



FLOT Lines

Flotilla 74 Brandon

District 7

USCG Auxiliary

Issue 1 2022

A Bittersweet Holiday Gathering: Celebrating the Season and Wishing Old Friends Goodbye.

By Dorothy Riley, FSO-PB



Elaine and James Nabach resigned from the Auxiliary December 2021. They are shown here holding framed certificates of appreciation presented by William Sage on behalf of Flotilla 74 Brandon members. Photo by Richard Strehl

Flotilla 74 Brandon held its December meeting outdoors under the carport. The evening of Dec. 14 began with a brief meeting followed by food and fellowship. The members played games and enjoyed themselves.

Unlike in previous years, the celebration did not feature a "Dirty Santa." Instead, we handed out door prizes and played Bingo. William Sage bid James and Elaine Nabach farewell with framed certificates of appreciation and tokens gifts to express the members' gratitude.

For some members, this was their last meeting with Flotilla 74 Brandon. Members James and Elaine Nabach resigned from the Auxiliary, and Frank Goyco and Galen Johnston transferred to Flotilla 75 Apollo Beach. We will miss them and former member Ronald Matz who recently passed away. Fair winds and following seas!

May 2022 be a productive and successful year for our flotilla! Ω



Left: Our 'hosts,' Brenda Nanius, Flotilla Vice Commander (e) and William Sage, Flotilla Commander (e).

Right: Frank Goyco, Flotilla Commander at the holiday celebration. Frank is returning to Flotilla 75 Apollo Beach after serving as Flotilla 74 Brandon commander. Photos by Dottie Riley



FLOT Lines



Flotilla Staff Officers

August Miller
Navigation Systems

Gerald Banach
Member Training

Richard Strehl
Public Education

George Ppabeis
Public Affairs

Dottie Riley
Publications

William Sage
Program Visits

Hilario Benitez Rivera
Vessel Examinations

Chris Alexander
Communication Services

Flotilla 74 Brandon has several flotilla staff officer openings. Contact William Sage to fill one of these critical positions:

Secretary of Records
Treasurer
Information Services
Materials
Communications
Operations

Newsletter Flotilla 74 Brandon

William Sage, Flotilla Commander

Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
3006 South Kings Ave., Brandon, Florida

From the Helm- William Sage, FC	3
So, You Joined the Auxiliary. What's Next?	4
What will you do?	5
Recreational Boating Safety	6
Information Technology	9
Marine Safety	9
Human Resources	10
Communications	11
Aids to Navigation	11
Operations	12
Public Affairs and Publications	13
The Ties That Bind Us. By Dorothy Riley, FSO-PB	14



To navigate this document click on the title in the content list above. To return to this page, click the 'Home' button at the bottom of each page.



We're on the web!

www.cgaux74.org

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Flotilla74/>



FLOT Lines is a publication of Flotilla 74 Brandon, District 7 United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, located at 3006 S. Kings Ave., Brandon. The cost of publication is provided by dues-paying members of the Auxiliary, an organization of unpaid, civilian volunteers whose mission is to assist the U.S. Coast Guard in promoting boating safety. Articles may be reprinted with the express consent of the author or photographer with proper credit given to same. For permissions or for more information, please contact the editor, Dorothy Joan Riley, SO-PB, Email address: dottieriley@gmail.com



From the Helm

William Sage Flotilla Commander



Hello shipmates!

We look forward to getting off on a positive footing this year. We have several objectives with the first being painting our flotilla building. Before the hurricane season begins. We will also be reaching out to all our flotilla members for several things.

The first reason is to see how we can help you. This can be assisting you to get your required training done or provide you with the resources you may need to be a successful Auxiliary member.

The second is asking you for your input and help. We would like to know what we can do as a flotilla to be more successful, and we to ask for your help filling various positions within the flotilla. We know that we have members with a lot of experience in different areas and we may ask you to step up and help us in order for the flotilla to succeed in our mission.

We ask that you please attend as many meetings as you can especially when we say we need a quorum to approve minutes and budgetary motions, etc. When we have in-person meetings, we normally have fellowship time before the business meeting so that we can get to know each other and establish relationships.

We will get to know each other better as we work in promoting our mission as Auxiliarists. Our Motto is "Semper Paratus" which means Always Ready.

Our Mission is:

- To promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety
- To provide trained crews and facilities (boats) to augment the Coast Guard and enhance safety and security of our ports, waterways and coastal regions
- To support Coast Guard operational, administrative and logistical requirements.

