

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

For Boaters, By Boaters®




THE DRUM

A Publication of the Finger Lakes Chapter

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editor@abc-flx.org

From The Commander

By Jim McGinnis, AP SV Brewster

View from the Bridge

Fall has descended on our marina and darkened our sailing souls just a little bit. Boats are being pulled daily and we see the first of the shrink wrap cocoons appearing on local stands. This year, I've got two boats on trailers to winterize and one on the stand. But it's a pleasant kind of work. Taking each task and making it right for the promise of spring next year.

In 2020 boating has turned out to be a terrific form of social distancing. We can sail without regard to the virus. We don't infringe on anyone's space and we don't need masks. Locally, we have seen a super leaf peeper season and some great boating days. Don't forget to take some time to head out to the vineyards and enjoy some of the best days in the Finger Lakes Region.



Safety

This time of year gives us new opportunities to do something we might regret in terms of safety. Ladders are essential for cleaning the boat and getting the covers on, but be careful. The Life Alert commercial ("Help – I've fallen and I can't get up") may be more concerning when we start the fall from 10 feet in the air. Make certain the ground underneath the ladder is not too soft to support you. Also, move the ladder instead of leaning just a little further to the left or right. Check the ladder to see if any of the rungs have weakened or are falling loose. Watch out for others in the area when they are climbing a ladder that they just "borrowed for a few minutes".

NY Canal System

I had a fantastic opportunity to see the Erie Canal System with Tom Alley and Mike Crouse early September when we transported *Tomfoolery* from Watkins Glen by canal to Coeymans Marina on the Hudson River. Over five days, we covered 28 locks and 280 nautical miles at 6 mph.

We crossed Oneida Lake and entered another long stretch of canal at Sylvan Beach, NY. Near the end, we dropped down the Waterford Flight of five locks, back to back, that descend from the Mohawk Hills to near sea level at Troy, NY. We used the *self-service* gin pole at Castleton-on-Hudson to successfully step the mast on *Tomfoolery* (with just a little less swearing than is normally required to complete that task here in Watkins Glen.)

The scenery was delightful, the lock crews accommodating, and nights spent on the wall waiting for the lock master to come in to work in the morning were quiet and peaceful. You've got try the locks on either your boat or one of the rental canal boats. The locks and lock system are a fabulous asset of New York State.

A boat can also do a mini-loop – Watkins Glen to Oswego to Lake Ontario, up the St Lawrence Seaway to the [Chambley Canal](#), then down the [Richeleau River](#), [Lake Champlain](#), into the [Champlain Canal](#) to the Hudson River and back the reverse of the trip we did to Seneca Lake. Maximum four to five weeks. Who's in for this trip?



Photo 1: Traditional lock with gates.

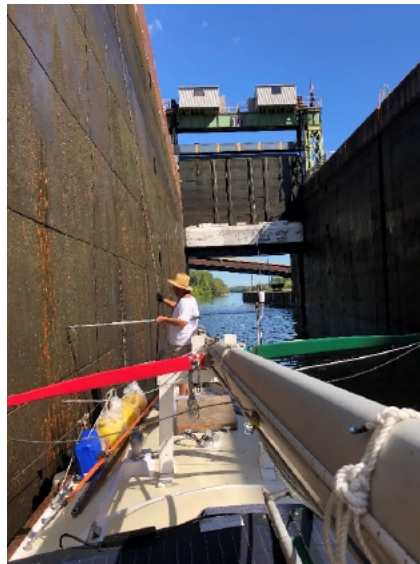


Photo 2: Guillotine gate style lock – get thru quickly!



Photo 3: Dinner ashore at the lock park.

The Drum

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General Information

info@abc-flx.org

Commander

James McGinnis, AP

co@abc-flx.org

Executive Officer

Phil Cherry, S

xo@abc-flx.org

Administrative Officer

Fred Seip, S

ao@abc-flx.org

Education Officer

Charlie Fausold, SN-IN

seo@abc-flx.org

Secretary

Rachael Nichols, S

sec@abc-flx.org

Treasurer

Marcia Taylor, AP

treas@abc-flx.org

Assistant Education Officer

John Flick, S

aseo@abc-flx.org

Membership

Mark Erway, AP

membership@abc-flx.org

Public Relations Officers

Glenda Gephart &

Judy Cherry, S

pro@abc-flx.org

Vessel Safety Check Chairman

Ray Margeson, AP

vsc@abc-flx.org

Web Site Administrator

Thomas Alley, SN

webmaster@abc-flx.org

Youth Committee Chair

Katie Alley, P

katie@abc-flx.org

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Photo 4: Sunrise on the canal way – that's water not glass!



