

# AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

For Boaters, By Boaters®



## THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

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Report any errors or omissions to:  
editor@abc-flx.org

### From The Commander

By Phil Cherry, S

SV Harmony

#### View from the Bridge

Well, here it is October, and our boat is slated to hit the hard next week. It's heartbreaking. I had several competing priorities this summer that kept me away from Watkins and the lake for much of the year, and my boat made it out of the slip fewer times than I'd like to admit. Many boaters tell me what a great summer it was for wind and sun here in Schuyler and all I can do is smile and be happy for them. Next year will clearly be different and I'm already looking forward to it!

I was, however, able to make many of our organization's social events this year, like the evening at the Seneca Cheese Company where our own Terry Stewart entertained us with a talk about his *True Love*, or the evening up at Hazlett's Oasis where Doug Hazlett spoke on his sailing adventures and shared some award-winning wine with us all.



Other spectacular events were our summer rendezvous up at Sampson State Park in July, and the "Navigation by the Stars" event aboard the *True Love* held in early September. I'm pleased with the quality of all these events and the comradery that comes with shared socialization around boating. My thanks to all of you who participated and helped organized these events.

The most recent event we were involved in was also spectacular. While not an official function of ABC-FLX, we were able to participate in co-hosting, along with the Schuyler County Historical Society, the Finger Lakes Boating Museum, the Finger Lakes Yacht Club, and the local Chamber of Commerce in presenting Mr. Art Cohn who spoke to a crowd of

over 200 people about his submarine exploration of Seneca lake and the boats and people that traveled – and sank – in Seneca Lake and the Canal system almost 200 years ago. It was a great program, and I was delighted to see so many of our members able to attend.

Lastly, ever since we took our trip last year on the Erie Canal, my wife and I have been fascinated with the Great Loop. I think the trip has actually made it on both our bucket lists, which is saying something for a couple that rarely agrees on anything! I'm wondering how many of our members might have already taken the loop, or who might also be contemplating such an adventure. Yes, the Mississippi is at record lows, the Gulf is full of hurricanes, and gas prices are at an all-time high, but the allure of taking six months or longer and leisurely seeing much of the eastern portion of the Country by water is alluring.

We do however have what you might call an infrastructure problem. We own a 28-foot sloop with an old gas powered Atomic Four that does super on our little lake here in Schuyler County but makes me nervous even considering a trip up to Geneva! What we need is a larger power craft capable of making the journey and doing it in comfort.

This is where you come in. Anyone interested in renting their boat for an extended period, or perhaps taking us on as passengers and crew on your own adventure? I'm only half kidding, but I would enjoy hearing from any of our members who may have taken the trip previously and who might have some pointers to offer, as my wife and I continue to muse over this unique adventure.

That's all for now. Have a safe and prosperous election season... and don't forget to vote!

- Phil, SV Harmony  
[co@abc-flx.org](mailto:co@abc-flx.org)

## The Drum

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## From the Administrative Officer

By Maggie Martin

SV Wined 'n' Down

### November Meeting Information



The boats should be out of the water and the leaves are coming down. It's time to take a little break to get to-

gether and enjoy an interesting evening with a guest speaker from

The Finger Lakes Boating Museum in Hammondsport.

We have reserved the upstairs room at the El Rancho Mexican Restaurant on Franklin Street in Watkins Glen on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, for our group, beginning at 5pm. Drinks are available from the bar. This is their 'Taco Tuesday' special so we can order tacos with a choice of fillings for \$2.00/each or the taco platters (3 tacos and sides) for \$10. We will be placing the order when we arrive, so please advise if you plan

to attend. RSVP to

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

We hope to see you there!

Looking ahead, the next meeting and installation of officers is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, at 5pm at Fulkerson's Winery. Details will be provided closer to the date.

- Maggie

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## Membership Thoughts

By Mark Erway, AP

Membership Chairman

### Membership Matters



We are currently showing 68 active members. There were two new members in 2022, and they are Cindy Swank

2/21/22 and Catherine Chesebrough 4/25/22. There were 11 members who did not renew this year, so we are down 9

overall since the beginning of the year.

We know that membership has its privileges. When you log in to the national site you can find pages of benefits for a wide variety of things. When you participate locally you can find even more benefits, like making new friends, learning and practicing new skills, taking classes and spending time with like-minded people. Best of all, is having fun on the water in one of the most beautiful settings of our country. The Finger Lakes region is simply awesome.

The best way to get new members is through personal contact. So,

when we have an activity or offer a class, tell someone about it, invite them to come. The best way to retain members is to form relationships with others, engage them, involve them, and most importantly, "miss" them when they're gone or no longer coming. I guess that's what is meant by being a "club". We are America's Boating Club – Finger Lakes Chapter. What a great group of people!!

Regards,

- Mark

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



## From the Education Director

By Jim McGinnis, SN-IN

SV Brewster



Ok, *Brewster* is on her stands, the cover is on, the winterization process is

behind me. And now we are in Florida for the winter. Hurricane Ian went far to the south of us, so no damage to our house in Bradenton. Very fortunate.

In Florida, Lynne and I are members of the Manatee Sailing Association and that will give us the opportunity to get out on the water this winter. Their racing season starts in January and ends in April. So, I look forward to that.