The various areas in which we operate are:

- Safety and Security Patrols
- Search and Rescue
- Mass casualty or disasters
- Pollution Response and Patrols
- Homeland Security

There is an extensive explanation of when we were established by Congress and the various areas in which we operate. However, the basic services that we provide are helping the federal, state, and local governments improve the knowledge, safety skills, and operating environment of recreational boaters. We do this by providing these and other resources to the public:

- Public Education (PE)
- Vessel Examinations (VE)
- Distributing boating safety literature and information to the boating public and commercial and governmental organizations through the Marine Program Visitors program.

With your help, as members of Flotilla 74 Brandon, we will work to provide as many of the above services that we can to help the public in boating safety this coming year.

Thank you for volunteering in providing this valuable service to the community and people that we serve.

Bill Sage, Flotilla Commander

As within most volunteer organizations, 100% of the work is done by 20% of Auxiliary members. Help us change these numbers!



Articles of Interest

So, You Joined the Auxiliary. What's Next?

When you first inquired about Auxiliary membership, chances are the Auxiliary flooded you with a barrage of information and forms. This likely included directives about the enrollment process, our security investigation process, uniforms, several handbooks, and new member study guides; Federal Emergency Management Agency Incident Command System courses and lastly, the enrollment application along with instructions about what forms of identity you will need to complete the enrollment process.

It can feel overwhelming, but it does not have to be. Ask for help if needed. Do it in steps and keep in touch with your flotilla commander or another member. Read the New Member Handbook and complete the Form 7001 Enrollment Application.

Once you complete the application, next comes the "required training." These are what we call the CORE training courses found at <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&category=core-training>.

This opens another topic: Navigating Auxiliary websites and finding what you need.

We forget that this is a whole new world for newcomers. Too often, seasoned members respond to every new member's question with, "You can find it online." That may be true, but that answer is not always helpful. Where does one look? What does one use for search criteria or keywords? Let's start with how to navigate Auxiliary pages.

It isn't easy to access many Auxiliary pages without a member number. For instance, without signing in with a member number, one cannot access a link



to the Auxiliary national pages from the District 7 website. For this reason, we suggest you bookmark either the Division 7 webpage (<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07>) or the Flotilla 74 webpage (<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07-04>).

Bookmark the Flotilla 74 webpage. From this page, one can easily navigate to other Auxiliary pages.

Arrow #1 on the Flotilla page points to the national Auxiliary homepage. The national homepage is open on the right-hand side.

For new member information, click on the Directorates link at the top of the national page. On the drop-down menu, select "Human Resources." On the left-hand side of the Human Resources page, select "New to the Auxiliary?" Everything you need to know as a new member is on this page.

You are off to a great start! Remember to keep in touch with other members, participate as much as possible in scheduled events and attend meetings!

Right now, we are meeting virtually, so you can sign in wherever you are.Ω

Much of the material presented in this issue including the article this page is reprinted with edits from FLOT Lines, Issue 1, 2019. These sections are written by Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Staff Officer-Publications



Articles of Interest

What will you do?

Hopefully, by the time you receive your member number, you already have a clue what you would next like to do. Here is where we again ask, “Why did you join the Auxiliary?” What initially appealed to you enough so that you stuck with the demanding process of becoming a member?

While the answer to that question is as varied as our members, your answer will point you in the direction of what you should next do. Many new members are lured by the excitement of our Seamanship program and the opportunity to become coxswain or crew. Some are more interested in our Recreational Boating Safety programs, while others are drawn to the more passive computer-related fields.

With the advent of climate change and awareness about marine debris, our Marine Safety and Environmental Protection missions are growing in popularity. There are several qualifications within Marine Safety. Some members prefer the opportunity to work directly alongside the Coast Guard by serving aboard a cutter as a food service specialist, becoming an Ombudsman, working in the Auxiliary Health Services, or as an Interpreter. The best part is that we provide the training free for you to assume any qualification, and as a volunteer, you decide how much time you are willing to commit.

