



Hello All,

I am honored to be the President of the NNOA, Pensacola Chapter. During my 30 years in the Navy I have been an NNOA member at various chapters on the East Coast, and for the past year, I have been an active member of the Pensacola Chapter. The level of enthusiasm, dedication, and willingness to take action that has been demonstrated by local chapter members

has made this a successful team with a genuine focus on the mission and goals of the NNOA. It is therefore a pleasure and an honor to be the President and a member of the executive leadership team that will chart the course for future accomplishments.

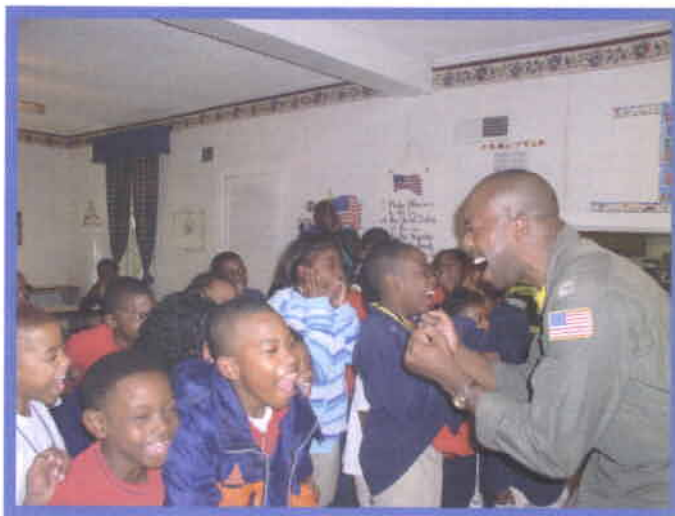
I must admit that being president is entirely different than being a member. The sheer energy that goes into planning Chapter events and being a part of the monthly community outreach activities is both exhausting and refreshing. Right now all I can is, "Wow!"

Let me share my vision of the Chapter with you. Even with all that we do and have done, we can do more... in other areas. Although I am committed to maintaining our same level of dedication to the community, I would like to see us strive to enhance our internal mentoring of our junior officers. We have a definite need for growth and development in this area. Also, I would like to place increased emphasis on developing community relationship with high schools, NROTC Programs, and colleges. These are the primary sources of new officer accessions, therefore, our replacements are waiting to be recruited.

NNOA is committed to the professional growth and development of its members. Preparations for promotions and the ultimate assignment of command require broad-based planning in all aspects of career development. NNOA can help. NOW is the time to start learning before critical mistakes occur.

During future professional development sessions, a variety of topics will be presented. I would like to encourage all members to submit topics of interest for desired training. Remember, "Iron sharpens iron". We are dedicated to achieving a diversified workforce. The goal of NNOA is to provide continuous training and information to enhance members' opportunities for success, so stay tuned-in and connected.

I encourage you all to recruit new members to the NNOA Pensacola Chapter and make every effort to attend the monthly Professional Development sessions. It is by the grace of God that we have an organization such as this one that is openly sanctioned by the military for its said purposes. Now, let's get together and commit to moving ahead with our goals and ambitions.... Cmdr. Ed Cunningham



GO NAVY! (Above): Lt. Samuel leads these kids in a resounding chant. Sounds like they want to join!

NNOA ask Kids Some Elementary Questions

Story and photos by Lt. Karen Eifert

NNOA members recently went out to motivate students at Saint Anne's a Catholic School. Member presence was specifically requested by teacher Kelly Mackie, who had heard about the group's mentoring efforts in the local community.

As part of an event organized by Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin, NNOA members showed up one Friday afternoon geared toward making a difference in the minds of the children.

"What do all of you do in the Navy?" One child asked Ragin. "I'm a pilot so I fly planes." "Really?" asked the skeptical child. "When's the last time you flew?" A room full of eyes widened when Ragin answered, "about fifteen minutes ago."

Assisting Ragin in answering the children's myriad questions was NNOA Pensacola Chapter Vice President Cmdr. Constance Evans, Cmdr. Ava Abney, Cmdr. Craig Abernathy (Ret.), Lt. Xavier Samuels and Ensign Tyrone Gabriel.



