



Area Presidents' Handbook

Navy League of the United States
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Introduction

Thank you for serving as an Area President for the Navy League of the United States. Table 1 lists the Area President positions by region. We are glad you are bringing your enthusiasm to this larger role in the organization. Please know that your help is crucial to the continued existence of the Navy League.

Since Area Presidents have differing levels of leadership experience, the purpose of this guide is to help you understand the job of an Area President, presenting some advice, ideas and tools that we hope will help guide you as your term progresses. As you will discover, there are many ways Area Presidents can and should support their councils.

By providing support to councils, Area Presidents help sustain the Navy League of the United States in its entirety. You and your Region Presidents are the vital “bridge” between National Headquarters personnel and local councils.

Newly elected Area Presidents should complete the Area Presidents Workshop, available at <https://portal.navyleague.org/pages/resource-pages/training>. This guide supplements the workshop and provides information and material to make your job easier and to make you more effective. In the execution of your appointment, you can call on your Region Presidents or staff members at national headquarters for help at any time.

Overview

Area President is an important field leader of the Navy League. These positions provide a critical link between Navy League national programs and the field organization. Even if you have served as Council President, expect that the scope of duties for you as Area Presidents for multiple councils will demand even more time and energy.

All Area Presidents, as well as every national, region and council officer, should maintain their focus on the mission of the Navy League. Therefore, an important part of your job is to help councils in your area recognize that the success of their grassroots efforts depends upon the success of the entire Navy League of the United States organization.

Navy League Mission Statement

We are a civilian organization dedicated to informing the American people and their government that the United States of America is a maritime nation and that its national defense and economic well-being are dependent upon strong sea services — United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard and United States-flag Merchant Marine.

This handbook, together with the Navy League operations manual, is used to provide Area Presidents with the tools needed to do the job. Many Region Presidents have found that goal-setting helps their region focus events and activities on meeting the Navy League's goals; the Area President should support the region's goals.

Navy League Goals

1. Educate national leaders and the nation.
2. Support the men and women of the sea services.
3. Provide assistance to the sea service families.
4. Support youth programs.

Along with maintaining your focus on the mission of the Navy League, you need to guide your councils to do the same. Because councils are at the field level of the organization, their emphasis is naturally on helping local sea service units. Your job is to assist councils to engage in activities that support all four Navy League goals.

The Role of the Area President

You are the liaison between Council Presidents in your area with the region, national officers and the national headquarters staff. As liaison, your job is to foster communication and shared understanding between your councils and national.

As stated in the Navy League operations manual: “The Area President is responsible for all activities of the Navy League in his/her area. The Area President shall conduct the business of the area in accord with the operations manual.”

<https://portal.navyleague.org/file/operations.pdf>

Your interface with the National Directors and Region Presidents for your area is most important. The National Directors of the board of the Navy League from your region, the Region President and you are the officers of your area. You are the senior Navy League national officer in your area. Council Presidents and council officers will look to you for guidance and leadership.

As Area President, you will supervise all Navy League programs and activities. You are first a leader, motivator, mediator (as opposed to a dictator), the national contact, a coach, counselor, helper and adviser. But, the most important thing to remember is you are a leader of volunteers. Your “please” and “thank you” will go a long way.

Your job is to help each council improve their council functions with the assistance of your Region President and the local council officers. Ultimately, whatever happens in your area is your responsibility.

With this in mind, you are expected to visit councils and meet with their officers, contact National Directors (within the area) and talk to your Region President. These are large tasks, but they can be done.

All Area President tasks involve communication. The most important communication method in today’s world is electronic communication. Prepare to become computer savvy! Many of your councils may have social media accounts, such as Facebook and webpages; you should join their groups to stay current on council activities.

The Navy League operations manual outlines the responsibilities of Area Presidents in its Part Two, in Table 2-2, “Responsibilities of Area Presidents.” There is more information about these tasks in the “How to Begin” section of this guide on Page 4.

How to Begin

Know Your Councils

Review

Obtain and review all files from the previous Area President so you can be familiar with the workings of your area. If you did not receive any files, call your predecessor for his/her view of the state of the area. Talk to your Region President and your region's National Directors for more information.

