

# AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB®

For Boaters, By Boaters™




## THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

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### From The Commander

By Jim McGinnis, AP

#### View From The Bridge

2019 is off to a terrific start for ABC-FLX Chapter. Charlie Fausold and several of our instructors (Mark Erway, Ray Margeson and I) just completed the USPS Piloting Class with 4 new members and 4 existing members. It tells me that our Education arm is effectively providing a valuable service in the community. It also indicates that we are firing on all cylinders as our Directors of Membership (Mark Erway) and Publicity (Glenda Gephart) are improving our visibility in the Boating Community. This month Tom Alley and Charlie are completing the plans for our first “Boat Handling” class starting in May. This is a new and improved version of “Seamanship Class” and will highlight our local “On-The-Water” focus employing hands-on training. (If you would like to become a member of our instructor cadre please let me or Charlie know. You are welcome to sit in on any class and we are



conducting a formal instructor training class this spring. I’ve always found that a great way to really learn something is to prepare the material and teach it.)

I was privileged to speak on behalf of our ABC-FLX Chapter to the Watkins Glen Village Board and new Mayor Luke Leszyk at his first meeting. Phil Cherry and I teamed up with Michelle Hyde of Watkins Glen Parks Department to present our proposal for the Life Jacket Loaner station to be installed at the new Canoe-Kayak launch site near Clute Park. The idea is that if a boater arrives without life jacket or wrong size life jacket, they can borrow one on the spot and return it when finished. (Drowning is the

second most common cause of accidental death for youth and not wearing a lifejacket is most often the case.) The new station will provide various size lifejackets, remind people to wear life jackets and provide visibility for the safety mission of ABC-FLX and USPS in the community. The station has been fabricated and will be installed for the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Canoe-Kayak Launch.

Lynne and I have been in Florida for a few weeks since I retired from Corning on 3/31/19. We have seen great weather and promise to bring it back to NY this week! By the way, we talked to Terry Stewart after his blissful sail to the Dry Tortugas and we saw John Chesborough and Maggie Martin in Key West just days after their return from a 4-week sailing trip to Cuba. Lots of inspiration there. In Florida, Lynne

and I belong to the Manatee Sailing Association in Bradenton and were further inspired by the membership director who has been living on her sailboat at Regatta Point Marina on the Manatee River for the past 6 years. She is from Hammondspoint, NY, attended Wells College in Aurora, NY and sailed using a sextant for navigation through the Caribbean - in her earlier days. She took the USPS classes when she was living in Manhattan, NYC. Today she does all the membership paperwork on her boat with her computer, Android phone and a printer. Oh, did I mention, this ball of fire is 87 years old!

Time to pull the cover off the boat and begin that rite of spring. See you in the Marina.

- Jim, SV Brewster  
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## From the Administrative Officer

By Phil Cherry, S

*Boatless but looking!*

### The Power of Volunteers



I took the Seneca Sail and Power Squadron's course "Seamanship" over two years ago. The course has

been renamed "Boat Handling" and is being offered again this year. If you hurry, you might be able to still get in the class. It was

a great class and I learned an enormous amount about boating. I said Seneca Sail and Power Squadron because that's what we were known as back then - but of course we have changed our name recently, or at least we're "doing business as", America's Boating Club - Finger lakes Chapter, and on the web, "FLX-ABC.org". Check us out.

I'm not writing today about our name change, but rather on the

### The Drum

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outstanding work of our volunteers who teach classes like the one I took two years ago. Last year I took Sailing and this year I took Piloting – all with outstanding instructors who knew the material cold and who were volunteering their time in an effort to raise the level of education for all boaters.

Most of my classes had at least two instructors and, on some nights, we had three or more. The instructors give freely of their time because they love boating and more importantly, they love to share their vast boating knowledge with others. In seamanship and sailing classes, the

courses also involved on-the-water instruction, where the squadron would assemble three or four boats and owners in the evening to go out on the lake and practice what we learned in the classroom. You can't learn how to set an anchor or the right way to bring the jib across the bow in a classroom. It really helps to experience these techniques on the water. Organizing the boats and owners and arranging these on-the-water excursions is time consuming and intensive and yet the instructors are obviously so happy to be there sharing their expertise with us novice boaters.

I don't have a lot of knowledge about what other squadrons (or

Chapters) do with respect to classes or on-the-water instruction, but I've heard anecdotally that the Seneca Squadron – or the Finger Lakes Chapter – is one of the best programs in all of New York State. Having attended several classes, I can attest to the quality of instruction and the dedication of our teaching volunteers. If you have ever wanted to know more about boating, check out one of our classes. They are an outstanding value and the quality of the teaching staff is the best. See you on the water!

- Phil

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## From the Education Officer

By Charlie Fausold, SN-IN



A busy spring education season continues apace. Three students successfully

completed the new *Radar for Boaters* course, and eight more completed *Piloting*. *Radar for Boaters* was delivered through an online format, which you can expect to see more of in the future. Up next is *Operations Training*, which gets into the inner working of club organization and leadership, and *Instructor Development*. *Instructor Development* is probably an underappreciated course, since quality education programs are the heart of what we do and

ID provides the needed tools and techniques.

*Boat Handling*, which replaces the former *Seamanship*, gets underway in early May and spaces are filling up rapidly. This will be our first course of the year with an on-the-water component. Also in May will be an offering of *America's Boating Course* delivered to a local Boy Scout troop. The Scouts will have an opportunity to earn a merit badge as well as obtain their boating safety certificate. Finally, several members have signed up for *Navigation*, which will begin this summer with sight folders and classroom sessions starting in the fall.

At the recent D/6 Spring Conference National Education Officer Craig Fraser, SN, highlighted a

number of ways in which America's Boating Club is endeavoring to expand its range of education delivery mechanisms. These include enhanced Powerpoint programs with embedded video, the America's Boating Channel YouTube outlet, online courses, webinars and downloaded student and instructor materials. The online programs will allow students to go through the content on their own, with classroom sessions devoted to discussion and elaboration.

