



FLOT Lines

Flotilla 74, Brandon

District 7

USCG Auxiliary

Issue 6 2023





FLOT Lines

Newsletter Flotilla 74, Brandon

Dorothy Riley, Flotilla 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

Dottie Riley

Publications

Public Affairs

William Sage

Human Resources

Matt Stephen

RBS-Partner Visitation

Vessel Examinations

Tanner Piliego

Information Systems

Communication Services

Christopher Hunt

Communications

Member Training

Kelly McMahon

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: Flotilla 74, Brandon member Steve Williams is appointed Flotilla Staff Officer-Operations by Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Commander, at the Flotilla meeting on Sept. 12, 2023. USCG Auxiliary photo by Tanner Piliego



From the Helm

Dorothy Riley Flotilla Commander



It is year's end which is a time to reflect. What are our accomplishments, and where did we fall short?

I am extremely grateful for our new members. Most completed their CORE training in record time, and some have already assumed flotilla staff officer positions. Members Clark Pittman and Matt Stephens earned their Operational Auxiliarist device in under a year. Bravo Zulu!

A few of our members come to us with skills developed in their civilian lives that greatly benefit and enhance our future capabilities. These skills range from professional teaching to specialized training and certifications in radio operation, emergency medical assistance, and as the Department of Homeland Security "Stop the Bleed" program trainers. We have a rich skill bank on which to draw. Our immediate goal will be to turn these skills into Auxiliary qualifications like Telecommunications Operators and qualified Instructors. This new crew is also young, energetic, and highly motivated.

One of our successes this year was our work on our building. Last year, we dried the building and stripped the wet flooring. We could not afford to have the floors replaced professionally, so getting the floors restored depended on our members' availability to work on this project which extended the time it took. (That is the only downside to having younger members who are employed.) Just when we thought we were organized and ready to complete the project, a storm knocked out our electricity, and we lost two full months waiting for the county to restore it.

One of the more important qualities about our members is that they have fun together. They have the

right idea because membership should never be a drudge! They are the epitome of diversity and inclusion as they are very different from each other and present differing skills and interests. I so look forward to watching them mature as members next year.

Our shortfalls are fewer than they were this time last year, so we must be moving in the right direction. We have several qualifications that our members must earn. We desperately need qualified Instructors to teach both Member Training and Public Education courses. We need more Vessel Examiners. We must focus on Recreational Boating Safety tasks and on recruiting. New members most often earn their Vessel Examiner qualification first. This would solve one problem. Also, we must help our members qualify in areas of interest to them. Meeting their needs and interests will help with member retention. Rather than simply expecting them to meet ours.

What do our members want to do? What do they- YOU- want to accomplish? We have a new year ahead and would like to see you "be all that you can be," to borrow from a recruiting slogan.

Enjoy the holidays. Spend time with friends and family. Reflect on what you want to do next year in the Auxiliary. We will do all that we can to help. Your growth benefits all of us.

Dorothy Riley,
Flotilla Commander

A very happy holiday season to every member, their family, and friends!



From the Helm



We published this question in an issue of Flot Lines earlier this year, and with 2024 upon us, we ask you again:

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE AUXILIARY?

1. Why did you join the Auxiliary?
2. When was the last time you attended a flotilla meeting?
3. What is your primary reason for missing meetings?
4. Are you satisfied with your membership in the Auxiliary?
5. Are you proud of being a member?
6. When was the last time you participated in a planned event or activity?
7. What were your goals as a new member?
8. What activity/event did you most enjoy?
9. As a new member, did you prepare a Member Involvement Plan?

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T7Li_SvvVbkEPSNWekeFsKZs-La_-6XO0/view

Note: There is no reason that seasoned members cannot write a new Member Involvement Plan to help refocus on your goals.