The jobs (qualifications) most commonly found at flotilla levels are described in the following pages. We will begin with Recreational Boating Safety because that is our primary mission supporting the Coast Guard. Ω

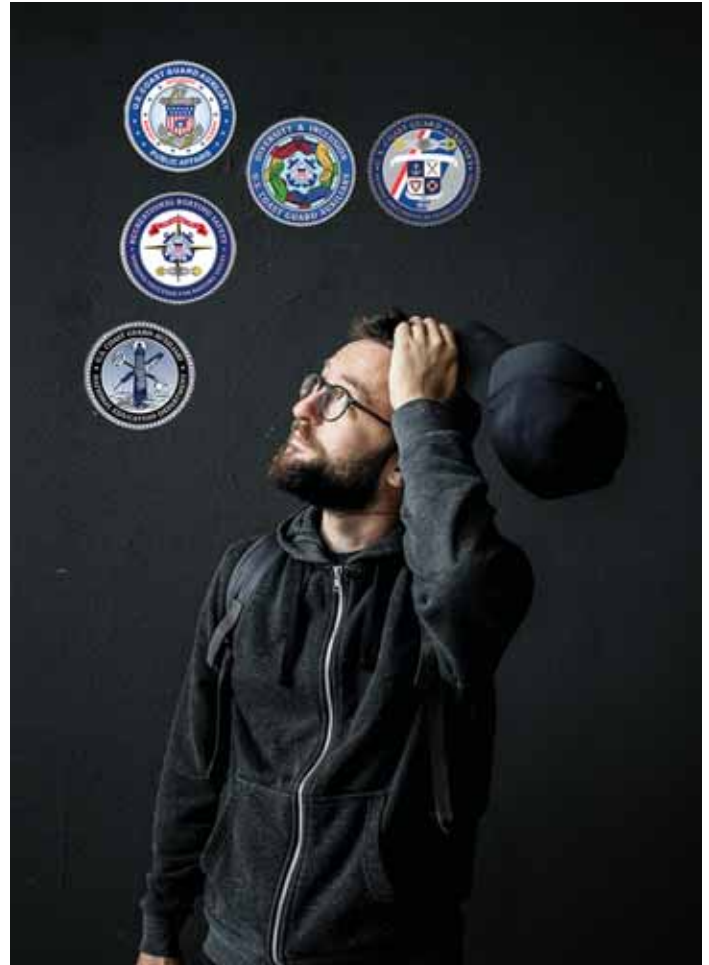


Photo by Valentin Salja royalty-free to use on
UNSPLASH

The Auxiliary operates in

- Safety and Security Patrols
- Search and Rescue
- Mass Casualty or Disasters
- Pollution Response and Patrols
- Homeland Security
- Recreational Boating Safety
- Commercial Fishing and Vessel Exams
- Platforms for Boarding Parties
- Recruit for all service in the Coast Guard

Our Mission

- To promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety
- To provide trained crews and facilities to augment the Coast Guard and enhance the safety and security of our ports, waterways, and coastal regions
- To support Coast Guard operational, administrative, and logistical requirements



Articles of Interest

Recreational Boating Safety

Recreational Boating Safety is the first of the many missions of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The three Recreational Boating Safety Directorates are Vessel Examinations, Public Education, and Recreational Boating Safety Outreach. These directorates work in tandem to reduce the number of boating accidents and casualties in the U.S. each year. Each offers positions or qualifications at the flotilla level to help spread the boating safety message.

Vessel Examinations

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT>

The Vessel Examinations Directorate (Dir-V) includes two program areas: Vessel Examinations and Partner Visitations. New members are most often encouraged first to earn the Vessel Examiner qualification.

As the name 'Vessel Examiner' implies, a Vessel Safety Check entails checking recreational vessels to ensure that they carry the necessary safety equipment recommended by the National Safe Boating Council and meet national and state laws. These include but are not limited to life jackets, emergency flares, etc. As a certified Vessel Examiner, you will have the unique opportunity to work with and educate the recreational boating public. This one-on-one interaction will provide a vital opportunity to enhance a boater's knowledge and help ensure they have a safe, fun-filled day on the water.

The key to becoming a great Vessel Examiner is all in training. Becoming a Vessel Examiner can be done by classroom instruction along with hands-on training or by self-study along with some hands-on training. However, we recommend that you first accompany one of the flotilla's Vessel Examiners and watch. They will enjoy the company, and you will have the opportunity to learn and ask questions.

We often talk about our 'low number' of Vessel Safety Checks, but the impact on our flotilla statistics is not important. The importance lies in what is not said: every Vessel Safety Check not performed is a missed opportunity to educate the boating public and save a

life! Our flotilla needs qualified Vessel Examiners.

Wonder if you have the time? Like all our volunteer jobs/qualifications, you set your schedule, and you need only complete five Vessel Safety Check a year- pass or fail- to retain your qualification. Ω



KEY BISCAJNE, Fla. - Vessel Examiner James Simpson of Flotilla 6-11 Miami D7 conducts a Vessel Safety Check at Rickenbacker Marina in February 2010. (United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Chris Todd)



Articles of Interest

Recreational Boating Safety



A Recreational Boating Safety Partner Visitor restocks a table-top display. This literature helps educate recreational boaters about critical safety issues and national and state laws. USCG Auxiliary photo

Recreational Boating Safety- Partner Visits

Partner Visitors are the Auxiliary's "ambassadors" to the recreational boating public. Key to the Auxiliary's dealer/partner outreach program is a cadre of trained Auxiliarists who visit our partners regularly to drop off or restock boating safety literature displays or discuss upcoming special events.

