

## Section 10 - GROWTH AND MORALE

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## Growth and Morale

### Introduction

The entire NSS Chapters' Handbook is the result of the personal experience of our chapter activists. However, this particular Section contains the greatest amount of direct input. Its material has been gathered from many sources: conversations, conference workshops and panels, and chapter publications. It addresses growth and morale, two topics which go beyond the specifics of operating a chapter. Without them our chapter system can not live up to its vast potential!

Several basic ideas merit special emphasis in this introduction. The first is that ALL organizations go through cycles, ups and downs. Your problems are probably not unique to your chapter--nor to NSS (although you may think so if you haven't had experience with other organizations). Every group has some problem! And you will no doubt face many kinds of problems throughout the life of your chapter.

Are you sometimes puzzled by the lack of enthusiasm for our message or for your chapter's activities? One thing we shouldn't forget is that while the public has a very broad interest in space, this interest is usually not very deep. Our job is to build upon their general positive feeling and educate them about the relevance of space, find out what matters to them, then use relevant arguments. And we must always remember that we are competing with many other groups for people's attention.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** This is the biggest benefit of being part of a chapter system. Help, experienced guidance and moral support is available. Write or call the Chapter Coordinator with your specific questions or general problems, contact other chapters and meet fellow activists at conferences. Regularly reread this Chapters' Handbook for new ideas, things that you overlooked or may now be relevant to your situation. Read it with pen in hand and write as the ideas come. Or read a section aloud with other chapter members to stimulate specific ideas for your group, then brainstorm.

Of course, this is a two-way street. Have you discovered what to do (or NOT to do) about a specific problem? Send it in for the "Help!" section of this Section.

### Goals

An NSS chapter without an overall plan of action is in danger of being, at best, less effective than it could be and, at worse, of eventually bogging down in discouragement. Goals are an important part of any Chapter Plan. Two of the most common tumbling blocks that chapters run into are having too unspecific a goal and not having a balanced set of long-term, intermediate and short-term goals.

Often members decide to start an NSS chapter with the general goal of having an active local chapter like the ones they read about in *Ad Astra*. Unless the new group considers specifically what they want to accomplish, they may dive into a series of unrelated activities that don't seem to have a lasting impact on their community.

Your chapter needs an integrated set of goals that will maximize the effect of each individual project. First you must decide on a basic reason for your chapter to exist. It can be rather general, for example, bringing about a fundamental positive attitude in your community about space development within the next five years. You can have other, more specific long-term goals as well, such as, establishing a physical location as a focus of local space activity, perhaps a museum exhibit area or some kind of office.

Then you must consider what intermediate and short-term goals will get you to where you want to go. One intermediate goal might be to establish an active speakers' bureau. You can then make a list of the short-term tasks that will help realize that goal: getting slides and putting them together into a short presentation, acquiring handouts or other items that speakers will need, getting members to volunteer, training them, gathering a list of community organizations to speak to, advertising the bureau, scheduling speakers and evaluating the program.

Of course, you may alter or replace your longer term goals as your chapter changes. However, that possibility shouldn't keep you from benefiting from both the immediate rewards of short-term goals and the stabilizing force of long range planning.

Ideally we should consider chapter goals in light of how they can fit into an integrated plan for grass-roots local, state/regional, national and Society-wide (international) goals.

### **The Chapter/Community Relationship**

(Thanks to Dale Amon for the original concept for this section.)

Another all-important part of a Chapter Plan is to consider the impact your chapter does--and could--have on your community. To make this easier, you can think in terms of a graphed curve. The height of the curve at any point stands for the number of people who presently hold a certain view about space development. At the far left are people who are actively committed to the concept, at the far right are those who are totally unaware of it. Everyone else in your community falls somewhere in between.

The shape of this curve is probably not even and symmetrical. Its original shape will depend on: 1) what the attitudes of the people in your community currently are (you can guess at this or do a survey), and 2) where you place various classifying factors along the bottom axis.

A typical curve has the NSS chapter leadership, which we will call Group 1, at the extreme left end of the curve. To the right is Group 2, the active members of your chapter. The ratio of these two groups is probably in the range of 1:1 to 1:9. Next comes Group 3, those who are members of your chapter, probably getting your newsletter and attending an occasional activity. The ratio of Groups 1 and 2 (active members) to the total of these three groups (total membership) is often in the range of 1:2 to 1:5.

Group 4 are the people who attend a chapter activity, see an exhibit, or have other direct contact with your chapter, but are not members. Group 5 individuals are those who are aware of the existence of a local NSS chapter. Group 6 is aware of space development and perhaps NSS, but not your chapter. Group 7 is the rest of the people in your community.

The Basic Goal of all your chapter activities should be to move the curve towards the left. Group 1 is increased as your chapter grows and you move active members into existing and new chapter leadership positions. Past chapter leaders can move into the largely untouched area of regional activity.

Elsewhere in this Section there are suggestions for how to turn inactive members into chapter activists. An on-going recruitment program should be aimed at Group 4 people to bring them into your chapter.

Specific publicity strategy should be focused at each of the remaining groups. Sometimes the message you want to get across should be very simple: that your local chapter exists and does worthwhile things, or just "space is good".

You can use this classification technique for sub-groups within your community--teachers, business leaders, students, members of a particular organization, women or minorities. This can also be a valuable way of defining target audiences for individual programs and projects.