10. Have you completed the CORE training courses?
11. Have you completed other Auxiliary training? <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=new-members>
12. Would a mentor help you complete training courses or encourage involvement?
13. What can we do to make your membership more enjoyable and rewarding to you?
14. Do you enjoy being with other members? (Fellowship)
15. What would motivate you to participate more often?

Reprinted from FLOT Lines, issue 2, 2023



Beauty and the Brain: A Wired Connection

*Improving creativity and motivation
by introducing a
pleasant environment.*

By Dorothy Riley



In 2023, the Flotilla 74, Brandon, staff started meeting at a local restaurant. While we regarded this as a stopgap measure in a time of need, we did not end the practice after our building was functional again. We enjoyed these meetings more. They were less formal but far more productive! Best of all, we enjoyed each other's company and bonded as friends and associates.

As a (retired) social scientist, this presented me with a riddle. We were not as happy or productive at our facility as when we met at the restaurant. We were the same people with the same jobs, but the restaurant always produced better outcomes. The people were the same. The positions and goals were the same. All that differed was our environment. That made me research the impact of our environment on enjoyment and motivation. Everything then fell into place. Beautiful or pleasing environments positively impact creativity and motivation.

Our attraction to beauty isn't just a fleeting feeling—it's deeply rooted in our neurobiology. When we encounter something aesthetically pleasing, a cascade of neural activity involves various brain regions and hormones. Let's delve into this fascinating interplay:

Brain Regions Activated by Beauty:

- **Medial Orbitofrontal Cortex (mOFC):** This area is crucial in reward processing. When we perceive something beautiful, the mOFC lights up, releasing dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and motivation.
- **Anterior Insula:** This region is linked to emotional awareness and the processing of sensory information. It becomes active when we experience aesthetic pleasure, suggesting a connection between beauty and emotional engagement.
- **Visual Cortex:** This region processes visual information, analyzing the features and composition of what we see. When presented with something aesthetically pleasing, the visual cortex exhibits heightened activity, suggesting a deeper processing of its visual qualities.

- Appreciating beauty is more than a mental process.

It impacts our physiology as well.

Hormones that influence

our perception of beauty include:

- **Dopamine:** As mentioned earlier, dopamine plays a crucial role in the pleasure associated with beauty. The mOFC releases it and contributes to feelings of reward and motivation, making us want to engage further with the aesthetically pleasing object or experience.
- **Oxytocin:** This "love hormone" enhances social bonding and empathy. Interestingly, research suggests that oxytocin can also be released in response to beauty, potentially contributing to feelings of warmth, connection, and awe.
- **Serotonin:** This mood-regulating hormone can be positively influenced by exposure to beauty. Studies suggest that experiencing something aesthetically pleasing can boost serotonin levels, leading to feelings of happiness and well-being.

Studies have shown that exposure to aesthetically pleasing surroundings or working in a visually pleasing environment can significantly benefit and stimulate creativity. Pleasant environments enhance focus and concentration. Beauty's calming and stimulating effects can help individuals focus better and engage more deeply in creative tasks. Additionally, these environments boost mood and motivation. The positive emotions associated with beauty can increase motivation and drive, leading to higher levels of creativity and innovation.

Aesthetically pleasing surroundings promote divergent thinking. Beautiful environments' complex and stimulating nature can encourage individuals to think outside the box and explore new ideas.

While the exact mechanisms are still being explored,

(Continued on page 7)



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the evidence suggests that working in a pleasing environment can create a positive feedback loop, enhancing creativity and productivity.

- Studies have shown that spending time in natural environments like forests or parks can significantly improve mental well-being and creativity. This principle may apply to boating or activities engaged in at a boat ramp while conducting Vessel Safety Examinations.
- Surrounding oneself with art and design elements that resonate with personal preferences can create a stimulating and inspiring workspace. It is in our flotilla member's interest for us to make our meeting space more visually appealing.
- A well-organized and clutter-free environment can reduce stress and distractions, allowing individuals to focus better and tap into their creative potential.

