

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

Golden Isles



The port hole

For Boaters, By Boaters™

A quarterly publication of America's Boating Club Golden Isles

Upcoming Events

July
17 - Club Social

August
10 - Club Social
24 - Club Cruise

September
17 - Club Social
20-22 - District Cruise
& Rendezvous

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Commander's Message



CDR Mark Crawford, AP

GPS Is Definitely Our Friend

In 1714 the British Parliament passed the Longitude Act which provided a substantial reward to the person who could provide a solution to the vexing problem of practically determining longitude on the high seas. This was not just an academic challenge as the solution had practical application to navigation. Scientists and astronomers had been working on this problem for thousands of years.

Ancient Greek astronomer Hipparchus had gone so far as to set a prime meridian in Alexandria. Galileo proposed using the moons of Jupiter to calculate longitude. Lunar distances were used for years but the calculations were complex.

The ultimate winner of the British contest was John Harrison in 1773 for the development of a chronometer that could be used on the high seas. A pendulum clock, for obvious reasons, was not a practical way to keep time. The ancient Greeks knew the ability to keep time was an important clue to solving the longitude problem but not until Harrison was a clock developed that worked on a rocking ship. In 1884 the Royal Observatory in Greenwich England became the Prime Meridian. This location was adopted by most of the world to measure time and distance.

In recent years a much finer point has been placed on what is known as GMT or Greenwich Mean Time. Today, we use atomic clocks to keep precise time and the actual Prime Meridian has been moved slightly. We now call the standard time UTC or Coordinated Universal Time.

Then in 1973 the U.S. Department of Defense began the development of GPS. The first satellite was launched in 1978 and the final and 24th satellite became operational in 1993. In 1983 President Reagan allowed GPS to be used by civilians with some limits; in 2000 President Clinton removed all limitations on civilian use.

The solution to the problem of longitude was finally put in the hands of everyone with the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 and the integration of GPS on the phone in 2008. It only took 294 years to make finding longitude as simple as looking at a phone. Apple opened the coding for the iPhone to software developers, and they went wild with almost endless uses for GPS.

Continues on next page

Commander's Message (continued)

We as pleasure boaters now have an interesting problem: figuring out which of the hundreds of boating apps is best. There are apps for navigation, wind, weather, and tides and lots of other needs. Many have all these integrated into a single app. All use GPS in some way. This question is a little like answering who is the best quarterback in NFL history. We all have an opinion.

I did a very short, non-scientific survey of some of our members about which apps they use for boating. In the interest of space and time, I am going to list the apps that were mentioned without any additional commentary. I will list these by category but some fit in several buckets. Hopefully at our next social event we will have a lively discussion about which ones are best.

Navigation:

Aqua Maps, Open CPN (android), Navionics, Anchor Pro, Ditch, NOAA Buoy, Garmin Active Captain, America's Boating Club, SSCN, Sea Pilot, Savvy Navvy, Argo Nav, Boat Beacon, Wave Boating, Solocator,

Weather:

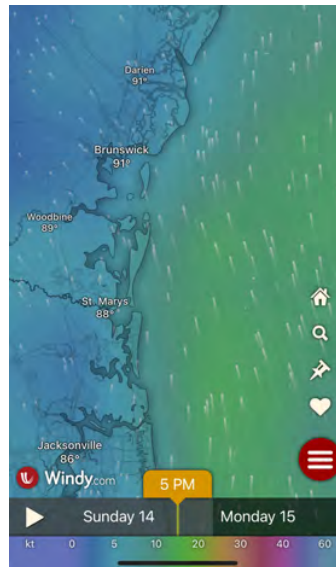
Storm Radar, MyRadar, Carrot, Weather Channel,

Tides:

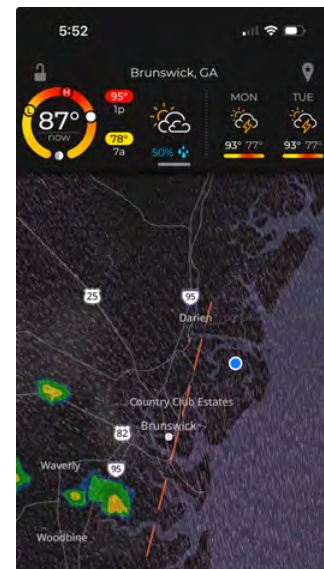
Tide Alert, Tides Near Me, Boat U.S., Real Tides and Currents, Tides

Wind:

Windy, Predict Wind



Windy



MyRadar

Please invite your friends and family to our social events and cruises. The best way to grow the club is through your recommendation to join the fun.

