


AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

For Boaters, By Boaters®




THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

In this issue...

- From The Commander..... 1
- From the Executive Officer 3
- From the Administrative Officer 6
- From the Education Director 7
- Secretary's Sidenotes..... 9
- ABC-FLX News..... 11
 - Happy Birthday! 11
 - 2023 Accident Statistics 11
 - District 6 Fall Conference..... 11
- Upcoming Classes & Seminars 12
 - Radar for Boaters 12
 - Weather 12
- Long-Term Class Schedule 13
- Sampson Rendezvous in Pictures..... 15
- The Last Word 18
- Calendar of Events..... 20

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From The Commander

By Phil Cherry, S SV Harmony

Planning for the Future

Our squadron (or Chapter as it's referred to in the ABC lingo) is just beginning to embark on a process to review and update our organization's strategic plan. A small group of us met just this morning to scope out the task, discuss prior efforts and chart a course to completion. Our goal is to complete the planning process by the end of the year and have the new plan ready for the Annual Meeting in January. You can help!

Some folks might shrug their shoulders at the thought of strategic planning, and yet it makes perfect sense to me that if you do not know what your goals and objectives are as an organization you'll certainly never reach them, and you'll likely die as an organization. So, revisiting your strategic plan every so often is always a good idea, if for no other reason than to engage the membership in some self-reflection while working towards,



and becoming, a better and more useful organization.

Our organization's last strategic plan was prepared in 2020 and so it's about time we took a look at where we are. Thankfully, our organization is a relatively simple one. But simplicity is no excuse for not doing some self-evaluation prior to revising our strategic plan. Our leadership team, composed of our bridge officers as well as our executive committee members, will be doing the lion's share of the work, but we welcome the input of every single member. Look for an opportunity to participate in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis in the months ahead and a chance to comment on the plan moving forward.

According to our old plan, we have four principal goals as outlined below. The entire plan, complete with definitions and specific objectives for each goal is available on the ABC-FLX website [here](#).

Education

Meet the educational needs of USPS members and promote safe boating by enhancing the knowledge and skill of the general public.

Public Awareness

Increase the visibility and presence through events, marketing and PSA opportunities.

Member Involvement

Achieve a membership level that will enable the squadron to fulfill its mission.

Social Activities

Offer a diverse range of social activities that appeal to a broad spectrum of current, prospective and new members.

There is no question that we are an educational organization, and one that provides a public service to our community. We are also a community of boaters, whether power or sail, who enjoy one another's company and our common love of boating. The above four main goals may change a bit in the next iteration of the plan, we will see, however, we will not venture far from our core responsibilities as a member organization in America's Boating Club, and our history of education and community service.

That said, we do have challenges. While our membership in the Finger Lakes chapter has been static (or declining slightly) over the past several years, many squadrons across the country are losing members and/or not able to recruit and retain new members. It is fair to say that we also struggle with enticing members to serve in a leadership capacity in the organization. Fresh ideas and energy are the lifeblood of most small non-profits and so getting new members to participate is crucial for long term health of the any organization.

On the positive side, our strengths are many. We have some of the most talented and dedicated instructors in all of the ABC and our on-the-water offerings set us apart from many other squadrons who do mostly classroom work. Our fiscal house is in order and the majority of our membership is generally engaged in the organization. These are great strengths, but there is always room for improvement and our hope is that through examination of our strategic plan and membership input, we can make our organization even better.

Stay tuned for how you can contribute to the strategic planning effort, and in the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer boating season!

- Phil, SV Harmony
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The Drum

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From the Executive Officer

By Kris West, S

Facing Fears & Having Fun on Lake Ontario



I've spent most of my life living 'just over the hill' from the Great Lakes in small cities whose rivers rush downhill in

the opposite direction, away from these storied inland seas. Even so, the lakes always pulled me to them and traveling to them always came with a sense of newness and adventure for me. Over the years, I've been able to drive around them, swim in them and even live on one for a brief stint. Sailing them mostly eluded me until this year when Jim McGinnis invited me to join the crew of *Brewster* for the Lake Ontario 300 Challenge (LO300) along with his brother, John, and longtime friend, Dave Dawson-Elli.

Roughly tracing a figure eight across Lake Ontario, the LO300 was designed to challenge the skills of weeknight racers to long distances and the open ocean conditions conjured up by the lake. This was the opportunity I'd been looking for and I ended up serving as crew for not only the race but also on the voyage to and from Oswego.

As our departure date approached a stupid voice in my head piped up creating doubt and anxiety.

Would I succumb to sea sickness out there? As the only woman aboard, would I be a respected member of the team? Would I lose my nerve if the weather turned nasty? In the weeks before the race, it seemed like some folks around the marina relished in sharing their 'war stories' of how bad conditions can get – monster waves, bone chilling cold, voracious biting flies.



Figure 1: Modeling the latest in foul weather gear courtesy of Mike Crouse.