We had a great summer. Weather was terrific. Sailing was special as always. I made two trips to Maine this year to sail with my brother on his 1972 36-ft Gulfstar Center Cockpit. Last week Lynne and I returned from a trip to Italy that we had been planning since before COVID. Milan, Pisa, Rome, Florence, and Venice. We took a classic Gondola Ride around Venice and the Grand Canal. Great Trip!

In terms of classroom activity, we had the best season for the Basic Boater Safety Class (ABC) in quite a while with 18 completions, nine of which were in Geneva and nine in Watkins Glen. We had four new instructors conducting the ABC classes this year: Phil Cherry CDR, Katie Alley ASEO, Andrew Price Secretary and Kris West. Jim Morris ASEO assisted me with one of the Geneva classes. Thank you to those members for contributing their time and knowledge and to Boater Safety in our Community. We were really excited to extend our training offerings to the north end of the Lake. It is our long-term goals to grow by covering the

Finger Lakes Region with our classes.

Six students completed and passed the Engine Maintenance class comprehensive 100 question exam. Out of the classroom, we changed the primary and secondary fuel filters in my boat and re-primed the engine with the finger operated fuel lift pump on the Yanmar engine. Great class.

Shout out to Ray Margeson – AP-IN has now completed all the requirements for Inland Navigator – Great job Ray.

- Jim

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# Secretary's Sidenotes

By Andrew Price

Secretary

## Environmental Trends in Boating



I am a reader / lurker on several boating forums, and I am seeing many discussions about new environmental

regulations coming to bear on boating. These issues run the gamut from discharge at sea to maintenance waste in boat yards and marinas to bilge discharge to runoff from cleaning while at the dock. Regardless of the concern, the discussions touch on several themes: cost and environmental protection.

I am sure we have all seen times when the beautiful waters in which we are boating have been fouled. I know I have seen Seneca Lake suffer algal blooms, which, although not related to boating

pollution, certainly brings home the point of pollutants effecting the quality of the water.

In terms of changes to regulations for environmental protection, boaters, especially DIY'ers, are seeing new requirements related to dust capture, fluid runoff capture, decontamination, recycling, bulk material (think shrink wrap) recycling, and bottom cleaning waste removal to name a few.

In terms of cost, boaters utilizing marinas are seeing higher prices as protection comes online in relation to catching runoff from end of season wash downs, materials sales incorporating recycling costs into the sales price, the need to utilize dust capture systems when stripping coatings or gel cote, and the need to use more environmentally friendly fluids and materials as well as many others. Likewise, we may see changes to the systems which pertain to fuel, oil, and waste on our boats. Even the manufacturing materials and processes will be affected. These will also impact cost as old,

“grandfathered” systems are replaced or regulations prohibit continued use of some systems outright.

These changes will drive up the cost of boating overall, and they could be significant as they eventually come online. However, my experience is that seasoned, long-term boaters are generally willing to do their part for the environment and will absorb these costs. I think that these requirements and costs will help us all become more conscious of our part in producing pollution in its many forms, and our consciousness will help us consider each step we take and whether we are using the least polluting process or product.

Reading these conversations online has helped make me more aware of my surroundings and actions. I hope we can all embrace our role in keeping our boating environmentally sustainable. See you on the water! Well, maybe when the weather warms up!

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

# Water Lines

By Glenda Gephart

## NY Approves Watershed Plan



A comprehensive plan to reduce pollution that can affect Seneca and Keuka lakes' water supplies, aquatic habitats,

and recreational uses has been approved by the state.

The Seneca-Keuka Watershed Nine Element Plan identifies strategies, programs and projects aimed at reducing excess phosphorus. While essential to life, too much phosphorous can "cause or contribute to conditions that adversely affect aquatic habitat, recreational suitability, or a waterbody's suitability as a supply of potable water," according to the Nine Element Plan.

"Protecting the Seneca-Keuka watershed from harmful algal blooms, flooding, and impacts to water quality is a priority," Secretary of State Robert J. Rodriguez said in an October 20<sup>th</sup> DEC news release. "This plan to protect the watershed is a living, breathing document that will be used for years to come and is a result of what can happen when the agencies and communities come together in the process."

The Nine Element Plan can be found on the DEC's website at

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/senecakeuka9e.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/senecakeuka9e.pdf).

Keuka Lake and Seneca Lake form the Seneca-Keuka watershed. Together the lakes contain more than half of the water within the 11 New York Finger Lakes and are bordered by parts of Schuyler, Yates, Seneca, Chemung, Steuben and Ontario counties. The watershed extends over approximately 712 square miles.

"The Seneca-Keuka watershed is valued for its rural character and composition. In addition to the two lakes, there are diverse landscapes of forests, farms, glens, and wetlands providing unique vistas and contributing to a sense of place. The landscape diversity supports numerous uses by residents and visitors alike, which contribute to economic and cultural diversification of the region," according to the Nine Element Plan.

The plan refers to the "myriad of ways humans rely on the resources of the Seneca-Keuka watershed; these include potable water that meets or exceeds public health standards, recreation in and on the water, production of food and fiber, energy generation, etc."

The project considered all of those factors in developing short- and long-term phosphorous mitigation strategies. The project also looked at the multiple factors that lead to phosphorus concentrations in the lakes and the streams that feed them.

