



“Always Ready”

Division 26 — Western North Carolina East District Southern Region

Lakes Badin, Hickory, Norman, and Wylie

September 2025

Boating Safety Education For Children ***Top Priority for Division 26***

Following a brain-storming session with Katie Jost, Executive Director of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte, members of Division 26 decided to embark on a newly created boating safety education class for watersports campers during the week of 4 August 2025. The campers, between the ages of 8 and 14, participated in boating, wakeboarding, and waterskiing while at camp.



Katie Jost reviewing plan.



Practicing the cleat hitch.

Auxiliary members experienced with teaching children boating safety put their heads together, consulted the Boats 'n Kids course, the Boat America course, and the content that was already being taught by camp counselors. The allotted time was 1.5 to 2 hours. The instructors presented their plan to Katie and the camp counselors and all gave an enthusiastic go-ahead.

Six instructors spent an awesome 2 hours teaching the children and staff. All appeared eager to learn. The content included knot tying for the bowline, cleat hitch, and clove hitch; navigation rules using boat models; water rescue techniques such as reach and throw; differences in life jackets, and the correct response if a canoe capsizes.



Teaching rules of navigation.

A small class allowed for lots of one-on-one teaching. Evaluation of this year's class provided important information related to the ideal number of instructors, the equipment needed and the time required for each activity. The class was well received by Katie and the staff at the YMCA and there is a request to repeat the class at summer camp next year. This endeavor was a win-win for everyone.



Practicing reaching for water rescue.



Captive audience for learning about safety on the water.



Instructors, from left: M. Briggs, S. Eifried, T. Edwards, S. Riggan, J. Rheeder, J. Barton.

Sea Scout Ship 459 Holds Quarterdeck Meeting

Submitted by Pierre Rheeder, Flotilla 26-4, Mate for Ship 459



Sea Scout Ship 459, chartered by USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 054-26-4, conducted their first bi-annual Quarterdeck planning meeting for 2025 during the weekend of 15-17 August. A quarterdeck, for the Sea Scouts, is basically a meeting attended by all scouts and leaders, in order to plan activities and appoint a scout, with a leader mentor, to chair the activity.



We asked Steve and Kimberly Riggan, who live on Lake Norman and are members of our flotilla, if we could camp for the weekend on their property and they gave permission. We have camped there before and I guess we behaved.

The scouts arrived Friday evening and after setting up camp, they conducted Part One of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Sea Scouts. The whole weekend was completely youth planned and led.

Saturday morning, after breakfast, four members of the Antique & Classic Boat Society (ACBS) visited us to show off their antique boats and share information. Quartermaster Jarrett Rheeder taught the scouts how to do a vessel safety check and they inspected the boats. All of the boats passed.



The scouts enjoyed rides around the lake on the antique boats. The boats available for rides included a 1950 22-ft. Chris-Craft Model U-22; a 1956 18-ft. Shepherd Runabout; a 1963 21-ft. Lyman Runabout; and a 1994 27-ft. Grady-White.

After lunch, Steve Riggan took us out on his new boat and taught the scouts about aids to navigation. Kimberly Riggan allowed the scouts to do their planning meeting inside around the dining room table. What a welcome relief from the heat.

The scouts cooked dinner and completed Part Two of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Sea Scouts. Sunday morning, one of the scouts, Alex, led the scouts in a Scout Worship Service.

A board of review was held for scout David, who earned his Ordinary Sea Scout rank. The Ordinary rank follows the Apprentice rank and requires the scout to be active in the Ship, demonstrate leadership skills, and gain knowledge in areas such as seamanship, piloting, safety, and communication.

Everyone helped clean up and the scouts departed around 1200. This was an awesome weekend and we are grateful to the Riggans who allowed us to take over their place of peace and quiet for the weekend.



Fun, Travel, and Adventure

An Auxiliary Cook at Emerald Isle

Submitted by Gary Eifried, Flotilla 26-4



In July, the East District Southern Region DSO-CA (Culinary Assistant) put out a call for 6 weeks of CA support at Station Emerald Isle, due to the regular Culinary Specialist (CS) going on paternity leave. Having just graduated from CA training, along with Tony Marciano and John Dibbins of 26-4, and knowing how my wife likes the beach, I put my name down for one of the weeks in August. We stayed in a condo, but billeting is available for singles.