But, there were others who went out of their way to make sure both *Brewster* and everyone aboard would be safe and comfortable. Mike Crouse loaned me his foul weather gear which came in handy many times. Tom Alley, Dave Dawson-Elli, Mike Crouse and Jim McGinnis all ran through race requirement checklists multiple times to make sure *Brewster* was fully equipped. John McGinnis planned the menu and purchased our provisions. All of this along with the team's combined experience and the knowledge of my own abilities

gave me the confidence that this would truly be a trip of a lifetime.

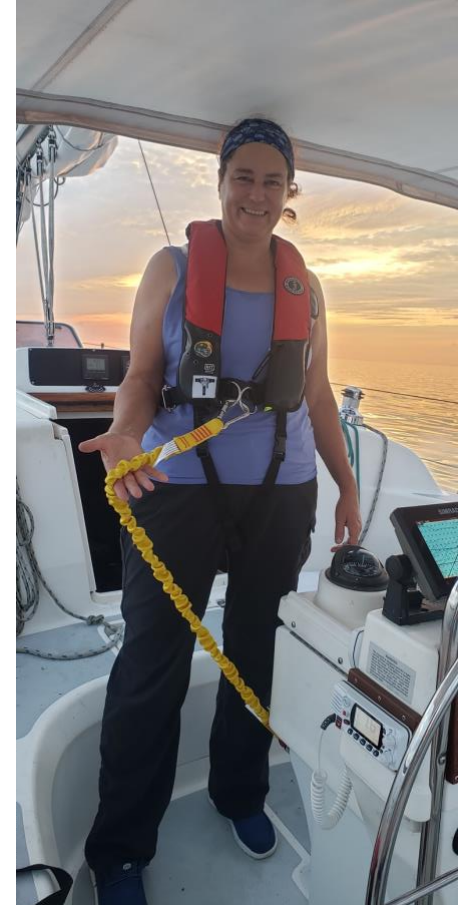


Figure 2: Safely tethered in for the night watch.

Heeding stories of how debilitating sea sickness can be for even seasoned sailors, I wanted to make sure I was fully prepared by getting my hands on any motion sickness remedies I could find. By the time we set out, I was loaded for bear with an arsenal of vitamin B6, ginger chews, acupressure bands, Dramamine, and *two* different prescription drugs. We motored out of Oswego on July 9th onto a flat calm lake but the weather forecast included steady wind from the northeast as hurricane



Figure 3: The first of many beautiful sunsets during the trip.

Beryl blew itself out over the west end of the lake. The evening included a spectacular sunset during my first 4-hour night watch with Jim and everything stayed calm until the rain and wind started to pick up the next morning during my second watch. Ready for a nap after breakfast I tucked up into the v-birth and immediately dropped into sleep as the seas continued to build to 3 - 4 feet. The thrum of the motor, the sound of water washing by my ear and the rocking of the boat lead me into a dreamscape where I was safely tucked inside a great whale swimming across the lake. To the surprise and delight of everyone on board I emerged 2 hours later feeling refreshed and energized and with all fears of motion sickness completely put to rest.

I still had to prove to myself that, as the only woman on board, I would be accepted into the crew. Like many women, I was not mentored in the ways of machines

or electronics in my formative years. Only when I met my husband did I start learning how to take on DIY projects around the house. And it was only after I joined ABC-FLX a few years ago that I started learning about the finer points of sailing and boat maintenance. For this trip, I brought along homemade pesto and fresh lettuce from my garden and a willingness to take on any job. I chipped in with meal prep and clean up. I scrubbed the deck. I trimmed sails. And when the wind died, I killed flies – lots of flies. I approached my tasks with a positive attitude

and I recognized that when some jobs were beyond my skill set it was important to learn as much as possible along the way.

Ultimately, it was Jim, John and Dave, who made me feel a part of the team by allowing me space to do my work while also providing tips and tricks on how to be a better sailor.

Facing my final fear came as we neared the halfway point in the race. Along with a few other boats, we approached Main

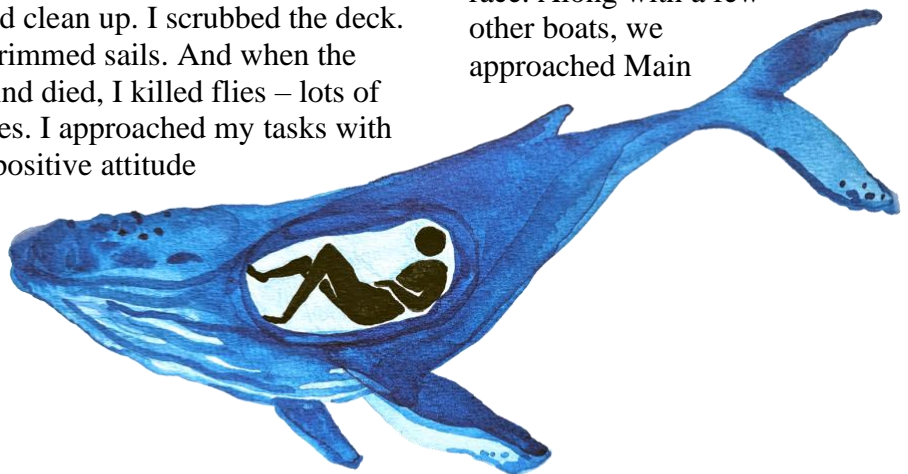


Figure 4: All my fears of seasickness faded after riding through heavy seas dreaming of being safely inside a whale. Original watercolor by Megan West.



