United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Study

Can the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary survive in the 21st Century?

How changing generational attitudes
will affect an all-volunteer organization

August 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is loosing members, dropping from an estimated 38,000 in 2004 to about 30,500 in 2006. With the final Personal Security Investigation deadline looming, an additional 5,000 may not seek to continue membership or be disenrolled at the end of 2006, above and beyond the normal churn in membership.

Traditionally, the main avenue for reinvigorating membership numbers came from students taking the Auxiliary's public education courses. Smaller numbers came from those recruited from vessel safety checks and those who found out about the Auxiliary by other means. Recruiting drives, where National asked local flotillas to make a special effort to find and process new members, accounted for others.

> **Membership numbers**
> How many members the Auxiliary needs to meet their mission obligations and how many members it needs to meet its financial requirements would be two different answers. Getting a specific answer from the leadership is difficult because of the way the two spiral around each other like a double helix strand of DNA. They are – for now – inseparable.

In fact, none of these tried and true methods now works well enough to make up the Auxiliary numbers. Recruits from public education classes have fallen off dramatically, as have the other traditional methods. There have been three special recruiting drives in 2006 that brought in roughly 2,500 new members, though losses cut well into that figure. Further, the Personnel Department, which manages these special drives, is beginning to get pushback from the flotillas/division/districts that recruiting is always on their plate and these drives are unnecessary and don't contribute to the overall effort.

Why this drop in recruiting new members? There are many reasons, one of which is that aggressive recruiting is often not done in flotillas which take a more laid back approach, only accepting new members if they're contacted first. Even then, there are many flotillas that don't accept recruits because, "it's too much effort to train them," or "we're just the right size and don't want more members," or "it's not our job."

National continues to receive messages of inquiry for membership through its web sites and toll-free phone number. Until last year, when (and if) these contacts were sent to the local flotilla, they were often ignored, or the flotilla contact information had changed and the messages were sent into a black hole. Potential recruits were never contacted and lost interest. That problem has been addressed.

The real question is, why aren't more people coming forward to volunteer as they have in past?

Driven by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, volunteerism rose, however the spirit of civic activism has withered. But that was a single event- driven incidence. Volunteering was already on the decline.

The volunteer spirit of the coming generations has changed and the Baby Boomers, now beginning to retire, don't join civic groups in the same numbers that their parents and prior generations did. Gen-X joins civic groups even less, and while Gen-Y, the Millennial Generation, shows a trend toward resurgence in volunteerism, they are looking for a different experience than is offered by the Auxiliary today.

It isn't just the Auxiliary feeling the loss in interest. The Power Squadrons, the American Red Cross and virtually all-traditional civic groups based on people voluntarily showing up, feel it as well.

Groups that are succeeding, like the AARP, are virtual groups, mostly headquartered in Washington, D.C., that don't have local affiliations. They keep their members engaged with on line communication and direct mail and by focusing closely on narrow hot button issues.

The Auxiliary, late in studying these dynamics and playing catch-up, is just beginning to look at concepts and processes to retain existing membership, but without an infusion of new members, this course will not ultimately be successful in maintaining viable numbers.

The challenge is to consider and recommend a course of action to rebuild the Auxiliary's numbers. To do so, the Auxiliary needs to address the generational changes that have already begun to affect recruiting practices.

The Auxiliary can't count on past and present recruiting methods as the answer any longer; they won't work much longer. New approaches to recruiting and retention must be found.

And that may change the face of the Auxiliary and how it does business.

Fred Gates
National Directorate Commodore,
Member Services Directorate

2. ANALYSIS

√ *"More homes have more televisions than ever before. The good news is that more couples and families are staying home together. The bad news is they're watching solo. Watching TV as a couple or family is becoming so rare it's called "co-viewing.""*

√ *"The police department has a problem in its volunteer ranks. Hardest hit is the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol's traffic division. Medical emergencies and attrition have reduced the squad of 60 men and woman who perform the service.*

"People are getting older. Some are having hip replacements or knee operations, or other type problems that keep them from doing what can be active, energetic work."

√ *"The Pacific Northwest is a region where, across all denominations, there is a long history of lay people acting independently from what the church leaders tell them, It's a part of our individualism.*

"While many churches may be loosing members, - entrepreneurial churches – large usually nondenominational churches that make extensive use of technology and media to spread their message – are the fastest-growing part of the religious landscape.

"Often called mega churches, they tend to focus on individual and family enrichment, rather than community and political involvement.

"Mega churches also tend to attract people who favor fewer government constraints, free trade and few rules."

√ *"WASHINGTON – Americans are watching more sports but playing less, according to this year's Statistical Abstract assembled by the Census Bureau.*

"It reflects the changing nature of the country according to Lars Johanson, a statistician at the Census Bureau. There are several potential reasons for the decline. During times of security and abundance, people feel more inclined to spend money and enjoy themselves. During times of, say, political unrest, insecurity and economic downturns, people feel insecure, and their mood shifts into a negatives. People don't feel as good, so they shrink away from spending money and engaging in activities.

"Among those who play sports, exercise walking is the number one sports activity, followed by camping and exercising with equipment, all individual activities."

√ *"Want to help the world? A new web site started by college students operates on the philosophy that people are time-starved and can barely find a spot in their busy schedules for doing their part to help the world. Everyone has five minutes to spare, and therefore, can make a difference. The site consists of links divided into the categories 'Write,' 'Donate,' 'Join,' and "shop.' From there you can navigate to do-gooder sites.*

A. The canary in the mine

What does all this have in common? Like the canary in the mine, involvement in social engagement is an instructive measure of broader social change. And in the last several decades of the 20th Century, community groups and their tens of thousands of members began to fade.

Older volunteers aren't dropping out – not more rapidly than age and accidents have always accounted for. The difference is that community organizations like Coast Guard Auxiliary flotillas are no longer being continuously revitalized as they have in the past by a steady stream of new members.

Up their alley

At one time there were many bowling leagues, now there are few. But the fact is that there are more bowlers than ever before – out there in their lanes – *Bowling Alone.*∗

Voting patterns are instructive as a proxy of social engagement. Compared to demographically matched nonvoters, voters are more likely to be interested in politics, give to charity, volunteer, serve on juries, attend school board meetings, participate in public demonstrations, and cooperate with their follow citizens on community affairs.

Participation in the electoral process is at one of the lowest points in the country's history and is the most visible symptom of a broader disengagement from community life. It is not just from the voting booth that Americans are increasingly AWOL.

According to the Roper Polls, which has been tracking community involvement over many decades, the frequency of virtually every form of community involvement has declined significantly. Americans are involved less and less in every aspect of civic engagement than they were 20 years ago.

B. Understanding generational attitudes

Service and special interest groups are no longer connecting with many Americans. One of the recent groups studied where they were disconnecting with potential members was the Sierra Club, which, like the Auxiliary, translates membership dues into operating funds.

∗ The book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community,* by Robert D. Putnam, is the major source for this report. For more information about this amazing book, see Appendix, Page 31. For far more information, the book's 500 statistics-packed, highly readable pages are recommended reading.

The Sierra Club has more to concern them than money. A two-year study of the organization's effectiveness showed that local chapters do little to develop leaders, engage no more than two percent of their members in local action and have a "limited" degree of public influence.

The central challenge stems from fundamental changes in American culture. Organizations that want you to show up and participate are the type of organization that is disappearing.

Another challenge is how to use limited income to ignite activism among younger members.

