AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB
For Boaters, By Boaters®

2025 DISTINCTIVE COMMUNICATOR AWARD NEWSLETTER

THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

In this issue…

From The Commander..... 1
From the Executive Officer 3
From the Administrative Officer..... 5
From the Education Director..... 6
Secretary's Sidenotes..... 8
ABC-FLX News..... 10
Happy Birthday! 10
Got News?..... 10
Upcoming Classes & Seminars 10
Where Do I Start? 10
How to Register..... 10
Looking for Something? 10
The Last Word..... 11
Long-Term Class Schedule 12
Calendar of Events..... 14

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

From The Commander

By Kris West, S *SV Zephyr*

A Season for Thanksgiving.

The end of October is upon us and brings with it the close of the 2026 boating season for many of us on Seneca Lake. It's always a bittersweet time of year for me as I plan my last few sails of the year and start going through my haul out check list. I was fortunate enough to take advantage of some nice sailing weather in October so, while I didn't sail as much as I'd have liked the rest of the season, five consecutive days of sailing with nearly perfect weather this month felt like a nice capstone to 2026.

Unlike the spring when we were all eyeing the high water levels, September water levels were already below normal which lead me to pump out my holding tank early to avoid running my fin keel aground. I was thankful for that decision as I started hearing about folks running aground at the pump out dock a few weeks later in early October. When I finally hauled out earlier this month, I



kept a close eye on my depth gauge as it ticked down from 4 feet, 2 feet, 1 foot, and then bottomed out at 0.6 feet – a mere 7 inches of water between the bottom of my keel and the bottom of the lake. Phew, made it! Now, lets hope that the water level gods smile on us kindly for the 2027 season.

With the end of sailing season, we switch gears at our house to celebrate not one but two Thanksgiving holidays. Nearly 30 years ago, my Canadian husband introduced me to the wonderful tradition of Canadian Thanksgiving celebrated on the second Monday of October – a time of year full of autumn color and lots of late season vegetables

America's Boating Club® is a registered trademark of the United States Power Squadrons®

fresh from the garden to make it a true harvest festival complete with all the fixings of a traditional American Thanksgiving.

As we prepare for our second Thanksgiving feast in November, I'll have plenty to look back on with gratitude – including the great things our chapter of America's Boating Club accomplished this year. In addition to offering our traditional slate of classes, we certified a few new instructors, had some really successful short courses in anchoring and engine maintenance, hosted a wonderful boaters weekend and participated in the 100th Anniversary of the Schooner *True Love*. Whether you support ABC-FLX through your ongoing membership only or also add to it your skills to teach and organize classes, manage the website, coordinate events, manage the finances, publicize our events, welcome new members or conduct vessel safety checks I want you to know that I'm thankful to each and every one of you and your contributions. It means a lot to the organization and to me personally.

As we all change tack from our Seneca boating season, I wish you all a happy holiday season full of gratitude with those you love most. And, wherever you spend your winters, I hope you have many of opportunities to get outside and have fun!

- Kris
co@abc-flx.org

○ ○ ○ ○ ○



Figure 1: Zephyr all tucked in for a long winter's nap.

The Drum

Published six times per year by the Finger Lakes Chapter of America's Boating Club. The opinions expressed in **The Drum** *are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of America's Boating Club, its officers, directors, or members.*

General Information
info@abc-flx.org

Commander
Kris West, S
co@abc-flx.org

Executive Officer
Jim McGinnis, SN-CN
xo@abc-flx.org

Administrative Officer
Shane Alsworth, S
ao@abc-flx.org

Education Officer
Katie Alley, JN
seo@abc-flx.org

Assistant Education Officer
Scott Williams, JN
aseo@abc-flx.org

Secretary
Glenda Gephart
sec@abc-flx.org

Treasurer
Marcia Taylor, AP
treas@abc-flx.org

Membership
Phil Cherry, AP
membership@abc-flx.org

Public Relations Officers
Glenda Gephart
pro@abc-flx.org

Vessel Safety Check Chairman
Ray Margeson, AP-IN
vsc@abc-flx.org

Editor & Webmaster
Thomas Alley, SN-ON
webmaster@abc-flx.org

Unless attributed otherwise, ©2026 copyright by America's Boating Club - Finger Lakes Chapter. All rights reserved.

