

# THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Monthly Newsletter for Flotilla 14-2, Arlington

Vol. XLIX - No. 1

January 2024

## FROM THE PILOT HOUSE

To begin this new year of the Signal Bridge I wanted to include some items from earlier editions to give us a sense of our history- where we came from. In my files I happen to come across the letter received from the USCG granting the establishment of 14-02. A copy of that letter can be seen at the end of this newsletter.

To set out our direction for 2024 I thought it would be interesting to me to see what I wrote as FC to lead off the January 2010 edition of the Signal Bridge. The similarities in that message (copied immediately below) and this one is strikingly similar.

*As I envision the life of our flotilla playing out in 2010 I see our future shaped by three groups of people: Experienced/qualified members, current members who are anxious to do more if they were only asked, and new members.*

*Is any one of those categories more important than the others? Some might say yes, I say it depends on the perspective from which one sees the subject. My perspective from the Elected Bridge is to view the responsibilities, capabilities, and energies of the membership to determine the best way to grow the flotilla in a positive manner.*

*A very important part of this next year's plan is to increase the number of people on our membership roles. Stating the obvious, the key is to go where those folks are. An important part of the plan is to combine the flotilla staff officer's responsibilities. I was reinforced in my thinking as I was reading the duties of each of the FSO positions. There is quite a bit of overlap in the written coordination one FSO is required to have with another. That overlap seems a logical route to building our membership. In the area of public awareness, I encourage members with expertise in the various billets of the flotilla to be in attendance at the events from which our new members will come.*

**Again, our effort in 2024 will be centered around recruiting new members to our flotilla. How we accomplish this will be a group effort through a lens focused on Auxiliary RBS: PE, PV, PA, VS and extending to co-events with the USCG recruiting office and the AUXSCOUT program. I've already been in touch with Chief Thompson with the USCG recruiting office in mandarin; he's On Board with working with us. Chuck Hayes is our link to AUXSCOUT so we'll lean heavily on his guidance. Related to that, I've gained permission from the senior BM1 at the Mayport base for any scout troops in the area. Coordinating through Division 14 and Bill Hurlburt, AUC, we'll finalize this for when the weather warms.**

## AUXSCOUT

The Auxiliary - Sea Scout Youth Development (AUXSCOUT) program in District 7 (D7) is growing. Since June, seven AUXSCOUT staff officers have been appointed, including four flotilla staff officers: Lindsey Bond, Dawn Fowler, Deborah Casey, and Daniel Muelhaupt, and three division staff officers: Raquel Ramirez, Michael Martin, and Brice Cook. We have 20 staff members now on the D7 AUXSCOUT team. Fourteen flotillas in eleven divisions are supporting Sea Scout Ships or are developing close partnerships with Sea Scouts in their areas. Auxiliary-Sea Scout partnership paves the way for Sea Scout members to join the Auxiliary. In September, two Sea Scout leaders and one youth enrolled in the Auxiliary. Several applications are in process. We welcome all Auxiliarists, flotillas, and divisions to support AUXSCOUT. We have resources to help you get started. Please



contact Monique Wong, District Staff Officer-AUXSCOUT (DSO-AS), at [mwong.uscgaux@gmail.com](mailto:mwong.uscgaux@gmail.com). Auxiliary Dues for Sea Scout Youth Members After N-Train in March 2023, the National Board and the Chief Director of Auxiliary (CHDIRAUX) approved a recommendation to reduce the national Auxiliary dues for youth members (AL AUX 015/23). Sea Scout Auxiliary members who are 14 through 17 years of age now pay \$12 (a 50% discount) for national dues. Recently, Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach, and Flotilla 22, Allatoona, waived their flotilla dues for youth members. Division 2 is also leading the way in waiving their division dues for youth members.

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason Vanderhaden pose with John Humphrey

Article copied and edited from the Summer edition of The Navigator

## Staff Officer Reports

### Finance

There were no transactions in the flotilla checking account for the month of December that related to flotilla funds except for an interest deposit from VyStar CU. However, there were transactions related to the Auxiliary providing Thanksgiving dinner to the active duty. Those transactions\* are categorized as a Pass Through which means the checking account was used as a vehicle to facilitate the income and distributions of donations received from Auxiliary members, and do not impact flotilla funds. These transactions will appear on the EOY 7025 accounting.

\* The D7 DSO-FN, Donna Miller, was consulted for this action.

## Marine Safety

On the lighter side:

**Dock-** That nasty object that keeps hitting your boat and damaging it.

**Owning a Boat Charter Company-** If you want to end up with a million dollars chartering boats, start with 10 million.

**Ebb tide-** useful to know if it runs at 6 knots and your boat only does 5.

**Man Overboard-** when you do this, shout "I have the keys to the rum locker", this helps in rescue efforts.

**Gaff-** a hook with a barbed point that tells fish that humans are not your friends

Previous Events

Nov 25th Jax Lighted Boat Parade/Fireworks Boat Patrol

Dec 2nd Palm Valley Lighted Boat Parade Boat Patrol

Proposed Events

Jan 25-28 Prime Osborn Boat Show Booth

### 1. Dan Buoy

A float and a pole which is weighted to stay upright with a flag on top and used to locate a Man Overboard. It is thrown off the boat to mark the location of a person in the water.