**Keeping Your Chapter Active**

by David R. Jones, Jr.

So you've decided to form an NSS chapter. You'll put up a few signs, maybe write your local paper. No sweat. Get together and have a good time. Easy? Only it doesn't work that way.

To have a good chapter you must be active. To keep active you need "planned" events that will keep your members' interest. These events should be a wide variety of things, such as discussions, movies, guest speakers, trips, projects, contests--you name it. Just so long as you take time to plan it out and keep it interesting.

Involve your group in lively discussions. The more controversial the better. Announce the subject at the preceding meeting so your members can come prepared. And be prepared yourself. You must start it off, usually with your own opinion. A few subjects that have worked well are: Who should be allowed to go? How should we live (culture)? Interior designs for living and military vs civilian control.

Or you could base your discussions around movies. Movies are available for free or for return postage from many sources. NASA has many on a wide range of subjects. Most libraries have movies or access to them, ask to see their lists. Also, many large companies (such as AT&T) make movies that might interest your chapter. Write and ask.

Don't limit your group to just space movies. Go for diversity. Look for related topics like agriculture, communications, environment. And not just movies. Look for various speakers.

Speakers can be found at local universities, industries, through libraries, other clubs (such as astronomy, AIAA chapters, ham radio satellite users, etc). Look for a variety of topics: power generation, waste disposal, international and space law, the environment. Many subjects relate to space settlement.

If the speaker can't come to you, go to him. Take trips to museums, observatories, NASA facilities, etc.

**plan projects**

See what your members would like to do. You could put together slide/lectures on such subjects as space habitat design history or solar power satellites. Offer them to local schools, clubs, even church groups. Put out a newsletter. Be it fancy or small, it keeps your members informed.

**have contests**

Use space books as prizes. Have contests to name chapters, to design chapter patches, for posters, for space poems, to name habitats (how about an entertainment habitat?).

**put up displays**

Libraries love for someone to fill their display boards. Set up tables at science fiction conventions, Sun Day activities, college registrations, public events. NSS has some nice membership forms, make your own handouts. Sell bumper stickers or postcards (they're hot items).

And along with displays goes publicity. Many local newspapers are more than glad to run notices of your meetings--and are hungry for stories. Just don't get too technical for the local Earth-based folks. And keep NSS Headquarters informed of your activities.

Most important, find out what your chapter members are interested in. Start working from there and expand outwards. There is a universe of events and topics awaiting you.

### Chapter Development

[Ed Note: This section has been written primarily from material supplied by Bill Rudow and Ken Poe.]

#### growth

As an educational organization, the National Space Society's goal is simple: educate all people about the unlimited potential for human expansion that the opening of the space frontier will make possible. There is a lot that a small group of people, organized into an NSS chapter, can do to further this goal, but to really have maximum public impact, a chapter will have to grow.

Chapter size is dependent on both membership and activity. A small but active chapter has the potential to become a large and active chapter. On the other hand a chapter with a large membership which has become inactive and out of touch is likely to be in danger of folding.

There is a tendency to expect a chapter to experience explosive growth immediately after forming. If this happens, so much the better; but if explosive growth does not occur, it is important to maintain good communication among members and to keep up the level of activity.

#### recruitment

As you plan a recruitment program, you must understand what your chapter has to offer--A Lot!

There are tangible benefits, such as your newsletter, use of the chapter library, borrowing and sharing among members, the right to vote and hold office, access to tours, etc. that one wouldn't have as an individual, and perhaps a poster/button/sticker/publication when he/she join or reduced rates for events or publications.

More important are the intangible benefits: the opportunity to learn about space for a lifetime hobby or as a career aid (teachers), having a source of up-to-the-minute info., being able to actually help the space program, belonging to a group, having the chance to meet interesting new people of various ages with different backgrounds and viewpoints, making professional contacts and friends with common interests. Activists get a feeling of accomplishment and gain the appreciation of their peers. They have extensive opportunities for self-development: to develop creativity, leadership, new skills, upgrade skills, to work with a variety of people, teach, organize, write, edit, design and construct exhibits, do publicity, explore careers, make career contacts, experience personal growth, and add to their work history. Young people get the chance to work with adults as equals.

Most of all, we offer them the opportunity to make a difference, to be a pioneer, following in a great tradition, and to work towards a hopeful future for all humanity.

A Membership Committee must be an integral part of your chapter's structure. If you stop recruiting new members, you are on your way to stagnation and death.

Each public event will usually attract some strongly interested individuals. Even if only one new person shows up at a public meeting, the meeting should be regarded as a success, especially if he or she turns out to be an active member.

Other ways to find new members are through direct mailings, membership signs, video/slide presentations, mall exhibits, a list of services used in community outreach and notices in company and club publications. Word of mouth is biggest tool for chapters.

You can have special membership drives when your entire membership concentrates on recruiting. Divide the group into teams and have some type of competition. Have membership nights, a rally or other contests. Make it fun and keep it simple.

If you decide that you need a specific kind of member, or ones with specific skills or assets (such as social skills, people management abilities, or even free time), you may target specific groups for recruitment.

Remember that some of the best leaders and workers are “unemployed”, but with other means for meeting their basic needs (food and shelter): housewives, students, retirees, etc. Retirees who have business experience, or understand the workings of your community, are especially valuable.

