

THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Newsletter for Flotilla 14-2, Arlington

Vol. L - No. 5 August 2025
Bill Sekeres, FSO-PB

FROM THE PILOT HOUSE

In regard to the public, the boating season (and our opportunities to be active with the public) is beginning to wind down; although cooler weather will present some chances. Before the end of the year though, we still have a lot to do in finishing out this year and getting ready for 2026. In that light, it'll be important that as many of us as possible attend (guarantee a quorum) our August meeting. Please do all you can to be there.

Bill Sekeres, FC

Staff Officer Reports

Communications (FSO-CM):

Jeff Sandler has accepted the position of FSO-CM. It's been a very long time since this staff position has been filled. Here is a brief job description: Encourages the use of VHF-FM radio and promotes participation in communications drills, including training exercises in search and rescue communications for vessels and aircraft. Works with units toward providing qualified Auxiliarists for standing communications watches*.

* NOTE- Communications watches in the context of the Auxiliary does not transfer to standing radio watch at a Coast Guard unit.

Communication Services

Our Flotilla website and calendar are up to date at the present time. We are working on adding the Monthly Meeting Minutes (will be added after approved).

If you would like something added to the calendar, feel free to contact me. After approval from the FC, we will add the information. Please review our site, any comments are welcome. Flotilla Website URL: [Welcome to the Flotilla 14-2, District 7 Web Site](#)

Tom Anderson, FSO-CS

Finance

There were no transactions in the checking account in the month of June. In July, there were two transaction. One was a refund of PE class payment to a family who attended a class and too, a deposit received from other students.

At our August meeting we'll begin the discussion of dues for 2026 and forming a budget committee as well for 2026.

Bill Sekeres, FSO-FN

Materials

I ordered stamps from ANSC for the FSO-PE to send out Americas Boating Course Books to preregistered students.

FYI- There is NO requirement to get my permission to forward my report to anyone. When I was an SO, my monthly report was always forwarded to the other flotilla FSO's. My report also goes to the 14-2 website and the monthly flotilla newsletter. This can be viewed by the Public and the Auxiliary.

The only requirement is photos. A photo of a "non Aux". person requires written permission to be used. For example, the photos we take at the boat show. We get a signed permission slip from the person whose photo we want to use in an auxiliary publication.

Marc Lang, FSO-MA.

Marine Safety

The Best Flotilla Members are The Members you have now.

Proposed Events

October 9th Florida DEP Safety Fair

Oct 24-26 Jax Beaches Air Show- submitted application to city

Completed Events: None

Other Items:

1. Federal Register Monday June 23 USCG AIS- The Automatic ID System (AIS) only has 2 channels and it is getting crowded. The new (VDES) VHF Data Exchange System will have more channels to use. On an AIS screen you can hover over a contact and it tells you the vessels name, course, speed and other info. Commercial vessels require this system but several VHF-FM radios also have this feature

and recreational boats can use it as well.

3. USCGBoating.org shows marine casualties, present to the past. To see the entire list, uscgboating.org- recalls and safety defects, scroll down to Marine Safety Alerts, then left side of page to Marine Casualty Reports. Some example of recent marine casualties are:

6/25 2025 Collision between a Barge and a Train- Iowa

6/16 2025 Sinking of Fishing Vessel- Texas

6/16 2025 Explosion of Fishing Vessel- Hawaii

6/13 2025 MOB on a Towing Vessel- Texas

6/5 2025 Capsized Barge- Louisiana

4. I informed a reporter by email from the Florida Times Union who wrote an article that the Florida Boating Bill, Lucy's Law was CS/SB 628. He wrote HB 289 which is incorrect. He also stated that anyone born after Jan 1 1988 or 36 years old needs a boating class. The age in 2025 is 37. $12 + 25 = 37$.

5. I submitted an ATON Discrepancy Report on the navigation lights of the J T Butler bridge over the ICW. 5 of its 10 lights are extinguished and have been out since the first of the year. I contacted the 7th District (Now SE area) ATON Chief (who previously helped get the Beach Blvd Bridge lights operating) of the Butler Bridge problem. I received an email back from District 7 ATON (Now SE area) that FDOT was notified and repairs will take place soon.

You have to notify SE area ATON who will notify FL Dot of a problem. FL DOT does not seem to have a maintenance program to check bridges. SE Area ATON can violate FL Dot and the federal fines (\$36,439) for failure to maintain a bridge are high. Trying to notify FL Dot yourself (doesn't work).

6. New Approved Florida July 1st Laws

HB 289- Boating Penalties, BUI

CS/SB 628- Boating Penalties, Reckless, Careless Operation, Lucys Law

HB 575- Change Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America

HB 735- Add more water access, Clean Marina Program

SB 830- Removal of Migrant Vessels

SB 1388- Boater Freedom Act- Stop LE from no probable cause boardings

SB 164- Abandon Boats

7. Boaters Courses

boatersuniversity.com- medical and first aid, marine engines, anchoring and more.