It is not much good if you are the only person on the boat.

### 2. Sealand

In the North Sea is an offshore platform that is known as Sealand. It is located 12 kilometers from the coast of Great Britain. It has been there since 1967. The Inhabitants want to be their own country, but they are prohibited from doing so.

### 3. Sawfish

Sawfish are on the Endangered Species list. If you catch one, here is what to do. Cut the line when the fish is as close to your pole as you can. Do not touch the fish, do not put the fish in the boat or haul it up on the beach.

Notify FWC at [sawfish@myfwc.com](mailto:sawfish@myfwc.com), or 844 472 9347.

### 4. Alligators

According to the FWC, between 1948 and 2022 there were 453 alligator bites to people. 26 of these bites were fatal.

### 5. Endangered and Threatened

Threatened- likely to become endangered

Endangered- danger of extinction, destruction or reduction.

Protective measures kick in. Ex: feeding lettuce to the starving manatees.

### 6. Warning Labels

Some New boats come with decals advising boaters of unsafe practices. One of these is the On Plane Seating Diagram. Some decals state to Not sit in a pedestal seat during planing speeds. These seats swivel and the potential to eject a person makes them a dangerous seating position.

### 7. Through Hull Fastening

A lot of fasteners with through hull fittings are installed at the factory before the deck and hull are joined. When

you own the boat and want to install an item, then accessibility is restricted. To install an item, first look for any removable items nearby. This might be a stereo speaker, access port for a fuel fitting or transom shower assembly. If you have none of these, an alternative is to cut a hole to fit a round access plate you can buy. They come in 4" 6" or 8" sizes. You can also use toggle type bolts. These bolts have a swivel end that goes in the hole and then turns so they can be tightened.

#### 8. Metro Park Marina

Due to construction, the Marina is closed. A cable prevents boats from entering the area and closed signs indicate you cannot use it. It is not known when it will reopen.

### **Program Visitor**

In this particular Article I will like to inform our Flotilla PVs what is being done to improve our Flotilla PV Program as well as motivating our PVs to go out there and engage with our partners, conduct more visits to local Marinas, Marine Industry Suppliers and Marine Dealers, and to make a good effort in finding local events that we, as the USCG Auxiliary can help/support in promoting Boating Safety.

Before we proceed with the above issues, I need to let you know what good things are happening, as well as some not so good things preventing us from getting there. So, let's start with a few good things that have been going on for the past 2 Quarters of CY – 2023:

- **Recruiting & Mentoring:** The recruiting effort has increased throughout the Flotillas in Division – 14; thanks to the e-responder system and direct recruiting. Our Program Visitation plan should be working the same way – once the recruits gain their BQ status we can approach them to become PV certified and at that time, assign a mentor to help them go through the PV certification process.
- Program Visitation recruitment numbers are still below our goal setting numbers. COVID is gradually moving out and we believe recruitment numbers will begin to increase.
- SO-PV & FSO-PVs are encouraging PVs to visit other establishments such as restaurants, library, barber shops, and so forth (places where people gather). It seems they are gaining confidence and being more pro-active in their search areas. While visiting an establishment, make sure to engage with the business partners as well as the customers. PVs provide a variety of information on safety issues to the customers that will allow them understand boating safety is the primary source in maintaining safety onboard, as well as keeping all passengers alive. It also triggers customer participation and allows them to ask more questions and ask for support and help. Great opportunity to encourage customers to join the Auxiliary.
- Great recruiting efforts going on at Division - 14, & Flotillas 14-01, 14-02, 14-04, 14-07, and 14-08.17 – the PVs are showing positive results in their recruiting efforts. Divisions are reporting several recruits on a monthly basis. PVs need to ensure the recruiting process goes all the way through and the new members are given the opportunity to choose a Program – such as Program Visitation as a “career path”. After that, they need to be fully certified as PVs, receive their ID card, and complete their Core Training. Make sure the PVs share their journey with other PVs; it validates their journey. Here's another thing our PVs are doing that means a lot to the new members - they are keeping in touch with them - that alone validates the process and builds trust and confidence. That in essence should be the start of the mentoring process. SO-PV and FSO-PV should start recommending the new certified PVs to request a Mentor. Whether it is a new member or a member with many years in the Auxiliary, mentors are always there to help throughout their careers in the USCG Auxiliary.