Photo 5: A sign on the Hudson River: To Erie or Lake Champlain?



Photo 6: Mast is ready to hoist.



Photo 7: Mast is up! Blue Skies! Note the floating docks. There is a 5-foot tidal range on the Hudson!

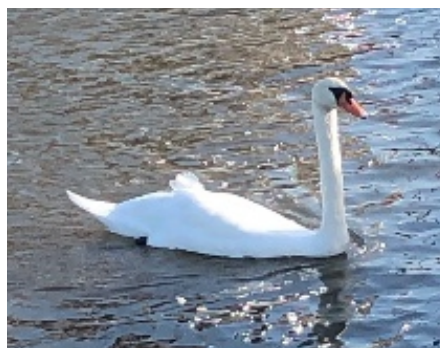


Photo 8: "Hudson", the resident swan at Coymans Landing Marina.

COVID – 19 Update

We maintain our approach to follow the appropriate guidelines. We avoid close contact with large groups of people and surfaces. Our Marine Communications Class is now taking a hybrid approach, we have in-person classes every other week and use the Free Conference Call system on-line for every class. Remember that the ABC Basic Boating Safety class and the Boat Handling Class (formerly Seamanship) are available from USPS completely on-line. Our annual Change of Watch will be January 17th, 2021 and will kick off a new Boating season. We will do this meeting on-line.

Remember to ask new people to join ABC-FLX and build our organization. As I always say - new members bring new ideas, energy and experiences that can strengthen our capabilities. I have the ABC-FLX information tri-folds; let me know if I can get some to you. Mark Erway and Marcia Taylor can take care of the registration and payment processes.

Closing Thoughts

Please vote November 3rd! – It's the way we act responsibly to chart the course of our great country.

Fair Winds and following seas,

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

From the Executive Officer

By Phil Cherry, S

SV Harmony

The Times They Are A-Changin'



I announced my retirement from Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Schuyler County recently. I

head out the door on December 31st, after a term of four years, into a world that has changed dramatically since I entered the professional workforce in 1983, and even more so since the advent of the Coronavirus. CCE is not unlike the ABC-FLX. Both organizations pride themselves on providing quality, non-traditional educational opportunities to adults and youth, and frankly I think the model may be in danger, or at least at a turning point.

When I started my first professional job we had a “typing pool” – a small group of employees who, if I had a letter or document I wanted to send out, I’d send up my hand scribbled notepad to the pool and in about a day I’d get a draft back that would then be edited and finalized over the course of another day or more. Shortly after that, in the late 1980’s we saw computers start to enter the workplace and the IBM Selectric typewriter had met its match. Now I could compose my own letters, put it on a 5¼-inch floppy and take it to the printer room! That was followed closely by the office network, and a whole new

section of IT people who purported to know all about computers and networks and who were going to make my life easier. I think the opposite actually happened, but that’s the subject of another article I might write someday.

More recently, our world has been shaken by the Coronavirus (a.k.a., COVID-19). Now, instead of countless face to face meetings, conferences and the like, we’re forced to participate in most gatherings virtually, by Zoom, Webex, or some other conferencing software. That shift has occurred literally overnight as the market for computer cameras and microphones will attest. For CCE, the change has been dramatic and, I fear, game changing. I think the same is true for the Power Squadrons.

CCE is composed of over 50 separate county-based associations across New York, each with their own set of educators for agriculture, youth programming, nutrition and horticulture – to name a few of our larger topic areas. It’s a little different than the Power Squadrons, where New York seems to have about 40 chapters based more on water bodies as opposed to governmental organizations, but the issue is the same. Prior to COVID-19, when CCE held an in-person workshop, we’d get 15-30 people attend an evening session on one of those topics and everyone would walk away enriched and educated. For the Power Squadrons, while class size may be a bit smaller, the model is

the same – we offer standardized courses to an engaged audience who walk away enriched in boating education.

Now, with CCE, we’re doing virtual Zoom workshops and we’ve seen participation rates increase dramatically. We are no longer constrained by geography or commuting times to class and our workshops here in Schuyler County can be made available to the entire State of New York, and beyond, via the Internet. While geography may still be important in some respects (a workshop on growing grapes for wine will not sell well in the North Country), there is a tremendous opportunity for consolidation and cost savings, especially in CCE as we use paid staff to teach our courses as opposed to the Power Squadrons army of volunteers.

