

USNAAA MEETING OF 4-5 May 2006 SUMMARY

by Hank Schwartz '62, NM Chapter Vice President

On the 4th and 5th of May, I attended the Naval Academy Alumni Association 2006 International Chapter Officers Forum and the Spring Board of Trustees Meeting. Both meetings were held in Alumni Hall, while an informal pizza and beer gathering was held at the Alumni House on the evening of the 3rd. In short, everything was very well organized and quite enjoyable.

The Officers Forum on the 4th, included a number of presentations which I will briefly summarize for information.

The first presentation was a welcome address by George P. Watt, Alumni Association President/CEO and a member of the Class of '73. In my opinion, one would be hard pressed to find a more enthusiastic and dedicated individual. He briefly summarized where the Association stood - 51,000 grads, 10,000 non-grads, 4,300 parents, 2,300 Blue and Gold, with 97 Chapters World Wide. Of note, by the end of the second day, there were 100 Chapters. All of the above was referred to as the Extended Brigade. A couple of other key words were:

- Network emphasizing time, talents and resources from the Alumni personnel
- Mission emphasizing high moral, mental and physical standards.

Following the welcome by Watt, Admiral Carl Trost (my old XO and currently Chairman of the Board) Class of '53, gave a brief overview of current Board issues. Included were the efforts to heal the somewhat nasty past election rifts. This subject seemed to ruffle a lot of board members' feathers. If anyone wants to know more details, I'll be happy to discuss what I know. Other issues included the intent of the Board to **make recommendations** and **not directions** to the Superintendent. Finally, there was a quick summary on what the Alumni Association has done for the Academy over the past six or so years. I guess the biggest indicator is the fact that the Association has provided over \$120 million for academic, athletic and general improvements for the Brigade.

The next speaker was Bill Miller, Academic Dean, Provost and a Classmate of mine out of '62. He went into quite a bit of detail as to where the academic efforts were headed. In brief summary, the academic thrust is still toward engineering, but a much greater emphasis is now being placed in foreign languages and cultures, particularly those associated with the Middle-East, China, India, and the Muslim religion. Included in this effort is the establishment of an International Program Office providing opportunities in a 4-year program, including summer professional training, language/culture opportunities and semester exchanges with a foreign country in civilian institutions. But key none-the-less in all these efforts is still the philosophy that **all midshipmen will still be ship drivers**.

Captain Stephen Latta, Vice Dean of Admissions and a member of the Class of '78 was the next speaker. His discussion included the Academy's efforts in finding good candidates with a significant amount of emphasis on women and other minorities. One interesting fact - SAT averages for the latest class was 1309. Other issues discussed were the Blue and Gold Program, the Summer Seminar Program, and Info Forums (road shows) using graduates, current midshipmen and other knowledgeable speakers making speaking tours around the country. The thrust in the latter case - get kids all the way down to the middle school level interested in the Academy.

Next in line was Tim Kobosko, Class of 80. He serves as the Association's Vice President for Information Services. Lots and lots of information provided on what the Association has to offer in internet support in regards to membership, class mail, sharing with NAF and other areas of interest. I asked for a hard copy of his presentation, and if and when I get it, I will forward it to anyone who wants to know more.

The morning finished up with four members of the Class of 2006, and Captain Bruce Estes Grooms, Commandant and submariner, out of the Class 80, who is currently selected for RADM. The discussions were pretty informal, with the Commandant highly enthused about the Brigade and his job. One interesting note, the Brigade Commander who was one of the four speakers, has split service at the Academy. He was originally with the Class of '04, then went on a 2-year Mormon Mission to South Korea and was re-instated as a member of the Class of 06.

This ended the morning sessions and was followed by lunch in King Hall, you know, the Mess Decks. Lunch was followed by a tour of the Uriah P. Levy Center, which serves the Jewish Midshipmen. The Center also has meeting facilities for other Academy activities. After our tour, it was the Superintendent's turn.

