





Newsletter Flotilla 74, Brandon

**Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Commander** Clark Pittman, Flotilla Vice Commander

Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

3006 South Kings Ave., Brandon, Florida

Flotilla Staff Officers

**August Miller Navigation Systems** Materials

George Papabeis **Public Affairs** Operations

> **Dorothy Riley** Publications

William Sage **Human Resources** 

Clark Pittman **Member Training** Secretary of Records

Matt Stephen RBS-Partner Visitation

Tanner Piliego Information Systems Communication Services **Finance** 

Background photo: Steve Williams, Dean Bell, coxswain, and August Miller aboard "Ms.Daisy," Flotilla 74, Brandon Auxiliary facility. USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabeis

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We're on the web!

www.cgaux74.org



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

Background photo: Hilario Benitez Rivera and Clark Pittman conduct a vessel safety check at Williams Park boat ramp during National Safe Boating Week, May 2022. USCG Auxiliary photo by Dorothy Riley.

#### From the Helm

# **Dorothy Riley** Flotilla Commander

#### Growth Isn't Always Linear: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

For every peak, there's a valley. For every leap forward, there's a stumble backward—sometimes just an inch, and other times, what seems like miles.

I always thought growing meant always doing or accomplishing more than I did the day before. But I've realized that's not growth, and when I believed it was, growth wasn't what I was seeking. I was seeking a permanent better. I wanted persistent happiness—a reprieve from difficult, overwhelming feelings, and a

sense that I was one inch closer to day of my life.

It is often in the struggles that we stretch and come better understand ourselves. Struggles are part of departure from it. We don't comething is wrong. So long as we're making progress overall, we can trust we're doing just fine.

That is the pep-talk I give myself, especially when discouraged (like now). It may help you too.

Our flotilla needs you. A handful of members do everything, and that burns members out no matter how committed they are to the Auxiliary, or how much they enjoy each other's company. Too few members participate in activities.

I am so very grateful to these core members, but like me, they no doubt pray that more members participate in activities and/or assume flotilla staff office responsibilities. If not feeling ready is holding you back, don't fret. Members learn the duties of their office through hands-on learning. That is how all of us learned!

In closing, I remind you of two things:

- 1. Why did you join the Auxiliary? What did you hope to do?
- 2. From the prologue to the new member oath: "The satisfaction you derive from your Auxiliary membership will be in proportion to your level of participation in the organization's activities."

Please think about these words.

A perfect time to reengage is coming up: National Safe Boating Week, May 20-26, 2023. Come to support your



fellow members by assisting with conducting Vessel Safety Checks or providing boating safety information at our tent. Come enjoy the barbecue and fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there!  $\Omega$ 

## Why did you join the Auxiliary?

What can we do to reinvigorate the enthusiasm vou felt when you took your new member oath?

Help us fill our flotilla staff office positions. We will guide you as you learn!



### Have Clipboard and Decals-Will Perform Vessel Safety Checks!

#### By Dorothy Riley

Our members work well together and enjoy each other's com pany. That was evident on Feb. 19, 2023, when Dorothy (Dottie) Riley accompanied Clark Pittman, Flotilla StaffO fficer-Vessel Examinations, and Matt Stephen, Vessel Examiner in training to conduct two vessel safety checks at a storage yard in Riverview. Pittman supervised Stephen's vessel checks required for Stephen to earn his Vessel Safety Check qual-ifi cation. Both vessels passed the safety check, although the owner of one vessel had to drive to a local boating store to buy replacements for expired safety equipment.

It was a fun day filled with bantering and laughing. It is no wonder that fellowship is a critical component of the four cornerstones of the Auxiliary.

Stephen, by the way, has completed the requirements for the Vessel Safety Check qualification.