(Above): Cmdr. Craig Abernathy (Ret.) poses with an enthusiastic child.

NNOA members took turns explaining to the children the jobs they performed in the Navy. Most of the children knew exactly what Abney's job entailed.

"I'm a nurse," said Abney. Does anyone know what a nurse does? Nearly one hundred hands flew up around the room. Without waiting to be called on they all answered, "You help people!"

Abney went on to explain that if any of the children wanted to follow in her footsteps it would be best to start now. "Decisions you make today can affect the rest of your life" she pointed out.

Of the Public Affairs Officer they asked, "Have you ever met Michael Jackson?" The question was met with an unexpected, "Yes!" Of the other pilots they asked, "Do you ever crash?" They were met with an honest, "Sometimes, but we try to focus on safety."

But the most important questions to be asked that day came from the officers themselves. They asked the kids if they understood why they made the point to get out there and visit them that day. The children didn't seem to know.



THIS KEEPS US SAFE (Above): Ensign Tyrone Gabriel fits 9-year-old Warren Jones with a pilot helmet.

"It's because we want you to be successful in life," said Gabriel. Do you know what it takes to be successful in life?" he asked. They answered without missing a beat. Some said it was important to stay in school while others made the distinction of *graduating* from school.

Later in the program the kids watched a Naval Flight Officer video, tried on a pilot helmet and listened to Cmdr. Craig Abernathy (Ret.) tell how much fun could be had at the Space Camp held annually at Naval Air Station Pensacola.

In closing, the NNOA officers rephrased a question they asked the children earlier. They asked the children, "What do all of us have in common?" They gave the kids several hints, "It's not our uniforms and it's not that we all defend our country in different ways," they said.

"The answer is we all came here today for the same reason," said Gabriel. "We care about you and want to inspire you to do something positive with your lives."

At the end of the presentation, these children all gave the officers hugs before they left. In roughly one hour's time they truly made an impact upon these children!



Above: Capt. Kelvin Sherman talks to kids at the Boys and Girls Club about how to achieve their future goals.

Boys and Girls are Mentored at the Club

Story and photos by Lt. Karen Eifert

Several pilots stationed on Naval Air Station Pensacola, who are also members of the Pensacola Chapter National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), recently visited the children at the Boys and Girls Club of Escambia County in an effort to help them determine their future goals in life.

Understanding that many of the children who attend Boys and Girls Clubs tend to live on the poverty side of urban America where gangs, drugs and crime thrive, NNOA members Capt. Chaunce Mitchell, Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin, Lt. Xavier Samuels, Capt. Kelvin Sherman (USMC) and Ensign Tyrone Gabriel wanted to go out to show their support.

At the request of Club Director Hattie McCorvey, they arrived at the clubhouse located on "H" Street promptly at 3:30 p.m.; the idea was to show the children they are important enough to visit *and* let them know the officers respect "homework time" enough not to cut into that time frame.



Above: Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin rewards a child for knowing the name of the first black female aviator.

"It's never too soon to start thinking about what you want to do in life," said Mitchell. Often times all we do is ask children what they want to be when they grow up. That's not enough; we need to walk them through the process so they realize that, no matter what they choose, success in that area is going to involve hard work."

The children were certainly ready for the question. "I want to be a lawyer," said one and, "I want to be a movie star," said another. Ensign Tyrone Gabriel pointed out that, even though each of the children's aspirations were worthy ones, each involved the ability to read and write *well*.

"Even if you're going to be a movie star you're still going to need to do well in school," said Gabriel.



Left: This Boys and Girls Club member proudly holds a VT-86 patch she received during a visit from NNOA Pensacola Chapter members.

At hearing this remark, the children seemed to pay closer attention to what the pilots had to say. One young boy asked, "If I want to be a lawyer, can I still play baseball?" "Absolutely," said an ecstatic Sherman. There's no reason why you can't study and have fun too."

The children seemed surprised when Sherman found no shame in admitting he didn't find becoming a pilot easy. He said he studied especially hard in school to get where he is today. "And I'm *still* learning," he said.

The officers talked to and entertained questions from the children about their future goals for nearly forty-five minutes, careful not to use confusing Navy and aviator terminology. They were also careful to answer every question the kids asked, even those preceded by, "I know this might seem stupid but..."

"It's better to ask a question you don't know the answer to and risk *looking* stupid than to not ask the question and really *be* stupid," said Mitchell.

Because research has shown that Boys and Girls Clubs really do make a significant difference in the lives of children, giving "at-risk" children hope, NNOA is proud to be actively involved with the Boys and Girls Club of Escambia County.

NNOA delivers holiday baskets to the needy

By Lt. Karen Eifert

During the holiday season NNOA members got together in a board meeting and decided they wanted to do something extra special for members of the local community; they decided to give away holiday baskets to the needy. After careful consideration of who

could best benefit from the donation, they decided it would be best if the gifts went to church communities they had already visited throughout the year. In this manner, they could simultaneously impact the church community and further solidify ties they made throughout the year.

NNOA wanted to do more than just make a charitable donation; its members wanted to remind the churches that they were also looking to recruit future naval officers by way of their ROTC scholarships. At every quarterly church visit members are sure to remind parishioners there are teens approaching their high school graduation sitting in that very audience.



A SMALL FEAST! (Above): Local Pensacolan John Cocoris is happy to receive an NNOA holiday basket. (Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert)



Above: Lt. Cmdr. Daryl Pierce poses with a basket recipient from First Baptist Church. (Photo courtesy of Warrington First Baptist Church.)

The churches visited by NNOA during the 2003 year were hosted by Cmdr. Ava Abney, Lt. Cmdr. Esan Simon, Capt. Chaunce Mitchell, and Lt. Carl Barnes. These members approached their pastors with NNOA's offer and then stepped back, allowing those pastors to be the ones who ultimately decided who was most in need of a holiday basket that year. No expense was spared for making sure these baskets came with all the trimmings for a fine holiday meal.

There was a ham, three vegetables, cider, pound cake, hot cocoa, marshmallows, chocolate candy, fresh fruit and a candle.

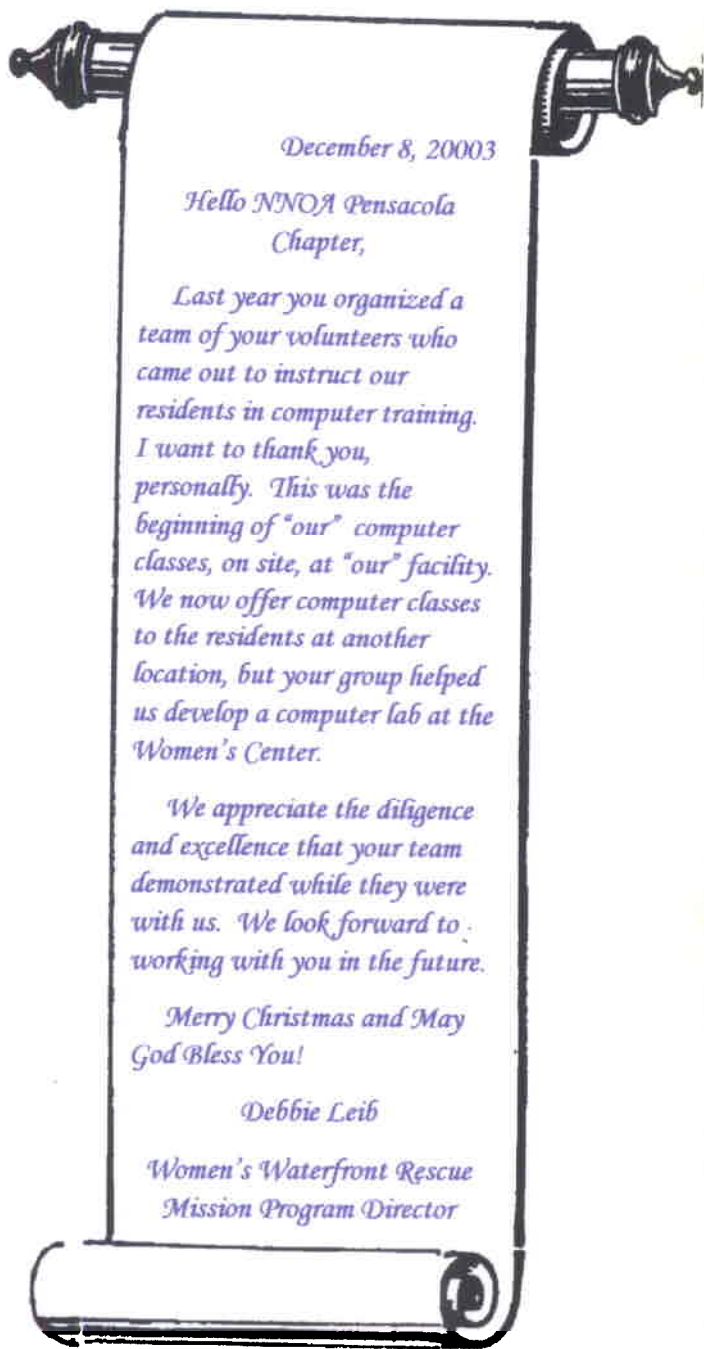
"Thank you," said John Cocoris, a local resident who said he was happy to be on the receiving end of one of these baskets. "Thank you for thinking of me."

When all was said and done, five families benefited from the generosity of the NNOA Pensacola Chapter.

When asked if the Chapter would participate in an event like this one again, Chapter President Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham said, "We're going to try because we feel it's important to help people and let them know there are other people in the world who don't mind helping them out when the chips are down."

The NNOA members all agree they felt it their responsibility to give to the community like this. They also understand the impact they have every time they participate in a charitable act like this while in uniform. "We don't do it for the thank you's we receive, said Chapter Vice President Cmdr. Constance Evans. "We do it because it's the right thing to do. I'd rather spend the time I have on this earth doing things like this."

NNOA Letter of Appreciation!



NNOA Letter of Appreciation!



Above: Lt. Xavier Samuels goes the extra mile when he helps serve food to the homeless at the Waterfront Rescue Mission Thanksgiving Day.



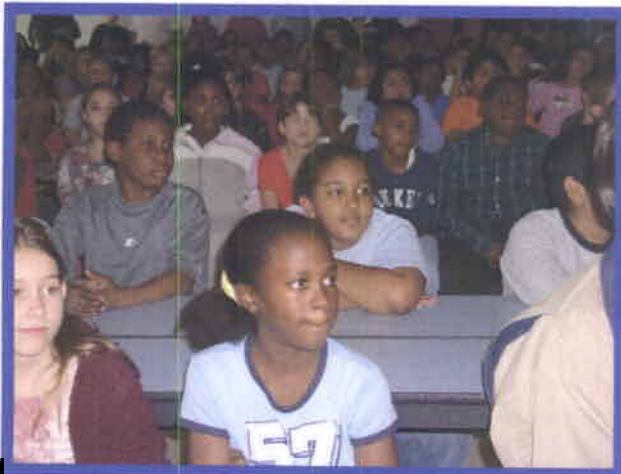
Above: Capt. A.J. Gallardo and Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham hand out certificates at the Black History Month Essay/Poster Contest held at Navy Point Elementary School. (Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert)

NASC and NNOA Join for Forces for BHM By Ensign Nathan Officer

Naval Aviation Schools Command (NASC) recently joined forces with the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) in a Black History Month (BHM) essay and poster contest at Navy Point Elementary, (NPE) February 20.

In an event designed to increase social awareness in the students *and* present writing as an enjoyable activity, NPE students were asked to respond to the 2004 BHM theme, "A Day On, not a Day Off: 'What can *you* do to Make the World a Better Place?'" The students answered with 51 essays and posters, which were then judged by members of the NASC and NNOA staffs.

The results of the contest were announced during an assembly attended by the entire student body. Nearly 500 excited children packed the cafeteria, some sitting on the floor, others standing along the walls to get a good view. NNOA President Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham took the floor first.



Above: Students listen attentively as Capt. A.J. Gallardo and Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham explain the purpose of their visit that day. (Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert)

"Everyone who participated in this contest was a winner," Cunningham said. "Choosing from the essays and posters was extremely difficult, so I hope you will join me in a extending a round of applause for our winners."

The first round of names recognized each student who participated in the contest; each was awarded a Certificate of Participation. The second round of students were the actual contest winners, and those students received Certificates of Excellence. The recipients were Kodey Jackson (first grade), Alivia Winslow (third grade), Tina Phan (fourth grade), Jerrod Pettus (fifth grade) and Sean Seibert (fifth grade).



Above: Capt. A.J. Gallardo and Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham hand out a certificate to this shy participant at the Black History Month Essay/Poster Contest held at Navy Point Elementary School. (Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert)

Fifth grade winners Pettus and Seibert both read their essays during the assembly, which led to many of the teachers commenting on their ability to speak so easily in front of such a large audience.

The teachers also marveled at the children's aspirations. "I can't wait until Jerrod runs for president," said NPE Principal Mrs. Patsy Goolsby.

In addition to the certificates signed by both Gallardo and Cunningham, the five contest winners also received \$25 Walmart gift cards provided by the NNOA Pensacola Chapter.

Many proud parents and grandparents, impressed with the intent of the contest and the recognition their children were receiving, visited NPE that afternoon just to hear their children's names as they were read.

But the person most impressed was perhaps Gallardo himself, who shook every single child's hand as he handed out the certificates. He said, "I was happy to be a part of this event, and it was refreshing knowing that the students of today are definitely thinking of ways they can improve the world tomorrow. I think that speaks well of our nation's future in general."



NNOA Supports Boys and Girls Clubs Ball
By Maj. Gen. Al Gilley

I am extremely impressed with the members of the National Naval Officers Association whom I met at the Boys and Girls Club Ball last month. It was a pleasure to share a table with such enthusiastic young officers. I learned a lot about your chapter of NNOA from my conversations with them throughout the night and accept their invitation to attend one of your future chapter meetings.

You can be proud of the reputation that your chapter has in the Boys and Girls Club hierarchy. The Club's Board of Directors considers your chapter a primary contributor and recognized it at the ball as a Special Organization that "goes above and beyond" in the community, including visiting community schools and exposing students to the opportunities in the Navy.



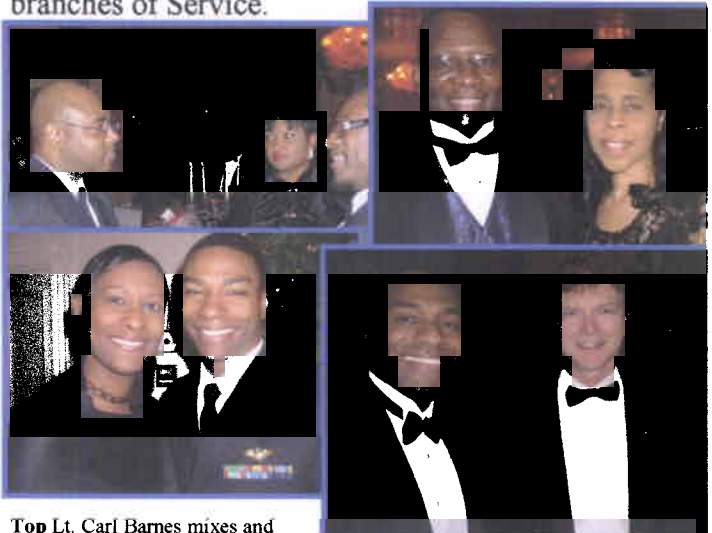
Top: Members of the NNOA Pensacola Chapter present a check for \$500 at the Boys and Girls Club Ball. **Middle:** Service members in attendance at the ball pose. (Photo courtesy of Boys and Girls Club)

The Ball was not only informative but also fun. During the more serious moments, Lt. Karen Eifert accepted a lovely vase of red roses from the Boys and Girls' Club as a token of its appreciation of the support generously given by your chapter.

Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin gave an eloquent speech on your chapter events and activities of the past year after presenting a charitable donation check of \$500. I commend you on a year of making a difference.

On the lighter side, we all enjoyed a delightful prime rib and shrimp dinner and tried our skills at a few games. My putting won me a few golf balls but the only big winner from our table was Lt. Cmdr. Ragin who won a bottle of Italian wine.

