal federal limit for driving is a BAC of .08. But a BAC as low as .05 results in boaters four times as likely to die in an accident. A BAC of .10 increases boaters' risks of death 10-fold, and a BAC of .25 means they are 50 times more likely to die. The study showed that these risks did not differ between driver and passenger, raising doubts about the effectiveness of designated driver campaigns for boaters. It appears that the effects of boating while under the influence go well beyond the risk to the boat operator. Passengers also need to be aware of the risks.

## U.S. Law Requiring PFD Use by Children Stalled

The U.S. Coast Guard proposed a national law requiring children under age 13 aboard recreational vessels to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs). The USCG received 46 comments on this proposed rule. Twenty-two comments supported the rule as proposed, eight supported it with changes, and sixteen opposed it.

However, the National Association of Safe Boating Law Administrators requested that the final rule not be implemented until its member states review it further. As a result, a law requiring PFD use by children in the U.S. has been withdrawn from consideration until the Fall of 2002.

This rule was intended to reduce the number of children who drown because they are not wearing PFDs. From 1995 through 1998, 105 children under 13 died in the water, 66 of them by drowning.

By late 1995, 26 states required children to wear PFDs while aboard recreational vessels. Requirements, however, differed from state to state, affecting children of different ages, aboard vessels of different sizes, and engaged in different activities. By late 1999, 36 states required children to wear PFDs while aboard recreational vessels. The requirements, however, still were not consistent nationwide. The age for required wearing varied from under age 18 when the vessel operator is under 18, to under age six. Laws differed in other ways, too: the sizes of vessels (more than 26 feet in length; or less than 65 feet, 26 feet, 19 feet, 18 feet, or 16 feet in length) on which PFD use was required; whether the vessels were under way, in motion, or not specified; and whether the children were on open decks, below decks, or in enclosed cabins. In Alaska, children under 13 are required to wear a PFD.

The number of deaths by drowning of children under 13 decreased from 26 in 1995 to 11 in 1998. A 1998 study of recreational boating accidents revealed that the rate of children who drown in states that require PFDs (1.22 child drownings for every 1000 accidents) is lower than in states that do not (1.31 child drownings for every 1000 accidents).

To improve boating safety and establish uniformity of boating laws, the Coast Guard considered a nationwide requirement that children under 13 wear USCG-approved PFDs while aboard vessels under way. The proposed rule acknowledged the law enforcement efforts of states that already require children to wear PFDs by allowing states to enforce their more stringent requirements. It added authority for USCG boarding officers to enforce the requirements while encouraging states to establish their own requirements without imposing a federal mandate to do so.

Anyone with questions concerning this proposed rule can call Carl Perry, USCG, at 202-267-0979.

---

### USCG-APPROVED INFLATABLE PFDs FOR CHILDREN AVAILABLE

SOSpenders® has received USCG approval for their inflatable PFDs for children. These first inflatables to be approved for use by children feature double the buoyancy of inherent flotation vests and turn most children face up in the water. There are automatic, manual and oral inflation models to choose from.

SOSpenders® was recently purchased by Arcata, California-based Watermark Gear, a division of Crescent Capital.

### *New School Curriculum Available Soon*

AMSEA's new K-12<sup>th</sup> grade standards-based school curriculum *Surviving Outdoor Adventures* will be published by Alaska Sea Grant and available this summer. Watch for it!

## Bi-lingual Students . . . continued from page 10

similar in English and in another language but have different meanings; and the contextual environment of words, including attitudes associated with words and emotional meanings contained within words.

False friends tend to occur with languages that have a European history. In Russian *ekonomnity* does not mean economic but practical, frugal or thrifty. The meanings are close enough that you and a native Russian speaker might both think you understand the statement: Bristol Bay fisheries have not been economically viable for several years. In fact, the Russian might think Bristol Bay fishermen just have not been frugal enough in their fishing operations.

Another example of confusing word use involves multiple meanings. In English, "compass" refers to both an instrument that measures direction and a tool with two arms connected at one end with a moveable drawing point used to make circles and arcs. In German, *kompas* has only the first meaning. When you explain that the compass is used to draw circles, a German speaker may become confused trying to picture the handheld compass used as a drawing implement.

The social and cultural context of words is subtler than multiple meanings and false friends. It refers to the meaning we understand from the total environment in which the word is used; a meaning that resides primarily in our unconscious minds. Even within a language group there are different contextual meanings based on subculture, geography, class, personality, past experiences, tastes and values. By and large within a language, however, these differences aren't great enough to cause confusion and misunderstanding.

Words that cause interference differ from language to language based on differing cultural attitudes toward the concept behind the word. For instance, to Chinese the word 'individualism' has negative connotations. It means selfish. To North Americans of European descent, it has a positive connotation. The Chinese student will have a negative

attitude toward a statement that fishermen are a very individualistic group, whereas the North American responds to a description including individualism with respect. In a 1992 study of 21 different words comparing cultural and social contextual meaning between Hopi, Zuni and Navajo speakers, 17 of the words had significant conceptual differences.