This is a watershed moment for the Sierra Club – the organization, if it chooses to – has to plan the best chance of evolving beyond the current staleness of membership levels. If outings are important, then they realized they should focus should be on lifestyle choices.

"The only way an organization can fulfill its national purpose … is to invest its financial, staff and moral resources in developing its leaders, enhancing its organizational capacity and conducting programs of effective local action," said Marshall Gantz of Harvard University.

If the Sierra Club is going to move forward, it needs to fashion a positive vision for the future rather than doom saying. Also the organization needs to couch that vision in ethical and sometimes almost religious terms – and attempt to retake the high ground.

It was partly by reading *Bowling Alone*, a book about the loss of community in America that current Sierra Club President Lisa Renstrom became determined to unite the far-flung organization in a fresh way. The result was called *Bowling Together*, calling for a grass root renaissance. "We need to enlist our co-workers and neighbors … our churchgoers and parents standing on the sidelines of soccer games."

Lurking danger: Our demographics keep getting older and the old guard is wearing down.

C. Four generations: Generational generalities

Silent Generation (1927 – 1945)
  ➢ Attitude: Pay-your-dues, work hard
  ➢ Likes: Security, stability
  ➢ Dislikes: Debt, borrowing, upstart kids
  ➢ Reputation for hard work, conflict resolution (via compromise), romanticizing, being friendly and accommodating

Baby Boomer Generation (1946 – 1964)
- ➢ Attitude: If you have it, flash it
- ➢ Likes: Shopping, winning, leading, vision
- ➢ Dislikes: Paying off debts, aging
- ➢ Reputation for being "in-charge," innovation, "bigger is better," believing they do have all the answers, and perfectionism

Generation X (1965 – 1985)
- ➢ Attitude: "Whatever . . ." (They're reacting to a hurried childhood)
- ➢ Likes: Now, being with friends, change
- ➢ Dislikes: Bossiness, corporate culture, getting up in the morning
- ➢ Reputation for cynicism, taking risks, pragmatism, and non-affiliation

Generation Y or the Millennial Generation (1986 – 2006?)
- ➢ Attitude: Let's make the world better
- ➢ Likes: Labels, family, friends, technology, the environment
- ➢ Dislikes: Dishonesty, unbalanced lifestyles
- ➢ Reputation for text messaging, optimism, inclusiveness, being clean-cut

D. Exploring the next generation of retirees: The Baby Boomers

Members of the largest generation in the history of the United States, the Baby Boomers, are just beginning to retire. If you think of this generation as a giant bell curve, the beginning edge to the curve are those people approaching 55 years of age. Over the next 20 years this generation will surge into retirement. Marketing specialists, researchers, foundations and membership organizations such as AARP are already studying these soon-to-be-retirees, and with good reason. This generation has been known for breaking with tradition and charting new courses. This is the 60's generation that rebelled against authority, organized movements and changed the workplace.

Signs of the times
Several recent studies indicate the aging Baby Boomers are not one homogenous group, and their vision of retirement is different from their parent's generation.

Now they give every indication of being a new breed of volunteer.
- • Baby Boomers expect to live longer and they are planning for financial, mental and emotional security.

- • Baby Boomers believe they have far more choices in terms of activities and lifestyles.

- • Baby Boomers plan to travel, explore new places and spend periods away from home.

- • Baby Boomers do not view retirement as the end of a career, but rather as an opportunity to begin a new career.

- Baby Boomers like the idea of "re-tooling" themselves through courses and educational opportunities so they can upgrade skills and gain new qualifications.

- Baby Boomers are not constrained by traditional ideas of retirement. They refuse to get old and they refuse to believe that age will limit them in any way.

- Baby Boomers are showing a tendency to remain in the communities where they have lived and work. There are indications they may be less inclined to move to the traditional retirement community states.

"The Baby Boomer generation of retirees will have different needs, different motivations, different expectations and different barriers to becoming volunteers." (Heartbeat Trends, 2001, p. 45). Volunteer managers are being challenged to design new recruitment efforts, systems and structures to meet this new generation of volunteers. Current research has identified several themes and priorities to consider:

Future expectations

The future generations of age 50+ volunteers will expect and demand more from their volunteer experience. They expect to be a part of the decision making process, they want flexibility that allows them to integrate paid and unpaid work, they want to engage in meaningful service learning activities, be afforded opportunities similar to those offered to staff and to be able to transfer their professional skills to positively impact local community needs. Successful organizations seeking to harness this vast, yet untapped resource will need to reassess and think expansively and creatively.

1. Offer choice, flexibility and responsiveness to today's lifestyles. Provide numerous options and the ability to choose what and how much a volunteer can do.

2. Pair volunteer activities with educational and recreational opportunities, life-long learning, domestic and international travel, family and intergenerational relationships, and volunteer service and learning that can lead to new employment options. National organizations in particular may wish to develop volunteer exchange programs with interstate members/partners.

3. Begin now to develop and promote recruitment information for those approaching retirement. This generation is already planning for their retirement years.

4. Use the Internet to give information, make statewide and national connections and to recruit and place volunteers.

5. Enhance marketing messages with images of volunteers doing new, unexpected things, of volunteers having a good time together, of volunteer "experts" solving problems.

6. Don't rely on "civic duty" and "make a difference" as marketing messages for this generation. Offer opportunities for new experiences, challenges and stimulation. Personal growth and the desire for new knowledge and skills are powerful forces within this generation.

7. Develop career paths for volunteers to promote life-long learning, advancement and skill development.

8. Provide opportunities for volunteer to "try-before-you-buy" experiences as a marketing tool. This consumer-oriented generation looks for quality, efficiency and effectiveness. Episodic volunteering has been the norm for many of these busy working people.

9. Provide clear expectation regarding time, tasks and training.

10. When possible promote the connection to local issues and local problem, and communicate *how* volunteers will make a difference.

E. Gen-X: It's about lifestyle

The generation born between 1963 and 1976 — has not received the same level of marketing attention that the preceding Boomer generation received (and continues to receive) because of the latter's immense market size. Gen-X comprises some 57 million adults, compared with more than 70 million Boomers. But as the larger market of Boomers edges into retirement and subsequent wealth disbursement, Gen-X will increasingly account for the large chunk of high-earning wealth accumulators.

Estimates say that some 29 million U.S. households have a Gen-X primary head. (In comparison, it is estimated that more than 39 million households have a Boomer primary head.) These younger Gen-X households are settling down into the rhythm of the life-stage process: buying their first homes, raising children, and climbing up the corporate or entrepreneurial ladder. This is why recruiters and marketers should pay more attention to the Gen-X market segment:

• Gen-X households are well educated. Four in 10 Gen-X primary heads have at least a college degree, compared with just 31 percent of Boomers primary heads and 30 percent of primary heads of U.S. households overall. This higher education assures the potential for what the U.S. Census Bureau refers to as "the big payoff" (that is, historically, people with a college education earn significantly more in a lifetime than do people who have less education).

• Half of Gen-X household heads are already in high-paying professional, technical, or managerial positions.

• Although Gen-X households currently account for just 13 percent of the total affluent population, they constitute 20 percent of the mass affluent and more than one-third of the emerging affluent markets.

By establishing and solidifying relationships with Gen-X now, an organization increases the likelihood that it will be the organization of choice for the future. To target this group successfully, recruiters need to consider two key characteristics of Gen-X: their diversity and their technological sophistication. The 2000 Census revealed Gen-X as more

ethnically diverse than older generations because of recent immigration waves and higher birthrates among minorities.

