



GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER

FALL/WINTER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2014



NNOA Houston Plays Host to Regional Leadership Symposium



Panel discussion (From left): LT Ronney Wright, CDR (sel) Zeita Merchant, LCDR Valerie Boyd and CPO Keith Naker
-Courtesy of MSU Texas City

On November 22nd NNOA Houston co-hosted a Regional Leadership Symposium which drew more than 100 uniformed personnel in partnership with the Association of Naval Services Officers. The event was kicked off by CAPT Brian Penoyer, USCG, Sector Commander Houston-Galveston who highlighted the missions and objectives unique to NNOA and specifically addressed the prevalent misnomer that membership was available exclusively to minority officers. To this end, he challenged each junior officer in attendance to actively pursue membership within their local chapters with the objective of fostering a shared benefit of professional development, mentorship and community involvement.

The event also featured numerous senior officers whom courageously divulged their experiences as minorities in the Armed Forces. In sharing their personalized accounts, audience members were left with a greater sense of appreciation and a re-affirmed focus towards achieving uncommon success within their respective areas of influence.

Lastly, the symposium concluded with a panel discussion surrounding the topic of work life balance. Through use of a distinguished panel of active, retired and civilian personnel, attendees benefited from an in depth exploration into the distinct challenges associated with achieving true success between personal and professional goals. Accordingly, NNOA Houston is very appreciative of the efforts put forth by a host of supporters, particular thanks is extended to U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Texas City for their gracious hospitality.

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Upcoming Events

- Buffalo Soldier Gala
28 February
- Galveston Food Bank
29 March
- Scholarship Fundraiser
April-TBD
- National Conference
9-11 July

President's Corner

We have made great strides this year! We have mentored youth, been visible in the community, trained area officers and awarded scholarships to deserving students. Thank you! Your tremendous effort has made this possible. Looking forward to our Spring Event Calendar.

Very Respectfully,
LT Ronney Wright



NNOA Houston Recognized by the Galveston County Food Bank

Recently the Galveston County Food Bank extended formal appreciation for the contributions and service dedicated to Client Choice Food Mart Saturday's. NNOA Houston is credited with sorting over 6,000 pounds of food that yielded over 5,000 meals for 1,300 families in Galveston County. Chapter members are encouraged to continue supporting the Galveston Food Bank, namely with the objective of continuing the chapter sponsored initiative called *Client Choice Saturdays*, which allows the food bank to open its doors every fifth Saturday for needy families. Many thanks are extended to chapter members that have sacrificed their Saturday's for the benefit of those less fortunate within our local community. Your hard work is most heartily appreciated!

If you're interested in more information regarding future volunteer opportunities please contact LTJG Michelle Washington at 409-978-2739.

Holiday Nursing Home Visit

In paying homage to the men and women who have bravely served our country, NNOA Houston recently visited a Veteran's Nursing Home located in Jersey City. Garnering the participation of 25 attendees, chapter members presented gifts, shared sea stories and even took part in a little caroling all in the spirit of ushering in the Holiday Season. Gift bags which included socks, toiletries and other necessities were distributed to nursing home residents. This was certainly the highlight of the event and word quickly spread that NNOA was in town. Next year, we'll be sure to show up with extras. Also in attendance was LCDR Millard Smith, Jr., USN (Ret) who introduced us to his grandchildren and initiated caroling with a solo rendition of Nat King Cole's version of *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*. It was a distinct pleasure meeting his family and thank you for efforts towards coordinating this event. We hope to see you again in 2014!

This is our second time visiting this nursing home and we hope to pursue multiple visits in 2014, particularly for Veteran's Day, Memorial Day and again during the Holiday Season. This is an extremely rewarding opportunity to say thanks to those that have come before us and I highly encourage all chapter members to make time for this worthy cause.



LCDR Millard Smith Jr., USN (Ret)
performing Christmas Carols





Save the Date! New Initiatives Upcoming in 2014

NNOA Houston is poised for a busy 2014. In effort to broaden our footprint and reach a greater number of junior officers within the Greater Houston Area we have set forth a number of new initiatives that will assist in getting the word out about NNOA. Some notable upcoming events include:

2014 Houston Buffalo Soldiers Museum Gala. NNOA has partnered with the museum's executive board in effort to maximize fundraising proceeds. A table has been reserved for chapter members at a discounted price of \$100 a plate (max 6). Dedicated to honoring the JAG Corps, multiple speakers will highlight new initiatives and recent successes achieved nationwide. Entertainment will be provided by the one and only *The Duke of Earl*, who is best known for his musical accomplishments in the 1970's. The event involves a reception on 27 February and a Gala on 28 February. Reservations can be coordinated through LTJG Washington at michelle.d.washington@uscg.mil or 409-978-2739.

