

Announcement of the 2019 D5 Online JN Course

(For D5 SEOs, Instructors and Students)

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USPS® District 5 intends to offer a district wide Junior Navigation (JN) course. JN is the first of two USPS courses which introduce students to the theory and practice of celestial navigation. Though most students who have taken JN did not plan to go great distances offshore, they found learning about the basic principles of celestial navigation and other topics such as astronomy and the history of navigation was great fun.

The prerequisite to enrolling in the JN course is the successful completion of the Advance Piloting (AP) course exam. The course will be given online except for a one-day sight taking session to be held during the summer and early fall. The other online course sessions will begin in mid-September. The sight taking session will be given at selected locations around D5. Attendance at one of the sight taking session will be mandatory. Once a student has expressed interested in enrolling in the online JN class they will be sent the following, via e-mail:

1. A description of the online JN course
2. The JN sight requirements
3. A document which describes how to log onto the online JN class using FreeConferenceCall.com
4. A document which describes how to access Dropbox
5. A link to a narrated PowerPoint presentation, stored on Dropbox, which will describe the marine sextant and explain the JN course sight requirements.

The sight taking session

During the sight taking sessions, instructors will help the students learn how to use the marine sextant to meet all the sight taking requirements. Ideally, there will be one instructor for each four students. We will need D5 volunteers who have completed JN to make this possible. Each student will need access to a suitable sextant (some plastic sextants may not be adequate). Once the students have been introduced to the sextant, they will work in pairs to observe the sun and meet all of the sight taking requirements of the JN course in one day. Typically, the sight taking session will begin at 9 AM and end at approximately 3 PM. Once we know the geographical locations of the students we will attempt, with the help of the SEOs, to set up regional sight taking sessions for the convenience of the students and instructors. Once instructors have been identified they will receive a document which contains information which will help them prepare for the sight taking session and explains the requirements to the students. The students who live near Philadelphia will be invited to Lake Galena, near Philadelphia, for the sight taking session.

Course management

Jim Heckman, SN and Bill McManimen, SN will be the course leaders. Other D5 members who have completed the JN course are welcome as instructors. As mentioned above, their help would be greatly appreciated during the sight taking sessions. In addition, we invite all instructors to sit in on any or all of the online course sessions and a limited number to teach all or part of an online lecture. We also invite

Online JN Course

instructors, whether or not they wish to help teach JN, but wish to learn more about how to teach an online course to “sit in” on the course. The first couple of online sessions would be most helpful to the latter group.

Each squadron which has members who have enrolled in the Online JN course will be responsible for providing sextants for their students and ordering course materials and exams for their students. This will insure that each squadron will get National and D5 credit for teaching the course and will greatly simplify the logistics of running the course.

The online course sessions

To participate in the course, the students and instructors will need a modern computer (no more than 5 years old) and an internet connection. A free program, called “FreeConferenceCall.com” will be used to allow communication between the students and the instructors. A document which explains how to log onto the online course sessions and the etiquette of participating in an online course will be sent to all students and instructors. The instructors will be able to speak to the students and share their computer screens with the students. Likewise, the students will be able to communicate with the class and when the instructor wishes and with the permission of the student, the latter’s screen will be visible to the entire class.

A to-do list:

- 1) If you are interested in joining the Online JN Course as a student or need more information, contact Jim Heckman.
- 2) If you know of potential students who may be interested in taking the Online JN course, send Jim Heckman their names and e-mail addresses. You are encouraged to help recruit students.
- 3) If you are interested in helping teach during the sight taking session or the online sessions, please let Jim Heckman know.
- 4) If you are interested in “sitting in” on all or part of the online JN course, please let Jim Heckman know.

Once we receive responses from the SEOs, the instructors and the students, we will send additional information to each. If you have comments, suggestions or questions please contact us.

Best regards

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