

AOG Class Support Message

Contributed by RANGITSCH Joseph Francis
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Following is text of an e-mail from Joel Jebb '82, Director, AOG Class Support Program, and Jim Johnston '73, AOG Vice President for Alumni Support, with an update on alumni support and last weekend's homecoming:

Dear Class Leaders-Please see below for a message to you from LTC Jim Johnston '73, our new Vice-President for Alumni Support. Respectfully-Joel

Dear West Point Class Leader,

This is an exciting time to be at West Point, and I am very honored to serve as your Vice President for Alumni Support. In recent years, our programs for graduates and cadets have steadily grown and matured. Your contributions have been essential to these enhancements. In the years ahead, I look forward to working with you to develop new ways to support alumni and encourage them to reconnect with West Point.

My seven years at the WPAOG, along with seven on the faculty in the '80s and '90s, have impressed upon me a number of themes: the passion alumni have for the Academy; the extraordinary dedication, enthusiasm, and capabilities of the Corps of Cadets; how critical diversity is to optimizing our capabilities as a cohesive community of alumni; and the magic in the words West Point. We have a lot to build on as we reinforce the commitment of our active members and seek to attract new participants to activities connected to West Point.

Our Alumni Support staff is superb. It is led by Maryellen Picciuto '86 (Organizational Support), Joel Jebb '82 (Class Support), Jay Olejniczak '61 (Publications), and Duston Sanders '72, who joins the Alumni Support Office as Chief of Alumni Support Operations, following a number of years in Development. I look forward to continuing to work with John Calabro '68, now our Association's Chief Operating Officer. John and I have been friends and colleagues since my first tour in the Department of English in 1982. As many of you well know, the program assistants and administrative and technical staff in Alumni Support do much of the heavy lifting. Each of them is dedicated, smart, and enthusiastic, always willing to help.

A wonderful Homecoming Weekend recently concluded here. For many who returned to our alma mater, the weekend was capped off by The Miracle at Michie-Army's overtime win over Tulane. It was a game for the ages with a season's worth of excitement in the final minutes. Images of Kevin Dunn's Hail Mary TD pass to Mike Wright as time expired and of the Corps as the cadets hoisted Kevin above the sea of white sierra shirts after the game will endure. They called to mind the scene at the Holleder Center following the final buzzer when the women's basketball team won the Patriot League Championship over Holy Cross in 2006-a spontaneous outpouring of enthusiasm and pride among the Corps.

Last Friday, the Superintendent spoke to the large reunion audience in Eisenhower Hall. LTG Hagenbeck '71 talked informally with the group for more than an hour and then responded to questions. I wanted share a few items with you and your Classmates:

- * The Academy will continue to look for new ways to enhance and expand its connection and immediate relevance to the Army.
- * USMA has become the center of gravity for the Nation's fight against terrorism.
- * Help is needed in making West Point more widely known and recognized, especially in African-American communities.
- * USMA's physical program (physical education courses and other elements in the program) is the best anywhere.
- * The winning attitude-an expectation and determination to win-is absolutely critical to preparing cadets for the Army.
- * Coaches are expected to "win more than they lose and beat Navy."
- * West Point's emphasis on moral-ethical training and education is very significant to the Army.
- * Preventing alcohol and sexually related problems and misconduct continues to be a matter of emphasis and concern: a culture where cadets take care of one another and anticipate and

prevent problems is one of the keys to improving in this area.

* The Academy leadership is very pleased with the balance of civilian and military instructors: 22% civilian; 60% rotating military; and 18% senior military. The Superintendent and Dean of the Academic Board Brigadier General Pat Finnegan '71 praised the dedication and values of the civilian instructors.

* The Commandant of Cadets, Brigadier General Robert Caslen '75, told the audience about the realism and intensity of training for the Yearling class at Forward Operating Base Buckner. He said that future Yearling summers would include more time for socialization, getting to know Classmates and reenergizing for the upcoming year. He briefly described Saturday military training during the academic year, saying that it largely focuses largely on training planning and collective training events.

That's a quick update from the Alumni Center on a beautiful Hudson Valley fall weekend. In closing, I want to thank you for all you do, in cooperation with the staff here at Herbert Hall, for fellow alumni, and, by extension, for West Point and the Corps. I look forward to meeting with you in the years ahead and in leading our Association's support of your work on behalf of West Point and the Long Gray Line.

Beat Navy!

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Vice President for Alumni Support

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