2014 Scholarship Fundraiser. Tentatively scheduled for Friday, 11 April, NNOA Houston is currently working with ANSO Houston in coordinating the details towards the 3rd Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament. We are looking for volunteers to assist with concessions, refereeing and other general support functions. If interested please contact LT Ronney Wright @ ronney.c.wright@uscg.mil or (409) 978-2705.

Galveston Foodbank "5th Saturday". Since 2012 NNOA Houston has supported the Galveston County Foodbank. The next scheduled 5th Saturday is 29 March; hope to see everyone there. Questions and/or details can be directed to LTJG Washington @ 409-978-2739.

42nd Annual Conference. This year's conference is scheduled for 9-11 July at Quantico. To promote attendance a new initiative has taken root which provides senior or retired military officers a medium to sponsor a junior officer to assist with travel and miscellaneous cost that may otherwise preclude participation. The process is easy and available those interested can register at www.nnoa.org. Moreover, this year's conference is shaping up to be very beneficial as senior principals from all the uniformed sea services are expected to attend and address NNOA Members. To that end, NNOA Houston hopes to send at least 3 chapter representatives to this year's conference. Members are highly encouraged to take advantage of the new sponsorship program in addition to attending this year's highly anticipated conference!



“MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT”

CDR (SELECT) ZEITA MERCHANT, USCG



CDR (sel) Merchant, USCG is a distinguished member of NNOA who has been a source of inspiration for local junior officers. She has been an outstanding model of consistency and excellence and has played a vital role in establishing a strong foundation from which our Chapter has risen.

In serving U.S. Coast Guard Texas City as the Executive Officer, Commander (sel) Merchant has championed a number of innovative diversity initiatives which has greatly improved inclusiveness and awareness of established affinity groups such as NNOA and ANSO among area military officers.

Most notably, she serves on the Board of Directors in support of Houston’s own Buffalo Soldiers National Museum. Leveraging her vast professional network and influence, she has set in motion plans toward establishing a special exhibit dedicated to the Coast Guard Pea Island Lighthouse Keepers. With the assistance from NNOA Houston, the exhibit is tentatively scheduled to be unveiled during the last weekend of March 2014.

In February 2014, Commander (sel) Merchant was honored at this year’s Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) as a recipient of the Professional Achievement in Government Award for sustained and exceptional public service. Congratulations Commander, well deserved!

Poised to transition to U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters as Special Assistant to the Vice Commandant this summer, we wish her the best of luck in this high-profile position and extend our congratulations in being selected to the rank of Commander during a time of unprecedented low promotion trends. Semper Paratus!

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!!!

We will hold our elections in May 2014. Open positions include President, Vice President, and Webmaster. We are accepting nominations through 15 April 2014. Please make submittals via email to LTJG Washington.

Interested in joining NNOA?

Go to www.nnoa.org, contact us at (901) 275-5531. You can view the 2014 calendar of events at www.nnoa.memberclicks.net/houston.

Executive Board

President	<u>LT Ronney Wright, USCG</u>	Secretary	<u>LTJG Michelle Washington, USCG</u>
Vice President	<u>CAPT John Matthews, USN (Ret)</u>	Webmaster/Historian	<u>LT Urdley Smith, USCG</u>
Treasurer	<u>LCDR Jay Jones, USN</u>	Parliamentarian	<u>CAPT Joseph Willie, USN</u>

2014 Calendar of Events

February 2014

- 8th - Regional Robotics Competition Volunteer Support
- 23rd - General Meeting
- 28th - Houston Buffalo Soldiers Museum Gala
- TBD - Annual Pilots and Professionals in Schools Support

March 2014

- General Meeting
- Advanced Education Opportunities - CDR (sel) Merchant
- 29th - Galveston Food Bank

April 2014

- General Meeting
- 11th Fundraising Event (3-on-3 B-Ball Tourney)

May 2014

- General Meeting
- Financial/Estate Planning - CAPT Willie
- Scholarship Awards Banquet
- Golf Tournament Fundraiser
- 31st - Galveston Food Bank

June 2014

- General Meeting Summer Picnic
- Newsletter (Spring/Summer)

July 2014

- General Meeting
- 42nd Annual Conference, Quantico Marine Corps Base