

THE LIFE LINE

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District 5 SR - Division 23
Flotilla 23-07 Herring Bay, Maryland

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YOUR NOW IN COMMAND

SPRING 2024

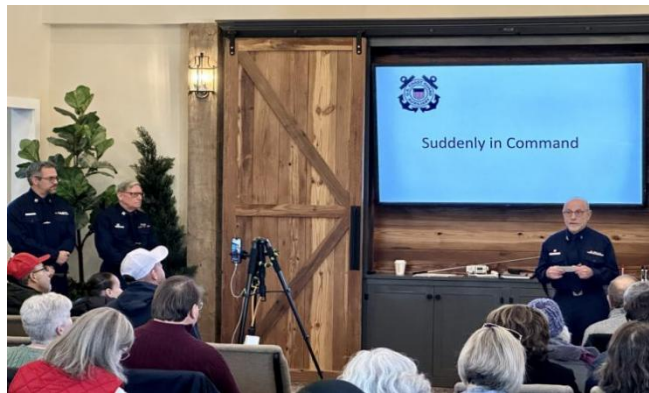


Nothing breeds success like success and presenting boating safety to the public is a good example. On February 17, members of Flotilla 23-07 once again gave their Suddenly in Command class this time to 62 of the slip owners of Herrington Harbour North Marina in Tracys Landing, Maryland. Back in May of last year, the flotilla gave the same class at Herrington Harbour South Marina in Rose Haven, Maryland which was so well received, the Herrington Harbour owner asked to have it repeated at the North facility.

Auxiliarists Joe DiStefano, Paul Manicone and Frank Voltaggio presented the two and a half hour class at the Landing building located at the marina. In support was Joe Sheehan, FSO-VE, who took the opportunity to sign up a number of boat owners for vessel exams. Flotilla members Gini Shrift, FC and Brian Shrift, VFC, were also in attendance to assist.

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Auxiliarist Joe DiStefano introducing the class and instructors.

This boating safety primer is designed for those not generally at the helm and helps them to be prepared with the basics in case of an emergency. The course is especially important for family members and friends in case something happens to the boat operator. Students learned about a typical vessel, nomenclature, and operating principles such as starting the engine, basic boat handling, and on board equipment such as using a fire extinguisher. Included were descriptions of what causes boating mishaps and how to minimize them:

Your skipper falls overboard.

Your skipper becomes physically incapacitated (e.g. injury, seasickness, other medical condition).

Your skipper needs to attend to a pressing emergency.

What now? Would you know what to do?



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BECOMING A VESSEL EXAMINER

The key to becoming a great Vessel Examiner is all in the training. It can be done by classroom instruction along with hands on training or by self study along with a mix of hands on training.

The following information outlines how to become a Certified Vessel Examiner in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary:

1. The member must be at least Basically Qualified (BQ).
2. The member/trainee must pass the Vessel Examiner Test, online <http://cgexams.info/testing>, with a score of 90%. When taking the test online, read the test instructions carefully. Test can be taken "open book". You must locate all the materials that you will need to read and study, PRIOR to taking the online Vessel Examiner Exam located at the National Testing Center (NTC), as it is timed.

Since these materials can be difficult to locate, the Auxiliary has developed a list and provided links on the NTC site for you to make it easier. These links will help guide you through the various reading material needed to successfully pass the online Vessel Examiner Exam:

- The Vessel Safety Check (VSC) Manual **M16796.8A** can be found at [this link](#). Change one can be found at [this link](#).
- You should also be familiar with **Forms ANSC-7003, ANSC-7008, ANSC-7012, and ANSC-7038**. They can be found on the forms page at [this link](#).
- Additional guidance is available for performing a VSC on PWC's ([this link](#)) and **Paddle Craft** ([this link](#)).

3. The member/trainee performs five Vessel Safety Checks with a qualified Vessel Examiner mentor. These five VSCs can be with more than one mentor. The VSCs are entered on the ANSC 7038 form listing the mentor as lead and the student as trainee. Note in the 7038 REMARKS section that the VSCs were performed as training for qualifying a new VE. The FSO-IS needs to enter this information into AUXDATA before the trainee can receive their Certification. Ask your FSO-IS to process the 7038 ASAP, as DIRAUX will not issue the VE Certification until the five mentored VSCs are in AUXDATA II.

4. Keep copies of all your paperwork associated with your Vessel Examiner training.

Reward: Serving as a Vessel Examiner is among the most rewarding experiences in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary as it offers you Recreational Boating Safety 'customer-facing' opportunities to meet, educate and learn from boaters that span from entry level paddle craft to 60 foot motor yachts and sailboats.

Joe Sheehan, SO-VE



FATAL PASSAGE

One of the deadliest maritime tragedies on the Chesapeake Bay occurred right here in our own backyard. On August 12, 1955, the commercial passenger schooner, *Levin J Marvel* sank in Herring Bay, Maryland in 27 feet of water in the midst of Hurricane Connie, initially a Category Four storm. Of the 23 passengers and four crew members, a total of 14 died that day.