From the Executive Officer

By Jim McGinnis, SN-CN *SV Brewster*

Diesel Maintenance Seminar Recap



Some of you may know that Walt VanCise and I taught a Diesel Maintenance Seminar this past month on *S/V Brewster*.

The spacious engine room made it possible for three students to change the primary and secondary fuel filters on my 27 hp, 3-cylinder, 3GM30 Yanmar.

They found the bleed screw and pumped the fuel bulb and finger fuel pump until bubbles formed and finally solid liquid emerged. Locking down the bleed screw we wished for good luck on the restart. The engine restarted after about 10 seconds of cranking and pumping the fuel control lever. Success.

We discussed changing the oil and oil filter but everyone had done that before. Change it every year. Same story on the impellor, but change it every other year.

Mostly we talked about diesel operation and the differences with a gasoline engine. A diesel engine uses 20:1 compression to explode the fuel under extreme pressure. A gasoline engine uses a spark plug to ignite the air fuel mixture with a 6:1 compression ratio.

Clean fuel is the most essential element of diesel performance. Keep your fuel clean. Add a cetane booster, injector cleaner, and diesel fuel biocide (to prevent moisture from allowing algae growth in your tank). Fill the fuel tank to the top over the winter to prevent any moisture from condensing in the open space in the tank.

The diesel fuel pump sends more fuel than is needed by the injectors to insure that fuel is always available for acceleration. The extra fuel also cools the injectors and returns to the fuel tank by a second line.

Black smoke coming from a diesel engine means incomplete burning and insufficient air flow. Clean or replace the air filter. White smoke may be present at startup, but if it persists it could be a sign of engine component wear.

Diesel engines like to run under constant load, so don't be afraid to run it at 2000 plus rpm.

Earlier in the week I had decided to change the engine coolant. I opened the 3 drain petcocks each with a plastic drain tube and opened the heat exchanger cap at the top of the engine. Interestingly, nothing came out, even though the engine was full of coolant. I unscrewed and removed the three drains and found that each of them was plugged with sludge. So now with the taps out, the coolant drained right out. It was dark orange and murky.

I bought a bottle of radiator flush treatment and ran that for an hour under load and drained it out. Still dark and more solids drained out. I refilled it with water and ran the engine for 15 minutes and drained that out. Now the fluid was a light tan and completely clear. I refilled with new Dexcool GM coolant specified in the Yanmar manual.

I had always checked the coolant for freeze point protection and thought that was good enough. I found out that the coolant does age and loses it corrosion protection over time. So, it's a good idea to change it every other year.

Let me or Walt know if you have any questions about taking care of your diesel engine.

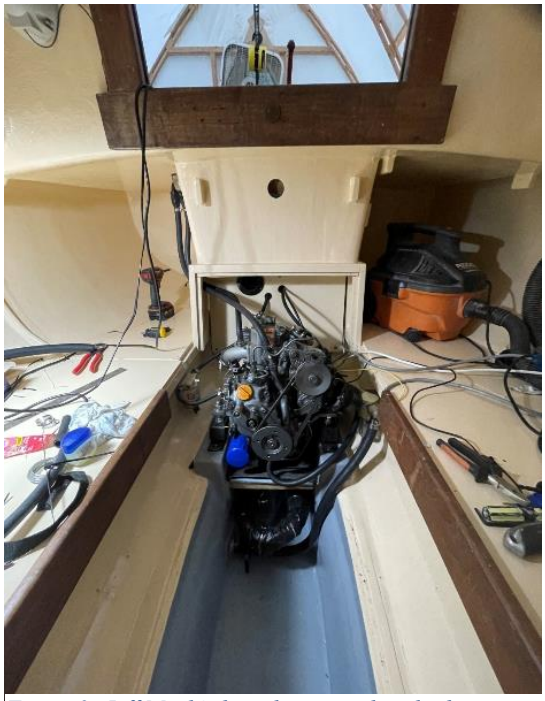


Figure 2: Jeff Mack's brand new single cylinder Yanmar.

Since the engine photos aren't that special, here are a few gratuitous pics from the *True Love* Birthday Party.