By understanding the neurobiology of beauty and its influence on creativity, we can design environments that nurture our well-being and fuel our creative potential.

The types of images and environments that appeal to men and women can vary depending on individual preferences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts. However, some general trends can be observed. The workspace should be visually appealing, aesthetically pleasing, clean, organized, and clutter-free. Opt for a neutral color palette like beige, white, or light gray as a base. This creates a calming and spacious feel, allowing for flexibility in adding pops of color through accessories and artwork. Blues and greens promote a calming and focused atmosphere, while yellows and oranges can boost energy and optimism.

- Maximize access to natural light if possible. Natural light improves mood and cognitive function and is beneficial for both genders. Incorporate natural materials like wood, stone, and plants for a calming and organic feel. These elements can help reduce stress and improve concentration.
- Hang relevant art (Coast Guard Auxiliary or nautical theme), inspirational quotes,

or affirmations on the walls to promote positive thinking and creativity. Consider rotating them periodically to keep things fresh and engaging. Avoid stereotypically gendered themes. Steer clear of overly feminine or masculine decor.

- Focus on creating a space that feels welcoming and inclusive for everyone. Remember, the key is to prioritize functionality, inclusivity, and a welcoming atmosphere that encourages everyone to thrive.

While some of these ideas may not be possible or practical at our flotilla, there remains much we can do. We started decluttering our building. Let us continue. We can paint, rearrange furniture, or add artwork or inspirational quotes or posters.

I propose we focus on decluttering our flotilla and making it a brighter, more attractive place to meet. We want to project a pleasing and professional environment that encourages pride in who we are and encourages others to be a part of the Auxiliary. Ω

We have a long way to go, but the progress we have already made is evident. Members no longer dread walking into the storage room. USCG Auxiliary photos by Dorothy Riley





Left: Chris Hunt makes the final adjustments to the flotilla's meeting room.

Right: Matt Stephen took charge of cleaning the storage area, which included disposing of truckloads of accumulated "stuff."

All photos this page by Dorothy Riley



Above: Kelly McMahon finishes cleaning the galley.



Tanner Piliego and Steve Williams complete installing the carpet tiles.



Division 7 Holds Annual Change of Watch

Dorothy Riley Sworn in as Commander of Flotilla 74.

By Dorothy Riley

Division 7 held its annual Change of Watch ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023, at Flotilla 72, St Petersburg. The purpose of the Auxiliary Change of Watch is to install the newly elected officers and recognize the accomplishments and service of the outgoing officers. The annual Change of Watch is often the only formal gathering of division and flotilla members during the year. This is especially true for Division 7, which has recently combined the Change of Watch with the annual Award Dinner.

From the words of Dean Hoskin, Division Commander: "The Change of Watch Ceremony is a purposeful, dignified, time-honored tradition that is integral to the transfer of command. The formality of the occasion is an acknowledgement of respect for leadership which is vital to the Auxiliary organization. In our case, the ceremony represents more than the transition from one Commander to another. It is the transfer of absolute responsibility for a unit of the United States Coast Guard and its assigned missions."



Top: Dean Hoskin, Division 7 Commander presents Dorothy Riley the District 7 Publications Award for the best division newsletter in 2022. Tony Hooper, Division Vice Commender is behind the podium.

Below: Matt Stephen with CAPT Michael P. Kahle, Commander, Sector St. Petersburg. USCG Auxiliary photographs



The Change of Watch is also the only event attended by officers of the Coast Guard. This year's event was attended by Captain Michael P. Kahle, Commander Sector St. Petersburg; LT Andrew J. Grady, Chief of Maritime Law Enforcement, Sector St. Petersburg; BMCS Daniel Whitby officer-in-charge, Station St. Petersburg; and BM1 Tyler Hudson, Operations Petty Officer, Station St. Petersburg. Auxiliary officers present included Martin Goodwin, District Chief of Staff, District 7; Dan Helou, District Captain West; and Terry Hershman, Auxiliary Unit Coordinator Station St. Petersburg.

