



by James Buckley

Three Cheers for The Navy League



(from left) U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead, retiring Santa Barbara Navy League President Karen Crawford, and National Vice President of the Navy League of the United States Doug Crawford (photo by Priscilla)

Officially, it's the Navy League of the United States Santa Barbara Council, but we know it as the Santa Barbara Navy League, and it has been blessed most recently with two effective and persuasive Presidents. **Connie O'Shaughnessy-Los's** presidency (she's now listed as a member of the its Advisory Board) is the one that first brought the Navy League to our attention. Invitations to fly to and land upon both the USS Abraham Lincoln and then the USS Ronald Reagan (trips that I took full advantage of) solidified our support. Trips aboard other ships, including a nuclear-powered sub were all just extra frosting on an already elaborate and very tasty cake.

When Connie left her post in 2006, it was taken up by **Karen Crawford**, who continued aggressively pursuing an agenda that put the U.S. Navy in the most positive light. Under Karen's leadership, the Santa Barbara Council was awarded "Outstanding Large Council" all four years of her presidency. The Santa Barbara Navy League's website and its newsletter both garnered praise and awards.

Karen's husband, **Doug Crawford**, has been named one of only twelve sitting National Vice Presidents of the Navy League of the United States. He also produces the Santa Barbara Navy League Television show, directed by **Grant Ivey** and/or **Jerry Lomonaco**.

Karen's term of office ended in January, but before being "shipped out," Karen presided over one last meeting, hosted by **Greg Gorga** at the SB Maritime Museum and featuring U.S. Chief of Naval Operations **Admiral Gary Roughead** (accompanied by his wife, **Ellen**) as keynote speaker. Among those in the audience: MST (Marine Science Technician) First Class **Chuck Reed**, Sailor of the Year for the US Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment.

Sister Christine Bowman offered a short but poignant invocation, and then Karen revealed that her son, **Justin Crawford**, had been deployed to the Rashid district in Iraq during the surge in 2008 as a platoon leader. "When he returned home," Karen related, "he told us about the Seabees converting an Olympic training pool into quarters for soldiers, and of sailors defusing roadside bombs for Justin's platoon."

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We're going to miss Karen's big smile, dedicated efficiency, and Tuesday mixers (which we could never make because it's the *Journal's* put-to-bed day) but no doubt the new president, **Lin Graf**, will take up where Ms Crawford left off.

There may be more worthy causes and organizations, but surely the Santa Barbara Council of the Navy League ranks near the top of that list of worthy causes and organizations. Anyone wishing to become a member is invited to call 805-879-1598.

Neither military service nor experience is required and we urge you to join the group.