Figure 5: My crew mates (L to R), Skipper Jim McGinnis, Dave Dawson-Elli, and John McGinnis.

Duck Island in the northeastern corner of the lake right around dinner time on Saturday evening. As we tucked into our salad course under about 6 knots of wind we watched two of our competitors off our beam and eyed purple clouds bellying low over the lake to our south. In the wink of an eye, everything changed. One boat about a mile off our starboard side slammed over - her sails almost hitting the whitecaps that appeared out of nowhere. Dave, at the helm, called out, “reef the sails!” All food and dishes were passed below deck to John who exchanged them quickly for life jackets. When the squall hit us at over 30 knots everyone above deck was tethered on. Jim and I

were already double reefing the main and Dave was able to hold course. There was no time to think. Over the next hour or so (or maybe it was only 10 minutes), the wind died and came back several times leading us to raise and then double reef the main at least three times (or maybe four, I lost track). By the time the storm passed, my arms were limp noodles but I felt so exhilarated! I’d faced my final challenge and didn’t lose my head.

In fact, I had a lot of fun. In the process of saying yes to the trip and overcoming my fears, I accomplished so much more. I made two new good friends in John and Dave. We enjoyed spectacular sunsets, sunrises, moonrises and moonsets over the

lake. We ate like kings. We laughed – a lot. We marveled at Toronto’s glittering skyline. We stargazed together in the quiet night. We sailed under perfect conditions. Our group of four came together as a team. And, when the wind died and we swam and floated, weightless, in the middle of one of the world’s wonders – the inland fresh water ocean that is Lake Ontario. It truly was a trip of a lifetime and one I hope to repeat some day!

Now, get outside and have fun!

- Kris

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From the Administrative Officer

By Maggie Martin

SV Wined 'n' Down

Our Next Club Event



Guy Schamel spoke about his history with the Watkins Glen Marina to the ABC

Group gathered at JR Dill at our meeting in July.

On September 17th, we will be meeting on the second floor of the Seneca Cheese Company, 29 North Franklin St., in Watkins Glen. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Jim McGinnis talking about his recent trip to Lake Ontario and the race he participated in there. The meeting will start at 7:00pm. A full bar

and snack items are available to purchase. We hope to see you there!


- Maggie
ao@abc-flx.org



Figure 6: Guy Schamel with the glass bowl presented to him at the meeting.



Figure 7: Dancing at Samson Park! Bill Trondsen and Christa Wolfe were the first ones on the dance floor - followed by the rest of the gang! Music provided by Phil Smock and his band, the Take Three Quartet.



Need a Burgee? It's a great way to show your membership in ABC-FLX!

Contact co@abc-flx.org to learn more!

From the Education Director

By Katie Alley, JN

SV Tomfoolery

On Being Busy



It's been an incredibly busy, but fulfilling summer for me! I've learned that there

are two types of "busy" in life.

The first type, the bad type, is when you're overwhelmed with everything you have to do and everywhere you have to be. You're skipping meals and sleeping less because everything is so demanding. You are miserable, overworked, stressed, and feeling like a cog in the machine.

The second type, the good type, is when you have a lot of things to do and a lot of places to be, but they are good things and places. They are things and places you look forward to doing and being at. When you have a day-off from all the activities, you aren't sure what to even do with yourself. This type can be overwhelming at times, and things like chores might be neglected, but you keep going and manage what you can day by day.

My summer has been some version of the good type of busy. I have two jobs that I love - including crewing aboard the Schooner *True Love* where I meet new people everyday. I have friends in the marina asking me to go sailing with them every

weekend. I am taking a new navigation class and am learning new things about the sky overhead. I have my own little boat to work on and tinker with and sail! Sometimes, I even get to clean my apartment and do laundry and play video games with my boyfriend.

Even with the packed calendar, life is good. One highlight of my summer is the annual rendezvous to Sampson. Overall, the weekend was a success again this year! I had a great time hanging out with everyone, dancing at the Vista, drinking, eating, and playing mini golf. The new mini golf course is beautiful and well-made. There are some unique holes for sure! Furthermore, our squadron owes Andrew Price a thank you for leading the *Emergencies on Board* seminar again this year. Thanks Andrew! The only two downsides to the weekend were that 1) the weather and clouds did not cooperate for celestial sight-taking and 2) the beaches were closed due to algae blooms. (I got to go swimming in the middle of the lake with Kris and Phelps!)

The Celestial Navigation class is underway. The instructors are Tom Alley and Jim McGinnis. There are four students in the class, including myself, our ASEO, and our Secretary! So far, we have been meeting on Thursday evenings in the Village Marina aboard *Tomfoolery* while the weather is still pleasant. *Tomfoolery* is fully equipped with a projector so we can view the slideshows that go with our

lessons. Tomorrow, we might get really crazy and meet over at *Lucky Hare*!