Review the previous year's annual reports from your councils. Area Presidents can view the reports through the Navy League Member Service Portal.

Set Up Document Folders

- Files such as "Navy League" (for general information), "Area" (for all papers, copies of emails, activities, newsletters, rosters, etc.) and "Region President" (for communications with your Region President).
- File of current contact information for NROTC/NJROTC units, Sea Cadet units and military commands in your area.
- File of current contact information for Region President, Council Presidents and National Officers.
- Fiscal record files, including expense receipts and reimbursement reports.
- You might want to establish and maintain a separate file for each council in your area. This file should include copies of the council's annual reports, your notes from visits, council newsletters and any other useful information about the council.
- Passing on copies of your files will help Area Presidents do their job.

Contact

Once you've been installed as Area President, it's time to contact the councils in your area. If Council Presidents don't already know you, introduce yourself. You can do this however you're comfortable, such as with a phone call, an email or in person.

Ask about the next council meeting/event date. If the date fits in your schedule, ask the council president if you may attend. If the answer is yes, then request three or four minutes of program time to introduce yourself. This is an opportunity to talk about the other councils in the area. Ideally, Council Presidents are pleased you want to visit them. If the president thinks he/she does not need any help from national, you may sense a hesitation to include you. Council Presidents may not understand the role of the Area President. Let them know that your job is to assist councils with their efforts — not to direct or judge them.

Also ask:

- For a council member directory if there is one.
- To be included on the council's communication list for newsletters and event information, and about the council's social media accounts.

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Use this contact to thank the council for what they do. After making contact, send an email to the council president confirming the time and place of your visit. The more technology-savvy you are, the more effective you can be, as communications today are primarily done through email and social media. Your councils may have social media accounts, such as Facebook. Joining their groups helps you to stay current on council activities and shows your interest.

Do the Work

Set Annual Goals

Goal-setting is the process of identifying something that you want to accomplish and establishing measurable goals and timeframes. The objectives you choose will help direct your actions. If you need a little motivation to act, goals can provide incentive. Having and fulfilling goals shows you are responsible.

Ideally, the region has established goals that support the current goals of the Navy League of the United States. If such goals exist at the region level, Area Presidents can adapt region goals to the area level. Likewise, if the councils in your area have specific goals, Area Presidents can incorporate those goals into area-wide goals.

Ultimately, working toward your goals will help you fulfill your responsibilities as Area President as detailed in Part Two of the Navy League Operations.

Fulfill the Responsibilities Specifically Relating to Your Councils:

Mentor incoming council presidents who have not previously held the position.

Using the “Resources” section of the Member Service Portal, 1) provide them a copy of the “Council Leadership Position Description,” found in the operations manual section and 2) hold a training session, using the “Guide to Council Turnover,” from the Training Documents section.

Arrange and conduct at least one (more, if feasible) area-wide meeting and/or workshop.

Ideally, an Area President can schedule a meeting or workshop that most council representatives will attend. Sometimes that’s not possible. There are various other ways you can complete this task without requiring your council representatives to travel. For instance, your councils can join in on one of the many headquarters webinars or updates. Area Presidents can use headquarters’ “GoToMeeting” software to host teleconferences and video conferences. Additionally, one of your councils might invite other councils in the area to their events.

Once your Region President establishes a schedule for region meetings, you could plan an area meeting in conjunction. If your area councils are driving to the region meeting, they might stay for an area meeting. Do what you can! A meeting with only three councils and a variety of National Directors can be very productive.

Visit each council at least once a year or more frequently, if feasible.

In some areas, the councils are so widespread that it is impractical for the Area President to attend a council function. Area Presidents can prepare and send relevant PowerPoint presentations for viewing at a council meeting.

Encourage councils to form and/or adopt Naval Sea Cadet Corps units and to be active in other youth programs.

Assure timely submission of council annual reports to national headquarters, providing assistance as needed.

Council annual reports are a must. Your effort to have them submitted to national by Jan. 31 every year may require multiple contacts from you to have them submitted on time. (Council rebates are only received AFTER receipt of the annual report.) Be sure that you and your Region Presidents get a copy of every report.