The three masted cargo schooner was designed and built by JMC shipbuilders in Bethel, Delaware in 1891. The *Marvel* was of wooden construction, 125 feet long with a 23.5 foot beam and a draft of eight feet. She started her commercial career as a freight hauler carrying timber from North Carolina. She was not a powered vessel in the true sense of having an inboard or outboard engine. The *Marvel* derived her auxiliary maneuvering ability through the use of a separate motor launch to push the ship from the stern when docking in port or when the wind died.

By the 1940's, this type of craft was beginning to see the twilight of commercial sail on the Bay although its later owner, Herman Knust, modified the vessel and ran a sightseeing cruising business, Chesapeake Bay Vacation Cruises from 1944 until 1952.

By 1954, the ship had fallen into a state of extensive disrepair having been mothballed on the Wicomico River near Salisbury, Maryland. It was at that point that John Meckling purchased the *Marvel* from Herman Knust and restarted her career under Chesapeake Windjammer Cruises. The new owner was working with limited funds and many of the needed repairs appeared to have been made only above the waterline. At the time, the Coast Guard did not require the *Marvel* to be licensed or inspected to carry passengers since the law only called for vessels weighing over 700 tons to comply. The *Marvel* measured in at only 183 tons.

On the morning of August 12, as Hurricane Connie worked her way up from the south, the *Marvel* departed Cambridge, Maryland and proceeded across the Bay heading back to Annapolis, Maryland despite the dire weather reports. The increasing winds and waves forced the captain to change course and head instead to the shelter of the West River. However, the high winds began to shred the sails and the shorthanded crew were unable to get the motor launch to operate. Meckling changed course again and headed south for Herring Bay in a last ditch effort to ride out the storm. At that point the bilge pumps began to fail and a Mayday message was sent out but there was no response. He anchored the vessel but the force of the storm created extreme conditions and the ship began to break up. The captain and a few others took refuge in a nearby duck blind until the hurricane blew it apart while residents of North Beach, Maryland, seeing the *Marvel* in distress, went out to the ship to help rescue the survivors. Recovery efforts followed until the last of the bodies were located on August 15.

John Meckling, having had little experience in either seamanship or navigation, was later prosecuted and found guilty of negligence but not manslaughter. However, due to the judge's leniency, his sentence of one year in jail was suspended and the \$2,000 fine was waived.

In 1958, primarily as a result of the loss of the *Levin J Marvel*, the Small Passenger Vessel Rule was passed by Congress which required the inspection and certification of any commercial vessel carrying more than six passengers for hire.

Frank Voltaggio, FSO-PB

YOUR NOW IN COMMAND CON'T.

In addition, Joe DiStefano discussed the proper way to set an anchor which is always a possibility for boaters in an emergency condition. This was followed by an in depth discussion on man overboard situations and on using a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and the importance of having it registered. It allows rescuers upon receiving the satellite notification to contact the owner and ascertain if an actual emergency has taken place. PLBs have come down in price over the years and are much more affordable to the average boater.

Finally, the attendees were presented with a demonstration on the importance of using either a fixed or a hand held VHF radio and the proper way to call for assistance. VHF radios can provide a greater area of transmission than a cell phone as well as allowing other boaters in the vicinity, who may also have a radio, to offer assistance.



Auxiliaryist Paul Manicone discusses Mayday calls.

The class was warmly received by the audience and Flotilla 23-07 looks forward to conducting additional safety training at that facility in the future.

Frank Voltaggio, FSO-PB

PASSING THOUGHT

Good judgement is usually the result of experience. And experience is frequently the result of bad judgement. But to learn from the experience of others requires those who *have* the experience to share the knowledge with those who follow.

Barry LePatner



THE LIFE LINE

AWARDS

2023 Auxiliarist of the Year – Chris Jensen

Sustained Service Award – Kimberle Sheehan (3rd Award), Helen Gemignani (1st Award)

Recognition for Outstanding Service - Joseph DiStefano, Helen Gemignani, Frank Voltaggio

Auxiliary Operations – Helen Gemignani

Vessel Examiner – Kimberle Sheehan

Air Crew – Joseph Sheehan

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

April 27, 28 - Safe Boating Class, Parish Creek Landing, Shady Side, Maryland, 0900 - 1500

May 11 - VE and Kayak Inspection Day, Herrington Harbor South, Rose Haven, Maryland, 0900

May 13 - Flotilla meeting, Herrington Harbor South, Rose Haven, Maryland, 1900

May 18 - Marina Safety Day, Herrington Harbor South, Rose Haven, Maryland, 0900 - 1200

June 8 - Outdoor Yard Sale Herrington Harbor North, Tracys Landing, Maryland, 0900

June 9 - Great Chesapeake Bay Swim, Sandy Point Park, Maryland, 0930

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

Visit us at:

<https://Flotilla2307.com>

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Photos by Brian Shrift.