Fair winds,

- Jim

o o o o o



Figure 3: Bounding Home - straining at the bit....



Figure 4: A draft that's shoal, a beam that's fat, it has to be a pure bred cat.



Figure 5: Boat Candy!



Figure 6: The Birthday Girl!

From the Administrative Officer

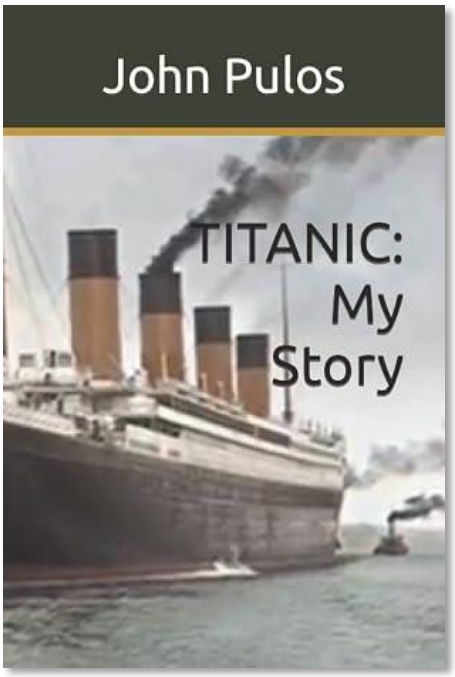
By Shane Alsworth, S *MV The Office*



We had an informative and enjoyable social event at the Ginny Lee Café on October 14th. Local author, John Pulos, gave a presentation about his research on the famous *HMS Titanic* and the tragic sinking that claimed the lives of over 1,500 passengers. His research centered on interviews with a local resident that actually survived the sinking, as well as fascinating stories relayed by family members and neighbors of local survivors. John autographed copies of his book, *Titanic: My Story*, and gave a lively Q&A session after his presentation.

We are grateful to the staff at Ginny Lee Café for extending their hours and providing table service for the event, as well as for the strong attendance from ABC-FLX members. Given that we are fast approaching the busy holiday season, our next event will be the annual Change of Watch in January. The event will be held at the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel and further details will be coming soon.

If you have ideas or suggestions on venues you would like to experience or speakers you would like to hear from, please email me at ao@abc-flx.org or call me at (607) 973- 2665. I look forward to hearing from you!



- Shane
ao@abc-flx.org



From the Education Director

By Katie Alley, JN

SV Champagne Problems

Reflections on One Year of Boat Ownership



"I've always loved the look and feel of yachting and sailing and being on the sea. It conjures places in the world infused with wealth, warmth, romance, excitement, inspiration, and aspiration: Newport, Nantucket, Portofino, Saint-Tropez. Just as in my dreams as a boy, being on the water is all about escapism. It embodies class. I think of Jack and Jackie Kennedy. The good life is something everyone wants."

- Tommy Hilfiger in his 2016 memoir, *American Dreamer: My Life in Fashion & Business*

I think Tommy recognizes the feeling we all have when we're on the water well. It's a great feeling and that's why he wanted to emulate it in his clothes. Okay… maybe we aren't always classy. And I know wealth for a lot of us is defined with our boating community and the fact that our boats float, not finances.

I had the absolute pleasure of meeting Tommy Hilfiger in October. Elmira College, where I work, is home to the Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School. Tommy was born and grew up in Elmira, NY and got his start selling bell-bottom jeans to Elmira College students. Some of you may have even shopped at his first store! Tommy is a very down-to-earth, smart, cool guy and he visits the Elmira College campus every year. I've been sporting a pair of red Tommy sneakers on the docks all summer!

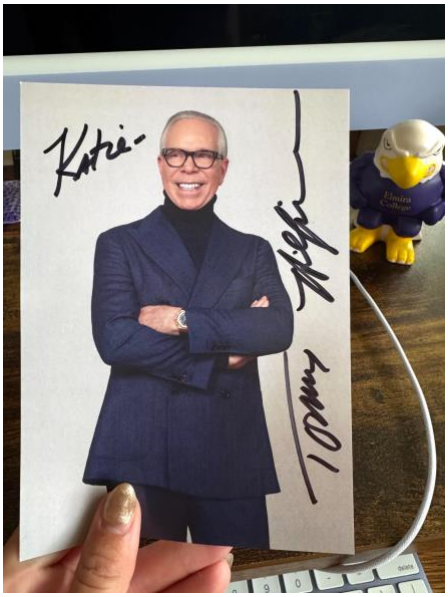


Figure 7: Tommy's autograph for me!