My point in all of this is that the times they are a-changing. With virtual educational opportunities, our Power Squadrons need to assess our strengths and consider making some changes. Our Finger Lakes Chapter is one of the best Chapters in all of New York State and the largest Chapter in all of District 6. As long as virtual or on-line educational classes are being offered, we should consider marketing our virtual courses to a wider audience and reaping any financial or other benefit in the process. To do that, we’ll need enhanced technical capabilities and volunteers who can navigate the technology to ensure a quality viewing experience and outcome.

Not all our courses will lend themselves to virtual classrooms. Some of our classes benefit from on-the-water exercises (try setting an anchor over the Internet!), or require the hands-on assistance of instructors, and they will be challenged as long as COVID-19 is a threat. However, COVID has taught us all that virtual classrooms can work and can be advantageous in certain circumstances. It behooves our Squadron

to consider where we can enhance our virtual educational opportunities, both here in the Finger Lakes and across the world-wide web.

As I prepare to walk out the door at CCE, I've sent a similar message to my colleagues there. The local CCE association that is the first to chart a course for on-line virtual workshops may be the association that survives the inevitable consolidation that will come

with a more virtual society. Hopefully we'll never lose our Squadron's social aspects, and County CCE associations will never cease interpersonal interactions such as our local 4-H clubs, but the times are changing, and we had better be prepared to change with them. Our future may depend on it.

- Phil

xo@abc-flx.org

From the Education Director

By Charlie Fausold, SN-IN

SV Morning Glory

Next Course Offering



The Coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc with our plans for educational

programming, as with so many other aspects of daily living. Just when we thought we might be able to start thinking about resuming a more "normal" level of in-person classes, COVID cases in our region are spiking, dictating a cautious approach.

Marine Communication Systems, the second course in the Marine Electronics series is now underway with a small but dedicated group of students. Instructors Tom Alley and Jim McGinnis are employing a hybrid in-class/dis-

tance learning approach, with students able to choose which best meets their needs. The third course in the series, Electronic Navigation (see below), will get started after the first of the year. Please contact me at SEO@ABC-FLX if interested.

Electronic Navigation introduces GPS technology from the most basic receiver to chart plotter systems for navigation on board. The process of navigating by establishing waypoints and routes, and then running the planned courses, is demonstrated. Further, electronic charting software for the desktop computer is examined, with creation of waypoints and routes on the desktop and subsequent download to the on-board unit. Despite differences among the various manufacturers' offerings, a thorough discussion of the

features being made available is included.

Special attention is paid to apps for tablets and smartphones that provide the electronic navigation function at the helm, for relatively little cost.

Students should be familiar with basic charting concepts such as latitude, longitude, the compass, course plotting, and time/distance calculation, to get the most out of the course.

The student materials include a soft-bound course text and a Windows-compatible CD for electronic content. The course menu provides all the class presentation PowerPoints, an interactive homework tool, and hands-on exercises on the PC that simulate GPS functions.

- Charlie

seo@abc-flx.org

From the Assistant Education Officer

By John Flick

The "S" Word



Any of you who have read what I've had to say by way of *The Drum* over the (almost) last two years would

know that safety both at the dock and underway has been the general theme. This month the "S" is a little different but in the end, it is very closely connected with being safe out there.

Some of us have older boats and some of us have newer boats. Those of you with newer boats, have you ever noticed how many decals there are onboard both inside and outside the cabin? I am not referring to the oil discharge and garbage placards. Having these placards is the law for vessels 26-feet and larger. Are your placards in place and legible? The oil placard is generally located in the machinery space while the garbage placard is generally located where garbage may be generated for example in the galley. In a perfect world, both placards would be installed side-by-side but this is rarely practical and could be unsightly. If you were ever boarded by law enforcement, wouldn't it be easy to direct them to only one place so they could see you are in compliance?

For the purposes of this article I will refer to decals, placards, signs, labels, emblems, tags, sharpie markings, print incorporated into the electrical panel graphics, and checklists as stickers because that's most generally what is used in the real world. This topic is important, so please don't write this off as being frivolous or silly. Please read on to learn more about the "S" word.

What form do these stickers come in? There are the make, model, registration, and serial number stickers but I don't care about them at the moment as they won't do anything to make us safer. A manufacturer's sticker would generally include a pictogram and a message panel made up of a signal word, the nature of the hazard, and the possible consequences.

The highest priority stickers listed from most deadly to painful are typically red, orange, or yellow (around the signal word) with the words, "DANGER", "WARNING", and "CAUTION". These stickers typically address hazards such as carbon monoxide, fire and explosion from fuel vapors, falls overboard, and getting ground up by rotating props.



