

THE LIFE LINE

VOLUME 10
ISSUE 3

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
District 5 SR - Division 23
Flotilla 23-07 Herring Bay, Maryland

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OUR NEW FLOTILLA COMMANDER

SPRING 2023



My husband, Brian, and I absolutely love being out on the water. We began boating on the Three Rivers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for two years, before making our way down to Stafford, Virginia. We were out exploring the Potomac every weekend, taking trips up to Washington, D.C., down to Coles Point, VA and everywhere in between. We'd journey out to the Chesapeake Bay every year for our "boat vacation," over the Fourth of July, stopping in at some amazing locations.

Often times at our marina, we'd see what we thought were members of the Coast Guard. We came to learn they were members of an organization we'd never heard of, the Coast Guard Auxiliary. After spending some time with the members, learning what the Auxiliary did, both my husband and I decided to join.

I joined the Auxiliary because I could give back to something that I truly loved, recreational boating. As a newer member of 054-25-11, I had completed all my core training and began looking at ways I could be of service. As an Instructor for the American Red Cross, I saw a need for our Boat Crew members to be fully trained and qualified in First Aid, CPR and use of an AED (since we had one on our facility). I obtained my first qualification, Instructor, and offered regular training.

I spent three years in Stafford, VA, and with Flotilla 054-25-11. During that time, I served in multiple elected and appointed positions, including FSO-HR, FSO-DV, VFC and FC. Additionally, I became very involved in the Sea Scouts as our Flotilla launched the second Auxiliary Sponsored Sea Scout Ship, Ship 2511, as part of the partnership with the Boy Scouts of America.

I fell in love with the Chesapeake and all its quaint little towns on our trips out to the Bay, and in 2020 Brian and I moved to Rose Haven, Maryland. We discovered a Flotilla in our back yard, Herring Bay, 054-23-07, and both transferred.

I felt that I lost a year of Auxiliary service, maybe two, due to COVID, but am excited that we're open again and able to work with the boating community. During that time, I obtained my Master 50 Ton license, Inland and next year I hope to enroll in the boat crew program.

As the new Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 23-07 I'm hoping to help grow our membership and the services we provide to the thousands of boaters in our back yard!

Gini Shrift, FC

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Brian and Gini Shrift

SAFETY NOTIFICATION

Recently the District 5 Southern Region Operations Training Officer (OTO) advised that Auxiliary issued inflatable Personal Flotation Device (PFD) inflating cartridges will not be replaced. When these cartridges expire the inflatable PFD will need to be disposed of and a replacement inherently buoyant PFD requested for continuing operations. No new inflatable PFDs will be issued by the D5SR OTO.

This brought up some questions about the wearing of inflatable PFDs during Public Education, Vessel Exams & Public Affairs events. Here is the current guidance from OTO BOSN Murphy:

- ✓ Vessel Examiners will adhere to the current D5SR OTO policy that when cartridges expire or are discharged then the PFD will be discarded and an inherently buoyant PFD will be requested.
- ✓ Public Education & Public Affairs should continue to teach and educate the boating public about the use and maintenance of inflatable PFDs. They can also keep the old PFDs & cartridges after they expire to show the activation during PE and PA.

Please pass the word and send any questions back to me. Thanks for promoting safety for all our members in all our missions.

COMO Michelle Thornton, D5S (054) DSO-OP

ANNAPOLIS YACHT CLUB SAILING CENTER

On March 18, members of Division 23 joined together to present the Maryland Safe Boating class at the Annapolis Yacht Club in Eastport, Maryland. Margret Butler, along with Mark Bertacchi, Dorothy Neiman, Doug Casler, Paul Manicone, and Frank Voltaggio arrived early that Saturday morning to set up a public affairs table and prepare for the incoming class.

The Maryland course is one based on responsible boating procedures and requirements. The Maryland Boating Safety Education Act requires that any person who was born on or after July 1, 1972, and operates a registered or documented pleasure vessel on Maryland waters, be in possession of a Certificate of Boating Safety Education. The certificate must be shown, on request, to any Maryland Natural Resources Police Officer or other law enforcement officer such as the U.S. Coast Guard.