Watkins Glen could easily be added to the list of places in the world that are infused with wealth, warmth, romance, excitement, inspiration, and aspiration. Without all of those things, I would have never purchased my own keel boat.

On October 4th, 2025, I bought my C&C 25, lovingly renamed *Champagne Problems*, just in time for haul-out. The way I feel this year hauling out is entirely different from how I felt last year.



Figure 8: Sailing Champagne Problems *this summer.*

Last year, I was a bit in over my head. I had a long list of broken things and overdue maintenance (that the seller was *very* upfront with me about, no disrespect to him) and had very little time until she had to go on her cradle for the off-season. Where do I start? How do I even winterize a boat? That had never been MY responsibility before. Our maiden voyage was to the pump-out dock, where I promptly guided the bow into a "THUD" against the dock. I felt like I was responsible for someone else's boat. I spent $3000 in boatyard and slip rent before I even properly sailed the boat!

This year, I feel confident, proud, and well, sad. This year at haul-out, I knew exactly how MY boat should sit in the slings and in her cradle. I have my list of winterization to-do's. I'm happy with all of the progress I made on repairs and upgrades this season.

She feels like my boat - a purple boot stripe, holographic sparkles, a brand new outboard and autopilot, a clean interior, new decor, lockers full of gear I'm familiar with. *Champagne Problems* is not the state I want her to be yet, but she is a whole new boat from last year. And she's just going to keep getting better. I am sad because I feel like I just got started with everything I want to do. I wasn't ready for the season to end.

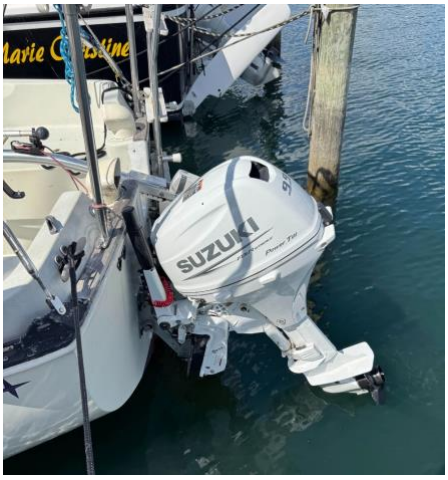


Figure 9: New 2023 Suzuki 9.9 HP. Upgrade!!

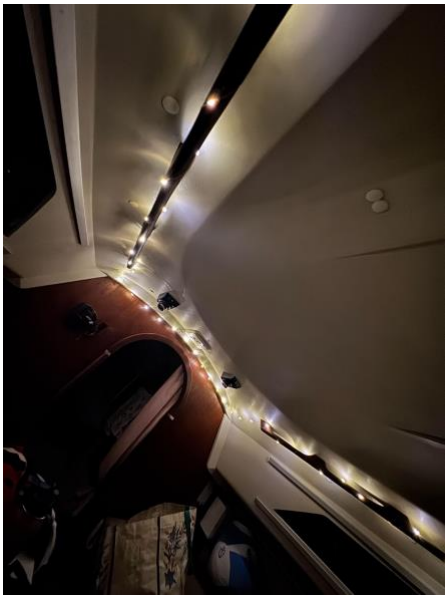


Figure 10: String lights are the ultimate feminine decor.





Figure 11: It's MY boat and I will make it as girly as I want with holographic sparkles.

This year I supposedly knew what I was doing while motoring to the pump-out dock, but still let the bow forcefully "kiss" the dock again. I just might make a tradition out of it, to stay humble.

What a privileged life I live where my biggest source of sadness is the changing of the seasons. Like Tommy says, it's the good life that everyone wants! I'm glad I've made it happen. And of course I'm privileged to be surrounded by a wealth of boating knowledge in our club and in the marina who make all nautical things doable.