I'm writing this directly after having lunch at *Lucky Hare* on their opening day! It is so great to have a local business back in the Village Marina's restaurant (*Horseheads Brewing/Lakeside Eatery* operated there in 2022 and 2023). The building has sat unused this year until today (August 28th) while negotiations about the building's lease were ongoing. Perhaps a full review will be in order later, but I'll share my initial impressions now!

Some minor renovations were made inside and the bar looks fantastic! My grilled chicken sandwich was very good! My French fries were also fried and salted to perfection. The prices are lower and very reasonable in my opinion. For those of you like me who are anti-beer, there is a selection of wines and cocktails (again, for a lower and more fair price than we saw at with the previous tenant). There are no domestic beers yet, but a variety of *Lucky Hare*'s local brews are available to choose from. I did not have a drink yet, since I am waiting to work a sunset cruise aboard *True Love*, but after my shift I'll be back at the bar with my ID!

Since it is a Wednesday, *Lucky Hare* is not very busy (yet). I encourage you all to come on down and support the new business! The Village Marina is truly a gem and we're lucky to

have a place to eat and drink right on the water while we enjoy the view. Plus, *Lucky Hare* will be open year-round, so you can even visit Seneca Lake during the winter while staying warm inside.

In the last edition of *The Drum*, I wrote about my shopping list for my new 14-foot boat, an Alcott Sunfish. There's more to say about her, but I'll save that for the next edition. I have not made my maiden voyage with her yet, but she is completely rigged and ready to sail. Additionally, the

trailer is all legal for NYS, my car has a cool new hitch, and I am ready to carry her wherever I want!

Though I did not meet my original timeline goal for having my Sunfish ready, there's no purpose in getting frustrated about it. I have a lot of things going on in my life – a lot of good things – and that's okay. I've been the good kind of busy and I'm happy with how this summer went. What could I complain about? (Maybe

having to spend my time doing laundry, again.)

Since I've been out of school, I've realized that September really is a great month in the Finger Lakes. The excessive heat tends to be over and the wind tends to be stronger. The season isn't done yet - I still have things to do!

- Katie

seo@abc-flx.org



Secretary's Sidenotes

By Jeff Mack, JN

Summer House



Each summer for over a decade, my wife's father, Dale, rents a large, old Dutch Colonial

house in Huron, Ohio, just 100 yards from Lake Erie and only five miles from his home where my wife grew up. This house, called the "Buster Brown Shoe House" because it was originally the summer retreat of a family that owned the Buster Brown Shoe Company, serves as the setting for an annual family gathering. Here, Dale hosts his five daughters and their families for a week of bonding and relaxation.

The house is a sturdy, three-story structure, built to endure the harsh winters brought by Lake Erie's weather. Over the years, it has become a cherished place for this large family, known simply as "summer house." However, after the initial reunions, the brothers-in-law often find themselves bored and restless, feeling invisible as their wives reconnect with each other and the children disappear with their cousins, only returning when they need money for ice cream. What is a dad to do?

In the past, I sometimes skipped out on the summer house gatherings, opting instead for work or just showing up on weekends. But about five years ago, when I became serious about sailing, I realized I could spend my time on the lake. Lake Erie, with its ever-changing moods, has always captivated me. From the break wall near the house, you can see the rollercoasters of Cedar Point, a familiar sight from my past. This was where I met my wife – both of us working at the park during college summers, creating crafts for visitors. She was making baskets and I was making glass. Our favorite dates involved taking the ferry across Sandusky Bay, wandering around town since neither of us had a car.

Beyond Cedar Point lies a small, intriguing cruising ground: the Western Lake Erie Islands (WELI), including Catawba, Kelleys Island, Put In Bay islands, and Pele Island. This area, all within a few miles of each other, seemed perfect for exploring with a small sailboat. A plan for making summer house more appealing started to take shape in my mind.

Conveniently, a creek runs behind the summer house, where neighbors keep small boats. The creek leads to a lagoon connected to the Sawmill Creek Resort Marina and, through a narrow canal, to Lake Erie. The

SV Tiny Tina



Figure 9: Map of western Lake Erie showing where the summer house is located.



Figure 8: Detail showing the creek and canal that provide convenient boat access.

house's owner gave permission to keep a small boat there during our stays, providing a perfect starting point for my new adventure.



Figure 11: My perfect boat for western Lake Erie gunkholing.

Next, I needed the right boat—a trailerable sailboat that met specific criteria. It had to weigh less than 3,000 pounds to be towable with my vehicle. It needed to be easy to rig and launch solo, with shallow enough draft to be able to sail around Sandusky Bay but stable enough for safe cruising around the Western Lake Erie Islands, and small enough to store in my garage. After an extensive search, I found a Menger 15, a gaff-rigged catboat, which I towed home from Cape Cod.

The Menger 15, although unusual for the intended area, was ideal for me. It features a tabernacle mast, a heavy centerboard, a sturdy canvas dodger, and a boom tent. The bowsprit extends the forestay forward, reducing the typical weather helm of a catboat and providing a convenient place for anchor storage. It's equipped with a 2.5 hp Suzuki outboard

motor that pushes it along at 3 knots. Even if swamped, it remains afloat due to its positive buoyancy, thanks to the foam-filled voids in the hull. The boat is designed for single-handed sailing, and I can manage the sails from the cockpit. The navigation system is simple: a fishing chart of the Western Lake Erie Basin, a hand-bearing compass, basic plotting tools, and Navionics on my iPhone. The head is a bucket, and the galley consists of a small collapsible cooler. For sleeping, we use inflatable camping mattresses under mosquito netting and a nice canvas boom tent.