Many of us can remember our response upon discovering NSS--“Where have you been? I’ve been looking for a group like this all of my life!” Such “closet spacers” are usually NOT joiners and, therefore, will usually not have any experience at leading such a group. On the other hand, their self-identification as a “spacer” tends to make them more dedicated and (in some cases) more reliable. It is well worth your extra effort to go out of your way to train these folks!

### **new members**

Only in very rare instances will a chapter encounter a new member who wishes to become very active right away. In general new members will state that they’re glad to join but regret not having very much available time to participate in activities. This makes sense. If they’re valuable, they’ve been doing something with their time. It would be irresponsible to just drop their other commitments. However, they do want to do SOMETHING! They did not join just to come to meetings.

The amount of time that individuals devote to NSS activities will depend mostly on how important they feel it is. Every inactive new member can be potentially turned into an active member, but the process will probably be a slow one. When interested new members are found, be sure that they are sent some information about the chapter and the National Space Society. Call them and let them know about some upcoming activities. Don’t put them in charge of a project, but do get them committed immediately to participate in a project or committee! Active members have to be cultivated, not bulldozed.

Your Membership Committee should have specific people who are responsible for seeing that new members are welcomed and integrated into the group. You can color-code name tags at meetings for officers, members and newcomers. Then assign a couple of extroverts to greet new members and introduce them informally. You may also want to introduce them to the entire group during the meeting. Everyone should say Hi and introduce himself.

A Membership Committee member might “adopt” a new member and look out for them until they are well established in the group; perhaps call and see if they need a ride to the meetings, etc. You can invite them to small group activities to give them a chance to get to know a few people. Some chapters publish a list of new members in their newsletter. Make an effort to quickly turn them into an “insider”. Don’t leave them in the dark about the chapter leadership or its organizational structure. Do NOT let them fall through cracks in the system. A New Member Packet works well (see Section 2).

### Activating and keeping members

The chapter newsletter should be the main vehicle of communication. If there is a general consensus that a chapter is too small (or poor) to publish even a very simple (news)letter, options such as a regional newsletter with shared responsibilities can be pursued.

Announcements of all upcoming activities should be included in the newsletter along with articles about successful past events. Although this information will not be news to the nucleus of a chapters membership, inactive members who are considering donating their precious time and talent will realize that the chapter is truly an activist organization.

While the newsletter is the visible communications vehicle which formally states a chapter's activities, direct communication by telephone is often more important. Frequently a member will forget about an upcoming meeting or for various reasons will lose interest. A telephone call from an active member often influences the decision to attend a given meeting or not.

In general, a policy of active members contacting inactive ones can be a great boost to a group's morale. Similarly, inactive members and interested people should be encouraged to call chapter officers to find out the latest information on various events. Communications of this nature can be the necessary prod to sparking additional chapter activity.

Use questionnaires, awards (such as the most active new member), work sessions, phone trees and other personal contact to keep members. Watch out for attendance after a dull meeting.

Remember that all members are individuals with their own needs and reasons for joining. As early as possible, determine what these needs are (through surveys or personal contact) and establish a direction for the chapter that will meet these needs and interests while still accomplishing the goals of the Society.

Regular meetings are habit-forming. For regular monthly meetings, try to pick days later in the month, the first two weeks are usually overloaded with meetings. There are two schools of thought about scheduling meetings: one that by using the same day, i.e. Wednesday evening, you put the "keep it simple" rule to work for you. It becomes known as "my NSS night", reducing conflicts. However, some argue that by changing days of the week (and maybe weekends), every member will be able to attend some activities.

### Morale

by Chris Peterson

Nothing is better for a local NSS chapter's morale than putting on a successful public event! The group will be on a high for weeks afterward with that "We did it!" feeling. The "it" doesn't have to be an earth-shaking event to bring on this reaction. In fact, a highly successful small event is better for morale than a large event that falls short of expectations.

How to bring the group cheerfully through the project and at the same time make sure enough work gets done to have it be successful?

First, don't overcommit the group or allow members to overcommit themselves. It hurts a lot to say "I'm sorry, but we have to back out on our promise. We just aren't ready." Far better to run a jam-packed "NSS Hour" at the public library than to bomb out on "NSS Month" at City Hall. Start small to gain experience, then go for big projects. Remember that the difference between a packed "NSS Hour" and an empty one is Advertising! It doesn't matter if your speaker is Abraham Lincoln--people won't come unless they've heard about it, preferably two or three times.

Spread the tasks around. After all, only those who actually helped will get that great feeling of accomplishment we're aiming for. Even if they only make a couple of phone calls or stuff a few envelopes, they will feel that they made a contribution and deserve some credit. And they're right! Praise them for their efforts. No matter how little they're doing they could be doing even less. Honest praise will spur them on to greater things. On the other hand, criticism on a job poorly done is rarely effective. Just mentally note the problem: "I guess Joe isn't very motivated. We'll give that job to someone else next time." But don't make Joe feel bad about his failure; he may prove valuable in the future.

Communicate! Phone calls are best. For example, once a week have Sue call Bob, Bob call Joe, Joe call Sue, etc. Without a schedule these calls will lapse: after all, we're all busy. Regular contacts with other successful NSS chapters are helpful too: the more experienced chapter guides the newer chapter.