If you need to qualify (or requalify) for Vessel Examiner before National Safe Boating Week, please get in touch with Clark Pittman or Dorothy Riley.  $\Omega$ 



Note: This issue's cover photo is Matt Stephen conducting a vessel safety check on Feb. 19, 2023, in Riverview. USCG Auxiliary photo by Dorothy Riley





Top: Matt Stephen, Clark Pittman, Dorothy Riley and one of the two boat owners with his daughter. Below: Mission accomplished! Matt Stephen attaches the VSC sticker to the boat with the boat owner and Clark Pittman looking on. USCG Auxiliary photos by Dorothy Riley

# **National Safe Boating Week**

Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day: May 19 **National Safe Boating Week:** May 20-23



Join us May 21 at Williams Park Boat Ramp 8 AM to Noon.

- Assist with conducting Vessel Safety Checks.
- Stand a watch at our public information table.
- Enjoy fellowship with other members.
- Spouses and friends are welcome!

(Bring your life jacket whether wearing a uniform or civilian clothing.) We will hold a cookout for our members and their guests—nothing fancy. Just an opportunity for food, fun and fellowship.

District 7 USCG Auxiliary



- **Vessel Safety Checks**
- Safe Boating Information
- Free Give-Aways







# **National Safe Boating Week**



#### SAFEBOATINGCAMPAIGN.COM

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FLOT Lines

Flotilla 74, Brandon

District 7 USCG Auxiliary

Issue 2 2023

#### Tall Ships - St. Petersburg

#### By Dorothy Riley

The city of St. Petersburg was proud to partner with Tall Ships America to host a magnificent fleetoftallshipsalongtheSt. Petersburg waterfront Mar. 30 - Apr. 2, 2023. This four-day festival was a wonderful experience for families to enjoy live entertainment, historical exhibits, food, beverage, and boarding these remarkable ships.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary set up a Public Affairsboothtoo fferinformationaboutrecreational safe boating classes, Vessel Safety Checks, and recruit new members.

The festival started on Thursday, March 30, with a dramatic Parade of Sail. Four traditionally rigged vessels sailed from the Gulf of Mexico into Tampa Bay through the Sunshine Skyway and along St. Petersburg's picturesque coastline.

In addition to boarding the ships, guests enjoyed a dockside festival featuring live entertainment, "Ask the Captain" forums, photo ops, food trucks, live music, dockside and kids' activities, a festival marketplace, and much more!

Flotilla 74, Brandon's "Miss Daisy," participated in providing a safety zone with Flotilla 74 members Steven Miller, crew trainee, and George Papabeis, crew member behind the camera.

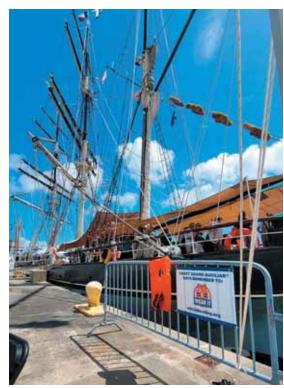
The festival was a huge success and is hoped to become an annu-al event.  $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$ 

"Duty Calls" from Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg, with Daniel Helou (District Captain-West), coxswain; Tony Hooper (Division 7 Vice Commander), and Anne-Marie Woolsey from Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach, crew in front of the Spanish "Nao Trinidad" and the "Pride of Baltimore." USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabeis

This page, top: Samy Hanna, a member of Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach, watches the "When and If," a sail-away vessel from New York sail by. USCG Auxiliary photo by Valerie Fernandes

Below: Visitors aboard the "1877 Barque Elissa" while docked beside St. Petersburg Pier. USCG Auxiliary photo by Arlene Merseal, Flotilla 11-1, Clearwater





### USCG Auxiliary Diversity Moment April 2023:

## **Every Post is Honorable**

Shipmates, here's our Auxiliary Diversity Moment for April. This month we emphasize the plethora of missions and activities available to us as Auxiliarists. This message is to highlight those missions for us to contemplate and discuss.

In 1775, General George Washington wrote, "Every post is honorable in which a man can serve his country." Today, we can now interpret fairly that his use of the term, "man," means "person." All of us. Every post. In the Auxiliary, that means every position or office, regardless of what level we hold, represents service to further the well-being of our country and communities.