Data, meanwhile, show Gen-X as more likely than Boomers and the average U.S. citizen to use the Internet to obtain all types of products. Understanding the psychology, needs and expectations of Gen-X will enable organizations to be more competitive in attracting and retaining this upcoming group.

Martha Stewart's somber visage under headlines about her trial might well serve as a sign of the times. Stewart soared as an archetype of a nesting Baby Boomer, a matriarch whose gospel of restrained Yankee elegance ran so deep in the domestic zeitgeist as to personify "lifestyle marketing" itself. Like the tract homes and condo communities in which she held so much currency, however, her wand-like prescriptions for household empowerment, evinces a sameness that, today, seems to be squarely at odds with new dynamics driving the business of homemaking.

Mix and match For personal preferences

Gen-Xers will shop around, do research on the Web and mix and match to gradually meet their needs. They don't perceive a single standard for fashion. They travel more, they're more ethnically diverse, exposed to more than previous generations, through the Internet in particular - it's expanded their vision as individuals – It's not a 'mass' world anymore.

As nearly 49 million members of Gen-X, currently 27 to 38 years of age, funnel through their own great nesting stage, arbiters of aesthetics face a period of post-Boomer adjustment. Once the media and Madison Avenue handed down the rules of style. Boomers represented the last generation that tried to follow those rules as a matter of status. Now, as a generation once characterized as slackers and cynics settles into its own homes, X-ers are trading off extravagant, homogenous, marketing-synthesized notions of "aspirational" personal and domestic styles, opting instead for more financially manageable, more personally flavored style statements.

The Information Age has shaped Gen-X in more than just knowledge, but also in how they wield it and, thus, how they react to other' notions of cultural standards.

They are called the "iPod generation," referring to the Apple portable MP3 player that allows music fans to compile their own music tracks, not just listen to prepackaged CDs.

The way this generation is now beginning to create a more substantial life is much the same way they've learned to shop, or how they dress, or interact with friends, on cell phones or online.

Their lives have been about access, about 'Any which way you want it, you can have it.' You don't have to just aspire to it anymore.

F. Call them Gen-Y or Millennials: they deserve our attention

Four studies about Gen-Y (also referred to as the Millennials) came out in a single day at the end of April. Each was looking at this population from different perspectives. One article was from the *National Law Journal* advising trial lawyers to avoid stereotypes about the younger generation when considering juror selection. The second article was a survey from the Food Marketing Institute, reporting on grocery shopper trends. The third article was a summary of research studies on the spending habits and debt patterns of young Americans. The final article was a commentary on the *USA Weekend* Teens and Volunteering Study. If such diverse groups as trial lawyers, grocery store owners and financial/credit marketers, are studying the values and characteristics of Gen-Y, perhaps this is a good opportunity to compare their findings with the latest volunteering study.

Relationships

More than 90 percent of teens now say they 'get along' with their parents, and nearly 80 percent say they get along 'very well' or 'extremely well.' One survey found 82 percent of teens reporting 'no problems' with any family member versus just 48 percent who said that back in 1974, when parents and teens were far more likely to argue over basic values.

All four studies note that Gen-Y entered the world at a time when children and family were fashionable. Las Vegas was marketing itself as a family destination and "baby on board" signs were in vogue. Gen-Y children have been wanted, valued and coddled from birth. They have lived highly structured lives. From their preschool days they have had scheduled playgroup dates, participated in team sports, music lessons and a wide range of stimulating activities. Parents have micro-managed their schedules and remain highly involved in their children's lives.

Managers of volunteers may see this parent/child relationship played out when a teen's parent calls to schedule an interview for their child for a volunteer position in an organization. Or, the parent may accompany the teen for an interview and fully expect to be part of the interview process. The teen will also assume their parent will be part of the interview.

Parents frequently call to negotiate hours, or reschedule appoints for their children, from work hours to college schedules. While managers of volunteers might assume there is parental pressure or lack on genuine interest on the part of the teen, most often this is not the case. Young people today look to their parents for assistance with scheduling their lives and often report wanting their parents to be part of their decision making process.

Managers of volunteers are cautioned to proceed cautiously when getting a call from a parent. Times have changed and the dynamics of who makes the phone call or who shows up for the interview has changed.

Don't be too quick to discount a potential teen volunteer because a parent calls to schedule the appointment.

Specific comments from the recent marketing surveys have wonderful kernels of information that can help managers of volunteers develop marketing and recruitment strategies for Gen-Y volunteers.

    • Teens seem to be conforming to traditional values, rules and standards. What has changed is what conformity looks like, and this change can throw off even the savviest manager of volunteers. It is not surprising to find honor students with green hair and co-eds with four tattoos – relying on stereotypes about what green hair and tattoos signify can get the manager of volunteers into trouble – appearances in this generation can be deceiving.

    • Gen-Y is a generation on the go. Features they deem important are fast checkout, self-checkout and quick, convenient meal solutions. They love a variety of foods, including ethnic, organic and gourmet foods. They eat out more often than anyone and are extremely high in their use of coffee bars.

These comments highlight defining characteristics of this generation. They are highly tolerant of differences. Green hair, tattoos, piercings, and ethnic foods are a small part of the diversity this generation has grown up with. Products of the civil rights movement and the children of Boomer parents, they reject prejudice and are incredibly tolerant of other people – their looks, experiences and preferences. They expect that same open mindedness regarding them.

Endless change

Variety and stimulation are the norm for Gen-Y. Life is full of experiences and they want to live a life filled with endless variety and change. These multi-taskers have never lived in the status quo. Life has been a constant flow of change and they seem to thrive on variety.

As a generation on the go, they expect most things in life to be fast and convenient for them. They are the 24/7-generation, used to shopping online at 2 a.m. or researching a product on the net so they can be prepared, informed buyers. While their grandparents grew up in the shadow of the depression and believed that patience was a virtue, this generation grew up in the information age where you never have to wait for anything. They believe the patient are more likely to be run over then rewarded.

The business community has already begun to incorporate data from this market research into their recruitment campaigns. Consider the Cardinal Health web site (http://www.cardinal.com/college/internships/) describing their youth intern program:

The experience is hands on (they can try it), begins immediately (start on the first day), and promises to be "meaningful" and "exciting." The second paragraph is filled with values laden words designed specifically for this generation: innovative, collaborative,

fast-paced, business casual, and work-life balance. These are the very words and phrases managers of volunteers should be building into their volunteer jobs descriptions and marketing materials. If the marketing industry has identified the characteristics and the business community has created the recruitment tactics, shouldn't the nonprofit world also be crafting new messages for this young generation?

Gen-Y is exhibiting a strong interest in volunteerism. Following are a few of the findings from the Teens and Volunteering Survey from *USA Weekend*.

- 30 percent of students in grades six-12 volunteer more than 80 hours per year.
- 93 percent anticipate volunteering as adults
- 38 percent find volunteering a way to combine interests and talents
- 76 percent say their parents volunteer
- 32 percent believe the primary purpose of volunteering is to be exposed to new experiences and new people
- 44 percent find volunteering highly rewarding

The experience was rewarding because:

- 53 percent could see the immediate impact
- 52 percent believed in the overall effort
- 51 percent made friends and met interesting people
- 42 percent found the opportunity well organized and efficiently run

Neil Howe and William Strauss, authors of *Millennials Rising*, were asked to comment on *USA Weekend's* Teens and Volunteering Survey. They like what they see: *"These numbers reflect the can-do spirit we have been seeing in this population ... this generation has a growing reputation for service that's making waves across the nation. A higher share of high school students are community volunteers today (more than 65 percent than ever before measured, going back half a century ... They're smart, teaming up, doing well – and volunteering at a level and intensity we haven't seen since the 1940's."*

G. The new volunteers: What to expect

Volunteers have changing expectations of what they want from volunteer service.