Partners may include bait shops, insurance agencies, marinas, or a branch of one of the world's largest marine chandleries. In short, our partners are establishments frequented by boaters.

Program Visitors distribute literature – always at no charge – including the latest Federal and State boating safety brochures, booklets, and handouts. Additionally, Partner Visitors provide distinctive literature easels to display this literature.

If you are already a Vessel Examiner, it only makes sense also to become a Recreational Boating Safety-Partner Visitor. After the initial visit, Partner Visitors

may make visits in civilian clothing. Once you develop a relationship with these partners, they may call you to know what brochures they most need. This is one of the easiest qualifications to earn and maintain.

Talk to other members about becoming a Vessel Examiner or Recreational Boating Safety-Partner Visitor.

You need not be a qualified Vessel Examiner to accompany other Vessel Examiners while performing Vessel Safety Checks. "Going along for the ride" offers you the opportunity to learn and ask questions and helps build a sense of camaraderie.

Ask to be trained as a Vessel Examiner or take the course online. <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=job-aid-kits>

Recreational Boating Safety Outreach

The Auxiliary urges boaters to wear life jackets every time they go out on the water.

The Auxiliary urges boaters to avoid alcohol when boating.

The Auxiliary offers various boating education classes to provide boaters with the knowledge they need to operate their boats competently and safely.

The Auxiliary offers free Vessel Safety Checks so boaters can see that they have all the required boating safety equipment aboard.

The Recreational Boating Safety Outreach Directorate page is where you will find all boating safety and outreach programs. We collaborate with many partners to bring the boating safety message to the recreational boating community.

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=RB-GROUP>



Articles of Interest

Recreational Boating Safety

Public Education

The Auxiliary offers arguably the best boating safety courses in the nation. Our courses are tailored to boaters from paddleboards and personal watercraft to powerboats. Our goal is to promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety by providing exceptional boating safety education to the American public, to eliminate loss of life, personal injury, and property damage.

The most popular boating courses are "Boat America," "Weekend Navigator," and "A Paddlers Guide." Flotilla 74 offers "Boat America" year-round. Presently, the course is offered virtually.

To teach our boating courses, a member must become an Instructor. Becoming an Instructor (IT) is not that difficult but requires commitment.

The Auxiliary Instructor program qualifies members as Instructors for public education (PE) and member training (MT) courses. To qualify as an Instructor, the member must pass the current IT Qualification Examination (an open-book three-hour time limit examination with 90% or better) and satisfactorily teach two classes under a qualified instructor's supervision. The first presentation should be 10-30 minutes in length, and the second presentation should be one to two hours in length.

Completing the Instructor training program makes you a productive member of the flotilla almost immediately



Online classes make our boating safety classes available to a broader audience of recreational boaters. Image composite for illustrative purposes by Dottie Riley. Main image from Pixabay, royalty free to use.

upon completion. Currently, qualified Instructors are one of our greatest needs.

You can find the instructor training program on the Public Education Directorate website.

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&category=e-public-education>

The site also offers information on successful presenting virtual/ electronic classes.

If you prefer individual or classroom training to earn your Instructor qualification, please ask Bill Sage, Flotilla Commander or Richard Strehl, Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Education. Ω



Articles of Interest

Information Technology

Most Auxiliary information technology specialists serve their shipmates directly at the flotilla level. These Flotilla Staff Officers of Communication Services (FSO-CS) and Information Services (FSO-IS) play a vital role in making each Auxiliarist effective.

Communication Services officers maintain Auxiliary web pages, and many also administer the flotilla's social media pages. The web platform is easy to learn and requires no previous knowledge of building web pages or computer coding. The necessary skills are taught through online classes, one-on-one mentoring, attending a Coast Guard C-School (at no cost to the member), or combining these learning methods.

Information Services officers provide a wide range of member services – including information on opportunities to serve, recording mission accomplishment, counseling on training requirements, and much more.



They make sure the hours reported by our members and training completed are entered into Auxiliary Data System.

Our Information Technology (IT) community transitions from direct member support to envisioning, developing, and supporting the systems that support our members at the division, district, and national levels.