Public Relations Officer



"The link between poorly managed agricultural lands and degraded water quality is well established. This has often made the farming community an easy target when promoting environmental remediation," the report states. "However, the diffuse and omnipresent nature of phosphorus, sediment, and precipitation means all lands are potential contributors to reduced water quality. Furthermore, preservation and support of a sustainable agricultural economy is of critical importance to the Seneca-Keuka watershed community."

The Nine Element Plan states that scientific consensus on the causes of harmful algal blooms (HABs) has not been reached. But elevated phosphorus is suspected, along with other factors related to climate and invasive species.

HABs occurrences in Seneca Lake have increased in recent years, and the report acknowledges that HABs "threaten and impair recreational access and potable water use."



Studies and discussions leading to the Nine Element Plan have shared a common theme over the years: a strong commitment to protecting the lakes and watershed and a desire to direct efforts into cost-effective strategies that reflect the best available science, according to the report. Public education and outreach are described as crucial.

Among the recommended strategies of specific interest to boaters:

- Supporting and expanding the Boat Launch Stewards Program.
- Installing informational kiosks and signage at boat launches about the spread of invasive species.
- Supporting invasive species outreach and educational initiatives.
- Installing boat cleaning stations at public boat launches.

Other strategies include:

- Constructing floodplain wetlands in areas frequently inundated with water.
- Planting cover crops on lands that are prone to erosion and nutrient runoff when bare.
- Fencing and controlled crossings to separate livestock from waterways.
- Replacing and/or upgrading failing septic systems.
- Adopting open-space conservation rules to preserve forests, wetlands, and other high-value resources during subdivision.
- Continually engaging watershed stakeholders across all groups and demographics in volunteer opportunities concerning water quality protection and improvement.
- Integrating water quality protection efforts into agri-tourism marketing programs and projects to maximize the value and appeal of producers and products to consumers.

The Nine Element Plan concludes, in part: “The Seneca-Keuka watershed provides a multitude of ecosystem services that benefit us all [...] The lands and waters support food and fiber production, offer beautiful vistas and diverse recreational opportunities, provide habitat for a diverse assemblage of native species, and are a source of clean and abundant drinking water. In addition, the watershed lands and waters support power generation and waste assimilation for development activities. This beautiful region of the New York Finger Lakes has provided a unique sense of place to generations. ... Continued collaboration and partnerships are the key to protecting this resource for future generations.”

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

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## Upcoming Classes & Seminars

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### Where Do I Start?

To work through the progression of Boating Classes and the progression of Boating skills development we have organized the classes and skills on the Long Term Schedule (see page 9). If you have any questions or want a class offered sooner, let me know.

### Advanced Marine Navigation

Advanced Marine Navigation (AMN) will begin Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, in Room 115 of the Schuyler County Human Services Complex in Montour Falls. AMN builds on Marine Navigation, which is a prerequisite. It focuses on navigation in coastal waters where greater distances require increased accuracy in course plotting and tides and currents must be taken into account. It also introduces more advanced

electronic navigation tools such as radar. The registration fee for AMN is \$80 for members and \$38 for additional family members sharing the student materials. Club members who have taken Marine Navigation (Piloting) are strongly encouraged to join us for Advanced Marine Navigation. Registration for this class is open now. Contact Jim McGinnis to register.

## Boat Handling

Boat Handling starts early May 2023. Formerly known as the Seamanship 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 for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGS), PowerPoint slides, videos, and animations. Best of all, several of the sessions will be held on the water, aboard local 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 USPS grade of “Seaman” (S) and is the pre-requisite course for Marine Navigation. 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 2023

**Duration:** 9 weeks

**Where:** Watkins Glen

**Prerequisites:** None.

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

## Seminars

If you haven’t looked at the USPS seminar offerings, you might be missing out. USPS has a wide variety of online seminars available

on the USPS Website ([americasboatingclub.org](http://americasboatingclub.org)) This winter you can complete a few to add to your skill set and keeping boating on your mind. The following seminar is an example that could save your life.

## Propane Systems on Your Boat (Seminar)

Propane and butane, also known as LPG (Liquified Petroleum Gas), are the most common cooking fuels used on boats. While efficient, cost effective, and widely available, these fuels can also be dangerous. This seminar gives you the tools you need to use propane fuel safely on the water. It explains boat propane systems, propane safety, and how to keep your boat and crew safe. Students receive a detailed student guide, with a glossary, inspection checklist, and standard operating plan for what to do when there is a leak.

### What’s Included?

- How LPG works
- Components of a typical bulk delivery system, what they do, and how they work together to deliver fuel to appliances
- Risks of using LPG and how to mitigate them through prevention—how to inspect and maintain your LPG system, test for leaks, and locate them, operate your LPG appliances safely
- What to do in an LPG emergency

This seminar will not teach you how to install or repair an LPG system. Those tasks should only be performed by technicians

certified by ABYC (American Boat and Yacht Council) in marine LPG systems.

Propane Systems on Your Boat is also available as an [interactive online seminar](#).

## Instructor Recertification (Seminar)

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. The Instructor Certification is a requirement for teaching any course where nonmembers (i.e., the general public) are present. If your certification is expiring, contact Charlie Fausold to sign-up for the Seminar.