Stickers that are blue with a signal word "NOTICE" are typically related to maintenance or information specific to that vessel. Some examples are battery maintenance, bridge capacity, black water discharge, and mast height.

Some common practical application of stickers:

- VHF radio use reminder decal, something you need to know when the excrement (this article is not about *that* S-word) hits the fan.
- Stickers on battery(s) may remind us of when they were purchased or installed.
- A reminder of where to keep the buoys, to port or starboard, as you navigate between countries. I learned this one from the excellent ABC Cruise Planning instructor, Don Kloeber.
- Labeling fuel filters, oil filters, water filters, etc. to know when they were last replaced.
- Head operating instructions.
- Blender operating instructions.
- Capacity placards remind us to not overload our small boats.
- Proper ladder use. How many times have you seen uninformed, non-sticker readers not facing the ladder during use?
- And finally, the classic, run the bilge blower on the gas-powered boat for 4-5 minutes before starting the engine, after refueling, and at low rpms.

Stickers are normally located at the swim step ladder or boarding point, at the helm and other areas where equipment is controlled such as at the electrical panel.

Does your boat have any stickers? Where are they? Have you read them, and do you follow what they say? If there is something you need reminding of, perhaps you should purchase a sticker and install it in that prominent appropriate place as a friendly reminder. Modern label makers are available (of course) and work well. I made up a "MUD

DAUBERS KEEP OUT" sticker for my boat. I hope they read it.

The next time you are enjoying a boat show, (remember them?), I encourage you to see how many stickers you can find on an 18' boat just for fun and giggles. I think you would be surprised how many you find.

I acknowledge that some messages are head scratchers at best. Force 10 brand label states, "NEVER USE FLAME TO CHECK FOR LEAKS!!" on the tag at the propane storage locker. Really? I hope that people who

need to read this stuff stay on land and away from our boats.

Stickers or no stickers, doing what it takes to be safe out there doesn't have to be complicated. Who would have ever imagined, reading a sticker could save a life?

American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) T-5 was referenced for this article.

- John

aseo@abc-flx.org

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Water Lines

By Glenda Gephart, Public Relations Officer

Harmful Algal Blooms



A summer of many low points ends with some good news for Seneca Lake: Fewer Harmful Algal

Blooms (HABs) were confirmed this year compared to the prior five years.

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association volunteers ended their 10-week HABs monitoring program on Oct. 11. More than 120 volunteers monitored about 60 miles of Seneca shoreline of the 75 total miles.

The Finger Lakes Times in Geneva reported on October 19th that blooms were reported on only seven days, for a total of 15 confirmations. Four days had a single HAB report, two days had two reported and one day had seven. All but the final three were in the southern end of the lake.

"The absence of blooms is a real phenomenon. We will be looking over the data in the off-season to see if we can figure out why," Bill Roege, Association HABs director, is quoted in the Finger Lakes Times report.

Cyanobacteria, microscopic organisms that occur naturally in New York lakes, ponds and streams and especially in calm, nutrient-rich waters, are commonly known as blue-green algae or harmful algal blooms, HABs.

"Cyanobacteria blooms can form at any time but occur most often in late summer or early fall, coincidentally, when humans are most likely to cross paths with the bacteria," according to the Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association.

The first confirmed Seneca Lake algae bloom was identified on Saturday, Aug. 22, in the southeastern part of the lake, between Burdett and Hector. The Association reported that the timing of the first bloom was in line with previous years' experience.

But the seasonal totals show many fewer blooms this year. Last year, 40 blooms were confirmed. In 2018, there were 39, and 2017 confirmed blooms totaled 50.

The Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, the Finger Lakes Insti-

tute and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation have collaborated over the past six years to raise awareness, collect bloom samples, analyze blooms samples and notify the

public of harmful cyanobacteria bloom locations on Seneca Lake.

The public can follow weekly bloom reports on the Association's website at www.senecalake.org. The Association also

is always seeking more volunteers to be trained as monitors.

- Glenda
pro@abc-flx.org

Upcoming Classes & Seminars

Electronic Navigation Systems

The third part of the Marine Electronics series of elective courses, *Electronic Navigation Systems* introduces GPS technology from the most basic receiver to chart plotter systems for navigation on board. The process of navigating by establishing waypoints and routes, and then running the planned courses, is demonstrated. Further, electronic charting software for the desktop computer is examined, with creation of waypoints and routes on the desktop and subsequent download to the on-board unit. Despite differences among the various manufacturers' offerings, a thorough discussion of the features being made available is included.

