



## BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

### MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year Knights,

As we start off with a fresh year ahead, with plenty of opportunities for a fabulous 2026, I would like to wish all of our Blue Knights Family a happy and healthy New Year.

I would also like to take a moment to thank our chapter for the continued support and faith to carry on another term as your President. Thank you!

I would also like to thank Jim Thomas ( VP RET ) and John Emrick ( Treasurer RET ) who both stepped up at a time when we needed to keep the chapter moving forward.

John became the Treasurer on his very first day in our chapter. Johns has a extensive background in business and he held the position in Maryland. John knew we were in a pickle with Tony passing away and he volunteered to help. John's attention to detail and origination is second to none. We were blessed to have had John as our Treasurer. He kept us afloat and set us up for success to meet all our goals. Thank you, Brother! Jim stepped up when Rory needed to step down. We were preparing for the SRC Venice and had a lot going on. Life is busy and has many twists. Jim had a very full plate at the time; however, he stuck it out to keep us going. Thank you, Brother.

New year, new term. We now have two new executive officers: Vice President Ralph Smith and Treasurer Tracy Dunn. Both Ralph and Tracy agreed to help the chapter and relieve Jim and John of their duties. Thank you both for helping FL XVIII continue to grow and meet all our goals for our charities and chapter needs. We also have a new Director, Michael Klein, who is taking over for Tracy Dunn. Michael has been our Road Captain and is always looking to ride. Thank you for filling the Director position.

I also want to thank our amazing Secretary, Webmaster, and Editor, Domenic Ceccanecchio, for his continued dedication to our chapter. Dom puts in a lot of time each month with the newsletter and website on top of his secretary duties. Dom will be staying on as our Secretary, and I am blessed to have him.

I also would like to thank Jim Ryan, our Sergeant at Arms / Director. Jim is a money magnet when it comes to charity. Jim has given so much time, money, and effort making wooden items to sell and auction off at the Children's Corn hole charity he started. Thank you for staying on.

I need to send a big thank you to our Director, Bobby Grotz. Bobby and Lydia have done so much for us each year setting up our chapter Christmas party. Lydia keeps the party going and makes sure everything is perfect. Each year, Bobby helps with setting up our Gun Raffle and always gets us a good deal. Thank you.

Lastly, I want to thank all our members who come out to support our chapter. Without you, we don't have a chapter. We need you to come and eat, ride, laugh, tell stories, help a brother out, and possibly work an event. This is your chapter; make the most out of it and God bless you all.

*Patrick Gibbons*  
President, FLXVIII



### January Ride and Event Schedule

**BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNERS WILL TAKE PLACE RAIN OR SHINE RIDES ARE SUBJECT TO MOTHER NATURE'S APPROVAL**

**Thursday 1/1 10:30 AM**

First ride of the year  
Lunch at the Old Salty Dog  
1601 B Ken Thompson Pky.  
Sarasota

**Tuesday 1/6 5:30 PM**

Dinner at the Shrine  
Hot Sands Tiki Bar  
600 N Beneva RD, Sarasota

**Tuesday 1/6 9:30 AM**

Monthly Chapter Meeting  
2nd floor of the Shrine  
600 N Beneva RD, Sarasota  
\*\*\* Deadline — Dues for 2026 \*\*\*

**Saturday 1/10 9:30 AM**

Smoke Under The Oaks Rib Fest  
LaBelle. WAWA 19289 Times Circle / Jacaranda. Venice. \*\*\*\*\* I will let you know when we have a Northern meeting spot \*\*\*\*\*

**Saturday 1/17 10:30 AM**

Lunch Ride to the  
Alfia River Beer Shed  
11222 Casa Loma Drive  
Riverview  
7/11 Gas station  
12060 301 N/ Fort Hamer Parrish

**Wednesday 1/2 11:30 AM**

Lunch at Mission BBQ  
University Parkway Sarasota

**Saturday 1/31 9:00 AM**

Breakfast at Skillet's  
8635 S Tamiami Trail  
Unit 4 Sarasota



## OUR PLEDGE

"AS A BLUE KNIGHT I PLEDGE TO ACT WITH HONOR AND PRIDE TO PROMOTE MOTORCYCLING AND MOTORCYCLE SAFETY BY BEING AN EXAMPLE OF THE SAFE USE, OPERATION AND ENJOYMENT OF MOTORCYCLES. I WILL WORK AT ALL TIMES TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MOTORCYCLING COMMUNITY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. THE FRATERNAL SPIRIT WILL ALWAYS GUIDE ME IN RELATING TO OTHER BLUE KNIGHTS"

# BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

## CHAPTER EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT ..... PATRICK GIBBONS  
VICE PRESIDENT ..... RALPH SMITH  
TREASURER ..... TRACY DUNN  
SECRETARY ..... DOMENIC CECCANECCHIO  
SERGEANT AT ARMS .... JAMES RYAN

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

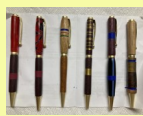
SID JONES / PAST PRESIDENT  
MIKE KLEIN  
BOBBY GROTZ

## OPERATIONS

JAMES KIRKPATRICK / CHAPLAIN  
DOMENIC CECCANECCHIO / WEBMASTER  
BRIAN MACCONNELL / QUARTERMASTER  
JIM KELLY / SAFETY OFFICER  
DOMENIC CECCANECCHIO / NEWSLETTER

## In the Chapter Market

Jim Ryan — Woodworking made to order.  
Tell me what you want, size, and specific wood (if requested)  
and I will make it. Very reasonable prices.  
941-313-1363 or [jryanretired@aol.com](mailto:jryanretired@aol.com)



### PRICE REDUCED

2016 Harley Davidson FLSTFBS "Fatboy" All Black, 25645 Miles. Price - \$12,000- **NOW \$11,000.**  
Purchased from Rossiter's HD August 15, 2022 and has been garage kept everyday. Price includes a brand new windshield still in the box, never opened. Contact John Emrick at 410-991-8161 (okay to leave a message) or [mddre3077@aol.com](mailto:mddre3077@aol.com)



2014 FLHTK Harley Davidson Ultra Limited  
Color- Daytona Blue Mileage- 17500  
Includes headsets for rider and passenger  
Price- \$12,200 FIRM

John Emrick [Mddre3077@aol.com](mailto:Mddre3077@aol.com)



Michael Klein is selling a DeWalt Drill Driver 12V 3/8".

Cost new \$100 asking \$50.  
Comes with two batteries, a charger and carrying bag.

Michael Klein 941-809-9986

[msk0217@gmail.com](mailto:msk0217@gmail.com)



# We need and want your input .....

Send your letters, suggestions, or any special event you would like to share to:

Patrick Gibbons

[pjgibby1969@comcast.net](mailto:pjgibby1969@comcast.net)

OR

Dom Ceccanecchio

[dcc444@comcast.net](mailto:dcc444@comcast.net)



SEND YOUR SALE ITEMS TO ADD TO OUR MARKET





**Date:** 02/13/2026

**Time:** 5:00 PM

**Venue:** Sarasota County Fairgrounds

**City:** Sarasota, FL

### About the Event

The Thunder By The Bay Music & Motorcycle Festival is a vibrant celebration that takes place in Sarasota, Florida, on February 13th, 2026, starting at 5:00 PM. This exciting event combines the love for music and motorcycles, showcasing local and national acts while offering a full weekend of entertainment for motorcycle enthusiasts and music lovers alike.

#### Feb 13

Fri • 5:00 PM

#### Thunder By The Bay Music & Motorcycle Festival:

##### Night Ranger - Friday

Sarasota County Fairgrounds

Sarasota, FL

#### Feb 14

Sat • 11:00 AM

#### Thunder By The Bay Music & Motorcycle Festival: .38

##### Special - Saturday

Sarasota County Fairgrounds

Sarasota, FL

#### Feb 15

Sun • 12:00 PM

#### Thunder By The Bay Music & Motorcycle Festival:

##### Montgomery Gentry & Eddie Montgomery - Sunday

Sarasota County Fairgrounds

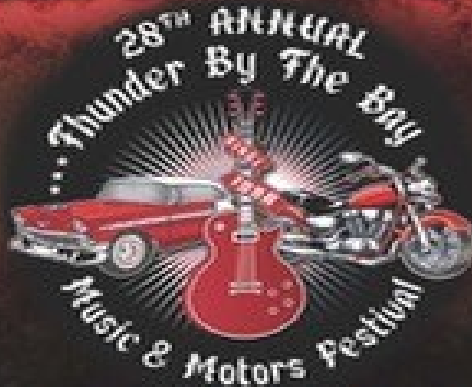
Sarasota, FL

# Thunder by the Bay

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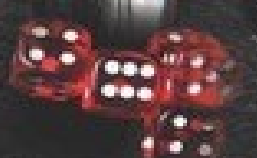
## RIDE IN. ROCK OUT. GIVE BACK.



