

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 SV Brewster

View from the Bridge

It's so terrific to be back in the marina and starting to work on the spring boat projects. I bought a new "Fresh Water" Antifouling Paint "FW-21 Slick Coat Racing Paint is an ultra-thin, super-slick, low-friction film for boat bottoms. It is the ideal racing finish for fresh water or cold salt-water boats." Just putting that out there. Mike Crouse had the bottom of his boat sandblasted this week. He and his son Ryan will be putting their secret sauce on the bottom over the next couple weeks. Racers know it's important to get in the head of the competition even before the boats get wet. More fun to come as we dream about the big race from Marion, MA to Bermuda June 18th, 2021.

Lynne and I spent this winter in Florida. We visited ABC-FLX members Jeff and Claudia DeMeritt in Indiantown, FL on their Nauticat 33 and visited John Chesbrough and Maggie Martin in Key West just before they sold



Contessa. Lynne and I also chartered a 40-foot Hunter out of St. Petersburg, FL Sailing Florida Charters with Frank and Carol Rinker. We had terrific weather for that week.

The District 6 Spring Conference, held April 9-11 at the Radisson Hotel in Corning, went off without a hitch. Outgoing District Commander Nancy Bieber was succeeded by the new District Commander Rick Hibbs. We had a larger turnout than expected, which was terrific considering COVID times. We also had great weather for the weekend (Saturday at least). During the conference, we had a couple really interesting presentations: One on Celestial Navigation by Filmmaker

Jack Gordon – Marion to Bermuda Race 2019 and the other on the Lake Ontario proposed National Marine Sanctuary by Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator at NOAA.

Many Thanks to Tom Alley for setting up these presentations and for providing the telecommunications to put it all together. Glenda Gephart and Lynne McGinnis assisted with the registration process. Charlie Fausold attended as our Education Director. Ray Margeson and Phil Cherry supported Tom on the presentation/communications equipment. We have been working on developing expertise in the “Producer” role for these positions and it was evident this weekend. Lynne coordinated the Gift/Wine baskets for the raffle, and we had 10 to choose from all together. A top vote getter was the awesome Tool and Wine basket from Sue and Jim Morris. Thanks to you all.

Winter Studies

Classes I took while “on the hard” in Florida Actually it was more like on the couch with the laptop but you get the idea.)

- Marine Engine Maintenance
- Electronic Navigation

Both classes were very good. Without a doubt, everyone should take USPS Engine Maintenance. This class will absolutely save you time, money, and frustration. It will also likely avoid being stuck on the lake with a preventable engine issue like water/dirt in your diesel fuel. It covers when to do all maintenance and why. Change oil in the fall, change impellers in the spring, take the class

if you want to find out why. Among a number of other key topics, it included a detailed review of “stuffing box” design and maintenance.

Electronic Navigation includes a survey of the best attributes of the new technology available for boating. Integration of Radar, AIS, and VHF with Chartplotters is in full swing from the major vendors. Probably not needed for most boaters on our Finger Lakes, but essential if you plan to take a charter in coastal waters and off-shore.

Environmental Stewardship

Here’s a thought - Boating Clean in 2021. Everyone should be thinking about protecting the lake whenever we are on the water. Oil, Fuel, trash, and sewage don’t belong in the lake and it takes some effort to insure they never get there. There are also soaps that will be in the grey water that are biodegradable. I recently saw “Dr Bronner’s Pure Castile Soap”. “Good for your body and the planet.” Also top-side boat washes that end up in the lake should be minimized and biodegradable.



The Drum

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Boating Safety in 2021

We will also work to publicize National Safe Boating Week, May 22-28, 2021, and emphasize the critical "Life Jacket – Wear It" Campaign. Consider that in two thirds of all boating accidents, victims have drowned. Of those victims, 90% were not wearing a life jacket of any kind. Of recorded incidents where an individual falls overboard or their boat capsizes, 44% lead to a fatality. Our goal is to change those odds and encourage the use of lifejackets for sailors, kayakers, sportsmen, fishermen, and all recreational boaters.

The Summer Weekend trip to Sampson Marina

This will be a super weekend with socially safe group activities and cookouts. Six boats are already signed up as we go to press. To get a slip, sign on to Seneca Lake Resorts

www.senecalakeresorts.com

We are also planning to conduct some of the evaluations on the water for Boat Operator Certification (BOC). Contact Charlie Fausold if you would like to participate in that activity. In any case, please consider attending this event either on your boat or by driving up to join us at Sampson.

Just FYI - The Rochester Off-shore Powerboat Association hosts their Annual Battleship Run on Seneca Lake July 16th-18th. A word to the wise: Lookout on the lake. You will hear these powerboats coming just a few minutes before you see them. We had fun last year watching boat owners and crews launching these Thunderboats at the Sampson Ramp on the Friday of the event.

Here's a great idea from a member: The Finger Lakes Chapter could host a Kayak trip to the Catherine Valley Marsh – Spring Clean-up event and picnic. Let me

know if you would be interested in participating.

For our primary objectives in 2021, we look to our purpose as an organization. We want to commit to continuously improving our efforts in Boating Safety, Boater Education, Community Service and engaging our ABC-FLX members. We are working on building our level of social connection to our members. Look for more opportunities for in-person education classes and on-the-water events.

I know you are getting excited about the upcoming boating season. Boats are going in the lake!

Fair Winds and Following Seas,

- Jim, SV Brewster
co@abc-flx.org

From the Executive Officer

By Phil Cherry, S

Time to Let Your Voice Be Heard?



Earlier in my government career I spent almost a decade working in Dover, Delaware, the State

Capital, as a public agency lobbyist for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. At one point in the late 1990's I was appointed by then Governor Tom Carper (now US Senator Carper) to be his legislative Director for the last three years of his administration. I got to wear a fancy suit and tie every day and hobnob with government and corporate big wigs as I worked diligently on the Governor's legislative agenda, which in

the late 1990's involved utility deregulation, offshore wind energy, open space and farmland preservation, capital punishment, tax law, slot machine gambling, water quality and fisheries issues and a host of other topics important to the Governor. It was an exhilarating and high-pressure position, but one I will always cherish, as it gave me a detailed understanding of how laws are made, what motivates politicians

SV Harmony

and what it is like at the top of the political heap.