If an internal squabble arises, try to focus on the task at hand. Sometimes a decision must be made as to who is "right". When this happens, look at the people involved. Who is a "talker" and who is a "doer"? The doer is more likely to be worth listening to.

Finally, take photos during the preparations and during your successful event. These are great ego-boosters and you may need them for *Ad Astra*!

So, you've had a wildly successful project and the participants are extremely pleased with themselves. What's to be done? Why, have a party, of course! Give out awards with lots of shouting and clapping. Pass around the photos and congratulate each other. You deserve it! Encourage non-participants to attend the party also. They may feel a bit left out and will make quite sure to help out next time.

Write up your experience and send it to the Chapter Coordinator with pictures. If it gets published, your group will really love it! While you're at it, send it to the local newspapers. An article will do wonders for both morale and membership growth.

Other notes on morale:

- 1) Do most work between meetings, not at them. Use them to report on past actions and plan the future. Don't spend too much time discussing details like "should there be cows in space settlements?" Our goal now is to spread word of the possibility of such settlements and their benefits to Earth, not decide exactly how they should be.
- 2) Although reaching out to the public with these ideas is a lot of fun, we also need to educate our legislators, i.e., lobby! This can be rewarding also.
- 3) Don't spend too much time and money on an elaborate newsletter. Many functions of such a newsletter can be served by a combination of the telephone and *Ad Astra*.
- 4) Encourage your group to break bread together. Potluck or restaurant meals will help everyone get acquainted and keep in touch.

### **Machiavelli and the Art of Chapter Building**

by Dale Amon

#### **growing your own: the mushroom management principle**

(That which does not kill them makes them strong.)

To grow your own staff you have to give responsibility, take chances and sometimes put up with serious mistakes. Delegating responsibilities when you are certain you can do it better and quicker is very difficult for a neophyte leader. But keep in mind HOW you came to be better and quicker. You learned by making mistakes and seeing how badly things could be screwed up. Think back, and you'll probably remember at least one incident in your past that left you red-faced because YOU were responsible and every one knew it. All people want to be accepted and respected by their peer group. This makes



responsibility a very powerful tool. It must be noted that it only works if the individual is part of a peer group (your chapter) and cares about the respect of theirs in the chapter, OR whose efforts and name are highly visible to a valued peer group (professional society, community leadership, etc.).

If you want good people, you have to give them the same opportunity to screw up that you had. If they know you will step in and pull their buns out of the fire when things get tough, they will not grow. You have to develop the iron constitution it takes to watch someone getting themselves into a hole and let them get themselves out. You can make suggestions, but don't take over unless: 1. The person is not trying. 2. The person is showing gross incompetence and an inability or unwillingness to learn. In either of these cases, you are probably better off without the person. If the person asks for help, give advice, suggest people who can assist, BUT DON'T LET THEM OFF THE HOT SEAT.

If the person is worth the effort to develop, treat them as an adult. If they screw up, simply state what they did wrong. Your emotions about the event have absolutely no place at all in such sessions. Emotionalism is for despots with goon squads, not for leaders of volunteer organizations. Part of the price of leadership is the loss of your freedom to be emotionally attached to projects.

If genuine effort was made, you should act as a teacher and assist the person in identifying what went wrong. If you can socratically lead them to discovering the answers on their own, then so much the better.

But what of those who just can't handle a project? As a general rule of thumb, you should ease the person out of the area they can't or won't handle in as gentle and subtle a way as possible. It is even better if you can get them to suggest the idea. The subtlety is required because it is in general a good philosophy not to make enemies, or to demoralize those working with you.

Exactly how you carry out the above requires a careful evaluation. It may be YOU have misapplied the skills of an individual with special talents. The person may not even be aware of hidden talents they have, in which case you are doing them a favor by searching for them.

An amazing change comes over people when they find an area that matches their skills and their interests. When such happens, it is best to stand back and watch the work fly.

### **opportunism**

(Organizational Social Climbing)

Plan, but keep your eyes open for unexpected opportunities. If you are trying to find a membership chairman, don't miss taking advantage of a PR person that happens by. All plans are dynamic. Just because the world refuses to cooperate with your plan is no reason to despair. Simply incorporate reality into the design. Sometimes even mistakes or disasters can be used to good effect. You just have to keep looking for the positive aspects. This also helps the morale of your group. If the leadership is despondent, think of the state of mind of the troops!

### **professionalism**

(You Are What You Appear To Be)

Executives are busy people, and the more likely someone is to be useful to you, the busier they are likely to be. It is a self-defense for the sanity of such people that they quickly cull that which deserves their attention from that which does not. This determination is based on subtle cues learned over many years of dealing with people, and such cues are usually accurate; otherwise the person would not be where they are. If the classification is "unimportant" or "energetic but too inexperienced to accomplish anything", you will find it very difficult to gain any further attention.

What this means to you is simple. ALWAYS be professional in dress, manner, attention to detail, attention to QUALITY. If you are sending a letter, it should be on letter head, printed letter quality, contain

NO spelling errors or typos, be formatted as a standard business letter, well aligned on the page, no smudges, etc. You must strive for perfection; attempt to have the same polished look as letters you receive from large corporations. You may bet your behind your entire group will be pigeonholed in someone's mind based on the first glance at your letter. Never take a chance with the first impression you make, whether in person or in proxy; it is very likely to be a permanent impression.

