

**Surface Navy Association  
Executive Committee Minutes (Draft)  
March 1, 2007**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

VADM Kevin Green, USN (Ret), *President*  
VADM Tim leFleur, USN (Ret), *West Coast VP – via phone*  
VADM Hank Giffin, USN (Ret), *East Coast VP – via phone*  
CAPT Paul Rinn, USN (Ret)  
CAPT Dave Lee, USN (Ret)  
Dr Harry Kantrovitch  
CAPT Jim Tackett, USN (Ret)  
RADM Tom Wilson, USN (Ret)  
CAPT Ned Lundquist, USN (Ret)  
CAPT Rudy Laco, USN  
CAPT Bill Erickson, USN (Ret), *Executive Director*  
Ms Julie Howard, *Admin Staff*

**MINUTES**

Minutes were reviewed and motion to accept was carried unanimously

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Admiral Green opened the meeting repeating Admiral Hogg’s reiteration that Chapters are the heart beat of the organization. He also stressed the need for us to do a strategic planning session this year.

In closing he recommended 2 books - Ian Tolly’s book “Six Frigates” and Evan Thomas’ book “Sea of Thunder”.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

**Praying Mantis Video Proposal by Sonalysts, Inc.** Sonalyst are looking to do an animated video that would concentrate on Operation Praying Mantis. It is expected that this would be something that would be of interest to the History Channel, etc. We have not been involved in the production business for videos. We have supported the launching of public affairs shows. Sonalysts has approached SNA to become a sponsor or to use our corporate sponsors to fund the project. Before we even consider this we need a proposal. However we also need to ask them to talk to the Navy to see what they think.

**Ocean Technology Foundation.** Following our 2006 donation for the locating of the Bonhomme Richard OTF are asking for an additional donation of \$5,000. Last year they requested \$10K and we gave them \$1K. We did give them a booth at the symposium. However they were not able to provide someone to man the booth. . Not sure if this fits into our mission and how it would benefit our membership. We have not budgeted for this expenditure. It was decided to table the request at this time until later this summer.

**Open Architecture Forum.** This would be a follow-on to the Communications Forum held at the end of last year. We looked at this as an SNA forum on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. PEO IWS also has a program called Industry Day. The initial proposal from their office was to combine the event as

a joint forum and move the proposed venue to the Hyatt Regency to accommodate the size. After much discussion it was suggested that we move to a joint forum in the May time frame and they keep Industry Days in March as a stand alone event. We will watch how this initiative develops and revisit at the next meeting.

**ASNE Human Systems Integration Symposium.** SNA is a co-sponsor on this event that will be in Annapolis on 19-21 March in Annapolis. There is no financial outlay for sponsorship.

**Navy Marine Corps Council** The date for this has been set for 15 May at the Army Navy Country Club. Last year the SNA invitees were the ExCom and Board of Directors and cost to attend was covered by SNA. Recommend that we support this event again. An email invitation will be distributed.

#### **CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP REPORT**

Currently have 61 sponsors and have received \$43,000 to date. There are a number of corporations out there that we could solicit for sponsorship. We were provided with a list from the American Shipbuilding Association of organizations we might want to contact. The issue is do we really want to go out and solicit corporate sponsors or are we happy with how they are coming in right now. Our revenue has grown such that the percentage received from corporations is over 80% of our total revenue. Early on it was thought that we should have no more than 50% of our revenue coming from the corporations. Recommendation is that we do not actively solicit corporate sponsors. It was also discussed that here an advantage for us to have a greater pool of resources provided by corporate sponsors and perhaps we need to look at the package we provide. We also need to look at what kind of association we are. If the founders found it important to limit our corporate revenue percentage then we should perhaps look at this.

There are ways to get bigger and there are a number of ways we can do this. The current question is do we want to market the association to gain additional corporate sponsors? It also questions our relationship with the sponsor and also with the Navy. Consolidation is taking place in the industry and some of them might change how they sponsor things later. It is important that we follow the charter that we as a non-profit and take care of our active duty population. It was felt that we will continue to grow even if we do nothing to market. Issue: it is okay that we are growing without aggressive marketing and do we want to continue this trend or be more aggressive. *Action Item: ask VADM Hancock to take this up and present us with a proposal at the next ExCom.*

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

No report for this evening

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

We are barely into the new year. We are still finalizing symposium money however all indications are that we will be close to budget.

#### **SYMPOSIUM REPORT**

RADM Hart was unable to attend the meeting. At the Hot Wash up a number of issues were discussed that boiled down to 3 main topics.

- The first is the scheduling of 3 luncheons over 2 days. It is felt there is a conflict between the Awards Luncheon and the CEO Luncheon. After much discussion it was determined that there is not much we can do about it. We do get fairly senior attendance at the CEO/Flag luncheon.
- Second point was the size of the session hall. We are looking at keeping the general session room the same size for the first day but for subsequent days will make it smaller which will provide an additional room for use.
- Banquet seating was the final issue. We are looking at ways to better distribute the seating.

Finally it was determined that with reduction in space we are still on track to meet budget.

#### **AWARDS COMMITTEE**

We are starting the cycle and are now looking at special recognition awards. Open to any nominations in that category. We are still looking at themes for Historical Recognition.

#### **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

VADM Gunn unable to come at the last minute. We have received 27 new applications and 41 potential renewals. Plan is to award 9 new and any additional ones that come from renewal fall out will be awarded to make us up to a total of 50. We extended the grade submissions to the Spring Semester for renewals to have a better look at the grades.