For the last three years, this boat has added a new dimension to our summerhouse experience. It's provided me with a much-needed escape, allowing me to explore

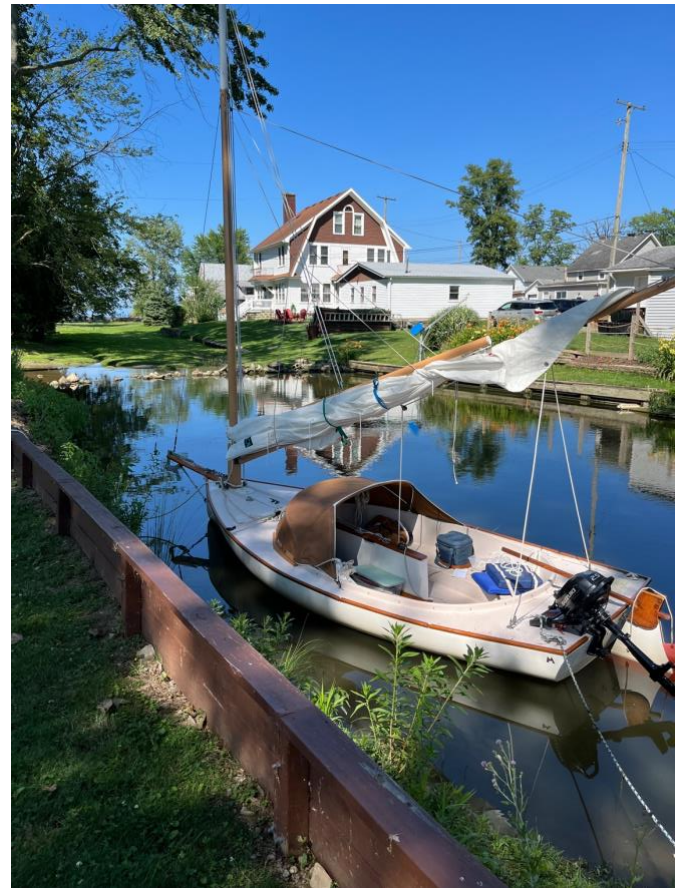


Figure 10: My Menger 15 tied up behind our family summer house.

the lake's nearby islands and bays. The boat has also become a favorite among the cousins, serving as a swim platform on hot days and a way to learn about sailing. Most recently, my oldest daughter, Frances and I enjoyed a two-day cruise to Kelleys Island, South Bass Island, Catawba Island, and Cedar Point, making memories that will last a lifetime. The little catboat has proven to be the perfect addition to our summer house tradition, blending adventure and family fun on Lake Erie.

- Jeff
secretary@abc-flx.org

ABC-FLX News

Happy Birthday!

Happy birthday to our members!

September

Howard Cabezas
Charlie Fausold
Lynne McGinnis
Steven Moff
Jennifer Stephens

October

Lisa Alley
Carl Blowers
Charlie Honsberger
Mary Margeson

2023 Accident Statistics

BOAT/US published the latest US Coast Guard boating accident statistics in the September-October issue of their magazine. While boating accidents were down slightly (4.9% decrease), the root causes were still the same as in prior years.

According to USCG Captain Amy Beach, USCG Director of Inspections and Compliance, "The most frequent events involve collisions with other vessels, objects, or groundings, which is why it's so important to keep a proper lookout, navigate at a safe speed, adhere to navigation rules, and obey navigation aids."

- Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in

fatal boating accidents, accounting for 17% of deaths where the primary cause was known.

- 75% of fatalities occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction (where instruction was known).
- Only 15% of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator passed a nationally approved boating safety education course.
- Where the cause of death was known, 75% of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of these victims, 87% were not wearing a life jacket.
- Where boat size was known, 4 of every 5 drownings occurred in vessels less than 21 feet in length.

The full 2023 Recreational Boating Statistics report is available at:

uscgboating.org

under the "Statistics" menu, "Accident Statistics" submenu.

Some of the numbers:

- 3,844 accidents in 2023.
- 2,126 injuries.
- 564 deaths.
- \$63M property damage.

Primary causes of accidents:

- Operator inattention (586).
- Improper lookout (421).

- Operator inexperience (414).
- Excessive speed (299).
- Alcohol use (211).
- Nav rules violation (210).

District 6 Fall Conference

If you've never been to a District Conference before, I would suggest you give it a try. There is tremendous opportunity there to learn new things, meet other dedicated boaters, and to get an appreciation of what's happening in our organization at a national scale.

They're also kinda fun!

Watch your emails for the announcement with details of our Fall 2024 conference. It will be held in Manlius, NY on Saturday, October 19th. It's not a far drive and of enough of us go we could even set up a car pool.