Council rebates are based on the information provided in the annual report. Once the period for filing begins, you may have to remind Council Presidents to complete the report.

Each year the report process has become more electronic, and there have been enough system filing problems that some presidents might choose to not make the effort to complete the electronic reports. Additionally, there are councils who have decided the effort is not worth the rebate. If the council doesn't act, you should ask Council Presidents if they need help completing the report and should assist if the council allows.

Your effort to have councils submit them to national by Jan. 31 every year may require calls, sending notes or emails. Be sure that you and your Region Presidents get a copy of every report.

Oversee timely submission of government-required council nonprofit status forms and tax documents, providing assistance as needed.

You will need to research your state's tax requirements. Information should be available from the secretary of state. An account period (tax period/tax year) is usually 12 consecutive months. There are two kinds of account periods, calendar and fiscal. Generally, your account period can be found in the councils' bylaws.

Which method a council uses for IRS filing will depend upon the annual income.

- For IRS filing, enter <https://sa.www4.irs.gov/epostcard/> into your browser. That gets you into a log-in page and you can start the process. There is also an "IRS Form 990-N Electronic Filing System (e-Postcard) User Guide" which is very helpful. To get it, search for "IRS Form 990-N User Guide." It is Publication 5248 (7-2016).

If requested, administer the Navy League Oath of Office for incoming council officers.
(See Table 2.)

Fulfill the Responsibilities of the Region

Act as liaison between the Region President, Council Presidents and national officers.

This is where your files with contact information become important. Don't wait to be asked! You can initiate contact.

Assist the Region Presidents in establishing and conducting a Regional Nominating Committee.

The Region President will contact you in February or March. If there are members in your councils showing interest in doing more in the Navy League, provide their names to the Region President at the beginning of the nomination process.

Coordinate with the Region President to support councils to establish liaison with military commands and maritime-oriented organizations in the area.

You can develop a contact list with the help of your Region President and members from councils in your area. To ensure the list is comprehensive, you may want to Google "military commands and maritime-oriented organizations near me."

Assist the Region President and national headquarters personnel in establishing a program of maritime education seminars sponsored and established by councils in the area.

The best way to do this is to complete all training available to councils from national headquarters, so you know what you can suggest and which resources would help your councils present programs of maritime education.

Assist the Region President and national headquarters personnel in executing national programs approved by the Board of Directors.

As Area President, you should disseminate information about ongoing national programs. National headquarters may receive funding from public and/or private sectors to promote a campaign designed to increase awareness of sea services' needs. Councils can use the professionally developed campaign materials to promote membership in the Navy League of the United States. Since you know your councils, figure out how the national program can help a council membership drive.

Fulfill Specific Responsibilities

Utilize the Navy League Member Service Portal ...

As Area President, you can view the membership roster information for your councils. Although not required, as Area President, you may want to send your own "Welcome Aboard" letter to new members, encouraging renewal of members dropping off. If you need help navigating the Member Service Portal, contact staff at "membership@navyleague.org."

Endeavor to increase communications between councils for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

Consider distributing area newsletters. Following a national meeting, there is a lot of information you could pass on to your councils. You can also send a newsletter to Council Presidents after a region meeting. The information will serve as meeting notes for the councils that attended, and as a “for your information” for those that didn’t attend.

Area Presidents shall forward, in a timely manner, an accounting of their area expenses semiannually.

Area Presidents receive a semiannual reimbursement to help cover job-related expenses. An expense report must be submitted twice a year to the Region President (for approval) and within 75 days of the end of the period to continue to receive reimbursements. Preparing the Area President’s fiscal expense shouldn’t be difficult if you note all your Navy League activity on a calendar.

If you keep extensive expense files, you can account for all the paper, copying and postage costs you incur each year. You might consider keeping a notebook in your car to record your travel costs: mileage, tolls, parking, etc., when you attend a council event. The reward for your effort is a check from headquarters that will help defray the personal costs you incurred as Area President. If you need help with the fiscal report, contact national at “finance@navyleague.org.”

Take the lead to develop new councils and/or merge or close existing councils.

The process is detailed in Part Two of the Navy League Operations Manual under the section “Councils.”