#### **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

At the end of February we have 6241 total members. There are two items for this evening. The first is an email received from Captain McGrath a new SNA Board Member. He asked that this be made part of the minutes which reads as follows:

"Dear Captain Erickson,

It was nice meeting you at the Board of Directors Meeting, and I look forward to a few good years working together to help make this organization better. It is in the spirit of that end that I submitted my name for consideration, and it is in that spirit that I raise the following issue, which I hope you will raise with the Executive Committee and allow me to personally represent at an upcoming Executive Committee meeting.

The issue is Enlisted Membership in the Surface Navy Association; specifically, the extent to which we as an organization seek to increase our numbers through widening our outreach. The Bottom Line Up Front of my argument is that I believe SNA has become fixated on attracting Enlisted members, an endeavor that is ultimately without any real value to the organization and which has little or no return on investment.

I was the XO of the USS PRINCETON (CG 59) in the late 90's, and my CO held the San Diego Chapter Presidency. One of our responsibilities was to host the West Coast Symposium, and at the time I was shocked at the degree to which SNA National pushed us to ensure a program that would appeal to

Enlisted Members, specifically Junior Enlisted Members. We worked hard to create just such a program (largely because of the money we were seeking from National to help put the symposium on), and got a lukewarm at best return. This was SIX YEARS AGO! Returning to the present, I attended my first Board of Directors Meeting last week and I was astounded the extent to which this single issue dominated the three hour plus meeting. Presumably, this issue did not just re-emerge; my sense is that it has remained atop the agenda throughout the intervening years.

As I listened to the various reports, I tried to do a little analysis and synthesis, designed specifically to discern any real return on investment with respect to attracting enlisted members. If I remember correctly, Enlisted Members make up 85% of the Surface Force, and only 10% of the SNA. Active Duty Officers make up 15% of the Surface Force, but I believe somewhere in the neighborhood of 33% of the membership.

During the financial brief, I believe I added up approximately \$18000 in payments (out of a total of \$72K) to chapters around the country designed to support primarily Enlisted events--SOY and CPO centered.

During the membership brief, I believe I saw a net drop in 361 total Enlisted members.

How do I analyze this? I see the overwhelming majority of the Surface Force Manning making up a small, but declining portion of our member base (ironic given the number of free memberships this community receives) even as the organization continues to focus to a huge degree on this same community.

So what is our answer? Why, work harder! It is clear that if we only did more outreach, spent more money, made the organization more attractive to Enlisted Members, they would join. The problem is, there just is no evidence to suggest this is the case. In fact, all of the evidence points in the opposite direction. This is a bucket with a hole in the bottom of it.

Putting aside for question of return on investment, I must wonder aloud what the purpose of this outreach is? Is it to grow the organization, why concentrate on the least likely to join segment of the population. More importantly, what is the purpose of getting bigger?

Is it to change the nature of the organization by broadening the member base? If so, why? What benefit is there to this?

The plain truth of the matter is that Enlisted members are not likely to be attracted to what the SNA has to offer (especially Junior Enlisted), and that if the organization were to change in ways designed to attract them, it would risk driving away its core constituencies.

I would like to request that this email be shared with the Executive Committee and that I be given an opportunity to represent these views in person at an upcoming Executive Committee Meeting.

Sincerely and very respectfully,

CDR Bryan McGrath, USN  
Member, SNA Board of Directors ('10)"

| It is important that we review all comments from any member of the association and that respond after review.

**Deleted:** Will make sure that all ExCom members receive an electronic copy of this email.

Membership Committee has been looking at a number of issues recently. The committee has met a number of times and consists of active duty and retired members - both officer and enlisted. There are 2 issues the committee wants to highlight. We have put together two online surveys to get some feedback from our membership. Surveys will be distributed to our active

duty members and will be on a non-attribution policy. We would then have an offsite in Hampton Roads to look at the results and where our focus should be. This is scheduled for mid-April and the results of this meeting will be provided at the next ExCom. The other survey is a JO survey to go to those members who have received a complimentary 3 year membership. The first group that were awarded are at the mid-point of this membership and we want to review the results from this around Mid-May and then present to ExCom. The survey will be distributed to ExCom for review. It is hoped that if we do this we are committed to reviewing all responses positive and negative and looking at all suggestions. Even though the GI Bill covers the cost of the education there are still some expenses like books, fees, etc that are not covered by this. This might be a good item that we can cover and might attract more enlisted members. The message should be funneled down from the leadership and should come from our Force Master Chiefs. One way might be to create a scholarship to fund needs. Key to get sailors to join is to get Chiefs to buy in. Perhaps if SNA hosted a luncheon between the Force Master Chiefs and SNA to discuss issues. We still hear from JOs 'What's in it for me' We have had some great SNA events in Norfolk but haven't really pushed SNA membership per se. Need to ensure we don't put undue pressure on people to join and cross ethics guidelines.

One issue at the Board Meeting was more enlisted articles. The cover story for the next SITREP will feature the MCPON and we are looking at having more enlisted centric articles. We do support a number of other initiatives both in Midshipman support and professional development.

#### **PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT**

We are moving ahead with an informal look at publications and website. The Washington Chapter is conducting a fund raising effort for personal DVD players for the wounded soldier and sailors at Walter Reed.

The OA Forum was partly designed to put SNA as a thought leader and it is hoped that if this doesn't move forward that we continue to do something.

#### **SPECIAL PROJECT**

We have updated the Hall of Fame videos in Newport and Navy Memorial and will be sending pictures shortly. We are also working on a proposal to go to Great Lakes sometime this year.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Next meeting date 25 April.

With no other business adjourned at 6:45 pm.