The Coast Guard has tasked us

with some critical missions of high visibility. We are all aware of our goal in ensuring we provide the ever-growing boating public education on being safe on the water. We do this through Vessel Safety Checks, conducting safe boating classes, and assisting in checking and logging various aids to navigation. Every member, directly or indirectly, should support efforts towards this end. These are the important posts.

We have many supporting missions that not everybody sees-not active duty, the public, or even our

own members at times. Providing administrative support to the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary, being involved in marine safety and related investigations, serving as culinary assistants, dealing with various port security operations, going to a local business to make sure that safe boating and related information

is available to the public, serving as an ombudsman, etc. These are the important posts.

Shipmates, the overall arc of our nation's history is one of progress. That arc includes us, right here and right now. Every office. Every position. Just because a job isn't labeled "critical," doesn't mean it's unimportant. It's all honorable. Our team is the most

Line Officers NAVCO VCO RCO Staff Officers Member ADSO DSO

Auxiliary insignia does not indicate RANK or position of authority. The insignia indicates the level of RESPONSIBILITY the member has accepted. Membership works differently than a corporate ladder. We only sometimes move upwards. We move/serve in all directions. Commodores often hold flotilla staff officer positions because every post is honorable.

> valuable resource. The Auxiliary has something for everyone, with no exceptions. We bring all our diverse backgrounds and talents, big and small, to the table, and all can be employed. All of us. Every post.

Check out our National Diversity website, where Commodores David Porter and Tracy Schultz have compiled two tremendous resources: "Mission Diversity," and the "Leadership Compendium." http://wow. uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=d-dept

By: Michael Brown, BC-DUP Outreach (Diversity & Inclusion Directorate) Ω

#### Tampa Bay Boat Show- Yup, we were there!

By Dorothy Riley





Tampa Bay March events are numerous and often competing. Blame it on the weather. March is one of the few months when outdoor temperatures are not hot and humid, and event organizers take advantage of this.

During the first days of March, some of the competing events held in Tampa Bay include the Florida Strawberry Festival, the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, the Gasparilla Music Festival, the Gasparilla Festival of the Arts, and what most relates to the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary — the Tampa Bay Boat Show held Mar. 3-5 at the Florida State Fairgrounds.

E. Elliott Seda, from Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach, coordinated the boat show. The booth provided information on Public Education courses available throughout Division 7, Vessel Safety Checks, and member recruitment. Several members of Flotilla 74, Brandon, held a watch at this event. They include George Papabeis, Matt Stephen, and Dorothy Riley.

A big thank you to participants, and, please get involved in future events and activities!  $\Omega$ 

Top: George Papabeis, Gilbert Thomas (Flotilla 77, Polk County) and Joe Silva (Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach) talk to visitors at the USCG Auxiliary information booth at the

Tampa Bay Boat Show held Mar. 3-5 at the Florida State Fairgrounds.

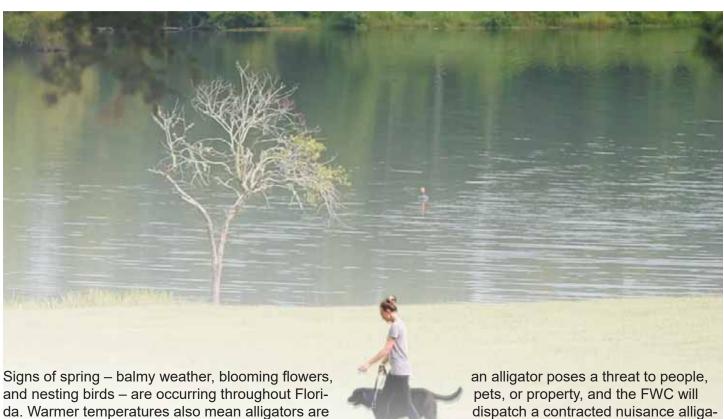
Below: From left: Dorothy Riley, E. Elliott Seda, Joe Silva, and George Papabeis at the Tampa Bay Boat Show, Mar. 5, 2023. USCG Auxiliary photo by Gilbert Thomas.