Mark Crawford
Commander



Now's the time to sign up for the District 26 Cruise & Rendezvous that will be held in Savannah. Dates are September 20-22, 2024. You can come by car or by boat. Several of our club members will be attending. You don't have to stay for the whole weekend and you don't need a boat. The folks in Savannah have plenty of boats if you want to ride along with them.

Should be lots of fun. Hope to see you there!

Executive Officer's Report



XO Cynthia Lamb, AP

Let's Break the Addiction

I've been conducting Vessel Safety Checks for a couple years now. A Vessel Safety Check (VSC) is a voluntary examination of a personal pleasure boat by a certified examiner to verify the presence and condition of certain safety equipment required by state and federal regulations. There are 15 items that are assessed during each VSC ranging from life jackets to visual distress signals (VDS) to fire extinguishers. There is no charge for these safety checks, and no consequences if you don't pass. These checks are performed to keep you safe, not to penalize you.

They're kind of fun to do and I like talking with boat owners about their boats and about what they need to have onboard to not just be compliant with federal and state boating laws, but to be as safe as possible. It's no fun though when the boat doesn't pass. It usually means something is broken, missing, or no longer serviceable. Either way, it means the boat owner will have to spend some money if he/she wishes to correct the deficiency.

What do you think is the number one reason for a boat to fail a VSC? It's not a lack of personal flotation devices or not carrying a fire extinguisher; it's not meeting the requirement for a visual distress signal due to expired signal flares (signal flares expire 42 months after they are manufactured). Sometimes the boat owner has several packages onboard, all of them expired. People often say things like "I just bought these." They also wonder why it even matters considering that they "never boat at night." Ah, now that's an interesting statement. It's true that a boat less than 16 feet in length does not have to carry VDSs during daytime hours, but if your boat is greater than 16 feet in length, you must carry them. Why? Besides being the law, remember that VDSs are for emergencies. Can you imagine any scenario where you set out for a day of boating, but you end up in your boat after it gets dark? I bet you can think of some. What's if your engine fails, or if you run aground?

So, given that it's a requirement to carry visual distress signals, that doesn't mean they have to be flares. I have several problems with the flares (besides the fact that they expire). In addition, they have a short burn time, they can be used only once, and they are dangerous (they can burn at over 5,000 degrees).



Photo source: America's Boating Channel

There is the potential for both injury and property damage if not properly handled. In every video I've ever seen of a flare demonstration, the user is always wearing a heavy glove and has the flare extended out over the water. (See the picture on the left as evidence.) How many of us carry a heavy glove on our boats? And, if you're holding the flare over the side of the boat, how are you tending to the emergency? These flares aren't going to hold themselves now, are they?

Continues on next page

Executive Officer's Report (cont'd)

Visual distress signals, especially pyrotechnic devices, cannot be deployed in order for you to practice. In fact, it's against the law. That's why many people are not familiar with how to safely use and care for these devices. Do you know how to deploy them? Do you know if your expired flares still work? Flares also present significant storage and disposal problems. Simply throwing expired flares in the trash would be an environmental and health hazard as they contain highly toxic chemicals. Unfortunately, there is no single agency or organization handling the disposal of expired flares in the U.S. There are also different, yet unclear, requirements at the state level about how flares should be disposed of.

Given all these drawbacks, the Coast Guard Research and Development Center in New London, CT, launched a multi-year project to develop a signal characteristic that could be used as an alternative to pyrotechnic flares; from this research they developed a set of requirements for manufacturers to meet. There are now several electronic flares on the market that comply with all U.S. Coast Guard requirements for Night Visual Distress Signals.