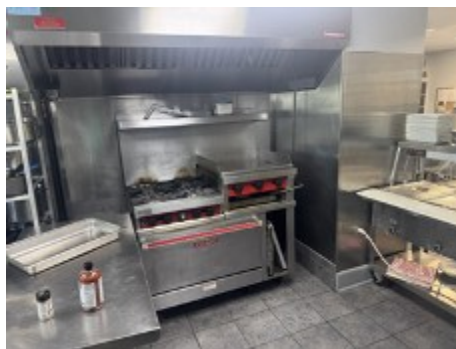
The assignment was to prepare breakfast and lunch for approximately 10-12 Coasties daily. At first it seemed like I would be on my own in the kitchen, which was kind of scary, but then a reservist CS signed up for the same period and I was a true assistant.



Station Emerald Isle is a small-boat station located at the south end of Emerald Isle, North Carolina, about 2 hours by road from Wilmington. There are two OPFACs at the station. One is a 45 Response Boat Medium (RBM) and the other is a 27 Special Purpose Craft Shallow Water (SPC-SWII) which is pictured on the right.



The station has approximately twenty-one assigned personnel, but not all are on duty at the same time. Therefore, meals were usually prepared for about ten people. One day, a group from Sector North Carolina was present, so there were a few more to feed.



The galley itself is small with a fairly ancient gas stove and griddle, a refrigerator, a freezer and storage cabinets. Meals are served from a heated serving line, and the crew eats in a small dining area with two tables. This space doubles as a meeting and training area.

On the first day, Officer in Charge, BMC Kenneth MacDougall, and Executive Petty Officer, BMC Kyle Vaders, welcomed me and stated how appreciative they are for Auxiliary

support. Their COMM Watchstander is an Auxiliarist who is there every day from 0800-1200! The majority of the Coasties were in the 18-28 age group and could not have been more friendly and complimentary of what we were doing. They cleaned their plates pretty well!



I learned a lot about “mass” cooking techniques from the reservist CS and really enjoyed my afternoons on the beach. Overall, this was a fantastic experience! I recommend that anyone who has a chance to spend time at a CG Station, in any capacity, take advantage of that opportunity.

East District Southern D-Train

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, East District Southern Region, conducted District Training in Glen Allen, Virginia on 10-13 April 2025. Engaging presentations were provided by Rear Admiral John "Jay" Vann, Commander, Coast Guard East District; District Commodore James Thomas; and David Gamble, District Chief of Staff. Several educational courses were offered and opportunities for meeting new people, critiquing the past, and planning for the future occurred every day.

The following members of Flotilla 26-4 successfully completed one of the educational courses offered.

Gary Eifried: ICS-300, the Intermediate Incident Command System Course

Sharon Eifried: AUX-12, C-School leading to qualification for Public Affairs Specialist 3 (entry level)

Tony Marciano: AFLC, the Auxiliary Flotilla Leadership Course

Pierre Rheeder: AFLC, the Auxiliary Flotilla Leadership Course

Additional members of Division 26 who attended D-Train include Z Nazif, DCDR, David Ray, VCDR, Mark Briggs, FC, Flotilla 26-2, and Sandra Stewart, Flotilla 26-4. Formal and informal networking occurred with Division 26 well represented.



Fellowship Dinner: CDR David Otani, Sharon Eifried and Gary Eifried (26-4), Commodore Jim Thomas, Commodore Michele Thornton, Dave Gamble, DCOS. Photo by P. Rheeder



Lunchtime Fun: Gary Eifried, 26-4; Mark Briggs, 26-2; Jerome Ix, 08-1; Emogene Adkins, 08-3; Steve Holcomb, 08-3; Dave Ray, 26-2; Z. Nazif, 26-1; Pierre Rheeder, 26-4.

Photo by S. Eifried



Saturday Banquet: Gary Eifried, 26-4; Sandra Stewart, 26-4; Commodore John Krogmann; Mark Briggs, FC, 26-2; Dave Ray, VCDR, 054-26.

Photo by S. Eifried



Dave Ray, VCDR, Division 26, chats during break with Commodore Jim Thomas, East District Southern Region.