Professionalism covers every facet of your appearance and behavior at any time you are representing the National Space Society. This means dressing appropriately, being well-prepared and being on time. If you are going to be late or are not prepared, you always call and apologize for the impending delay. No excuse is acceptable after the fact except your own death. And if you have agreed to be on a talk show, your notice had better be DAYS in advance. And even then you may get a bad reputation, unless you already have a very good relationship you can afford to strain. When dealing with a scheduled media appearance, there are no acceptable excuses for not showing up. If necessary get a replacement, because even though they will be polite and understanding (read: professional) when you call to cancel, your throat is cut.

Whether the powers that be in your local community come to view you as a group of cool professionals or a gaggle of insignificant sci-fi freaks is entirely up to you.

### **building depth in your management**

(Enduring the Slings and Arrows of Outrageous Fortune)

For an organization to be able to survive whatever Murphy throws at it, you must make sure that each important area is not only covered by a competent person, but that each person is working with an heir apparent who is cognizant of ALL projects, contacts, methodologies, name lists, friends, enemies, etc. in the area of question. Thus if you lose a key person, the knowledge locked up in their head does not go with them: it has become part of the structure. The new person must then begin bringing someone ELSE up to speed.

This goes doubly for yourself. What would happen if you got run over by a sandworm? Everyone is replaceable, but without some forethought, an organization can go through major problems while it attempts to find such a replacement. This can include internal strife if you have built a one-person show: your lieutenants may each think they are the best able to take over and may end up shattering the organization with infighting.

You may think this does not sound like a "democratic" organization, but keep in mind that someone selects candidates for a job. If the selection process puts turkeys on the ballot or fails to generate a strong consensus, your organization is doomed to lay an egg.

Someday you have to step down, or move on to a national job. After all, do you REALLY want to run a chapter for the rest of your life? It is the sign of a job well done when you can step back and the chapter can walk and even run on its own.

### **building infrastructure**

(Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones...)

You must have infrastructure before going for mass membership. When someone pays for a membership, it means you have one year to use them or lose them, probably for good. So it does little good to expand at an enormous rate, because you are likely to collapse just as rapidly next year. If you don't have people to contact, befriend and support your neophyte space activists, they will decide their energies are better spent elsewhere. One or two people cannot nursemaid an army, no matter HOW good they are.

Rapid growth at the start can cause a complete loss of control and an ensuing anarchy that may prevent a group from accomplishing anything. An organization needs a strong, respected local leadership. This is best developed by handpicking the initial group, picking some small projects, learning to work

together, and continually culling and improving the central leadership group. When this group has become experienced and tight-knit, you are ready for mass membership. This is not to say you should not grow in the interim. Just make sure the growth is controlled.

### organization dynamics

(And To Every Season, There Is A Purpose)

Organizations go through stages that require changing types of people and organizational structure:

1. Start up (entrepreneurs, fluid structure)
2. Transition
3. Maturity (professional management, fixed structure)

Entrepreneurs and professional management types usually go through a severe conflict during the transition from entrepreneurial to mature organization. As the operating structure becomes more and more formalized, as required by a large organization, those who perform best with structure of their own creation almost invariably leave.

### strong leadership

(DEMocracy, not MOBocracy)

Strong leadership is necessary if you want an effective organization. Democracy does not mean arguing over details. It means selecting the best people you can, and following them so long as they are accomplishing the goals of the organization, and getting someone else at the next election if they are not. It maybe useful to look at elected chapter officials as being more closely related to the top level management of a corporation. As long as they operate effectively they keep their jobs and have virtually a free hand in day to day operations. If they do not succeed, the stockholders (chapter membership) has them escorted out the front door after the fiscal year end report.

If a leader can't make any decision without a vote, you will go nowhere, particularly in the earlier stages when a certain freewheeling entrepreneurial flair is required. This type of flair can be frightening to those not used to it, but without it a chapter will permanently remain a club.

More mature organizations will of necessity have more limitations on authority, and in fact are better off without the entrepreneurial start up types.

But even here limitations should primarily be in bylaws, not in constant abuse of Robert's Rules. After all, if they can't do the job, why were they selected in the first place? Get the best people you can find and get the hell out of their way while they get the job done.

### brief thoughts

- If you want good people, you have to be doing something that is big enough to be of interest to them.
- Reach should always exceed grasp (slightly). Flexibility means you don't freeze the structure early.
- it depends on the people you find.
- Balance elements. Don't concentrate so heavily on your favorite area that it grows out of proportion to others.
- Any system left to itself will invariably go from bad to worse.
- Understand the direction of your community. Find the parade and get in front of it.

