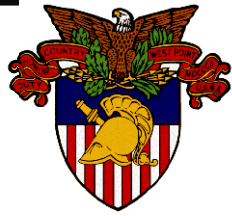




WEST POINT PARENTS' CLUB OF THE TEXAS PLAINS December 2003



Dear Parents,

It is so difficult to believe that Thanksgiving leave has come and gone. But do not despair - Christmas leave is right around the corner, and will be here before you know it! And of course, closely following Christmas is the 2003 All Academy Ball, sponsored by the WPPC of the Texas Plains. We all realize that the Ball falls only two days past Christmas this year. Much work has gone into this event to honor YOUR cadets. What better way to spend a part of your holiday season than with your West Point and Army family? The Ball is nothing without your attendance and so we sincerely hope to have the participation of all of our WPPC of the Texas Plains members.

Andy and I extend our most heartfelt thanks to "our" cadets who came by during Thanksgiving to visit with "The Old Grad and the Ex-LT". You know that we love you all!

Please remember to send me your cadet and family news! This is YOUR newsletter but I need your help.

You may reach me by email at ashaffer@swbell.net or by telephone (432) 697-0813. We will see you all at the All Academy Ball on December 27 and then at the February meeting! Until then,

GO ARMY!

Betty Shaffer Admissions Representative USMA

DON'T FORGET TO BOOKMARK OUR WEBSITE AND TO CHECK IT FREQUENTLY!

<http://www.west-point.org/parent/wppc-tp/index.html>



FROM THE PRESIDENTS' DESK

Thank you to Peter Bowen for the most informative program on the United States Naval Academy.

Your cadets need to be reminded to put the All Academy Ball on their calendars! The dress is Full Dress Gray for the Ball. If you live outside of the Midland/Odessa area, please consider booking a room and staying the night. The Ball is much more enjoyable if you don't have to worry about a long drive home. It will be an elegant affair, the young people look great and everyone has a wonderful time. Make your family plans now to be a part of this memorable evening.

Check with your cadet as to his TEE schedule before you make Christmas travel plans. West Point does not allow cadets to change their TEE times or their duty requirements simply to catch a flight that has been advance purchased.

Nominations for the 2004-2005 Board will be held at the February 15th meeting in Midland. Now is the time to prayerfully consider serving as an officer for the club. If you have any questions as to specific duties and time commitments, please contact Joe or Carla Haston at (432) 366-5586 or (432) 640-8514.

Carla and I are excited to be co-presidents of the greatest WPPC of them all!

GO ARMY!!!!

Joe and Carla Haston



ATTENTION TO ORDERS!



THERE WILL NOT BE A MEETING OF THE WPPC OF THE TEXAS PLAINS IN JANUARY!
THE NEXT MEETING WILL (OF COURSE!!) BE THE ALL ACADEMY BALL
DECEMBER 27 AT GREEN TREE COUNTRY CLUB IN MIDLAND

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE
FEBRUARY 15, 2004 AT 3:30 PM AT CLEAR SPRINGS CAFE IN MIDLAND
THE AGENDA WILL BE A RECAP OF THE ALL ACADEMY BALL AND
NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS FOR THE 2004-2005 WPPC BOARD

Board Positions to be nominated are:

- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- All Academy Ball Chairman



Volunteers!



- Additional positions:
- Boodle Chair
- Publicity

BECOME AN ACTIVE PART OF YOUR WPPC AND CONSIDER SERVING ON THE BOARD!

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR THE ALL ACADEMY BALL!!

DOOR PRIZES FOR CADETS AND MIDSHIPMEN

Please remember that we are relying on all of you to provide the door prizes to be given out at the All Academy Ball. We are asking that each family donate one prize - something that your own cadet would enjoy receiving! You may bring the gift before the Ball, or the evening of the Ball. Your Ball committee has worked very hard to obtain donated door prizes, but we want to insure that each cadet and midshipmen has something special to take home. Please help us to make this a fun event for the cadets/midshipmen and bring a donated door prize. Food, gift cards, DVD's - you know what they like!

**NOW
IS THE
TIME!**



FINAL COUNTDOWN TO ALL ACADEMY BALL 2003!

OR

"THE CLOCK IS RACING!!!!!"



We hope that you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving with your families and cadets. But now it's time to finalize plans and arrangements for our All Academy Ball!

Fund raising has exceeded our most optimistic expectations. Thank you is not enough to say for all of your hard work and the generosity of our contributors.

Our greatest concern at this point is attendance at the Ball because of the close proximity to Christmas Day. Please make your reservations to attend the Ball, and bring your family and friends. **Remember - the purpose of this entire event is to honor your cadets.**

We need volunteers for some specific duties the night of the Ball. We will need people to work at the registration tables and to greet our guests at the door. We are also going to have an AWESOME computer/video segment during the program and we need some volunteers to start and stop the presentation. It will take only a few minutes and training will be provided! This job requires minimal computer skills.

The on-line service for charging tickets to the Ball is up and running. The link is:

<https://www-secure.west-point.org/wppc-texasplains/academy.ball>

Our thanks to Megan Price of West Point Org for all of her help.