Jerry and I bought the SOS Distress Light by Sirius Signal to count as our nighttime distress signal, with the orange distress signal flag covering the requirement for daytime use. Here is a list of some of the advantages of breaking the pyrotechnic signal flare addiction and switching to an LED solution:

- Does not expire
- Lasts for hours
- Family safe so even your kids can operate it in an emergency
- Can be used untended (so you can attend to the emergency)
- Easy to operate
- Visible up to 10+ nautical miles
- Powered by replaceable "C" cell alkaline batteries
- Environmentally safe with no disposal issues
- Buoyant and water proof; so even if you drop it in the water, it's still active

The Sirius SOS Distress Light, Flag, and Whistle can be purchased for \$89.99 at several stores including West Marine and Bass Pro Shop. It covers the requirements for visual distress signals (night and day) and for having a sound producing device. A 3-pack of flares is \$39.99. Remember, the electronic version is a one-time purchase so it's less expensive in the long run.

Are you still relying on a distress signal that is similar to that used by mariners during the time of *Moby Dick* or are you ready for something better?



Photo source: Fisheries Supply web-site

<https://www.fisherinessupply.com/sirius-signal-c-1003-sos-distress-light-flag-whistle/c-1003>

Squadron Education Officer's Report



SEO Mike Moye, SN

Upcoming Courses

Our next upcoming ABC class will be October 12. It's scheduled at the University of Georgia Marine Extension Center and begins that morning at 8:30 a.m. Also, the Offshore Navigation class is complete, and the students are ready to take the exam. Like all Advanced Courses, the exam goes back to National for grading, so we'll hear something about their success as soon as it is returned.

We recently did a brief head count of current members and found that we have 37 members who have completed the ABC course and are ready for the next step—Boat Handling. Boat Handling is intended for newer recreational boaters who have completed a basic boating class (like America's Boating Course) and want to learn more about skilled boat handling in a variety of situations. The course covers six primary topics: (1) Rules of the Road: A Practical Approach, (2) Confidence in Docking and Undocking: Slow Speed Maneuvering, (3) Boating with Confidence: Handling Your Boat Underway, (4) Anchoring with Assurance: Don't Get Carried Away, (5) Emergencies on Board: Preparation for Handling Common Problems, and (6) Knots and Line Handling: The Knots You Need to Know.

We're shooting for a late August to early September start date. It usually takes six evenings to complete the course, including the exam. Do consider it if you're ready for another level of boating education. Also, if you've spotted a topic that interests you but don't want the entire course, we can offer it as a stand-alone seminar since we start a new topic at each class meeting.

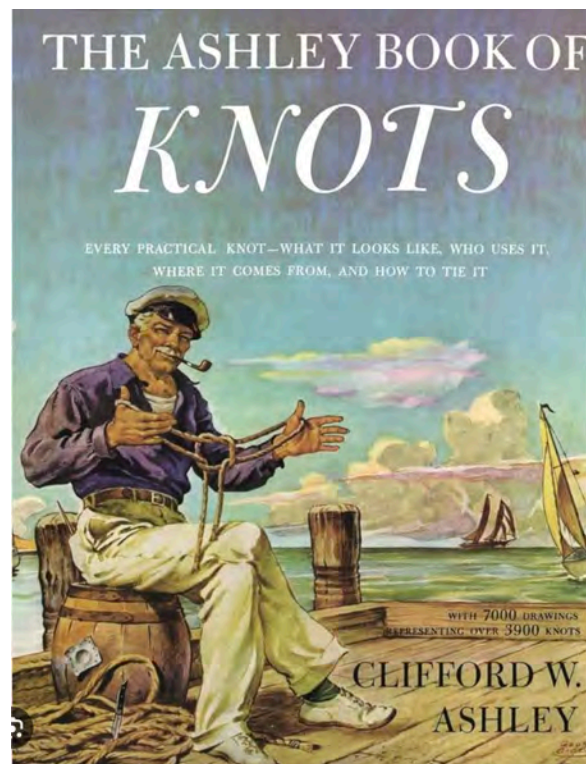
One more thing. At no extra cost we will have one of our members demonstrate the famous "**flying bowline**". It's a sight to behold.

I am the proud owner of a copy of *The Ashley Book of Knots* which was written 80 years ago. It's 619 pages long and illustrates 3900 knots. Nowhere in that famous tome is anything like the "flying bowline".

Too bad Mr. Ashley didn't have the YouTube channel to astound his readers with the fast-moving cleverness of this very special knot-tying technique.

'Nuff said.

Mike



Administrative Officer's Report



AO Daria Lijoi

We had a great time in **June** on the back porch of the Wolf Island Oyster Company on Saint Simons Island. We had great attendance and everyone enjoyed dinner with a view of the marsh. (Some photos below.)