“Ride So Children Can Thrive”



# DICE RUN



SATURDAY – FEBRUARY 14 | MOTORCYCLES & CARS ARE WELCOME

**\$30 IN ADVANCE**

**\$35 DAY OF EVENT**

COMPLIMENTARY COFFEE & MUFFINS

CASH BREAKFAST BUFFET AVAILABLE



**REGISTRATION**

**SARASOTA SAHIB SHRINE**

(600 N. BENEVA ROAD)

**9:30 AM TIL 11:30 AM**

**REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES ADMISSION INTO MYAKKA STATE PARK  
AND THUNDER BY THE BAY MUSIC & MOTORS FESTIVAL**



SCAN TO  
PRE-  
REGISTER

PROCEEDS BENEFIT  
**Suncoast  
Charities  
FOR CHILDREN**  
[suncoastcharitiesforchildren.org](http://suncoastcharitiesforchildren.org)

**CASH PRIZES TOP THREE HANDS**

**\$500 - \$250 - \$100**



1ST ROLL – SARASOTA SAHIB SHRINE

2ND ROLL – ADRENALINE HARLEY-DAVIDSON

3RD ROLL – MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK

4TH ROLL – THE HAVEN

5TH ROLL – FIRE & IRON TENT INSIDE THE FESTIVAL

(FESTIVAL GATES OPEN AT NOON - ALL HANDS MUST BE TURNED IN BY 2:00 PM)

**FESTIVAL  
FEATURED HEADLINER**



**SUPPORT ACTS  
GIVEN TO FLY  
BOBBY FRISS**

## THUNDERBYTHEBAY.ORG



A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-HELP-FLA OR ONLINE AT [www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com](http://www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION # CH4531



# BLUE KNIGHTS FLORIDA XVIII

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - MINUTES

December 2nd, 2025



7:00PM - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Sahib Shriners, 600 N Beneva Rd, Sarasota FL

President: Patrick Gibbons - Vice President: Ralph Smith - Treasurer: Tracy Dunn - Secretary/Webmaster: Dom Ceccanecchio  
Sergeant At Arms: James Ryan - Past President: Sid Jones - Director: Bob Grotz - Director: Mike Klein  
Quartermaster: Brian MacConnell - Chaplin: James Kirkpatrick - Safety Officer: Jim Kelly

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**Meeting Call to Order:** by [President Gibbons](#) @ 7:04 PM

In attendance: Executive officers: 4 Officers: 3 Members: 18 Guests: 3

**Pledge of Allegiance:** led by President Gibbons

**Invocation:** by Ralph Smith

**Welcoming Remarks:** by President Gibbons.

### **PRESIDENTS REPORT: PATRICK GIBBONS**

- [President Gibbons thanked](#) Jim Ryan for taking the lead on behalf of the chapter for the cornhole tournament benefiting the children charity. The event raised \$1130 for the chapter.
- President Gibbons thanked outgoing executive officers, Vice President Jim Thomas and Treasurer John Emerick. Each was presented with a challenge coin as a token of thanks for their service.
- President Gibbons installed our new Executive officers Vice President Ralph Smith, and Treasurer Tracy Dunn. Thank to both for stepping up and serve.
- President Gibbons thanked Dominic Ceccanecchio and Jim Ryan for continuing to serve as Secretary/Webmaster and Sergeant at Arms for another term.
- Patrick Gibbons announced that he will be staying on for another term as chapter President.
- Michael Klein will be filling the Director position that was opened because Tracy Dunn moved up to Treasurer. Thank you Michael.
- Christmas Party: President Gibbons needs to have your RSVP by no later than December 12th. Payment \$30/person can be worked out before the party if needed. He will send out a reminder via email.
- Christmas Shop for Sid's Kids: The shopping trip will take place on Monday, 12/15 @ 11:00AM at the Walmart on Rt. 70 (east of Interstate 75) in Bradenton. \$1500 was approved by the members to be spent for the gifts. Please come out and experience the joy of filling a Childs wish list. A delivery date for the gifts will be announced.
- Tickets for are available. Contact President Gibbons if you would like to sell or purchase some tickets. Please purchase some tickets if you are unable to sell.