The younger generations are more entrepreneurial and less likely to be attracted to a bureaucratic structure. They want the freedom to try new things in new ways. They are technologically literate and prefer to use technology. Unlike their parents, they do not see

technology as impersonal or cold. Indeed, they see technology as a means of connecting to a global world in new ways.

They are comfortable searching for answers and information on the web. They are comfortable working alone or in virtual teams. They do not like to spend time in meetings hearing everyone's opinion and endlessly debating the issues. They are not inclined to seek leadership positions that require additional amounts of personal and professional time. They are more comfortable with leadership that changes from project to project. They like having the opportunity to work with a variety of leadership styles.

This is in stark contrast to an older generation that likes coming together to solve problems. Baby boomers like working in teams to explore alternatives and identify strategies. They believe there is value in the face-to-face meetings that support interpersonal relationships. They are comfortable making commitments and assuming leadership roles. They often like things the way they are and are reluctant to implement change. An even older generation prefers conformity, uniformity and order. They are not always comfortable with technology and may view it as highly impersonal.

Unique styles

Each generation has differing expectations. The challenge is to bring these diverse generations together through multiple options and opportunities. The Auxiliary must understand the unique needs and styles of the each generation, volunteers and constituents, and create ways for each to receive personal satisfaction and reward.

Leadership is often viewed by the older generations as synonymous with commitment, dedication, skills, knowledge and experience. These preconceived ideas of what it is to be in a leadership role create subtle messages for new, younger volunteers about long-term commitment and dedication. Younger volunteers do not always see themselves as experienced, skilled, or capable of leadership. They do not readily see what's in it for them.

Attracting and cultivating new leadership and new volunteers require new approaches on how to do the work as well as new messages about the value of the work and the personal growth and development that comes from volunteer and leadership service. Many volunteers are less interested in making a difference and more interested in the personal return on their investment. Today's younger volunteers are attracted to the opportunities for skills building, career enhancement, networking and professional/leadership development that come from board and committee work.

Volunteering should be a safe place to learn new skills. These young volunteers are self-developers – they have the ability to learn quickly and on their own. They like access to resources so that they can self educate. This generation may prefer a self-study CD Rom.

Keep orientation and meeting materials brief and scannable. Engage Gen-X volunteers quickly and make them feel like insiders. Give them meaningful assignments, listen for

their preferences and concerns, respect their skills and opinions, recognize their contributions and remember that they are very good at multitasking.

Volunteering should be pleasurable, even fun. Build in socializing and celebrations. Provide lunch at noontime meetings; provide snacks for after work meetings. Be mindful of the time and keep meetings on schedule and brief. Run tight, efficient meetings that respect the contributions of personal time. Have copies of all materials available. Make it easy for people to participate. Recognize individual contributions. Attracting volunteers in today's world is hard work. There are no simple, standard answers for recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Today the Auxiliary is called to find new, diverse ways of increasing communication, providing education, attracting younger volunteers, utilizing technology and respecting people's limited time.

H. My time isn't your time

A true tale of the Auxiliary missing the boat

"I received your disenrollment letter and wanted to respond as I hope others do so that the USCG Auxiliary can improve.

"The reasons for me leaving the Auxiliary are simple. My work requires me to work late and travel frequently, which makes meetings and training during the week virtually impossible. In addition, I spend my weekends at our lake house with my 5-year-old son and my 2-year-old daughter. Therefore, my time on the weekends is better spent with them.

"I enjoyed my time in the Auxiliary from the fellowship perspective. However, I believe the Auxiliary (at least some flotillas) needs to completely revamp with a youth movement. It seems that members of Flotilla 5-10, most of which are older have their own agenda about how things work and aren't willing to try new things or change. It seems as if they want to bring in younger people, but as long as we don't rock the boat too much.

"While they are all great people, I believe that they are so far removed from my life that they don't understand why I can't be as involved as they are. It boils down to they "work" for the Auxiliary and between work and kids, I only have 1 - 2 hours per day (generally between 9 - 11 p.m.) for extracurricular activities."

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I. Generational differences shaping leadership

Our youngest leaders matured in the glow of computer screens;
our oldest in the shadow of the Depression and World War II.

For Generations X and Y, the old command and control leadership is passé. The top down leadership style that grew from a military model is not effective in today's world of rapid change. Today's young leaders act first and evaluate later, because a leader cannot afford to carefully evaluate first in the high-speed environment of today.

Loneliness looks popular these days

Americans, who shocked pollsters in 1985 when they said they had only three close friends, in July 2006 say they have just two. The numbers who say they have no one to discuss important matter has doubled to 25 percent. Men and women of every race, age and education level report fewer intimate friends. Their remaining confidants are more likely to be members of their nuclear family but intimacy within families was down too, according to the June issue of the *American Sociological Review.* One explanation for friendship's decline is that adults are working longer hours and socializing less. In addition, commutes are longer, and TV viewing and computer use up.

This rapid response decision-making is a characteristic of today's younger people. They have been taught to act fast. Consider the video games they've grown up with. They have played with simulations since they were very small, and have learned to act fast, watch what happens, and adapt.

May of today's older generations don't excel at today's video games because they are more cautious, watching, observing and waiting for the right moment to jump forward. Today's gamers are proficient because they move fast and don't worry about making the best move. They might lose a game, but remember the lesson and adapt their moves during the next round. Young people have grown up with simulations never imagined a few short years ago. SimCity lets them build and operate a city and war games let them experience combat and team work. This generation has been trained to make quick decisions.

This shift in leadership style started with Gen-X and has continued to become more pronounced in Gen-Y. It is sometime hard for those in an older generation to respect the quick, decisive leadership style seen in young people, tend to question how much they really know, and de-value their ability to make decisions based on limited experience. The older generations grew up in a time when they worked their way up to leadership roles. Often they don't think of younger volunteers or colleagues as collaborators, because they assume they are inexperienced. But young people today know more than they knew at their age. The World Wide Web and instantaneous access to news and information has made knowledge much more available at an earlier age.

It is important to highlight differences between generations and how these differences contribute to new patterns of leadership: career, speed, loyalty, balance, and heroes.

The concept of **career** has changed. Young people today talk more about jobs and skills than they do about career paths. They don't see the need or the benefit of picking a single career. Increasingly young people talk about having parallel careers. Many say they expect nine different careers in their lifetime. For them life is more like a video game than a board game. In video games roles are less defined and you learn through experimentation. And if it doesn't work, you can reboot and start again.

Life in the new millennium is all about **speed**. Young people not only live with speed and chaos, they thrive in it. In a climate of rapid change the young generations feels they have to act fast to win or stay in the game. If they proceed slowly and cautiously, they lose.

Everyday heroes

For many of the older generations, heroes contributed to our ideals and values. They grew up with the words of John Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your county." Past generations had many heroes that shaped and influenced them. They were the icons, the people we looked to for inspiration and leadership.

The patient are glanced over, passed over and run over. The great depression taught people to make sacrifices and be patient, but the Information Age has taught a generation that they never have to wait for anything. They are looking for opportunities to gain 20 years of experience in two years. Computer simulations allow them to formulate ideas, test them, retest, refine and move forward. They believe in just doing it.