### Awards

An awards system can be an effective tool for improving or sustaining chapter morale. The awards you give depend on the size of your chapter and what effect you want them to have. You can set up one or more regular awards, then ask for nominations and have your membership, an awards committee or your Board of Directors vote. Ideas for awards include:

- "Most Active New Member".
- Remember that it is better that you as the organizer get no recognition than to neglect a pat on the back for any fledgling activist who made a contribution.
- Task related awards--for the member who coordinates or attends the most work sessions, setup the most library exhibits, writes the greatest number of newsletter articles, gives the most talks, etc.
- Standing, non-competitive awards with defined criteria, so that everyone who meets the criteria gets the award (like Scout merit badges). These can include a certificate for X number of members recruited, with add-on stickers or a stamp for each additional number; a pin or patch that a member can wear when they have qualified as a member of the chapter speakers' bureau, perhaps by taking a training course and/or by giving a certain number of presentations; a "Space Educator" award for organizing and teaching a class, or meeting specific qualifications. Make sure that getting the award signifies REAL achievement.
- Awards for Contests--can be more for fun, or as a way to get a logo, new ideas, artwork for the newsletter, etc. --"Outstanding Achievement"--can be awarded monthly or yearly, as an actual award at an installation dinner, or with a biographical sketch in your newsletter. (Take care that this not be divisive, leading to worse, not better chapter morale by setting one individual or faction against another. If this is likely, then use the non-competitive, standing awards.)

Awards can also be used for publicity purposes. Send out a press release and photo of your major award winner(s). You can also give awards to non-members for positive contributions to space development--scientists, corporations, books, movies, etc., or for space education within your community, such as the teacher who makes the best or most innovative use of space development concepts in their classroom. By advertising among the educational community for nominations for this award, you bring your chapter and the potential of space education to the attention of local educators. You can also ask them for nominations for student awards. (See the section on science fairs in Section 5.) Take care that the media understands that your chapter is making these awards, NOT the National Space Society.

The actual awards can be certificates with your chapter seal (see Section 2), memberships in NSS and/or your chapter, plaques (expensive), posters or photos, books (see if a store will donate one or more, if you give them credit), pins or patches. See the Resources section for dealers in space-related items. Check first if items sold by NSS or other chapters can be used. Your chapter may be able to sell an award item that it produces, such as an "NSS Space Educator" patch or pin, to other chapters.

### Old Leadership

If your chapter is to be a dynamic organization year after year, you must consider how to move new people into the chapter leadership. To a certain extent, chapter growth will automatically produce more leadership positions, as jobs become too large for one person. You may need both a Recording and a Correspondence Secretary; Executive, Programming and Education VPs; or perhaps a Copy Editor and Production Editor for your newsletter. You may need to set up committees or "Working Groups" for areas like membership, publicity and education. When someone takes on a significant, on-going job, it may be wise to give them a title. Titles cost nothing and give recognition to your achievers.

Eventually, newer members will want to move into your top leadership. What to do with your "old leadership"? (You?) Former leaders often invent a new job or move on to regional and Society-level activity. This is good for the chapter and for NSS. Of course, they can run for chapter office again later on.

What if you are in danger of losing a leader because he or she is tired and over-worked -- "burned-out"? If you don't have newer members to take over, at least exchange jobs. Even if you need the person, it is better to let them rotate out, when they insist. See if they don't have one favorite project or task, no matter how small, that they have never had time for, but would like to do. At least get them to act as a consultant, try not to lose them completely.

### **Saying Good-bye**

Sooner or later you will find that people will leave your chapter: They graduate, move out of the area to a new job or face a personal crisis. Some may decide that they just do not want to be a member anymore.

Be sure to say thank you in a special way to all people as they leave, no matter what they have done. We hope that they will remain members of NSS, recommend it to others, start a chapter in their new location and maybe even come back to your chapter someday. Members often keep up their membership in a chapter even after they move away. Try to conduct an "exit interview" in person or with a survey. Why did you join? What were your expectations? How were you recruited? Why are you leaving? (Follow up if it is because of a legitimate lack in the organization.) What suggestions do you have for improving our chapter? Note: you should ask similar questions of your members-- while they still are members!

### **Student Chapters**

Students are well worth your effort. They have time, energy and often an activist interest (but usually not money and often lack transportation). As soon as you have one member on a campus interested in starting a chapter, he or she can hold an organizational meeting with the backing and organizational expertise of the city chapter. This gives access to students, media, free rooms, maybe also money, printing and other materials. For commuter colleges, plan "Brown Bag Seminars" and other lunchtime activities.

Student chapters have special problems staying active during vacations, exams, and when activists graduate. There is heavy competition for a student's time and energy. An interested faculty or staff member can be an invaluable stabilizer. A student chapter can also have a mutually beneficial on-going relationship with a nearby community NSS chapter.

When planning a student chapter, make sure you understand the campus schedule. Membership recruiting and the organizational meeting should be done at the beginning of a semester. Find out procedures and deadlines for becoming a recognized student organization and how to apply for student association membership, funding and other benefits. You may have to apply in the spring to get these for the following year. Avoid scheduling during exam periods, semester and summer breaks.

NSS chapters have also been formed at high schools. You may find an interested teacher when you are a guest speaker in a science class (usually the teachers can bring in outside people). Tell the students that they will not be able to go if there isn't an aggressive program.

**Tactics For Dealing With Crazies**

by Chris Peterson

At some point your chapter may find itself saddled with a crazy whose only interest is discussing his obsession, namely achieving the One True (a) economic system, (b) political system, (c) Union with the Greater Galactic Being. A useful approach for the group leader to take here is to acknowledge the person's interest and assign him to "study it" or "discuss it with others interested" at another time. Make it sound informal; do not give him an official position.

Explain that the group does not have time to discuss his idea at this meeting. If he insists on continuing a discussion which the other members are clearly uninterested in, be firm in changing the subject. The group as a whole will support you.