The **July social** will be held on Wednesday, July 17 at 6 p.m. at the Rooftop at Ocean Lodge located at 935 Beachview Drive, Saint Simons Island.

For **August**, we're planning a cruise-themed murder mystery event at our home. Invitations have been sent via email. Hope to see you at all of our fun events.



Peanuts and Autopilots

Submitted by: Charles Wilsdorf

After months of extensive preparations involving organizing galley supplies, refrigeration storage, dinghy equipment, navigational charts (in both digital and paper form), bedding, provisions storage, docking lines, anchor arrangements, sail maintenance, needed tools and various other essentials, my companion, Coy Hodges, and I set sail for the Bahamas from Brunswick. While this wasn't my inaugural voyage, the journey to the Bahamas held novelty for me. I felt a tinge of apprehension, pondering how my skills and personality would align with those of a new crew member. Prior to our departure, Coy and I engaged in lengthy conversations to ensure our expectations were communicated clearly.

When embarking on a cruise, especially on prolonged stretches, I strongly advocate the use of an autopilot. Autopilots are adept at steering boats, often surpassing human precision and granting sailors more time to maintain a visual watch (and/or even indulge in some ocean reading). The necessity of an autopilot became apparent earlier to me on a voyage to Mexico (Pacific coast) on *El Regalo*, our Tayanna 52, when our autopilot failed. Even with adequate crew, the Admiral, Teresa, said "No way!" Teresa made her way down into the bowels of *El Regalo* and personally replaced all the hydraulic cylinder clevis bolts the yard had left loose and had fallen out.

Prior to leaving for the Bahamas, we learned that the autopilot on *Makana*, Coy's Catalina 320, was not functioning, so he had a marine electronic specialist come to repair it and conduct a test voyage to ensure its proper operation.

Both Coy and I were now thrilled as we began our trip that April morning from Brunswick Landing Marina. Traveling down the East River, we double-checked for any essential items we may have forgotten. Adequately stocked with food, full water tanks, topped-off fuel, six cases of beer (which Coy kept stowed in his berth), rum, and all marine electronics in working order, we sailed under the Sidney Lanier bridge before allowing the autopilot to take control. Immediately, *Makana* abruptly veered to starboard and started swerving erratically. I immediately disengaged the autopilot and took control of the steering. Coy was now thinking about returning to the dock. The autopilot had functioned flawlessly just a few days prior; so, what could have triggered its sudden erratic behavior?

I had experienced the same condition before on a boat which had its fluxgate compass and controls in one unit. It worked great in standby, but if I hit the engage button it would turn us hard starboard. I quickly figured out that my external fixator on my wrist was causing the problem, so I thought maybe we had a fluxgate compass problem with *Makana*. Coy, unfamiliar with what a fluxgate compass was or



