# AMERICA'S BWATING CLUB

For Boaters, By Boaters\*



# THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

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# From The Commander

By Kris West, S

SV Zephyr

#### List-o-mania

Back in May of 2024, as I was getting to know *Zephyr*, I boldly (some might say naively, given my lack of experience) set goals *for that season* including:

- 1. Anchoring out
- Finishing a FLYC race before the after party wrapped up (☺)
- 3. Sailing to Geneva
- 4. Camping aboard
- 5. Flying the spinnaker and,
- 6. Going for a solo sail.

I thought it was a pretty reasonable list that would challenge both me and my crew throughout the season. In May of 2024, I didn't fully understand the unique combination of weather conditions, planning, crew calendar coordination, skill and even a little bit of luck required to tick any one of those items off the list. In fact, having all those elements come together turned out to be more akin to catching



lightning in a bottle than I expected. As a result, by the end of the 2024 season, I'd managed to accomplish only two of my six goals: anchoring out and finishing a race in reasonable time (and that second one was thanks to Katie Alley's skill, not my own). So, our first full season on Seneca in 2024 brought with it lots of experiences but left me itching to get back at my 'to do list' in 2025.

With the 2025 season in the rear view mirror, it's time to take stock again and I think my crew and I did pretty well this year. Early in the season we joined the FLYC fleet in the Commodore's Cup race from Watkins Glen to Geneva. The voyage was made



Sailing downwind in light air with Megan aboard.

extra special by a crew made up of my husband and our daughter who was visiting from Seattle. We don't get to see her very often so having her aboard for a few days was icing on the cake.

We headed north under perfect spinnaker conditions but we just hadn't developed that skill set yet so the kite staved in her sock. As the winds died and with the fleet in the distance, we withdrew from the race and motored our way to the Seneca Yacht Club in time for dinner and the after party. Nonetheless, we made it to the north end of the lake, were able to join the party and camp aboard. So, I guess that's a couple more items checked off the list leaving my two loftiest goals still in my sights: flying the 'kite' and taking Zephyr out solo. Getting to that point took considerably more time aboard and lots of practice.

Lucky for me, Jim McGinnis and Christa Wolf were more than willing to join me on several sails during the summer which allowed me to practice everything from casting off, maneuvering under power, and docking to raising, lowering, and trimming sails while underway. They relaxed and coached me while I learned to work with "Helmut" my autohelm. It was mostly smooth sailing except for one memorable moment when a 20 knot gust nearly forced us to round up and Jim coached me through it while taking the helm briefly. That was a great lesson to always think ahead and have a plan for when (not if) things suddenly go sideways.

Another day, we had a fun sail when we took advantage of a light, consistent, southerly breeze and 'popped the chute' just outside the marina for a quick downwind jaunt. We made it easy on ourselves by leaving the main flaked on the boom and we even tacked the spinnaker around a few times. It was a blast! I'm hoping to develop my skills further next year to the point where I can fly the chute with the main up too. For now, at least I'm more comfortable with the mechanics of deploying and dousing the spinnaker.

Given Jim and Christa's combined experience, having them aboard gave me a master class in seamanship. The time we shared together on the water telling stories, swimming, soaking up the sun and making memories is a highlight of my season. But still, I had one more goal to achieve: Solo.

With more than half the season under my belt with Jim and Christa, I picked a perfect day in

#### The Drum

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Christa Wolf takes the helm.



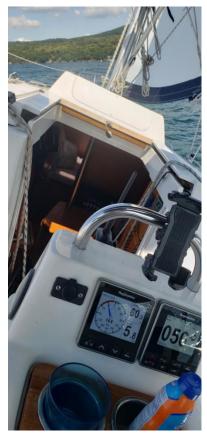
Flying the spinnaker!

mid-September to finally take Zephyr out on my own. The winds started out steady from the north at about 5-8 knots.

Motoring out of the marina and raising the sails had become routine and my heart was only half way to my throat as I set out. My nerves settled down quickly as Helmut and I easily executed several upwind tacks. A couple hours later and somewhere south of Peach Orchard Point the winds were building steadily to 10 knots, gusting frequently to 15 and were forecast to increase from there. That's where I decided I'd had enough fun and headed back to the marina. It was great to prove to myself that I could solo. Admittedly, I felt pretty proud of myself for making it to that level. But more importantly, I realized that, for me, the fun in sailing really comes from sharing the experience with friends and family. It's the time spent together with loved ones that matters most and sailing Zephyr on Seneca Lake has become a great means to that end. And,

even though I've checked everything off my original to do list, I recognize I'll never be done learning all there is to know about sailing because it requires a continuous pursuit of honing skills through gaining knowledge and experience rather than completing a checklist of tasks or goals. I guess I'm getting smarter because I'm beginning to understand how much more I have to learn.