Dorothy Riley and Matt Stephen attended the ceremony representing Flotilla 74, Brandon. Riley took the oath of office as Flotilla Commander, 74, and Staff Officer-Publications Division 7.

As Matt Stephen noted, these gatherings are a great opportunity to put names we may hear daily with faces and get to know others outside our flotilla. The list of officers and division staff is published separately. We all wish for success in the coming year! Ω



*We May Not Be Playing With
a Full Deck,
But We Hold a
Great Hand!*

By Dorothy Riley



Pardon my card playing analogy. Our flotilla is not fully staffed, and several key positions remain to be filled. (Hence, “we are not playing with a full deck.”) The most involved members, who can always be counted on, are a stellar, incomparable group. They are a team to be proud of!

To offset our deficits, we need to work smarter. This begins with setting SMART goals. We covered this briefly in our last newsletter and now with more detail. The first step to successful goal setting is to figure out what you want to accomplish. What are your dreams, aspirations, and desires? What do you want to achieve in 2024? Once you know what you want, you can start setting goals to help you achieve them.

Your goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

- **Specific:** Your goals should be specific and well-defined. What exactly do you want to achieve? Goals can apply to individual members as well as to staff officer responsibilities.
- **Measurable:** Your goals should be measurable so that you can track your progress. How will you know if you're on track to achieve your goal? Rather than set the goal “to increase the number of Vessel Examinations conducted,” try something like “to increase the number of Vessel Examinations conducted by 20 percent over 2023 totals.” Another example would be “to earn one (or two) new qualifications during 2024.”
- **Achievable:** Your goals should be doable but not too easy. You want to challenge yourself but not set yourself up for failure.
- **Relevant:** Your goals should reflect your overall goals and values. Why are you setting this goal?
- **Time-bound:** Your goals should have a deadline. When do you want to achieve this goal? Our deadline is built in. We function according to the calendar year, but you may choose to set a six-month goal.

Write down your goals.

Writing your goals down makes them more accurate and concrete. It also helps you to hold yourself accountable. Flotilla staff officers should share these goals with the elected leaders.

Create an action plan.

Once you have your goals, you must plan how to achieve them. What steps do you need to take? What resources will you need? How will you overcome obstacles? Who can help you achieve these goals?

Set a timeline.

Give yourself a deadline for achieving your goal. This will help you stay on track and motivated. While we operate according to the calendar year, you may set six-month goals.

Take action.

The most crucial step is to take action. Don't just sit around and think about your goals. Get out there and start working towards them. Be sure to enlist the helpers you identified in step two.

Track your progress.

Regularly track your progress towards your goals. This will help you stay motivated and ensure you are on track. Will you track once a quarter or mid-year?

Review and adjust your goals.

As you progress towards your goals, you may need to review and adjust them. This is normal. Don't be afraid to change your goals as needed. Are you on track? Bravo! Are you falling short? What would help improve your success rate?

Celebrate your successes.

Take the time to celebrate your successes along the way. This will help you stay motivated and keep moving forward.

Here are some additional tips for successful goal setting:

Be realistic about your goals. Don't set yourself up for failure by setting unrealistic goals.

Focus on your process, not your outcome. Don't get too attached to the outcome of your goals. Instead, focus on the process. For example, if you scheduled an event or activity and achieved lesser results than hoped for, focus on what you did right or what you can change the next time.

Be patient. It takes time and effort to achieve your goals. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results immediately.

Believe in yourself. You can achieve anything you set your mind to. **Believe in your fellow members.** Encourage them to take on a flotilla staff office. If they think that they may not be up to the task, remind them that most of us felt that way the first time we assumed an office, and we will always help each other.

I hope these tips help you set and achieve your goals. Remember, the most important thing is to take action and never give up on your ambitions.

Ready to play cards? We already hold a great hand!
Ω



Dean Hoskin, Division 7 Commander Visits the Brandon Flotilla.