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### Tips to safely co-exist with alligators.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission bulletin



more active and visible. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends taking precautions in and around the water. FWC also provides safety materials, including a video and infographic in Spanish.

While serious injuries caused by alligators are rare in Florida, the FWC offers the following tips about how to co-exist with them safely:

Keep a safe distance if you see an alligator; never feed one. When fed, alligators can lose their natural wariness and instead learn to associate people with food availability.

- Swim only in designated swimming areas during daylight hours. Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn.
- Keep pets on a leash away from the water's edge, and never let them swim in fresh or brackish water. Pets often resemble alligators' natural prey.
- Call the FWC's Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286) if you believe

tor trapper to resolve the situation. The FWC prioritizes public safety and administers a <u>Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program</u>

(SNAP) to proactively address alligator threats in developed areas while conserving alligators in areas where they naturally occur.

Find more resources about living with alligators and Spanish translation information tools at MyF-WC.com/Alligator.

The American alligator, Florida's state reptile, is a conservation success story. Florida has a healthy and stable alligator population, estimated at 1.3 million alligators of every size. They are found in freshwater lakes, ponds, swamps, and slow-moving rivers in all 67 counties in Florida.

Learn more about alligators.  $\Omega$ 

Photo: Keep pets on a leash away from the water's edge, and never let them swim in fresh or brackish water. Pets often resemble alligators' natural prey. Photo by FWC



# Paddling the Hillsborough River:

A journey through protected wilderness and urban areas.

#### By Dorothy Riley

A 30-mile designated paddling trail runs from Hillsborough River State Park to Rowlett Park in Tampa. The middle section of the Trail is the most popular for paddling and, during the cooler months especially, offers some of the best wildlife viewing in the State. Much of the river is contained within protected wilderness areas. Multiple parks along the paddling trail offer many recreational opportunities for launching or stopping to

stretch and snack.

Get out your kayak or canoe and invite a friend- and don't forget to wear your life jacket!





Tampa Bay is a large estuary system with a rich and diverse marine ecosystem. However, the bay has been facing a number of environmental challenges in recent years, including pollution, overfishing, and habitat loss.

Several marine conservation efforts have been launched in Tampa Bay in response to these challenges. These efforts include:

- Restoring oyster reefs: Oyster reefs are important marine habitats that provide food and shelter for various marine life. In recent years, oyster reefs in Tampa Bay have declined due to a number of factors, including disease, pollution, and overfishing. Several organizations, including Tampa Bay Watch and the Ocean Conservancy, are working to restore oyster reefs in Tampa Bay.
- Reducing pollution: Pollution is a major threat to the health of Tampa Bay's marine ecosystem. Tampa Bay's pollution sources include sewage, stormwater, and industrial waste. A number of organizations, including the Hillsborough County Water Authority and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, are working to reduce pollution in Tampa
- **Overfishing:** Overfishing is a major threat to the health of Tampa Bay's marine ecosystem. Several species of fish and shellfish have been overfished in Tampa Bay, including redfish, snook, and oysters. A number of organizations, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Manage-

ment Council, are working to reduce overfishing in Tampa Bay.

These marine conservation efforts are essential to the health of Tampa Bay's marine ecosystem. By restoring oyster reefs, reducing pollution, and reducing overfishing, we can help ensure that Tampa Bay remains a vibrant and healthy estuary system for many years.

The water quality in Tampa Bay is generally good. The bay is monitored by a number of agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Tampa Bay Water. These agencies test the water for various contaminants, including bacteria, viruses, and chemicals.

