



“Always Ready”

Division 26 — Western North Carolina District Fifth Southern Region

Lakes Badin, Hickory, Norman, and Wylie

August 2024

Celebrating New Space for Auxiliary Activities

Joshua Murray Boating Safety and Awareness Initiative at Blythe Landing Dedicated



On 18 May 2024, family and friends of Joshua Murray, local law enforcement officers, members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the boating public gathered at Blythe Landing in the town of Cornelius in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for the dedication of the *Joshua Murray Boating Safety and Awareness Initiative*. Old-timers will remember this building as a lakeside commissary. The building has now been turned into a vibrant resource for providing boating safety information, a classroom for teaching boating safety education, and a space for providing radio guard while Division 26 auxiliarians and marine police units are on patrol on Lake Norman.



Family of Joshua Murray delivers remarks. Photo by K. Riggan

The Boating and Safety and Awareness Initiative is established in honor of Joshua Murray, a Cornelius police officer who passed away from a massive pulmonary embolism while off duty. Officer Murray was known to be an excellent law enforcement officer with a big heart. Boating safety was his mission in life and establishment of this initiative is a step forward in continuing that mission. Another force behind this initiative is an increased awareness of the need for boating safety awareness and education following multiple drownings on Lake Norman in recent years.



Z Nazif, DCDR, Division 26, addresses the attendees.

Photo by K. Riggan

The space will be shared by law enforcement officers, members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Lake Norman Marine Commission, and several other local organizations committed to fostering a safe boating environment and providing boating safety education. Before entering into this partnership, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was established between Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary for the purpose of collaborating on initiatives to promote safe boating practices. Members of Division 054-26 are in the process of establishing a radio station at Blythe Landing. The new tower will enable watch standers to contact the far reaches of Lake Norman.



Radio station and room for educational material available to the public Photo by K. Riggan

Highlights of Dedication at Blythe Landing



Darrin Sanchez, FC, 26-03; Richard Croasdale, FSO-HR, FSO-OP, FSO-PE, 26-02; Z. Nazif, DCDR, Division 26. Photo by K. Riggan



Flotilla 26-04 members: James Barton, FSO-AS, FSO-MT; Tony Marciano, VFC; Pierre Rheeder; and Sydney Newcombe, FC. Photo by K. Riggan



Loaner life jackets available at the life jacket stand. Photo by K. Riggan



Jet ski damaged in an accident on display. Photo by K. Riggan



Vessel Safety Checks available for the entire day. Photo by K. Riggan

First Classes at *Joshua Murray Boating Safety and Awareness Initiative*

The inaugural “Boat America” class held in the classroom at the new Joshua Murray Boating Safety and Awareness Initiative at Blythe Landing was a huge success. On 27 July 2024, ten students, including one under the age of 17, were welcomed at Blythe Landing in Cornelius, North Carolina, by George Brinzey of the Cornelius Police Department (CPD). He spoke briefly about Joshua Murray’s love of Lake Norman, his dedication to boating safety, and the formation of the facility dedicated to his memory. The class was hosted by the CPD, in partnership with the USCG Auxiliary, and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation.

Before class, students were treated to coffee and pastries donated by a local vendor.

Lunch was also graciously provided by a local vendor. Instructing the class were Auxiliarists James Barton, Steve Riggan, John Dibbins and Scott Wigginton, all from Flotilla 26-04. In the future, the CG Auxiliary, marine police officers, and other organizations dedicated to boating safety will be offering boating safety education classes at Blythe Landing.



Steve Riggan instructing.

Photo by S. Wigginton

Above submitted by Scott Wigginton, Flotilla 26-04



Mark Briggs instructing.

Photo by B. Butlin

On 26 July, 2024, members of Division 26 had the opportunity to be part of the Cornelius Police Department’s Summer Day Camp at Blythe Landing on Lake Norman, North Carolina. One of the activities was teaching the youth how auxiliarists check boats for safety. In the photo, Mark Briggs, 26-02, can be seen instructing the children in the new classroom at the Joshua Murray Boating Safety and Awareness Initiative. Tom Edwards, 26-02 and Steve Riggan, 26-04 also assisted. The children also were treated to rides on the police boat, a beach hunt, and ice cream.

Submitted by Beverly Butlin, Flotilla 26-02

District 5th Southern Region D-Train

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Fifth District Southern Region conducted their District Training in Glen Allen, Virginia on 4-7 April 2024. Informative presentations were provided by CDR David Otani, Director of Auxiliary, Fifth District Southern Region; District Commodore John Krogmann, and CDR (Ret) Eric May, ADSO-HR, FC 06-03.

One of the highlights was the availability of the Flotilla Leadership Course which is a great asset for members interested in serving as a flotilla elected leader. Additional classes available were Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/First Aid, Risk Management/Team Coordination Training (RM/TCT) refresher, Operations, Communications, and Vessel Examiner Workshops, Social Media Training, and Paddle Craft Training. Sector roundtable discussions, receptions, and meals together allowed plenty of time for networking.



CDR David Otani, DIRAUX, delivers remarks at the Banquet. Photo by S. Eifried



Commodore John Krogmann speaks at the D5SR District Board Meeting on Friday. Photo by S. Eifried



CDR (Ret) Eric May presents tips for successful Human Resource programs. Photo by S. Eifried



Division 26 attendees gather together before the banquet. From left: Scott Wigginton, 26-04; Sandra Stewart, 26-04; Z. Nazif, DCDR, 26-01; Mark Briggs, 26-02; Dave Ray, 26-02; Gary Eifried, 26-04; Sharon Eifried, 26-04.

Public Affairs Events

Fire Station 1 in Tega Cay, South Carolina

Submitted by Beverly Butlin, Flotilla 26-02

On 11 May 2024, shipmates from Flotilla 26-02 were present at Fire Station #1 on Stonecrest Boulevard in Tega Cay, South Carolina to provide a lesson in water safety to children and adults. Emphasis was placed on the importance of wearing life jackets.

Beverly Butlin engaged the children by reading a Paw Patrols book about water safety. Tom Edwards, Jim King, and Patrick Hughes, FSO-CM, handed out whistles and activity books to the children. Parents were provided with information about boating safety courses and the correct way to choose the right life jacket for their children.

The flotilla thanks the Tega Cay firefighters for hosting the event and allowing the USCG Auxiliary to be an active part of the activities of the day. All in all, this was a successful Public Affairs event and everyone had a great time!



Tom Edwards, Flotilla 26-02, provides handouts for attendees. Photo by B. Butlin



Beverly Butlin reads as fire fighters interact with children. Photo by T. Edwards

Safe Harbor Kings Point in Cornelius, North Carolina

Submitted by Sharon Eifried, Flotilla 26-04

On 15 June, 2024, members of Division 26 stepped up to participate in a fun day at Safe Harbor Kings Point. This was a fantastic opportunity to engage recreational boaters in boating safety education. Literature, coloring books, maps of Lake Norman, and children's life jackets were available for distribution.

In addition, many boat owners took advantage of the opportunity for a vessel safety check (VSC). At Kings Point, the value of a VSC is always emphasized, and boaters strive to comply with all safety requirements.



Steve Riggan and Sharon Eifried, 26-04
Photo by B. Butlin



Beverly Butlin, 26-02 and Steve Riggan, 26-04
Photo by S. Eifried

Boat Crew Training Lake Wylie, South Carolina

Information submitted by Beverly Butlin, 26-02

Photos by Darrin Sanchez, Flotilla 26-03

On 29 April 2024, auxiliaries from multiple flotillas in Division 26 trained together on Lake Wylie, South Carolina. Dave Wascher, 26-01; Mark Briggs and Rick Croasdale, 29-02; and Darrin Sanchez, 26-01 conducted multiple two-boat towing drills in order to meet yearly currency requirements to maintain boat crew qualification and to increase proficiency. An added goal was to practice optimizing professionalism when serving the public and when training new auxiliary members.



Removal of Hazards to Navigation

Submitted by Richard Croasdale, Flotilla 26-02

On the morning of 7 June 2024, members of Division 26 embarked on a maritime observation patrol on Lake Wylie in South Carolina. On OPFAC 21952 was Rick Croasdale, Flotilla 26-02, as coxswain and Darrin Sanchez, Flotilla 26-03, as crew. David Washer, Flotilla 26-01, joined the patrol with his personal water craft (PWC), OPFAC 10849. It turned out that the mission was very productive in making Lake Wylie a safer waterway.

During the patrol, the vessels encountered multiple hazards to safe navigation and were able to intervene and dispose of problematic items safely.

While on his PWC, Auxiliarist Wascher was able to secure a line to a large piece of wood and remove it from the lake. The wood was deposited on the boat ramp at Charlotte Fire Station 38.



While motoring in the same vicinity a misplaced “No Wake” buoy was located on the shore of a cove. The buoy appeared to be one that was missing from the area near where a bridge passes over the cove on Shopton Road West. The buoy appeared to be at least a quarter of a mile out of position. The buoy was also towed to the boat ramp at Fire Station 38.

The third and last item that was discovered during the June 7th patrol was a 30 foot section of a tree floating in the middle of Lake Wylie. David Wascher was able to secure a line to the tree and tow it to shore. The auxiliarists on this patrol managed to make navigation on Lake Wylie much safer. This was a mission that made a difference.



Auxiliary Joins Law Enforcement Exercise

On 8 April 2024 several members of Division 26 participated in a Law Enforcement Exercise spearheaded by the Cornelius Police Department (CPD) on Lake Norman, North Carolina. Additional marine units joined from Lincoln, Catawba and Iredell Counties. Gary Eifried, John Dibbins, and Sydney Newcombe from Flotilla 26-04 and Mark Briggs from Flotilla 26-02 participated as boat crew and Allen James, Flotilla 26-04, provided radio guard.

This year, the exercise focused on the response to medical trauma emergencies on the lake. The exercise began with an excellent presentation by a member of the CPD emphasizing emergency casualty care with emphasis on boating accidents. Stations were established that focused on broken bones, penetrating wounds, and propeller contact wounds.



Exercise participants gather for morning briefing. Photo by M. Briggs



Enroute to the exercise. Photo by M. Briggs

The morning air temperature was chilly, but the water temperature was just above 60 degrees, making Mustang suits unnecessary. Over the course of the morning, coxswain Gary Eifried, with crewmember, Mark Briggs, provided a safety zone with OPFAC 22724 for an event in which first responders required divers in the water. John Dibbins and Sydney Newcombe were called upon to role play trauma victims in need of assistance.

Auxiliary members were able to conduct navigation training drills during the law enforcement exercise and while enroute to home dock. The area of Lake Norman that was traversed was Ramsey Creek in Cornelius, and Blythe Landing in Huntersville, North Carolina. Participating in these exercises helps to solidify the relationship between members of the law enforcement units on Lake Norman and auxiliaries. Both have the same mission: saving lives through boating safety missions and education.



Planning navigation drill. Photo by M. Briggs



Gary Eifried's facility, OPFAC 22724, joins law enforcement marine units for a law enforcement and medical response exercise on Lake Norman. Photo by G. Eifried

Law Enforcement Calls on Auxiliary for Assistance

Search for Drowning Victim

Early in the morning on Friday, 5 July 2024, a call was sent out by Cornelius Police Department for help with keeping boaters away from a search scene on Lake Norman, North Carolina. The day before, on the busy July 4th holiday, a swimmer had entered the water, did not surface, and rescue units were unable to find the swimmer. Coxswain Gary Eifried rose to the occasion, obtained orders from Coast Guard Station Elizabeth City, recruited John Dibbins as crew and Sharon Eifried as radio guard and set off in OPFAC 22724 to assist with screening as search teams looked for the drowning victim. It was essential to try to keep recreational boaters not only from entering the area, but try to limit boaters stirring the waters which hampers the effectiveness of the sonar.

Additionally, Sharon Eifried broadcast a SECURITE message on Chanel 16 every 30 minutes, requesting all boaters to avoid the sandbar at Day Marker D4 on Lake Norman. On Saturday, Gary Eifried broadcast a SECURITE message every 30 minutes during the day. Using SONAR equipment, the search team finally located the body of the victim at 2330 on Saturday. It was a sad day, a life lost, a lesson learned too late. Thank you to the first responders and to those that strive to get out the boating safety message.



Dragon Boat Race on Lake Norman

Photos by John Dibbins, Flotilla 26-04



On May 11, 2024 the Charlotte Dragon Boat race was held at Ramsey Creek Park in Cornelius, North Carolina. Dragon boat racing is a team competition of Chinese tradition.

Throughout the day, boats line up on the shore and race to the finish line while drums keep the rowers on the beat. The same boat can be used multiple times by different crews. In 2024 there were 27 races with the awards ceremony occurring at 1530.

Every year, the Cornelius Police Department sends out a call for the Auxiliary to help provide screening to keep recreational boaters away from the racers. This year coxswain Gary Eifried and crew members Hap James and John Dibbins were able to assist. In the photo to the right, the crew can be seen chatting with Officer George Brinzey of the Cornelius Police Department.



Cub Scouts Learn About Boating Safety

Submitted by Sharon Eifried, Flotilla 26-04

On 1 May, 2024, members of Flotilla 26-04 traveled to Huntersville, North Carolina to present a boating safety class to Cub Scout Pack 222. Thirty scouts rotated between one station focused on proper wearing of life jackets and a second station focused on what is necessary to be safe on a boat. Following consultation with the scout leaders, the following scouting topics were included in the class content.



1. Show how to safely help someone who needs assistance in the water, without having to enter the water yourself.
2. Identify five different types of boats.
3. Show that you can put on and fasten a life jacket correctly
4. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in swimming or boating.
5. Explain the importance of response personnel or lifeguards in a swimming area. Tell how the buddy system works and why it is important.
6. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in boating.
7. Identify the safety equipment needed when going boating.
8. Show how to do both a reach rescue and a throw rescue.

Auxiliarists John Dibbins, Gary and Sharon Eifried, Hap James, Sydney Newcombe, Jarrett and Pierre Rheeder, and Scott Wigginton interacted with scouts, parents, and leaders while teaching and assisting scouts to try on life jackets and handle safety equipment. The scouts were very enthusiastic, responding positively to the invitation to participate. Parents were attentive, asked questions, and verbalized appreciation for the class. Once again, auxiliarists were in the community, making a difference while completing the mission of providing boating safety education.



The first lesson is what happens if your life jacket is too big!

This is followed by fitting the scouts with a life jacket that fits properly and teaching how to determine a correct fit by lifting the jacket up by the shoulders. Photos by S. Newcombe.

Check Your USCG Auxiliary Knowledge !!!

Submitted by Gary Eifried, Flotilla 26-04

Answers can be found on the next page.

1. Your boat is at Kings Point Marina on Lake Norman. You want to go to the Peninsula Yacht Club. The distance is approximately 3.2 nautical miles. Approximately, how long will it take if you are doing 10 knots?

- a- 32 minutes b- 19 minutes c- 26 minutes d- 12 minutes

2. A boat compass points to:

- a- True North b- Magnetic North c- Chart north d-Compass north



3. We are in Coast Guard Auxiliary District 5 South. We are in Coast Guard District...

- a- 5 South b- 5 North c- District 1 d- District 5

4. An inflatable PFD can be worn on (choose all that apply)

- a- Pontoon Boats b-Bow riders c-Paddle craft d- Jet skis



5. While auxiliaries normally do not salute each other, you should salute if you meet the Auxiliary District Commodore (in uniform).