Got News?

If you have news to share that you think would be of use to your fellow boaters, please submit it to your friendly newsletter editor so that it can be included!

Upcoming Classes & Seminars

Where Do I Start?

To work through the progression of Boating Classes and the progression of Boating skills development we have organized the classes and skills on the Long-Term Schedule. If you have any questions or want a class offered sooner let me know.

See also: <https://usps.org/sss-where-do-i-start>

Radar for Boaters

The name says it all - learn all about radar and how it works. Radar is a practical tool for navigation and collision avoidance. This course talks about radar equipment and how to use it as a boater.

Prerequisites: Marine Navigation (Piloting)

When: Spring 2024

Duration: 7 weeks (6 classroom sessions plus a final exam)

Weather

Have you ever had a thunderstorm appear out of nowhere over the western hills of the lake? It can really put a “damper” on your day of cruising! The newly revised weather course can teach you about meteorological systems, how weather is created, and signs of impending poor weather. Learn how to understand a forecast in-depth and how boaters can receive the most accurate forecasts onboard.

Prerequisites: None

When: Winter 2025

Duration: 6-8 weeks. Details TBA

How to Register

If you have questions about any of these courses, or better yet, if you wish to sign up, please contact: Finger Lakes Chapter Education Director, Katie Alley:

seo@abc-flx.org

or send a check made out to ABC-FLX to:

Katie Alley
295 Stillwater Dr.
Horseheads, NY 14845

Or you can go to the national web site (www.usps.org) and register under the “Find A Boating Class” tab on the member home page.

Looking for Something?

ABC-FLX would be happy to hear your requests and ideas. Feel free to contact me, Katie Alley, at SEO@abc-flx.org.

Available subjects for instruction can be found on the chapter web site:

www.abc-flx.org

Long-Term Class Schedule

Seneca Education Department

BOC Level	Title	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
Inland Navigator	Classes	ABC	C	X	X	X	X	
		Boat Handling		X		X		X
		Engine Maintenance					X	
		Marine Electrical Systems			X			
	Seminars	Using A Chart						X
		VHF/DSC Radios						X
		Using GPS					X	
		Basic Weather and Forecasting				X		
	Skills	Basic Powerboat Handling					X	
		Fire Extinguishers						

BOC Level	Title	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
Coastal Navigator	Classes	Marine Navigation			X		X	
		Marine Communication Systems		X				
		Weather		X				X
	Seminars	Tides & Currents						X
		Rules of the Road	C					
		Anchoring						
		Mariner's Compass			X		X	
	Skills	Coastal Nav					X	
		Pyrotechnics				X		

BOC Level		Title	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Advanced Coastal Navigator	Classes	Advanced Marine Navigation			X		X	X
		Cruise Planning	C					
		Marine Navigation Systems		X				
		Radar	X					
	Sem.	Emergencies Onboard	C					X
		Marine Radar						
	Skills	Advanced Coastal Nav						X
		First Aid						

BOC Level		Title	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Offshore Navigator	C	Offshore Navigation			X			X
	Sem.	Computer Weather Forecasting	X					
		Thunderstorms / Severe Weather	X					
	Skills	Offshore Navigation	X					
		CPR/AED						
Endorsments		Sail		X	X		X	
		Boating on Rivers, Locks, and Lakes				X		X
		Canadian Regulations		X				
		Paddlesmart		X			X	
Other		Instructor Development					X	
		Instructor Recertification	X		X		X	
		Operations Training					X	
		Celestial Navigation	X			X		

Table Key

X = Planned

C = Completed

Sampson Rendezvous in Pictures

Photos by Katie Alley, JN

SV Tomfoolery



Figure 12: Jacqueline Alsworth checks out a sextant by taking a sight on the sun. Shane Alsworth observes and Jim Morris provides coaching and guidance for the sextant use.



Figure 14: Adjusting a sextant index mirror for frame perpendicularity. Jim McGinnis looks on.



Figure 13: Tom Alley shows Maggie MacBlane how to ensure proper mirror positioning and how to adjust and tune a sextant for use.



Figure 15: Phelps' new trick: Save me! He's towing Kris West back to her boat on Seneca Lake as they enjoy a swim in the warm waters on a warm day.



Figure 16: Phelps shows off his dishwashing skills at the club dinner.



Figure 17: Aside from rescue and culinary skills, Phelps is ready to show off his boating skills aboard Zephyr, the West family boat.