What words communicate explicitly about attitude also differs between languages. Yupiks use few words, but the words contain whole sentences in their meanings. Part of what is communicated with specific sounds is how the speaker feels toward what is being said. This may include attitudes toward the listener as well. English does not always have verbal clues about the speaker's attitude. This can cause Yupiks to be reluctant to give feedback in class because they do not want to cause embarrassment or offend. This is also true in many Asian cultures.

How can instructors best prepare for a multicultural, multilingual class and prepare students for their often-complex working environment? Teachers cannot be familiar with the first languages and cultures of all students. However, we can be aware that interferences are more common than we may think and therefore not judge students as passive or "not quite up to it," or ourselves as inarticulate or boring. When suspecting we are not communicating as well as we would like, we can take the time to check comprehension with practice of taught skills. We also can put important ideas and concepts in context by explaining in several different ways and giving examples and/or acting out.

This is a reason why "hands-on" training is so important. Not only is retention much longer for performance based skills, but demonstrating skills and having students practice them with good corrective supervision, is a universally understood teaching technique!

---

## Test Immersion Suits Regularly for Size & Defects

Immersion suit problems can develop both over time and during manufacture. Underwriter Laboratories only randomly tests suits. It is very important that suits first are tried for size and defects when they are purchased and during the course of ownership, *not* when abandoning ship! Few people buy a \$50 pair of shoes without trying them on first, but most people pay up to \$500 for an immersion suit and never try it on before putting it on a boat and, sadly, sometimes not even after it is onboard.

Consider abandoning ship and simultaneously discovering one of the following defects or problems with your immersion suit: (These are real situations recently encountered!)

1. Brand new suit with arm glued shut at shoulder. Seam sealant cured the arm closed during manufacture and arm could not be put into suit.
2. Zipper stop at top of zipper loose or missing, causing the zipper closure toggle to “jump the tracks.” The suit could not be zipped.
3. Thin ribbon covering the outside of a seam delaminated and seam split wide open.
4. Corrosion on zippers, flotation bladder missing, lights do not work, outdated batteries, or deteriorated light reflective tape resulted in less than optimal suit.
5. Large hands would not fit into a suit’s five-finger glove.
6. Suit did not fit or zip over larger-than-average physical features (belly, chest).

Can you *still* get into your suit wearing the clothing you typically wear on deck? Remember that bodies change as they age. Just because a suit fit well eight or ten years ago doesn’t mean it still does. Every year, practice donning your suit with the aim of donning it completely in 60 seconds.

At 10 to 12 years, immersion suits are at the end of their life spans. Glue deterioration, neoprene compression, zipper corrosion etc. mean suits need to be serviced or replaced at that time. People tend to underestimate the age of their suits. Examine your suit critically. Put it on. Remember, at sea, your immersion suit is your parachute. Treat it as if your life depended on it. It does!

---

### Irish Fishermen to Receive Mandatory Safety Training

Four thousand Irish fishermen will soon begin compulsory safety training covering all aspects of sea survival including fire fighting, man overboard recovery and swimming. The three-day course will be held in several locations on the Irish coast.

Fishermen will be required to wear lifejackets during the training program, but it will still be up to individual fishermen to wear PFDs when at sea. The Irish Coast Guard responds to requests for help from 300 to 400 fishing vessels per year.

Want to hear what an EPIRB signal sounds like?  
Visit [www.clis.com/cpb21/eltepirb.htm](http://www.clis.com/cpb21/eltepirb.htm)

---

### *False CO Alarms Triggered*

Radio operators should be aware that if they operate in the 150 MHz range, some carbon monoxide (CO) detectors will sound a false alert if near the radio. The Nighthawk CO alarm, manufactured by Kidde Company, is a very popular brand with this problem. The solution: move it away from the radio.

### OSHA Oversees Work at Sea

The Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) shares jurisdiction with the U.S. Coast Guard for working conditions on vessels in U.S. waters. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled recently that because the USCG exercises minimal oversight on uninspected vessels, OSHA should also involve itself in working conditions aboard uninspected and inspected vessels.

## U.S. Naval Vessels Granted Protection Zone

Temporary regulations, in effect until June 15, 2002, establish security zones around U.S. naval vessels. After June 15, these temporary regulations become permanent. The regulation establishes zones as follows:

- All vessels within 500 yards of a naval vessel shall operate at minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course and shall proceed as directed by the official patrol.
- No vessel is allowed within 100 yards of a naval vessel, unless authorized by the official patrol.
- Vessels requesting to pass within 100 yards of a naval vessel shall contact the official patrol on VHF channel 16. The patrol may permit vessels that can operate safely only in a navigable channel to pass within 100 yards of a naval vessel in order to ensure a safe passage in accordance with the Navigation Rules.
- Commercial vessels anchored in a designated anchorage area may be permitted to remain at anchor within 100 yards of passing naval vessels.
- Violations of the Naval Vessel protection Zone are a felony offense, punishable by up to six years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000.

Also, vessels that stop or anchor beneath bridges, in channels or around military, cruise line or petroleum facilities may be perceived as a threat.