From Flotilla Staff Officer to the National IT leadership, our mission is the same. We support our members to efficiently, effectively, and safely accomplish their missions.

Our flotilla is always in need of these skills!

For more information about Information Technology training and C-Schools visit <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=it-group>

Marine Safety

There are four Divisions in the Prevention Department devoted to the Marine Safety program: Commercial Vessel Activities, Port and Facility Activities, Prevention Outreach and Communication, and Education.

Earning one of the many qualifications in either Commercial Vessel Activities and Port and Facilities Activities are largely controlled by each Coast Guard Sector centered upon their local needs. These Auxiliarists are trained to work for the Coast Guard to perform activities regulated by the Coast Guard like inspecting com-

mercial and fishing vessels and container inspections in our ports. Sector St. Petersburg conducts periodic training in these programs.

At the flotilla level, we most commonly promote Marine Safety and Environmental Protection programs like America's Waterway Watch, Sea Partners, Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Resources, Living Marine Mammals Resources, and the Good Mate Program. With the increased awareness of marine debris and its impact on our marine environment, for many members, this is a good fit.

Auxiliarists most often spread our environmental protections messages at Public Affairs events and at schools. Several programs are geared toward children.

Are you interested in protecting our marine environment? Let us know!

Visit <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=P-DEPT&category=marine-safety> to explore these areas of opportunity. Ω



Human Resources

Human Resources Officers help recruit and enroll new members, and as the first contact most new candidates have with the Auxiliary, are critical to getting new members off on the right foot. This is where that barrage of emails enters in the ones discussed in the first article of this issue, "So, You Joined the Auxiliary. What's Next?"

As a new member, you have probably visited the national Human Resources Directorate several times, looking for specific links on the left-hand side of their webpage. These likely included:

New to the Auxiliary?: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=new-members>

Coast Guard Auxiliary Uniforms:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-uniforms>

(The link to uniforms is one some of our not-so-new members should periodically revisit as well!)

Auxiliary Manuals: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-manuals>

Human Resources lists several areas of interest, including job descriptions for working directly for or on behalf of the Coast Guard. These include Chaplain Support, Culinary Assistance, Coast Guard Recruiting Support, Health Services, Ombudsman Program, Auxiliary Recruiting, Retention, Support Services and Uniform.

Auxiliary Culinary Assistance (AUXCA) is a qualification that members can earn to work as chefs in Coast Guard facilities, including sector and station galleys and aboard Coast Guard cutters. All AUXCA members are trained using the Coast Guard approved Auxiliary Food Services Guides and instructors. Train-



Pat McAlvey, a member of Flotilla 75 Apollo Beach, is a trained Auxiliary Culinary Assistant who has gone on many tours aboard Coast Guard cutters for extended tours. He currently serves as Division Staff Officer and District 7 Staff Officer-Culinary Assistance. Photo by Dottie Riley taken December 2021 during the Division 7 Award Ceremony.

ing includes classroom lectures and culinary skills work followed by a standardized performance qualification completion within one year of the initial class. There are prerequisites to attend. Follow the link to the Culinary Assistance page at the national Human Resource Directorate page for more information:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxchef>

Several members of our division have earned this qualification and gone on tours aboard cutters for up to three months as far south as Puerto Rico and as far north as Alaska! The training is definitely worth the experience!

<https://www.facebook.com/USCGAuxFoodService-Team/photos/>



Communications



David Rockwell, a member of Flotilla 72 St. Petersburg and a qualified Telecommunications Operator stands radio watch April 4, 2017, in the Flotilla 72 Communications room. United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photo.

Telecommunications Operators stand radio watches for Auxiliary on-the-water missions. Experienced Telecommunications Operators may also stand watches at Coast Guard stations to augment station personnel.

Learning which frequencies to use, the language-specific to radio communications, and whom to notify in the event of an emergency is critical. To become involved in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Telecommunications program, applicants must become certified as Telecommunications Operators (TCO). Additional details of the qualification requirements for TCO can be found at this link:

<http://rdept.cgaux.org/documents/BeQualified/BecomingQualifiedAuxiliaryTelecommunicationsProgram.pdf>

Flotilla 74 does not have a radio facility or Communications room. Our Telecommunications Operators stand watches at flotilla locations that have radio facilities. This is a boon for new members as this allows them to meet members from other flotillas within our division.Ω

Aids to Navigation

If you are interested in our Navigation Systems programs for Federal Aids to Navigation (ATONs), Private Aids to Navigation (PATONs), Chart Updating (CU), and Bridge Administration Program (BAP), welcome aboard!