### **VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT: RALPH SMITH**

- Encouraged everyone to get involved and purchase or sell Thunder by the Bay gun raffle tickets.

### **TREASURERS REPORT: JOHN EMRICK/TRACY DUNN**

- Motion to accept November financial report Brian MacConnell, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jim Thomas, Unanimously Approval

### **SECRETARY / WEBMASTER'S REPORT: DOMENIC CECCANECHIO**

- Motion to accept November minutes Brian MacConnell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Thomas, Unanimous Approval
- Bylaws update: The Bylaw Committee is receiving the updated chapter bylaws for review.
- Check website for Newsletter.

### **SAFETY OFFICER: JIM KELLY/**

- Stressed the importance of stopping properly. Left foot should always be used first (not both feet).
- Beware of groves in the road because the motorcycle tires can get caught up in them.

### **CHAPLIN: JAMES KIRKPATRICK N/A**

### **SRC / INTERNATIONAL REPORT:** See Newsletter for details.

### **NEW BUSINESS :**

- If you intend to ride to the spring SRC conference contact Bob Grotz who is the road captain for details.
- Motorcycle sunshades will be available for purchase. More to follow.
- Jenny MacConnell will be hosting a Christmas Party at her home (6924 Stetson St. Circle, Sarasota 34243) on Christmas Eve between 6pm and 9pm.

### **SICK AND DISTRESSED:**

PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK AND DISTRESSED MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS.

Geri Buscemi

**50-50 DRAWING:** Amount: \$58 Winner: Don Parker \$28 (Don donated his prize back for the Children)

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Time: 7:45pm Motion: Brian MacConnell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Klein, All approved

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

*Prepared and submitted by Patrick Gibbons, Chapter President and Domenic Ceccanecchio, Secretary BK XVIII*





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**KUDOS TO OUR SERGEANT AT ARMS JAMES RYAN WHO SET UP ANOTHER FUNDRAISER FOR OUR KIDS CHARITY. JIM DONATED ALL KINDS OF WOOD ITEMS THAT HE MADE FOR THIS CHARITY EVENT THAT RAISED OVER \$1230.**







# THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

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# THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

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JANUARY 2026



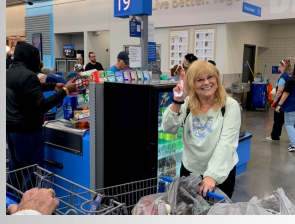




# Annual Childrens Christmas Charity

BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

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# December Snapshots

BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026







# Chapter News

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## January Chapter Meeting



**THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING IS  
7:00PM ON TUESDAY, January 6th, 2026  
2ND FLOOR OF THE SAHIB SHRINE  
600N BENEVA RD SARASOTA**

**COME OUT EARLY, HAVE DINNER AND CHAT WITH YOUR BROTHER KNIGHTS**

### Hazard Light Misuse Across States

Many U.S. states strictly regulate when drivers may use hazard lights. These restrictions exist because flashing hazards can obscure brake-light signals and create confusion for other drivers—especially during inclement weather or emergency situations.

#### Florida's 2021 Exception

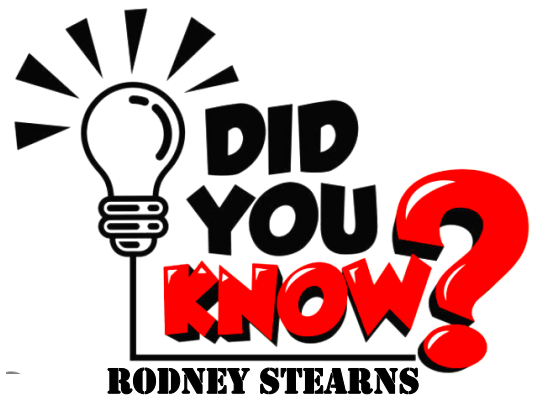
In 2021, Florida diverged from most states by expanding the permissible use of hazard lights while a vehicle is in motion. Under the updated law, hazard lights may be used in two situations:

##### Severe Weather and Low Visibility

Drivers may activate hazard lights while moving when visibility is extremely limited—such as during heavy rain, fog, or smoke—but *only on roads with speed limits of 55 mph or higher*. The goal is to increase vehicle visibility during dangerous conditions common in Florida.