Special attention is paid to apps for tablets and smartphones that provide the electronic navigation function at the helm, for relatively little cost.

Students should be familiar with basic charting concepts such as latitude, longitude, the compass, course plotting, and time/distance calculation, to get the most out of the course.

Course begins January 2021.

Boat Handling

The 2019 *Boat Handling* (BH) curriculum, formerly known as the Seamanship course, comprises a full six-part *Boat Handling* course and six seminars:

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

Students who complete the 2019 *Boat Handling* course and pass the exam will receive credit for the *Boat Handling* course and earn the Seaman grade. They will also receive seminar credit for each of the class sessions attended.

Boat Handling will begin in May 2021.

America's Boating Course

If you are interested in an exciting, in-depth boating knowledge course, check out *America's Boating Course* (ABC). This course may be taken as a classroom course or as an interactive home study course for people whose schedule and obligations would make it difficult to attend a classroom course.

Many boat insurance companies will offer discounts on boating insurance to boaters who successfully complete *America's Boating Course*. And, this basic boating knowledge course will give you the education required by most states to obtain a state boat license or operator certificate.

This course will be offered in April 2021.

How to Register

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

Education Director Charlie Fausold, Finger Lakes Chapter:

seo@abc-flx.org

or call 607-207-7771

Assistant Education Director John Flick:

aseo@abc-flx.org

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

Looking for Something?

The Finger Lakes Chapter of America's Boating Club will be happy to accommodate requests for courses not currently on our schedule of formal offerings. If there is an area in which you would like to get some instruction, please contact Charlie

Fausold, the Chapter Education Director, with your request.

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

www.abc-flx.org

Long-Term Class Schedule

Seneca Education Department

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

USPS News: Local, District, National & More

Happy Birthday!

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

November

Judy Cherry
 Jeff DeMeritt
 Barb Gates
 Glenda Gephart
 Stacey Maggio
 Tom Keebler
 Andre Wigley

December

Robert Drake
 John Flick
 Denis Kingsley
 Lisa Oldroyd
 Debra Pietro
 Brandon Seip
 Marcia Taylor

And we don't want to forget our neighbors in the Ithaca Sail & Power Squadron who are celebrating their birthdays:

November

James Saroka

December

Rich Dolge

District 6 Fall Conference Goes Virtual

By Jim McGinnis, Commander

Due to the recent uptick in cases of COVID-19 in our area, the District 6 Fall Conference will be held virtually via FreeConferenceCall.com. The format and mechanics of the conference will be similar to the Spring Conference.

All Finger Lakes Chapter members are encouraged to attend as there is a lot of information that gets presented at these district meetings.

Got News?

By Tom Alley, Editor

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

Contact Tom Alley:

editor@abc-flx.org

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Building the Southwester Dory – Part III

By Charlie Fausold

I finally wrapped up basic construction of the dory in mid-September. The final steps included building and shaping the masts and spars, oarlocks, centerboard and rudder/tiller assembly. Then of course painting and varnishing and lots of sanding in between coats. I used one-part polyurethane paint for the hull, Schooner varnish on the interior brightwork and masts and spars, and some leftover Interdeck nonskid paint on the cockpit sole.

A major feature that distinguishes the Southwester Dory from its smaller sibling the Northeaster Dory is the option to add a small outboard motor in a well at the rear of the cockpit. I initially liked this idea, thinking that it would facilitate getting in and out of my lift and open up trout trolling possibilities. However, after cutting a big hole in the bottom of the boat I was dismayed to see how crowded the cockpit had become with both the motor well and centerboard trunk in place. So I plugged the hole up, removed the well and decided to see if I can get along with just oar power. The jury is still out.

The sails were ready within a day of when I finished the hull, so the timing could have not been better. Chesapeake Light Craft's sailmaker is Douglas Fowler in Ithaca, and so I was able to pick them up directly. Douglas had done work for me previously, but he specializes in sails for traditional craft like the

dory. I chose a traditional Egyptian Cream sail cloth and am delighted with how they turned out.

After lashing on the sails and rigging the sheets and halyards the dory was ready to launch!

At only about 250 pounds and with its narrow bow and stern the dory rows like a dream. I am really enjoying it as a form of exercise.

It has taken a bit longer to learn how the dory performs under sail. With its unweighted centerboard it heels readily, but the balanced lug rig keeps the sail plan close to the water and the boat seems to settle in nicely at 10-15 degrees.

The mizzen is pretty self-tending, but you have to carefully mind the mainsheet.