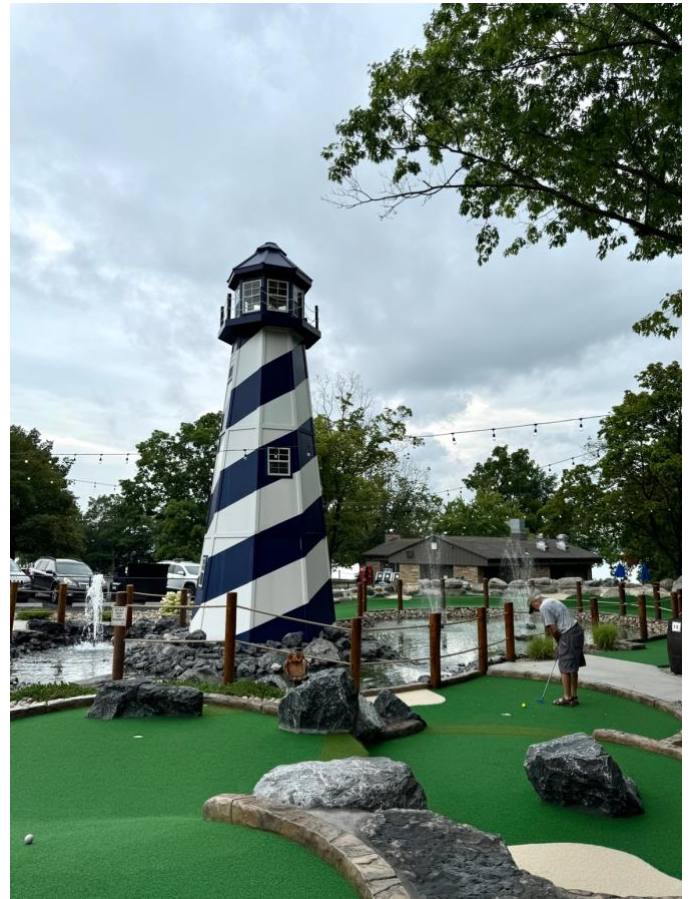


Figure 18: The new, world-class, miniature golf course at Sampson Resorts, just up the hill from the marina. Tom Alley shown missing his third putt in a row. ...on that hole!



Figure 19: Sampson Saturday sunset.



Figure 20: The Take Three Quartet got folks up, moving around, and dancing.



Figure 21: Bonus performance by Jim McGinnis.

- Katie

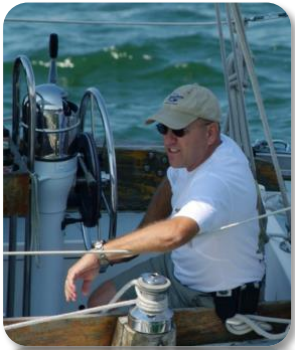
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The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN-ACN

SV Tomfoolery

Looking Inward



In the last issue I wrote about looking ahead to what would become a busy

summer season on the water. Now, as Fall and the tail end of our boating season approaches, our organization is in the process of looking inward to assess the condition of our organization and to identify things that might be holding us back from future success.

Those of you who have been members for a while might remember our club coming up with a long-range, strategic plan to serve as a guide to keeping our club on course for long-term success. Well, the last revision to the plan was made in 2020, so it's time to pull it out and review it to see how we've been doing. Most importantly, we need to objectively gauge what's been working and what hasn't so that we can focus our efforts productively.

Much of our success depends upon you, the rank-and-file membership. In fact, your input is probably more important than anything we've written down four years ago. If you haven't already, you can expect to hear from us very soon asking for

your input. It's vitally important that you respond to our query so that we can forge an organization that meets not just your needs but also your wants. Of course, you don't need to wait for our survey to come out. You can email any member of the Executive Committee or any of the club officers with your thoughts at any time. If you prefer, you can also contact me, your friendly editor, and I'll make sure your input (anonymous, if desired) gets to the right set of ears.

Remember: It's your club. It will be what you make it to be.

Since moving up to assume a national position in our organization a little over three years ago, I've gotten a glimpse of the USPS from a pretty good vantage point. From these observations I can confidently state that while some of our problems and weaknesses are fairly typical with other squadrons across the country, our squadron is definitely in a unique and special place which sets us apart from the majority of the chapters nationally.

First, we have a history of innovation and creativity that puts us ahead of most of our contemporaries. Our squadron was the first to develop and formalize on-the-water (OTW) education in the early 2000's. The procedures and processes we developed were used as the template for the national policies shared by all squadrons

today. Our squadron was also dabbling in the use of teleconferencing to provide a larger geographic reach for our classes several years before Covid forced everyone to do it. Several of the courses being taught today were developed with the help of local squadron members, and our local chapter is currently involved in national efforts to rejuvenate our entire educational portfolio using a development technique developed here.

Second, we have a number of individuals who, taken together, have skills and talent of great depth and great breadth. A number of them actively serve in leadership and support roles within our squadron today.

This is a double-edged blessing. We have this great resource within our group, but it seems to intimidate others from volunteering to take on roles of their own. When recruiting "fresh blood" for leadership roles, a common deferral of candidates is, "Sorry, but I can't possibly do the job as well as X has been doing it!"

How do you know if you don't try? I'm willing to bet that the incumbent you are being asked to succeed wasn't great at the job when he/she started, either. (I know I wasn't!) Rather, they learned how to apply their particular skill set to the responsibilities of the position.

Remember, whether you're volunteering or whether you're

being recruited, you are not being asked to “replace” the incumbent. You are being asked to SUCCEED them. Your skill set is different and, as a result, you will bring your own personality to the position you are taking on. It will be different, and that difference is good.

Having positions that evolve allows them to grow. Keeping functions and activities static guarantees only that they will become outdated and obsolete. In order for our organization to have a future, we must change, grow, and evolve in response to our environment.