##### Funeral Processions

Vehicles participating in a funeral procession may use hazard lights to help signal their involvement and maintain procession integrity.





# Chaplains Message



**BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER**

**JANUARY 2026**

## Christmas and the Story of Jesus

Christmas is one of the most widely celebrated holidays in the world, but at its heart lies a story that has shaped cultures, traditions, and beliefs for over two thousand years. For Christians, Christmas marks the birth of Jesus—a moment seen not just as the arrival of a historical figure, but as the beginning of a message centered on hope, compassion, and renewal.

According to the Christian tradition, Jesus was born in Bethlehem under humble circumstances. His birth is described as a moment of peace and wonder: a child laid in a manger, visited by shepherds, and later honored by wise men who traveled far to see him. This scene has become a symbol of simplicity and divine love, reminding people that greatness can emerge from the most unexpected places.

Over time, Christmas has grown into a season that blends faith, family, and generosity. Many celebrate by attending church services, exchanging gifts, decorating homes, and gathering with loved ones. Even for those who do not observe the religious aspects, the themes of kindness, giving, and togetherness resonate deeply.

At its core, Christmas invites people to reflect on the values Jesus taught love for others, forgiveness, and compassion. Whether celebrated spiritually or culturally, the holiday continues to inspire moments of joy and connection that brighten the darkest days of winter.

Hope that all my Blue Knights Brother and Sisters Christmas was filled with family, love and happiness. Praying that our first responders our safe from harms way.



*Chaplain Jimmy Kirkpatrick*



# Chapter News

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## TRAITS ARE NOT TELLING

Contributed by **Brother Rodney Stearns**

I recently had the opportunity to speak about police perceptions and the false aesthetics that continue to permeate public discourse. Public debate often focuses on the “militarization” of police, yet the satire of that term becomes clear when you examine it more closely. Our military—by and large—is well-trained, disciplined, and operates within a structured system of principles. In fact, many of the foundational concepts of modern American law enforcement trace back to Sir Robert Peel’s principles, which emphasize professionalism, order, and disciplined service.

The modern image of militarized policing is often traced to events like the Watts riots, the rise of the Black Panthers, and the Texas Tower shooting. These crises prompted agencies to consider how former military-trained personnel might be used to form rapid, specialized response teams—what would eventually become Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). Over time, boot-camp-style training, formal rank structures, standardized uniforms, and the symbolic accouterments of law enforcement helped shape a professional identity that is easily misinterpreted.

Police officers today perform a diverse range of roles, but they are typically issued a single standardized uniform and equipment set, worn across all environments. This uniformity—combined with the stoic demeanor encouraged for officer safety—often leads to perceptions of aggression or intimidation. In truth, officers frequently face no-win situations, where someone will resent them regardless of the decision they make.

Their habits of hyper-vigilance—avoiding having their backs exposed to strangers or doorways, constantly scanning for distractions or threats, and reading subtle cues that most people overlook—are not personality quirks but occupational necessities. Depending on the nature of their work, these traits can become deeply ingrained. And while the public may rarely see the toll of the “bad stuff,” families often don’t hear those stories either; officers commonly shield their loved ones from that part of the job.

Most families understand the traits that law enforcement officers display even after retirement, but many people outside that circle do not. As a result, they may judge an officer as arrogant rather than recognizing the experiences that shaped them. Many officers choose not to discuss their past, and some even seek out new friendships outside the law-enforcement community as a way to reconnect with a more “normal” view of society.

Regardless of the path they take, the stressors of our past do not define who we are today. During my speaking engagement in April, I was surprised by how many attendees had little understanding of the traits commonly seen in police officers. Though the Blue Knights are founded in law enforcement, what brings us together is the open road, shared purpose, and the respect we carry for those who serve and those who have served. We ride not to boast, but to honor the journey that shaped us.