**Help!**

While we don't want to be too negative, we suggest there are some problems that are common to many chapters at some stage of their existence. This brief question and answer section is not intended to solve complex problems in a few glib sentences, nor to replace individual guidance from experienced people like the Chapter Coordinator. However, it can help you to recognize problems and consider possible solutions.

**Problem:** "We have plenty of interest and enthusiasm, but not a lot of time."

**Suggestion:** Remember that ANYTHING you do is more than is being done in your area right now. Pick one of the small projects from this Handbook that interests your group and consider how it might be done if everyone devotes a little time to it. Make sure that no single person, especially you, takes on all the work and responsibility. Your goal should be a small, successful projector activity that everyone has worked on.

Of course, one thing that all members can do is circulate space development books and other material among their families, friends, co-workers and neighbors, then get them to join NSS. By doing this as a group, you can develop strategy, share materials, even keep track of everyone's progress as an incentive.

**Problem:** "We plan great meetings, but no one comes."

**Suggestion:** Try to "hitch-hike" on existing events with a guaranteed turn-out. Air shows, Scout and school events have worked well for some chapters. Form alliances with educational or community organizations. Is publicity your problem? Don't hesitate to spend half of your time on PR efforts.

**Problem:** "No one in our chapter has a lot of money, and chapter dues will not pay for the projects we want to do."

**Suggestion:** Pick cheaper projects. Or cut out the frills. Do they really increase the project's effectiveness? Make a wish list of materials and equipment (and also expertise and time commitments) that can be published in your newsletter, then try to find donors. Have a fund raiser. If your members really want to do an expensive project which cannot be funded any other way, see if each will donate the money they would spend on one luxury to it. Will a certain group of people benefit from it? See if they can help. An established chapter with a good track record could look into grant funding for a big project.

**Problem:** "People come to one meeting, then never come back."

**Suggestion:** Look at your meetings as an outsider would. Are you a closed group, too busy exchanging news and items to talk to newcomers? Do you spend a lot of time on dull chapter business which should be saved for business meetings? Do you have meetings just because they are scheduled, even if there is no real reason for them? Are they too technical? Are they unrealistically advertised? Are you all talk and no action? Do you fail to let newcomers know about chapter

activities? Remember that you often have only one chance to capture a newcomer's imagination and interest.

**Problem:** "We don't seem to be accomplishing anything."

**Suggestion:** First make a list of your chapter's recent activities. Are you really not accomplishing anything, or do you just feel that way because your activities are uncoordinated and not planned to move your chapter toward a specific goal? If you really are not getting anything done, follow the suggestions in this Handbook for brainstorming and setting goals. Your members need to see some concrete results, fast. Every chapter needs to see progress. Make a yearly list of accomplishments and publish it in your newsletter, along with congratulations and thanks to specific workers and the chapter at large. Avoid having do-nothing, at-large board members. Everyone should have an area of responsibility.

**Problem:** "Our chapter started out so well, but now we have lost our enthusiasm and our chapter seems to be dying."

**Suggestion:** Do you know each other & your opinions too well? Has your chapter grown dull and stale? Are you in a rut? Every chapter needs a steady flow of new people with their enthusiasm and new ideas and perspectives. You can get new blood through recruitment projects and by starting a new chapter in a nearby town or at a local college.

Variety is the spice of life! Pick a totally new kind of project. Stay open to new ideas, directions, points of view. Are you doing the same things, year after year? Regularly evaluate and review ALL projects, even "sacred cows" like the newsletter. Brainstorm and decide what the chapter wants do.

Work on regional or Society-level projects. Work with kids. Adopt a new group or one in another country (ask the Chapter Coordinator).

**Problem:** "How can we get more members to come to meetings (to be active)?"

**Suggestion:** Are your expectations reasonable? You will probably never get 100% participation. (NSS chapters probably have a higher level of participation, especially at the beginning, because we have a commitment to goals and definite ways to work towards them.) Remember that as long as a person is a member, there is the potential that the right time and activity will come along to increase their participation. Survey members to find out what they want to do. Experiment to see what works best. Chapter activities do not have to be deadly serious, just because we are concerned with serious issues. Never depend on guilt to get members to meetings.

**Problem:** "No one wants to work but me!"

**Suggestion:** Look honestly at your methods. Are you running a one-person show, not leaving room for others' ideas, contributions and feelings of accomplishment? Or are you demanding too much for the size and level of commitment of your group? Do you make activities fun, or make members feel guilty and uncomfortable because they are not living up to your expectations? They will soon find more pleasant ways to spend their time! If you suspect that your personality may be the problem, try to get someone else to organize a small activity and support it from behind the scene. This may be hard on your ego, but it may be the only way to get the group working together. If the other members are genuinely uninterested or unable to do anything, pick a small project, like a library display case exhibit, that you can do alone and may attract new interested people.

Even members who are genuinely too busy to take on a major job can usually find a few hours to do specific tasks at a work session. Can you find a way that they can combine space activism with what they are already doing? A mother who is asked to lead a youth group for her daughter's friends could start a Young Astronaut chapter instead. It still will require a lot of her time, but serves two purposes at once. Community service can be done with some fellow chapter members to increase your chapter's visibility. A student can incorporate a space topic into a required paper or research project that can also become a newsletter article or PR handout. Ingenuity can produce unexpected dividends.