([cfausold@gmail.com](mailto:cfausold@gmail.com))

## How to Register

If you have questions about any of these courses or seminars, or better yet, if you wish to sign up, please contact: Finger Lakes Chapter Jim McGinnis

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

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

## Looking for Something?

As always, this USPS National Boat Safety organization is really all about you, our members. We want to support you in any way we can to become skilled, capable, and confident on the water.



Please take a careful look at the long-term class list later in this newsletter. Our class schedules are now set up by skill level targeted by the individual member. From our Americas' Boating Club basic boating safety education course (now required in New

York State to operate a powerboat) to Celestial Navigation we have the materials, skills and instructors required to teach every class imaginable.

Let us know how we can serve you better. Email:

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

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

[www.abc-flx.org](http://www.abc-flx.org)

## Long-Term Class Schedule

Seneca Education Department

BOC Level	Title	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Inland Navigator	Classes	ABC	C	X	X	X	X
		Boat Handling		X		X	X
		Engine Maintenance	C				
		Marine Electrical Systems				X	
	Seminars	Using A Chart		X			
		VHF/DSC Radios		X			
		Using GPS	X				
		Basic Weather and Forecasting					X
	Skills	Basic Powerboat Handling	C				
		Fire Extinguishers	C				

BOC Level	Title	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Coastal Navigator	Classes	Marine Navigation	C			X	
		Marine Communication Systems			X		
		Weather		X			
	Seminars	Tides & Currents		X			
		Rules of the Road		X			
		Anchoring					
		Mariner's Compass	C			X	
	Skills	Coastal Nav	C				
		Pyrotechnics	C				X

BOC Level		Title	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Advanced Coastal Navigator	Classes	Advanced Marine Navigation		X			X	
		Cruise Planning			X			
		Marine Navigation Systems				X		
		Radar			X			
	Sem.	Emergencies Onboard		X				
		Marine Radar			X			
	Skills	Advanced Coastal Nav		X				
		First Aid						

BOC Level		Title	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Offshore Navigator	C	Offshore Navigation		X			X	
	Sem.	Computer Weather Forecasting			X			
		Thunderstorms / Severe Weather			X			
	Skills	Offshore Navigation			X			
		CPR/AED						
Endorsements		Sail	C		X		X	
		Boating on Rivers, Locks, and Lakes						X
		Canadian Regulations				X		
		Paddlesmart	X			X		
Other		Instructor Development	C					
		Instructor Recertification	X		X		X	
		Operations Training	X					

### Table Key

X = Planned

C = Completed

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# USPS News: Local, District, National & More

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## Happy Birthday!

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

### November

Judy Cherry  
Tom Keebler  
Glenda Gephart  
Catherine Gueli  
Andre Wigley  
Patti Dawson-Elli

### December

Debbie Pietro  
Denis Kingsley  
Jeff Mack  
John Chesebrough  
Maggie Martin  
Bob Drake  
Marcia Taylor  
Lisa Oldroyd-Stewart

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## District 6 Conference

*By Tom Alley*

Just a quick reminder that the District 6 Fall Conference will take place November 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> in Liverpool, NY (near Syracuse). These district conferences are a great way to meet like-minded boaters as well as learn what's happening within America's Boating Club at a regional and national level. The presentations scheduled for Saturday afternoon are a great excuse for a day trip to the Syracuse area.

Details of the conference and its schedule can be found on the District web site at <http://uspsd6.org>.

Hope to see you there!

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## Got News?

*By Tom Alley, Editor*

Do you have any boating-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 Finger Lakes Chapter or for one of our neighboring squadrons.

Contact Tom Alley:

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

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# Safety Insights from the 2022 Newport-Bermuda Race

By US Sailing

*The following is an excerpt of a report published by US Sailing on the fatal accident that occurred during this year's Newport-Bermuda Race. It provides some valuable insights on emergencies, how to handle them, and how to prepare for them. As such, I thought it worthwhile to include it in this month's newsletter. -Ed.*

o o o o o

**NEWPORT, Rhode Island (October 27, 2022)** – The Bermuda Race Organizing Committee would like to thank US Sailing and the expert investigation panel members who have devoted their knowledge and experience to fully studying the tragic loss of Mr. Colin Golder. Our deepest condolences remain with the family and crew of *Morgan of Marietta*. We encourage our sailing community to fully read US Sailing's report and find ways to realize the recommendations in all of our boating activities.

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## REPORT ON INQUIRY BY US SAILING INTO THE PERSON OVERBOARD INCIDENT ON THE YACHT MORGAN OF MARIETTAIN THE 2022 NEWPORT-BERMUDA RACE

October 15, 2022 – The 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Newport to Bermuda Race ("Race") started off Newport, Rhode Island on June 17,

2022. The yacht *Morgan of Marietta* ("MOM"), a Centurion 42, competed in the Race. Colin Golder ("Colin"), of New Providence, New Jersey, owned and skippered the boat. Colin went overboard on the afternoon of Sunday, June 19, 2022. He was not wearing a harness with tether nor a personal flotation device that complied with the Race's safety requirements (hereinafter "PFD"). The crew of *MOM* executed man overboard procedures, quickly returned to Golder, and connected him to the boat via a Lifesling. While connected to the Lifesling, Colin lost consciousness and died soon thereafter. The crew of *MOM* had great difficulty in pulling Colin's unconscious body back aboard, but finally did so. Once they recovered Colin's body, the crew returned *MOM* to its home port in New Jersey.