## SICK AND DISTRESSED

**PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK AND DISTRESSED MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS.**

**GERI BUSCEMI**





**Office of Marine and Aviation Operations**  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration  
Department of Commerce

# BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

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## THE NOAA CORPS

By **Tracy Dunn**

### Part 3 of 3: HISTORY

The earlier articles in this series covered the NOAA Corps and its history. But, as we all know, the true nature of an organization [is realized](#) by living it.

As with all organizations, there is so much more to being an officer with the NOAA Corps than what official summaries provide. For example, there are no enlisted personnel aboard ships. Wage marine personnel make up the crew. All positions from Chief to deckhand are civilians. Officers manage ship operations and serve as deck officers navigating and maneuvering the ship.... Ship drivers.

Officers rotate ashore after serving a two to three-year sea tour. They assume field and management duties throughout NOAA as needed and rotate back to sea-duty. It is a sea going career. Unless an officer [is assigned](#) to the flight program (Hurricane Hunters and nautical charting, etc), they will be serving sea-duty throughout their career.

The civilian crew, on the other hand, stay with the ship until they request reassignment, quit, or retire. This unique environment requires a distinctive style of leadership, especially when you are a junior officer. It is more of a negotiation unless there are safety concerns.



My time underway with the NOAA Corps was short but impactful. I served two years (mid-1988 to mid-1990) aboard a 210 ft. fisheries research ship, NOAA Ship Miller Freeman, assigned to the North Pacific and Bering Sea. We homeported out of Seattle, WA, but spent most of our time around Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, AK, with sometime in the Bering Sea. We also made intermittent cruises down the west coast and one to Hawaii.

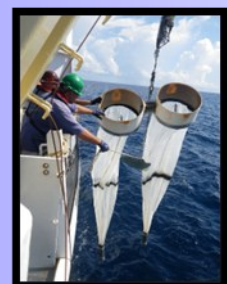
We were underway [roughly 243](#) days a year taking various scientific groups out from 21 to 30+ days. We usually only spent three days at the most in port to change out scientific crews. Bridge personnel worked 4-hour watches with 8 hours off while underway. Officers had collateral duties which kept them busy while not on watch. There was little down time.



Weather was a factor in all aspects of life on the ship. We [operated](#) in seas from choppy, to rough, to nasty quite a bit. It is hard to describe the fatigue which comes from living in an ever-moving environment. When in rough weather just standing requires an entire body effort in order not to topple on to the deck. I found out quickly why our passageways were so narrow. Any wider and you could not bounce back and forth to keep upright as you worked your way to your destination.

Sleeping was equally challenging. We stuffed any item we could under the edges of the mattress to form it into a U-shape to keep from flopping back and forth as the ship rolled. Unfortunately, you could not do much about pitching as the ship rode over each wave lifting the bow followed by the stern. Honestly, you were so tired from counteracting the ship's

motion and dealing with split watches day after day, your body just shut down despite [being bounced](#) around in the bunk.



As far as being a ship driver, it was a great ship. Unlike the nautical charting ships in the fleet which cruised to their sites and anchored, the Miller Freeman constantly moved from collection site to collection site. Once at a survey site, the ship had to [be maneuvered](#) to set the [various types](#) of collection equipment the scientists used, such as a stern trawl, plankton tows, and a water column data collection device called a CTD Cast. You had to learn ship handling quickly.



Office of Marine and Aviation Operations  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration  
Department of Commerce

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## THE NOAA CORPS

By **Tracy Dunn**

### Part 3 of 3: HISTORY

The ship also supported hydroacoustic field trials, launched current buoys, and provided a ride for marine mammal scientists to do surveys of marine mammals in the Pacific. Miller Freeman was one of the most active ships in the NOAA fleet.

The Miller Freeman was minimally crewed, so actual maneuvering the ship [was done](#) by the officers. As a deck officer, I had to keep the ship on course and at the right speed regardless of the sea state for the type of equipment we had in the water, help keep a lookout for other ships and navigate to the next collection site. It could get quite sporty on the bridge.




















