

• THE CHINA LAKER •

A publication of the

CHINA LAKE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

P. O. BOX 217

RIDGECREST, CA 93556-0217

(619) 939-3530

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NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Number 1

Board of Directors: Burrell Hays, President; Milton Burford, Secretary; Steve Sanders, Treasurer. *Members:* John Di Pol; Bill Porter; Harold Manning; Dick Murphy; and Paul Homer.
Trustee: Admiral Wesley McDonald, USN (Ret).

Newsletter Has a Name —

Many thanks to our supporters in the search for an appropriate name for our newsletter. This was an interesting project, for we received some unique names to choose from. The board finally selected one provided by Capt. Mike Sellars USN (Ret); henceforth the "letter" will be named "THE CHINA LAKER". Mike's list included the following: The Missileer, Mach One (or Two!!), The Propheteer, Desert Ramblings, Jets and Petroglyphs, The Petroglyph, The China Laker, The Road Runner, The Horned Toad, The Sidewinder, Sage Brush, Tumble Weed, and Chaparral. Thanks again to Mike and to all of you who sent in suggestions.

Foundations Museum Concept And Plans

Nearing Formal Approval —

Since January 1995, The China Lake Museum Committee (CLMC), chaired by Scott O'Neil and working in concert with the Foundation, the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Command, and the Commander of the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD), has been seeking official sanction of the Foundation's plan to develop and construct a Naval Armament and Technology Museum at China Lake. The effort continues as the CLMC and the Foundation members respond to questions sent to us from Washington, D.C. Let us assure our readership that bureaucracy is alive and well in Washington!

The CLMC request is modeled after the formations and relationships already approved and established between the Navy and the Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola and the Naval Undersea Museum at Keyport. The Committee has had numerous discussions with the senior leadership of these museums as well as the leadership of their supporting foundations. Many positive discussions have occurred between the CLMC and the Chief Historian of the Navy, who is delighted with the concept and anxiously awaits the forwarding of the request from the Naval Air (NAVAIR) Systems Command Headquarters. Foundation President Burrell Hays and
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CLMC members Scott O'Neil and Mike Ripley-Lotee have had several meetings concerning the Foundation's willingness to provide the maximum level of cooperation with the Navy in the establishment and operation of the Museum.

Taking a new program to Washington always proves to be interesting. This is also true of an existing program which has had very little activity over the past several years, i.e. the establishment of a new Naval Museum. From day one, that is the situation the Foundation and the CLMC have found ourselves in. The process seems to repeat itself as though it had never been done before, for not only is the task a process of re-education and the evaluation of new instructions, but several personnel are new to the concept.

The encouraging news is that the CLMC has provided background paperwork and information to the Commander of the NAWCWD, Admiral McKinney, who has reviewed a draft response to the latest round of questions fielded by Washington. In a meeting with Scott O'Neil and Burrell Hays, Admiral McKinney assured them that he was very pleased with the concept of the museum. It is anticipated that the "log-jam" will soon be broken to move the request to the Navy's Chief Historian Dr. Dudley.

Approval and sanction of the Foundation's concept for this museum is critical to the onset of our major fund raising campaign. This action will set in motion formal activity and contact with interested elements in Corporate America as well as other grant providing foundations and private individuals.

Operating in parallel with the efforts to gain approval for the museum concept has been the activity towards the development of a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the Foundation and the Navy. Now a smooth first draft of that memorandum has been reviewed and polished by the legal staff at the NAWS China Lake, and changes are not expected. This Memorandum will establish the operating principals for the museum and the details necessary for the foundation to initiate and complete construction. At present over one hundred acres of land beginning just West of Norma Street in Ridgecrest and extending from Inyokern road North several hundred feet into the base and then to Sandquist Road are earmarked for the Foundation to construct the museum and provide out-of-doors exhibits. Signature of the MOU is expected when the overall concept has received Navy approval.

Board Establishes a Building Fund —

The board of directors established a building fund during 1995. This fund will receive percentages of the general revenues brought on board by the Foundation in fund raisers, memberships, and other means. The fund allows potential donors to direct all or portions of their donations toward the construction of a new Armament and Technology Museum at China Lake which is the current primary financial goal of the Museum Foundation Board. As with any donation to The China Lake Museum Foundation, all such amounts are treated as exempt from federal income taxes under present IRS Tax Codes, Section 501 (a). The Foundation has been incorporated for Educational Purposes and has received an IRS ruling that it qualifies as a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization. The board is looking forward to a bright future for the development of funds to build a Museum and the establishment of the building fund is another accomplishment toward that end.

Major Fund Raising Campaign —

Initial plans have been set for the development of a fund raising campaign. The initial objective of this campaign is that of obtaining the capital required for the design and construction of the Museum facility. Once the Museum is complete, continued support will be required for maintenance and upkeep as well as for possible future expansion.