- a- True b-False

6. If a jet ski has navigation lights installed by the owner, the jet ski can be used at night.

- a- True b- False



7. Division 054-26 has how many Flotillas? (Give a number)

8. Lake Wylie is in which state?

9. If there is a disaster on the North Carolina coast, you can self-activate and link up with another flotilla there to help.

- a- True b-False

10. The Boat America course certification, which we award, is valid for 5 years after course completion.

- a- True b-False



USCG Auxiliary Knowledge: How Did You Score?

Answers to the Quiz Found on Previous Page

1. **About 19 minutes.** Distance= speed x time so $\frac{3.2 \text{ nm}}{10 \text{ nm/hr}} = \text{time (hr.)} > 0.32 \text{ hr. or } 19.2 \text{ min}$

2. **d- Compass North.**

While a compass naturally points to magnetic north, a boat compass experiences additional deviation from the electronics and metal on the boat, which must be taken into account.



3. **d- 5.**

The Coast Guard District 5 (or Fifth District) consists of the states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, the District of Columbia, and parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

4. **a, b, and c.**

Inflatable PFDs cannot be worn on a jet ski. They also cannot be worn by children under 17, or when water skiing.



5. **Although it's clearly not required, I would salute the Commodore as a sign of respect.** According to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, saluting is not required between Auxiliary members. However, saluting is a way to show respect and appreciation for the time and effort that Auxiliary members volunteer. Saluting is also proper when greeting members of the Armed Forces, including officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS).

6. **b. False.** Jet skis cannot be used between sunset and sunrise, even if equipped with after-market navigation lights.



7. **D26 has 6 Flotillas:** 26-01: Lake Norman, 26-02: Lake Wylie, 26-03: Davidson, 26-04: Lake Norman West, 26-05: NC Western Foothills (Lake Hickory), 26-07-Badin Lake.

8. **Lake Wylie is partially in North Carolina, partially in South Carolina.**

This makes it a lake under USCG jurisdiction.

9. **b. False.** You cannot self-activate, you must be assigned by appropriate authority. See Chapter 5, Section J, of the Auxiliary Manual

10. **b. False.** The Boat America course certification does not expire.



Awards for Auxiliary Members



Sydney Newcombe, FC, 26-04, receives award for inspirational leadership and broad administrative skills as a Program Visitor. Photo by B. Butlin



Holly Schneeman receives 2023 Boat Crew Member of the Year and David Schneeman receives 2023 Coxswain of the Year Award for Flotilla 26-04. Photo by S. Eifried



Sydney Newcombe, FC, 26-04, presents certificates to the above pictured members. From left: John Dibbins for crew qualification, Jarrett Rheeder and Pierre Rheeder for vessel examiner qualification. Photos by S. Eifried



Scott Wigginton is honored for superior performance of duty over 5250 cumulative hours of outstanding service and support, beginning in March 2007. Photo by S. Eifried



From left, John Dibbins, Sharon Eifried, and Gary Eifried are acknowledged with challenge coins for screening assistance on Lake Norman. Photo by S. Eifried

Vessel Safety Checks



In Tega Cay, South Carolina, on 11 March 2024, Mark Onoszko, Flotilla 26-02 conducts a very complete Vessel Safety Check on Lake Wylie. On this day, auxiliaries completed a total of 14 Vessel Safety Checks. Photo by B. Butlin



On 16 March 2024, members of Flotilla 26-02 conducted vessel safety checks at Allison Creek Park in York, South Carolina for the first time. Mark Briggs can be seen on board a boat conducting one of the 10 vessel safety checks completed. Photo by B. Butlin



Save the Date! **District 5th Southern Region D-Train**

Date: 5-8 September 2024
Place: Richmond Marriott Hotel
Short Pump, Virginia

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Feedback, articles, pictures are most welcome and should be sent to: Sharon Eifried, Editor, seifried@towson.edu.