The other day I hit 10.2 knots in a 10-15 knot breeze, so she scoots right along. Because of its narrow transom a traditional tiller would take up too much space in the cockpit, so the dory employs a Scandinavian-style yoke and draglink helm. It works fine but pushing and pulling the tiller instead of

moving it from side to side does take some getting used to.

As with any new boat I continue to think of tweaks and improvements here and there. One of the first things was to devise a way to keep from losing oars overboard. I learned that lesson quickly! There is one reef point in the main, and I am currently working on a system for that. The process of physical adjustments and improvements as well as developing the procedural routines unique to any boat will continue for awhile, but that's part of the fun!



Photo 9: Traditional belaying pins are an efficient way to manage halyards and downhauls.

Although building the dory pretty much consumed my entire summer, it was a lot of fun and immensely rewarding. Others have noticed also. More than once a random boat has pulled up alongside me to comment on how beautiful the dory looks

out on the water. The end of the season is approaching before the dory and I can become fully acquainted, so I am already looking forward to next summer.

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Photo 10: The dory features a yoke and draglink tiller and pop-up rudder.



Photo 11: With its relatively narrow beam the dory is a pleasure to row.

Winning the Barge Race

By Jim McGinnis

SV Brewster

September 12th, 2020 was a day I will not soon forget. That was the day we won the Barge Race on *SV Brewster*. It's in the books. Most of you know that the Barge Race is hosted by the Seneca Yacht Club the weekend after Labor Day each year. It starts at the outer marker buoy to the Cayuga-Seneca Canal and consists of one lap around the Navy Barge (11 miles south) and back. 22 miles round trip.

Seems simple enough. Yet other notable winners in our Watkins Glen Marina are quite proud of the accomplishment. I know of Mike Crouse, Tom Alley and Al Barton to name a few. (Let me know if there are others in the group.)

On that Friday afternoon, September 11th, Lynne and I motored up into a chilly and brisk north wind arriving in Geneva at about 5PM. Mike Crouse and Dee were a couple hours behind but arrived before dark. Mike did run aground in the shallow State Park marina and had to tie *Seek Ye First* up to just the bow to the nose of a pier. *Brewster* was able to slide into a rental slip since we only draw 4½ feet. We had a nice dinner on the boat and headed off to bed fairly early, as the pre-race meeting is at 9AM.

Mike's race crew showed up Saturday morning and were ready and raring to go. And there was some trash talk that needed to be attended to with

other racers. Maggie Martin and John Chesbrough drove up on Saturday morning and met us at the boat to crew on *Brewster*.

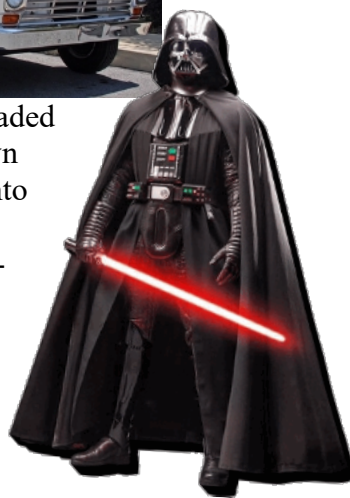
The handicaps are calculated for the boats prior to the race. Every boat gets a start time based on distance and PHRF rating. 13 boats entered the race with just two from FLYC. The sun was shining, and air was light as we left the dock.

The gun sounded and the first boat was off at 10 AM, heading south into a south wind. We started at 10:45 and Mike at 10:55. Mike was sporting new, all black head and main sails. I remarked to my crew that it looked like a race between the Good Humor Ice Cream Man (me on the beamy white Hunter 336 - *Brewster*) and Darth Vader (Mike on the dark blue with black sails *Islander 36 - Seek Ye First*). "Luke, I am your

father." (ie. - I will own you)



So, we headed south down the lake into the south wind tacking back and forth. From time to time, our crew



screaming "Starboard!" when getting a little too close to the 13 crossing boats as we gained on the fleet.

The wind started picking up and we were seeing some waves building at the same time. It seemed in no time that we were in 25 knot winds from the south and 3-foot waves. A Marshall Cat Boat that was being single handed dropped his main and called it a day. All others pressed on. Seneca Lake is two miles wide at the north end so the tacks are long, but you have to watch the depth – at one point we saw 10 feet of water on the depth sounder and decided to tack quickly.

About two hours into the race, Mike had caught us and was preparing to pass ahead. Just then his jib sheet let go and was flapping in the heavy air and could not be recovered. Later we learned that he was trying to change the headsail to reduce sail area. He turned back to Geneva and pulled down the sails.