The Cruising Club of America and the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club requested that US Sailing conduct a review of this incident and provide a report and recommendations aimed at enhancing the safety of offshore racing. To that end, US Sailing appointed a panel of six sailors to review the incident, establish what happened, and make recommendations to reduce the likelihood of a future similar incident.

The panel interviewed all surviving members of the *MOM*



crew, as well as Sabina Golder, Colin's wife. It reviewed *MOM*'s Expedition logs and YB Tracking record, as well as Race documentation kept aboard the boat. It consulted with experts in the fields of medicine, navigation, and weather forecasting. This Report aims to summarize what occurred in this incident, outline our findings, and provide lessons learned for the sailing community.

Part I provides a factual summary of events. Part II outlines key conclusions stemming from these facts. Part III offers lessons learned and recommendations aimed at making offshore sailing a safer sport for all who participate in it. Broadly, we found that the key contributing cause to Colin's death was his failure to wear a PFD, harness, and tether. Given the circumstances, his crew acted properly in connection with the subsequent man overboard procedure.

## I. FACTUAL SUMMARY

*MOM* started the Race on June 19, 2022. Colin owned and skippered the boat. Colin was an experienced offshore racing sailor, having competed in



approximately ten prior Newport to Bermuda Races. Colin was joined by seven other crew members: Sara Burke, Johan Blok, Rob Douglas, Shawn Edmonds, Ann Myer, Anne Popolizio, Lou Rugulo.

Two of the crew members were new to *MOM*, and the others had sailed on the boat previously to varying degrees. Colin was very involved in preparing the boat for the Race. In terms of actively managing the boat during the Race, Colin relied heavily on his crew. As of the date of the race, Colin was 74 years of age and overweight (estimates of his weight were 250-300 pounds at a height of 5 foot, 9 inches). He rarely, if ever, went outside of the cockpit while racing.

At the start of the Race, *MOM* was sailing in approximately 15-20 knots of wind out of the southwest. *MOM* got pushed over the starting line early and had to circle the Race Committee boat and start thereafter. Lou Rugulo, *MOM*'s navigator, advised the crew at the start that they should expect winds in the 20-25 knot range, with possible higher gusts, during the Race. Between the start of the Race and Sunday afternoon, *MOM* raced towards Bermuda without incident. Colin divided the crew into two watches: 1) Colin, Rob Douglas, Anne Popolizio, and Shawn Edmonds; and 2) Sara Burke, Ann Myer, Johan Blok, and Lou Rugulo. By all accounts, the watch system functioned smoothly, with all crew members getting a reasonable amount of nutrition and rest

during the first 40 hours of the Race. *MOM*'s watch system called for four-hour watches during the daytime and three-hour watches at night.

At 1100 EDT on Sunday, Colin came on watch with Douglas, Popolizio, and Edmonds. By this time, Colin had gotten to know Douglas' boat handling skills and had been deferring to Douglas on boat handling. At this point, *MOM* was sailing on starboard tack at a wind angle of about 95- 130 degrees true (according to the boat's Expedition data) under a full main and No. 3 genoa, with winds at approximately 290-330 degrees true. Boat heading was generally between 160 and 190 degrees. According to the boat's Expedition data, wind speeds were consistently in the low to mid 20s, with some higher gusts. Crew members report a sea state with waves consistently in the ten-foot range, with some higher waves of 12 to 18 feet. According to the boat's Expedition data, the water temperature was 23° Celsius (73° Fahrenheit), with boat speeds of 8 to 10 knots (and some higher speeds as the boat rolled down the swells.) Heel angles, on average, were around 15 degrees. The boat was reportedly well-balanced, with a manageable degree of helm. The crew switched drivers every 30 minutes to keep a fresh hand on the helm.

At approximately 1215 EDT, Douglas was at the helm of *MOM*. Colin was seated in the cockpit on the starboard side, forward. Popolizio was seated

behind him on the starboard side, and Edmonds was sitting to leeward. Douglas, Popolizio and Edmonds were all wearing PFDs and were clipped in using their tethers. According to many members of the crew, it was standard operating procedure for *MOM* crew members to wear PFDs, harnesses, and tethers at night and in conditions like those described above. Indeed, based on a photo of *MOM* at the start of the Race, Colin was wearing a PFD at the start of the Race.

Despite these unwritten standards, Colin was not wearing a PFD and was not clipped in at the time of the incident. He was wearing a pair of salopettes, an offshore foul weather jacket, and sneakers. At approximately 1225 EDT, a large wave hit *MOM*. The wave washed over the crew, easily burying *MOM*'s rail. Edmonds was tethered to the boat on the leeward side. He reportedly got hit by the wave and "had the impression of being underwater" for a period of time. This was a different type of wave from the typical spray that the crew experienced in the time leading up to the incident. According to multiple crew accounts, this wave washed Colin over the top of the leeward lifelines and into the water. According to the Expedition log on the boat's computer, the heel angle at this time hit 49.42 degrees. Speed over ground during these few seconds was recorded at 15 knots and 18.8 knots.