Considerable preparation is required before solicitation of support can begin. A professional fund raising organization has provided some basic guidelines for use in preparation for the solicitation.

A critical and basic requirement is the recognition of the Foundation by Navy as the supporting non-profit organization and the approval of the construction of a museum. This recognition/approval should occur shortly and at that time the fund raising efforts can proceed full steam ahead. This is why there is so much emphasis by the Foundation and the China Lake Museum Committee to secure the recognition and approval required from Navy.

Foundation Plans For Gift Shop

After several conversations with the Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Weapons Station, permission has been received for the Foundation to develop and open a Gift Shop in the Exhibit Center. This will be a welcome addition to the facility. People who visit the Exhibit Center frequently inquire about the availability of a Gift Shop, since they want to buy a memento of their visit or a gift for a friend.

A team of volunteers has begun to plan the layout of the shop. The selected location is the Chart Room. Many of you will remember this as the room behind the fireplace in the dining room when the Exhibit Center was an Officers Club. The entire Chart Room will be dedicated to the Gift Shop. This room is adjacent to the Foundations business office which is in the North end of the Center.

A complete complement of gift items will be carried in the Shop. These will include videos, poster art, tee shirts and sweat shirts, ball caps, aviation models, coffee mugs, party favors, books describing the area from past to present, and a host of other items. It is expected that the shop will be open during the office hours of the Foundation and gradually expand as the Exhibit Center opens for the weekends and the Foundation office hours expand.

The plans for the gift shop are being worked on now, and it is expected that the board will have approval so that development and construction will begin in mid 1996. The shop is expected to begin operations shortly thereafter. Dick De Marco is leading this effort for the Foundation.

Volunteers Needed For China Lake Exhibit Center —

Some months ago, several members of the China Lake Museum Foundation served as volunteers to assist the staff at the China Lake's Weapons Exhibit Center. The purpose of this effort was to augment the resident staff in handling and assisting visitors coming into the Center. This program, while successful in its intent, was of limited scope and operated only during the weekdays that the Center was open. The number of visitors to the Center did not materialize as expected and resulted in periods

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of inactivity. This was due in part to the lack of a larger facility located near the main gate and lack of advertising, etc., all features that will be corrected with the new museum. As a result, the volunteer program gradually diminished.

More recently, there has been renewed interest for greater involvement by the Foundation in the operation of the Exhibit Center, arising from two principal factors. Because of the budget crunch this fiscal year, NAWCWPNS seriously considered the elimination of the staff portions assigned to the Center. Weapons Division personnel informally inquired of the Foundation if it could assume staffing responsibilities with volunteer personnel, thus avoiding the option of total closure. This matter has been resolved, at least for the time being, with the decision by NAWCWPNS to maintain the assignment of one staff person. However, the ensuing discussions within the Foundation Board of Directors has lead to consideration of another aspect. The Board believes that the Foundation could play a role in the operation of the Center to the mutual advantage of both itself and NAWCWPNS, based upon keeping the Center open for visitations, albeit with shorter hours, on Flex Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday. On these days only, Foundation member volunteers solely would be in attendance. Promotional activity would be undertaken to publicize and promote visitation by the public in general and organized groups in particular. This suggestion has been made informally to cognizant NAWCWPNS personnel.

Along with this, several member volunteers have been organized as docent "tour guides" to assist Exhibit Center staff on an ad-hoc basis in hosting visiting groups. The docents give a brief orientation/introductory talk, sometimes show a video film appropriate to the interests of the group, and help interpret the exhibits as the visitors tour the Center, usually on a weekday, but sometimes on a weekend. The several efforts recently accomplished so far on this basis have been very successful.

To carry-out both of these efforts to their fullest extent, especially the opening of the Center on Flex Fridays and weekends, a much larger cadre of member volunteers than now currently exists is required. If you are interested and willing to help, please complete the "member volunteer Survey" form and return it to the Foundation at the address indicated. Board Member John Di Pol is coordinating the effort. Feel free to call him at 375-2610.

Foundation Office —

The China Lake Museum Foundation office is located in Room 3, China Lake Exhibit Center, Building 500, Essex Circle, China Lake, California 93555-6002. The mailing address remains P. O. Box 217, Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217. The telephone number is (619) 939-3530, and the FAX number is (619) 939-0564. Hours of operation are 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday through Friday (except Flex Fridays).



**SURVEY FOR PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEERS
AT THE CHINA LAKE WEAPONS EXHIBIT CENTER**

Please check one or more boxes:

- YES, I can assist on FLEX Fridays and/or weekends on a regular, periodic basis.
- YES, I can assist on FLEX Fridays and/or weekends on an ad-hoc basis.
- YES, I can assist as a Docent Tour Guide on an ad-hoc basis.
- During regular work days.
- During Flex Fridays or Weekends.
- I am interested in attending a briefing for more information.

Your Name _____
Address _____
_____ Phone No. _____

Please return to:

China Lake Museum Foundation
Attn: John Di Pol
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