



Distinctive Comm Award

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### Distinctive Communicator Award

Each year the Communications Committee reviews Squadron and District newsletters and websites and selects those which merit special recognition for sustained quality throughout the year that not only promote life within the United States Power Squadrons® but also instill interest and inspire and encourage members of the public to take courses and join our organization. This achievement is recognized with the **Distinctive Communicator Award**. The awards program for publications and websites has changed. There is one award for each category and is intended to recognize those publications and websites that meet or exceed defined award criteria. You can learn more about the award criteria for each category by downloading an Evaluation Form for either Publications or for Websites. Lists of those previously recognized can be found in our Archives. The list for 2017 awards is available elsewhere on this website.

If your squadron or district would like to receive this award, just click on [How to Win](#). If you believe your newsletter or website is worthy and was not recognized for the award this year, click on [How to Appeal](#).

Districts or squadrons recognized for the **Distinctive Communicator Award** can proudly display the logo in their newsletter or on their website. **To save a logo image** click on [publications](#) or [websites](#) for whichever logo is desired. For Windows - right click on the image, copy, and save. For Mac - Control-Click on the image and select desired action. For iPads - tap the desired image and hold your finger on the image. You will have an option to Save or Copy the image. If you choose to Save the image, it will be saved to your iPhoto album. If you copy the image, you can paste it into an email and send it to yourself. Open the email on your computer and save the image as described above.

Squadrons of newsletters so recognized are encouraged to bring a maximum 25 copies of their award winning publication to share with others at National Meetings at the **Parade of Publications**. Why only 25? Space is unfortunately limited and we want to assure there is adequate space for all.

#### Distinctive Communicator Award Logos



#### SO YOU WANT TO WIN AN AWARD!

It's easy. Criteria for Publications and Websites are posted on the dropdown menu under **Forms**. The evaluation form for websites includes an explanation regarding the criteria. Here is a summary to help you better understand the criteria for publications:

1. The title of your newsletter should be large and clear. You are free to make it as artfully and tastefully as you know how. The name of the squadron and/or district should be shown as well as the legends "A Unit of the United States Power Squadrons®" and "Sail and Power Boating". Indicate the periodicity of your newsletter (i.e. monthly, bimonthly, etc.) and print the date of the issue. It is a good idea to list the volume and issue number for future reference.
2. Include stimulating articles on boating education (the boating classes and advanced/elective courses being offered), safety, boat shows, raft-ups, cruises, co-op charting, other civic services and every activity in which your squadron or district participates. There should be an article to promote the activity and, following the activity, an article to tell what happened and who was there. Always include pictures if possible. Put the most interesting articles on the first page. Remember your newsletter is your squadron's primary marketing tool and you are writing it for members who haven't attended an event for some time to try to make them active (or at the very least, to retain them as members) as well as for those who participate regularly. Rank and grade should accompany each name. Members are proud of the grades they have earned and are proud of responsible positions in the squadron or district. More ideas can be found in **Hints for the Editor**. Add congratulations for course completions and welcome new members.
3. Include a message from the commander or an assigned bridge officer. These messages should be inspirational, motivational and demonstrate leadership. These qualities are expected of all bridge messages. Avoid, "Thank you for..... Thank you messages belong in articles following an activity or event.
4. Squadron newsletters should have articles about district activities and conferences as well as information regarding Governing Board meetings, USPS annual meetings and whatever may be going on in the many national committees. This kind of information about USPS is being posted on the USPS bulletin board and can be downloaded and included in articles. Don't just copy these messages. Rewrite them and give them meaning for your members.
5. The overall appearance of your Newsletter should not only be legible, it should be readable, inviting your members to pick it up and start to read. Refer to the **Editors Guide** for more information.
6. Avoid typographical errors, misspelling and poor grammar. One or more members of most squadrons have a computer with a spelling checker. Make use of these but continue to proof read all material.
7. Follow the USPS style sheet described in the **Editors Guide**.
8. Include addresses and phone numbers of key people, including the editor.
9. Finally, look over your newsletter and ask yourself, "Is this newsletter interesting to read?"
10. If you can honestly answer yes to item 9, then **not later than 1 December** send **at least four issues if you are a squadron editor and two issues if you are a district editor**. Squadron newsletters should be sent to the Adviser assigned to your district while district editors submit their newsletters to the Adviser assigned for District newsletters. Most Advisers accept electronic copies of newsletters by email or a hyperlink to your newsletter. Using a hyperlink precludes potential overload of mail servers. Check with your Advisers to confirm which method they prefer.

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#### Weren't Selected? Appeal!

Websites are reviewed/evaluated at least two times each year. The last review occurs between late October and early November where a copy of each review is provided to the respective webmaster. Each review includes comments and/or recommendations from the Adviser. Every webmaster is invited to communicate with the Adviser for clarification or recommendations where deemed essential. Past experience has shown this to be a good process enabling interaction between organization and committee. The problem with an Appeals Process for websites is that there may be question regarding a review that is really a snapshot in time. Nobody can go back to review what was. That's why feedback and interaction between webmaster and committee is so important. As such, there is no appeals process per se since interaction with the reviewer is ongoing. For issues or questions that cannot be otherwise resolved, the unit commander should contact the Assistant Chair responsible for websites.

The former Publications Committee developed an **Appeal Process** that has carried over to the Communications Committee. You'll have an opportunity to appeal if you sincerely believe your newsletter should have received the *Distinctive Communicator Award*. Here's the procedure:

- Complete the appropriate Evaluation Form for Publications. Evaluation forms are available as a download from this website (see dropdown menu under **Forms**). Please remember squadrons are required to submit at least 4 different issues for the evaluation year and districts are required to submit at least 2 different issues for consideration. Can't recall if you sent one or not (email or snailmail)? Take the easy way out and make sure your Adviser receives a copy of every issue you publish.
- Publication editors should mail a copy of the completed evaluation form to their District Publications Chair and discuss the issue with him or her. If both feel that the claim has merit, ask the D/C for an opinion.
- When all are in agreement, ask the D/C to send the Documented Appeal to the **Communications Committee Chair** listed on this website under Publications Advisers.
- A three-person **Appeals Committee** will carefully review the arguments, make a determination, and then forward their decision to the Assistant National Secretary for his or her examination.
- Those submitting the Appeal Request will receive prompt notification of the final resolution.

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