As for the off-season, I keep telling myself my boat is not going to go anywhere, unless I move it. She'll be waiting for me next spring, and the spring after that, and the spring after that. There are still plenty of things to look forward to this winter, like my favorite holiday (Christmas), weekends skiing, and my birthday.

The Educational Department is taking a break for the holidays, but we'll be back with course offerings in the new year. Plus, look out for details on our Annual Change of Watch in January. Send me an email and let me know what classes or seminars you'd like to be apart of: seo@abc-flx.org.

- Katie
seo@abc-flx.org

o o o o o



Secretary's Sidenotes

By Glenda Gephart

True Love Sailabration



In the last issue of *The Drum*, we highlighted the ABC-FLX members who are part of *True Love* operations. The story previewed all the fun planned for the schooner's 100th anniversary Sailabration on September 25-26 at Seneca Harbor Park in Watkins Glen. A good time was promised, and, wow!

The two days were memorable, and many thanks and congratulations go out to *True Love* owner Terry Stewart and Watkins Glen Promotions.

While *True Love* squadron members were meeting former schooner owners from the U.S. Virgin Islands and beyond or telling their own *True Love* tales to sailing fans among the hundreds at the park, other ABC-FLX folks were busy, too.

Tom Taylor was the event's very skillful master of ceremonies.

Kris West, Denis Kingsley, Marcia Taylor and Glenda Gephart were at our tent teaching knot-tying. (Well, Kris had that covered!) They also displayed several life jackets and were eager to explain the organization's educational mission. (We shared our tent with the Finger Lakes Boating Museum; an appropriate partnership!)

Figure 12: Source: @heyjustinsmith on Instagram.

Maggie Martin and John Chesebrough proudly showed an array of Maggie's nautical paintings, including an impressive piece of the *True Love*.

Jim McGinnis and Charlie Fausold staffed the Seneca Lake Pure Waters table for a few hours, sharing that group's valuable work.

Across the park, from Lucky Hare to the pier, boats were the stars! The Sailabration was a day and a half of love of boating, affection for Seneca Lake and appreciation of community.

Other People's Boats!



Figure 13: Kris and Tom show a young visitor how to tie a clove hitch.



Figure 14: He did it! The "Ah-ha!" moment.

- Glenda
secretary@abc-flx.org



Figure 15: Kris chats with Gregg Dearth, who came from Connecticut for the Sailabration. Dearth brought memories of sailing on the True Love in the 1960s in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Figure 16: Kris West helps Russell Nelson with his knots, while Marcia Taylor is hanging out with Kirby.



Figure 17: We shared our tent with the Finger Lakes Boating Museum.



Figure 18: Phelps shows off his life jacket while spending time with Jim West in the ABC-FLX tent.



Figure 19: We had a display of several types of life jackets and spoke with folks about our education programs. Those conversations resulted in a handful of pre-signups for ABC classes in 2027.

ABC-FLX News

Happy Birthday!

Happy birthday to our members!

November

Judy Cherry
Tom Keebler
Glenda Gephardt
Patty Dawson-Elli

December

Denis Kingsley
Jeff Mack
Maggie Martin
John Chesebrough
Marcia Taylor
Larry 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 your friendly newsletter editor so that it can be included!

editor@abc-flx.org

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: https://usps.org/sss-where-do-i-start

How to Register

If you have questions about any of our 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

The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN-ON *SV Tomfoolery*

Cycles, Rhythms, & Seasons



It's hard to believe that this will be the last issue of *The Drum* for the year. By the time you read this, the District Fall Conference will have taken place and planning will already be well underway for the Spring Conference in April 2027. At a more personal level, my boat will be high and dry in her cradle. Hopefully, she will be fully winterized by that time and ready to spend the long, cold, monochromatic days of winter resting up for another season of sailing and traveling on our wonderful lakes and canals.

This fall has been the first time in many years that I've missed a District Conference. My calendar has been so full this year that, unfortunately, the conference was the victim of one of the many scheduling conflicts I've had. While I still saw all the material that got presented there, I miss catching up with Power Squadron members from other squadrons in our region. It's always a great reminder of just how diverse our members and our boating styles are. It's also a great environment where one can kick around ideas on how to make our respective clubs better.

