

## Plebe-Parent Weekend

PPW Schedule : Note the schedule changes from year to year. This link is for informational purposes, and not meant to suggest the schedule will be the same for your cadet's class year.

Do parents actually wear formal attire at the Saturday dance? Absolutely! It probably isn't worth renting something for the event but if you have it, wear it! This dance has all the markings of a formal ball. A dark suit for men is certainly fine and since there will be lots of company (50%+), you won't feel out of place. If you don't have a suit, a sport coat is OK also. The reception and dinner before the dance is a good chance to say "good-bye" to people you've met during the preceding days and to meet parents from your cadet's Company. You really shouldn't miss it.

Cadets wore full dress uniforms and their dates wore what looked to be like their prom dresses or a dressy cocktail dress. Most Cadets and dates went to the dance afterwards, this set of parents/grandparents were too pooped to care and just wanted to get back to the motel for some sleep!! Girls wore everything from long floor length to short slip dresses, but the ones who were more on the conservative style looked best - this isn't the time to break out the micro-mini dress that looks like there's a yard of fabric total!

Parents and grandparents ran the gamut from tuxes to dark suits, but certainly is not necessary to "rent/buy" a tux as a conservative business suit was just fine. There was still a lot of walking so women looked more comfortable in lower heels. Also, dressy suit/dresses, cocktail dresses, Sunday Church dresses, seemed to be the choices for moms, grandmothers, sisters, etc. Choosing something on the conservative side seemed to be more in place rather than dressing for the New Year's Eve Country Club scene. One question that had come up was where to get ladies hair done before the banquet. If at all possible, it's better to have a style that doesn't need a professional appointment. There is so little time to get something like this done, I can see where it might turn out to be a bigger hassle than it's worth.

It was not uncommon to see the Class tote bags brought along to the dinner right along with the dress purse. Some of this could have been due to weather that year. Some people packed their dress shoes and then switched when they got to the Mess Hall - some had a really "long" walk from cars. The tote came in handy for the camera/camcorder which was used before everything got started to take photos of the Hall and it's history. Allow at least a 1/2 hour ahead to see the whole hall and you can stay afterwards too. Cameras took pictures at the table, but due to the formality of the evening, it would be a little tacky to run around with a camcorder during the event! Here's a time when camera etiquette would certainly need to be used.

Several hints for the dinner - the goblets are yours to keep. We brought some small sheets of bubble wrap and at the end of the evening wrapped the glasses and they went into the tote bag. Also helped when packing them on the plane home. When the ceremonies are about to start, there is a toast right at the beginning and unless you're use to this protocol, you'll be toasting with an empty glass. Go ahead and mention this to the Cadet in charge of the table (in this case it was our son) - he made sure that the sparkling cider or water was poured in time so everyone was prepared for this toast. I'm sure that some other parents (more military background) can explain this a little better. This toast was also done at the beginning of our West Point Societies Founders Day Dinner here in Colorado.

Hope these comments and suggestions help - you'll have a wonderful time!

How can I do advance planning for Plebe Parent Weekend?

Watch the parent lists for information regarding PPW. West Point will send out an official Plebe Parent Handbook several weeks in advance of PPW, and the handbook will also be published on the USMA website, [www.usma.edu](http://www.usma.edu).

BTW, purchasing tickets too far in advance may not secure the best price. Your travel agent should be able to advise you what time of the year will be most likely to have travel "specials." Frequently, January is not a bad time to purchase tickets at a good price.

Is it appropriate to give a gift to my cadet's mentor?

This is a very personal issue and a gift is certainly not expected. The mentor has volunteered time to assist your cadet out of an appreciation for the difficult life he/she leads and from a genuine desire to help. That said, a gift would be very much appreciated, especially for the thought that it represents. Items that are representative of the part of the country are always nice . . . maple syrup from Vermont, cheese from Wisconsin, etc.

Is it okay to take a sibling when you go to Plebe Parent Weekend?

By all means! Although the name is Plebe Parent Weekend, it is for the whole family. Anyone is welcome, siblings, grandparents, friends, etc. All of the activities are open and youngsters definitely DO NOT feel out of place. It is a great (the only?) time they will have to see the entire campus including barracks rooms, mess hall, classrooms, etc. Short of

graduation, it is the "Must See" event of your cadet's four year experience.

Should I attend P-P Weekend if my cadet is away for an official activity?

Virtually everyone who has attended in similar circumstances has recommended it highly. While you won't be with your cadet, you will have an equal chance to see many of the sites which are normally not available such as your cadet's room and the Supe's house. Also, it will be the only chance you'll have to participate in the presentations by the academic departments.

Many parents have found that they can "adopt" a cadet from their son / daughter's company in such circumstances. The weekend is very open with a lot of interaction between parents and cadets.

Since all events are on post, can we avoid renting a car?

Although circumstances differ, renting a car for the weekend is suggested. It is true that most events are within walking distance and all are serviced by shuttle busses. However, transportation to your motel will be difficult.

What are suggestions for gifts to my cadet's mentor?

The following ideas have been suggested by PLEBE-NET members:

Make sure the gift is small enough for the mentor to carry around. You may want to give it to the him/her in a discrete manner, as not everyone brings one. A gift is not required and certainly should not be anything "showy" or expensive! As with so many similar expressions of appreciation, the "thought" is much more important than the "price."

Following are some of the ideas given: a gift representing either the town or State your cadet is from, examples, Vermont, syrup; California, wine; homemade salsa from someone in Texas, someone brought a jar of honey because her husband is a beekeeper. Also, most parents thought a book of pictures of cadet's State (Washington, etc.) was a very appropriate gift, or even a book about a craft or product their town was known for. Boxes of candy and fresh fruit were suggested. Something for the Mentor's house, for example, candles. Someone gave a cookbook with recipes that their State is famous, for example, Cajun food(Louisiana). Also, I was given the suggestion to give a gift for the Mentor's wife or children, or both, since they are giving up time that the Mentor spends with the cadets. And lastly, someone suggested giving something interesting for the home that all of the visiting cadets could enjoy while at the Mentor's house, for ex. a special wooden kaleidoscope. An officer also included that a memorable gift he received was a saber in a shadow box!

All in all, it seems that gifts are not expected and should be a token of our appreciation to the Mentors for their time spent with our cadets. (Information compiled by Alma Gallo).

Can we really go into the barracks and classrooms?

Yes, it is an open house situation. To go into the barracks, you must be accompanied by your cadet.

What types of clothing are worn for the various events?Clothing is generally a dressy casual for the day time events. Be comfortable and dress in layers so that you can take off the sweater or jacket when you're inside. Slacks are accepted in all restaurants . For younger siblings they should be neat and in "good" casual clothes. Make sure they understand that this is their brother's or sister's "place of work". It is a college campus but more than that it is a military post and the cadets work as well as study here.

The banquet is full dress for the cadets and the same for guests. Some people wear formals and tuxes. Others wear dressy knee length dresses or a dressy pant suit and the men wear suits. But it is a dress-up occasion.

Female dates generally wear either a cocktail dress or a long formal and the male dates wear suits or tuxes. The cadets wear full dress or the females can wear the evening dress option. It is the highlight of the weekend.

It is a long weekend so if you can pair outfits with different blouses or change a skirt for a pair of slacks it would condense your packing and still give you different looks. Also, don't forget a hat, gloves, and rain apparel.