



## Coast Guard Flag Voice 50

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Participating in professional associations is one of the important keys to a successful career in any organization and is especially true in the Coast Guard. Many fine professional organizations concentrate on specific disciplines or areas of interest. Our participation in these associations helps us better understand and meet the challenges facing our Service and nation.

In this Flag Voice, I will discuss three especially relevant sea services/military professional associations: the Women Officers' Professional Association (WOPA), National Naval Officers' Association (NNOA), and Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO).

The Women Officers' Professional Association (WOPA) is an independent association supporting its members' professional development and serves as a forum of information about the sea services (Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard). The Association's web site is <http://www.wopa.org/>

The National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) is an independent association of officers and enlisted sea services members, both active and reserve, dedicated to helping its members succeed in the naval services through professional education. Its secondary mission is to educate the public about the benefits of a career in the sea services. The current president is CAPT Charles Williams, USCG, PACAREA (pt). The Association's web site is <http://nnoa-national.org/home.htm>.

The Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO) is an independent association of active and reserve officers and enlisted Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy members dedicated to increasing Hispanic Americans' representation in the military sea services. The Association's web site is <http://www.erols.com/anso>.

Each organization strives to help its members succeed in their respective service. While each originally was formed and has as its main focus helping minority populations succeed (women, African-Americans, and Hispanics respectively), each is open to all and all three are truly exceptional career and professional development opportunities, both through local chapter activities and annual conferences and symposiums. The annual conferences, extensively supported by those of us in the human resources business, attract top-level service leaders for remarks and frank discussions with attendees. The annual conferences provide discussions on overall service direction as well as superb workshops on career and professional development. NNOA and ANSO serve as forums to bring critical personnel issues to the services' top leadership and develop important issue papers for the service chiefs. Many of the issues raised have been instrumental in improving the workplace environment for all Team CG. ADM Loy

highly values these perspectives.

Yet the most important benefit is what you personally receive - better information by which to make career and professional decisions. At each conference attended, I was overwhelmed by the great information presented and viewpoints exchanged - truly unique experiences. My only misgiving was the entire officer corps was not there to benefit. And these opportunities are not only for junior officers or the respective minority. First, each contribute to our "lifelong learning." Second, it's just as important for those of us in senior leadership positions, such as COs and XOs, to hear diverse perspectives and contribute to healthy dialogue. The more senior officers who participate, the more meaningful the dialogue, especially that occurring "outside" the program - robust mentoring opportunities. In fact, without senior majority participation, these conferences will not be nearly as effective as they could be.

I encourage all to look seriously at these opportunities. Some are rapidly approaching:

The WOPA Professional Development Symposium, "Human Dimension of Change," is 5-6 August 1999; the registration deadline is 23 July 1999. For registration materials, refer to: The symposium will take place at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, National Naval Medical Center campus, Bethesda, MD. The featured guest speaker, Dr. Judith Youngman, Professor of Political Science at the Coast Guard Academy, will speak on "Women in the 21st Century Military: Changes, Challenges and Champions." Other featured speakers include RADM Stillman, Assistant Commandant for Governmental and Public Affairs; CAPT Schneeweis, Director, CG Recruiting Command; CAPT Brice-O'Hara, Commanding Officer, CG Training Center Cape May; and Mr. McGarra, Systems Security Officer, G-SII. Not for women only, this symposium offers a variety of topics suitable for all military officers, enlisted personnel, Federal Government employees, and interested guests. The point of contact is ENS Lynda LeCrone, G-WTL-2, 202-267-2532.

NNOA will hold its 27th Annual National Training Conference, "NNOA and Sea Services Recruiting: Shaping the New Millennium," from 28 to 30 July 1999 at the Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia. Scheduled speakers include ADM Loy, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. There will be a session with the Commandant. RADM Olsen, Director of Personnel Management, will participate on a Flag Officer Panel, "Recruiting for the New Millennium," and I will participate in the panel, "Role of the Junior Officer in the New Millennium-Recruitment, Development and Retention." Sessions will address Coast Guard career management (promotions, assignments, evaluations), leadership and mentoring programs, recruiting initiatives and Workforce 2015, and diversity management (the next Workforce Cultural Audit, Minority Women Study, Diversity Summit update, and a captains' panel discussion on leading diversity management). Refer to: <http://nnoa-national.org/home.htm>. ANSO concluded its 17th Annual Conference on 9 April 1999 in San Diego. During the week-long conference, Navy and Marine Corps Hispanic Flag Officers and Rear Admiral Thad Allen, USCG, then Director of Resources, Coast Guard Headquarters, addressed participants. Outgoing President CDR Adolfo Ramirez, USCG, was extremely pleased with the large turnout of younger members. Incoming president LCOL Junior Ortiz, USMC, wants to build on ANSO's past successes and increase the organization's visibility and effectiveness. These are exceptional

opportunities: don't miss out-sign up now!

Regards, FL Ames

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