This summer's experiences really were just several steps on a path toward becoming a more competent, prepared and confident sailor than I was back in May of 2024. In turn, that will allow me to be a more relaxed host when others join me aboard which will make for more fun for everyone. In fact at the end of the season, one of my crew suggested that next year I add a focus on the finer aspects of cruising to my 'to do list' - namely, laying in a wellstocked galley and bar. Point taken. I've already started working on my shopping list!



Heeling, solo, at 5.8 knots in a 14.8 knot wind.

Until then, get outside and have fun!

- Kris
<u>co@abc-flx.org</u>

• • • • •

## **From the Executive Officer**

By Jim McGinnis, SN-CN

SV Brewster



Our XO is currently cruising somewhere near Puerto Rico, but he did send us a post card to instill a bit of jealousy!

- Editor



## From the Administrative Officer

By Maggie Martin

Life of a Waterman, Jay



Wehrung

Captain
Jay
Wehrung
was the
featured
speaker at
our last
meeting on
September

23rd, hosted by ABC member
Sayre at Fulkerson Winery. After
a social hour tasting estate wines,
and a covered dish dinner, we
held a short business meeting and
were treated to a talk by local
sailor/waterman Jay Wehrung of
Burdett. He gave an overview of
his experiences on the water,
starting with racing Hobie Cats as
a teenager on Seneca Lake. In his
20's, he moved to California
where he became interested in
sailing and working on wooden

boats in San Diego's Mission Bay. After restoring his own Sparkman 40' vessel, he set sail for San Francisco, on an adventure that makes a great story, and learning experience. Following that, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, there was a sailing trip from Spain through the Canary Islands that ended in Brazil, not without its pleasures and challenges! He eventually chartered his boat in the Carribean, and spent years as a captain and boatwright in New York Harbor, as First Mate on the schooner 'Adirondack'. His connections eventually led him back to the Finger Lakes and his home on Seneca Lake.

Jay currently works as the 'Boatman' for the Cornell University Rowing Department, with an eye on getting back to the Caribbean in the years ahead.

SV Plein Air

We loved hearing about his adventures!

- Maggie <u>ao@abc-flx.org</u>



Captain Jay Wehrung at the helm of the schooner When and If.

## From the Education Director

By Katie Alley, JN

**On Patience** 



"The sea does not reward those who are too anxious, too greedy, or too impatient."

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea

We're setting aside our Halloween costumes and going

through gallons of antifreeze. It's

a transitional time of year for us boaters.

Unfortunately, patience is an inherent part of boating. Here in Upstate New York, we must be patient for spring, when we can get out on the water again. If you're a sailor, you often have to

SV Tomfoolery

be patient for the wind to do what you want it to do. If you own a boat, you have to be patient with yourself and all of the projects you've undertaken until your boat is in a functional and cosmetic state you're satisfied with.

If you're too impatient and you choose to go out in inappropriate weather, or sail in rough winds, or operate your vessel in a deteriorated state, the sea will not reward you. You will not

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experience the beautiful benefits of boating. Instead, you'll run into trouble and put yourself in danger.

If you're an anxious boater, you're hyperaware of all of the things that could possibly go wrong on the water. That awareness can fuel fear, and you may never leave the dock as a result. If you never leave the dock, you'll never fully experience the wonders of boating either.

If you're a greedy boater, your ego may get the best of you. We've heard the stories of boaters being reckless, speeding, and showing off, who end up seriously injuring themselves, their crew, and others. If you injure yourself, you're not experiencing the rewards of the sea.

The good news is that education can solve all of these problems. Our classes can give you confidence or humble you, or both. They can also teach you patience and help you pass the winter. All of these are wonderful qualities that will lead to plentiful rewards and successful trips on the water.

As we transition into the dark, cold months of the year, we're putting together an enriching calendar of classes for our members. Some classes I have

heard interest in include Marine Navigation, Marine Electrical Systems, and Engine Maintenance. Please reach out to me via email at seo@abc-flx.org and let me know if you are interested in taking any of these classes. I will likely send out an email gauging which classes have the most interest and determine which ones I will schedule the soonest. So watch out for that! At this point, we are headed into the holiday season, so we'd be looking at starting any one of these classes first thing in the new year.

