

The Leadership News

A quarterly newsletter on leadership and diversity in the Coast Guard

Issue 17 Spring 2001

Cutter XO Sets the Bar for Inspirational Leadership Lt. Michael Davanzo, 2001 Witherspoon Award Winner, Receives Rave Reviews from Shipmates

Lt. Michael Davanzo was selected as the seventh annual recipient of the Capt. John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award. Davanzo, executive officer of the CGC Madrona, received the award March 22 from the commandant, Adm. James Loy. After the ceremony, Lt. Davanzo, his wife, Allison, and Carol Witherspoon, wife of the late Capt. John Witherspoon, were guests of honor at the commandant's State of the Coast Guard address. As winner of this award, Davanzo will serve on the Leadership Advisory Council (see related story on page 6).

Following are excerpts from the award nominations for Lt. Davanzo. These were written by members as junior as a seaman apprentice as well as senior enlisted and junior officers.

Inside

Set a Goal – the Sky's the Limit!	3
A Cook's View of Diversity	4
"Houston, we Have a Problem"	4
A Testament to the CG Family	5
Leadership Advisory Council on Target and Tracking	6
New Survey Asks, "Why are you Leaving?"	7
Flag Voices on the Web	7

Development of Junior Personnel

One theme that stood out was the way he helps his people with their professional development:

"Mr. Davanzo's strongest and most genuine leadership attribute is the care for and development of junior personnel. Whether it be a new junior officer, second-class petty officer or non-rate, XO puts all of his energy into their development. In the first meeting I had with Lt. Davanzo, he asked me what my goals were, and he wrote them down on a note card. Now, 18 months later, while submitting my assignment data card to him for review, he pulled out that same note card and compared my goals to my career choices to ensure that I was going to meet them. He keeps a card for every person on the boat to ensure that they meet their goals as well."

"His loyalty and relentless cause to help shipmates is extraordinary. Everyday he is trying to help someone with their problems, goals or life's dreams. For those aboard who



Adm. James Loy, Carol Witherspoon, Allison Davanzo and Lt. Michael Davanzo with Witherspoon award trophy and plaque.

are not Coast Guard-career bound, Mr. Davanzo goes out of his way to re-recruit them to stay in. He constantly gets to these individuals and tells of the benefits of staying in the Coast Guard. It seems everyday he gives them a new reason to remain with this organization."

"I have never seen an individual work so hard for other people in my life. He loves the Coast Guard with all of his heart and is dedicated to its continued success through the

(continued on next page)



(continued from page 1)

development of his subordinates. I came out of the Academy looking to get my afloat tour out of the way and then sit in a land billet until I could get out of the Coast Guard. After working with XO for more than a year and a half, I am now working towards an XO patrol boat tour in hopes of a promising afloat career in the Coast Guard. In this career, I can only hope to inspire and motivate others like Mr. Davanzo does. While only a member of the Coast Guard for a short time, I know that Lt. Davanzo will be one of the most influential leaders and mentors in my life.”

“As a new third class boatswain mate with several seamen under me, I am beginning to see what it takes to be a good leader. Several times a day I find myself think-

“It is the leadership that Lt. Davanzo displays every single day that is something I look forward to being able to do as I move along with my own Coast Guard career.”

ing, ‘What would XO do?’ On several occasions I have gone to his stateroom to ask him for advice. He always has time to help me out. If he doesn’t have an answer for me, he finds one or sends me in the right direction. This is the same relationship he has with the rest of the crew. How he finds the time, energy and

never-ending motivation is amazing to me. It is the leadership that Lt. Davanzo displays every single day that is something I look forward to being able to do as I move along with my own Coast Guard career.”

Incredibly Resourceful

Another theme is the help he provides his people in times of personal difficulties:

“Lt. Davanzo spent countless hours making travel arrangements for members suffering family emergencies. He is incredibly resourceful. On one such occasion, he personally checked every military flight schedule from the Air Force to the Marines to make travel arrangements for a member whose child had a ruptured appendix. Commer-

cial flights were unavailable until the following day and Lt. Davanzo was committed to finding the most expeditious means of travel.”

Proud to be Part of the USCG

Other traits that were frequently mentioned were his integrity, love of Coast Guard, job knowledge and expertise, and motivational abilities:

“Every military or Coast Guard holiday has been remembered by his direction for crew members to read examples of past heroic acts by shipmates and cutters.”

“He has always been able to make good of the worst situations. In times when the crew has been totally down about a certain situation or assignment, Lt. Davanzo has produced, straight from the heart, a motivational speech that left even the captain saying, ‘Wow.’ Out of the 52 people aboard at that moment, all 52 walk past the boat deck and down the ladders feeling proud to be a part of the United States Coast Guard.”