Increase Membership in the Area

Although no longer required in the operations manual, Area Presidents should make an effort to increase membership in the area by assisting in forming new councils, increasing the strength of existing councils, and obtaining Corporate, Corporate Gold, Business Associate and Community Affiliate Members.

More on Communications

Again, one of the most important parts of your job as Area President is communication between the Area Presidents and Council Presidents. Getting Council Presidents confident enough to call upon you for support keeps the communication lines open. You will then be aware of important information regarding your councils.

Encourage Council Presidents to talk to you about problems before going to the Region President. However, let them know that the national staff is always available.

In your communications, remind councils that they can invite the Navy League National President, other national officers, admirals, generals and members of Congress their events. Ask the hosting council to call you ahead of time to keep you advised of such an important event.

With the advent of email, communications are easier if you maintain a current email list. Using the Member Service Portal, you can generate an email list of members accepting email contact in your area. You can keep in touch monthly with your membership and notify them of upcoming events, as well as important and interesting topics. With a quick note, you can let your leaders know of schedule changes or short-notice ship visits immediately. If one council's event is open to members of other councils, circulate that event information to all your councils.

Personal, handwritten notes or an email, when used for a "Thank You" are well received and appreciated. Promptly sending thank-you notes is important, so all reports you've received are acknowledged. Be sure to let your members know when you read a great newsletter or a good annual report, attend an interesting program or just want to thank them for what they do.

Finally, try to avoid negative or critical written communications with your councils (including email). Settle problems, by telephone or face-to-face, if possible, before resorting to a letter or an email, which may come back to haunt you. Volunteers are a wonderful group of people. Keep them active with a positive outlook on everything.

Area Presidents should send periodic reports to the Region President as requested. The Area President's report helps the Region President prepare the region report for the National President, which is presented at the national convention and the winter meeting.

As Area President, you may also want to generate your own council member letters to area members, welcoming them and later asking them to renew their membership.

Area Presidencies by Region

Caribbean/Latin America

- Eastern Caribbean

Empire

- Connecticut
- Eastern New York
- Western New York

European

- Southern Europe
- Florida
- Central Florida
- Northeast Florida
- South Florida

Great Lakes Region

- Illinois
- Michigan
- Wisconsin

Liberty Region

- New Jersey

Lone Star

- None

Mid-Atlantic

- Nation's Capital

Midwest

- Central Midwest
- Lower Midwest
- Upper Midwest

New England

- None

Northwest Region

- Columbia Pacific
- Greater Northwest
- Northwest Coastal

Pacific

- Greater Pacific
- Hawaii

Pacific Central

- Central California
- Northern California
- Northern Nevada
- San Francisco Bay

Pacific Southwest

- Greater Lost Angeles
- San Diego/Imperial Valley
- CA Mid-Coast — Inland Valley
- CA Coast – Inland Empire

Rocky Mountain

- None

South Atlantic Coast

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina

Southern

- East Gulf
- Central Gulf
- West Gulf

Recognition and Awards

Recognition is a very potent motivator for volunteers! Here are some proven ideas:

1. Personal notes – handwritten or by e-mail; “Thank you, great job, well done, good newsletter, excellent meeting, welcome aboard,” etc.
2. Like and comment on Facebook postings.
3. In your talk during a council visit, recognize the entire council for the great work you see happening.
4. Personal telephone calls — very quick and easy.
5. Group emails to contact and recognize one or more individuals throughout the area.
6. Submit names of outstanding Navy Leaguers for region and national recognition.
7. Encourage your councils to work toward the national standards for recognition as an Outstanding or Meritorious Council or have an awarding-winning newsletter or public relations program.
8. Award up to two Certificates of Appreciation or one Scroll of Honor annually.

Be sure and tell everyone in your area about those recognized and any awards.

Additional Area President Resources

NLUS Operations Manual

There are resources for Area Presidents in the references to Area President in the operations manual. (See Area President in the index.) Make sure your manual is the latest version. Ideally, you should review the entire manual so that you can answer the many questions that will come up during conversations with the membership. The operations manual reflects the Navy League Bylaws. These are how we conduct business, and if the language is unclear, contact the bylaws committee.