Along with good things come a few negative connotations that require attention and support to get turned around and create a positive situation – let's take a look at a few of them:

- PV Retention continues to be an issue. Some members feel they are not getting recognized and opt to resign or retired. We need to improve on the way we handle the awards – mainly those that come from District; some get

submitted and are slow in coming, if at all. The Goal here is to motivate members to stay in; finding new motivational factors that will help validate the process. This issue is shared by the Divisions and the Flotillas within – need buy-in, as well as input from the Flotillas PVs in how we move forward. Maybe introducing Mentors into the system and processes to help solve the Recruiting and Retention would be a good starting point. Observation, one of the reasons we do not get people in the field conducting PVs (VEs too) is the fear within the new members. We are assigning Mentors for those requesting Mentors. We continue to encouraging members to request Mentors. A Mentor can build confidence, motivation, and trust. We definitely need to improve our programs, processes, goals and objectives - the key here is bringing the Mentoring Program to be the tool that will make this change take place.

- Reports – lack of reporting has been an issue that is presently trending. We are looking into this matter - what is the actual leading factor leading this trend – in order to correct this issue, we need feedback from the PVs out on the field. Preparing, reviewing, and delivering in a timely manner required reports - this process requires improvement - must likely, training might be the key element to bring this change about. I have looked for a Planning and Time Management plan or process in place that can help in preparing robust PV Reports; did not find one in place. Possibly training in Planning, Scheduling and Time Management can be the key element in improving how we do business in the USCG Auxiliary; it will be a great improvement. Planning elements need to be reviewed when accomplishing tasks – this is paramount in a successful outcome. Time Management is a tool of Planning that delivers a Project in a timely manner.
- Overall, many of the issues in our Divisions & Flotillas dealing with Program Visitation (PV) stem from Participation, Communication and the vested interest in the subject of Program Visitation by the Program Visitors (PVs). Since COVID many meetings are now conducted via Zoom. Members find this a form of complacency that just stagnates performance and achievement. Need a new approach to get them motivated and instill in them a sense of achievement and responsibility. Here’s one issue that we are all trying to conquer: Several attempts to hold joint Active Duty/Auxiliary it is not working. However, if we are to continue to follow these attempts it should be done during Boat Shows, Patrols and the Fellowship events & Program Visitation events. Some of these gatherings are a potential source of PVs.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Develop Program Visitation (PV) - Recruitment & Retention Process Improvement (Continuous)
- Certification of PVs – we are in need more PVs certified throughout the Flotillas (Continuous)
- Continue to add PV events to the Flotillas within the Division.
- Review the events coming to Jacksonville on a monthly basis, add them to the schedule and “attend them in force” - contact other Flotillas within the Division and get PVs to join you and attend the events.

## **Flotilla Social**

In December, fourteen members, retired members and spouses gathered for a fun evening at Ole Mexican Restaurant on Atlantic Blvd. A fun evening and good food.

January and February- TBD

Because of my online training for IS every Tuesday and Thursday evenings from JAN 23 – MAR 7 we will have to move our meeting dates to another day in February and March. We will vote on that during our January meeting; we’ll possibly move our nights for our socials too.

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**Below is the establishment letter for our flotilla.**

Our current member, Derek Lloyd is a plank owner. We'll surely do something special to celebrate him.





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Address reply to:  
COMMANDER (ba)  
Seventh Coast Guard District  
Room 1018, Federal Building  
51 SW. 1st Avenue  
Miami, Fla. 33130

4 October 1974

Mr. Alfred G. Distefano, 0701402001  
2331 Ironwood Drive  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

Dear Mr. Distefano:

Effective this date, Flotilla 2, Division XIV, Arlington, Florida is established with a total enrollment of sixteen (16) basically qualified members.

Election certificates will be issued to the duly elected officers as follows:

Commander: Mr. Alfred G. Distefano, 0701402001  
2331 Ironwood Drive  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

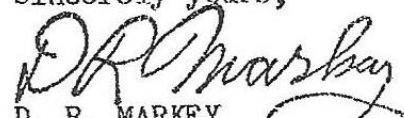
Vice Commander: Mr. Marshall K. Rhodes, 0701402007  
3566 Rogero Rd.  
Jacksonville, Florida 32211

An Officers Manual will be issued to you as Flotilla Commander. UPON EXPIRATION OF YOUR TERM OF OFFICE, YOU WILL TRANSFER THE MANUAL TO YOUR SUCCESSOR. General management of the flotilla is to be in accordance with instruction set forth in the Auxiliary Manual, CG-305.

Membership cards and certificates and a copy of the CG-305 will be issued to all members. A decal of Inspection will be issued to all members having a facility.

On behalf of the Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District, the Commodore, all officers and members of the Seventh District Auxiliary, I extend my congratulations on the chartering of this flotilla.

Sincerely yours,

  
D. R. MARKEY  
Commander, U. S. Coast Guard  
Director of Auxiliary

Copy to:  
District Board & Staff  
Flotilla Commanders XIV  
NACO