Finally, please do not feel that you need to be an "expert" to help out with our education programs. Our lead instructors always welcome volunteers to assist students with in-class activities and skipper and their boats are essential to our on-the-water programs. If

SV Morning Glory

you are able to donate some of your time, I guarantee you will

find it very rewarding. As the saying goes, the best way to learn something is to teach it!

- Charlie

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## From the Assistant Education Officer

By John Flick

### What About The Holes In Our Boats?



All too often we ignore or forget things that are buried under the cabin sole or hidden behind

the galley sink. How many thru-hull fittings does your boat have that are below the waterline at all angles of heel and where are they? Let's get an overview.

We will work from what's in contact with the hull and the water and work our way inboard. Like most things on our boats, there are a variety of materials available for thru-hull fittings and seacocks including marelon, bronze, plastic, and stainless steel. Like anything, there are pros and cons to the various materials. For example, we don't have to worry much about marelon (fiber reinforced nylon) corroding. Metal is stronger and won't melt in a fire. Unless you are a hardcore racer, you likely don't care much if the fitting is flush or is mushroom shaped. The important thing is that the fitting makes a watertight seal to the hull. If you ever looked

closely, you may find indentations or nipples on the inside of the fitting. You got it; this is so a tool can be used to hold the male portion steady while the nut is tightened on the inside of the hull during installation.

The American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) requires a seacock or valve on any thru-hull fitting below the waterline, again, at all angles of heel. Why do they require this? Very simply, "to stop the admission of water in the event of failure." What can fail? Hose, hose clamps, and strainers are a few things that come to mind but there are many. Thru-hull fittings and seacocks shall be connected directly. This means that they don't want a piece of hose between the thru-hull and the valve. Seacocks are generally fitted to the thru-hull but can be connected directly to the hull. Bottom line is that we want a reliable means of stopping water from entering the boat when it is unwanted.

Ball style valves are desirable. Gate and globe valves, despite their widespread use, have several design flaws and are not appropriate for marine seacock applications. What's in your boat?

The best valves have a handle, not a hand wheel. In an emergency situation, we want to know very

quickly whether the valve is open or closed. A handle position is much more obvious as it will line up with the fitting or tailpiece (be parallel) when open and be perpendicular, or at a right angle, to the line when the valve is closed. A valve position (open or closed) of a circular handle that requires multiple turns is not nearly as clear.

How about accessibility? Can you see the handle? Can you reach the handle? Does the handle move or is it seized? Is the handle accessible but there is some boat structure or stowed gear that is preventing you from moving it quickly?

ABYC's static load test is to hang a 500 lb. weight from the end of the hose barb for 30 seconds. Wow! They take this stuff seriously. If at the end of this test there is no ingress of water, then you are good to go (according to ABYC).

A semi practical real-life test to consider is removing a hose from the hose attached to the seacock barb and dumping water into the seacock. When the valve is closed, does water exit the hull? Naturally this is done with the boat out of the water. This doesn't duplicate real life pressures, but it is better than no test at all. Keep in mind that we could be moving



a handle but the ball inside is static in the open or closed position. Get out your flashlight when your boat is on the hard and look into the thru-hulls. Do you see anything odd or unusual? Is the valve corroded?

We want two, half-inch wide, all stainless steel clamps (alternated 180 degrees from each other) securing the hose to the seacock hose barb. Check to make sure the clamps are tight and make sure the hose is not cracked or chafed.

This was not intended to be a how-to article covering thread types, backing plates, etcetera, but

I hope we have got you thinking about the holes in your hull. In summary, make sure you know where these valves are and make sure they are marine grade installed to ABYC standards, accessible, and operative. Exercise the handles regularly, maintain seacocks per manufacturers recommendations, and consider keeping tapered wood plugs nearby to plug a hole in a worst case scenario.

I hope you pay close attention to these holes in your boat as they

can let a shocking amount of water in quickly and sink your boat. Stay safe out there.

If you are curious about any particular topic, please let us know so we can include it in an upcoming issue. Thanks for reading.

- John

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#### References:

- ABYC standards
- Mechanical and Electrical Manual, Nigel Calder

## From the Public Relations Officer

By Glenda Gephart



Longtime chapter member and officer Charlie Fausold recently spoke at a meeting of the Watkins-

Montour Rotary Club. Charlie was there to spread the word about the club and its mission, education and training opportunities and planned community projects.

Technical glitches may have frustrated Charlie, but his presentation was excellent, and the value of speaking at an event such as a Rotary meeting was immediately evident.

A Rotarian who fondly recalled having a small boat in high school is thinking about getting a power boat. An extended family that includes many children would really enjoy the fun of a boat and being out on the lake, he told Charlie. But many decades have passed since he last piloted a boat, and he's sure he needs to be re-educated in all aspects.

This is one of the greatest values of the ABC-FLX! To be able to help folks like the Rotarian who needs a refresher course – or to learn for the first-time things he never knew or cared about as a teenager. The board's commitment to better publicizing the chapter's courses and reaching more boaters, including targeted audiences such as Boy Scouts, is being fulfilled.

Safer boating on the lakes will result, and that's good news for everyone!

- Glenda

[pro@abc-flx.org](mailto:pro@abc-flx.org)

## Upcoming Classes & Seminars

### Operations Training

#### Spring 2019

More than just a seminar that will tell you how America's Boating Club is organized, it makes you aware of all of the various activities there are in which you can become engaged. Well worth the time and it may even make you aware of a totally enjoyable way to get more involved with the Finger Lakes Chapter of America's Boating Club.