Navy League Member Portal

By using the Navy League Member Portal, you have access to abundant help for your role as Area President. Resources include:

Council Support Materials

Everything you need to run your council or run awesome events is here, except live members.

Training Resources

Here you will find recent and useful organizational training, webinars and other material.

NLUS Non-Web Forms

Offline forms, PDFs and other forms used by and for the organization.

Branding and Style Guides and Tools

Here you will find guidelines and a complete set of materials you can use locally to help create media interest and market Navy League locally.

Recent Field Service Presentations and Webinars

Find current slideshows and recordings here.

Once identified as such in the computer system, Area Presidents may also access council records through the Member Service Portal, so you can view what Council Presidents see regarding membership activity.

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Fellow Navy Leaguers and Staff

Area Presidents also have people they can rely on as resources. There are designated Navy Leaguers ready to support you and many others who will help if you just ask them. These include the Region President, other experienced leaders in the Region, and Navy League staff and officers. Although staff employees change, there is always someone in the department checking emails. Here are the departments that have general email addresses:

HR@navyleague.org

development@navyleague.org

events@navyleague.org

corporaterelations@navyleague.org

finance@navyleague.org

training@navyleague.org

seapowermail@navyleague.org

execdirector@navyleague.org

nationalpresident@navyleague.org

communications@navyleague.org

membership@navyleague.org

Planning Area Meetings

Learning to manage is the key to survival as an Area President. We hope that Area Presidents leaders inspire other Navy Leaguers to follow them in a leadership role. Headquarters has learned that, typically, the most effective Area Presidents have vision. Don't accept the status quo – change the way things were previously done if necessary to improve your area.

It helps the Navy League organization if Area Presidents are on the lookout for future leaders.

Once you have identified potential leaders, include them in area activities whenever possible. Encourage Council Presidents and other potential leaders to attend national meetings — there are two each year. Also, invite them to attend region and area meetings.

If feasible, work with the Region President to have a spring area meeting early in the calendar year (February or March). Such meeting can be multipurpose, providing information and training for new council officers and concurrently conducting the Regional Nominating Committee meeting.

Ideally, region/area meetings can also include speakers or a panel of speakers, and visits to sea service bases/ships, or participation in a ship commissioning or change of command. Training workshops can be presented on many subjects from among the topics listed at <https://portal.navyleague.org>.

Planning Area Meetings

One-Day Session 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (recommended)

Saturday – Drive-in, drive-out, lunch in room, no speaker.

First Half – Each Council gives a 6-8 minute report on its activities.

Second Half – Workshop, possibly using online resources.

The start and end times depend on the drive time for the most distant attendee.

Two-Day Session (not typical for an area meeting)

Friday night dinner/social with speaker.

Saturday workshops – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Other Formats:

A cruise or weekend trip with workshops mixed in.

Military briefings for half-day and then workshops.

Tour of military base or ship for half-day after morning workshops.

START ON TIME – Do not wait for anyone!

STAY ON SCHEDULE!

Agenda of Area Meeting

1. Keep it simple. A prayer and Pledge of Allegiance is normally used to start the meeting.
2. Use name tags and name cards on table to identify council attendees.
3. Sign in – name, address, phone number, email address, council.
4. Introduce all present.
5. Allow 20-30 minutes for coffee/doughnut time ahead of your scheduled starting time.
6. Opening welcome should be brief – three to five minutes.
7. Have handouts available for pickup: membership application forms — individual, community affiliate plus speaker handouts.
8. Water and glasses on tables.
9. Check public address system, audio-visual equipment, etc., if used

Topics — Although this is a very broad area, here are some “tried and true” subjects:

1. Council president reports – six to eight minutes
2. Membership and retention discussion
 - a. How do we get them?
 - b. How do we keep them?
 - c. Small group (4-5) discussions and report
 - d. Why do members leave?
 - e. What are some solutions?
3. Fundraising
 - a. Open discussion or small group
4. Why have a Navy League in my town?
 - a. Small group discussion and report
5. Youth Programs – Sea Cadets, NJROTC, school support, etc.
 - a. Each council president brings in a list of supported units to share
 - b. Open discussion
6. Programs – What was each council’s best one or two programs?
 - a. Small group discussion and report
7. Visits/Tours – What is their value? How to conduct?
 - a. Small group discussion and report
8. Conducting council board meetings
 - a. Purpose?
 - b. How often?
 - c. Agenda
 - a. Small group discussion and report

Note – a great discussion topic is effective meetings (a workshop)
9. How is a Navy League council different from Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.?
 - a. Small group discussion and report
10. Operations manual review
 - a. A good topic for meetings with new officers
11. Orientation for new members
 - a. How to do?
 - b. What topics?
 - c. When?
 - d. Small group discussion and report

12. Current national theme or program
 - b. What does it mean for Navy League councils?
 - c. How does it apply?
 - d. Importance of participating in grassroots legislative program
13. Community Education
 - a. What does this mean?
 - b. What topics/ideas do you want to cover?
 - c. Who does it?
 - d. Is assistance available?
 - e. Promote use of Navy League presentations, available at <http://navyleague.org/communications/nlp.html>.

Outside Speakers or Panel — the Region President, national officers and HQ staff

- a. Great way to be updated on Navy League or military topics
- b. Always allow time for Q & A
- c. Disadvantage: cuts into workshop time.

“In-House” Speakers – Local Navy Leaguers

Speakers from your area may be National Directors, past Navy League officers or council leaders with special expertise. These speakers may be qualified to talk about many of the topics listed above. However, topics that fall in the class of training will need the use of online resources, local leaders or national instructors to teach. They are:

- Recruiting council officers and board members
- National Navy League organization
- Overview of national staff functions
- Latest changes in national bylaws and operations manual
- Duties and responsibilities of council boards, etc.

Other topics to discuss our upcoming national meetings, dates of special events in the region, the region and area organization and responsibilities. Always review and discuss the current membership and retention statistics for each council.

Fellowship and Fun

A meeting is a time to build a good team with fun and informal time. You can recognize birthdays, have awards, give away some prizes and even take pictures for distribution.

Summary, Evaluation, Goals and Goodbye

Summarize key points. Remind everyone again of important future events and dates. Have an evaluation form to pass out that you have prepared ahead of time for this meeting. It takes five minutes to complete and turn in before they leave (see next page).

Be sure to stress your appreciation for their attendance. “Thank you” goes a long way.

AND END ON TIME...

Follow-up. In your next communication/email summarize the highlights from the meeting so all can know what was discussed.

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NLUS Oath of Office

Would the council officers and Board of Directors please come forward?

The Navy League of the United States was incorporated in 1902. An early benefactor as you know was President Theodore Roosevelt, who donated a portion of the monies he received from the Nobel Peace Prize to begin the Navy League of the United States. He stated:

“It seems to me that all good Americans interested in the growth of their country and sensitive to its honor should give hearty support to the policies which the Navy League is founded to further. Furthermore, the country should watch the Navy League with great interest.

We must rely upon the broad and far-sighted patriotism of our people as a whole for the building and maintaining of the American Navy: and it is of great importance there should be some means by which this patriotism can find an effective voice, and the Navy League offers just the means needed.”

And upon those words our organization has continued in their work. May I remind each of you of the following objectives of the Navy League:

1. To foster and maintain interest in a strong Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine as integral parts of a sound national defense and vital to the freedom of the United States.
2. To serve as a means of educating and informing the American people with regard to the role of sea power in the nuclear age and the problems involved in maintaining strong defenses in any age.
3. To improve the understanding and appreciation of those who wear the uniform of our armed forces and their families and to better the conditions under which they live and serve.
4. To provide support and recognition for the Reserve forces in our communities in order that we may continue to have a capable and responsive Reserve.

5. To educate and train our youth in the customs and traditions of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine, through the means of an active and vigorous Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

It is the responsibility of the Officers and Board of Directors to ensure that successful programs and initiatives are established to accomplish these objectives. It is the responsibility of each of us as members of the Navy League to support the _____ Council board and to do our best to see that the programs and initiatives have our full support.

If you would each hold up your right hand and repeat after me:

“I do solemnly swear,
that during the term of office for which I have been elected,
I shall faithfully serve,
To the best of my ability,
The interest of our Nation,
Its maritime services and the Navy League.”

Congratulations to you all and the very best in your new adventure.