Each Auxiliary or Coast Guard District or Coast Guard Sector may establish procedures for Aids Verifier qualification. Members should check on the process in their area by contacting their Navigation Systems (NS) Chain of Leadership and Management beginning with August Miller, Flotilla Staff Officer-Aids to Navigation or William Sage, Flotilla Commander. More information may be found at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=P-DEPT&-category=aids-verifier-pqs>

Note: You must sign in to access this page.)

Members need not be qualified Boatcrew to earn the Aids Verifier qualification. Any Auxiliarist who holds an Aids Verifier qualification is authorized assignment to duty to support and augment the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation program.

Auxiliarists may assist and support Coast Guard units in servicing Federal aids after receiving proper Coast Guard training. Auxiliarists may also help the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers in updating nautical charts and publications. Training is available in all four Auxiliary Navigation Systems Programs – ATONs, PATONs, Bridges, and Chart Updating.Ω



ATON photo by George Papabeis, FSO-PA, FL 74 Brandon



Articles of Interest

Operations



Photographs: David Pliner, Flotilla 72 St. Petersburg (crew), holds the towline's end during a training exercise conducted June 21, 2021. On the "vessel in distress." Holding the towline is William Ackerman, Flotilla 7-16 Gulfport (crew). Daniel Helou (trainee) faces portside, and barely visible behind the helm is Tracy Adkins (crew), both Flotilla 72 St. Petersburg members. (United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photograph)



The **Auxiliary Seamanship or Auxiliary Boat Crew** program is likely one of the leading interests of new members. New members have either seen us on the water or at Public Affairs events or read about our members in action. Yes, participating in our varied on-the-water missions can be fun and exciting! It is also demanding and requires more time and commitment than our other programs.

While it is possible to take the course on-line, it is not practical or recommended. In addition, to complete the course, one must also meet the performance qualification standards and pass the qualifying examination. These require hands-on training and practice. The program relies heavily upon instructors and mentors to produce crewmembers who are seaworthy, knowledgeable, and assets to the Auxiliary Boat Crew program.

Because the course places a high demand on instructors, mentors, and Auxiliary facilities (it takes a minimum of two boats to practice towing evolutions), our division

offers this course once a year for all members wishing to become crew qualified. Also, there are several prerequisites for taking the course. You must be a member in good standing and have completed the required CORE courses, including Incident Command System (ICS) 100, 700, and Team Coordination Training.

While the Auxiliary Boat Crew program requires significant commitment and effort to complete, the rewards are just as great! Interested members should talk to William Sage, Flotilla Commander and Flotilla Staff Officer-Member Training.Ω

(Yes, his instructors told Dan to move the towline under the rail!)



Articles of Interest

Public Affairs and Publications

"Public Affairs is every member's business!"

Public Affairs promotes the Auxiliary and its missions through marketing and public relations. Public Affairs offers three qualification levels mirroring those awarded to members of the Coast Guard. Still, even members not interested in completing one of the three qualifications should know Auxiliary Public Affairs policies. The easiest way to do this is to take the online course "Introduction to Public Affairs (AUX-20)." You can find this course at the Public Affairs e-learning portal: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=A-DEPT&category=online-training>

Every member should know how to answer questions posed by members of the public at events or news media, write articles for external publication or internal Auxiliary newsletters, and understand what to post- and what not to post to social media. Without basic knowledge, it can be a predicament! Why do we say, "Public Affairs is every member's business?"

Public Affairs has its rewards. A member can serve as Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs without earning a Public Affairs qualification, but a Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs should complete the introductory course! You learn more about the Auxiliary, its missions, and its history and understand it faster than in any other field within the Auxiliary.

Publications

Everything already stated about Public Affairs applies equally to Publications. They are both in the same directorate at the national level, and members earn the same qualifications. There is, however, a distinct difference below the national level: Public Affairs officers are our public face and release external news sources. In contrast, Publications officers write and publish for Auxiliary (internal) newsletters.

One more difference- Publications officers need a bit more computer savvy to compile a newsletter. Every office productivity suite has templates for newsletters built-in and spell and grammar checkers. Like any other skill, improvement comes with experience. I want to convince you that learning magic is as difficult as learning (that would make what I do more

impressive), but it is not! You only need to be brave enough to give it a try and determined enough to stay with it.

The best part about newsletters is that they acknowledge our members' efforts and help boost morale. Like everything else in the Auxiliary, someone (likely me) is ready to mentor you if you are willing to try. Ω



George Papabeis, Flotilla 74 Brandon Staff Officer-Public Affairs has quite a Public Affairs resume. Papabeis has written countless news releases and filmed several Auxiliary Public Service Announcements and videos of interviews. He also shot training films for a Coast Guard Port Security Unit, the source for this cover photo for "Intercom" Division 7 newsletter, Summer 2014 edition; Dottie Riley, editor. So, there you have it- Public Affairs and Publications in a single image!