Therefore, it’s not important that you be “better” than your predecessor. It’s important that you be different. Fresh. Unconstrained by precedent and the “we’ve-always-done-it-this-way” paralysis.

Finally, you can only get out of a club what you put into it. Abundant returns require the effort of investment. And the investment effort will galvanize the ownership you have in the returns.

So, if our club is just something you see as being a cause worthy of your membership dues with a handful of enjoyable social events every year, I would

challenge you to step up your involvement a notch. I guarantee that you’ll get much more back from the added exposure to our organization.

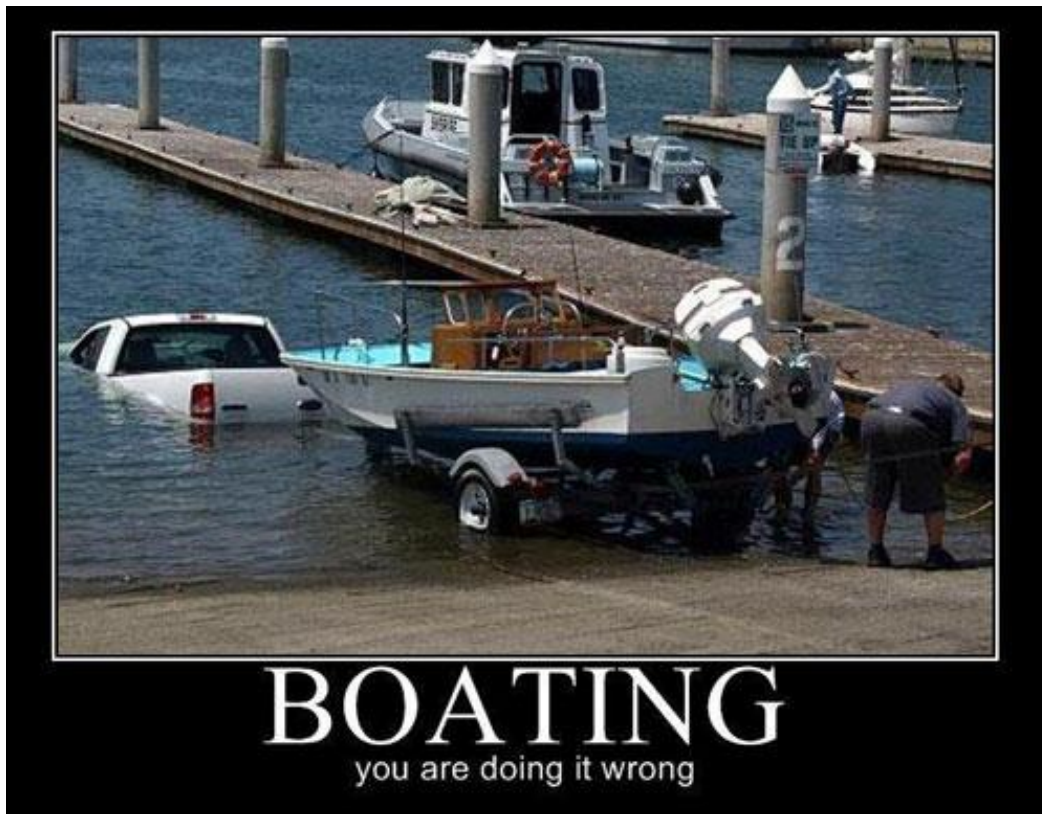
Volunteer. I dare you!

- Your Editor, Tom
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Post Script: Speaking of getting involved, why not join me at our District Fall Conference this October?

As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

editor@abc-flx.org
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Calendar of Events

September 2024

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* September issue publication date.
- 07 Seneca Lake Barge Race, *Seneca Yacht Club, Geneva, NY.*
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 17 Social Event, *Seneca Cheese Company, Watkins Glen, NY.* Guest speaker: Jim McGinnis. (1900)

October 2024

- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 19 District 6 Fall Council & Conference, *Manlius, NY (D/6)*
- 25 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 25 Deadline for *Drum* articles

November 2024

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* November issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date. (D/6)
- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)

December 2024

- 20 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

January 2025

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* January issue publication date
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA Finger Lakes Chapter Change of Watch
- 17 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

February 2025

- 01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 01-10 USPS Annual Meeting (National)
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 21 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

March 2025

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* March issue publication date.
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA District 6 Spring Council & Conference (D/6)

April 2025

- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 18 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 21 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

May 2024

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 18-24 Safe Boating Week (National)

June 2024

- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 21 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

July 2025

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* July issue publication date.
- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900).
- 25 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)
- 31-8/3 D/6 Rendezvous, *Sylvan Beach, NY.* (D/6)

August 2025

- 7/31-8/3D/6 Rendezvous, *Sylvan Beach, NY.* (D/6)
- 01 *The Deep 6* summer issue publication date. (D/6)
- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

Calendars are "living documents." For the latest information on squadron activities, please check our web site:

<http://www.abc-flx.org>

or our Facebook page:

<http://facebook.com/SenecaPowerSquadron>

for any last-minute changes.