



Southport Flotilla, 2023 Captains Letter
Flotilla is December 9th and will commence at 6 p.m.
Registration is due no later than November 27, 2023

Welcome, and thank you, for being a part of the 2023 Southport Winterfest Flotilla. We hope this year will be an enjoyable experience for you so that you will consider making your participation a tradition in the future. We also want this to be a SAFE, incident free event for you and your fellow Flotilla members. We feel with an organized float plan, we can all enjoy a safe and fun event. Please take time to make sure you understand the information in this packet before leaving the captains' meeting. We want to make things go as smoothly as possible during the event. Please note the registration due date! This year we have sponsors who will be providing donated goods and services who must have an accurate head count. Plan to decorate early. Leave your lights on to help your marinas enjoy the holiday season.

Remember, we have a float plan in place and will attempt to execute it to the best of our ability, but there will be on-the-water decisions made to allow for the various river conditions and weather. Please be patient and do not get in a hurry at night.

SAFETY FIRST

Our goal is to have a joyous, festive occasion that is accident free and fun. Please keep in mind that the water temperature will be cold, and visibility will be limited at night. A person overboard has only minutes before being overcome by hypothermia. Please make sure all crew members take special precautions not to put themselves in danger of going overboard. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are highly recommended for all crew and required for anyone less than 13 years of age. Please consider personal glow sticks or strobe lights and have man overboard (MOB) equipment handy and on deck. It is the captain's responsibility to brief the crew.

If this is your first time participating in the Flotilla, please talk to one of the veterans here today about visibility. Visibility at night is generally poor. It is also greatly compounded by the fact that you will have numerous decorative lights on your vessel that will decrease your night vision and make the red and green lights of navigational aids extremely hard to spot. You should have a designated watch person in the forward area of your vessel to help you spot other vessels and navigational aids. This crewmember must be able to communicate freely with you.

The weather may not be great during this part of the year. We have had strong currents, wind, rain, fog, and cold weather. We have also had calm and generally warm weather with little wind or current. This year is anyone's guess. We will plan for the worst and hope for the best. The Cape Fear River can surprise us either way. The US Coast Guard (USCG) will help us judge the weather conditions. The final weather decision will be made in coordination with the USCG. If the final decision is not to conduct the Flotilla, we will make the announcement as soon as possible. Even if the decision is to go ahead, each vessel Captain has the final call for their vessel. If you don't feel comfortable with the conditions, DO NOT GO! If you experience engine difficulties before the callout, DO NOT GO! Others will enjoy the lights on your vessel as it remains in the harbor.

Remember, no fireworks are allowed!

All vessels and crew must adhere to USCG boating safety regulations, including those related to the consumption of alcohol. Please save the alcohol until after the vessel has returned to the berth and been secured.

JUDGING

Our Southport Elementary School art students will be located on the west end of Waterfront Park (near Oliver's Restaurant) on the bulkhead. One of the largest challenges for the judges is making sure we know which vessel the judges are judging. Identifying vessels at night is very difficult. For this reason, we will be assigning you two reflective numbers to attach to your portside and your stern. Please make every effort to maintain that numbered order. Pass only if the vessel ahead of you is having a serious problem making way or is dropping out of the Flotilla for some reason. Please notify the Cape Fear Yacht Club (CFYC) control on Channel 78 if your vessel drops out for any reason. The elementary school children and adult supervisors doing the judging need your assistance by staying in the correct numbered order.

Registered, numbered boaters will be judged. If you do not display your number, you will not be judged. You will receive this number at the mandatory Captains Meeting, which will be at 10 am on the morning of December 9th. The Captains Meeting will be located at Fizzy Janes, 614 W West St, Southport, NC 28461. They are kind enough to sponsor a breakfast for captains and one guest. Remember please place one sign on the port side and one sign on the stern. Please return the signs when you come to the "After-Flotilla Thank You Party" on Tuesday January 9, 2024 at a time to be determined and located at Rusty Hooks, 4907 Fish Factory Rd, Southport, NC 28461. (South Harbor - Safe Haven Marina)

FLOTILLA PROCEDURE

Times are approximate and will depend on river and weather conditions the night of the Flotilla.

1. All vessels must monitor Coast Guard Channel 16.
2. All vessels must also have a working VHF radio on channel 78. Channel 78 is the Flotilla operating channel for all directions and information. CFYC control will be communicating Flotilla directions on Channel 78.
3. CFYC control will be on station and monitoring Channel 16 and 78 near the entrance to the Old Yacht Basin (Old American Fish Company) at approximately 5:00 pm.
4. The CFYC will begin the Flotilla lineup at 5:40 PM at the Flotilla Start Line in the Intra-coastal Waterway (ICW) near the entrance to the Old Yacht Basin (Provision Company / Old American Fish). The Flotilla route will be from the Old Yacht Basin Start Line past the Waterfront Park and City Pier, past Marker 19 to a mark boat before the entrance to Deep Point Marina. The Mark Boat will define the turning point. It will have a white strobe light to identify it. The Flotilla route will then circle back toward Waterfront Park and Old Yacht Basin staying more mid-channel to not interfere with vessels still passing the judging area. The Flotilla will continue past the Southport Waterfront and Morningstar Marina to Indigo Plantation Marina where the Flotilla vessels will be released to navigate back to their respective dockage area. This will conclude the Southport Winterfest Christmas Flotilla. Some vessels will proceed on past Oak Island and St James Marina to Midway Road Bridge, but they will be under each individual captain's command and control. The USCG may escort them at the USCG's discretion.
5. Vessel Staging:

- a. The plan is to stage the vessels, but not create a difficult and demanding process. Vessels docked in the Old Yacht Basin will stage in the Old Yacht Basin and be ready to join the Flotilla at approximately 5:45 PM.
 - b. Vessels from Southport Marina, Indigo Plantation Marina, South Harbor - Safe Haven Marina, St James Marina, Bald Head Island Marina and other individual vessels must time their arrival to be at the Flotilla Start Line at approximately 5:40 PM.
 - c. Once in the vicinity of the Start Line, all vessels should check-in with CFYC control on channel 78. Vessels will be instructed to begin staging behind each other in a circular counterclockwise cruising pattern between the Start Line and Southport Morningstar Marina in their specific numbered sequence.
 - d. If we have commercial fishing vessels, they will lead the Flotilla, followed by power and sailing vessels. If no commercial vessels participate, power vessels will be staged in line first followed by the sailing vessels. Kayaks, canoes, and rowboats will stage in the vicinity of the entrance of the Old Yacht Basin and the Intra-coastal waterway. Special instructions will be issued to them on an individual basis.
 - e. As vessels arrive in the staging area, CFYC control will provide directions and Flotilla position based on the number assigned to each vessel on Channel 78. Please follow the instructions and maintain your assigned numbered position. The ICW will get crowded and vessel control will be important. The Bald Head Island (BHI) Ferry operating between Deep Point Marina and BHI may pass through the Flotilla between the City Pier and Kingsley Park area. Please be on extra alert for the BHI Ferry in that area. The wake is significant if they do not reduce speed.
 - f. At 6:00 PM the lead vessel of the Flotilla will be given the "GO" signal to start the Flotilla by CFYC Control on channel 78. The lead vessel (USCG) or Cape Point (Southport's last active shrimp boat.) will set the pace to accommodate the slowest vessels in the parade based on current and wind conditions.
 - g. Once the Flotilla begins, the plan is for all vessels in the Flotilla to stay on the North Side of the ICW, the port side of your numbered vessel as you approach Southport Waterfront Park to allow our judges the best view of the vessels as they move up river.
6. Please leave the area in assigned number order and make every effort to keep approximately 100 feet to 200 feet between vessels. All Flotilla vessels must maintain the in-line, bow-to-stern formation. If you drop out or pass a vessel for any reason, inform the CFYC control boat on Channel 78. The judges must know your Flotilla location and number to insure they are judging the correct vessel.
 7. Please follow and complete the course. In all publicity for the Flotilla, spectators have been offered the areas from the Old Yacht Basin to Deep Point Marina and reverse the course past the Old Yacht Basin, Southport Morningstar Marina and terminate at Indigo Plantation Marina to watch the Flotilla. Please cruise the entire route and help our spectators have an enjoyable experience. There will be a mark boat at the entrance to Indigo Plantation Marina.

A special thanks to all participating Flotilla Captains, crew and guests for making this year's Flotilla a part of Southport's historic waterfront heritage!



Southport Winterfest Flotilla Registration Form

REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4 PM on November 27, 2023

Captain's Name: _____

Boat Name & Location: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Sailboat

Powerboat

Other

If other, what kind? _____

Boat Length: _____

- All boats of all sizes are welcome. The more we have the better the Christmas spirit will be.
- A mandatory Captain's meeting will held at 10 am on December 9th located at Fizzy Janes, 614 W West St, Southport, NC 28461, and they are kind enough to sponsor a breakfast for captains and one guest.
- Flotilla is December 9th and will commence at 6 p.m. please read the accompanying captain's letter for further instruction.
- This year each vessel will be provided with two reflective signs to support judging. Registered, numbered, boaters will be judged. If you do not display your number, you will not be judged.
- All captains and crew are encouraged to dress in Christmas attire and decorate their vessels in a Christmas theme. Let your imagination be your guide.

Participation in the Southport Winterfest Flotilla shall be at participant's own risk. I hereby release the City of Southport, Downtown Southport Inc., Cape Fear Yacht Club, Officers, Agents, or Employees of the aforementioned who shall not be liable for any damages arising from personal injuries or damages sustained by participant in or during his/her active or passive participation during this event. Participant assumes full responsibility for any injuries or damages, and does hereby release and discharge, City of Southport, Downtown Southport Inc., Cape Fear Yacht Club, Officers, Agents and Employees of the aforementioned from any and all claims, demands, damage, rights or causes of action present or future which I may cause in any way or which may be occasioned by me or those on my vessel resulting from participation in the 2023 Southport Winterfest Flotilla. Festival or festival's designees may use the names and likeness of the participants for promotional purposes without further compensation.

Signature _____ Date _____

Mail, E-Mail or hand carry completed form to:

Suzanne Foster

Owner / Innkeeper, LaPolena Bed & Breakfast

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<http://www.lapolenabnb.com>