

From the Commander

Monthly Dinners Resume in September

I am pleased to announce that our ABCHH Dinner Program will be getting underway again next month and will be held at the Yacht Club of Hilton Head. We are excited that this will be a long-term partnership for hosting ABCHH dinners. The Yacht Club of Hilton Head provides a fitting setting for our organization. Located on Broad Creek near Palmetto Bay Marina, the Yacht Club shares many of the same values that have long been at the heart of ABCHH—promoting safe boating, encouraging fellowship among those who enjoy the water, and strengthening our connections within the local boating community.

Both organizations recognize that boating is about much more than simply getting from one place to another. It is about building friendships, sharing experiences, supporting our community, and helping ensure that everyone who enjoys our waterways can do so safely and responsibly. Our shared appreciation for boating and the Lowcountry make the Yacht Club of Hilton Head a natural partner for this year's dinner program.

The evening will be an opportunity to reconnect with fellow ABCHH members, meet new friends, and enjoy the camaraderie that makes our organization special. We are grateful to the Yacht Club of Hilton Head for welcoming us and look forward to making this the first of many memorable gatherings.

Watch for your invitation as we get closer to the date. We hope you will join us for what promises to be a wonderful evening with fellow boaters and friends.

A Moment for Safety: Consider Making the Switch to Electronic Flares

I always like to take a moment in our newsletter to talk about boating safety, and this month I want to talk about replacing those flares on your boat that expire every three years.

Traditional pyrotechnic flares have long been an important part of a boat's safety equipment, but electronic visual distress signals, often referred to as electronic flares or emergency strobes, offer several significant advantages. They are reusable, typically don't expire as long as they have fresh batteries, and they eliminate the fire and burn hazards associated with igniting a traditional flare. They can be tested regularly to ensure they are operational when needed.

Perhaps most importantly, a high-quality electronic distress light can provide a highly visible, continuously flashing signal for **an extended period of time**. Many models are designed to be visible from significant distances and can be used repeatedly during an emergency.

That said, an electronic distress signal is only useful as a nighttime distress signal. You will need to have another form of distress signal for daytime use, such as an orange flag with a black square and circle in the middle. Make sure that whatever electronic distress signal you purchase is approved by the U.S. Coast Guard as nighttime distress signal.

This is a good opportunity to inspect your entire emergency signaling kit. Check expiration dates, inspect equipment for damage or corrosion, and make sure everyone aboard knows where the signaling equipment is located and how to use it.

The best safety equipment is the equipment you have, know how to use, and can count on when you need it.

Learning on the Great Loop

Many of you may not know that I am currently traveling the Great Loop, an adventure that has provided an incredible opportunity to put many of the skills I have learned over the years to work on the water.

One of the things that has struck me most during this journey is how much of what I have encountered has been familiar because of the education and training I received through our boating education program and our cruises. Navigation, understanding charts and waterways, planning passages, communications, weather awareness, and many of the other skills we teach aren't simply classroom exercises—they are skills that you we use every day while cruising.

The Great Loop has certainly provided plenty of opportunities to learn even more along the way. Every waterway presents its own challenges, and every day brings something new. But having a solid foundation in boating knowledge and seamanship has given me greater confidence as we make our way through the Loop.

And perhaps the most enjoyable part of the experience has been the people we've met along the way. We have been amazed by the friendliness and helpfulness of fellow boaters, marina operators, lockmasters, and people in the communities

we've visited. There seems to be an almost universal willingness among boaters to lend a hand, share information, or simply strike up a conversation.

We are having a great time on the water and creating memories that we will have for a lifetime. The experience has also reinforced for me why organizations like ABCHH are so important. Education and experience make us better boaters, but the friendships and shared experiences make boating even more rewarding.

I look forward to sharing more of our Great Loop adventures with you as the journey continues!