

Council Best Practices - 2005

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January 27, 2005

Support for Naval Academy Participation in the Emerald Bowl

*Thanks to **Bill Stephens**, Northern California Area President and **Gary Wong**, San Francisco Area President for their efforts and this report*

The Naval Academy football celebrated a highly successful season with a victory at the Emerald Bowl in San Francisco, California on December 30th. Behind the scenes, Navy Leaguers in the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California Area were busy working to turn out a large, pro-Navy crowd! Gary Wong, San Francisco Bay Area President, purchased and donated over 50 tickets so that individual sailors and USCG personnel could attend the game. Bill Stephens, Northern California Area President, worked very hard to bring VIP personnel to the game, including Vice Admiral Harvey Johnson, USCG, Pacific Area Commander, Consul General Chung Sang-Ki, Republic of Korea and members of the City of San Francisco's Veterans Affairs Commission. Secretary of the Navy Gordon England stated that the Navy League is both effective and dynamic in the support of sea services personnel, which he appreciates, as do our sea service personnel.

Sheila McNeill in a thank you note to Bill Stephens, stated "Events like this, handled in such a professional manner, do more to highlight the effectiveness and power of the Navy League than anything we could do in Washington."

Thanks to Bill Stephens and Gary Wong for their efforts to showcase the sea services on national television. *Well done!*

March 10, 2005

Navy Operations Support Center

A recent letter to the Naval Reserve Force from the Chief of Naval Reserve commended the Navy League to active and reserve members of the force, stating:

"Please consider supporting those who are supporting YOU and your shipmates by becoming a member of the Navy League. You can choose to become active in one of their local councils and help them to attract the next generation of great Americans who will

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continue to defend our freedoms. Let the people who are tireless advocates on your behalf know that we appreciate their efforts by joining the team.”

The Admiral’s letter provided council members with an excellent opportunity to reach out to the citizen patriots who serve in the Naval Reserve Force today. We must, however, approach this opportunity with the right attitude. Therefore, please take the following actions with regard to this opportunity:

1. Locate the Navy Operations Support Center(s) (NOSC) in your community. One quick method is to locate your nearest NOSC is to review the map at http://www.navyreserve.com/m/pdf/2008_Region_Map.pdf. The address of the NOSC and the contact phone number are in your local phone book under US Government listings..
2. Call your local NOSC and ask to speak with the Commanding Officer. Identify yourself and ask for an appointment (15-20 minutes suggested). Emphasize that the purpose of the appointment is to explore opportunities for your council members to support drilling reservists and active duty staff at the NOSC.
3. At the appointment, the following agenda is recommended:
 - Briefly introduce the Navy League and discuss the activities of your council. The NLUS plastic Mission & Goals card should be presented to the Commanding Officer. You may mention the letter from the Chief of Naval Reserve, but only in the context of determining how the Navy League can support the local reserve center staff and drilling reserves (next bullet).
 - Ask the Commanding Officer to suggest areas that your council can support the center staff and/or drilling reserves. Some suggestions include: adoption of the center, family support for recalled reserve families (perhaps working with an Operation Homefront chapter), community orientation - housing, schools, shopping, churches - for new families (for example, introduction of Community Affiliate members who assist military personnel in your community), employment assistance, including part-time jobs for center staff (if available through your business members), or any other service identified by the Commanding Officer.
 - Agree to an action plan and follow-up reports (what and when for each action item).
 - Ask the Commanding Officer for an opportunity to tell the Navy League story to his staff and drilling reserves. At a minimum, request distribution/placement of Navy League Membership applications and your Council Newsletter in a central location. Also ask the Commanding Officer if there are personnel who may be interested in volunteer opportunities with your council or Sea Cadet unit (prepare a list of council and sea cadet volunteer needs before you go to the meeting).

Report the results of your visit to your Area and Region Presidents.

If you have any questions concerning this approach, please contact Bill Waylett, wwaylett@navyleague.org, or 1-800-356-5760, X1593.