Winds were now gusting to 28 and occasional bigger waves caught our attention as the spray blasted across the deck. (Note to self – consider a spray dodger for *Brewster*). Thankfully, John was taking the full force of it and Maggie and I tucked in behind him. Lynne was in her typical racing position - below decks.

Everything in the boat was tossed onto the cabin sole as a result of the wind and waves.

The dingy and spinnaker bags hopped off the V berth and dishes we had not seen in years flew through the air. Our heavy cooler jumped over the door sill in the main cabin and into the head. Maggie said that if the wind passed 30 knots – maybe we should consider retiring. But we pressed on.

We were in the lead as we approached the Barge after three hours of pointing to weather. The wind continued to increase, and we saw 31 knots on the anemometer. So, we were able to

round the Barge and turn back to Geneva.

Dead downwind we were flying. We hit 9.2 knots on the speed indicator as we could feel ourselves surfing down a wave with the sails wing and wing. I furled the jib as we were yawing down the waves and didn't need to sail area. (No, we never did put a reef in the main.) The ride back was quick, and we could only see a few other boats still in the race.

It turns out just five of the original 13 completed the course.

We crossed the line with fresh beers all around and were thrilled to able to pull down the mainsail and head into calm water in the marina. We headed over to the Seneca Lake Yacht Club building to watch the remaining boats come in. Just about everyone had a tale of something breaking on the boat under the load.

Yes, it was a blast. And a day we will long remember on *Brewster*.

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Photo 10: The crew of Brewster savoring the thrill of victory following their high seas adventure in the 2020 Seneca Barge Race. (L to R: John Chesbrough, Maggie Martin, Jim McGinnis, and Lynne McGinnis)

The Last Word

By Tom Alley, SN

SV Tomfoolery

Are We There Yet?



Well, here we are in the eleventh month of a year that I think many will be eager to forget. I consider my-

self to be an optimistic person by nature, but I confess that this year has made it difficult to maintain that temperament.

Difficult or not, I will do my best to practice some perseverance (my wife refers to this behavior as my “obstinate stubbornness”, but I think she’s being a bit harsh...) and refuse to let someone or something else determine the attitude with which I approach life. After all, life is a gift; one to be appreciated.

Now I admit that some days are better than others, but that doesn’t mean I’m not grateful for the less-than-great days. The human spirit is like steel; to become strong and sharp it needs to be run through a blast furnace and beaten on an anvil. An African proverb puts this concept in nautical terms for us:

Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.

When I look at a project I just finished, usually as I’m icing a bruise or dressing a cut or tending skinned knuckles, it’s easy to overlook the pain and be

grateful for the shine in the varnish or the gleam in the new piece of equipment that is bolted in place and functioning just perfectly. Hopefully we can all do the same when the world gets straightened out from where it is now.

Bermuda Update

As you read in our Commander’s column, my fair sloop, *Tomfoolery*, is now safely stored along the Hudson River for the winter, awaiting a day in May when the tides will be right, and we can relaunch for the next phase of our adventure. Now comes the planning for the final phase of preparation for the 2021 Marion-Bermuda Race.

Over the winter we will be concentrating on crew qualifications and those last few projects on the to-do list. We’ll be putting together our final checklists to ensure we bring everything we need along for the trip and leave everything we don’t need at home. The finite volume of storage available on a 35-foot sailboat is a harsh reminder that “No! You can’t take it with you!”

The biggest variable, of course, is the lingering effect of the coronavirus and its potential impact on travel and activities in the spring. I don’t know of anyone who has a crystal ball that can predict what will happen there. All we can do is continue

to prepare and to remain optimistic that this crazy world will settle down a bit. On the bright side, if Bermuda is still on New York’s “verboden” travel list, we can satisfy nearly all of our self-isolation commitment just on the return voyage.

Another task that will get addressed over the winter months will be forming and establishing a shore-side support crew. Race rules require we identify a designated point of contact for any official communications between the Race Committee and crew families. Not required, but equally necessary, will be additional people who can help with the logistics of getting crew and supplies from our home base to various ports and rendezvous points as required.

I’ve said it before, and I will say it again: Participation in this event has been an unbelievable way to tie together ALL the subjects I’ve studied through the Power Squadron. There are certainly all the navigation skills, but also skills taught in Cruise Planning, Marine Electronics, Weather, Engine Maintenance, and a host of the seminars (Marine Compass, Using GPS, Knots & Marlinespike, Locks and Rivers, etc).