Things have changed politically in the last two decades for sure, but the process of law making is still pretty much the same, albeit different from state to state. I have very little knowledge of how the process works in New York, but I do know that what happens in Albany can affect us all in ways we do not anticipate. I also know that Legislators like and need to hear from their constituents concerning legislation before them.

Take New York Senate Bill #5958, sponsored by Senator Rachel May who represents Central New York's 53rd District, which includes most of the City of Syracuse, parts of Onondaga and Oneida counties, and including parts of the Erie Canal. I expect many of you may know far more about the Canal's operation than I do, and the transfer of the canal operation over to the New York Power Authority (NYPA) back in 2017. I am told the transfer was done due to the vast resources of the NYPA and because the Canal needed some TLC that the Canal Corporation just could not provide. The Senate Bill was introduced by Senator May on March 24, 2021 and is currently assigned to the Senate Transportation Committee.

The bill is a short read and can be found here:

<https://legiscan.com/NY/bill/S05958/2021>

It does basically two things. It specifies the operating "season" for the canal of early May through early November and provides some assurance that commercial entities can use the State dry docks, travel lift and storage resources under certain conditions. My read of the bill prompts me to wonder if in allowing commercial use of such facilities, the bill inadvertently (or deliberately) bars private boat owners from using such facilities, which is currently allowed under the existing law. This may be an area needing further investigation.

Having a statutorily defined operating season sounds like a good idea to me and given the history of season "adjustments" by NYPA in the past, as detailed in the bill's justification, seems to be warranted. I have heard some of our members complain about not knowing when the canal system will open for the season, which makes planning trips somewhat difficult. The bill does not address when the NYPA must make their annual opening and closing decisions, so maybe that is an amendment we can look for... a date specific when NYPA must announce the year's schedule?

My instincts tell me that the NYPA might oppose this bill, on the grounds that specifying an operating season unduly constrains their ability to make business decisions regarding the canals operation that may affect their bottom line. Of course, that's nonsense, but their argument will play well

with NYPA's advocates and supporters. I expect the NYPA will also not appreciate being told they need to make their facilities available by commercial entities using the dry docks, storage capacities and lifts, but perhaps not if it also cuts out private boat owners from using such facilities, if they do at all.

In any event, if you are interested in this topic, I urge you to follow the link above and read the bill. You should also read the justification, as it provides some valued perspective and history. If, after your review, you think it's a good bill, the best thing you can do is to contact your elected local Senator and express your support for the bill, and/or to suggest amendments. In this area, it is Senator Tom O'Mara. His contact info is widely available. If you think it needs an amendment, it might also be a good idea to contact Senator May with your thoughts. As for our Boating Club getting involved in the bill's passage, I regret not having this information during the recent District 6 Conference that we just hosted down in Corning. It would have been helpful to get the District's take on the legislation and whether our bylaws allow for any political activity of our association in matters such as this. Something to look into!

- Phil

xo@abc-flx.org

From the Education Director

By Charlie Fausold, SN-IN

Ready, Set, Learn!



Registration is now open for Boat Handling (formerly Seamanship). This 6-

session course is ideal for newer recreational boaters and those who want to gain more knowledge, skill, and confidence to boat safely and have more fun in a variety of situations. It is a foundational course applicable to both motorboaters and sailors.

Boat Handling covers these topics:

- Rules of the Road: A Practical Approach
- Confidence in Docking and Undocking: Slow-Speed Maneuvering
- Boating with Confidence: Handling Your Boat Under Way
- Anchoring with Assurance: Don't Get Carried Away
- Emergencies on Board: Preparation for Handling Common Problems
- Knots and Line Handling: The Knots You Need to Know

Classes will be held Thursday evenings, 7 to 9pm beginning May 13 in the Schuyler County Human Services Complex, 323 Owego St. in Montour Falls, as

well as online for those unable to attend in person. There will be an optional review session on the water on Saturday morning, June 19th and a final exam on June 24. Attending all six sessions and passing the exam earns the Seaman grade. Each topic is also available as a free-standing seminar.

The cost of the full course is \$70 for ABC-FLX members and \$90 for the general public and includes a downloadable student book as well as the downloadable US Coast Guard Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook. A print version of the student book is an additional \$20. If taken individually, each seminar is \$20.

For more information or to register email me: SEO@ABC-FLX.ORG.

In other news ten ABC-FLX members participated in a very informative seminar on Sail Trim and Rig Tuning led by Mike Crouse. For me, one of the take-aways was the importance of learning from others. Mike shared how some of the “old salts” he raced against on Lake Ontario shared – over time – knowledge they had gained, and Mike in turn shared with those in the seminar. Expect those FLYC races to be even more competitive this summer!

By the time this issue of the Drum goes to press we will have held a

second seminar on Trailering, led by John Flick.

Finally, we held our first ABC class of the year in Waterloo, taught by Dennis Daniels, and several more are in the planning stages for locations in Watkins Glen, Hidden Valley 4H Camp, and Geneva.

Safe Power Boat Handling

Plans are being developed to certify interested ABC-FLX members in Safe Power Boat Handling at the club's rendezvous at Sampson State Marine Park on July 31. This is one of the required skills for Inland Navigator, the first step in the Boat Operator Certification program. For more information on the Inland Navigator BOC level go to:

<https://www.usps.org/departments/13000/13700-on-the-water-training-certification/2017-05-08-01-34-35/13700-boat-operator-certification/13700-inland-navigator-page>

and go here for the specific skills required to be demonstrated for Safe Power Boat Handling:

https://www.usps.org/images/ed-dept/files/BOC_and_OTW_Training_Programs/in_checklist.pdf

More details will be forthcoming as plans take shape.

- Charlie

seo@abc-flx.org

Water Lines

By Glenda Gephart, Public Relations Officer

The Finger Lakes National Heritage Area?



The National Park Service wants to know why the 14-county Finger Lakes Region should be designated a National

Heritage Area. Gathering answers to that question is a significant step in a process that began seven years ago, says Cindy Kimble, executive director of the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance.

A National Heritage Area spotlights the natural, historic, cultural, educational, and recreational resources of a region. As boaters, we cherish our lakes and should appreciate the benefits that may come with Heritage Area designation.

And we should be endorsing the project with letters of support and comments!