With Colin overboard, the crew quickly initiated a person

overboard (“POB”) response. Douglas assigned Popolizio the role of being the spotter, and she maintained eye contact with Colin in the water. Douglas called out that a man was overboard to the watch below. Popolizio hit the POB button on *MOM*’s Raymarine chart plotter, located on the steering pedestal. Edmonds readied the Lifesling on the port side, and also served as a spotter for Colin. Edmonds kept his eyes on Colin from the time he realized Colin had fallen overboard until he was reconnected to the boat. Douglas tacked the boat, backwinded both sails, and executed a quickstop maneuver.

Once the off-watch crew were alerted of a POB, they put on PFDs and came up on deck. While no crew member could provide an exact estimate of timing, it appears they were able to do so within a minute or two. Once the off-watch crew came on deck, they threw two Type IV cushions overboard in order to create a debris field. They then dropped the jib, and one of the off-watch crew members started the engine. As the boat returned to Colin, it passed him to windward, Edmonds deployed the Lifesling, Douglas tacked the boat back over and brought the Lifesling around Colin. This entire process took four to five minutes from the time Colin was washed overboard. According to crew accounts, the boat never got more than 300 yards away from Colin during this process. Within three minutes of Colin falling overboard, *MOM*’s recorded

speed was between zero and three knots.

Colin made contact with the Lifesling and was alert at the time he did so. He swam to the Lifesling, proceeded to put the Lifesling on under his arms without any issues. He was not talking at this point, nor did anyone on the crew hear Colin talking after he fell overboard. Once Colin was connected to the boat via the Lifesling, Edmonds proceeded to slowly pull him back to the boat and verbally expressed concern for keeping his head up and out of the sea state. Some crew members report being able to make eye contact with him during this time.

Edmonds’ original plan was to bring the Lifesling to mid-ship and bring him back on board. However, during the process of bringing him back to the boat, Colin appeared to lose consciousness and his face went into the water. Edmonds was very concerned about the amount of time Colin’s face was going to be in the water and brought him to the swim platform in order to get Colin’s face out of the water as soon as possible. Multiple crew members stood on the platform and raised Colin’s head out of the water as they attached *MOM*’s jib halyard to the Lifesling. At this point, Colin’s skin was blue, and he was unresponsive. While trying to raise Colin’s body on the jib halyard, the halyard chafed aggressively and began to shred. Eventually, Colin slid out of the Lifesling, and crew members were unable to retain

a grasp of him. He was floating face down near the boat and believed by the crew to be dead at this point.

The crew of *MOM* then attempted to seek help from others outside the boat. They initially had some trouble unlocking the boat’s Iridium GO system because it was paired with Colin’s cell phone, and they did not have the unlock code. They contacted other competitors via radio, who helped establish a relay to the United States Coast Guard. (Eventually, the crew was able to unlock the Iridium GO system and begin using it.) Through this relay, the crew of *MOM* understood that a helicopter was being dispatched to assist. *MOM* circled Colin’s body, awaiting assistance from the Coast Guard. Approximately an hour later, the crew learned that the Coast Guard would not be coming, and they renewed their efforts to retrieve Colin’s body from the ocean.

The crew found the Lifesling ineffective because Colin was unconscious and unable to maintain his position in the device. The crew tried to use a drogue, wrapping it around him and pulling it up. This failed. Next, the crew tried to hoist Colin’s body using the straps of his salopettes. This also failed. Finally, after at least two hours of effort, the crew secured lines around various parts of Colin’s body, and using the main halyard, hauled the body on deck.

The crew zipped Colin’s body into *MOM*’s No. 3 genoa bag, lashed it to the rail, and began heading for the boat’s home

port of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. At this point, the crew had been able to make contact with Sabina Golder, who asked the crew to deliver the boat to Perth Amboy. Douglas served as de facto skipper during the delivery. *MOM* and her crew returned to port on Wednesday at approximately 1600. The boat was met at the dock by the local police department and coroner, as well as several US Customs officials.

According to the medical examiner's report, the cause of Colin's death was "drowning." This panel consulted with an independent medical expert, Dr. Jo Larkin, who supported this conclusion.

## II. KEY CONCLUSIONS

1. The conditions existing at the time of the incident clearly warranted use of a PFD combined with a harness and tether, and to be clipped in while on deck. Indeed, Colin's fellow watch members were equipped in this manner. Some were even "double tethered" to keep themselves as close as possible to the boat.
2. Colin's failure to wear/use a PFD, harness, and tether proximately caused the POB incident, and ultimately, his death. Colin's crew did not press him to wear a PFD, harness, and tether in these conditions. Had Colin been wearing a PFD, harness, and tether, it is highly unlikely that he would have been washed overboard.
3. The evidence suggests that Colin died due to drowning. This is the conclusion reached in the medical report provided – a conclusion that was confirmed by Dr. Larkin. Some crew members speculated that Colin died of some other sudden cause, pointing to the fact that he appeared to be alert and was making eye contact with the crew. Dr. Larkin advised that the process of drowning is "gradual," and that such reactions are not inconsistent with a drowning diagnosis.<sup>9</sup>
4. The crew of *MOM* properly executed man overboard procedures and reconnected Colin to the boat within four to five minutes, never losing sight of Colin. Their efforts in this regard are impressive, especially given the conditions.
5. The crew of *MOM* experienced great difficulty in recovering Colin's body. Recovering an unconscious body absent a PFD and harness, particularly given Colin's physical stature and the conditions existing at the time of the incident, would have been extraordinarily difficult for any crew.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated above, we find that the crew of *MOM* acted properly with respect to the recovery of Colin's body, given the difficult circumstances that existed. We commend them for the skill and bravery that they

demonstrated. We believe that the offshore sailing community can learn many lessons from this incident and offer the recommendations below toward that end.