Students from the Annapolis Yacht Sailing Club were in attendance along with five adult local boaters. The club members ranged in age from 11 to 17. Margret led the class with an introduction of each Auxiliarist and then began the class chapters on Know Your Boat, Before You Get Underway, Operating Your Boat Safely, and Legal Requirements. After a short lunch break, the students returned to the chapters on Boating Emergencies and Enjoying Water Sports. This was followed by a review of all the chapters by Paul Manicone and the administering of the final exam. All of the students passed the test and were awarded a Maryland State Safe Boating Certificate.



BOATING SAFETY CLASS

On April 22 and 29, members of Flotilla 23-07 returned to the Anne Arundel County Edgewater Library in Edgewater, Maryland, to present the Spring edition of our Boating Safety course to the public. Joe DiStefano (FSO-PE), Chris Jensen, Brian Shrift, Ray Walsh, and Frank Voltaggio once again participated in the instructional portion of the classes.

The first class introduced the students to Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 covering such topics as Know Your Boat, Before You Get Underway, Operating Your Boat Safely, and Legal Requirements. The instructors went through a review of each chapter, presenting demonstrations of boating safety techniques as well as emphasizing areas where boaters especially needed to be aware of possible hazardous situations.

On April 29, the class met again and went through Chapter 5 on Boating Emergencies and Chapter 6 on Enjoying Water Sports. Another review of all the chapters was conducted and the students then completed the final exam. Maryland State registration cards were presented to them and then the instructors provided additional training sessions in marlinespike, chart reading and how to operate a VHF radio.

Joe DiStefano once again personally thanked Elaine Saba of the Edgewater library facility and her staff for their support in promoting and advertising the class to the public. Plans were then put in place to conduct another boating safety class at the library in October.



Joe DiStefano and Elaine Saba

APPROVAL OF ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Just a reminder that any articles written for print media or any interview done by an Auxiliarist must go through the District Staff Officer for Public Affairs before it is run. Please pass on to your members.

Connie Cosgrove, SO-PB

PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACONS

While personal locator beacons (PLBs) have been available to the public for a number of years, many boaters still do not find the need to own one. PLBs operate in the 406 MHz and 406.10 MHz range and have been approved by the Federal Communications Commission. They have become extremely popular with hikers and backpackers, especially those who could not expect a search and rescue team to locate them in the wilderness without one. PLBs can be purchased for as little as \$250 but a good unit averages out to about \$400 and beacon registration is free.

PLBs emit a distress signal in the event of an emergency offshore or on land. They are generally thought of as small hand-held Emergency Position Indication Radio Beacons (EPIRBs). The main difference between the two however, is that an EPIRB is registered to a vessel and PLB is registered to a person. A PLB is a smaller device that has to be manually activated and can emit a distress signal for a minimum of 24 hours. EPIRBs are larger, can automatically deploy and activate if a boat sinks, and begins emitting a distress signal for a minimum of 48 hours.

While boaters here on the Chesapeake Bay may feel that they are within a short rescue time if any problems arise, it has been determined that any extended time spent in the water can eventually result in hypothermia and death. Boaters should not rely on the expectation of a successful rescue especially if they are not wearing a personal flotation device and/or have a waterproof cellphone or hand-held radio on them. Having the extra advantage of a PLB can mean the difference between life and death.

BEACON REGISTRATION IS FREE AND INTENDED TO HELP SAVE YOUR LIFE!



www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov

Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking (SARSAT) Program

SARSAT/ Beacon Registration
NSOF E/SPO53
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
888-212-7183



Own an EPIRB or PLB? Call or use the QR code on the back to check your registration. It may help save your life!

PASSING THOUGHT

Zen and the Art of Sailing

Student: How does one know when to adjust the sails?

Teacher: Close your eyes and listen to the voice in the wind. Can you not hear it?

Student: No. How is it that you hear it?

Teacher: Ah, how is it that you *do not*?

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 8 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

May 20 - Marina Safety and Fellowship, Herrington Harbor South, North Beach, Maryland, 0900 - 1500

May 24-26 - US Naval Academy graduation, Annapolis, MD

June 3 - Herrington Harbor North, Tracys Landing, Maryland, VE/PA event

June 12 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

July 4 - Parade, Shady Side, Maryland, 1000

July 10 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

August 8 - National Night Out, Shady Side, Maryland, 1800

August 14 - Flotilla meeting, Cedarhurst Community Center, Shady Side, Maryland, 1900

Visit us at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=054-23-07>

Published by the USCG Auxiliary at no expense to the U.S. Government.

Photos by F. Voltaggio