Opinion

The Ties That Bind Us.

By Dorothy Riley, FSO-PB

"Fellowship means talking and laughing with others and sharing responsibilities and burdens. While fellowship includes getting together and having fun, it also means sharing, caring, and supporting each other. It means answering a call to assist in an activity or mission and enjoying the companionship of other members."

I look at past flotilla newsletters and find myself surprised and saddened by the number of familiar faces of members no longer active in our flotilla. What happened?

The waning and waxing of flotillas are cyclical. Over time, all flotillas are subject to growth and decline. Where are we on this spectrum?

Flotilla 74 Brandon was once one of the most robust units within our division. We won numerous annual division awards and enjoyed one of the most vigorous activity rates. The first bump in our road was when our Polk County detachment became a flotilla in early 2016. Once members of Flotilla 74 Brandon detachment, several of our most active members left our ranks to form Flotilla 77 Polk County. The remaining members of Flotilla 74 worked hard to increase membership and activity levels, and while we never again enjoyed the same level of success as before, we came close. We were proud of our flotilla and the success of Flotilla 77. For several years, our friendships remained strong. The creation of a new flotilla from within our ranks was just a hiccup in the long run.

What made us drift further from our former success? Was it the stand-down necessitated by the pandemic? That may account for the reduction of activity in recent months but not for the loss of members. Despite the pandemic, we recruited new members, so the pandemic is not the primary cause either. Where did our 'old' members go, and why are they not with us? It is easier to answer the first part of this question.

In recent years, a few members died, but fortunately, very few. Several more members transferred to other flotillas. Some members resigned. Too many members remain in our rolls but do not participate in meetings or activities. These inactive members possess immense skills and knowledge. Their absence presents a significant loss of resources for our flotilla. This answers the 'where' but not the 'why.'

Why do members transfer to other flotillas? Not every one transferred due to proximity to their homes. What do other flotillas offer these members that set them apart from ours? We all are under the same stand-down orders, so higher activity rates are not the reason.

The most significant contributor to our faltering condition is our lessening fellowship. While this is an opinion, it is based upon nearly two decades of Auxiliary membership. Where are the ties that bind us, our sense of camaraderie and mutual support? Looking back at 2016, we did not significantly decline after our detachment became a flotilla. We began to weaken after our members stopped working together, and we allowed our relationships to decay.

Where is our fellowship?

For a good reason, fellowship is one of the four cornerstones of the Auxiliary. Without our caring for and commitment to each other, we cannot accomplish our boating safety missions. We are not motivated to answer a call to perform Vessel Safety Checks or assist in our Public Education programs. We are disconnected and only too content to let someone else do it.

The recent death of a member brought home to me how removed from each other we have become. [Ron Matz](#) dedicated many decades to Flotilla 74 and to the Auxiliary. He did the jobs no one else would do, and yet when he died, only a single couple attended his memorial service. (I am as guilty as everyone else. I did not attend.)

This made me take a critical look at fellowship and the ties that bind us. Fellowship means talking and laughing with others and sharing responsibilities and

(Continued on page 15)



Ron Matz



(Continued from page 14)

burdens. While fellowship includes getting together and having fun, it also means sharing, caring, and supporting each other. It means answering a call to assist in an activity or mission and enjoying the companionship of other members.


A reminder is an oath we took as members of the Auxiliary. The first sentence of the last paragraph read by the flotilla commander is: *"The satisfaction you derive from your Auxiliary membership will be in proportion to your level of participation in the organization's activities."* Participation is through interaction with members.

I think we lost many members because we stopped caring for and interacting with each other. I pray we take the true meaning of fellowship to heart and reach out to our fellow members.Ω



Fellowship: (noun)

- the condition or relation of being a fellow:
- friendly relationship; companionship
- community of interest, feeling, etc.
- communion, as between members of the same group.



How can I help CGMA's efforts?


*Contributions are always welcome.
CGMA gratefully receives
donations of all sizes and kinds.*

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance accepts
donations from individuals and organizations.

Active Duty, Retired Military Members
and Civilian Employees make a great impact
by donating through an allotment or payroll
deduction. Memorial donations, bequests
and estate gifts leave a lasting legacy.

Contributions are tax deductible.

