



APRIL  
2017

# COAST GUARD REPORTS FALSE DISTRESS CALLS OFFSHORE CAPE CORAL

**HATCHCOVER**

VOLUME 44 ISSUE 4

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY FLOTILLA 96



## ABS Class of Spring 2017 *Flotilla 96, Gold Side Reps Greet Bonita Bay Boat Show Guests*

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING:  
WED., APR. 19 at 1900**

The Hatchcover is a publication of Flotilla 96 of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, located at 13531 Vanderbilt Drive, Naples, FL 34110. The cost of publication is provided by dues-paying members of the Auxiliary, an organization of civilian volunteers whose mission is to assist the United States Coast Guard in promoting boating safety. Articles and photographs MARCH be reprinted only with the written consent of the author or photographer, with proper credit given to same. For permission or for more information, please contact the editor: Gregg Ramshaw, FSO-PB 96 at: [gwranshaw@aol.com](mailto:gwranshaw@aol.com)



# BRIDGE CHAT

## MICHAEL DIPIERRO FC



April is National Volunteer Month. This is dedicated to all those who volunteer for the myriad good causes in our nation as well as those who promote and encourage volunteerism. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the epitome of volunteerism as it embodies the core values of what it means to give back to our country. Thirty thousand of us nationwide donate some two million hours of our free time to our cause. Nationwide, we provide, maintain and man 2,250 vessels, 180 aircraft, and 1,700 radio rooms. The efforts expended and personal dollars used to outfit our facilities, clothe our volunteers, and make effective use of our talents and skills are huge. All are aimed at two primary goals: to promote boating safety and assist the Coast Guard in its vital mission of protecting our shores and rescuing mariners in danger.

Each of you in Flotilla 96 exhibits these acts in numerous ways from Public Education to Vessel Examinations to Partner Visits to on-water patrols and in many other worthy endeavors. We provide the Coast Guard with the extra set of eyes and ears that no other military branch of our federal government has. And as you've heard numerous times, we are a force multiplier for the Gold side active duty missions. In the course of doing these works, we each enrich our own lives with member training and the satisfaction of helping others.

Let us pause a moment to appreciate what your shipmates are doing on a daily and weekly basis to keep our local waters safe for the recreational boater and for the time spent improving the lives of our members in further honing their skills in new tasks. This is a moment for me to extend my sincere thanks to each of you for what you do — however much or however little — to make Flotilla 96 a better place for its members and for the community we serve. My appreciation for your contributions and accomplishments grows greater each year.



# FLOTILLA NEWS & AWARDS



**Michael DiPierro FC** (above right) gets to present himself with his eighth consecutive Auxiliary Service Award at the March General Meeting. At a recent Division 9 assembly, Flotilla 96 officers received letters of commendation. **Frank Raab FSO-NS, CM** and **SO-CM** (above, center) gets Auxiliary Letter of Commendation from **District 7 COMO Judith Hudson** (left) and **DCMDR Tom Bamford** (right) for, as Raab modestly puts it, “just really doing what I am supposed to do.” In photo below left, **Michael Dobrovic** (center) receives Auxiliary Letter of Commendation for performance as a Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitor from January, 2013, to December, 2016, for completing 500 Program Visits, 105 Vessel Safety Checks, 109 hours on Boat Crew, and 2,500 hours in other missions. **FC DiPierro** (center, lower right photo) accepts Coast Guard Achievement Medal for Operations for January, 2013, through December, 2016, from **Hudson** and **Bamford**.





## Four "Graduate" from Spring ABS Class



**CLASS PHOTO** — The About Boating Safety Class of Winter-Spring 2017 poses with three of their Flotilla 96 instructors. Front row, Susan Farr of Estero, and **Mike Clukey FSO-MA**. Back row, left to right, **Bernie Appelman**, Nancy Reddish of Naples, Rick Schmaley of Bonita Springs, Brent Bohlen of Springfield, IL, and **Stan Bricker**. Other instructors included (left to right) **Ed Walters**, **Max Lefevre** and **Dave Raphael**.





# SILVER, GOLD SIDES GREET GULF, INLAND BOATERS AT BONITA BAY MARINA EXHIBIT



Ronnie Cadorette FSO-CS (left photo) mans the Flotilla 96 tent while (below) Jim Mayer FSO-VE, Seaman Kaela Hazlitt of STAFMB and San Diego, and Flotilla 96 mascot "Herman" chat up a Bonita Bay boat show guest.



BM3 Dillon Durando of STAFMB, (below, left) and member Ed O'Neill pose with a guest at the boat docks. Dick Etches FSO-HR (right photo) congratulates a captain on a successful VE. The boat show was held Feb. 24-26.



(Photos by Gregg Ramshaw)



# EPIRB vs. PLB: TWO LIFE-SAVING ABBREVIATIONS TO REMEMBER



*May 20-26 is National Safe Boating Week. Boaters are urged to consider using the devices described below to increase their safety on the water. Two years ago, in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Safe Boating Council launched a “Saved by the Beacon” campaign to urge boaters to use electronic beacons for additional safety.*

The Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) it is registered to the vessel, not the person. An EPIRB should be mounted in an area on the vessel free of overhead obstructions, yet easily accessible (Category I type). It may also be carried in a ditch bag, which is a compact floating bag containing items a boater may need in the water (Category II type).