The culprit

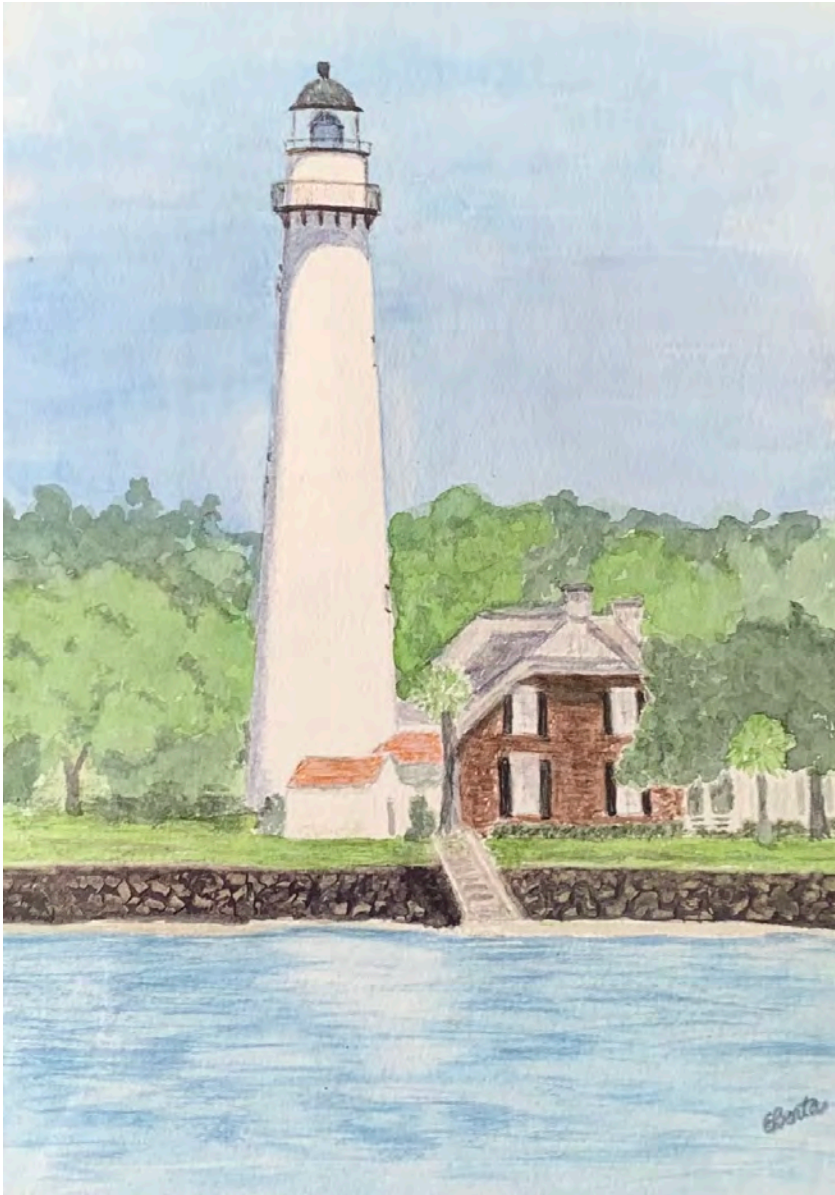
where to find it, asked for guidance. After a thorough search in the aft cabin, I located the fluxgate compass situated at the bottom of the aft closet, next to a #10 tin can (110 oz) of super extra-large roasted peanuts. We quickly relocated the peanuts to eliminate any interference.

The autopilot then operated flawlessly for the remainder of the voyage. Sometimes, the solution to a boat problem can be quite simple, and this was one of those cases.

Note: Coy Hodges was a member of our club and earned a full certificate (SN). As a professional educator, he taught our club Weather, Piloting, Advance Piloting, Junior Navigation, and Navigation courses. We still reminisce today about our four years of cruising together in the Bahamas and from Key West to North Carolina.

Watercolors from the Water

By: Eileen Berta



There are so many classic locations for artists around our Golden Isles that are accessible for all to paint. As a boater, I have a unique perspective - from the water.

I first discovered this as a novice painter several years ago, when I captured a reference photo of the St. Simons lighthouse from offshore. I realized that everyone can and does paint it from the other side - but how many can get this view?

More watercolors from the water on next page

Watercolors from the Water (cont'd)

By: Eileen Berta





America's Boating Club Golden Isles



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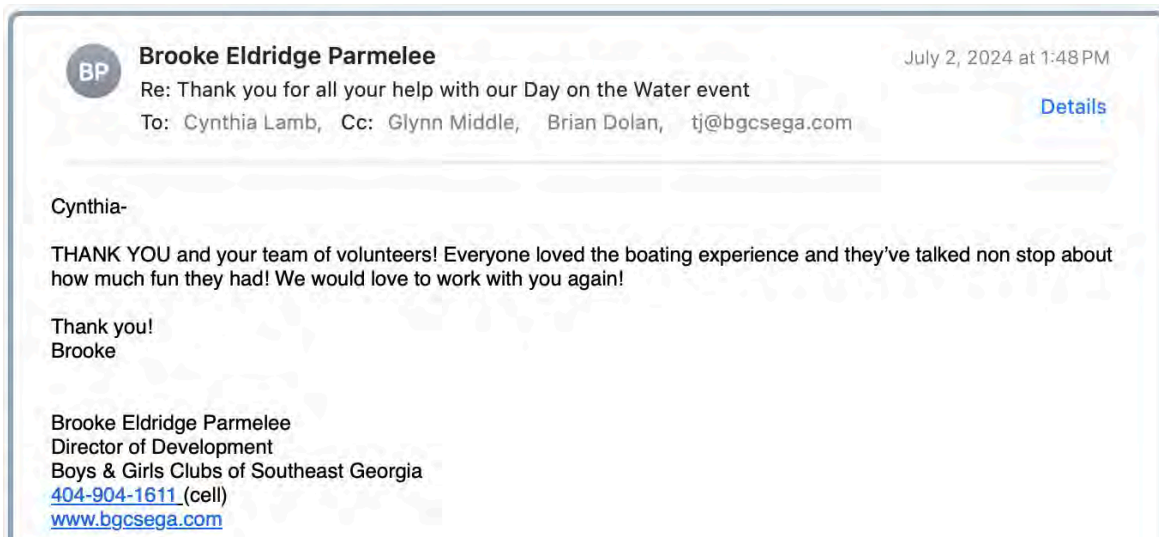