The FDEP's most recent Source Water Assessment for Tampa Bay Water facilities was in 2021. The assessment found that the water quality at the facilities was "good" and "excellent." The assessment also found that the water quality at the facilities was better than the state and federal standards.

Tampa Bay Water also monitors the water quality of the bay. The water quality reports from Tampa Bay Water show that the water quality in the bay is generally good. The reports show that the water quality meets the state and federal standards for drinking water.

However, some areas of the bay have poor water quality. These areas include the Hillsborough River and the Alafia River. The water quality in these areas is affected by sewage, stormwater, and industrial waste.

(Continued on page 15)



#### (Continued from page 14)

The FDEP and Tampa Bay Water are working to improve the water quality in Tampa Bay. These agencies are working to reduce sewage, stormwater, and industrial waste pollution. They are also working to restore oyster reefs and other marine habitats.

Many things are being done to reduce pollution in Tampa Bay. These include:

- Reducing sewage: Sewage is a major source of pollution in Tampa Bay. The Hillsborough County Water Authority is working to improve the sewage treatment system to reduce the pollution released into the bay.
- Reducing stormwater pollution: Stormwater is another major source of pollution in Tampa Bay. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program is working to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution that is released into the bay by installing green infra-

structure, such as rain gardens and porous pavement.

- Reducing industrial waste: Industrial waste is a major source of pollution in Tampa Bay. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is working to reduce the amount of industrial waste that is released into the bay by enforcing environmental regulations.
- Restoring oyster reefs: Oyster reefs are important marine

habitats that help filter water pollution. Tampa Bay Watch and the Ocean Conservancy are working to restore oyster reefs in Tampa Bay.

Reducing single-use plastic pollution: Single-use plastic pollution is a major problem in

Tampa Bay. The city of Tampa has banned single-use plastic bags and straws.

Tampa Bay Watch has been restoring oyster reefs in Tampa Bay since 2001. The organization has restored over two miles of oyster reefs at 30 sites along the shores of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee coun-ties.

Tampa Bay Watch uses a variety of methods to restore oyster reefs, including:

- Oyster shell planting: Tampa Bay Watch volunteers plant oyster shells on the seafloor to create new oyster reefs.
- Oyster reef balls: Tampa Bay Watch volunteers install oyster reef balls on the seafloor to create new oyster reefs.
- Oyster reef bags: Tampa Bay Watch volunteers fill oyster reef bags with oyster shells and place them

on the seafloor to create new oyster reefs.

Oyster reefs are important marine habitats that provide food and shelter for various marine life. They also help fi Iter water pollution and protect shorelines from erosion.

Tampa Bay Watch's oyster reef restoration projects are a vital part of the organization's mission to protect and restore Tampa Bay's marine environment.

These are just some of the

things that are being done to reduce pollution in Tampa Bay. By working together, we can make a difference and help ensure that Tampa Bay remains a healthy and vibrant estuary system for many years.  $\Omega$ 



Photo: Oyster beds help reduce water pollution. The absence of these beds or dead beds can signal an unhealthy marine environment. Photo by Bob Luce on Unsplash

# SUN 'n FUN AEROSPACE EXPO 2023

The SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo was held for the 49th time in 2023. The event was held from March 28 to April 2, 2023, at Lakeland Linder International Airport in Lakeland, Florida. The expo was a huge success, with over 200,000 visitors in attendance.

Gil Thomas from Flotilla 77, Polk County coordinated the Auxiliary participation in the event by setting up a Public Affairs booth that provided recreational boating safety and recruiting information. Clark Pittman and Matt Stephen, members of Flotilla 74, Brandon, stood watch during the event.

The expo featured a wide variety of activities and events, including:

- A fly-in for aircraft of all shapes and sizes
- An airshow featuring military and civilian performers
- A STEM and Career Fair
- A Family Fun Zone
- Over 500 exhibitors
- Hands-on workshops
- Dozens of forums

The expo was a great opportunity for pilots, aviation enthusiasts, and families to learn about aviation and have some fun. It was also a great way to support the Aerospace Center for Excellence, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting aviation education.