There certainly were horrible days on the ship when the weather became too rough to conduct operations. I was prone to seasickness which made those times so much more special, especially considering there was no calling in sick. You had to stand your watch and just deal with it.

On the other hand, I [was blessed](#) with being able to experience the majestic nature of the Pacific and Bering Sea that few will ever [have the opportunity to encounter](#) without being aboard a ship. There were Killer whale pods, Dall's porpoises swimming in our bow wave, bioluminescence life stirred up in our wake, and the Northern Lights on the occasional clear night. However, the most notable event occurred on a midnight watch in the middle of the Pacific.

It was one of those unusually calm nights. We were underway to set up marine mammal surveying in the morning. I stepped out on the bridge wing to take a moment to get some fresh air and look for any ship lights on the horizon. The night was clear, and I could see stars from horizon to horizon as bright as any stars I have ever seen while on land, as there were no city lights competing with the night sky. It was both spectacular and yet made me feel [very small](#) on that little ship so far from shore.

Like many in law enforcement with tales of their past, bunking on a ship created many memories worthy of telling, but I can save those for when we are sitting around trading stories. I will end with the fact that my time serving on Miller Freeman taught me I was not meant for a life at sea. However, I would never have had the opportunity to join NOAA's Officer of Enforcement if it were not for my service in the NOAA Corp. For that I will always be grateful.

### The Real NOAA Corps

Uniformed services pay grade	Special O-10	O-9	O-8	O-7	O-6	O-5	O-4	O-3	O-2	O-1
										
										
	Vice admiral	Rear admiral	Rear admiral (lower half)	Captain	Commander	Lieutenant commander	Lieutenant	Lieutenant (junior grade)	Ensign	

\*\*\* Thanks go to Rodney Stearns and Randall Jarvis for taking time to review the articles and provide edits.





*Ride with Pride!*

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Mike Shockley - Chairman  
Randy Hoagland - Vice-Chairman  
Bob Awtrey - International Rep  
Justin Hartley - Secretary  
Al Fryer - Treasurer

### THE SRC REGION INCLUDES:

Alabama  
Florida  
Georgia  
Louisiana  
Mississippi  
South Carolina  
Bahamas  
Bermuda  
Puerto Rico  
Virgin Islands

SRC WEBSITE— <https://srcknights.org/>  
NEWSLETTER: <https://srcknights.org/>

# BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

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## SPRING 2026

## Blue knights® International Southern Regional Conference

Tour Horse Farms  
in Ocala



## Hosted by FLORIDA III

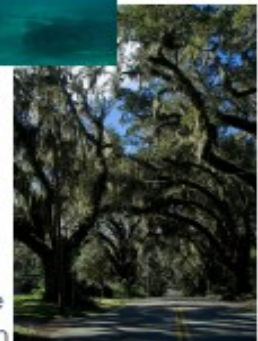
## April 12th — 15th 2026

## Ocala, Florida

## Horse capital of the world

Come join us for the SPRING 2026 Southern Regional Conference in Beautiful Ocala, Florida

We are in the heart of Florida. We have scenic winding backroads, beautiful horse farms, coastline, theme parks, the best natural springs in the world and much, much more!



**Host Hotel:** Holiday Inn Conference Center, 3600 SW 38th Ave, Ocala, FL 34474 (352) 629-9500

**Overflow Hotel:** Holiday Inn Express, 3580 SW 38th Ave, Ocala, FL 34474 ((352) 390-6999

**RV CAMPING:** Near the Hotel

**Registration: \$130 per person**

Includes: **Goodie Bag** and **Banquet**

**Pre-registration cutoff: March 1st 2026** to guarantee banquet attendance. **Registration Opening Soon**

### AGENDA & ACTIVITIES

**Sunday:** 3pm—7pm Check in /Registration

**Sunday -Tuesday:** Hospitality room for Networking; 50/50 raffles every night

**Monday:** 7am—8am Presidents Meeting

2 x Guided rides; Self Guided options to local venues and adventures.