Information is also available at >

<http://www.west-point.org/parent/wppc-tp/AAB.htm>

Please remember that **Hendershot will be at the All Academy Ball to do professional portraits.** They do wonderful work and we promise that you won't have to wait in a three hour line! (memories of Plebe-Parent Weekend!)

We will decorate on Friday, December 26 and, as always, can use all of the hands that are available. In addition, we will need volunteers to help with the take-down and clean up the day after the Ball. We would like to have all of these "duties" assigned before our guests arrive for the Ball the evening of December 27.

For those of you from out of town, we would encourage you to stay in Midland the night of the Ball so that you may better enjoy the evening, the dancing, the fellowship and - if you wish, the clean-up the next day! If you need information on hotels or lodging, please contact Paula or Betty. The LaQuinta is offering a special rate of \$40 per evening, which includes a continental breakfast.

Your All Academy Ball committee has been hard at work this past year to make this a most memorable evening for all of you. Please help us to honor our cadets and midshipmen by attending the Ball. We can promise you a wonderful event that you will not forget!

Reis and Paula Ritz

CADET AND GRADUATE BIRTHDAYS!

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Michael Blanco	December 30
2LT Brandon Ritz	December 3
Alan Willis	December 3

Sam Atwood	December 29
Lynn Davis	December 13
Paula Ritz	December 15
Dan Thornbury	December 12



Have you wondered how **Bob and Jane Glover** have fared on their trip across the country following the ARMY football team? Have you experienced bouts of anxiousness not knowing how life in the RV was going? Well, fear not - we have news from the most devoted Army football fans in our WPPC!! Jane has sent the following report to calm your nerves:

"We have had an awesome time this fall. We met and had our pictures made with Pete Dawkins early in the season.... quite the gentleman... nice suit!! We hosted players/families/and friends at Round Pond for the month of September--- in fact, Bob has been named "Mayor of Round Pond".

We incidentally met **COL Hayden** in line at the Quarterback Luncheon at the West Point Club.. we hadn't met him before.. just started chatting over cold cuts! It was so funny to realize that he was "THE" COL Hayden about whom we have heard so much. Then a little while later, we hooked up with Joel and saw him standing waiting for a bus... so we took him back to the Thayer. We all enjoyed him so much!

We will definitely do this again next year. It has been incredible. We just hope that the schedule will work out well for us!

Joel also gave us personal tours of Kimsey and Hoffman!!!WOW!!! Money well spent!! It was amazing... such impressive facilities!

Joel is doing well academically and in football. Although the team has struggled, Joel has actually done very well as far as personal performance. We've talked with **LTG Lennox** numerous times, and he's assured us that they will make the appropriate decision as far as the new coach. He has suffered through all of this with us... every game... even after his dad passed away."

Stay tuned for the further adventures of "**THE MAYOR OF ROUND POND and Family**". We are pleased to report that the Glover's will be at the All Academy Ball so you may learn all the football poop from them during the evening!

Cadet Zach Frisbie, USMA 2007, will be participating on the Sandhurst team for his company, the C-4 Cowboys. Your editor can only assume that Zach is taking a break from his Spirit Mission activities to take part in the Sandhurst Competition!

We can only report on those Firsties whose new branches are known to the editor. For those that we omit - well, we keep asking for cadet news!

Cadet CodySam Davis is proudly wearing the insignia of the Corps of Engineers (Essayons)

Cadet Dustin Navarro has joined the ranks of The Combat Arm of Decision - Armor Branch

Cadet Robert Scheiern will be a "skeet shooter" aka Air Defense Artillery (If It Flies, It Dies)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR FIRSTIES. WE ARE **SO** VERY PROUD OF ALL OF YOU!

REMINDER! The annual Army - Navy party has been canceled due to the numerous conflicts of our members. Some of our members are traveling to Philly for the game and we do expect a full report! GO ARMY! BEAT NAVY!

Some of you may have seen this version of The Night Before Christmas, as it has made its way around the internet. But this year it seems appropriate to reprint it here. The story is that it was written by a Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan. As you celebrate the holidays with your family and loved ones, please keep a special place in your hearts and prayers for our military who are so far from home and serving in our defense.

Tw'as the Night before Christmas,
He lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house made of
Plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney
with presents to give,
and to see just who
in this home did live.

I looked all about,
a strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents,
not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle,
Just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures
of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,
Awards of all kinds,
A sober thought
Came through my mind.

For this house was different,
It was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
Once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,
Silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor
in this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
The room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured
a United States Soldier.

Was this the hero
of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho,
the floor for a bed?

I realized the families
that I saw this night,
Owed their lives to these soldiers
Who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world
the children would play,
and grownups would celebrate
a bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom
each month of the year,
because of the Soldiers
like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder
how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve
in a land far from home.

The very thought
brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees
and started to cry.

The Soldier awakened
and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa, don't cry,
This life is my choice;

I fight for freedom,
I don't ask for More,
My life is my God,
My Country, My Corps."

The Soldier rolled over
and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
so silent and still
and we both shivered
from the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave
on that cold, dark night,
this guardian of honor
so willing to fight.

Then the Soldier rolled over,
with a voice soft and pure,
whispered , "Carry on, Santa,
It's Christmas Day, all is secure."

One look at my watch,
and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas, my friend,
and to all a Good Night."