Boat Projects

Now that the boating season is over, I can say that I've finally finished (well…, sort of) the projects I had slated to complete this spring. My list for 2027 is already pretty long and, like this year, will probably not be completed before launching next spring. As the saying goes, "Life is hard. Buy a boat. Make it harder!"

One of the components on your boat that you should never take for granted is your standing rigging. I make a habit of this by dropping my mast at least once every five years. This habit was reinforced following a near dismasting on Lake Ontario in 2016, even though I had inspected the rigging when dropping the mast two weeks prior to transit the canal system.

Well, *Tomfoolery's* mast was last down in 2021, so the rigging and connection points are due for a good going-over. This exercise will also test the winter cover I made a couple years ago to see how well (or how poorly) it fits with the mast down.

Of course, dropping the mast unleashes a flood of additional projects that fall into the category of "as-long-as-the-mast-is-down-I-should-also…" projects. Result: Instant project backlog and a very ambitious off-season schedule.

Web Site Updates

A subset of the Web Site Development Committee met on October 7th to restart activities following a summer boating hiatus. Short term priorities for the team include:

- Upgrade currently live sites (FLYC & ABC-FLX) from Joomla version 3 to version 6.
- Migrate the USPS D/6 site from its SiteGround host to IONOS, our new service provider.
- Upgrade the USPS D/6 site from Joomla version 3 to version 6.

In addition to the above activity, the Seneca Yacht Club (SYC) has expressed serious interest in joining the consortium of boating clubs to share resources on our new host. This will help further reduce operating costs almost immediately.

Stay tuned!

- Your 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	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Inland Navigator	Classes	ABC	C	X	X	X	X	X
		Boat Handling		X		X		X
		Engine Maintenance	X		X			
		Marine Electrical Systems	C					
	Seminars	Using A Chart						
		VHF/DSC Radios						
		Using GPS			X			
		Basic Weather and Forecasting		X				
	Skills	Basic Powerboat Handling			X			
		Fire Extinguishers						

BOC Level		Title	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
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	X		X			
	Skills	Coastal Nav			X			
		Pyrotechnics		X				

Table Key

X = Planned

U = Underway

C = Completed

BOC Level		Title	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Advanced Coastal Navigator	Classes	Advanced Marine Navigation	X		X		X	
		Cruise Planning				X		
		Radar						
		Emergencies Onboard				X		
	Sem.							
	Skills	Advanced Coastal Nav				X		
		First Aid	*Contact American Heart Assoc. or Red Cross*					

BOC Level		Title	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Offshore Navigator	C	Offshore Navigation		X			X	
	Sem.	Computer Weather Forecasting	*Offered online.*					
		Thunderstorms / Severe Weather	*Offered online.*					
	Skills	Offshore Navigation				X		
		CPR/AED	*Contact American Heart Assoc. or Red Cross.*					
Endorsmentss		Sail	C		X		X	
		Canadian Regulations						
		PaddleSmart	X		X			
Other		Instructor Development	C		X			
		Instructor Recertification	X			X		
		Operations Training	*Offered online.*					
		Celestial Navigation			X			X

Table Key

X = Planned

U = Underway

C = Completed

Calendar of Events

November 2026

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

December 2026

08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
18 Deadline for *Drum* articles

January 2027

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

February 2027

01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
07-15 USPS Annual Meeting, *Tampa, FL* (National)
09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
19 Deadline for *Drum* articles

March 2027

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

April 2027

09-11 District 6 Spring Council & Conference, *Binghamton, NY* (D/6)
13 Bridge Meeting (1900)
16 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
23 Deadline for *Drum* articles

May 2027

01 Finger Lakes *Drum* May issue publication date.
01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
22-28 Safe Boating Week (National)

June 2027

08 Bridge Meeting (1900)
TBA FLYC Commodore's Cup Race/Cruise to Geneva Weekend (FLYC)
25 Deadline for *Drum* articles

July 2027

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

August 2027

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

September 2027

01 Finger Lakes *Drum* September issue publication date.
09 Seneca Lake Barge Race, *Seneca Yacht Club, Geneva, NY.*
12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
12-19 Fall Governing Board, *Cary, NC* (National)

October 2027

10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
20 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
20 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