Thursday afternoon started with a presentation by the Superintendent, VADM Rodney Rempt, Class of '66. The Admiral talked initially on issues such as morals, character, numbers of females (17.8%), alcohol abuse, maximizing midshipmen experience, officer development and the improved importance of the Honor System. Other areas he discussed included academics, athletics and his concerns. In the case of concerns, his largest problems were sexual misconduct, alcohol abuse and honor violations. In the case of sexual abuse, the latest problem was tops on the question agenda. But because the case was on going, not too much could be said. As for alcohol abuse, if you breathe anywhere from .08 to .15, you're in trouble. If you are greater than .15, you're in real trouble. They are randomly testing people in Bancroft Hall who look intoxicated after coming back from liberty. As part of this program of testing, they are even doing breath tests in town at the local pubs. This is a new effort, and the jury is still out

on the results. His final comments were how the Alumni can help. They included:

- Keep informed
- Support the Foundation
- Get involved with the midshipmen
- Pass on the good news
- Support Shipmates overseas
- Support USNA leadership

I came away from his presentation greatly impressed. Here was a gentleman that was almost jumping up and down on the stage in his admiration and enthusiasm for his Brigade of Midshipmen. Not bad for a fellow out of the Class of '66.

The final presentation for the day was a series of discussions from various Chapter leaders in how they were using techniques known to them as "Best Practices". Several areas which some felt important included dues and ensuring it was paid, getting other organizations (Navy League, parents, Blue and Gold members, etc) involved in the Chapters social events, social events (Plebe send-off picnics, Parent's Club Christmas parties, Summer Secession picnics, sporting events, etc) and one final point of interest was getting private companies involved with Chapter activities. Lots of other good ideas that we might want to review.

Thursday completed with a Banquet at the Visitors Center.

Friday's meeting was that of the Board of Trustees. The meeting was fairly cut and dry, with Trustees responsible for particular disciplines making presentations. Probably of most significance were the monetary efforts. Hank Sanford gave a very detailed presentation on new investment strategies and where the combined Alumni Association and Naval Academy Foundation funding stood. The combined funding goals were aimed at \$225 million. The final accumulated funding was \$254 million, of which 67% was from Alumni donations. Of interest, USNAAA and the NAF combined corporation is ranked in the top five of its kind in the Nation. A final point of interest during this meeting, was the refurbishment of Ogle Hall (Alumni House) in order to meet handicap requirements. Total cost is capped at \$823,000. This will include an elevator, new entrance ramps, and restroom upgrades.

In summary, the two-day event was very informative and highly enjoyable. The Naval Academy remains very impressive and the support groups and staff structure are excellent. We as a Chapter need to stay injected in the process.

If you have gotten this far, I hope I haven't bored you to tears. As for me, going back there sure gets one back into that philosophy of a very small fish in a very big pond. But it does make one very proud to have been a member of a wonderfully intelligent and highly energetic Brigade of Midshipmen.

Follow-up letter sent out by George Watt, USNAAA President/CEO:

Dear Chapter President,

I want to thank you for taking the time out of your busy lives and schedules to join us here in Annapolis for our recent International Chapter Officers Forum. We had a terrific turnout of 88 representatives from 100 Chapters. We're very excited to have reached 100 Chapters worldwide with the introduction of three new Chapters: Western North Carolina, which was represented by Bob Cowin, '69; Southern Arizona, represented by Bill Dolan, '57 and Arkansas, represented by Scott Pursley, '79.

For those of you who had to miss it, we hope you are able to join with us next year. It is a great opportunity for you to share ideas with other folks who are just like you – persons who are committed to and enthusiastic about the Naval Academy and who give of themselves to help bind and bond fellow alumni. We certainly appreciate the time and effort it takes to attend, but please note that we pick up the expense of your travel here and your lodging. We're certain the experience you'll have and the people you'll meet will make it well worth the effort.