On June 27, our club put on a **“Day on the Water”** event for kids from the Boys & Girls Club of Southeast Georgia. This event included a 3-hour boating adventure that started at the St. Simons Marina near Gascoigne Park. From here, the kids were taken on a cruise up the Frederica River, down the Mackay River (Intra Coastal Waterway), under the F.J. Torras Causeway to the South Brunswick River, then up to Blythe Island, where a picnic was held.

We had 8 boats, 8 captains, 8 crewmembers, 17 kids, 7 chaperones, and 5 land-based “crew” for a total of 45 people participating.

The kids all got an opportunity to take the helm, try their hand at a man overboard drill, and talk on the VHF radio. We also saw some dolphins. All in all, a great day!

I received the following email from the Boys & Girls Club following the event:



(Pictures follow on the next 3 pages)







Rick Hindery's Invocation from the 18th Annual Change of Watch

At our club's annual change of watch on April 13, Rick Hindery (as he usually does) gave the invocation. This particular instance though was not Rick's "usual" and was more of a prayer meets a commencement address. I asked Rick if I could reprint his invocation in the newsletter and he agreed. Here is Rick's invocation that evening:

Lord, you let us grow to maturity in an era without sunscreen. We rode our bicycles without helmets. In our early childhood our parents transported us in vehicles without seat belts. Some of us rode in the back of pickup trucks. We were allowed to spend entire summer days at play usually with a complete absence of any adult supervision.

Girls were allowed to be tomboys. They were boisterous and they defined their own happiness. We rough-housed. Through this period of careless pursuit of fun, we discovered happiness.

As we matured, we slowly learned lessons of safety. As we approached adult hood, we realized that we would never live long enough to make every possible mistake ourselves, so we tried to learn from the mistakes of others. You watched over us and in time we graduated, got jobs and the most fortunate of us acquired boats.

In your love for us you led us to The United States Power Squadrons. We came for the education and stayed because of the friends we made. We are blessed. We practice safe boating and share our knowledge with all those we meet on your waters. We know that if you fish, you are a boater. We acquire our Boat US Marine Insurance with a discount, and we have Sea Tow special rates. We would never cast off without explaining where the PFDs are stored and we recite our safety messages to our passengers even though our ever-young subconscious minds shout the same subliminal message that we heard since the first moment we were allowed to run free as kids: "Let's have FUN, FUN, FUN!"

You have blessed us with oceans and rivers, and people we love to explore them with. Thank you for this past year and it is with humble and hopeful hearts that we ask for more blessings in this coming year.

Those tomboys I referred to earlier are now excellent boaters, they feel...no they know.... that women can be captains too and would like to make the "Women in Boating" classes a regular addition to our ABC classes. I realize that your son did his boating with Peter, Mark and Matthew and his other guy disciples but you see there was this women's equal rights movement a few decades back and our female members are not going to sit in the back of the boat and have their thoughts ignored, so I ask that it be your will to let this program grow and prosper. We have a similar hope too that we can work with the Boys and Girls Club to get young folks on the water and give them their first lessons in boating safety.

While we aren't a religious organization, we come to you from time to time, especially at the Change of Watch and invoke your presence and ask for your blessings. I can't speak for everyone, but I can't imagine that any of us has watched your sea with all its power, gazed at your dark night sky with its splendor of a million stars or enjoyed the blessing of your sunrise over the ocean and not felt a presence. We hear your voice in both the booming thunder of the storm and the singing of the sea bird. Feeling your presence, we ask for these humble but good things in your name.

Golden Isles Welcomes its Newest Members



SAVE THE DATE!