We also plan on offering Instructor Development in the new year so that we can bring a new group of teachers up to speed. I'm excited for this, as we always could use more instructors, and new instructors ensure the future of our education offerings.

And once spring comes around again, we'll be offering *ABC* and *Sail* classes.

In the meantime, have a wonderful holiday season and stay tuned to your email for the latest updates and schedules. I hope that you'll choose to practice patience with us this winter in a class!

- Katie seo@abc-flx.org P.S. In case you didn't hear, your SEO took the jump into keel boat ownership. This is *S/V Lanikai*, a 1982 C&C 25. I am already working on my patience, confidence, and humility.

There will certainly be more content to come regarding this developing relationship, hopefully some of educational value. For now, we're taking the winter slow and getting to know each other.

I am incredibly appreciative of my friends in ABC-FLX and all of the education opportunities I've received that enabled me to make this jump. And the best part of this hobby is that there is always something more to learn!



The day we made it official. During our first date, we shared a bottle of Glenora Brut. Our maiden voyage was to the pump-out dock.

SV Project

## **Secretary's Sidenotes**

By Jeff Mack, JN

A Season Well Spent – Even Without My Own Boat in the Water



Despite not having my own boat in the water for more than a week this season, I've had a splendid year as a sailor.

The season

began early in April when I joined as crew aboard the schooner *Bonnie Lynn*, hailing from Greenport, Long Island, for an eight-day ocean voyage. I hitched a ride with my old friends, Eric and Hanna — the owners and licensed masters of this magnificent 62-foot steel staysail schooner — as they made their return passage from a winter of chartering and cruising in the Bahamas.

On that voyage, I had the chance to put some of my ABC course skills to good use, completing 14 four-hour watches and steering *Bonnie Lynn* hundreds of miles through the Gulf Stream without running into anything... whew! Along the way, dolphins rode our bow wave, and I watched humpbacks breaching and blowing just fifty meters off our beam near the mouth of the Hudson Canyon as we

It was an incredible journey — aside from a couple of days of seasickness as we motor-sailed into the wind and square waves heading toward the Gulf Stream. With only three of us on watch rotation, my best companion for a while was a bucket. Eventually, I surrendered to the sea, accepted the motion, and realized that solid ground was now just a memory.

approached Long Island from the

open ocean.

In July, I trailered my catboat to Huron, Ohio, for a few days of day sailing on Lake Erie. From

> our creek berth tucked behind Sawmill Creek

Marina, we sailed between Huron, Cedar Point, and around Sandusky Bay.



The Bonnie Lynn makes it safe back to her berth in Long Island.

We didn't make it out to the Western Lake Erie Islands this year, but it was great fun to take my daughters and their cousins out on the water. Everyone got a job and a place to sit, and by the end of the week, those who wanted to sail pretty much knew how to get her going — and keep her going! We dropped anchor near the beach and let them splash



Bonnie Lynn in Beaufort, NC for diesel and water.



View from the midship helm of the schooner Bonnie Lynn.

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FLYC racing on Seneca Lake.

in the waves. I love how easily they turned my catboat into a stable little swimming dock.

This season, I was grateful to join my friends Jessup and Aga as crew aboard their boat *Tavernier* for the FLYC race series. *Tavernier* had a terrific year racing on Seneca, taking third place in the Seneca Yacht Club's Race Around the Barge and earning high standings in the local club series.

Despite some lively discussion about handicapping which I tried to avoid like the plague, skipper Jessup showed great passion, raw skill, and the true potential of his boat. I appreciated the chance to race with *Tayernier* since I didn't

Visiting Geneva for ice cream. (L-R, Jessup, Aga, Jeff, and Chad)

have a boat of my own this season. It gave me valuable time on the water — and all the adventure, camaraderie, and competition that go with it.

Behind all these onthe-water activities, I've been steadily chipping away at *Minka*, my sailboat restoration project. So

far, I've stripped her down to essentials — removing every part that would come free without too much fuss, including all the old paint from the interior, bilge, and bottom (down to the gelcoat). I must thank Jessup again for checking in on this project showing enthusiasm and providing help and encouragement along the way.

With help from Bob Hansen, who glued up and rough-cut a pair of white oak wedges, I built out the engine bed using a laser to find the correct drive shaft angle. I shaped and laminated them into the hull with a heavy fiberglass

jacket blended onto the layup over a large area. I've also installed and tabbed in plywood stringers and supports for the water-lock, battery box, fuel tank, throttle assembly, and engine control panel.

