

Year-End Celebration

By Commander Dave Medvedeff, AP-CN

As we gathered for our Year-End Dinner and 2025 Change of Watch ceremony, I was reminded once again of what makes America's Boating Club Hilton Head so special: our people. This evening was not just a celebration of accomplishments—it was a chance for me to personally thank the many volunteers, leaders, instructors, captains, and friends who keep our Squadron active, welcoming, and strong.

Reflecting on a Great Year

First, my appreciation goes out to our Bridge whose commitment has shaped the success we now enjoy. My sincere thanks to:

- **Glen Crews**, Administrative Officer
- **Brad Loescher**, Executive Officer
- **Rick Sturges**, Education Officer
- **Russ Collins**, Secretary
- **Kevin Thieneman**, Treasurer
- **Craig Loomis**, Past Commander

Their leadership made my role as Commander both smooth and inspiring. Their commitment, their time, and their talents are a big part of what keeps our Squadron exceptional.

A Truly Active Boating Season

One of the highlights of this past year was our incredibly active cruising schedule. We organized **12 cruises**, and what impressed me most was the participation: **41 different captains** stepped up to lead. Overall, our cruises included 81 boats and 213 participants.

I'd like to give special recognition to our most active captains:

- **Jim Iannacchino** – 8 cruises
- **Bob Newbert** – 7 cruises
- **Craig Loomis** – 6 cruises
- **Stefan Gantenbein** – 5 cruises

Our most active crew members—Noel Wendt, Debbie Loomis, Ed Berry, and Nancy Ford—added enthusiasm and energy to every outing. I want to personally thank each of you for being such an integral part of our Squadron's on-the-water success.

Promoting Safety & Education

Education and vessel safety remain at the core of our mission. I am deeply grateful to our instructors and our dedicated 2025 Vessel Safety Examiners who help ensure our boaters are prepared, knowledgeable, and confident. Your commitment truly saves lives.

Recognizing Exceptional Service

One of my favorite parts of the evening was presenting awards that highlight the extraordinary contributions of our members.

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to:

- *Mary Ellen Witman*, for her dedication and exemplary service as **Editor of the *Ocean Breeze Newsletter***
- *Jim Iannacchino*, for his dedication and exemplary service as **Social Media Chair and Assistant Education Officer**
- *Linda Larson*, for her dedication and exemplary service as **Vessel Safety Check Chair (aka “Fearless Leader”)** and achieving a squadron record 202 Vessel Safety Checks this year.

Special Thanks went to:

- *Paul Hoyte, AP-IN*, for his long time commitment to our squadron. Paul has touched so many elements of the squadron’s activities, and we are a better squadron because of him. Paul is retiring from ABC, and he will be missed.
- *Captain Bob Newbert, AP*, his intrepid leadership as the adventure cruise leader. I was happy to award him a glass sculpture with the following inscription:

Fearless at the Helm,
Master of Fun, and
Chief Architect of Adventure
No Boring Voyages, All Memories!



I was honored to present the **Lowell G. Ward Award** to *Russ Collins, AP-CN*, for his exceptional dedication in organizing all of our dinner meetings for the past four years. Russ works in the background, negotiating best pricing for our dinner venues, developing seating charts, and handling all of the dinner logistics. We have all benefitted by his efforts.

And it was my pleasure to award the **Commander’s Cup** to *Craig Loomis, P*—a recognition he has truly earned through years of leadership and service. He continues to be very involved in our club, supporting me and keeping our Lowcountry Cruises relevant to our squadron members.

Our Guest Speaker

We were lucky to have Mark Dryden, Harbour Master at Wexford Yacht Club and squadron member, join us as our guest speaker. He gave us a fascinating look into Wexford’s lock replacement project and the unique features of the lock systems at both Wexford and Windmill Harbour. I appreciate Mark taking the time to be with us and share his insights.

Year End Celebration Awards



Captain Bob Newbert
Adventure Cruise Leader



Jim Iannacchino
Social Media Chair and Assistant Education Officer



Russ Collins
Dinner Venues and Logistics
Exceptional Dedication
Lowell G. Ward Award



Craig Loomis
Leadership and Service
Commander's Cup