- A. *Wearing of PFDs, harnesses, and tethers* — Sailors should wear PFDs, harnesses, and tethers when on deck in inclement weather and when conditions otherwise warrant. We believe this incident would not have occurred had Colin been wearing a PFD, harness, and tether, and was in fact tethered to the boat. Stating the obvious: **If you fall overboard while sailing offshore, your chance of death increases dramatically. Staying attached to the boat is critical to minimizing this risk.**
- B. *Responsibility of all crewmembers to ensure compliance with safety requirements* — It is often said that wearing such equipment is a "personal decision." We disagree. Any time a person goes overboard, the entire crew is at risk. For that reason, all crew members should be trained to actively promote safety requirements and standards, ensure that all crew members comply with them, and be prepared to challenge each other with respect to safety issues. We recommend that the Safety Equipment Requirements should be expressly rewritten to emphasize that **ALL crew members bear responsibility for acknowledging and enforcing requirements**

**associated with good seamanship, and that skippers expressly instruct their crews in this regard.** We

also believe it would behoove all skippers and crews to engage in strong internal communications concerning safety protocols, including pre-race safety briefings and discussions. *See Recommendation J below.* We believe these measures would facilitate an added measure of safety aboard any racing yacht.

- C. *Lifesling training* — The crew of *MOM* initially used the jib halyard to try and recover Colin even though the recovery was being executed from the transom. (Quite possibly, due to the unresponsive nature of the POB, it was necessary for the recovery crew to be at sea level, making the transom a reasonable choice for a recovery.) However, the exit angle of the jib halyard made it a poor choice in this regard. Choice of the jib halyard may have been influenced by safety at sea demonstrations showing recovery from amidships. Ultimately, the crew moved to the boat's main halyard for this purpose. Safety at Sea trainers should consider focusing more heavily on lifting POBs back onboard via a Lifesling (including choice of halyard), and to augment such training – whenever possible – to utilize equipment necessary to properly demonstrate such techniques. Additionally, in Safety at Sea

training, emphasis should be placed on the need to consider alternative courses of actions under the stress of timing and conditions.

D. *Training and equipment concerning unconscious POBs*

— We recommend that Safety at Sea training be updated to focus more heavily on methods for bringing unconscious POBs aboard and address the possibility that the POB is not wearing a PFD or harness. Further, we would encourage manufacturers of safety equipment to explore enhancements that may improve a crew's ability to recover an unconscious POB.

- E. *Additional training on external communications* — The crew of *MOM* experienced some difficulties with communication. Specifically: 1) the boat's VHF radio was set on low power; 2) the crew had trouble connecting to the boat's Iridium GO system because Colin's phone was the key element of that system, and the crew could not access it; and 3) the crew had some difficulties operating the DSC calling feature on the VHF radio and lacked a complete understanding of DSC capabilities. While none of these difficulties materially affected the crew's ability to bring Colin back aboard alive, we believe Safety at Sea training should be enhanced to focus more heavily on communication methods available on off-shore passages, including the performance capabilities of

VHF radios, Iridium GO systems, and cellular phones.

Additionally, we suggest that race organizers consider requiring or recommending additional training of multiple crew members in this regard, focused on the characteristics of their particular event.

- F. *Training regarding MOM-8 units* — The crew did not deploy the MOM-8 unit, and multiple members of the crew on watch stated that deploying this device did not occur to them. It appears that the crew discussed the use of the device before the race and that Colin mentioned it as a priority. However, deployment of the MOM-8 did not occur to the crew in this admittedly high-pressure (and for a period of time, short-handed) situation. At least one crew member commented that they had never seen the MOM-8 unit deployed during their Safety at Sea training. This highlights a legitimate challenge within Safety at Sea training regarding the ability to demonstrate equipment that requires professional service after use. Going forward, we suggest that Safety at Sea trainers consider additional ways to demonstrate the value/use of MOM-8 units. While we doubt that use of the MOM-8 device would have changed the outcome in this case, it is clear that the unit was not utilized, perhaps due to lack of familiarity and the opportunity to employ it in a training situation.



G. *Training regarding availability of outside rescue assistance* — During this incident, it appears that the crew of *MOM* — for a period of time -- was led to believe that the U.S. Coast Guard would come to their aid. Regardless of what the Coast Guard may have told the crew of *MOM*, we find it highly unlikely that the Coast Guard would have been of any assistance in this incident, given that *MOM* was sailing several hundred miles off the east coast of the United States. For this reason, we strongly recommend that all Safety at Sea courses be reviewed and revised to reflect the realities of the Coast Guard's capabilities in this regard. We also recommend that all race organizers provide specific and realistic guidance to competitors re what to expect in terms of rescue capabilities and emphasize the foundational principle of self-reliance in that guidance.

H. *Training regarding rescue swimmers* — We recommend that Safety at Sea training be revised to specifically address when, if ever, to send a rescue swimmer into the water. The *MOM* crew specifically discussed this issue and wisely decided not to send a swimmer into the water given the conditions. However, we believe many crews might have made a different decision, especially given the emotional difficulties of seeing a fellow crew member struggling to live. We believe

this topic needs more attention and discussion in our community.