**Tuesday:** 2 x Guided rides; Self Guided Options

**Tuesday night:** Banquet; Silent Auction

**Wednesday:** Check out or think about extending your stay in Florida!



**Vendor & Chapter Sales available:**

Contact: **FL III VP/President TEL # EMAIL**





*Ride with Pride !*

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Mike Shockley - Chairman  
Randy Hoagland - Vice-Chairman  
Bob Awtrey - International Rep  
Justin Hartley - Secretary  
Al Fryer - Treasurer

### **THE SRC REGION INCLUDES:**

Alabama	Bahamas
Florida	Bermuda
Georgia	Puerto Rico
Louisiana	Virgin Islands
Mississippi	
South Carolina	

SRC WEBSITE— <https://srcknights.org/>  
NEWSLETTER: <https://srcknights.org/>

## **BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER**

JANUARY 2026

### **Greetings:**

I am happy to officially announce that the 2026 SRC Spring Conference will be hosted by Blue Knights Florida III in Ocala, Florida.

As you may know, there were no bids for a conference at the last business meeting.

The SRC Board worked with several Chapters after the fact to procure a meeting venue.

The outcome is that Florida III will host the Spring Conference in Ocala.

From the Host Chapter, below are some basic details and an initial Flyer for the conference.

**Registration is not open yet, but you can make room reservations.**

### **SRC 2026 Spring Conference**

**Hosted by: Blue Knights Florida III**

**Dates: April 12 - 15, 2026 (Sunday - Wednesday)**

**Location: Holiday Inn Conference Center**

**Address: 3600 SW 38th Ave, Ocala, FL**

Registration: \$130 per person.

### **Reservation Information & Booking Links:**

#### **Host Hotel:**

Holiday Inn & Suites Ocala Conference Center

352-629-9500

**<https://www.ihg.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI...>**

#### **Overflow Hotel:**

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

352-390-6999

**<https://www.ihg.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=EX...>**

All Standard Rooms are \$144 plus tax.

All Suites will be \$169 plus tax.

There is also a Campground about 250 yards from the host hotel called Ocala RV Camp Resort.

The location is 45 minutes from the Gulf Coast and 90 minutes from the Atlantic Coast.

**More information and registration details will be coming soon.**

Question specific to the event should be directed to Florida III President, **Joe Nazario** - [joenazario1959@gmail.com](mailto:joenazario1959@gmail.com)

Notice: You are one of many recipients of this group email because you are listed as a current SRC President, SRC State Rep, or Executive Board Member.

---

***Ride with Pride!***

***Brotherhood before Politics!***

### **Mike Shockley**

Blue Knights International

SRC Chairman

706-338-1742

[msshockley@gmail.com](mailto:msshockley@gmail.com)

# On The Lighter Side



## BLUE KNIGHTS® FLXVIII NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

AULD LANG SYNE

BABY

BALL

BALLOONS

CALENDAR

CELEBRATION

CHAMPAGNE

CLOCK

CONFETTI

COUNTDOWN

DANCING

DECEMBER

EVE

FATHER TIME

FIRECRACKER

FIRST

FLUTE

GAMES

### Happy New Year!



GOWN

HAPPY

HAT

HOURGLASS

INVITATION

JANUARY

KISS

MIDNIGHT

MUSIC

NOISE MAKER

PARTY

RESOLUTION

SPARKLER

STREAMER

TIMES SQUARE

TOAST

TRADITION

TUXEDO

VOW

YEAR



*"The bike can stay. You, on the other hand, aren't on the list"*



*"He wanted to wear a vest so he could show off his new tattoo. Since it's 39° out, he didn't get very far."*

### New Year Prayer

Dear God,

So far this has been great! I haven't gossiped about my friends. I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, cruel, or rude. I'm very thankful. But in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on I'm probably going to need a lot more help to get

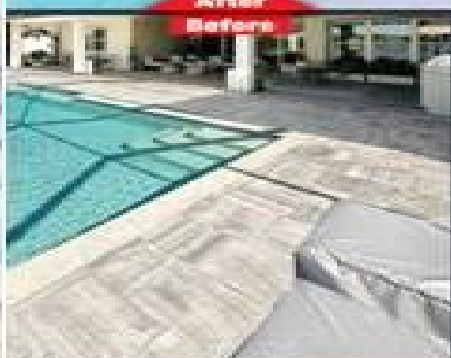


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JANUARY 2026

### Mission BBQ



118 Reviews

**Hours:** 11am - 9pm

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Greg and Cynthia Brock  
Broker/Owners

# 2026

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR