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President's Message

Last month, I observed that the operative word for this election year has been “change.” America has now voted to entrust a new generation of leadership with the Presidency. We face a number of crises and challenges that will test the abilities of a young and charismatic leader who will also serve as our Commander-in-Chief.

Our Association also faces challenges. Times change, and failure to adapt to that change leaves the unprepared wondering, “Who moved my cheese?” Our biggest challenges consist of relevance, recruiting, and revenue. To remain relevant, we must not only keep up with changes in legislation and Navy policies, but also get ahead of the power curve, providing thought leadership and a voice of wisdom that earns both trust and respect. Our recruiting numbers have dropped over time as we struggle with identifying the venue and the message that reaches a new generation of Sailors, while identifying services that make a difference in young careers. The downturn in the stock market has impacted nearly everyone, including our Association. Although our investment policy ensures that we never invest in speculative or risky equities, even the safest securities have come under assault. We are fiscally sound, but I felt a lot better about our bottom line a year ago.

These factors reinforce each other. Without relevancy, we will be unable to recruit effectively. Without new members and sources of revenue, we will spend our resources until ultimately we “eat the horse we’re riding.” If we can’t maintain a positive fiscal glide slope, we will lack the resources to recruit and retain members. And so on.

I have appointed CAPT Lance Mauro, your National Executive Vice President, to lead a strategic Transition Committee consisting of a dozen members from across the nation, officer and enlisted, drilling and retired. They will look at ways we can renew and revitalize our Association so that we forge the foundation for long-term vitality. We cannot afford the luxury of standing still. We must change or we will fade away.

If the message of change concerns you, don’t be surprised. I would venture that most readers over the age of 40 are reading this in the printed magazine, and not on-line. As we grow older, we tend to become set in our ways; change becomes less welcome and a thing to be feared. We long for “the good old days” and retreat into structures that are comfortable and familiar. This works well in a protected environment, where one’s safety and future are assured by others. It is exceedingly dangerous in a competitive or hostile world.

Change, however, is not without its own risks. As Nicolo Machiavelli warned in *The Prince*: “It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.”

I encourage you to align with the “new order of things,” even if you are as yet uncertain of our direction. We are establishing clearly defined goals, measurable results, and accountability for progress. This is what differentiates change from mere activity. With your support, we will succeed and build a lasting future of which we all can be proud.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Mark Hardy".

G. Mark Hardy
National President

Editor's Note: To learn more about your Association President, see <http://www.navy-reserve.org/president.pdf>.

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