Our objectives for each Forum are threefold. (1) to inform and educate - by placing before you the top leadership of the Naval Academy who can bring you up to date on the state of the Academy and the vision for the future...(2) to bring our resources to you. You are able to meet our staff and learn more about the support and capabilities we would like to provide to you...(3) to provide an opportunity for you to share best practices and ideas from your colleagues for your use in your own geographic area.

I would like to recap some of the points I made at the ICOF. Please share these with members of your Chapter.

We are **mission focused** – we exist to support the Naval Academy and its Alumni, today's Brigade of Midshipmen, and tomorrow's Brigade of Midshipmen so that we will continue to be more relevant and impactful than we ever has been in our 120 year history – especially to the Academy. The Association is a duly chartered corporation subject to the corporate code of Maryland. Our trustees and officers act as legal fiduciaries and must manage accordingly. USNA AA is a professional organization with an energetic and highly competent staff, led by experienced and professional leaders. USNA AA is a non-profit business operation – a growing and going concern with considerable assets. We provide comprehensive and competitive services to our Alumni and outstanding leadership to our communities and the country.

A major portion of our impact on the Naval Academy is Thanks to YOU. Thank you for providing your time, talents and resources to USNA and the Brigade of Midshipmen – you have made a positive difference. As our Theme for this forum, puts it, we look to you in your geographic area to be:

“INFORMED ADVOCATES FOR TODAY'S BRIGADE”

In your home community, you personify the Naval Academy, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Extended Brigade and our mission:

“ To serve and support the United States, the Naval Service, the Naval Academy and its alumni: By furthering the highest standards at the Naval Academy”

You serve and support by actively seeking to know the facts; being active and engaged with what the Academy's mission and vision.....To stay informed, we recommend that you read Shipmate, come to our website often; get the facts, not the hearsay, about today's Naval Academy and

Brigade. Call us, talk with our staff members....use our services.

True to our mission, you have recently “*served and supported*” and “*furthered the highest standards at the Naval Academy*” through the Leaders to Serve the Nation Campaign which just concluded. This campaign has had a **transformation** effect on USNA – the landscape and internal programs of USNA are changing in positive ways, thanks to private donations which increase the margin of excellence at USNA

Let me share with you a quick review of the statistics:

- * \$253.7 million in commitments; nearly 76% already paid (\$192 million)
- * 2005 was fourth consecutive year we exceeded Annual Fund goal of \$6.8 million

And perhaps the most significant of all: **Alumni contributed 67%** of the Campaign commitments.

As well, you have “*served and supported*” by “*seeking out, informing, encouraging and assisting outstanding, qualified young men and women to pursue careers as officers in the Navy and Marine Corps through the Naval Academy*” In your geographic areas, you are the extension of the Admissions program through your assistance with Blue and Gold officers, Academy Awareness Representatives; and supporting the Admissions team when they come into your area. Keep up to date on Admissions programs through their webpage at www.usna.edu.

Finally, you have continually “*served and supported*” by “*initiating and sponsoring activities which will perpetuate the history, traditions, memories and growth of the Naval Academy and bind alumni together in support of the highest ideals of command, citizenship and government*”. Your monthly gatherings, your signature events, your Founders’ Day events – all of these help to perpetuate the tradition of the Naval Academy, bind and bond. We ask you to share the “how to’s” of your best events with each other through our online Best Practices Forum.

We have many online services and capabilities to help you reach other alumni and help keep them engaged. To access all of this, I ask that you make sure you have logged into our New Online Community at www.usna.com. Here you will find opportunities to allow individuals to pay for their membership online and sign up for all of your events online. You will find the opportunity to email all of the alumni in your area very easily. It will benefit your efforts to encourage all of those in your Chapter and geographic area to log in and update their profile with us.

Again, thank you for your participation at our recent International Chapter Officers Forum. Thank you for the events you plan on a monthly basis to bind and bond alumni, your coordination with the Parent Clubs in your area, your assistance with USNA Admissions; and the time and effort it takes every day to build those relationships. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for USNA, the Brigade, the Alumni Association and Foundation.