A few rotten and wet areas in the side decks had to be re-cored, and I've epoxy-filled all deck holes for re-bedding. Most recently, I built a greenhouse-style shed to keep *Minka* dry and projects moving through the winter months.

My garage now holds a growing collection of parts and materials — all "organized," of course — with just a few fine details still to sort out: a longer throttle cable, assorted hoses and fasteners, electrical and navigation components, and a teak finishing system.



Minka's winter home.

This project has been an incredible, self-driven journey of discovery. I've learned a thousand new things — not just about boats, but about patience, craftsmanship, and time itself. I've come to believe that time is part of the makeup of a good boat, even one of fiberglass and patience seems to remain the ultimate lesson of all craft. I'm excited to get Minka on the water for another exciting season from a new perspective and looking forward to having her ready for a spring commissioning.

- Jeff secretary@abc-flx.org

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## **ABC-FLX News**

#### **Happy Birthday!**

Happy birthday to our members!

#### **November**

Judy Cherry Thomas Keebler Glenda Gephart Patricia Dawson-Elli

#### **December**

Denis Kingsley Jeffrey Mack John Chesebrough Margaret Martin Marcia Taylor Lawrence Sampson Lisa Oldroyd

#### **Got News?**

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

## **Upcoming Classes & Seminars**

#### Where Do I Start?

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

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

## Instructor Development & Certification

The course has been designed to demonstrate interactive teaching methods focused on adult learning. Students are required to prepare lesson plans and give three presentations to their peers utilizing a variety of teaching aids and presentation skills. The instructor may assign a topic for these presentations, or you may use material and PowerPoint slides from existing USPS

courses, and they may build on one another.

For those who are already certified instructors, don't forget that your certification must be renewed every four years. Fortunately, this is easily done by attending a 2-hour seminar to get you caught up in the latest teaching techniques and recommendations.

Details for these sessions are still being finalized, but it's not too early to get your name on the list if you're interested in helping our club share its knowledge of boating.

**Prerequisites:** None **When:** January 2026

Instructors: Jim McGinnis &

Charlie Fausold

**Cost:** FREE to members

## **Operations Training**

To many, America's Boating Club (a.k.a., the USPS) is a large, complex organization shrouded in mystery. For many, this is an impediment to getting more involved in the club, which directly impacts your ability to get more *OUT* of the club.

Come join some of our more experienced members to learn how our club is organized and how all these groups work together to get things done. Not only will be time well spent, but the instructors will ensure you have a good time as you learn more about our club!

Prerequisites: None

Lead Instructor: Jim McGinnis

**Cost:** <u>FREE</u> to members

## **Marine Navigation**

(Previously known as Piloting)

This is ABC's introductory class to navigation; the stepping stone from navigating "by eye" to using both modern and traditional tools to figure out where you are.

**Prerequisites:** None **When:** Winter 2026 (Q1)

**Instructors:** TBA

**Cost:** TBA

### **Marine Electrical Systems**

A popular elective that will give you a good overview of the electrical system on your boat, removing much of the mystery and intrigue of the spaghetti of wires found on modern boats nowadays.

This course was updated in 2022.

**Prerequisites:** None **When:** Winter 2026 (Q1)

**Instructors:** TBA

**Cost:** TBA

#### **Engine Maintenance**

Another popular elective that, like its electrical cousin, demystifies the mechanical beast living in the bowels of your boat.

Prerequisites: None

**When**: Winter 2026 (Q1)

**Instructors:** TBA

Cost: TBA

#### Sail

This course lets you learn about basic sailboat designs and nomenclature, rigging, and safety from experienced sailors. Then tackle the physical aspects of all forces and techniques, sail applications, marlinespike, helmsmanship, and handling of difficult conditions.

This course also features the Finger Lakes Chapter trademark on-the-water, hands-on

instruction.

**Prerequisites:** None **When**: May-June 2026

Where: TBA (classroom), Watkins Glen Village Marina (on-

the-water)

**Instructor:** TBA

**Cost:** TBA

### **How to Register**

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

#### seo@abc-flx.org

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

### **Looking for Something?**

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

SEO@abc-flx.org.

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

www.abc-flx.org



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## The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN-ON

#### **Season of Gratitude**



Continuing our newsletter theme of "seasons" this year, we come to the month of November. This month

could be thought of as a month of remembrances.

Starting with the Christian holidays of All Saints (Nov 1st) and All Souls (Nov 2nd), we quickly segue to Veterans' Day (Nov 11th) to remember those who served our country in her armed forces. November is also a month where many yacht clubs have their end-of-season banquets where tales of the summer competitions are retold, and individuals and crews are recognized for their contributions and performances. Capping off the month we have

Thanksgiving (Nov 27<sup>th</sup>), where we gather as families to celebrate the bounty and gifts we enjoy.