If you did not participate this year, be sure to sign up next year. The Aerospace Expo is more fun than work! Ω





These members of Flotilla 77, Polk County, posed for a photo beside a "randomly selected" aircraft at the SUN n' FUN Aerospace Expo. Ok, so it was not random, but we are permitted our biases too!

The page background is the Blue Angels, favorites at the airshow. USCG Auxiliary photos by Gilbert Thomas



# **Briefs and Updates**



#### D-Train 2023



**US Coast Guard Auxiliary DISTRICT 7 BOARD MEETING & TRAINING** SEPT 19 - 24, 2023

Florida Hotel and Conference Center 1500 Sand Lake Road Orlando, Florida, 32809 407-859-1500

(For reservations, mention CG Aux) \$129.00 room rate per night!

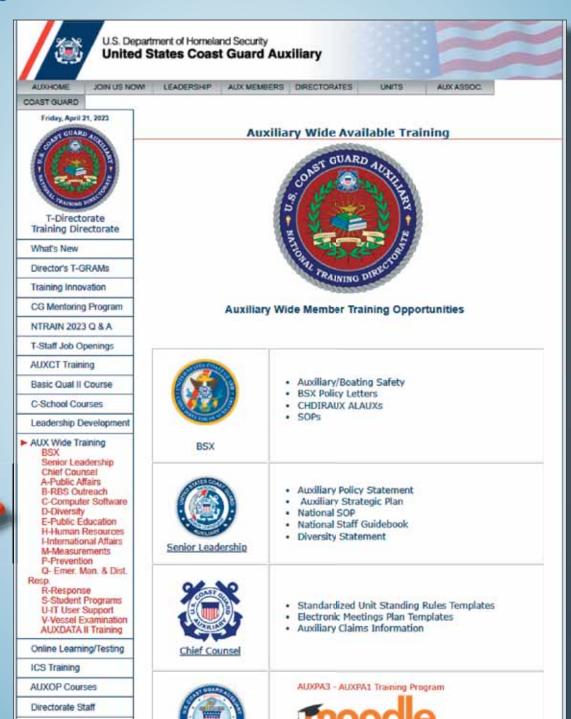
Don't forget to pre-register online.



# **Briefs and Updates**

Complete your CORE training. Find online courses on the Training Directorate website and earn new qualifications. Go to:

http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&category=aux-mem-ber-training

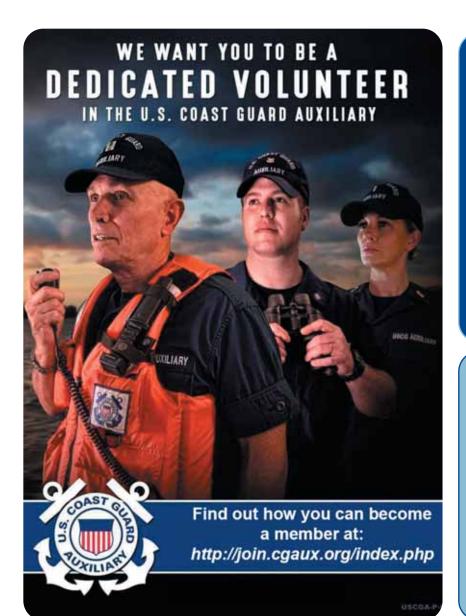




**Note: Members** 

must sign in to

gain access.



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 front-line 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.

FLOT Lines is a publication of Flotilla 74, Brandon, District 7 United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, located at 3006 S. Kings Ave., Brandon. The Auxiliary an organization of dues-paying 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 Riley, SO-PB, Email address: dottieriley@gmail.com

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Be sure to attend our next flotilla meeting

When: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.

Where: Flotilla 74, Brandon
3006 S. KINGS AVE, Brandon, FL

Why: Membership is more rewarding when you participate...

and bring a friend!

FLOT Lines