**When:** Spring 2019

**Duration:** 1 Session (2 hrs)

**Where:** TBA

**Prerequisites:** Active USPS/ABC membership.

**Lead Instructor:** Charlie Fausold

**Course Cost:** Free

**Register:** Contact Charlie Fausold at [seo@abc-flx.org](mailto:seo@abc-flx.org)

### Boat Handling

#### Starts May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Formerly known as the Seaman-ship class, this course has just received a major overhaul as part of the overall restructuring of the Advanced Grade courses.

The Boat Handling course consists of six, two-hour seminar sessions. These sessions include an overview of USCG rules (COLREGS), PowerPoint slides, videos and animations. Best of all, several of the sessions will be held on the water, aboard real boats where you can practice what we cover in the classroom.

Boat Handling is also the first of the Advanced Grade courses to have its textbook in a digital (eBook) format.

Completion of all six seminars along with passing a comprehensive written examination will result in the award of the grade of "Seaman" (S).

Don't have time for the whole class? Then take advantage of the new format and structure and just sign up for the sessions you are interested in!

**When:** May-June 2019

**Duration:** 9 weeks

**Where:** Presbyterian Church, Watkins Glen

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Lead Instructor:** Tom Alley

**Course Cost:** \$70 (USPS members), \$22 (add'l family members), \$110 (nonmembers)

*This course has limited seating due to its on-the-water component. Priority will be given to students who sign up early. Also, students enrolling for the entire course will be given priority over those signing up for selected sessions.*

### Instructor Recertification

If you are a USPS Certified Instructor, then your certification must be renewed every four years. The good news is that it's easy to renew your certification by simply attending a 2-hour seminar.

Instructor Certification is a requirement for teaching any course

where nonmembers (i.e., the general public) are present.

If your certification is expiring, or if you are interested in becoming certified, please contact any member of the Education Department.

### Navigation

#### Starts July 2019

Following on the heels of our JN class, we will be offering the second part of the celestial navigation series this year.

Navigation is the class where students will hone their navigational skills to the pinnacle of traditional navigation – that of navigating by the stars.

Beginning this summer, we will take things out on the water and collect sextant observations of stars, planets, and the moon to accumulate enough data for everyone's "N" version of the sight folder.

Classroom sessions will begin in September and extend through December and will end with a two-week take-home examination.

All Navigation students will be required to attend the "Stargazing 101" session described below.

**When:** July-December 2019

**Where:** Watkins Glen Village Marina (OTW sessions). Classroom session location TBD.

**Pre- & co-requisites:** JN, Stargazing 101

**Lead Instructor:** Tom Alley

**Course Cost:** \$230 (USPS members), \$67 (add'l family members), \$375 (nonmembers)

**Registration:** This course is open to all USPS members, regardless of squadron/chapter affiliation.

identifying common constellations and some of the specific bodies used for traditional off-shore navigation. It will help you figure out where to look to find specific objects like the Andromeda Galaxy or Polaris, the North Star.

Best of all, this seminar is open to the public. You are encouraged to bring your family and invite all your friends.

*At the present time, it was learned that the Corning Community College Planetarium is scheduled to be refurbished and remodeled in 2019. As such, a reopening date has not been announced. We are searching for an alternate venue. Stay tuned for details.*

### How To Register

If you are interested in getting more details about any of these courses, or better yet, to sign up, please contact either of the following individuals:

SEO Charlie Fausold, Finger Lakes Chapter

[seo@abc-flx.org](mailto:seo@abc-flx.org)

ASEO John Flick

[aseo@abc-flx.org](mailto:aseo@abc-flx.org)

Or you can go to the national web site ([www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org)) and register under the "Find A Boating Class" tab on the member home page.

## Stargazing 101

### Summer or Early Fall

How often have you looked up into the sky and wondered what you were looking at? Is that a star? A planet? Or just an airplane?

This seminar will provide you the basic skills you need to begin

# Long-Term Class Schedule

Seneca Education Department

Courses	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Public	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC
Basic	Boat Handling	Sail	Boat Handling	Sail	Boat Handling	Sail
Advanced Level	Piloting	Advanced Piloting	Piloting	Advanced Piloting	Piloting	Advanced Piloting
Senior Level	Navigation			Junior Navigation		
Electives	Radar for Boaters Cruise Planning	Marine Electronics	Electronic Navigation	Instructor Training	Marine Comm.	
Seminars	GPS Nav	Power Boating	Paddle Smart	Trailer and Docking	Partner in Cmd.	
Self Study	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class

# USPS News: Local, District, National & More

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## Sampson Marina Update

There have been some exciting updates at the Sampson Marina on Seneca Lake. Check out page 23 of the May (Spring) 2019 issue of the District 6 newsletter, *The Deep 6*, for the update and some photographs of the work that's being done.

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## Welcome New Member!

A big welcome to our newest member:

Rachael Nichols

Please introduce yourself to Rachael at our next event!

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## Happy Birthday!

Best wishes to Finger Lakes Chapter members who are celebrating their birthday in next couple of months.

### May

- Ray Margeson
- Patricia Mason
- Sue Morris
- Dan Kingsley
- Gabriel Seip
- Frank Broderick
- Jim Morris
- Payton Watson
- Don Kloeber
- Phil Cherry
- Tessa Bell Cabezas

### June

- Jeffrey Barlow
- William Boychuck
- Claudia Demeritt
- Thad Dibble
- Anne Erway

- Kathleen Healy
- Zachary Michel
- Robert Stewart
- Thomas Taylor
- Benjamin Wigley

Tristan Zimba

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## Got News?

*By Tom Alley, Editor*

Do you have any squadron-related news or announcements? Contact your editor and have it printed here. We're happy to publicize anything of interest to our members, whether it's for the Seneca Squadron or one of our neighboring squadrons.