Flotilla members proudly show off their progress towards restoring their building on a shoe-string budget.

By Dorothy Riley



Members of Flotilla 74, Brandon pose for a group shot with Dean Hoskin, Division 7 Commander, Nov. 14, 2023. From left rear are William Sage, Kelly McMahon, Chris Hunt, Dean Hoskin, Steve Willims, Edgardo Diaz Rodriguez, Matt Stephen, Earl Abbott, August Miller, Michael Debetta, and Stuart Davisson. In front are Dorothy Riley, George Humphrey, Daniel McDermott, and Tanner Piliego. USCG Auxiliary photograph.

Flotilla 74, Brandon held its annual election at its business meeting on November 14. Dean Hoskin, Commander of Division 7 attended and oversaw the election process. Dorothy Riley ran unopposed for the office of Flotilla Commander. Hoskin also presented an Auxiliary Sustained Service Award to Michael Debetta and praised the members' efforts in restoring the building after last year's flood.

The flotilla will hold a separate election at the meeting on Jan. 15 for the office of Flotilla Vice Commander. **We encourage every member who is physically able to move to attend the January meeting.** Not only will it be a great way to start the new year, but we must have a quorum to hold an election! Ω



Dean Hoskin, Division 7 Commander presents member, Michael Debetta an Auxiliary Sustained Service Award at the Nov. 14 business meeting of Flotilla 74, Brandon. The award is presented for every 750 hours of volunteer service. USCG Auxiliary photo



Bill Sage took this photo while on a cruise in the Caribbean. Is it a sunset or a sunrise? Either is a great image for the end of one year and the beginning of a new one.



Flotilla 74, Brandon Holiday Gathering



December 11, 2023 at O'Brien's in Brandon



See who is who on the Christmas tree next page.

Flotilla 74, Brandon Holiday Gathering



Background by Annie Spratt on Unsplash; Illustration and photos on previous page by Dorothy Riley

Flotilla 74, Brandon held its annual holiday gathering on Dec. 9, 2023, at O'Brien's in Brandon. We held a "Dirty Santa" gift give-away and had door prizes. What can we add except to say that we had fun- real fun, with lots of laughter and good cheer! It was the best possible way to end the year.

Thank you to every member who contributed in 2023. You made the year fun! We all look forward to 2024 and to next year's accomplishments. *Happy holidays and happy new year!*



Members, Start Here!


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-member-training>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

AUXHOME JOIN US NOW! LEADERSHIP AUX MEMBERS DIRECTORATES UNITS AUX ASSOC.

COAST GUARD

Friday, April 21, 2023



T-Directorate Training Directorate

What's New

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Training Innovation

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NTRAIN 2023 Q & A

T-Staff Job Openings

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Basic Qual II Course

C-School Courses

Leadership Development

► AUX Wide Training

- BSX
- Senior Leadership
- Chief Counsel
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- D-Diversity
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- H-Human Resources
- I-International Affairs
- M-Measurements
- P-Prevention
- Q- Emer. Man. & Dist. Resp.
- R-Response
- S-Student Programs
- U-IT User Support
- V-Vessel Examination
- AUXDATA II Training


Online Learning/Testing

ICS Training






AUXOP Courses

Directorate Staff

Auxiliary Wide Available Training



Auxiliary Wide Member Training Opportunities

 BSX	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auxiliary/Boating Safety• BSX Policy Letters• CHDIRAUX ALAUXs• SOPs
 Senior Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auxiliary Policy Statement• Auxiliary Strategic Plan• National SOP• National Staff Guidebook• Diversity Statement
 Chief Counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standardized Unit Standing Rules Templates• Electronic Meetings Plan Templates• Auxiliary Claims Information
	<p>AUXPA3 - AUXPA1 Training Program</p> 

Note: Members but sign in to gain access.



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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 flotilla meetings
***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!