I. *Training regarding engine use* — We recommend that Safety at Sea training and race organizers' requirements be updated to include engine starting and use by multiple crewmembers as a required element. In this case, the *MOM* crew did an outstanding job executing man overboard procedures. But several of the crew were challenged by not being familiar with *MOM*'s engine. Skippers and crews should work together to ensure that all crew members know how to start a boat's engine when necessary. This training, review, documentation, and practice of all standard operating procedures on board is particularly important when some sailors are new to the crew or to the boat.

J. *Importance of safety briefings* — We believe Safety at Sea courses should be enhanced to better explain what kind of safety briefings ought to occur prior to a significant race such as the Newport to Bermuda Race. In this case, there were some newer crew members to the *MOM* program. A detailed pre-race safety briefing that discusses safety issues in detail might reduce (although not eliminate) the number of future incidents.

K. *Appointment of a "second in command"* — Generally, our training protocols do not contemplate the skipper falling overboard. In our

judgment, our sport does not sufficiently address continuity of leadership should a skipper fall overboard. To that end, we recommend that Safety at Sea training be enhanced to contemplate this possibility, and that race organizers in major offshore events require competitors to identify a "second in command." In this case, Rob Douglas and Ann Myer were identified as watch captains in the entry paperwork related to the Race, and Douglas emerged as the de facto skipper in Colin's absence. This latter decision appears to have been organic in nature. It might have been easier for the crew to have sorted this issue out in advance.

L. *Identification of crew members with medical training* — Crews should endeavor to identify who among them are trained in first aid/medical procedures, especially when a crew has not sailed together in the past. While the crew of *MOM* acted with great skill, it was not clear that they all had a strong understanding of each other's capabilities in this regard. Skippers and crews should, together, make sure that they all have a shared understanding of medical capabilities aboard the boat.

## CONCLUSION

Colin was washed overboard by a large wave in inclement weather. We believe, ultimately, his death was caused by his

failure to wear and deploy his PFD, harness, and tether. His crew acted admirably in returning and reconnecting him to the boat, but it appears that he drowned before they could get him back on the boat. All of us can learn important lessons from this tragedy, and we have tried to offer this relatively

simple set of findings and recommendations in the hopes that they will be widely shared and understood by our community, and that they can play a role in making our sport safer for all.

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*The full report with appendices and additional references can*

*be found on the USSailing web site at <https://ussailing2018.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/NBR-Morgan-of-Marietta-Report-10242022-FINAL.pdf> -Ed.*

## The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN-CN



It's near the end of October and I just spend this weekend going through the an-

nual ritual of decommissioning and winterizing our family sloop, *Tomfoolery*. As this is the 26<sup>th</sup> time I've gone through the process with this boat, I'm not nearly as reliant on checklists as I was the first few years. Repetition certainly breeds familiarity. Still, it doesn't make the process any more joyous, and the repetitions are separated by enough time that the muscle groups employed are just as sore as they were the year before. Maybe even more, since they're another year older!

Although on-the-water activity is dying down, boating activity isn't. There's the yacht club annual meeting and social, along with some social activities planned for our squadron. There are also educational opportunities that can be used to lay the foundation for expanding your boating horizons during the next season. In other words, just because our boats are on the hard doesn't mean we cease being boaters or must put our hobby on hold!

Coming up on Veterans' Day weekend is the Fall Conference for District 6. There are some interesting presentations on the agenda that make it worth a day trip to Liverpool, NY. It's also an opportunity to get to meet others who are enthusiastic about boating as well. I hope you consider coming up to join us.

SV Tomfoolery

For me, I'll be diving deeper into committee work at the national level during this "off" season. We'll be putting out a slightly revised version of the Marine Electrical Systems (MES) course along with, hopefully, a couple of new seminars. If getting involved in the content creation aspect of America's Boating Club interests you, please drop me a note so we can see where you might fit in. It's exciting work and it has a huge impact on a large number of people. In other words, it makes a difference!

And best of all, it's a lot of fun!

So, resign yourself to having fun this winter. Stay involved!

- 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)

# Calendar of Events

## November 2022

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* November issue publication date.
- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 November Social Event, El Rancho Restaurant, Watkins Glen, NY. Presentation by Finger Lakes Boating Museum (1700)
- 15 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date. (D/6)

## December 2022

- 16 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

## January 2023

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* January issue publication date
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 Finger Lakes Change of Watch
- 20 Deadline for D/6 *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

## February 2023

- 01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 19-26 USPS Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL (National)
- 20 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

## March 2022

- 01 Finger Lakes *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, Binghamton, NY (D/6)

## May 2023

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 20-26 Safe Boating Week (National)

## June 2023

- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 23 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

## July 2023

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* July issue publication date.
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900).
- 21 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

## August 2023

- 01 *The Deep 6* summer issue publication date. (D/6)
- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 25 Deadline for *Drum* Articles
- 27- 9/04 (National) Governing Board Meeting, Kansas City, MO

## September 2023

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* September issue publication date.
- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)

## October 2023

- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 20 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 23 Deadline for *Drum* articles
- TBA District 6 Fall 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.*