Contact Tom Alley:

[editor@abc-flx.org](mailto:editor@abc-flx.org)

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# A Project Manager's Approach To Cruising & Cruise Planning – Part II: Planning Resources (con'd)

By Don Kloeber, AP

MV Bacchus

A significant challenge I encountered was how to do pre-planning for our three- to four-week time on Georgian Bay... an area with which we had little or no prior cruising experience.

One resource I found very helpful during a 2015 cruise of New York Canals to Lake Champlain and again during a 2016 cruise on the St. Lawrence is **Active Captain (AC)**. AC included a website and iOS / Android Apps. The original AC was developed by an innovative individual based on the idea and power of crowd sourced information provided by the cruising community. The AC platform allowed cruisers to enter marina, anchorage and boating hazard information within the free website or app and it was

made available to the public via links displayed on world-wide charts. I have submitted over 100 reviews for marina and town tie-up facilities we visited during our prior cruises.

The original AC was sold to Garmin in early 2017 and late in 2017 Garmin also acquired Navionics, a well regarding source for electronic charts for marine GPS and multi-function displays (MFDs). Over a one-year transition, Garmin has embedded the ability to access the AC features within their newer MFDs. As my boat GPS / MFD is an older Raytheon unit, I am not able to integrate AC into my MFD. Recently Garmin has once again made the information available to the public

via a Garmin website and Navionics apps. I have been experimenting with both the Garmin website and Navionics app to access the AC information for cruise planning.

Figure 1 (see below) is the web-based view on a PC of the Trenton, Ontario area and the boating facility info available (Trent Port Marina Selected). As you can see, the screen shot includes facility and anchorage data located on a chart view.

The detailed marina info includes: Summary, Address, Contact, Business, Navigation, Amenities, Services, Retail, Fuel, Dockage, Moorings, Ratings and Reviews

I find the info provided, especially the cruising user provided ratings & reviews, particularly



Figure 1: Garmin/Navionics PC app screen shot of Trent Port Marina in Trenton, Ontario.

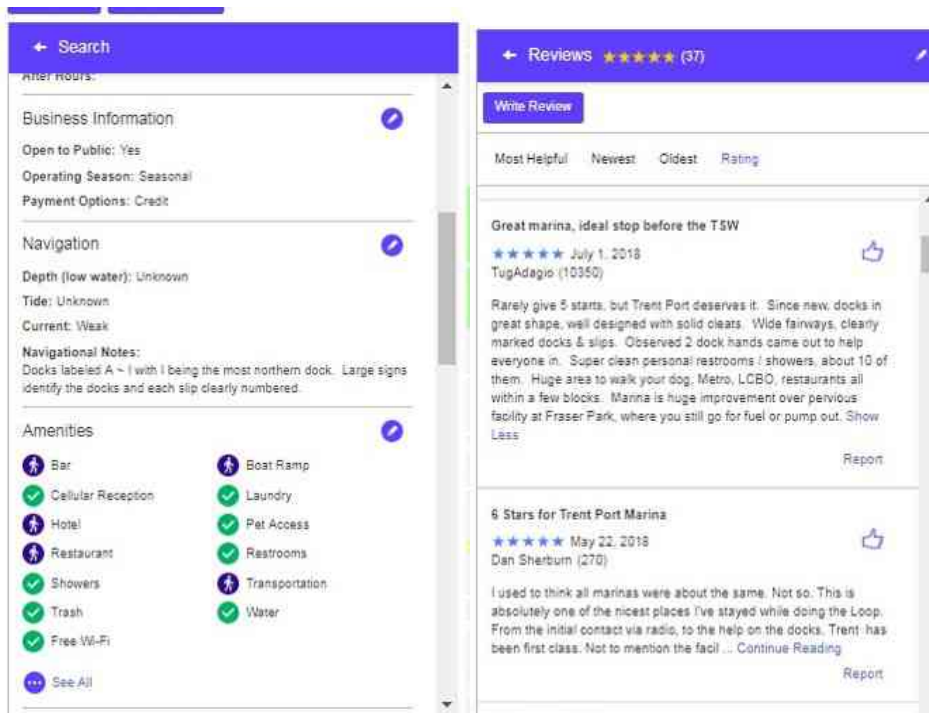


Figure 2: Screen shot of the Garmin/Navionics detailed information and review of a specific marina.

helpful when choosing overnight stops.

Similar detailed information and ratings are available for anchorages.

The Navionics app (Navionics Boating HD Marine & Lakes) has a modest charge for downloading / use and depends on the chart areas desired (USA \$15, USA & Canada \$22) and offers a free trial period download. The Navionics app has the same AC data coordinated with their charts and allows downloading charts for areas of interest which allows chart & AC data access without WiFi.

My travel experience, whether land or water based, has taught me that while websites and printed materials are useful, they can be “slanted” towards marketing or attracting travelers. Likewise, I have learned

that it is hard to beat “local knowledge”. The challenge I faced was how to gather “local knowledge” for distant locations, some of which I have never been to.

My approach has been to work my contacts and network as much as possible to identify sources of knowledge for the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW) and especially for Georgian Bay. I have utilized both the traditional personal contact approach as well as use of online forums to expand my network. I have been pleased with and had success from both approaches.

I started my personal contact efforts by reconnecting with a fellow power boat cruiser, whose home port is on Lake Erie, that I learnt my TSW charts to about 12 to 15 years ago. They did the Lake Erie – TSW cruise as a

loop that included some of Georgian Bay. My inquiry covered two areas – 1) Did he have any Georgian Bay charts he was willing to loan or sell? And 2) could he provide and recommended sights, marinas, anchorages, etc that were “don’t miss” recommendations from his cruising experience. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that he has continued his love of cruising and is currently Commodore of the Great Lakes Cruising Club (GLCC). I now have a full set of GB Inland Small Craft Route Charts “on loan” for the season and have made contact with several GLCC members that have provided some firsthand GB and TSW cruising knowledge and recommendations.