Loyalty has new meaning among young people who saw their parents downsized, reengineered and layoff off. They know the days of corporate loyalty to employees are long gone. Young people look after themselves first. They exhibit little loyalty to anyone other than friends and family. Loyalty is highly valued, and given only to a few friends and colleagues after they have earned it. When they feel respected and valued they will be loyal to the cause or organization and become great assets and advocates.

Balance is a fundamental value in the younger generations. As children of workaholic baby boomers, they view time, commitments and career advances through the lens of balance. In the workplace young people have been termed slackers because they don't work late, or don't come in on the weekend or they refuse to attend those extra meetings. They expect time off for family functions and don't understand why they have to stick around if they've finished all that was expected of them. But it is not an aversion to work that prompts their actions. It is a commitment to family and friends – a commitment to having a balanced life in which work is only one segment of a full life.

Gen-X and Gen-Y, asked about public heroes and figures they admire and look up to, struggle to find a name and often say they don't have "public" heroes. They may consider parents, friends and coworkers as people they admire, but most often they say they have no real models of leadership, no people they look up to outside of their immediate circle.

The Boomer and older generations with lots of heroes may find this disturbing but have to realize the whole concept of heroes has changed. Every time someone gets nominated to be a hero someone else comes along and reveals a dirty secret about them. Information makes heroes temporary or passing figures. Consider all the books that have been written about the Kennedys, Martin Luther King or Princess Diana.

The younger generations don't look for a Lone Ranger form of leadership. They don't believe that a larger-than-life individual can ride in, give directions and lead the way to great accomplishments. They also do not view age, seniority and rank as measures of accomplishment or expertise. Unlike an earlier time when people admired their elders and followed them to victory, this generation does not see age as a dominant characteristic for leadership.

In an era of complexity and change, young people look for leaders who work with followers as intimate allies. They want colleagues who will develop relationships that build intimacy and show trust and respect for them, their abilities and their ideas.

J. American volunteer rate steady at 28.8 percent

More than 65 million Americans volunteered last year (2005), but the participation rate has remained flat since 2002 and participation varies widely by state, region and ethnic group, according to a federal survey.

While numbers are up nearly six million, the rate at which Americans volunteer remained steady at 28.8 percent, according to the Corporation for and Community Service, a federal agency that promotes volunteerism.

Americans volunteered an average of 50 hours a year, the agency found.

The steady rate is an achievement, given the aging of baby boomers and the growing Latino population, both of which volunteer at relatively low rates.

The likeliest volunteer, the agency found, "is a white female who gives 50 hours per year volunteering through a religious organization as a tutor, mentor, coach or referee, followed by fundraising at 29.7 percent and food collection, preparation and distribution at 26.3 percent."

One of the trends that seem fairly clear is that people have broader ties to their networks and communities.

The Midwest had the highest volunteer rate – one third of its population – followed by the West, the South and the Northwest, which had 29 percent, 27 percent, and 26 percent, respectively.

More than one-third of the volunteers worked with or through religious organizations. One quarter worked with educational or other youth service groups and most of the rest worked with social and community service organizations.

– Knight Ridder News Service

3. CONCLUSIONS

At a workshop for volunteer administrators on trends and issues that impact the management of volunteers, the discussion turned to what has not changed in the last 25 years.

Still being talked about and complained about is a lack of day time volunteers – when as long ago as 1980 the need for organizations to shift their thinking and volunteer assignments to accommodate working volunteers was already recognized.

Time and interest

Increasingly volunteers who contact an organization saying they have two hours next Thursday from 4-6 p.m. stipulate exactly what they would like to do. If the organization cannot accommodate their schedule and interests, they politely move to the next organization.

But what has changed and what still needs to change, based on overall changes in society and volunteers in particular?

First, the volunteers and the managers of volunteers have changed.

The majority of today's volunteers are working people looking for short term, project or episodic based volunteer opportunities. Students are also looking for the short-term assignments that fit comfortably with school schedules and requirements. Because Americans are more educated as a society, we have better educated volunteers who have been in the workplace and have higher expectations about how the work is organized, managed and scheduled.

Volunteers today tend to volunteer for much more individualized reasons than previous generations, who were very active volunteers in their community. They entered their volunteer work through local associations where they made contacts and were able to network with the top people of many local businesses. As a requirement of membership, it was expected that they would become involved in the local projects.

In today's reality, volunteers are motivated in very different ways. Are they more self-centered? No – simply more focused and better able to articulate exactly what they are interested in doing. And, they know it has to fit with their busy lifestyle.

Next, globalization is changing the way they work. The volunteer community has expanded to include global neighbors. Students in Denver work on a service project with children in Africa.

A recent study of *Volunteer Match* reported that 1.5 million people used the Internet to access the services of *Volunteer Match*, which coordinates the Online Volunteer Program that connects volunteers with assignments anywhere in the world. To explore the impact of online volunteers, read about the experiences of 10 volunteers recognized for their

online work in 2005 at http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/stories/ov_oftheyear.php

People now talk about corporate social responsibility, civic engagement, church-based organizing, advocacy and social capital as forms and styles of volunteerism. The vocabulary has changed along with the volunteers and the types of things they are doing.

Following are some of the shifts:

A. Past expectations

- Volunteers were asked to do work that was identified by the organization
- Volunteer work was based on organizational needs
- There was clear distinction between work done by paid professionals and work done by volunteers
- Volunteer programs have been built around structure, form and systems to manage volunteers
- Volunteers were expected to be altruistic
- Volunteers were expected to respond to the mission and cause of the organization
- Volunteers self-identified the work they were interested in doing

B. Present construct

- Volunteer work must address personal needs and personal growth
- Volunteers are asking and are being asked to do the same work that paid professionals do or have done
- Today's volunteers are entrepreneurial and creative, and want freedom from systems and structures
- Volunteers are more open about their self-interests
- Many volunteers respond to the perks, prestige and opportunities for personal growth

This is a time when organizations need to look long and hard at what is happening in the global society and as managers of volunteers, if their organizations are to survive, need to make organizational shifts to accommodate the changes that will continue to happen. [1]

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[1] *Adapted from an article by Mary V. Merrill, L.S.W. of Merrill Associates*

C. Spontaneous volunteers: Something new

Changing volunteers and globalization have helped create new forms of volunteerism, having moved from talking about episodic volunteers to talking about spontaneous volunteers. Though there have long been disaster relief volunteers, there are now crisis response volunteers.

The Auxiliary, in support of Coast Guard missions, often finds itself asking members to participate in short duration, often intense, surge operations.   When national events happen, such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that caused widespread death and devastation, or the terrorist acts like Sept. 11, the Auxiliary receives many queries about joining.

The Auxiliary is spectacularly unprepared to handle such responses and needs to develop plans to deal with these event-driven volunteers. By doing so, the Auxiliary will move its comfort zone forward and become adept at accepting changed public concepts of volunteering.

D. "High touch"

Capitalizing On A New Work Ethic For Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer program administrators would be well served to take note of these new values as a way to craft recruitment messages and campaigns designed to attract today's volunteer. Some of these shifts transcend generations – Gen-X and Y have much more in common with Baby Boomers than many people think.

A nonprofit, volunteer organization like the Auxiliary, who's lifeblood is volunteers, needs to carefully reassess their expectations about work and consider how it incorporates, promotes and fosters these values through volunteer service.

Today's workers want to feel there is real meaning in the work they do. They are less interested in the bottom line and more interested in purpose and value.

In an increasingly hi-tech world, there is a need for "hi-touch" experiences that add meaning to life. Volunteering offers great opportunities to say: "What you do is noble," and "You do make difference."

