

Commander's Message
Adapted from Comments at the Change of Watch
10 November 2012

As we move into a new year at CSPA, let me share with you some of my basic philosophies of life and leadership.

Philosophical tidbit #1: Nothing is more important than membership. Without membership, there is no need for any other service we provide. Here's my philosophy about membership—If you build it, they will come. We need to focus on planning activities that are valuable and carrying out those plans to the best of our ability. If you want your organization to thrive, you do not wait on people to join so you can build a program. You build a quality program with the members you have no matter how few, then invite others to join you.

Philosophical tidbit #2: I believe in the innate goodness of people. They want the world to be a better place and want to feel like the things they do make a difference. I would like to see us doing more service that is not self-serving—participating in projects like the Beach Sweep or cCopperhead35@centurylink.net cooperative charting. If people see you giving of yourselves, they will give of themselves to you.

Philosophical tidbit #3: I believe in being a part of the bigger whole. I believe that we should fully support our district and our national organizations. Will we always agree with the policies they set forth? NO. But remember they are people just like us. They have limited time, limited resources, and they work within the same kinds of constraints that we do. If you want to see systemic change within an organization, the best way to ensure that it never happens is to divorce yourself from the situation. The most effective way to ensure that change comes about is to volunteer to lead.

Philosophical tidbit #4: I believe that we need to do more to nurture the next generation of boaters. While I love our old members, if we want to see real growth, we must make ourselves more attractive to younger people. Any organization that says its main aim is education and does not make children a primary target is just kidding. We need to proactively create opportunities to interact with young people.

In Ed's speech when he took over as district commander, he issued a challenge. And you know I am a native Southerner, and we do not turn down challenges. He asked squadron commanders to increase membership by 2%, to increase course participation by 5%. I in turn offer a challenge to you—I ask you to participate in one more squadron activity than you did last year. If you attended 4 membership meetings last year, shoot for five this year. If you did not take a course last year, take one this year. If you attended two cruises last year, try for three this year. If each member of this squadron did just one extra thing, imagine how much of a difference that would make in overall participation.

Finally, I believe that the difference between awesome and ordinary is a hair's width, sometimes just one person's efforts. My challenge to you—be THAT person.

Again I thank you, and I look forward to a great future.