My most successful personal connection was very serendipitous and occurred while motorhoming in Florida this spring. While in the pool one day talking to a Canadian couple we had met and exchanged the typical home base info. It turned out they lived near Lake Simcoe, the largest lake on the TSW, which led to a discussion about our summer cruising plans. I mentioned our previous positive experience at a marina in Honey Harbor, Ontario and our plan to stop there again. He asked the name and laughed when I told him it was South Bay Cove Marina as he was very familiar with it having a boat and season slip there for many seasons. Needless to say, they were immediate friends and issued an invite for hors d’oeuvres and adult beverages. I

am glad I had brought along my GB charts and we spend several hours sharing info and making detailed notes about anchorages, restaurants, and other boater recommendations.

My other avenue for expanding my network has been via online forums. The primary boating related forum I am a member and moderator on is TrawlerForum.com (TF) which is a worldwide forum slanted towards trawlers but covers many aspects of boating and cruising. In addition to many Great Lakes cruisers there are many members that have done the "Great Loop" including the TSW and GB on their way to Lake Michigan and Chicago before entering the canals and rivers back toward the Gulf of Mexico. I posted inquiring about any forum members that had any recommendations to share and/or were planning on cruising that area during 2019. I have connected with several worthwhile

resources and recommendations for both the TSW and GB.

Some of the cruisers have expressed an interest in trying to connect and rendezvous during our travels. None have a firm schedule at this point, but we have exchanged contact info and plan to "stay in touch" during our adventures to share info and hopefully to connect somewhere along the way.

One of my TF "contacts" is a cruiser with a home port in Michigan that is traversing the TSW on their way to the Rideau Canal, Ottawa River, Chambly Canal, Lake Champlain, New York Canals and ICW south for next winter. He mentioned he already had his lock passes in hand to take advantage of the "Early Bird" discounts. A quick search revealed a 20% discount on Canadian lock passes and a 10% discount on seasonal mooring passes was available until March 31st. With only 2 days to spare I was able to take

advantage of the discounts, and saved almost \$100 CDN, thanks to my TF contact.

The ability to combine "local knowledge" with extensive online resources has provided an extensive list of tentative stops. This knowledge provides a degree of confidence that we will be able to experience some of the best the TSW and GB inland small craft route have to offer.

A comparison of planned versus actual experiences will be presented after completion of our 2019 cruising season.

The last category of cruising resources I'll cover are weather related websites and apps, but that's a topic that, according to our editor, warrants being a separate article!

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## Weather Related Resources – Websites & Apps

*By Don Kloeber*

As a cruising boater concerned with safety, an awareness of anticipated weather conditions is a high priority, especially when boating on the Great Lakes. As an ABC-FLX Weather course instructor, I have a particular interest in weather-related resources, apps, and tools. My mate (Admiral) has also taken the ABC-FLX Weather course and keeps an eye on the sky as well as forecasts and radar.

There are a large number of weather apps and websites and many of us have our favorites. The following are the ones Marge and I find useful and utilize frequently. I can't say these are superior to any others, but I will attempt to outline the features that we find useful and possibly some tips to get the most out of these or other resources you use.

While many weather conditions contribute to the comfort and enjoyment while boating, there are a few aspects that affect safety and, in my mind, are priorities when planning each day's cruise. The primary weather conditions that affect safety are: Storms (especially electrical storms), fog, winds and wind related waves.

Our "go-to" app for everyday weather forecasts is the NOAA

Weather App. It provides current conditions and daily and hourly forecasts for seven days. It also includes an animated radar feature. This app is available for your current location and several "favorite" locations you can save and easily select. The app includes wind speed and direction in addition to the typical temperature and precipitation forecasts. Dew point and the temperature / dew point spread allows you to do your own "fog forecasting". Settings let you choose preferred units and various options. The only limitation that will affect us is that this app is for US locations only.

Environment Canada provides a Canada Weather App that is comparable to the NOAA Weather App. I have loaded and started to use this app to become familiar with forecasts for our intended cruising area.

**National Weather Service** – The NWS Buffalo Field Office provides weather forecasts for all of Lake Ontario.

[NWS Buffalo Area Forecast Discussion](#) provides a plain language discussion that includes: SYNOPSIS, NEAR TERM, SHORT TERM, LONG TERM, AVIATION and MARINE forecasts for the general area and all of Lake Ontario.

A fellow boater I have become acquainted with via the online TrawlerForum.com is a retired meteorologist and is on a multi-year cruise. His two-year, 20,000 nm cruising itinerary has included two Atlantic crossings, a Panama Canal transit and is currently in the Pacific Northwest with plans to cruise to Asia

next. He has been instrumental in acquainting me with a weather app and website (windy.com) that I was not previously familiar with but have come to like very much.

**WINDY.COM** is a free iOS and Android app and website. The app is full-featured and easy to use on mobile devices and in some respects, is even better than the website. Some features I especially like and believe will be useful while cruising are:

World-Wide - Windy App provides world-wide weather reporting and forecasting that allows you to pan and zoom to the area you are interested in. You can select a location and step through the forecast (several forecasts, actually) in one-hour increments. Zooming out lets you view the "Big Picture" of surrounding conditions that influence your local area. Plus, it's an amazing graphical presentation to look at and play with!

Customize settings - The default windy.com settings aren't ideal for all interests but by establishing a personal account you can customize and save your settings, set preferred units, default screens, and customize the menu choices to view different weather parameters and forecasts.

Overlay live conditions - To get a sense of how accurate the models are, I try to keep an eye on actual observed conditions and compare them to predicted conditions. Turning on "reported" wind or temperature superimposes actual conditions

from weather buoys and reporting weather stations, providing a comparison between forecasts and real life conditions.

Multiple Forecasting Models – Windy provides access to several forecasting models that you can either select as a preferred model or see multiple model side by side for comparison purposes. My meteorologist acquaintance has recommended using the NWS Buffalo information coupled with the Windy NAM short-term, small-scale forecasts for our cruising area. (See the discussion below regarding different forecasting models)

Extensive menu selections – Windy lets you choose the parameters (layers) that you are most interested in and provides easy access via a custom menu. In addition to the normal weather factors of temperature, precipitation and clouds, the items I find especially useful for cruising safety include:

- wind – speed, direction and gusts;
- waves – wave and swell heights and direction;
- fog;
- rain / thunder plus radar / lightning.

All of these are available graphically

Animation - Select a location, either your current or one of interest along your planned route, and animate the forecast to watch (backing or veering) wind shifts, speed changes and wave heights can be viewed over time.



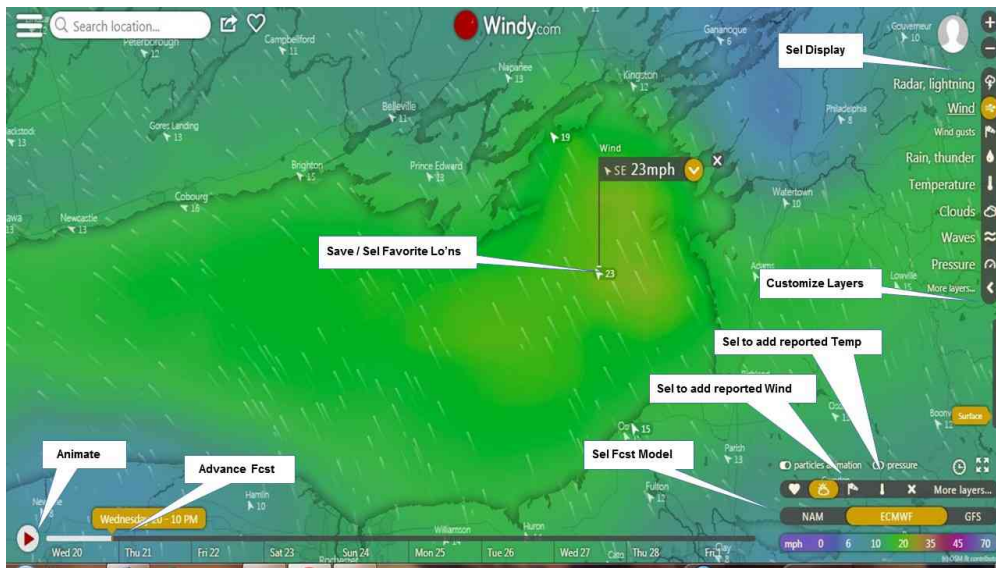


Figure 3: Screen shot of windy.com.

Overall cruising recommendations for use of Windy.com and other weather forecasting sites –

1. **Short term is more accurate** – Pretty intuitive but don't rely on medium- to long-term forecasts without double checking before venturing out.

Every day needs a fresh evaluation regardless what previous plans or forecasts were for that day.

2. **Watch for trends** - Sometimes the forecast model is off by a few hours, other times it underestimates or overestimates parameters (e.g. wind speed), but it's rarely entirely wrong!

If the trend is for increasing wind, particularly if the increase is significant, use caution!

The weather could come earlier or later or be worse than predicted.

3. **Don't disregard any forecasts** - If any Windy model or NOAA or Environment

Canada forecast shows a substantially different forecast, don't ignore any forecast! Instead, I would consider any forecast a "worst case" that could materialize, (even if it doesn't agree with other sources or models).

Erring on the side of caution rarely creates unsafe or uncomfortable conditions.

4. **Plan flexible cruise itineraries** – Any good cruise plan should include flexibility via layovers, weather days, et cetera to avoid any pressure to "push on" when conditions are unsafe or uncertain.

### Forecasting Models

Several model parameters are important when comparing models:

**Horizontal resolution** – A smaller grid (usually expressed in km) will provide better resolution for local conditions; larger grids are adequate for longer term, global forecasts.

**Frequency of runs** – More runs create shorter times between updates.

**NAM (North American Mesoscale Model)** ~5km grid; designed to handle smaller systems across the United States and parts of Canada and Mexico. The NAM is a short-term model run four times a day (00, 06, 12, 18 UTC) out to 84 hours (3½ days).

**GFS (Global Forecast System)** is a global computer model run by the US National Weather Service (NWS). The GFS horizontal resolution is about 13 km for the first 10 days and ~27 km from 10-16 days. Output is produced every hour for the first five days, three-hour intervals through day 10. The GFS is designed to handle large-scale systems like nor'easters, hurricanes, the polar vortex, or the jet stream across the entire world.

*NOTE: The GFS model is most notable for incorrectly predicting Hurricane Sandy while the ECMWF (European) model predicted landfall correctly 7 days out.*

During 2019, as a result of a recent tenfold increase in computing power, a GFS model upgrade is planned that will increase its horizontal resolution to ~9 km out to 16 days.

**ECMWF (European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts)** informally the "European model" has a horizontal resolution of ~9 km and is produced every three hours for the first 6 days, and six-hour intervals through day 10.

# A Week Out Of St. Petersburg, FL

By Jim McGinnis, AP

SV Zeus

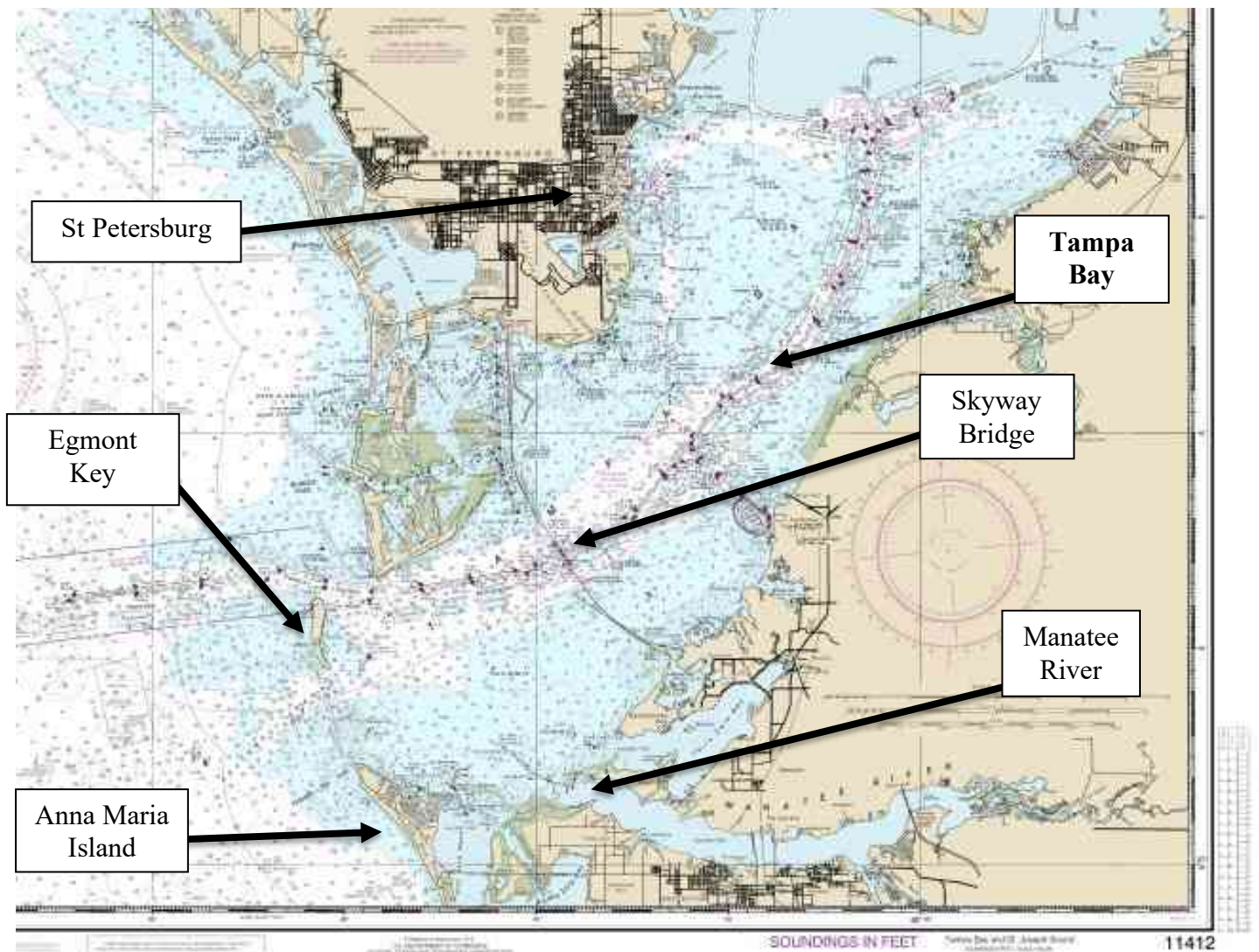


Figure 4: Chart of the Tampa Bay area where we took our 5-day cruise.

Matt Brady, Carol and Frank Rinker, Lynne and I chartered a 45-foot Beneteau the first week of February. The boat draws 5¾ feet (which is a lot in this part of the Gulf). She also has a 66-foot mast and is not deemed to be “Intracoastal Friendly” since most Bridges have a clearance of just 63-feet. Those details were important to keep in mind during our charter.

The boat basin in St. Petersburg is right in the heart of the downtown area. We found the sail-boat and loaded all the food, drinks, and gear to last us five days. The marina staff gave us a brief tour of the boat and agreed to come back at 9AM for final paperwork and check-out.

After dark, Matt and I headed out for beer at *The Moon Under Water* (a British Pub) right on

the water front park. It is adjacent to a well laid out walking street of bars, art galleries, and restaurants. Everyone was friendly in the shops as winter is their high traffic season.

Wednesday morning after the check-out, we headed out into Tampa Bay under power and, as advised, strictly followed the red and green Aids to Navigation heading out the Tampa Bay channel.





Figure 5: Carol and Lynne with a dolphin-escorted freighter in the background. Check out the freighter's name!

We first saw several freighters on the chart plotter with Automatic Identification System (AIS). They would also have been visible on our radar, but we had that turned off for the time being. We could tell the boat name, size, speed and destination. Then they came into view. Traveling at 15 to 18 knots (approximately three

times our speed), the freighters passed each other without slowing in the relatively narrow channel. Wow! Soon we saw a couple dolphins in the water, and then more dolphins jumping at the bow of the freighters. I was able to get this picture of Lynne, Carol, a dolphin and the ship *STI Seneca*!

We headed under the Tampa Bay Sunrise Skyway and straight for Egmont Key. We set sails despite the light air just to get a feel for the running rigging on the boat. The In-mast furler and electric winches are nice but can jam

easily in the hands of novices like us. Thankfully, the staff had given us a good briefing and we had no issues.

We dropped anchor near the Egmont Key Lighthouse at the north end of the island. The Island is a reminder of days gone by with aging gun emplacements to protect St. Petersburg Harbor and Tampa Bay during the Spanish-American War. The only residents are the Park Ranger and about 1500 gopher turtles. The gopher turtles don't swim so they aren't going anywhere.

The following video can tell you more:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQOPbf-J\\_7o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQOPbf-J_7o)

That night, we anchored in about 18 feet of water at the South end of Egmont Key and had a solid anchor purchase in the sand. The only rocking came from the occasional pilot boat heading out to help guide the freighters in and out of the Port of Tampa. We sailed the

Gulf of Mexico on Thursday and had a steady 8 knots in the afternoon. Dolphins were joining us from time to time just to keep us company.



Figure 6: Aerial view of Egmont Key (middle) and some of its famous residents, the Gopher Turtles (right). The Egmont Key lighthouse is also pictured (top).

Heading back into the intra-coastal we radioed and passed through the bascule bridges at Manatee Road and Cortez Road heading south towards Sarasota.

Thursday night, we anchored in the intracoastal waterway at Bradenton Beach. This is a favorite spot for Lynne and me. More than 40 years ago, we had gone for dinner at the nearby Seafood Shack at Bradenton Beach on our honeymoon. This day, shallow water kept us from approaching a dock, so Frank, Carol and Matt went in to shore in the dingy to get a few supplies for an on-board party that night.

Friday, we headed back through the bridges and into Tampa Bay for a great sail in 8 to 12 knots of breeze. In the late afternoon, we headed to an anchorage recommended by the charter company. At the last minute, I saw another anchorage next to the Desoto Memorial Park and headed in there. Low tide was coming soon at 7PM with the warm wind heading out of the south west. We dropped anchor in 9 feet of water.

The tide change is only 18 inches in Tampa Bay, so I didn't expect any issues. But

during the night the wind swung around to the northeast and pushed us into shallower water to the length of the anchor chain. I was awakened at 6AM when the boat, which had been rocking slightly in the breeze, suddenly stopped rocking. I knew that was not good.

Let's fast-forward over the genuinely engaging discussion amongst the crew about how we got there. By 7:30AM we were listing slightly with the keel in the mud. I tried motoring off with a good thrust of power from the diesel, but no dice. So then a plan came together.

Carol was manning the anchor windlass ready to pull in chain if the boat budged forward. Frank and Matt took off in the dingy off our starboard beam with an end of the spinnaker halyard, plus another spinnaker sheet and the second anchor with 150 feet of line and 20 feet of chain. I was at the helm and Lynne was ready to wind in the spinnaker halyard.

The first couple tries merely lifted the anchor up out of the mud until Frank and Matt got all the line out. One more try, with the anchor set again, Lynne began slowly tilting the

boat with the spinnaker halyard. At only about 30 degrees, I gave the boat a push with the diesel and we were free! Carol pulled in the anchor line and I eased the spinnaker halyard. We were floating. Cheers erupted from everyone and there was more than a little relief that we were not calling SeaTow.

One moral of the story: Anchor where the other boats of your size are moored, if you have that option. We might also have been free at high tide around 2PM but I was concerned that the lifting tide would just move us onto another sand bar and decided to move along.

Once freed from the soft bottom, Saturday turned into an awesome sailing day with 15 to 18 knots. The big sailboat was at home in this air we just had fun tuning and tweaking sail shape to maximize speed. We had a fabulous week and were ready to head back to the marina.

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## The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN



As I put the finishing touches on this issue, I'm watching the snow outside.

Enough already! It's

time to get ready for some boating!

However, it is definitely spring. I can say this because my "German Sheddies" started to blow their winter coats last week. So if you see me covered in dog hair, you'll know why!

With spring come boat projects, so please share yours. It's always fun to compare notes and

to see what other people are doing with their vessels.

Another thing that's always fun to hear about are trips you've taken in your boat. Like Jim and Lynne's story about their Florida charter this winter, it's great to read about others' adventures on the water. Hopefully they will inspire you to create adventures of your own.

It's also tough to keep up with the ever-changing world of electronics. If you've treated yourself to one of the new "magic" boating accessories, please share your experience with it.

Finally, pictures can tell a great story, too. Please share yours so that we can enjoy them as well.

SV Tomfoolery

Never underestimate the effect of what you might think is an "insignificant" or "boring" activity. You would be surprised at what impact it might have on someone else. Your comment, photo, or experience could inspire someone to try something new and discover something wonderful. As I mentioned at our District Conference a couple weeks ago, we're not just selling education, we are creating opportunity!

- Your Editor, Tom

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As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

[editor@abc-flx.org](mailto:editor@abc-flx.org)

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# Calendar of Events

## May 2019

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- 01 Seneca *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
- 06 Boat Handling course begins.
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 18-24 Safe Boating Week (National)

## June 2019

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- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 14-15 Waterfront Celebration & Cardboard Boat Race, *Watkins Glen, NY*.
- 24 Deadline for *Drum* articles
- TBA D/6 Buffalo Tall Ships Festival fleet departure, *Syracuse, NY*

## July 2019

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- TBA Navigation course sight-taking sessions begin.
- 04-07 Tall Ships Buffalo, *Buffalo, NY*.
- 01 Seneca *Drum* July issue publication date.
- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900).
- 22 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

## August 2019

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- 01 *The Deep 6* summer issue publication date. (D/6)
- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 23 Deadline for *Drum* articles
- 30-9/02 D/6 2019 Rendezvous. *Brockport, Ontario*. (D/6)
- 30-9/02 Tall Ships Brockport, *Brockport, Ontario*.

## September 2019

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- 01 Seneca *Drum* September issue publication date.
- 08-15 USPS Governing Board Meeting, *Louisville, KY*. (National)
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA Navigation classroom sessions begin.

## October 2019

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

- 25 Deadline for *Drum* articles

## November 2019

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- 01 Seneca *Drum* November issue publication date
- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date. (Delayed 1 week to cover Conference activities.) (D/6)
- TBA District 6 Fall Council & Conference (D/6)

## December 2019

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- 16 Deadline for *Drum* articles

## January 2020

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- 01 Seneca *Drum* January issue publication date
- 12 Seneca Change of Watch
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

## February 2020

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- 01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 09-16 USPS Annual Meeting, *Ponte Vedra, FL* (National)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* articles

## March 2020

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- 01 Seneca *Drum* March issue publication date.
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)

## April 2020

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- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 17 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 24 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>

*for any last-minute changes.*