Photo by S. Eifried



Spotlight on Members of 26-3

Ensign Lundon Livingston

Members of Division 26 are proud of Lundon Livingston, an auxiliary member of Flotilla 26-3 since 2020, as he graduates from the Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI-01-25) Course, a Leadership Development Training Course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. The mission of the ROCI program is to prepare officer candidates to serve effectively as officers in the U. S. Coast Guard Reserves. Candidates must exhibit traits such as team work, integrity and professionalism.

On graduation day, 21 August, 2025, Lundon J. Livingston received his commission into the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve from Admiral Tiffany Danko, Assistant Commandant for the Reserve and Director of the Coast Guard Reserve. Lundon will serve on the Intelligence Staff at Sector Charleston.



Auxiliarist Claire Northup



During a recent Division 26 meeting, Claire Northrup was celebrated as a new member of Flotilla 26-3. Claire received her New Member Certificate from Z Nazif, DCDR, and Darrin Sanchez, FC Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 26-3.

As Claire joins the CG Auxiliary, she celebrates completing the Coast Guard Academy Introduction Mission (AIM) Program as an honor graduate. The participants of the AIM program are high school students who spend six days testing themselves in mind, body, and spirit through experiences in the

classroom, on the water, and in the field. Claire also celebrates being accepted into the class of 2030 at the Coast Guard Academy.

Claire is entering her senior year at Cannon School in Concord, North Carolina. In high school, she is in the leadership program and the science Olympiad program. She sits as first cellist in the varsity orchestra and is on the varsity swim team.

In her pre-AIM reflection, Claire stated that receiving an appointment to the Coast Guard Academy has been a life long goal of hers. The members of Division 26 are pleased to be part of her journey and welcome her to the CG Auxiliary.

Vessel Safety Checks on Lake Wylie

Ebenezer Park, Rock Hill, South Carolina

Submitted by Beverly Butlin, Flotilla 26-2



On 31 May 2025, members of Lake Wylie Flotilla conducted a community relations day with "Coastie" at Ebenezer Park. The team of Mark Briggs, Beverly Butlin, Adam DeLuca, Jim Francisco and David Wascher, conversed with boaters and the general public about boating safety.

Vessel Safety Checks were conducted on 12 boats. Children and adults were entertained with the antics of Coastie.

The team was strategically located between the ramps and the playground which resulted in high interest and lots of interaction with attendees. York County and Ebenezer Park were so pleased with the event that the flotilla was invited back and held another event on 2 August.



Ebenezer Park, Rock Hill, South Carolina

Submitted by Beverly Butlin, Flotilla 26-2

On 2 August 2025 shipmates from Flotilla 26-2 were pleased to visit Ebenezer Park in Rock Hill, South Carolina on Lake Wylie to perform free vessel safety checks and speak with the visiting public regarding recreational boating safety. Although the weather presented a challenge, 5 vessel safety checks were performed by the team.

Mark Briggs, FC, Beverly Butlin, VFC, Adam DeLuca, FSO-VE and Jim Francisco were in attendance at the event. Mark Briggs took the opportunity to educate a new boater, although a VSC was not performed on the boater's new boat. The team gave out whistles and spoke with several kayakers.

The park management was happy to have the Auxiliary come out. Overall, it was a productive event. The team looks forward to serving at this location again in the future.



Two Boat Drills Lake Wylie, North Carolina

Information and photos by Mark Briggs, FC, 26-2 and Darrin Sanchez, FC, 26-3

On 17 August 2025, in pursuit of technical mastery of seamanship and rescue skills, the Lake Wylie and Davidson Flotillas conducted multiple two-boat towing drills while enduring high summer heat on Lake Wylie near Buster Boyd Landing. Despite difficult conditions, the crew rose to the occasion and mitigated the situation through teamwork and watching out for each other.

The necessary drills promoted everyone's proficiency, competency, cooperation, and endurance. The exercise built confidence, thereby resulting in foreseeable tangible gains in the name of eventual new crew and coxswain. Those participating were Mark Briggs, Rick Croasdale, Darrin Sanchez, David Washer, and Ray Webber.



