

A Nice Way to Spend a Saturday

We all live on the lake for personal reasons Suffice to say, I think we are all here because we want to. I decided to dedicate a Saturday to learn more about water safety. I found the perfect venue with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, "About Boating Safely" Class.

I recently attended the day long course which was held at the USCG Aux Flotilla 93 office, 252 River Road, Henrico, NC. I'm writing to hopefully interest others to take advantage of this really great opportunity for all boat enthusiasts that might one day save your life or that of a loved one. First the bad news. Yes, there is a test and the class lasts all day from 8:30 until almost 5 which includes a BYOL (lunch). But the very good news is the time flies and we all benefit from some excellent speakers which truly work at making the day both enjoyable and educational. We all passed the test thanks to their instructional techniques - *hint-hint* - if you aren't wearing earplugs you can't miss what you need to know.

The speakers, who are with the CG Auxiliary Flotilla 93, volunteer their time to instruct. You are learning from folks; most of whom spent their working career on the water in defense of our country.

After test time at the end of the day, I walked away knowing more than I knew which is always a win-win. Just so you know, years ago I took a Coast Guard class to sail on the Great Lakes. The 8 hours of this class trumped that training. It's concise and addresses what you need to know, not what is nice to know; both here on Lake Gaston and the Intercostal Waterway.

What you learn runs the gamut to where the bow is on a boat (it's the "pointy thing") to "Rules of Seamanship" (are you the Give Way or Stand On vessel?) , "How to Get Ready to Depart and Why You Need a Float Plan", "Boating Emergencies", "How to Trailer", "How to Operate Your Vessel Safely", to "Enjoying Water Sports With Your Boat". Most importantly, how to boat courteously on Lake Gaston.

I hope I have peaked your interest. You can enroll by calling 252.535.3335 or visit www.flotilla93.com. It's only \$35 bucks and comes with a 76 page learning guide which you can take with you.

If you want to learn more about water safety on Lake Gaston, you can visit lakegastonwatersafetycouncil.com.

Thanks for listening.

Brian Goldsworthy
(Now a proud graduate of the USCG Aux *About Boating Safely* course)