8. More Useless? Information

The SeaWise Giant Ship is the longest in the world at 1504'.

Maryland is the only US state with no lakes.

The shortest river in the world is the Roe River in Montana at 201'.

The smallest lake in the world is Benxi Lake in China at 161 sq ft.

The Nile River is the longest in the world at 4132 miles.

The Missouri River is the longest river in the US at 2341 miles.

The Mississippi River is the close second longest river in the US at 2340 miles.

9. The Best Color to be seen in the water

One of the requirements for lifesaving devices to get USCG approval is Color.

Currently permitted colors are a variation of orange or red. Indian Orange and International Orange are the best colors to be seen. Research has found that weather and light conditions effect visibility. Lighting, Cloud Cover, Seastate, Visibility, Whitecaps, Debris and Precipitation all change whether it is easier to see or not. The viewers angle or height of the eye and color of the water all change in seeing an object in the water, IE:. whether you are in an aircraft or on a boat. The angle is different.

Fluorescent Colors were not considered for life saving purposes but may in the future. They are more noticeable in the daylight hours including dawn and dusk than standard colors. Conditions can change and No Color is most detectable in every condition. Field Testing by the USCG is ongoing and the information will be provided to change the regulations if necessary.

Marc Lang, FSO-MS

Public Affairs

A silver lining- With the expectation of a major increase in the number of Boat America students from the Scouts, and when the (district) scout leader (was unable) to produce a completed Excel spreadsheet with committed students, a plan was designed to facilitate the promised 30-40 student enrollment at a curbside card table outside the Merrill Road satellite police station. The Excel spreadsheet mimics the FWC spreadsheet used to submit successful students applying for their permanent card. Without this spreadsheet an alternate matriculation process was clearly needed. The following backup plan was devised:

Students were to fill out the exam answer sheet demographic information section that is normally done before they take the exam. The advantages of this preregistration process are an accounting spreadsheet can be maintained prior to the class for large enrollments when organization leaders are unable to produce a partial or completed spreadsheet. The method to achieve this is as follows:

Using the iPhone Notes App, the information on the answer sheet is scanned into notes and then via Google docs is converted to ASCII (editable text) and then entered into the spreadsheet. This same exam answer sheet that is now “QC’d” and validated is used by the student for the exam. Students with exam anxiety, or feeling tense, make errors or write illegibly. Having the demographic information filled out ahead of time allows for timely correction of questionable data. The disappointing turnout for the much-anticipated high volume of Scouts students had its silver lining of devising a method to enroll a large number of students in rapid fashion with minimal Auxiliary effort. This system was tested before the enrollment day and worked fine.

Evaluations July BA Class 4 of 7 students responding

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Class Impression | Awesome, very well done/very educational, most informative/ covers each pic [slide] well/ good class lots of useful information |
| 2. Impression of Instructors | informative and personable/well prepared, knowledgeable and experienced boaters/prepared, well-spoken/very good, knowledgeable and person experienced |
| 3. Student Participation | About right, everyone seemed engaged and attentive/students given the right amount of time on subjects and able to adequately participate/just right/about right. |
| 4. Less time on: | N/A/Just right/nothing |
| 5. More Time on: | N/A/Just right/Navigation |

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. Suggestion for improvement | Appropriate for first time boaters needing boating safety and education/ |
| 7. enjoyed the most | Learning about boating safety and water sports/class participation , Q&A sessions/operating your boat safely/Entire class |
| 8. Additional comment | N/A, thank you/Good Job everyone!! Thank you 😊
/Thank you for holding this class |

Public Education

A Boat America class was held at the Ft CCC on 26 July where all 7 students passed; evaluation responses are included in the PA report.

The tri-fold brochure is being updated removing obsolescence by not including the schedule for the year. Finally, to add a touch of professionalism in addition to graphic changes, (the brochure) will be printed on glossy paper typical of other CGAUX brochures.

Our new phone number 904-701-8499 and email cgaux070.14.02@gmail.com are also included with QR codes for access to the online Form 7023 course schedule listed by Zip codes. Public access to the Venmo account: @uscgaux0701402 was not included for security reasons. Only after a rapport with bona fide students is established will that access be given.

Frank Samperisi, FSO-PE

Vessel Examinations

Year to date we've completed 31 vessel safety checks (VFCs). This represents more than a 100% increase over 2024. With the end of the year approaching the number of new vessel safety checks we can expect to complete is dwindling.

In January I set a goal of 130 VSC for this year but that was anticipating we would be able to complete 30-40 VSC of vessels located at the MWR units in two local Navy bases. Situations beyond our control prevented us from getting access to the bases; we'll try to fix that for next year. I do think that we're not as active at the marinas in our AOR as we could/should be. We'll fix that as well.

Bill Sekeres, FSO-VE