March 24, 2005

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Retention

Navy League retention continues at about 67%, which translates to a loss of 1/3 of our members annually. We need to refocus our efforts on *retention* in order to “stop the bleeding”. There are many resources available to assist councils in their retention efforts, including:

- Your council’s Area and Region President
- The Council Retention Workshop, which can be scheduled with Bill Waylett, wwaylett@navyleague.org, or reviewed by downloading from the Navy League website at <http://www.navyleague.org/councils/Council%20Retention%20Workshop.pdf>
- Review of council guides on Retention and Welcoming New Members, which are included in the Retention Workshop or can be downloaded at http://www.navyleague.org/councils/council_guides.php

Some key insights of the Retention Workshop include:

1. Retention does not just happen – someone needs to be in charge of the effort! A Retention Vice President and a Retention Committee are a good starting point.
2. Retention starts the first day someone joins your council. A New Member Welcoming Committee, with an assigned host and a council orientation session are critical success factors for an effective retention effort.
3. A New Member Welcome Letter is used by many councils. Bill Schultz, President, Santa Clara Council, william_schultz@credence.com, has an excellent letter, which he will share.
4. Conducting a New Member survey to determine the interests and expectations of your new members will help you get them involved.
5. Council rosters should be reviewed regularly since new members may join from outside sources (National HQ recruiting efforts) or through the NLUS website.
We only get one chance to make a good first impression!

Report the results of your retention efforts to your Area and Region Presidents.

If you have any questions concerning this approach, please contact Membership Services, service@navyleague.org, or 1-800-356-5760.

April 25, 2005

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Ship Adoptions – Extending the Opportunity

Thanks to John Lockwood, Northwest Coastal Area President for sharing this news.

The Lake Washington Council agreed on April 11, 2005 to adopt the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ship *Rainier*. Council President Ron Matthew and Captain John Clary met aboard the *Rainier* and finalized this historic adoption, the first adoption of a NOAA ship by a Navy League council. Merchant mariners comprise the crews of NOAA ships.

The NOAA Ship *Rainier* is designed and outfitted primarily for conducting hydrographic surveys in support of nautical charting. Scientific equipment aboard is normally limited to equipment that supports these survey operations. The ship operates off the US Pacific Coast and in Alaskan coastal waters. The *Rainier* is named for Mount Rainier in Washington state. The ship has a crew of fifty-five, including ten commissioned officers. The vessel is based at the Marine Operations Center, Pacific, on Lake Union in Seattle, Washington.

NOAA operates a wide assortment of hydrographic survey, oceanographic research, and fisheries research vessels. NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations operate these vessels. Ships located in the Pacific are managed by the Marine Operations Center, Pacific, in Seattle, Washington. Ships located in the Atlantic are managed by the Marine Operations Center, Atlantic, in Norfolk, Virginia. The NOAA ship homeport/locator information can be found at http://www.moc.noaa.gov/ship_loc.htm. NOAA is a *sea service organization* located in the Department of Commerce.

August 19, 2005

Recruiting Future Council Leaders

Many councils start the process of recruiting new Board members and officers in the fall of each year. In an effort to assist your council in this effort, we would like to share the results of a recent survey (thanks to Cynthia D'Amour ©) of volunteer organization leaders. Here are the questions, responses and some comments:

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| <u>Question?</u> | <u>Responses</u> | <u>Comments</u> |
|---|---|---|
| Why did you agree to accept a leadership position? | #1 Friends asked me #2 Another leader asked me #3 I responded to a call for volunteers | “If you don’t ask, the answer will always be No” is germane. Also important is to have a succession plan, a “future leaders” program, so volunteers have time to work up to council leadership positions. |
| How long did it take you to feel comfortable/confident in the position? | 37.8% within three months 18% after 6 months 14.6% on day 1 6.1% <i>never!</i> | More support for a future leaders program! Does your council confirm leaders are ready before electing them to office? |
| What is one thing you wish someone had told you before you started the job? | #1 Tell me how long the job takes (be honest!) #2 Share feedback/lessons learned from previous leaders #3 Know the time line of annual events #4 Get training for handling Board members #5 Learn team and consensus building skills | Now is the time to schedule “Council Officer & Board Member Training” so your candidates know what they are agreeing to do. Another valuable workshop is the “Council Annual Planning Retreat.” Contact Bill Waylett, wwaylett@navyleague.org , to schedule these important workshops. |
| What are your most important “lessons learned”? | #1 Lose your “perfectionist” approach – it takes too long with volunteers! #2 Learn to say “please” and “thank you”! #3 Keep an open mind – consider all ideas. #4 Focus on the opportunities, not the roadblocks. #5 Watch out for “same old, same old” – set goals! | Council leaders may also schedule workshops titled “How to Run Effective Meetings” and “Leadership in a Volunteer Organization” to address these lessons learned. Finally, the “Council President Workshop” and/or “Council Treasurer Workshop” can be scheduled for Region/Area meetings this fall. |

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