In 2019, the FLTA, which is leading the designation effort, received \$500,000 from the Parks Service to study the proposal. Over many weeks in the spring of

2020, focus groups across the region met online to discuss the concept, provide information and try to convince the Parks Service the designation should be approved. Kimble says 112 people participated in the meetings.

Now the Parks Service wants to hear from everyone else in the region. It is seeking general comments and letters of support. The comment period ends June 1, but the letters of support must be received by May 15, Kimble says.

“We need to show Congress that we deserve to be a National Heritage Area,” she says. “This will put the Finger Lakes on the national stage.”

National Heritage Area designation will bring the 9,000-square-mile Finger Lakes Region increased attention, promotion and grant funding opportunities. Kimble says only 55 Areas are now in place across the nation.

Seneca and Cayuga lakes are included the Erie Canalway National Corridor Heritage Area. Kimble said two Heritage Areas would greatly complement each other.

Kimble’s goal is to receive 1,000 letters of support from governments, businesses, organizations and individuals. State and federal elected officials are sending in

their endorsements, and President Biden’s support has been assured, she said. Biden attended Syracuse University, and his first wife was from Skaneateles.

“He is very interested in seeing this project move forward,” Kimble said.

After the comment period ends, the National Park Service will spend the rest of 2021 reviewing the proposal and developing a recommendation. Final designation comes in legislation approved by Congress and signed by the President.

“We will be thrilled if we’re able to have this designation by the spring of 2023,” Kimble says.

To learn more about the proposed Finger Lakes National Heritage Area go to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=91275>.

Send letters of support to Coleen Fabrizi, National Heritage Area Committee, Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, 309 Lake St., Penn Yan, NY 14870. Remember: Letters must be received by May 15, and the online comment period ends June 1.

- Glenda
pro@abc-flx.org

Upcoming Classes & Seminars

To register for any of these classes or to get more information, please contact Education Officer Charlie Fausold at:

seo@abc-flx.org

or call 607-207-7771

America's Boating Course

"ABC3", as this course is known within the Power Squadron, will be offered on three separate occasions in the coming weeks and months:

- May in the Geneva, NY area.
- July at the Watkins Glen Yacht Club in Watkins Glen.
- July 26-30 at the Hidden Valley 4-H Camp (enrollment restricted to camp attendees).

Contact Charlie Fausold for additional information or to register for any of these courses.

Boat Handling Course

Begins May 13th

Our new *Boat Handling* course is intended for newer recreational boaters who have completed a basic boating class (like *America's Boating Course*) and want to gain more knowledge, skill, and confidence to boat safely and have more fun in a variety of situations.

Boat Handling covers these topics:

- Rules of the Road: A Practical Approach
- Confidence in Docking and Undocking: Slow-Speed Maneuvering

- Boating with Confidence: Handling Your Boat Under Way
- Anchoring with Assurance: Don't Get Carried Away
- Emergencies on Board: Preparation for Handling Common Problems
- Knots and Line Handling: The Knots You Need to Know

This course will be held Thursday evenings, 7 to 9pm in the Schuyler County Human Services Complex, 323 Owego St. in Montour Falls. There will be 6 classroom sessions beginning May 13th, and a final review session on the water on Saturday, June 19th at 9:00am, followed immediately by the exam. Classroom sessions will also be offered over *FreeConferenceCall* for those unable to attend in person.

Completion of all six classes and achieving a passing grade on the exam will earn the "Seaman" grade, the first of five America's Boating Club advanced grades.

The cost of the full course for ABC-FLX members is \$70 (\$22 for each additional family member sharing the course materials) and includes a downloadable student book as well as the downloadable US Coast Guard *Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook*. There is an additional charge if you want printed versions of the student manual (\$10) and USCG handbook (\$12.50).

Each topic is also available as a free-standing seminar. If taken individually, each seminar is \$13 (electronic downloaded materials) or \$16 (printed materials). You

will get credit for taking the seminars, but again, need to take all six and pass the exam to receive credit for the Boat Handling course.

To register: email to seo@abc-flx.org.

Safe Powerboat Handling

This seminar will be offered at our Chapter's weekend rendezvous at the Sampson State Marine Park on July 31st. This offering, along with its on-the-water skill evaluation, will count toward your Boat Operator Certification (BOC).

Contact Charlie Fausold for additional details or to register.

Marine Navigation

Formerly known as "Piloting", this updated six-week course will be offered in September.

As with other offerings here, please contact Charlie Fausold for information or to register.

How to Register

If you have questions about any of these courses, or better yet, to sign up, please contact either of the following individuals:

Education Director Charlie Fausold, Finger Lakes Chapter:

seo@abc-flx.org

or call 607-207-7771

Assistant Education Director John Flick:

aseo@abc-flx.org

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.

happy to accommodate requests for courses not currently on our schedule of formal offerings. If there is an area in which you would like to get some instruction, please contact Charlie Fausold, the Chapter Education Director, with your request.

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

www.abc-flx.org

Looking for Something?

The Finger Lakes Chapter of America’s Boating Club will be

Long-Term Class Schedule

Seneca Education Department

Courses	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Public	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC
Basic	Boat Handling	Sail	Boat Handling	Sail	Boat Handling	Sail
Advanced Level	Marine Navigation	Advanced Piloting	Marine Navigation	Advanced Piloting	Marine Navigation	Advanced Piloting
Senior Level		Junior Navigation				Junior Navigation
Electives	Electronic Navigation	Instructor Training	Weather	TBD	TBD	Marine Electronics
		Engine Maintenance				Marine Communications
Seminars	Paddle Smart	Trailer & Docking	Partner in Command		Man Overboard!	Power Boating
	Advanced Powerboat Handling					Trailer Your Boat
				Instructor Recertification		
Self Study	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class	Any Class

USPS News: Local, District, National & More

Happy Birthday!

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

May

Tessa Bell Cabezas
Philip Cherry
Gregory Glaesemann
Daniel Kingsley
Ray Margeson
Patricia Mason
James Morris
Susan Morris
Gabriel Seip

June

Jeffrey Barlow
Dennis Daniels
Claudia Demerritt
Wolfgang Gates
Bill Phoenix
Thomas Taylor
Benjamin Wigley

Notice to Mariners

NY Canal Corporation

LOCK OPERATING SCHEDULE – LOCK E-23 (BREWERTON)

APRIL 29, 2021 – The New York State Canal Corporation today announced that Erie Canal Lock E-23 in Brewerton will operate 7:00 am to 3:30 pm daily between Saturday, May 1st and Thursday, May 20th to support the Walleye and Northern Pike fishing season.

On Friday May 21st, Lock E-23 will commence normal operating hours of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

Conditions permitting, all portions of the New York State Canal System are scheduled to open Friday, May 21, 2021, at 7:00 a.m. for the 2021 navigation season.

The Canal system is scheduled to close to navigation on October 13, 2021.

The Canal Corporation urges all users to register to receive updates through the “Notice to Mariners” notification program at www.canals.ny.gov.

For updates and information, please visit Canals.NY.gov or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

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

o o o o o

Voyage of the *Aquetnet*

By Charlie Fausold

Readers of these pages will know that I have an ancestor who was a whaling captain. Ezekiel Lockwood Curry was born in Hector, NY in 1803 and ran away to sea at the age of 14. After rising through the ranks he served as Captain on six voyages aboard the *Ann* (299 tons), the *Daniel Webster* (397 tons), the *Aquetnet* (300 tons), and the *James Maury* (395 tons).

While the *Ann*, *Daniel Webster* and *James Maury* hailed from Sag Harbor, NY and New Bedford, MA, respectively, the *Aquetnet* sailed from San Francisco. Recently I visited the New Bedford Whaling Museum to read Captain Curry's log of that voyage on the *Aquetnet*, 1852-53. Below are some highlights excerpted from my book, [A Hector Boy Goes to Sea: The Extraordinary Life of Captain Ezekiel Lockwood Curry](#).

The *Aquetnet* first headed south to Baja's Magdalena Bay, a major calving area for Gray Whales, where it spent a month whaling and getting ready for the voyage ahead, making repairs to the ship and taking on supplies of firewood necessary for boiling the whale blubber down into oil (called "trying").

After leaving Baja the *Aquetnet* spent three weeks in Hawaii before venturing north to Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, the Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean. There the ship reached its northern-most extent, at more than 68 degrees north latitude. On September 5 Captain Curry wrote

in the ship's log "4PM made the icy barrier extending as far as the eye could carry."



Photo 1: On June 29th Captain Curry and the First Ma-te, Mr. Parker, went ashore on Cape Navarin, which a tourist site today describes as the "stormiest place in Russia."

After four months in the far North and only taking three whales the ship headed home to San Francisco at the end of September.

The *Aquetnet* log entries provide a glimpse into life aboard ship and also reveal some of the personal qualities of its Captain.

For one thing, he is unafraid to roll up his sleeves and work alongside his men. He helps build a gangway, makes repairs to the ship's rudder and mends whaleboats when they are damaged during a hunt. On one memorable occasion in the Bering Sea (August 1, 1853) the 50-year-old Captain harpoons a whale himself, and when the whale stoves (damages) the small open whaleboat and a frightened crewman jumps overboard the Captain is "obliged" to cut the whale loose to save him! He delegates responsibility and looks after the condition of his ship and all aboard but exercises discipline

when required. He clearly is focused on his primary purpose - the pursuit of whales - but he also takes time to explore his surroundings, meet native people and socialize with other ship captains encountered along the way.



Photo 2: Magdalena Bay is a popular destination for whale-watchers today. (Brian J. Cant-well/Seattle Times/TNS)

Captain Curry was interested in the natural world. On February 4, while in Magdalena Bay, he and the Third Mate went ashore on Isla Santa Margarita "for the purpose of making some discovery." Unfortunately, after spending the night sleeping on the beach, they "found it a barren place" and "saw no animals and but few Birds." On August 11 he and the First Mate went ashore on a small island in the Bering Sea and, finding a rock containing "some type of metal," took a specimen of it. The log entry on March 1 (lightly edited here), as the *Aquetnet* is approaching Hawaii, is perhaps the most eloquent of the whole voyage: "Owyhee bearing NW 16 miles distant, the smoke from the volcano ascending up in fine style and the snow topped mountains in full view presenting a most

beautiful sight. How wonderful are the works of nature.”

While in sunny Baja on January 8 and 9 he went hunting with two of his crew, and gave others liberty to “ramble about the shores of the bay.” But as noted he was also a stern disciplinarian. On March 4, when two of the crew drew knives on each other and started fighting, Captain Curry sent one to the top of the foremast and the other to the top of the mizzen mast and made them stay there for 4 hours. When they came down and started fighting again, he put the instigator in irons and locked him the cabin until they reached port.

The *Aquetnet* faced danger from fire, ice and wind. On June 4th a careless crew member allowed a fire in the “logworks” to get out of control. A tarpaulin they used to try to smother the fire burned up. Then they took the mainsail down, wet it, and tried to use it to smother the fire, but it was too hot to go near. Finally, they hoisted the wet mainsail into the rigging and were able to get it over the fire and extinguish it. They had to cut the main brace to prevent the fire from climbing into the rigging.

Barely two weeks later on June 30, while experiencing dense fog, a dead calm and strong currents, the ship became trapped by the ice in shallow water so close to shore that they could hear the surf. They were able to break free the next morning, but not without taking some heavy blows from the ice.

Of course, the *Aquetnet* faced many storms. One of the worst Finger Lakes Chapter

occurred on July 24, when a gale blew the ship 10 or 12 miles despite having a 500-pound anchor and 70 fathoms (420 feet) of chain out. In another gale on August 17th the ship dragged its anchor and 90 fathoms of chain for 22 miles.

Occasionally the *Aquetnet* encountered native peoples on its voyage. After entering the Bering Strait on July 10, the *Aquetnet* was met by two boats of natives wanting tobacco and rum. On August 2 a boatload of “Exquimaux” men, women and children came on board. On August 26 Captain Curry noted that he had heard that Captain Cox of the *Magnolia* had bought a Bowhead whale from the natives and gotten 300 barrels of oil from it. The price? Three bottles of brandy.

Living quarters below deck for the crew on the *Aquetnet* must have been pretty crude. Early in the voyage, on January 11, the Captain ordered that a fire be started below to “smoke the rats



Photo 3: Mending sails was a constant chore. This leather tool protected the palm of Captain Curry's hand from the sharp needle.

out.” The entire crew slept on the open deck above that night. On April 10 the log reports that “the sow had 5 pigs last night.” For the Captain, however, it was possible to maintain social niceties, at least once in a while. On January 16 he spent the evening on board a nearby ship, the *Massachusetts*, and on the next night he in turn hosted Captain James Bennet and his wife Donna for tea.

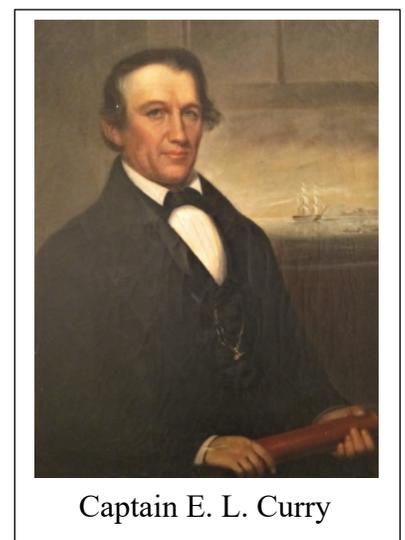
While traversing the vast expanse of the Pacific it was rare for the crew of the *Aquetnet* to see another ship, but that changed once they got to the whaling grounds and found



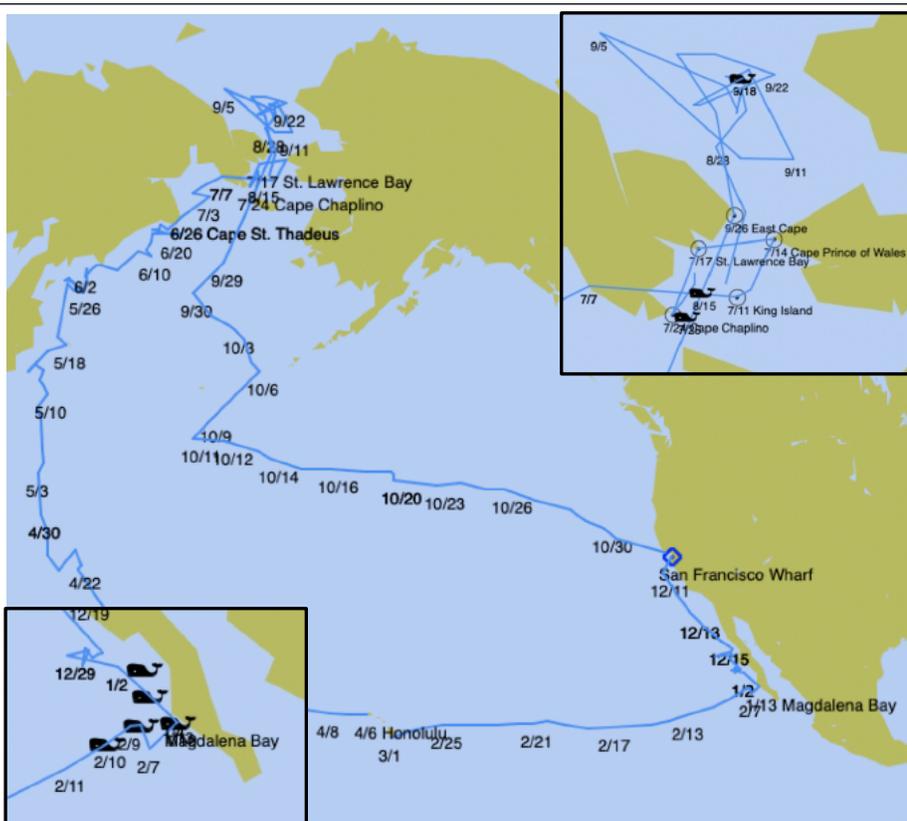
Photo 4: These parallel rulers have his son Robert's initials, but Captain Curry probably used them to plot his position as he navigated around the world.

Some days the longitude is determined by the “lunar” method, which involves measuring the angle between the moon and another celestial body. The “lunar” method entries are often accompanied by a hand-drawn symbol which may indicate whether the moon is leading or trailing the celestial body it is being measured against. Often both the “Chron” and the “lunar” methods are used as a cross check. On several occasions during the voyage Captain Curry checked the accuracy of his chronometer against known landmarks. Finally, on days where a “sight” of the sun or moon was not possible because of the weather, the latitude and/or longitude are noted as from the “Chart” or “DR” indicating that they were determined by “dead reckoning” - estimating current position based on the time, speed and direction travelled from the last known position.

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Captain E. L. Curry



Voyage of the Ship *Aquetnet*, December 1852 – November 1853. Whaling activity is concentrated in Magdalena Bay, Mexico (inset), along the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia and the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean (inset). Location dates are shown, and icons indicate whales taken.

themselves in the company of other ships with the same objective. Each crew member’s personal income was tied directly to the overall profitability of the ship, and the competition for whales could be intense. On June 16 Captain Curry’s log entry read: “Dark times. 40 ships in sight and not one whale.” When the *Aquetnet* lowered its boats after a whale on August 4th, the boats from three other ships were chasing the same whale. That day, the whale eluded them all.

A word about navigation. Obviously, knowing the ship’s position at all times was a high priority for the Captain. Latitude

(the ship’s position north or south of the equator) could be rather easily determined (“observed”) by using a sextant to measure the height of the sun above the horizon at a given time, often noon. Determining longitude (the position east or west of the Prime Meridian running through Greenwich, England) was more difficult, and Captain Curry used several methods. Some days the log notes that longitude was determined by “Chron” which involved using a chronometer (timepiece), astronomical tables, a sextant and then making some complicated calculations.

Luke Chapter 9

Words and photos by Nigel Sharp

www.ClassicBoat.co.uk



“But with a boat like a pilot cutter, the drag of the keel, the changing midship sections and the shape of the sheer would have made it very complicated. It could be that they just scrapped the original boat and built a new bigger one, but claimed they had lengthened the original boat to avoid paying the 50 guineas fee to register a new one. But no one today could prove it one way or the other.”

In 1887, *Vincent* was sold for £450 to the Falmouth District Pilot Boat Association, formed to pool the assets and income of the port’s pilots in the face of declining mercantile trade. By the early 20th century, she was based in Falmouth and no longer owned by the Vincent family, but continued to work in her original role until 1922 – one of the last Falmouth sailing pilot cutters to do so. She then became a houseboat, until she was broken up at Freshwater Boatyard, St Mawes, in the early 1930s. Some of her remains, including the companionway hatch, part of her boom,

Photo 5: Author Luke Powell at the helm of *Pellew*, his 9th pilot cutter replica.

Article courtesy of *Classic Boat* magazine. Originally published September 2020.

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Pellew is the ninth pilot cutter to be built by Luke Powell in the past quarter of a century, but what sets her apart from the others is her size. With a hull length of 68 ft. (20.7m) she is significantly longer than the 46 ft (14m) *Agnes*, the biggest of the previous eight. But it is in displacement terms that she really stands out: at 74 tonnes, she is triple the size.

The *Vincent* was built with a hull length of 55 ft. (16.8m) by Richard and Hugh Hocking at Stonehouse, Plymouth, in 1852. Her first owners were William, John and Joseph Vincent, from a family of pilots based in St Mawes. According to Merchant Shipping records, in 1877 her hull was lengthened to 68 ft. by cutting it in half and inserting a new mid-section. “Lengthening boats in that way was quite common practice, and with cargo vessels it was quite straightforward,” said Luke.

The previous boats were based on Isles of Scilly pilot cutters, whereas *Pellew* is a replica of the *Vincent*, a Falmouth pilot cutter. The Scilly boats were generally smaller than their Falmouth cousins, which often carried as many as eight pilots. One thing they have in common is that no original boats of either type survive today.



Photo 6: Above, Main picture: *Luke* at the helm; L-R: Tackle for whisker stay; named after local hero Admiral Edward Pellew; end of bowsprit.

and her beaching legs, were incorporated into a house built soon afterwards near St Mawes. Luke built *Agnes*, his third Scillies boat, in 2003, for an American owner. “She was the ultimate Scillies pilot cutter,” Luke told me, “and if I was going to progress my ambitions at that time, then the next boat I would have built would have been a big Falmouth pilot cutter.” But potential clients seemed to want boats of around 44 ft. (13.4m), so that is what he built. When *Agnes* came on the market in 2005, Luke decided to buy her back and return her to the UK to live aboard. When it became apparent the banking crisis was hindering boatbuilding projects, he and his wife Joanna decided to put *Agnes* to work chartering. They have been doing so ever since.

During all this, Luke kept discovering more about Falmouth pilot cutters, partly by accident and partly by actively looking. It started when Alf Jenkins (a Scillonian man with great knowledge of the islands’ history) showed him a photo of a 1:12 scale half-model of one. Alf didn’t know where the model was but several years later it turned up. Some time before, Frankie Peters, the last of the Peters family to build boats at Freshwater, had found it in a loft. He then passed it on to designer Percy Dalton, and from there it came into the hands of Cornish gig builder Ralph Bird. “It was a model of the original 55-foot. *Vincent*,” said Luke, “and it was the only existing

DNA of a Falmouth pilot cutter.” Despite Ralph’s reluctance, Luke was eventually able to take the lines off the model, and over time he built up a collection of old photos of Falmouth pilot cutters. The final and fundamental piece in the jigsaw that allowed Luke to begin the new project was meeting Brian Pain, done through mutual friends in Faversham, where he had once lived and worked.

COMBINING PASSIONS

At that time, Brian had just sold Rochester Independent College, which he had founded in 1984. He also owns a Thames sailing barge and was keen to combine his two passions by helping to create opportunities for education in maritime skills. Over a period of a few years, Brian sailed with Luke on *Agnes* many times and the two of them became friends. “On one voyage he asked me if I was ever going to build boats again,” said Luke. At that time, Luke didn’t think he was, and was seriously

considering selling all his boatbuilding tools and machinery, along with all the timber he still had. “Don’t do that,” Brian said, and suggested instead that charity Artysea could provide funding for boatbuilding projects with an emphasis on training – in traditional boatbuilding initially, and then for sailors on the completed vessels.

The pair agreed to build a replica of the 68 ft. *Vincent*, and work started in January 2017, at a riverside site just outside Truro. They named the site the Rhoda Mary Shipyard, after the 1868 Cornish trading schooner that has been lying derelict in the River Medway since 1925 – and which Luke has ambitions to restore at some point.

WE NEED A BIGGER CRANE

Almost all of the new boat’s hull is oak, supplied by SH Somerscales. The keel is made up of two pieces of 9 in. (23cm) x 14 in. (36cm). The sawn frames are 4 in. (10cm) x 9 in. at the bottom, 4 in. x 6 in. (15cm) at the top, and are in pairs over most of their lengths.



Photo 7: In frame and ready for planking.

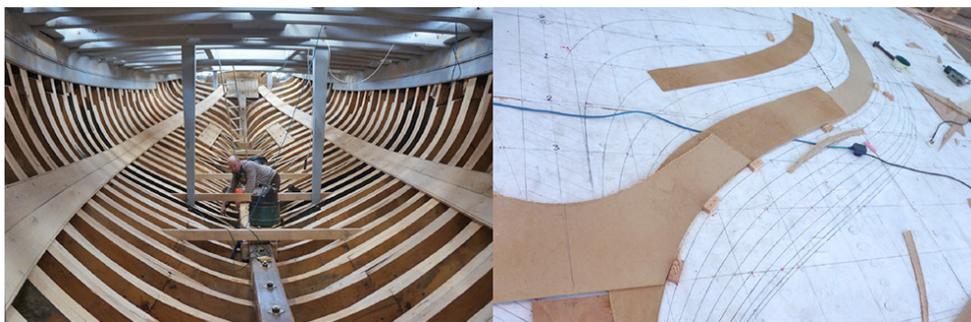


Photo 8: (L to R) The vast, empty interior looking aft; lofting the frames.

The bottom planking is 2 in. (5cm) thick with the upper part of the topsides 2¾ in. (7cm). “It is a good idea for the topsides to be thicker, as they take more punishment – bashing alongside quays and other vessels, and potential collisions, etc,” said Luke. “Also, the sheer strake in particular gives a boat the longitudinal strength it needs to stop it hogging.” The resulting chamfered step between the two thicknesses just above the waterline is an attractive feature that helps to break up the topsides. While Luke previously used chain blocks, he found a lorry with its own HIAB crane essential in handling the significant extra weight of the frames and planking on this boat. A 9-tonne external lead ballast keel reduces the requirement for internal ballast (although there is still 14 tonnes of it), in turn increasing cabin headroom. The 5 in. (13cm) x 9 in. oak deck beams support the 2 in. thick opepe deck planks, and the deck furniture is also opepe. Everything is bronze fastened.

The spars were made from two Douglas fir trees, each about 65 ft. (19.8m) x 5 ft. (1.5m) and over 6 tonnes, from Gunnislake in Devon, having been planted in 1903. “It took two days to get

here on a special low loader on a route which avoided various medieval bridges.” A “massive Wood-Mizer chain sawmill” was then used to machine the trees into squares before electric planes converted them to octagons and then rounds. They also



Photo 9: (L to R) Laying the opepe deck planks; planking complete and caulking under way.

provided enough material for the middle bulwark strakes (the upper and lower ones being oak), as well as the cabin sole. The rest of the interior joinery is oak.

The initial team working with Luke included James Baker, who had helped Luke with various previous projects, and two young trainees, Arthur and Dom, who were completely new to boatbuilding. They took the boat to the stage where the frames were erected before work came to a halt for the

summer while Luke took *Agnes* on charters. Then a new, larger team set to work: John Bray and Andy Cornish were joint head shipwrights, with up to four young trainees – Clyde, Ned, Shane and Katie, three of whom stayed until the boat was completed. Mylor Marine Team, from Mylor Yacht Harbour, did all of the electrical work; Colin Frake made all of the blocks; the sails came from North Sea Sails; and Bristol company Traditional Rigging made the standing rigging. All the metal fabrications were made in-house by Sam Coltman.

The project slowed down in the autumn of 2018 when Luke was diagnosed with cancer and underwent four months of treatment. “We had to let a couple of people go to make the project more manageable, but the others carried on valiantly without me,” said Luke. “At the time, I just hoped I might manage to see the boat sailing, but I’m still alive and I am hoping for a bit more now,” he added with a smile. “The boys did kindly offer to take me for the first sail in an urn!”

It may have seemed obvious to name the new boat *Vincent*, but, said Luke, it has no “va va voom”. It was decided to call her *Pellew*, after local hero Admiral Edward Pellew who died in 1833. From a seafaring family, Pellew went to school in Truro but ran away to sea at the age of 14. “He fought in the American civil war and against the French. He committed great acts of bravery and he was very compassionate towards his crew – and towards captured enemy sailors. You don’t get a better hero than Edward Pellew.”

Pellew was launched early one morning at the end of February, and not long afterwards the world went into lockdown. By the end of May, however, *Pellew* was at last making her way down the Truro River to go sailing.



Photo 10: (L to R) Luke and some of his team; launch day arrives.

One of Luke’s concerns was how *Pellew* might handle under power. After much debate about what sort of engine she should have, it had been decided to install a John Deer 125hp diesel engine with twin hydraulic drives, but this was later changed to a single hydraulic drive. So with a propeller shaft parallel to the centerline, but offset to port by about 3 ft.

(0.9m), Luke’s fears were understandable. “I wondered if we would get round the first bend in the river, but she actually handles really well,” he said. “She does what you want. She can do 7 knots at full revs and 5.3 at 1,300rpm, and that is quite adequate. We’ll only need the engine to get in and out of harbour and cross the channel when there is no wind.”

Luke drew *Pellew*’s rig after studying all the photographs and paintings of Falmouth pilot cutters he could get his hands on, and it is as close to what is known of the original as it could be. “It is much more authentic than the majority of other pilot cutters sailing today, as they have all tended to increase the sail area for racing,” he said. “I just thought that this is a big boat, no one alive has ever

sailed a thing like this, and we have just got to trust the original people who designed and built them.”

INSTANT TRUST

Accepting that “she won’t be the fastest boat in light weather”, Luke was, nonetheless, pleased with her performance in the gentle winds of

her first sail. When, several weeks later, he had the chance to sail her in a decent breeze, he reported that he had “instant trust in her ability and knew that she would do all that is asked of her”. In due course, *Pellew* will have two topsails – a working jib-headed topsail and a jack-yard topsail – the latter being nearly as big as the mainsail. “It’s going to be a big learning experience to use that one, especially when we need to get it down in a hurry,” said Luke.



Photo 11: Hatch to the aft cabin.

Her rig may be authentic, but Luke confesses to three “concessions to practicality” on deck: the doghouse in which the main companionway hatch is located (“to give the guests somewhere to sit on deck as well as a more spacious entrance”); the hydraulic barrel windlass, specially made by Cornish company Webster Boat Machinery (Falmouth boats tended to pick up moorings so didn’t have them, but they were traditional on Scilly pilot cutters, so all of Luke’s other boats have one); and two bronze electric capstans supplied by Italian Italwinch. “Everyone told me I was mad to operate a big cutter like this with a novice crew without some mechanical help,” Luke explained. “They will be used mainly for the mainsheet when gybing in a breeze.”



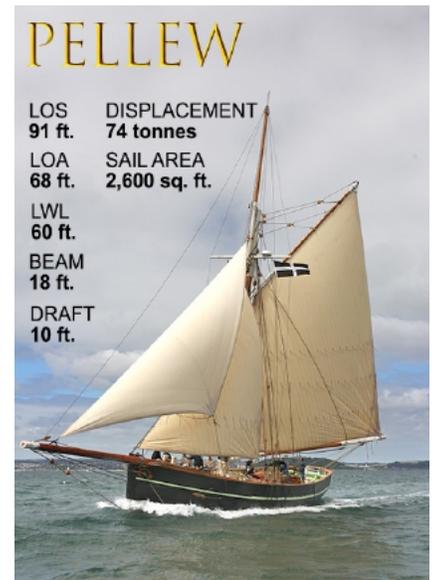
Photo 12: (L to R) Hydraulic barrel windlass by Webster Boat Machinery; Pellew sailing in a decent breeze for the very first time.

Down below, *Pellew* has more of a “yacht interior” than an original pilot cutter. The layout, from forward, comprises a fo’c’s’le with a pipe cot and plenty of storage space; a large heads and shower compartment; a large semi-open sleeping cabin with four pairs of berths, each pair having a degree of privacy; to port a large saloon table with a freezer within it and plenty of seating around, a pilot berth and a heads compartment; to starboard a large galley with an electric hob and oven, a dishwasher, a boiling hot water tap and under-cupboard concealed lighting (which Luke can’t stop pointing out to people, presumably because he is simply astonished that a traditional boat such as this would have such a thing); and aft of the companionway a three-berth cabin (one

of the berths being athwartships), with a central table with a Northern Lights 18kVA generator in a soundproof box under it, a heads to port and chart table to starboard. This aft cabin doesn’t have standing headroom, but Luke describes “a lovely traditional old-fashioned aft cabin such as they had in the old West Country schooners”, adding: “There will be many a night sitting round this table telling salty tales washed down with a drop of rum.”