If the problem is that outsiders do not follow through on promises, try not to depend completely on them, have backups and other activities.

**Problem:** "Morale in our chapter is terrible!"

**Suggestion:** Take a careful look at your situation. Is morale bad because of specific condition or happening (a failed activity?) or is it a more general malaise? If the former, you must take immediate steps to analyze and solve the problem.

If morale is just generally bad, consider ways to boost it. Do you recognize individual accomplishments? Give credit in your newsletter, public thanks at meetings, send thank you letters and give out award certificates.

Do you have conflicts between people? Before you can deal with them you must decide if it is a conflict of personalities or about goals and methods. Do you have a dominating person? See if you can involve combatants in separate projects. A little healthy competition may even increase your chapter's accomplishments. Some people work better alone than in groups. Are your problems basically financial? Are they really external problems, caused by people or institutions outside your group? How can you work around them? Geographically do you actually have two chapters?

Does your group have a positive attitude? Members can't just sit and complain. You have to face up to your problems and work on them. Be too stubborn to let your chapter fail. Get as many members as possible to the next NSS or regional conference. Not only will they be able to discuss specific difficulties with experienced activists, but enthusiasm at conferences is contagious! They will go home with renewed energy and determination.

**Problem:** "We goofed!"

**Suggestion:** Don't let your chapter be devastated by a mistake. Chalk it up to experience, and learn what you can from it. Analyze exactly what went wrong and how it can be prevented in the future. Try to cut your loses. If you made a bad impression on an influential person or group, look for a way to remedy it. Never commit an untried group to a large event. Have one or more small activities where you can evaluate workers and methods. This way you learn from small mistakes instead of big ones.

**Problem:** "Our chapter seems to have a negative image in the community.", "In spite of X years of activity, no one seems to know our chapter exists."

**Suggestion:** See the section on publicity for guidance on creating and maintaining a positive image in your community. Try working with schools and youth groups, community involvement projects or affiliating with a museum or other institution. And don't be shy about making sure your chapter gets credit for what it does!

If you can't give the local contact address and phone number in a publicity situation, at least mention that NSS Headquarters is in Washington, D.C. Someone who is interested can call Washington directory assistance to get HQ's number and our staff will put them in touch with you. If you can afford it, put a listing in the phone book for your chapter under its name and/or NSS. Then you can always mention "we're in the book". Make sure the local media knows how to contact you when they need fast information or a quote for a space-related story.

**Problem:** "Almost all our members are young, single, white, male and technically oriented. How can we attract a wider range of people?"

**Suggestion:** To attract more women: monitor the media & send information &/or a newsletter to women who seem like good prospects. Send information to women's organizations and offer to speak to a meeting. Chapters of Zonta, a women's service organization, have Amelia Earhart month meetings in January (she was a member of Zonta), when they look for aviation-related speakers. NSS chapters which have had women who were active and highly visible from the beginning tend to have few problems maintaining a balanced membership. Sending a male-female team to media interviews also helps let women know they are welcome.

All-male chapters must consider their attitudes, type of meetings & locations. If you want families, you must pick locations and activities where families feel their kids are welcome and comfortable: picnics, potlucks, pizza or dessert parties, rocket launches. You can't always meet in a bar or at expensive places. You have to be prepared to sometimes put up with a two-year old's



chattering during meetings. If you want both parents to be active you have to realize they will probably have to bring the kids along. Can you have a corner of the room where the older kids can entertain the younger ones? They may soon ask to come along to chapter activities see their friends. And kids can really help sometimes, if you plan for it. They grow up fast and will become NSS members, start college chapters, etc. Advertise to attract families: "NASA film for the whole family", "Families Welcome", "information about the Boy Scout Space Exploration Merit Badge and Young Astronaut program", etc. Have a space model exhibit and demonstration or rocket launches. Parents are always looking for free fun things to do with their kids.

Programs for Young Astronauts, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are another logical way to work with families. Just make sure that you get to talk to the adult leaders and parents too. Ideally will work so well with YA, SEDS, technical & specialized organizations that their members &/or members' families will join NSS as their general citizens space group.

Supply the moms in your chapter with slides and some suggestions or a script for a slide program for their kids' classes or youth groups. You might even end up with a great speaker.

**Problem:** "We don't have any luck working with other groups in our community, even those with related interests, like astronomy and engineering."

**Suggestion:** Form alliances, either by carefully selecting a general or specific common goal and then suggesting how both organizations can work towards it, or if that doesn't work, by using an indirect approach. A roundabout way of developing an alliance with reluctant groups is to target a specific group that you would like to work with and choose one or more programs or activities based on a topic of interest to them: the environment, economic development, women or minorities in space or astronomy. Then invite the group to send a speaker to give your chapter members insight into their interests, point of view and specific knowledge. You in turn will educate the speaker about space development (especially with the question and answer period following his presentation) and, through him, his group. Then you can try to send a speaker to their group, and suggest a joint meeting or project. You can also see if you can "infiltrate" a group with a few of your good members.

### Are You Having Fun?

While this may not seem to be important, you must remember that your chapter is not a short-term project; you want to be in for the duration. You can't keep going indefinitely on idealism if chapter activism is a grim chore. It must become a rewarding part of your lives! The rewards are many. It is not frivolous or wasteful to consider this when planning your chapter's course.