The common theme among all these events is, of course, gratitude. Each of these celebrations is a way for us to remember, recognize, and appreciate our many, rich blessings.

We have the Finger Lakes and the Great Lakes in our collective back yard. We have the canal system that allows us to travel between them and into the wider world of the great oceans relatively easily while providing adventure of their own. We have, of course, our vessels, to which many of us have bonded quite closely as they provided transportation, shelter, and enjoyment over many years. We have our voyages, be they a brief afternoon day sail or a monthslong adventure over long

SV Tomfoolery

distances. We have the events shared with other boaters that have provided camaraderie in competitive and noncompetitive settings. Most importantly, we have our friends and family with whom we share these wonderful moments.

All in all, we have a boatload (pun intended) of blessings for which we should be grateful. I hope all of you will join me in giving thanks this November for this wonderful hobby, this wonderful area, our wonderful little club, the wonderful pool of skills and talents of our members, and most importantly, all the wonderful friendships we enjoy.

Thank you, one and all!

- Your Grateful Editor, Tom

As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

editor@abc-flx.org

## **Long-Term Class Schedule**

Seneca Education Department

BOC Level		Title	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Inland Navigator	Classes	ABC	С	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
		Boat Handling	С		Х		Х	
		Engine Maintenance		Х		Х		
		Marine Electrical Systems		Х				
	Seminars	Using A Chart						
		VHF/DSC Radios						
		Using GPS				Х		
		Basic Weather and Forecasting			Х			
	Skills	Basic Powerboat Handling				Х		
		Fire Extinguishers						

BOC Level		Title	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Coastal Navigator	Classes	Marine Navigation		Х				Χ
		Marine Communication Systems			Х			
		Weather	С				Х	
	Seminars	Tides & Currents						Х
		Rules of the Road					Х	
		Anchoring						
		Mariner's Compass		Х		Х		
	Skills	Coastal Nav				Х		
		Pyrotechnics			Х			

#### **Table Key**

X = Planned

U = Underway

C = Completed

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BOC Level		Title	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Advanced Coastal Navigator	Classes	Advanced Marine Navigation		Х		Χ		Х
		Cruise Planning					Х	
		Radar	С					
		Emergencies Onboard					Х	Х
	з е ѕ							
	Skills	Advanced Coastal Nav					Х	Х
	lls	First Aid						

BOC Level		Title	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Of	С	Offshore Navigation		Х				Х
fsho	Sem.	Computer Weather Forecasting	Х					
re N		Thunderstorms / Severe Weather	Х					
Offshore Navigator	Skills	Offshore Navigation					Х	
tor		CPR/AED	Contact American Heart Assoc. or Red Cross.					
En		Sail		Х		Х	Х	
Endorsmentss								
men		Canadian Regulations	Х					
tss		PaddleSmart		Х		Х		
		Instructor Development		Х		Х		
Other		Instructor Recertification		Х			Х	
		Operations Training	Х			Х		
		Celestial Navigation			Х		Х	_

## **Table Key**

X = Planned

U = Underway

C = Completed

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## **Calendar of Events**

#### November 2025

- O1 Finger Lakes *Drum* November issue publication date.
- 01 The Deep 6 fall issue publication date. (D/6)
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)

#### December 2025

- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 19 Deadline for *Drum* articles

#### January 2026

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

#### February 2026

- 01 The Deep 6 winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 09-15 USPS Annual Meeting, Myrtle Beach, SC (National)
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 20 Deadline for *Drum* articles

#### March 2026

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

#### **April 2026**

- 14 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 17-19 District 6 Spring Council & Conference, *Binghamton*, NY (D/6)
- 17 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 24 Deadline for *Drum* articles

#### May 2026

- 01 Finger Lakes *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 The Deep 6 spring issue publication date. (D/6)

- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 16-22 Safe Boating Week (National)

#### June 2026

- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 19 Deadline for *Drum* articles

#### **July 2026**

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

#### August 2026

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

#### September 2026

- O1 Finger Lakes *Drum* September issue publication date.
- 08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 12 Seneca Lake Barge Race, Seneca Yacht Club, Geneva, NY.
- 20-27 Fall Governing Board, Cary, NC (National)

#### October 2026

- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 16 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 or our Facebook page:

http://www.abc-flx.org

http://facebook.com/SenecaPowerSquadron