“Having served at the National Aids to Navigation school, he is accepted throughout the Coast Guard as an expert in the field of ATON. He also has vast knowledge and expertise in law enforcement and search and rescue.”

“This award was created for people like Lt. Davanzo, people who do not measure success by their own achievements, but rather by the accomplishments of those around them.”

Members aboard the cutter have constantly asked which unit Davanzo is going to transfer to so they can put the same unit on their assignment data card to continue working under his superior supervision and expertise. Davanzo has received orders to be the commanding officer of the CGC James Rankin, a buoy tender based in Baltimore. ✠

LEADERSHIP ESSAY

Set a Goal – the Sky's the Limit!

by Lt. Paul Murphy, Executive Officer, Northeast Regional Fisheries Training Center, Cape Cod, Mass.

A chief gunner's mate who takes to the skies? Look out! GMC Rickey Rothig, currently stationed at the Northeast Regional Fisheries Training Center on Cape Cod, Mass., recently achieved a longtime personal goal – earning a private pilot license to fly a single engine aircraft. What prompted him to go after this goal that had been on his mind since he was a teenager? It was his attendance at the Chief Petty Officer Academy in 1999. While outlining a personal action plan and career development plan, he identified the goal to achieve his pilot designation.

An important part of identifying his goal was to identify the obstacles that were preventing him from achieving it. The perceived obstacles were numerous. They included his busy schedule, the demands of his position at the training center, the cost associated with acquiring the license, confidence in his ability to actually complete the training, the notorious inclement New England winter weather and the understandable concern for his safety from family and friends. He established a game plan to tackle the obstacles and realize his dream. He acquired a part time job at the local airport to

help with the financing of his license and he made a significant effort to balance the demands of his family, work and becoming a pilot. Furthermore, he always had a complete list of these obstacles (and solutions) located nearby on an index card as a constant reminder of his commitment to achieving his goal.

On June 18, 2000, less than one year after his CPO Academy graduation date, Rothig's efforts paid off when he received his private pilot license. "I'm convinced I wouldn't have been able to follow through with my goal of becoming a pilot unless I attended the CPO Academy. It provided me with the necessary tools and motivation to renew my interest in achieving a personal goal, which I had not done in quite

some time," said Rothig. Now he is focused on a new goal to obtain his instrument rating, which he is due to complete this year. Ultimately,



Chief Petty Officer Rickey Rothig with the plane that earned him his pilot designation.

Rothig's goal is to fly as a commercial pilot when he retires from the Coast Guard. "I hope my efforts will provide the incentive for others to set and achieve personal and professional goals and encourage supervisors to recognize and assist subordinates to do the same thing," said Rothig. ✦

For information on the Leadership Essay Program, visit www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on "Leadership Essays").

A Cook's View of Diversity

by Robert Gitschier, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WPM)

It is possible to make meals from plain unseasoned beef. However, that would quickly become boring, and it wouldn't provide the right nutrition for a healthy life. So instead, a skillful cook uses a variety of ingredients, such as potatoes, vegetables, breads and fruit, and mixes them with herbs and seasonings to bring out flavors that otherwise would never be tasted and provide nutrients that are vital to a better life. All are brought together to become something much better than any of the individual ingredients are alone. The skillful cook uses the array of ingredients in many dif-



ferent ways to achieve a different taste and meet different nutritional needs as necessary. The cook understands that if the ingredients are not used well, the meal will be ruined and the ingredients wasted, so the cook uses skill to bring out the best of everything and achieve the best results.

Diversity is the unique flavor and nutrients each individual brings, and diversity management is the skillful bringing together of those flavors and nutrients under the right conditions to make them better and more nutritious together than they could ever be alone. ❖

Chief,
Office of Leadership and Diversity
CAPT Curt Odom
Editor
Lynne Donahue

The Leadership News is published quarterly by Commandant (G-WTL). Contents are unofficial and not authority for action. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Transportation or the Coast Guard.

Article Submissions

We need your articles on leadership and diversity issues and best practices. Article length should be 400 words or fewer.

Lynne Donahue, Editor
Commandant (G-WTL-2)
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 Second St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001

Tel. 202-267-2381
Fax 202-267-4610

E-mail:
LDonahue@comdt.uscg.mil
Web Site:
www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm

"Houston, we Have a Problem"

by Cmdr. Bob Ball, ISC Honolulu

Integrated Support Command Honolulu recently used the "Apollo 13" Unit Leadership Program training module during a monthly officers' training session. Many years ago I went through the Coast Guard's Leadership and Management School, which used the movie, "High Noon," as the leadership reference. The updated movie reference is much appreciated. Overall, the response was positive. Three hours is a significant time commitment but one we found worthwhile. Our group consisted of chief warrant officers, lieutenants, lieutenant commanders, a GS-12 and a GS-11. The benefit of that breadth of experience added value to the discussion. We used open-ended questions to generate discussion, although I would advise others

to use someone with facilitating skills so the group doesn't get off track.

