

POSSIBLE VCOC CONVENTION CRUISE

A month ago if you had asked me about the possibility of having a VCOC convention (note: Seven other MOAA councils do have annual conventions), I would have not been very enthusiastic. I would have assumed that it was too much work and not worth the effort. However, after talking to a couple of Council presidents at the Council President's Seminar in April and listening to the pitch from MOAA's new travel partner, I'm now thinking that a short "convention cruise" in lieu of our Bi-annual dinner in October 2011 may just be an idea worth exploring.

It may seem like a long way off, but if we were to try to do this in October 2011 we are already on a fairly tight time line for planning. My intent is to send you all the information I have right now and get your reaction/input. At our VCOC meeting on 8 July, it's on the agenda under New Business for discussion. We will need to make a final decision not too long after the meeting. I have been communicating with the MOAA travel agent and she will hold our space and prices until November 2010 – almost one year out. But people will need to sign up by then and pay their deposit..

I will forward you the current proposal we have from MOAA Travel. For simplicity and cost, I only asked for information on a cruise from Norfolk to Bermuda in October 2011. Unfortunately, the response was that there were no ships sailing to Bermuda during the time frame that I asked for. However, there is one sailing from Baltimore to Bermuda and that may be pretty accessible for our people.

As I see it right now, here are the pros and cons:

Advantages:

- A convention cruise could be a lot of fun! First class entertainment is provided.
- A convention cruise (open to all members) would be informative, foster camaraderie, and expose more chapter members to VCOC and MOAA.
- Can be an excellent fund raiser. (Fla. Council President said they made \$5,000 on their convention booklet alone.) Also, we get a rebate from the cruise line depending on the number of cabins rented.
- We can accomplish onboard ship all the necessary business functions that will be needed at that quarterly meeting (e.g. election/installation of new officers, Legislative Committee meeting and Council vote on national priorities, memorial, etc.)
- Allows MOAA related information to be disseminated to more of our chapter members (e.g. Personal Affairs type information, MOAA partners' info, etc.) via seminars open to all members and spouses.
- MOAA Hqs encourages and supports these type Council conventions. (MOAA Hqs personnel attending will pay their own way.)

Disadvantages:

- A convention cruise may be more work than doing our normal Bi-annual dinner.
- There may not be enough interest by our chapter members to warrant doing this.
- There may be a problem getting enough chapter members to sign up and send their deposit soon enough (i.e. one year ahead) in order to ensure the prices and the space available.
- Shipboard entertainment may be a distracter to our planned meetings/events.
- Cost of a cruise may be prohibitive for some people.
- There may be other problems we haven't thought about yet.

For me, the bottom line is that if there is not strong interest and support for doing this then we should not proceed. On the other hand, if we don't at least explore the possibility then we'll never know if we've missed a good opportunity. (I'm not "pushing this" one way or the other.)