Volunteerism can offer tremendous options for personal growth and development. Whether sharpening current skills or seeking to develop new skills, volunteerism offers a safe environment in which to learn, practice and grow. Volunteer recruiters might want to promote "Come grow with us!" and "Come see what's in this for you!"

Volunteer experts have long advocated for the development of "career paths" within volunteer service. These paths encourage longevity and capitalize on the investment of

time and resources to train volunteers. Increasing retention is a goal in volunteerism as well as the workplace.

Volunteers appreciate knowing that others in the organization notice what they are doing and appreciate their efforts. They like to be kept in the communication loop. They want to know and understand the organization for which they volunteer.

Volunteers expect sincere recognition based on performance. They want to feel like partners with all levels of staff. Volunteers, like employees, value leaders who are "in it with them."

Volunteers expect organizations to be vigilant in protecting their rights as well as those served, through confidentiality, background checks, and professional volunteer management systems.

Coming together

Community happens when people volunteer. They feel a connectedness, to one another, to the staff, to clients and the organization. Volunteering extends one's circle into the broader community. It's a great way to meet new people, to share common values and concerns, to learn together, share together and laugh together.

Finally, volunteers like not just the pins, plaques, and letters, but the symbolism behind them. A pin, a t-shirt, an association coffee mug, and an organizational plaque are awards and outward symbols of the cause and the "noble work."

As people continue to seek the "hi-touch" of connectedness, the challenge is to find ways to bring volunteers together in community, both live and virtual, while respecting time pressures.

With the great proliferation of information available through the Internet it becomes increasing important for volunteer agencies to strive for continued accountability and the highest quality of openness and information.

NEXCOM and staff should continually engage in interactive communication with volunteers. Volunteers become advocates and bring great credibility to the work they do.

Today's workers do not want to be workaholics. They want a balance in their lives that includes quality time with family and friends.

There has been an increase in family volunteering, group projects and volunteering events such as Make a Difference Day. These are often attractive options for performing volunteer service while being with family and friends.

Volunteering is a venue for putting balance in life. It can be a respite for the weary soul and an outlet for restless energy. Volunteering can take a person out of their comfort zone or put them back into it. Volunteering can stretch a stagnant individual or allow a weary person an opportunity to regroup and recharge.

Volunteers can and do burn out in today's fast paced world. There should be volunteer sabbaticals, or at least options to do something new/different/less demanding.

Volunteers are constantly looking for ways to balance work, personal life and volunteerism. Volunteer administrators and managers are challenged to find new ways of doing work that respects the increasing pressures on volunteer's time. Perhaps the hi-tech options of email lists, bulletin boards, chat rooms, virtual communities, virtual meetings, and web-based orientation and training are respectful ways for increasing the time available for "hi-touch" volunteerism.

Noble work, personal growth and development, partnerships, community, trust, balance and synergy are all wonderful words to use in recruitment campaigns.

The real challenge is to turn these words into real, everyday values within the Auxiliary.

The best recruitment strategy is to live the Coast Guard values. People are drawn to people and organizations that are authentic.

E. Exploring contemporary trends in volunteering

"Most people in organizations are "operational thinkers.. Sometimes they just need a little help in strategic thinking. Having a futurist is like getting an insurance policy against being blindsided by something in the future.– Steve Millett, business futurist.

Contemporary trends in volunteerism give interesting insights into changes that are occurring and suggest potential strategies for making volunteer organizations more efficient and competitive.

1. Volunteer burnout
The highest ever recorded level of participation in volunteering in the 1998 *Survey of Giving and Volunteering in the United States*. Fifty-six percent of the adult population over 18 reported volunteering a total of 19.9 billion hours.

However, a comparison of the survey results over an 11-year period shows that while the total number of adults volunteering increased, the average number of hours per week decreased, as did the total number of hours given to volunteering.

Deducting the number of hours reported for informal volunteering, there is a decrease in the total number of hours devoted to formal volunteering.

The 1998 Survey reported that 41.9 percent of respondents indicated they had volunteered sporadically and considered it a one-time activity. Thirty-nine percent

volunteered at a regularly scheduled time, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Nine percent indicated they only volunteer at a specific time of year, such as during holidays.

The *Independent Sector* changed their survey criteria in 1999, so it is impossible to make a comparison with the more recent studies. They do continue to reveal fewer people engaged in volunteerism. A recent survey was done by U.S. Department of Labor in 2002. Twenty-six percent of adults over 16 (59 million people) reported volunteering between September 2001 and September 2002. They volunteered an average of 52 hours per year or one hour per week. This survey tends to show an even more dramatic decrease in both numbers of people volunteering and hours volunteered.

These figures seem to support an increasing trend by volunteers to engage in episodic volunteer opportunities (short term or one-time activities) rather than commit to ongoing or long term volunteer assignments, and suggests growing concern about volunteer burnout as organizations are stretched to do more with fewer volunteers.

Adults increasingly report they are too busy or unable to make long-term commitments as reasons for not volunteering.

A variety of studies in the past several years have identified work and family pressures as the main reasons for taking people away from volunteer work. The growth of workplace volunteering and family volunteering has been in response to these concerns, creating opportunities for people to combine work and family time with volunteer work.

The Netherlands Organization on Volunteering identified time as on the 10 top worldwide trends at the 2001 World Volunteerism Conference: "Time becomes more fluid: clear separations between time to work, time to care, free time and volunteer time disappears."

2. The human touch
Volunteers seek volunteer experiences based on human-focused motivations and are drawn to high touch, one-to-one activities. The primary reason given by volunteers for volunteering in the *Independent Sector* surveys is "I feel compassion towards people in need." An Ohio Urban Volunteerism Study reported that 74 percent of volunteers had worked directly with others. The 1997 Canadian National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participation found that 75 percent of Canadian volunteers are interested in helping people directly.

Work and career requirements that separate families geographically and technologically driven workplaces that isolate employees lead to an increased attraction to volunteer activities that foster direct interaction.

Volunteers are seeking meaning, value and enrichment through direct service volunteer work. Once again The Netherlands Organization on Volunteering tracked a similar trend, saying: "There is a need for reciprocity and collective experiences." Volunteer organizations that do not offer direct volunteer-client opportunities must work harder to connect volunteers to the overall mission of the organization, highlighting the contribution of volunteers to the improvement of the human condition.

3. Professionalization of the volunteer corps
Early retirement incentives and an increased emphasis on workplace volunteering suggest an increasingly professional pool of volunteers.

The Independent Sector reports that US college graduates are 60 percent more likely to volunteer. High-level mangers that have experienced buy-outs and early retirements, workplace changes that promote teamwork and participative decision-making, and increased life expectancy are fostering a professionalization of the volunteer corps.

Volunteers view themselves as consumers of volunteer opportunities. Because they are better educated and more experienced, volunteers have higher expectations of how they will be treated and are drawn to organizations that offer good-quality, meaningful volunteer opportunities that have a measurable impact.

This new professionalism in the volunteer corps is creating an increased demand for professionalism in volunteer programs. The Netherlands Organization on Volunteering identified a similar trend, saying: "High quality demands from governments, volunteer and customers lead to a growing professionalism."

4. New forms of volunteerism
Various government-initiated program in the past decade have provided financial stipends and other material incentives to encourage volunteer service. In 1960 Congress created the Peace Corps and VISTA as international and national service programs with minimal financial stipends. Today there are a wide range of government-initiated programs, such as AmeriCorps, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents, designed to promote and expand service beyond traditional volunteer programs.