We've completed most of the ten modules of the Unit Leadership Program over the past 18 months. I really appreciate the resource and look forward to new modules. Also, I appreciate the Professional Reading List as I sometimes make some of the books mandatory reading – we just finished the book, "First Break All the Rules."

The Unit Leadership Program and the Professional Reading List are on the Web at www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on "Leadership" then "Unit Leadership Program" or "Professional Reading List"). ❖

A Testament to the Coast Guard Family

by Cmdr. P. A. Francis, Aviation Training Center Mobile, Ala.

Mr. Bob Lee joined the Aviation Training Center workforce in Mobile, Ala., in 1988. He was hired as an audiovisual expert to develop training aids, and the fruits of his labor spread throughout Coast Guard aviation. Bob had a tremendous impact on the training and operational readiness of all Coast Guard pilots, aircrew and rescue swimmers. On January 15, 2001, Bob died of liver cancer. Although he was loved by many and will undoubtedly be missed by every-

one, this article isn't just about Bob. This article is an affirmation of the Coast Guard family and a testament to the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty.

A Courageous Battle

Bob's fight with cancer began in the summer of 2000. One afternoon Bob commented to his immediate supervisor, "My side hurts when I take a breath." Bob believed the pain was caused by a strained muscle but made arrangements to see a doctor. After a battery of tests and exploratory surgery, it was determined that the pain was caused by inoperable liver cancer. This meant

a steady regimen of chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Bob's supervisor, coworkers and the command rallied behind him.

"This command was determined to fill the church with service dress blue, tell Bob's Coast Guard story to the congregation and render simple honors to a dedicated public servant."

He wanted to continue working as much as possible. To accommodate this, special schedules were devised, and Bob's wife, Phebe, was given official veto power so he wouldn't overextend himself after his chemotherapy sessions. Everyone at ATC, whether active duty, reserve, civilian or contract employees, supported Bob and Phebe during this arduous battle. With self-effacing humor, Bob gracefully accepted the loss of his hair from chemotherapy. We laughed with him when he started wearing funny wigs and hats.

Bob's fight was courageous, and we believed in him. His supervisor,

an officer who had known Bob just a few short years, diligently monitored his medical status while providing emotional support for Bob and Phebe. He kept the command informed of the peaks and valleys of Bob's struggle and, most importantly, his actions conveyed the Coast Guard family's sincere concern for Bob's welfare. Sadly, Bob lost his battle with cancer, but the Coast Guard's commitment to family and friends was far from over.

Duty Above and Beyond

Simple acts of kindness add up. The seemingly little things we do to honor a fallen comrade do get noticed. Devotion to duty comes in many forms even when our duty isn't always clear or emotionally comfortable. It would have been easy for the command to consider Bob's funeral a private event. It would have been fine to "pay our respects to Bob and Phebe" and call it a day. However, this command was determined to fill the church with service dress blue, tell Bob's Coast Guard story to the congregation and render simple honors to a dedicated public servant.

Bob's funeral was an uplifting, spiritual event. The church service concluded with a hymn and the

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 5)

movement of Bob's casket to the hearse. Outside the church, a simple honor guard of officers and enlisted lined the sidewalk. More than 50 Coast Guard men and women were there to pay tribute.

The executive officer called the detail to attention and directed a hand salute as Bob was carried down the church steps. Friends and family members, as they left the church in a solemn procession, were filled with a sense of pride and appreciation as they watched Bob's Coast Guard family pay its last respects to their fallen comrade. They would remember Bob and the way he was honored for a long time.

The most poignant reaction came from Bob's wife, Phebe. She looked Coast Guard people directly in the eyes, and even though emotion wouldn't let her speak the words, her expression was one of sincere gratitude.

Often we equate "leadership" with just the marshaling of resources to meet growing customer demands or streamlining an organization to make it more efficient. There are times, however, when the fortitude of our leaders is tested by uniquely human events. Our conviction to honor others truly reveals itself outside the normal scope of the workplace. In my mind, this command has lived up to our core values by taking to heart the true meaning of "a Coast Guard family" and displaying honor, respect and devotion to duty through a very difficult time. ❖

Leadership Advisory Council on Target and Tracking

The Leadership Advisory Council was revamped in 2000 by changing its focus and membership. LAC members are responsible for gathering leadership development concerns, evaluating the Coast Guard Leadership Development Program and recommending changes, and conveying information to the field.

The LAC has been divided into groups to work on specific leadership initiatives. The groups are now working on their tasks, as follows:

Group A: Refining Leadership Continuum

Developing a plan to increase leadership and mentoring training for all work forces. Includes developing a course outline for a Coast Guard command and staff course that targets mid-grade officers and civilians.

