



Bill Turner, commander of Flotilla 12-3 of Lake Murray, congratulates Bobby Buscher and James A. Smith, members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary, for being named Auxiliarists of the Fourth Quarter of 2001 for their outstanding activities and work as members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Lake Murray Auxiliarists honored by District 12

By **Ollie Moyer**

Editor in Chief

James A. Smith and friend Bobby Buscher, residents of 436 Smallwood Drive on the Lake Murray shoreline, have been honored by District 12 of the Coast Guard Auxiliary for their outstanding activities and work as members of Flotilla 12-3 of Lake Murray.

Both admit being surprised when they were recognized as recipients of the Auxiliarists of the Fourth Quarter of the year 2000 at the district meeting last month.

Smith, a retired air traffic controller in Atlanta who first discovered Lake Murray only recently, says that "shocked" is a more accurate description when he and Ms. Buscher were revealed as winners of this special award at the district meeting which both attended along with several other members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary.

"We never expected to receive anything like this," said Smith, speaking for both he and Ms. Buscher. "It's a great honor to get something such as this and

be recognized by the whole division."

The Indiana native said that unlike many other Coasts Guard Auxiliary members, he and Ms. Buscher have the time and opportunity to do what they did to receive the award.

"A lot of auxiliary members are still engaged in daily occupations, working for a living, whereas we're both retired and can drop things at the spur of the moment and volunteer to help others who are studying, or need the guidance, and furnish a boat for training on the lake for the water tasks required to get checked off as auxiliary crew members," he observed. "We're fortunate to have the time and opportunity."

In 1992, Smith joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Georgetown where he had located in 1986. As a result of being in that auxiliary, he learned about Lake Murray.

"I didn't even have a boat then," said Smith, who admits joining the Coast Guard Auxiliary to have something to

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do. Since, he has become so wrapped up in it that he now considers this his hobby.

His CGA trail began by enrolling in the organization's boating safety class.

"The auxiliary was seeking new members, and I signed up," he recalls. He was almost immediately assigned to the communications room at Guard Station Georgetown.

Then he stood radio watch for the Coast Guard for approximately three years.

"There are a lot of nice people in the Coast Guard and in the Auxiliary," he said. "Since the Coast Guard is such a small unit of the armed service, there is a closer interaction between the military and the auxiliary, and I think this was evident during the division meeting at Mt. Pleasant a couple of weeks ago. You can meet and talk to the active Coast Guard personnel and they're very friendly and very cooperative. They are actively pur-

suing the auxiliary because of the help we give them."

Smith points out that in places such as Lake Murray, the Coast Guard would have no presence at all without the existence of Flotilla 12-3.

Smith learned about the Lake Murray Flotilla as a result of his affiliation with the auxiliary at Georgetown.

He remembers that when he first saw Lake Murray, he was overcome by its size. "I thought would never find my way around," Smith said. "It's a pretty big lake. But it was not difficult for me to overcome because of all the help I received from two members of Flotilla 12-3. Jay Dahlgren and Don Davis. They took me under their wing and took me out several times on patrols, showing me around, how to get my visual checkpoints and what to look for."

Smith is responsible for his friend, Ms. Buscher, learning about the Coast Guard Auxiliary and also discovering Lake Murray.

She and her late husband, who died in 1995, were living at the same condos

where Smith was living then. "We were living in the same place and I knew who he was, but we didn't move in the same circles," she said. In 1997 they became friends.

Ms. Buscher admits becoming interested in the Coast Guard Auxiliary "because of Jim." Up until then, she said she knew that such an organization existed, but had no idea of what it did. She joined the auxiliary in February of 1998.

"I had been on a boat only once in my lifetime before joining the Coast Guard Auxiliary," she admits, "and that was in my early 20s."

Expanding on her explanation of joining the auxiliary because of Smith, she said it took her a while to decide to join because "I didn't want to tread on his turf. But I quickly found that was not the case. He has been helpful to me and completely trained me as an auxiliaryist. I want to give him credit for doing a real good job. I don't think he did me any favors during the training because we were friends. I either trained right, or he was

stern with me. I think he was much more thorough in training me than he would have if training anyone else."

Her first glimpse of Lake Murray came in June of 1999, when she and Smith were looking for a place on Lake Murray.

"We decided to locate here (in Lake Murray Country) because there was a very active Flotilla and I knew how important this is to Jim. And me, also," she said. "Lake Murray struck me at first as being pretty, now it's home."

Both report no regrets in locating on Lake Murray. "I'm gladder to be here than you'll ever know," she said.

In addition to her activity with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, she spends much of her time to her hobby, painting. Scattered throughout her house are professional-looking paintings she has done. She especially likes to show visitors a wide shade covering a window overlooking the lake that features a painting of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse at South Daytona Beach on one side and a beach scene on the other.