For the next couple of years, *Pellew*’s program will concentrate on commercial chartering with occasional sail training, before balancing the two more evenly. On each voyage, there will be a skipper, mate and cook (who will all live in the aft cabin) and an apprentice (in the fo’c’s’le), plus the guests or

trainees. Initially, the skipper will be Luke, while he and his crew get to know the boat, particularly in bad weather, and ensure everything works properly. The plan then will be to have a “synergy of progression” whereby *Agnes*’s skipper replaces Luke on *Pellew* while *Pellew*’s mate becomes the skipper of *Agnes*, and so on. Meanwhile, Joanna will manage everything behind the scenes or, as Luke puts it: “Sailing *Pellew* will be the candy floss on the cake, while Joanna is there shovelling the coal into the boiler and keeping it going.”



Pellew is licensed under the MCA’s Category 0, which means there is no limit how far she can go from a safe haven, and she can take a crew of up to 16 people. “That means we will certainly go to the Azores, for instance, and maybe take her across the Atlantic,” said Luke. The Rhoda Mary Shipyard will be developed further to promote traditional boatbuilding skills, not least by providing facilities for start-up marine businesses



Photo 13: (L to R) The saloon looking aft with the spacious companionway; the well equipped galley, including Luke’s favorite topic – concealed lighting.

and restorations. Luke has talked about building a replica of a topsail schooner at some point, but I got mixed messages when I asked about future boat-building plans. “Building boats absolutely takes you over,” he

said. “Joanna and I have lived and breathed the *Pellew* for over three years while we’ve put our personal lives on hold. There is more to life than banging out boats. But if someone came along now and said ‘build

a replica of the Cutty Sark’, you would have to do it even if it killed you!”

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The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN

SV Tomfoolery

Distractions



Not much for your editor to comment on in this issue. Not because there is any lack

of material, but because of the abundance of “distractions” that have been keeping me busy.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, the Finger Lakes Chapter hosted the Spring 2021 District Conference at the Radisson in Corning. A lot of work went into that and, based on the feedback from attendees, we (and the Radisson staff) were delightful and accommodating hosts. A special “Thank you!” to Ray Margeson and Phil Cherry for volunteering and subsequently “stepping up” to take on the role of Technical Producers with the District’s new AV equipment. They did an excellent job!

May is also the month where the calendars align and I am tasked with getting out both the District and the local Chapter newsletters, so there has been a fair amount of time spent in April badgering everyone to get their material submitted and to hunting down some interesting content for the feature articles. I hope this ongoing effort meets with your collective approval!

Perhaps the greatest distraction, as you’ve probably guessed, is the looming deadline for getting everything ready for *Tomfoolery*’s participation in this year’s Marion-Bermuda Race. Many of the parallel project streams are now converging and contributing to a chronic condition of “information overload” for this skipper. *Everything* is a detail that is dependent on other details that themselves are dependent on yet others. Just figuring out the sequencing for all these things is, literally, a daily challenge.

Bermuda Update

The warming weather and the decreasing number of days to the start of the 2021 Marion-Bermuda Race have contributed to a flurry of activity to get those last stubborn items off the “to-do” list. To put things into perspective, by the time you read this we will be roughly two weeks away from setting sail for the last segment of the delivery from Coeymans Landing on the Hudson River to Marion, MA.

Amid all of this are the continually shifting shoals of Covid regulations. It seems like we’re making adjustments every week to accommodate evolving requirements and changing expectations. From this skipper’s viewpoint, it’s absolutely exhausting.

With the exception of my daughter, Katie (who is in the midst of taking final exams and getting ready to graduate from Alfred University), my entire crew accompanied me to the Hudson River to begin commissioning *Tomfoolery* for her shakedown cruise to Marion. The winter cover is off and everything we are doing is geared toward splashing into the water and heading east.

ABC-FLX members can be proud as the entire crew consists of members from our chapter. In addition to me:

- Katie Alley
- Mike Crouse
- Andrea Johnson
- Jim McGinnis

Likewise, the USPS is showing its colors in the fact that our shore-side support crew is also made up entirely of Power Squadron members, all of whom asked how they could be of help to our effort.

THANK YOU!

By the time the next issue comes out, you should begin hearing about how things went. Until then, I need to go re-sew a seam on our dodger, and do a hundred other things, too!

- Your Editor, Tom

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As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

editor@abc-flx.org

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Calendar of Events

May 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 13 Boat Handling Course begins, *Montour Falls, NY*.
- 22-28 Safe Boating Week (National)

June 2021

- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 17 Deadline for *Drum* Articles
- 18 Start of Marion-Bermuda Race, *Marion, MA*.
- ~~18-19 Waterfront Celebration & Cardboard Boat Race, *Watkins Glen, NY*. Canceled.~~

July 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* July issue publication date.
- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900).
- 23 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)
- 30-8/1 Summer Weekend at Sampson with BOC certification activities. *Sampson State Park Marina*.

August 2021

- 01 *The Deep 6* summer issue publication date. (D/6)
- 06-08 District 6 Summer Rendezvous, *Port of Rochester*. (D/6)
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 20 Deadline for *Drum* Articles
- 29-9/5 National Governing Board Meeting, *Raleigh, NC*. (National)

September 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* September issue publication date.
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBA Governing Board Meeting (National)

October 2021

- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* articles
- 29-31 District 6 Fall Council & Conference, *Rochester, NY*. (D/6)

November 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* November issue publication date
- 08 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date. (Delayed to cover Conference activities.) (D/6)
- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)

December 2021

- 17 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

January 2022

- 01 Seneca *Drum* January issue publication date
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 16 Seneca Change of Watch, *Online virtual event*.
- 21 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

February 2022

- 01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 06-13 USPS Annual Meeting, *Ponte Vedra, FL* (National)
- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 21 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

March 2022

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

April 2022

- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* Articles
- TBA District 6 Spring Council & Conference (D/6)

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.