Boaters should think about how any action might be seen by others, and report peculiar or suspicious activities to local authorities.

### Defective Aluminum Alloy Used in Some Boats

Aluminum boats made from an aluminum alloy manufactured by the Alcan Aluminum Corp. – alloy 5083-H321 – has been found to be NOT suitable for saltwater use. It is susceptible to corrosion and cracking. Unfortunately, several boat builders including Kvichak Marine and Nichols Brothers used this alloy. These and other boatyards work with customers to identify and replace suspect aluminum plate.

If your aluminum vessel has flaking, corrosion or cracking, contact LCDR Tom Miller at the Puget Sound Marine Safety Office at (206) 217-6180 for assistance.

### Interesting Factoids Revealed

Seawater is 3.5% salt. However, the human body is only .6% salt. The body dilutes ingested seawater, robbing itself of precious water needed other vital functions. Despite the tremendous urge to drink *any* liquid, including seawater, when severely dehydrated, consumption of seawater will not slake thirst and will result in an early death. In general, anything containing more than .6% salt dehydrates the human body quickly.

Protein requires more water to digest than other nutrients. Therefore, it is best to avoid high protein foods when dehydrated. Liferaft rations include little or no protein for this reason.

### *To Add to Summer Reading Lists:*

***Until the Sea Shall Free Them*** by Robert Frump is an excellent history of the sinking of the U.S. Merchant Vessel *Marine Electric* in 1983. Mr. Frump uses the sinking of to illustrate the evolution of safety in the U.S. Merchant Marines since World War II. The *Marine Electric* had only three survivors out of a crew of 34. This tragedy led to many changes in marine safety such as the faster retirement of WWII-vintage cargo vessels, immersion suit requirements for cargo vessels in the U.S. and the establishment of the Coast Guard rescue swimmer program.

Well written and researched, Frump has written one of the most insightful and readable books on marine safety. He combines drama, irony and years of investigative reporting including interviews with those involved, resulting in a first rate book. Doubleday, 337 pages.



# THANKS!

*The following people and organizations help keep AMSEA's marine safety training programs afloat!*

Sustaining Membership

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Anchorage

Supporting Memberships

Re/Max of Sitka/Welcome Home, Inc.  
Daryl Royce, Anchorage  
Educational Training Company, Sitka  
Dan Russell, Seattle  
F/V Coral Lee, Sitka  
F/V Gretchen S, Anchorage  
Andre Nault, Pacific Environmental & Safety, Redondo Beach, CA  
Norheim, Inc. F/V Frigidland, Petersburg  
F/V Kariel, Sitka  
Vessel Safety Corp., Kingston, RI  
F/V Meridian, Petersburg

Donor Memberships

Mona Christian, Petersburg  
Thompson Maritime, Inc., Farmdale, WA  
Joann Bailey, Sitka  
Alan & Elizabeth Horoschak, Sitka

Recent Service & Equipment Donations

F/V ValleLee, Port Angeles, WA - Liferaft  
F/V Northern Dawn, Sitka - Liferaft  
Susan Padilla, Sitka - Child's immersion suit  
F/V Cherokee, Sitka - One day of vessel use for training

**Also thanks to the scores of individual members, and the many others who teach and contribute to marine safety education!**

- Individual Membership: \$20.00
- Donor Membership: \$50.00
- Supporting Membership: \$100.00
- Sustaining Membership: \$500.00
  
- Newsletter subscription to the U.S. \$10.00
- Newsletter subscription outside the U.S. \$20.00

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here if this is a renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company/Organization/Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State & Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!** for becoming a part of the

## ALASKA MARINE SAFETY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2592 Sitka, Alaska 99835 Phone: (907) 747-3287 Fax: (907) 747-3259 E-mail: amsea@alaska.com

# Bi-lingual Students Can Challenge Instructors

*It is not uncommon for instructors to teach students whose first language is not English. The fishing industry includes large numbers of Alaska Natives, Russian Old Believers, Latin Americans and Asians. Instructors often take English comprehension for granted, but there are subtle yet important areas of misunderstanding. Marian Allen, AMSEA Schools Coordinator and Teacher of English as a Foreign Language, provides the first of two articles for instructors whose students' first language is not English.*

Do you ever feel you are not being understood while teaching — that a student isn't "getting it" or that you are teaching to a group of passive bodies?

In fact, what you suspect may be true — these things *are* happening. Perhaps, you are not clear or articulate, or the students are not motivated, interested or engaged. However, lack of connection often occurs because of subtle cross-cultural interferences, or two languages interfering with each other. In addition, fishermen and other mariners have words in their vocabularies with meanings specific to their maritime occupations. You use these words in your teaching. Interferences can cause misunderstandings, confusion and, in the worst cases, insult. This article examines some interferences that affect teaching: multiple meanings and "false friends" or words that sound

*continued on page 6 . . .*



*AMSEA instructor Bev Noll uses hot potatoes to graphically illustrate a lesson on hypothermia in a Crescent City, CA class for Vietnamese fishermen*



P.O. Box 2592  
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit 23  
Juneau, AK 99801

*Return Service Requested*