I’ve also had to tap into plenty of things not taught by our august organization: Carpentry, fiberglassing, plumbing, sewing, painting, and of course, marketing and, most importantly, PR. (“Honey, how do you feel about

a trip to Bermuda in a couple of years?”)

Geographically, we’re halfway to the starting line. Logistically, we’re about 90% of the way

there. Overall, it’s been an exciting and challenging adventure so far!

Until next time!

- Your Editor, Tom

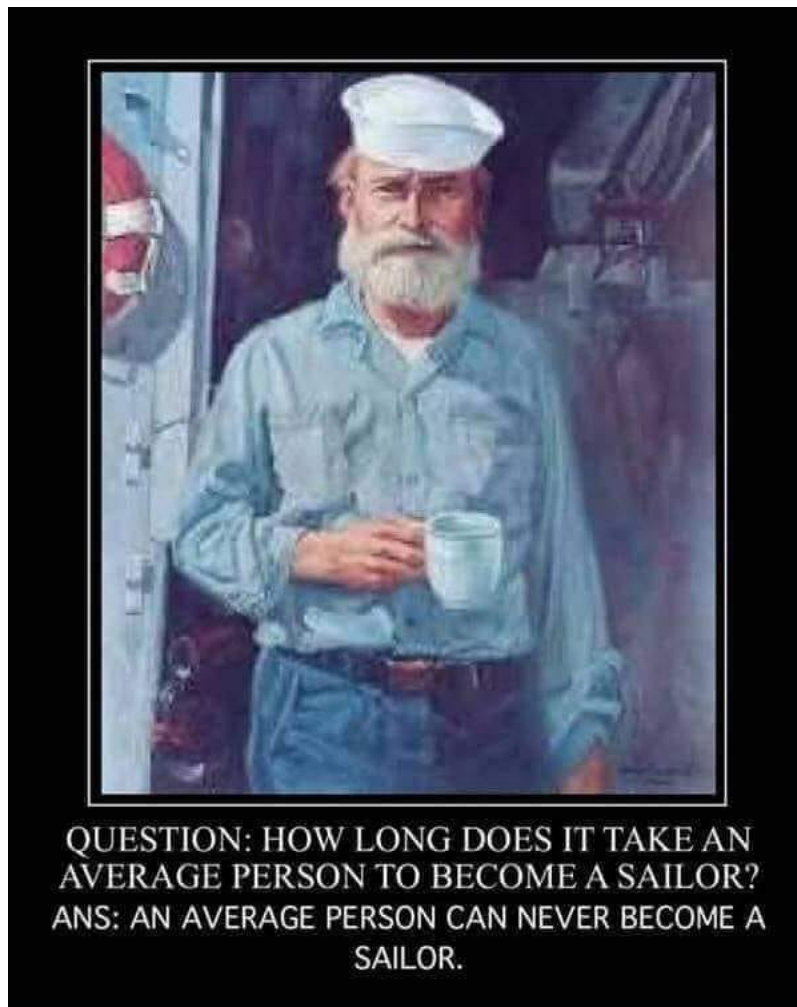
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As always, send your thoughts about this newsletter to:

editor@abc-flx.org

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Just for Grins



[As your District Education Officer, I tend to agree, because after you’ve taken some of the classes we have to offer, you are definitely no longer “average”! Thanks to Denis Kingsley for sending me this! – Ed.]

Calendar of Events

November 2020

- 01 Seneca *Drum* November issue publication date
- 10 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 14 District 6 Fall Council & Conference, *Online via FreeConferenceCall.com* (D/6)
- 18 *The Deep 6* fall issue publication date. (Delayed to cover Conference activities.) (D/6)

December 2020

- 18 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

January 2021

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

February 2021

- 01 *The Deep 6* winter issue publication date. (D/6)
- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 14-21 USPS Annual Meeting, *Ponte Vedra, FL* (National)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

March 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* March issue publication date.
- 09 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- TBD District 6 Spring Council & Conference (D/6)

April 2021

- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 16 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 23 Deadline for *Drum* Articles

May 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* May issue publication date.
- 01 *The Deep 6* spring issue publication date. (D/6)
- 11 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15-21 Safe Boating Week (National)

June 2021

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

July 2021

- 01 Seneca *Drum* July issue publication date.
- 13 Bridge Meeting (1900).
- 23 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles. (D/6)

August 2021

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

September 2021

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

October 2021

- 12 Bridge Meeting (1900)
- 15 Deadline for *The Deep 6* articles (D/6)
- 22 Deadline for *Drum* articles

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.