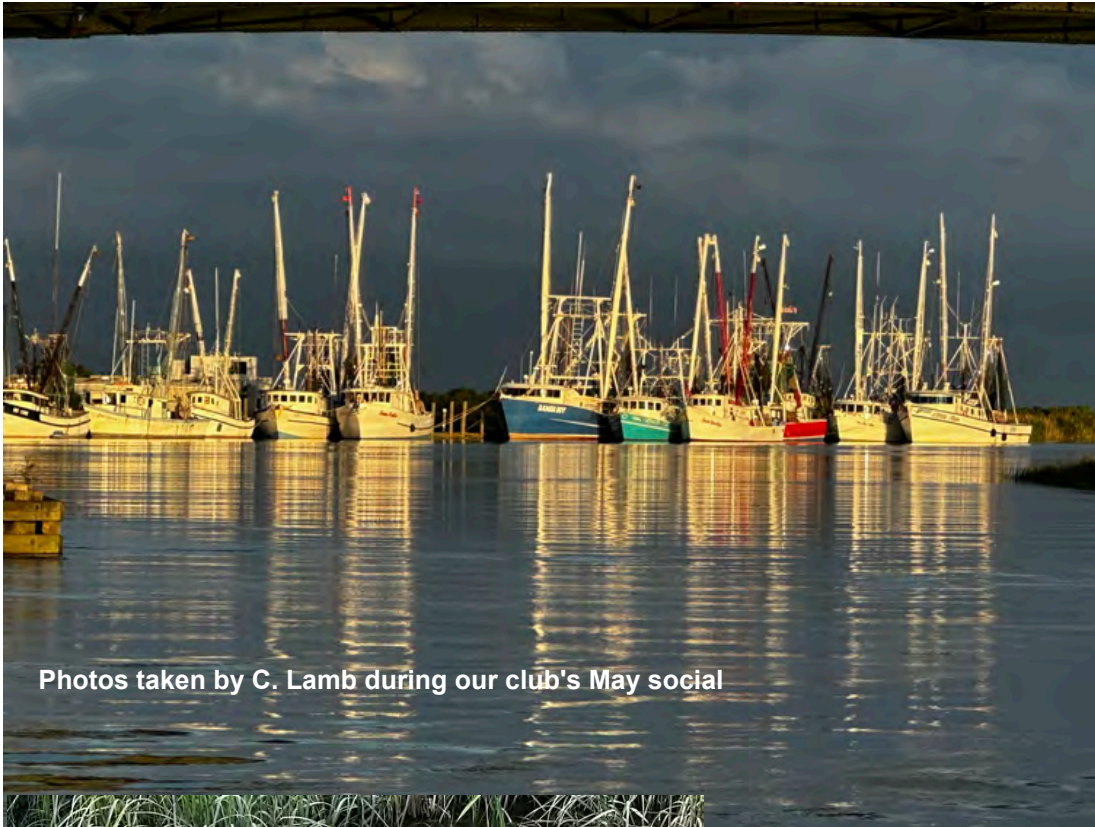


*Coastal Resources Division's
29th annual CoastFest
Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024
Mary Ross Waterfront Park, Brunswick, Ga.*

**Our club will have a booth at this huge, state-wide event.
We will provide hands-on activities for kids to learn
some fun and interesting nautical knowledge and skills.
Kids complete various challenges for the chance to win
fun prizes.**

We are looking for volunteers to help man the booth.

Photos from Club Members



Photos taken by C. Lamb during our club's May social



Spot the gator

As a boater, I'm more worried about the log actually...



Photos from Club Members...around the world



Frank and Eileen Berta in the wheelhouse during their recent Danube River cruise. Eileen said they let her drive because their chartplotter is just like hers and Frank's but I didn't believe her.



Can you spell relaxing?



Boat drinks

Greetings from the Lijois from the Dominican Republic!

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CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Please submit an article, picture, or even a link to a boating story or video that you feel other club members may enjoy. Please send all newsletter content to Cynthia Lamb.



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Our Club is part of the world's largest recreational boating organization with more than 17,000 members. We learn together, boat together, and help each other and other boaters on the water and on land.

Consider joining our Club to:

LEARN boating skills

ENGAGE with boating friends

CONNECT with the boating community

The only requirements for membership are a keen interest in boating-related activities and an eagerness to meet like-minded people whether power, or sail, or paddle boaters; however, **you don't need a boat to join**. Contact us through our website or Facebook page if you would like more information.