Educational institutions are engaging service learning as a teaching technique to connect theory with practical application through community based volunteer service for students. Emphasis on a global society has opened new avenues for international volunteering that are attracting a growing corps of retired individuals who are not satisfied with "routine" volunteer work.

Volunteers of all ages are creating new models of volunteering/service that reverse the trend toward short-term volunteering, requiring significant time commitments (30 hours per week) from volunteers. A major characteristic of these evolving volunteer-driven programs is that the volunteers are actively involved in the design and implementation of the work and find significant satisfaction in the opportunity to fully utilize their skills and talents.

5. Diversity

Changing urban centers, migration patterns, and an aging population create new consumers of services. Volunteer programs will be challenged to expand volunteer roles to new groups and new generations. Highly effective volunteer programs recognize the value of involving people from all sections of the community, including those the organization seeks to serve.

The *Independent Sector* has long reported that the most effective form of volunteer recruitment is personal invitation. The danger in this approach is that by relying on current volunteers to recruit new volunteers there is a considerable tendency to perpetuate existing volunteer attitudes as volunteers invite new volunteers similar to themselves. Organizations must develop differentiated marketing strategies that target efforts to produce greater diversity and reflect a broader cross-section of society.

6. Technology

Technology offers opportunities to revolutionize volunteer work. Knowledge is becoming available anytime, anywhere. A search of the Internet leads to the National Aging Information Center and it's extensive listing of resources on *Volunteers and Older Adults*. Resources on *mentoring* are plentiful on the Internet.

Research shared at the Independent Sector's Research Forum, *The Impact of Information Technology on Civil Society*, suggests that though the non-profit sector has current technology, it is often slow or reluctant to use it. There are frequently statements about the impersonal nature of technology and the fear of losing the human touch.

Technology offers exciting options for maximizing volunteer resources, considering limited time, is the biggest barrier to volunteering. Internet access to volunteering, and virtual volunteering options are among the fastest growing volunteer trends. Distance is no longer a factor when people choose an organization as a site for their volunteering. The times for volunteering are changing as people work in one time zone but serve others in a different time zone.

Organizations are challenged to create opportunities for new techno-volunteers that include online volunteer activities where volunteer tasks are completed online from home or work. Age restrictions for volunteer work will shift as young techno-teens seek opportunities to fulfill service requirements and build online experience.

The new generation of volunteers will not view technology as impersonal and organizations (current employees and volunteers) will be challenged to offer opportunities that promote "human touch" in new ways across the generational spectrum.

Distance learning is revolutionizing volunteer training by offering content for specialized orientation and training when and where it is needed. List serves and chat rooms encourage volunteer management professionals and volunteers to share innovative programs and cutting edge approaches to societal problems.

Technology offers great potential to address the number one barrier to volunteering – time pressures. Online applications, Internet based orientation, CD training modules and email can help to minimize meeting and time requirement and free up time so volunteers can do what they really want to do - make a difference in a life and in the world.

(Based on research published by Mary Merrill and Dr. Dale Safrit, "Management Implications of Contemporary Trends in Volunteerism in the United States and Canada," Voluntary Action, Volume 3, Number 1, Winter, 2000)

F. Communication challenges

Communication in today's fast paced world of e-mail and the Internet is constantly evolving. Keeping up with the latest techniques, formats and trends can be very frustrating.

But few things are more important in the relationship between volunteers and an organization than consistent, timely, effective communication. Because volunteers are not in the office on a regular basis, or perhaps are spread out across considerable distance, they rely on an effective communication processes to keep them informed and connected.

Maintaining a database of all volunteers (active and inactive) allows the creation of personalized, targeted and timely e-mail messages about new or urgent volunteer opportunities, organizational updates, special events, or legislative alerts.

While e-mail is a very convenient form of communication, there are times when direct personal contact is best, such as responding to a complaint, or following up with a volunteer that has missed assignments, been ill, or ignored procedures.

Effective communication systems can help to create community for volunteers. Creating community challenges us to move beyond e-mail updates to find ways of collecting and sharing information that supports the work of volunteers and offers them opportunities to increase their knowledge.

Most organizations have extensive information about causes and issues that are not fully shared with everyone Creating electronic libraries or knowledge centers allows volunteers to seek out information at their convenience. The database that can be created by sharing volunteer insights and experiences is incredible. Creating an organizational learning/resource center helps volunteers become more knowledgeable and can help them feel more connected to the organization.

A great virtual volunteer project is to create an online resource center for your volunteers. Younger volunteers are self-learners who are very comfortable searching the Internet for the information they need. These volunteers are not looking for meetings or training classes as a source of information. They want to explore the resources and read the information on their own. They prefer to come together on line to discuss, discern and make personal contact. Creating an online resource center is a cost effective way to provide a great variety of information that can be constantly updated and customized to the needs of your volunteers.

Saying thanks

An e-mail thank you is a timely recognition, but a hand written note is a very personal affirmation. A letter to a volunteer's employer is much more effective then an e-mail note.

When creating a resource center, keep the site user-friendly and as accessible as possible. Good graphics attract younger readers, but also affect download time and overall accessibility. While you don't want a boring, static site, you also don't need all the bells and whistles to be effective. Most people identify ease of access as a critical element for a successful site. Time is a precious premium for most volunteers and they want to be able to find and navigate the site with ease and speed. Have information in printable "text only" formats for volunteers that like to print the copy and read it later.

Volunteers want current, up-to-date information. An effective knowledge/resource center is constantly adding new resources and updating information. Consider posting an article each month that offers new insights and information for volunteers. When posting new information, send an e-mail notice to all volunteers with a link to the article or information. Promote the site and encourage volunteers to check it for resources that can help them be more informed, effective and connected.

Each organization will need to find the balance between print and electronic communication that works best for their volunteers. Electronic newsletters and e-zines are very effective for short articles and quick news updates. On-line resources that volunteers can peruse at their leisure are very useful. Policy and procedure changes might be easily disseminated via e-mail but may also require a written follow up. Online manuals are easy to update, access and share.

Communication will continue to be challenging as the Auxiliary continues to operate in an electronically dominated world. Volunteers expect rapid and timely communication systems. Organizations will be expected to respond quickly and efficiently.

Volunteer managers need to know their volunteers and keep track of the communication challenges, concerns, and information voids. With the wide range of communication options available today, volunteer managers have an opportunity to capitalize on their organizational and community knowledge by creating learning resources for their volunteers and thus learning communities for their volunteers.

4. SUMMARY

In the last three years, the Auxiliary has lost thousands of members for various reasons. Many of those losses can be attributed to personal security investigations mandated during that time. That process ends in January 2006. It is estimated at that time the Auxiliary may have 28,000 members, down from 38,000.

Traditional recruiting methods, exposure to the Auxiliary via public safe boating courses; courtesy vessel checks; casual discovery; or recruited by a friend, no longer bring in sufficient new members to make up numbers lost or to revitalize the organization. When normal membership churn – loss of membership because of loss of interest, disenrollments, retirement, illness and deaths – is added in, it has become difficult to maintain the membership even at the lower number, let alone build back.

The next generations have begun to move into what have been prime volunteer recruitment demographics. These generations volunteer their time less and less.

The Auxiliary can no longer be assured it can recruit the number of members it needs to fulfill its missions with quality personnel unless it understands the changing attitudes of its potential recruitment pool and what motivates them.

Can the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary survive in the Twenty First Century? The answer is yes. However the Auxiliary, like all volunteer organizations, will have to adapt to its potential membership pool, rather than expect the membership pool adapt to the organization, if it is to survive.