American Red Cross Training

Information and photos by Beverly Butlin VFC, 26-2

Members of Flotillas 26-2 and 26-3 gathered in Waxham, North Carolina on Saturday, 28 June 2025, to attend the practical portion of an American Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED and Administering Emergency Oxygen Course. Students were required to take the online portion of the course prior to attending the hands-on skills part of the course.



Those attending were Beverly Butlin, Rick Croasdale, Jim Francisco, Larry Hoover, Betty Laimak, Aspen Nairn, and Rob Starnes. Everyone passed!



Safety Patrol for Black Boat Weekend



Crew of operational facilities from Division 26 provided safety patrols for the Lake Day Party that occurred as part of Black Boat Weekend on 19 July 2025 at Lake Norman, North Carolina. Multiple agencies used boats, jet skis and drone platforms to monitor for safety. It was reported that 500 boats and 3500 people attended the party. The boats anchored off Dog Island in Mooresville.



Members of Division 26 aboard auxiliary facility with D. Sanchez at the helm. Photo by H. Schneeman



G. Eifried, T. Marciano, H. Schneeman, Flotilla 26-4 Photo by H. Schneeman



Aquatic car came out for some fun. Photo by H. Schneeman



Fire boat training during the day. Photo by H. Schneeman

Opening the USCGAUX Radio at Blythe Landing

The CGAUX Blythe Landing Radio Station at Joshua Murray Boating Education, Safety, and Awareness Center officially opened its VHF marine radio station on 17 May 2025. The purpose of the radio is to support on-the-water communications with VHF marine radio users on Lake Norman. Mariners are able to report unsafe conditions and hail help when problems occur.

Auxiliary radio watchstanders are using the radio for Division 26 patrols and find that the signal covers most of the entire 50 square miles of the lake. This is a great improvement in coverage. To help celebrate the occasion, CDR John Suckow, Deputy Sector Commander, Sector North Carolina traveled to Lake Norman to greet attendees and offer remarks.



CDR John Suckow delivers remarks. Photo by K. Riggan

The radio opening was held in conjunction with Lake Norman's Safe Summer Launch Day, a family-friendly community event that sponsored fun activities, food, and boating safety instruction. Members of Division 26 conducted a safety patrol, set up a PA booth and performed VSC's. Radio and TV station WCNC interviewed Auxiliary member, Steve Riggan, and broadcast a story promoting safe boating.



Tony Marciano conducting radio watch. Photo by K. Riggan



Steve Riggan introducing CDR Suckow. Photo by K. Riggan

Cardboard Boat Race on Lake Norman

Photos by David Wascher, Flotilla 26-2

On 3 May 2025, seven boats made from cardboard and duct tape launched from Ramsey Creek Park in Cornelius, North Carolina. The boats in the regatta sported names such as "Sea Ya," and "Soggy Bottom."



On this day, two facilities from Division 26 helped the marine police provide a screen to keep recreational boaters at a distance. Because the lake was a bit rough that day, it was amazing that only two boats sank. Other boats lost some parts, but all were recovered and safe by the end of the race.



The many spectators did lots of cheering and enjoyed the creative and playful designs of all the boats. The designers are now busy planning an engineering feat that will make it off the beach and not sink too soon next year!

Making a Difference



Seven adult students passed the Boat America class taught in Fort Mill, South Carolina on 23 August 2025. Trainee instructor Claire Northrup taught Chapter One. Claire has jumped right in after joining Division 26 and being accepted at the USCGA. Beverly Butlin, Rick Croasdale, and David Ray taught the remaining chapters.



Jim Francisco earns his Vessel Examiner Certificate.



Adam Deluca stays very busy as a vessel examiner.



Scott Wigginton teaches how to operate Coastie. He earned his 8th Sustained Auxiliary Award this year.



Jarrett Rheeder at the helm. So far this year Jarrett has completed 187 VSCs!

The United States Coast Guard Guardian Ethos

I am America's Maritime Guardian.
I serve the citizens of the United States.
I will protect them.
I will defend them.
I will save them.
I am their Shield.
For them I am Semper Paratus.
I live the Coast Guard core values.
I am a Guardian
We are the United States Coast Guard.



**The name of our district has changed, but
we are still FABULOUS!**

**We are the
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
East District Southern Region**

The new seal can be seen to the left.

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