An EPIRB is waterproof and may be manually or automatically activated. If your EPIRB has GPS coordinates, it can alert Search and Rescue of your position in as little as 2-3 minutes.

A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) works in the same way as an EPIRB, but is registered to the person, not a vessel, and may be used on land as well as the water.

PLBs require a little more effort to operate; they must be manually activated and held out of the water to function properly. A PLB is small enough to be attached to a life jacket, however, if not attached, it may be unavailable in a sudden emergency. The National Safe Boating Council believes wearing a life jacket is a simple life-saving strategy for recreational boaters. Both EPIRBs and PLBs must be registered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at [beaconregistration.noaa.gov](http://beaconregistration.noaa.gov) – it’s easy and takes just a few minutes. If any of your information changes, you must update your registration (phone, address, marital status, or sell your boat).

## Vessel Safety Check Days:

**Saturday, April 15**

**Sunday, April 30**

**All Members are Welcome!**

**Contact Jim Mayer FSO-VE**





# 2017 FLOTILLA CALENDAR

## APRIL

01 SATURDAY: ABOUT BOATING SAFETY 9AM - 1PM

08 SATURDAY: ABOUT BOATING SAFETY 9AM - 1PM

12 WEDNESDAY: OPERATIONS MEETING 1830

19 WEDNESDAY: GENERAL MEETING 1900

27 SATURDAY: LOCAL WATERS 9AM - 11AM



## MAY

10 WEDNESDAY: OPERATIONS MEETING 1830

17 WEDNESDAY: GENERAL MEETING 1900

20 - 26 NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK, LOCAL EVENTS TBA

**WEAR IT**  
We always do!

*Learn more about boating safely >>>*





## INCREASE IN HOAX DISTRESS CALLS RISKS LIVES, WASTES RESOURCES

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Coast Guard asked for the public’s help late last month to identify and curb a surge in hoax distress calls in the Cape Coral and Ft. Myers area.

For the past year, Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg watch standers have received a steady stream of suspected or confirmed hoax radio calls along the Southwest Gulf Coast – the majority of them made within the Cape Coral area.

*The calls were made on VHF-FM marine band channel 16, a channel designated only for hailing vessels and distress calls. A call is considered a hoax when there is an intent to deceive the Coast Guard or emergency responders.*

“Hoax calls are costly to the taxpayer and our service,” said Charles ‘Marty’ Russell, (right) resident agent-in-charge of the Coast Guard Investigative Service office in St. Petersburg. “When the Coast Guard receives a distress call, we immediately respond, putting our crews at risk, and risking the lives of boaters who may legitimately need our help.” Not to mention costs — to scramble the MH-60 helicopter at Air Station Clearwater runs about \$6,000 an hour, according to USCG estimates.



*Last year a federal court sentenced Charles Robert Dowd, 27, of Beaufort, North Carolina, to 41 months in prison and three years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$18,994.00 in restitution. He pled guilty in 2015 to making false distress calls to the United States Coast Guard.*

According public records, a “MayDay” call claimed a vessel with five adults and two children was taking on water and sinking near Beaufort. The call indicated one child was stuck on the vessel and could not be seen. Small boats from Coast Guard Station Fort Macon, a helicopter from the nearby Marine Corps Air Station, a towboat from a local salvage company, and emergency responders from the sheriff’s office and two fire departments deployed to assist in a search and rescue attempt. Response crews found no vessel or persons in distress. The Coast Guard determined that the call was a hoax, but not until nearly \$19,000 worth of resources were expended.

*Penalties for making a false distress call can include six years in prison, a \$250,000 criminal fine, a \$5,000 civil fine and restitution to the Coast Guard and local agencies.*

*Anyone with any information leading to the identification of a hoax caller is urged to contact the Coast Guard Investigative Service tip line at 727-535-1437, ext. 2308.*





## LOCAL RESCUES



**TAMPA** — An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Clearwater, and a 29-foot Response Boat Small-II from Station St. Petersburg located and rescued two missing jet skiers lost in the dark last month. When one jet ski became disabled, another skier went for a tow line but upon returning could not find his companions. "It is very important to have a VHF radio on board *any* vessel when out on the water," cautioned Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Bonneau. "When in a group of boats, the most important thing is to stay together and communicate for assistance."



**PORT RICHEY** — The Coast Guard Cutter Tarpon from Station St. Petersburg, an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Clearwater, and a 45-foot Response Boat-Medium from Station Sand Key rescued three boaters 100 miles west of Port Richey, FL. The boaters reported their boat would flood if it stopped moving. The Tarpon escorted the boat until it ran out of fuel still 23 miles offshore and began taking on water. Tarpon crew members conducted dewatering operations, and located and patched the source of the flooding.



**APRIL**

**SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES**

13 YEARS  
Roy D. Pirain

11 YEARS  
John G. Gaston III

8 YEARS  
Ralph M. Abate

1 YEAR  
Lucas R. Greer

Flotilla 96

MICHAEL DIPIERRO FC

RICHARD BOOTH VFC

Staff Officers

*MICHAEL DIPIERRO*  
FSO-OP

*RONALD CADORETTE*  
FSO-CS

*MIKE CLUKEY*  
FSO-MA

*DICK ETCHES*  
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FSO-PE

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