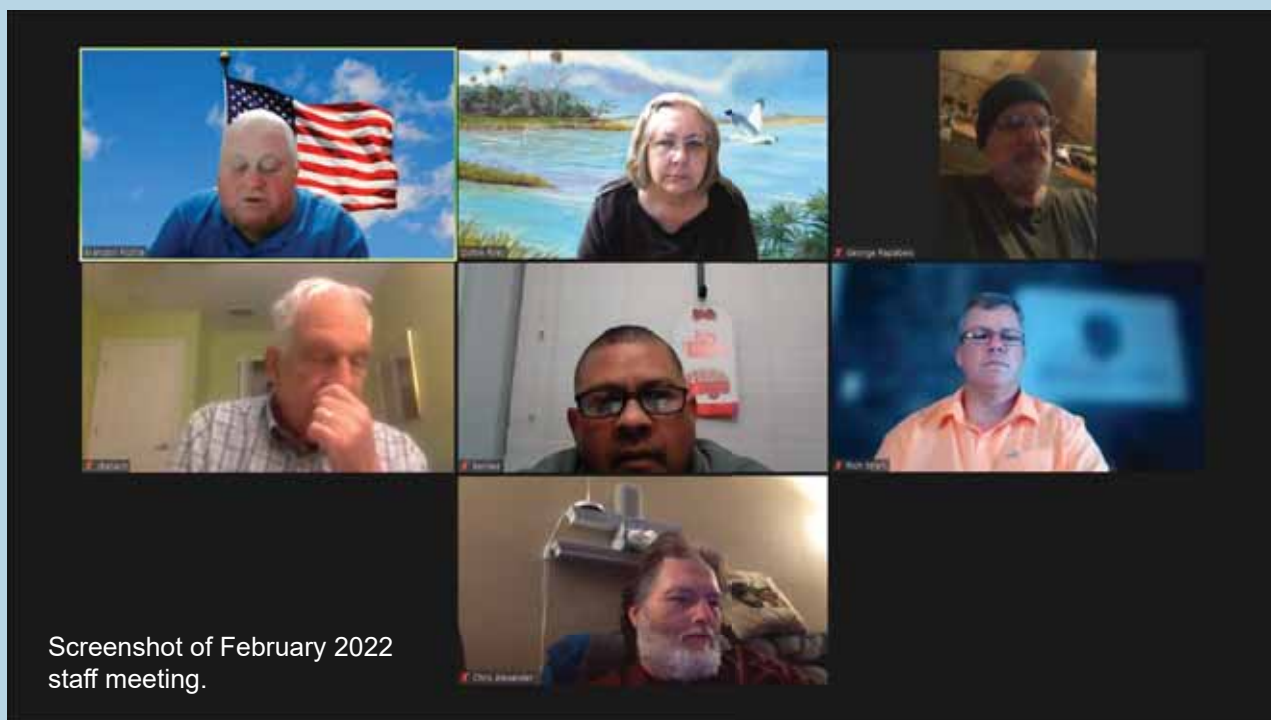
Donate securely online:
www.cgmahq.org



Contact your CGMA Representative
for assistance or more information

www.CGMAHQ.org
1.800.881.2462





Flotilla Meetings During the COVID-19 Shut-down.

With virtual meetings, there are few excuses to not attend flotilla meetings. You can login from any electronic device: phones, tablets, surface pads and computers. Even a landline works but without video.

Get involved! Connect with your fellow members and learn what you can do for the Auxiliary- or what we can do for you!

Flotilla 74 Brandon meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM.

Simply follow the link to the meeting sent out via email. If you do not have ZOOM installed, you will be prompted to do so.

See you at our next meeting!

FLOT is a military acronym meaning “forward line of own troops.” FLOT line or “forward edge of battle area” (FEBA) are technical terms used by all branches of the U.S. armed services to designate the forward most friendly maritime or land forces on the battlefield at a given point in time during an armed conflict.

We are not a military force engaged in armed conflict. We are, however, the frontline of the struggle to save the lives of recreational boaters, and we face this great endeavor armed with Vessel Safety Checks, Public Education classes and all the other Recreational Boating Safety programs in our arsenal. Our newsletter banner serves as a reminder of this mission.

The Privacy Act of 1974 protects the names, addresses, telephone/fax numbers and email addresses of Flotilla 74 members which may appear in this or other Auxiliary publications. As a matter of policy, information described above is not made available to the general public or outside groups without that members expressed and or written consent. When such information appears, its privacy shall be safeguarded, and the information will be clearly labeled. Publication of this information by the general public and/or outside groups is prohibited by the Privacy Act.