Group B: Marketing

Developing a plan/mechanism to market existing programs and policies like the 21 leadership competencies, Unit Leadership Program, mentoring Web site, etc.

Group C: 21 Leadership Competencies

Reviewing the competencies in light of studies/changes since they were introduced and recommending changes if appropriate.

Group D: Harvesting Field Initiatives

Soliciting the field for leadership

development initiatives and developing a deployable model that includes items like unit training, special assignments, mentoring, off-duty education, unit brown-bags, follow-on opportunities for graduates of existing resident training, etc.

Units are encouraged to share their leadership initiatives that have proven successful in the workplace for possible Coast Guard-wide use. See ALCOAST 057/01 for more details.

Group E: Delivery Methods

Researching and providing a summary of alternative means of developing leaders. Will include Web-based instruction, distance learning, off-duty education, reading programs, supervisor's role, individual development plans, developmental assignments, etc.

An ALCOAST was sent out in July 2000 to solicit LAC membership applications, and 15 members were selected for two-year terms. In addition, the LAC has several adjunct members, including the Witherspoon Award winner (see story on page 1). The first meeting of the group took place in October.

The LAC strongly invites your input on leadership issues, suggestions, best practices, etc. To contact members of the LAC, visit their Web page at www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on "Leadership" then "Leadership Advisory Council"). ❖

New Survey Asks, “Why are you Leaving?” “Why are you Staying?”

by Stephen Wehrenberg, Ph.D., Coast Guard Headquarters (G-W-2)

In a recent speech at the Coast Guard Academy, the commandant stressed the important influence of positive leadership on the retention of our talented “heroes.” He also reminded us that retaining every qualified member or employee is a responsibility of all leaders and supervisors. Retention is growing in importance – and not just because we’re having retention problems right now. Retaining our trained and experienced workforce is the most effective way to slow down the vicious cycle of loss-replacement-advancement-reassignment-loss that is reducing the experience level of the workforce.

A necessary component of retaining people is finding out why they are leaving or planning to leave. But it doesn’t do much good to only ask those who are leaving for their opinions. What if people who are staying are equally dissatisfied with some particular benefit or policy? What we need to do is find out why some people leave and some people stay and make sure we work to keep both.

Our technology finally supports an ongoing Web-based Career Intentions Survey. ALCOAST 064/01 announced the program.

We want everyone who is leaving the Coast Guard to fill out the survey. Why would anyone who has chosen to leave (or been asked to leave) bother? Because research tells us that most people who leave identify strongly with the missions of

the Coast Guard and still want it to succeed. They also leave behind many friends and shipmates ... why not try to make the Coast Guard a better place for them?

In addition, 18 events have been identified that will trigger someone staying with the Coast Guard to be asked to take the survey. These include:

- Graduating from recruit training or OCS
- Commissioning from Academy
- Transferring from one component to another
- Promotions
- Reassignments

We hope all members who are staying with the Coast Guard will think of this as an investment of 20 minutes in their future and that those who are leaving will consider it an opportunity to help us understand why.

The survey is on the Intranet (go to www.uscg.mil/ff21/, then “Your Turn,” “On-line Surveys,” and “Career Intentions Survey”).

Special arrangements can be made for those units/members without Coast Guard Intranet access. See ALCOAST 064/01 for more information. ☒

Flag Voices on the Web

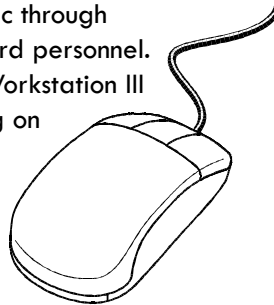
Rear Admiral Fred Ames, the assistant commandant for human resources, publishes short articles called “Flag Voices” on a regular basis. These articles provide valuable information on many human resource topics, such as

- Creating the Exceptional Workplace
- Health and Safety
- Recruiting and Retention
- Professional Development/Mentoring
- Diversity/Workforce Culture
- Pay and Compensation
- Housing/BAH
- Evaluations
- Assignments
- Promotion/Advancement
- Financial Assistance Programs

The entire archive of Flag Voices is on the Web at www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/flagvoice/0contents.htm

FREE COMPUTER TRAINING AVAILABLE

More than 700 computer courses, from basic through advanced, are available for all Coast Guard personnel. Users must first register from a Standard Workstation III computer. Once registered, students can log on anytime, anywhere through the Internet. Afloat units and isolated duty stations will use CD-ROMs.



See ALCOAST 165/01 for details on this new e-learning initiative, or go to the Intranet site, cgweb.uscg.mil, and click on the "Learning" tab, then "Getting Started."

COMMANDANT (G-WTL)
US COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS
2100 SECOND ST SW
WASHINGTON DC 20593-0001

**What makes this
XO so special?
pages 1-2**

**The sky's the
limit – page 3**