That means profound changes in understanding the coming generations and their motivations for volunteering what becomes less and less of their discretionary time.

It also means that the number one priority the Auxiliary faces for the future is deciding how it must change to have the volunteer workforce in the numbers it needs to fulfill its missions and yet still fit within the military Coast Guard structure.

The Auxiliary can't rely on past recruiting practices to remain a viable and vital organization able to meet mission requirements.

To be able to recruit in the Twenty First Century, the Auxiliary must look hard at what it wants to accomplish and determine the workforce it needs to accomplish those goals, both for the skills, mission hours and the funding it takes to finance the organization.

The Auxiliary leadership has, perhaps, two years to establish policy and begin to effect the cultural change necessary to transform itself into an organization that can attract quality volunteers in the numbers needed to meet mission goals.

5. APPENDIX

Although numerous sources were used in writing this report, two primary sources were used, the book *Bowling Alone* and articles by Mary Merrill. Without their works as source material, this study would have been far less complete.

A. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*
By Robert D. Putnam

Drawing on two huge sets of new data detailing how Americans really live, Robert Putnam shows how we've become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and the democratic process - and suggests how we may reconnect and reinvent common enterprise.

In 1995, Putnam published a short article in an academic journal, in which he described how league bowling had drastically declined and proposed that this apparently minor phenomenon symbolized a much broader and vitally significant social change. Unexpectedly, the article caught the attention of both the popular media and the political world, provoking both effusive praise and sharp criticism. Now, after years of exhaustive research, Putnam powerfully validates and deepens his original thesis: that over the past 30 years we have become ever more alienated from one another and from our social and political institutions, and that this disengagement poses a critical threat to our personal health, local communities, and national well-being.

Putnam relies particularly on two previously unexplored archives - the Roper Reports and the DDB Needham Life Style survey - that provide unprecedented data on the personal, social, and political behavior of Americans over the last quarter century. Together, they contain the results of nearly 500,000 detailed interviews covering an astonishingly wide range of information - from how many times the average American votes, volunteers, and goes to church, to how often he or she surfs the Internet, drinks a beer in a bar, or gives another driver the finger. By virtually any possible measure, Putnam found, Americans today are increasingly disengaged, not only from the public sphere but also from informal and private social relations. For example, we spend about 35 percent less time visiting with friends than we did 30 years ago, and American families have dinner together only two-thirds as often as they did a generation ago.

Individually and collectively, Putnam asserts, we are paying a heavy price for the loss of our "social capital," which is the product of communal activity and community sharing. Social bonds, for example, are by far the most powerful predictor of life satisfaction. In terms of measured happiness, getting married is the equivalent of quadrupling your income; attending a club meeting regularly is the equivalent of doubling your income. Social capital is also a strong predictor of personal heath. If you both smoke and belong to no groups, it's a close call as to which is the riskier behavior. On the community level, the loss of social capital is reflected in critical ways: higher crime rates, lower

educational performance, and more teen pregnancy, child suicide, low birth weight babies, and infant mortality. Furthermore, American communities vary widely in the amount of social capital available to them. The states of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont rank highest on the Social Capital Index, for instance, while Georgia, Mississippi, and Nevada rank lowest.

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam sets out to answer two fundamental questions:

<u>What has been happening to civic engagement and social connectedness over the past three decades</u>**?**

- **Politics and civic engagement:** The change is most obvious in the sphere of politics - voting, political knowledge, political trust, and grassroots political activism are all down. Americans sign 30 percent fewer petitions and are 40 percent less likely to join a consumer boycott, as compared to just a decade or two ago. But the declines are equally visible in non-political community life: membership and activity in all sorts of local clubs and civic and religious organizations have been falling at an accelerating pace. In the mid-1970s the average American attended some club meeting every month, but by 1998 that rate of attendance had been cut by nearly 60 percent.

- **Informal social ties:** Equally striking is the fraying of our informal ties with friends and neighbors and relatives. In 1975 the average American entertained friends at home 15 times per year; the equivalent figure is now barely half that. Virtually all leisure activities that involve doing something with someone else, from playing volleyball to playing chamber music, are declining.

- **Tolerance and trust:** Although we are more tolerant of one another than were previous generations, we trust one another less. Survey data provide one measure of the growth of dishonesty and distrust, but there are other indicators. For example, employment opportunities for police, lawyers, and security personnel were stagnant for most of this century - indeed, America had fewer lawyers per capita in 1970 than in 1900! But in the last quarter century these occupations have boomed, as we have increasingly turned to the courts and the cops to make others keep their word.

<u>Why has this happened</u>**?**

Like the murder on the Orient Express, this is a crime with multiple suspects. Some suspects can be exonerated; for example, residential mobility has actually been steadily declining for the last half century. Time pressure, especially on two-career families, is the most notorious suspect, but the evidence suggests that it is at worst an accomplice. Changes in family structure are another part of the story, for more and more of us are living alone, and conventional avenues to civic involvement are not well designed for single and childless people. Suburban sprawl that has fractured the

spatial integrity of our lives is a surprisingly important contributor. Electronic entertainment, especially television, has profoundly privatized our leisure time. The verdict on the Internet is still out. Will its primary effect be to reinforce existing social networks, as the telephone has done, or will it become a virtual substitute for them?

Most fundamentally, our nation is in the midst of a generational change that will make the problem worse before it gets better. A "long civic generation," born in the first third of the Twentieth Century, is now passing from the scene. Their children and grandchildren (Baby Boomers and Generation X-ers) are much less engaged in most forms of community life. For example, the growth in volunteering over the last 10 years is due almost entirely to increased volunteering by retirees from the long civic generation. However welcome this development may be in the short run, it represents not springtime of civic spirit, but an Indian summer. In short, none of the traditional channels for community connectedness fit the ways younger Americans have come to live their lives.

B. Selected statistical trend data

Three primary data sets were used extensively in the research reported in *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Interested researchers should consult *Bowling Alone* (and especially Appendix I) for more details on these data sets. Two of these (the DDB Life Style archive and various state-level measures of social capital) are now available for downloading from this site.

The DDB Life Style data, made available through the generosity of DDB Worldwide of Chicago, Illinois, who retain appropriate rights, including copyright, on these data, while allowing fair use for scholarly and academic research. Copyright 1975-1998 by DDB Worldwide. Also available for downloading is a simple summary of the 389 variables in this data set. In all this data set covers 1975-1998 with a total un-weighted sample size of 84,989.

The 14 state-level measures of social capital, along with the Comprehensive Social Capital Index, are described in Table 4 and pp. 290-291, of *Bowling Alone*; the underlying sources of these data are given in the endnotes to those pages.

The third data set, the Roper Social and Political Trends archive, was compiled and cleaned through the efforts of a joint research team, headed by Professor Henry Brady of the University of California-Berkeley and Professor Robert D. Putnam of Harvard. The underlying surveys used to create the Roper Social and Political Trends data set are archived at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, and the Roper Center retains ownership of the data. For that reason, the Roper Social and Political Trends data set is available only from the Roper Center itself and only subject to their usual terms and conditions.

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Mary Merrill is a dynamic, engaging speaker and a skilled facilitator. She has been a featured speaker at three World Volunteer Conferences and has worked with a wide range of organizations in the United States, Canada, Russia, Armenia, Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil and the United Kingdom. She designs strategic planning processes, employee development seminars, and serves as a consultant to nonprofit organizations and professional associations.

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