I will speak to the leaders of your chapter to discuss the possibility of becoming one of your newest members. However, whether or not I join NNOA, I extend an offer to become a mentor and leadership lecturer for your chapter. I believe that my 38 years in Army leadership positions overcome any cultural differences between our branches of Service.



Top Lt. Carl Barnes mixes and mingles with guests at the Boys and Girls Club Charity Ball
Bottom: Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin and wife Laura smile for the camera. Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert

Top: Maj. Gen. Al Gilley (Ret.) and Wife Ruthie at the Boys and Girls Club Banquet (Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert)
Bottom: Col. (Ret.) William Barrett Jr. and Lt. Col. (Ret.) George Wilson enjoy themselves at the Boys and Girls Club Charity Ball (Photos by Lt. Karen Eifert)

I encourage you to continue to work with the youth in Pensacola. Your efforts strike a cord in my heart, as I am also committed to giving back to the community by mentoring minority male teens through a new non-profit organization called STUDENTS TAKING RESPONSIBILITY IN DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE (STRIDE). In a future article I hope to tell you more about this noble organization and why I chose to focus my efforts in my recent retirement to making it a success. Keep up the good work NNOA; you are true heroes in our community.



Above: NNOA members ride in MLK parade aboard a float donated by the Human Resources Dept. onboard Naval Air Station Pensacola.

NNOA Does it Again at the MLK Parade

Story and photos by Lt. Karen Eifert

True. It was very cold. And yes, there was something of a two-hour wait *in* the cold before the parade began. But that wasn't enough to keep the NNOA Pensacola Chapter members who volunteered to ride the annual float from looking good.

Always a big hit at the annual MLK parade held in Downtown Pensacola, this year was not any different. The members were armed with sour balls, blow poops and lots of big smiles.

Riding on a float loaned to them from the Human Resources Department of Naval Air Station Pensacola, these sharp, squared-away officers enticed the crowds.

This year's NNOA participants were Commodore Chaunce Mitchell, Cmdr. Constance Evans, Lt. Cmdr. Wardell Fuller, Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin, Lt. Carl Barnes and Ens. Haligangi. This year NNOA members were also joined on the float by members of the Army and Air Force.

This willing group of officers say they are committed to participating in this annual, positive ritual because it lets people in the community see first-hand the strides the Navy is making in recruiting and retaining quality officers.



Above: Chapter Vice President Constance Evans throws candy to the crowds at the MLK parade.

Still to come:

Join us in planning for the upcoming events. March is Women's History Month. April is Child Awareness Month and May is Physical Fitness Month. Commit yourself to becoming more involved!

Congratulations to: Instructor Navigator of the Year, Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin of VT-86 and Newly-pinned Lt. Cdr. Esan Simon and Daryl Pierce.

Professional Development Briefing: March briefing will be conducted by Capt. Chaunce Mitchell. All others are TBA.

Potluck Gatherings: Homes currently under consideration are Lt. Carl Barnes, Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham and Lt. Karen Eifert.

Quarterly Church Visits: Please sign up so that we can continue spreading the word about ROTC scholarships and make our presence known in the community.

National Conference: This year the NNOA National Conference will be held in Millington, Tenn. and will be held the first week of August. It is never too early to start securing travel funds from your parent commands. Stand by to consult the NAVADMIN message for more details once it is released.

Quarterly Quote: "My grandfather once told me that there were two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group; there was much less competition." *Indira Gandhi*

Board meetings are held the second Friday of every month at 1500 in the Officers Club loft. General meetings follow immediately afterwards at 1530. Bring a friend and we'll see you there!

Pensacola Chapter Board members:

- President:** Cmdr. Edwin Cunningham
- Vice Pres.:** Cmdr. Constance Evans
- Historian:** Lt. Cmdr. Andre Ragin
- Treasurer:** Lt. Cmdr. Esan Simon
- Chaplain:** Lt. Carl Barnes
- Membership:** Lt. Xavier Samuels
- PAO:** Lt. Karen Eifert
- Secretary:** Lt. Corliss Kinard