



Squadron Annual General Meeting - April 19th, 2010

Executive Officer's Report

This past Saturday, I had the pleasure to represent the Guelph Squadron at the Niagara District Annual General Meeting.

At this meeting, the Guelph Power and Sail Squadron was presented with the Casa Blanca Award. The what? The Casa Blanca Award is one of several awards that has been set up by District to recognize those Squadrons within the District, that have had successes in specific areas. The Casa Blanca Award is also known as the Membership Loyalty Award and is awarded to the District Squadron that has shown the highest membership renewal numbers in the past year. I must admit, I was quite proud to accept this award on behalf of the Guelph Squadron, knowing in the back of my mind, that it is formal recognition for the hard work of our Squadron volunteers.

It is no secret that squadrons across the country are having some difficulty recruiting new students and in turn new members. Some squadrons have had to cancel their training programs, simply because they were unable to recruit new students. Without a training program, our source of new members is clearly limited. There is little doubt that a squadron without a training program is a Squadron at risk. To date we have been fortunate, our training numbers and consequently, our membership renewal numbers are significant indicators of our success as a Squadron.

A significant contributing factor to that success is, of course, the efforts of our volunteers. Coincidentally, April 18th through April 24th is National Volunteer week. Basically, for a Squadron to exist, some members are required. And, for a Squadron to be successful, some members are required to volunteer. The volunteers are our members, those of you, who find the time and/or sometimes make the time, to help with the delivery of our training program. You are the members who plan and make our social events happen. You are the members who serve as officers of the Squadron and work in areas like Communications, Public Relations and Membership. You are the members who serve on the Squadron Executive Committee. Bottom line, you are the reasons why we continue to be successful as a Squadron.



I have recently heard concerns expressed about the practise of "Bridge recycling". This recycling refers to the practice of filling Squadron Officer positions with the same people year after year. Interestingly, when you talk with those recycled people, they are the first to agree that it would be nice, if we had a pool of people to select from. Unfortunately, the pool is more like a puddle. I believe that we would all agree that recycling is not the most healthy way forward, but in our case, the status quo is, sometimes the only option and consequently, the best option, if we want to continue as a squadron.

The reality is that we do not have a large pool of candidates. So, what if, people were not willing to recycle themselves? I am sure that you can guess the answer to that question. Volunteers, recycled if required, are the glue that holds this Squadron together. People recycling is not an integral part of plan "A", but it might very well be the most important piece of plan "B". Recycling continues to ensure that the Squadron stays afloat. No pun intended.

When looking down the road, I can't help but wonder what the Guelph Squadron will look like in, let's say, in 10 years. I believe that, we have to stop and look down the road more often in 2010/2011. I believe that, people recycling is an effective bridge gap solution in the short term, but it is clearly not the long term solution. Obviously, the recycling of people has it's limitations and drawbacks and will eventually catch up with us, unless we start planning for the future. The most fundamental piece of that plan will be determined by the members, the people, the volunteers. We need to turn the puddle into a pool. For example, we need to train new instructors for our advanced courses, we need to qualify new recognized examiners for maritime radio, new instructors, we need new proctors, we need new people. This will not mean that we will stop recycling our veteran volunteers. On the contrary, we still need their experience, their knowledge and their advice. The knowledge and experience of our veteran volunteers will remain a significant resource, which should be fully utilized and I would suggest recycled again. This time, in a slightly different role, by mentoring the new Instructors, by assisting the new volunteers with training, Communications, Public Relations and Membership, by ensuring a smooth transition/change of watch.

The Guelph Power and Sail Squadron is about boating, it is about sharing boating knowledge, sharing boating experience, sharing boating stories, it is about training, it is about safety, it is about boaters, it is about people.



Now, we have big jobs and we have little jobs. You can get, as involved as much you might want to, or have time to, but I would suggest that you consider getting involved, to one degree or another, with your own success story.

At this time, in all fairness, I should point out, that there are some known side effects of becoming a volunteer. For example, while working with the phone committee, there is a slight risk of being scolded for interrupting some important family activity, while working in Public Relations, you may notice a slight increase in you vocabulary. As a proctor, there is always a chance that you could be approached to do some instruction. As an instructor, you may notice an slight increase in your boating knowledge. In planning social events, there is a slight chance of you becoming a social animal, while the Squadron Training Officer, may notice a decline in the time available for him or her to go boating. All volunteers may experience feelings of satisfaction, pride, enjoyment, fun and other unexplained sensations.

I have no doubt that the ongoing success of the Guelph Power and Sail Squadron is about people.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Young