

WPSA NEWS

The Newsletter of the West Point Society of Atlanta

<http://www.west-point.org/society/wps-atlanta/>

August 2002

Gelineau '81, McCorvey '74 to Lead Society

Officers chosen to lead the West Point Society of Atlanta for 2002-2003 include the following:

President	Ali Gelineau '81
President-Elect	Jesse McCorvey '74
Vice-President	Dale Hajost '82
Secretary	West Stewart '63
Treasurer	Max Hilsman '96
Public Affairs	Fred Gorden '62
Programs	Don Reinhard '59

Other members of the Board of Governors include John Petty '61, Phil Browning '62, Mike Gaines '73, Harold Cooney '74 and Carol Sumter '90. The Board also includes Past Presidents Dom Crea '70, Jim Eberle '71, and Dan Baker '73.

THE PRESIDENT LOOKS AHEAD

Two Thousand and Two has been a significant and exciting year for the West Point Society of Atlanta. As the end of this historic year approaches, and the Academy begins the next century of producing leaders for the Army and our Nation, much is in store for graduates and former cadets in the Atlanta area.

We continue the vision of being "the model West Point Society in support of the U.S. Military Academy, cooperating in service and civic activities and social projects to promote the principles and welfare of USMA, its graduates and former cadets." For the 7th consecutive year, the WPSA has won the Distinguished Society Award, and due to the multitude of activities and strong member interest, 2003 will bring the 8th award, and the highest level of recognition by the AOG.

More importantly, 2002-2003 brings with it ample opportunities to gather with classmates, and other graduates and friends of West Point, thanks to several extremely dedicated individuals who serve you year-round, many listed throughout this newsletter. Whether your purposes are serious or lighthearted, there is every reason to participate in your Society. See the membership article for more details.

All our usual activities will be continued, including our popular monthly luncheons. Thanks go to **MG (Ret) Duquemin '47** for his timely perspectives on the Middle East during the June luncheon. Look for another discussion on Terrorism/Counterterrorism, in the Fall, and insightful comments from **MG (Ret) Fred Gorden '62**, former USMA Commandant and new Board of Governors member, early in 2003.

This is the year for Army, as we Beat the Hell Out of Navy on December 7th and celebrate at the local Annual Army/Navy Game Party. Plan to support the Veterans Christmas Party in December, and All Service Military Ball on December 22nd, which is hosted by our West Point Parents Club of Georgia. On March 8, 2003, we'll celebrate our Annual Founders Day with **Anne and LTG William Lennox**, USMA Superintendent, as our guests of honor.

Next Spring, enjoy the great outdoors and beat Navy at the ever popular Army/Navy Golf Classic, our major fundraiser for the Youth Development Program. Our programs continue to grow as we add a fall picnic and a southside Happy Hour/networking event. Regardless of your location in metro Atlanta, your job schedule or interests, there's something for you this year. *(continued on next page)*

The President Looks Ahead, cont...

Something new: beginning mid-September, dues and event fees can be paid on-line via credit card over our secure website.

"THE DAYS"

August 28, 2002: **Benny Havens Monthly Happy Hour** (last Wednesday of every month) Frankies Sports Bar (three blocks inside I-285 on Roswell Road in the Prado Shopping Center). Warmup at 5:30pm. Event starts at 6:00pm. Contact Max Hilsman for details 404-459-3833

September 14, 2002, 12:00 noon: **Fall Picnic** at the home of Bette Rose and Mike Bowers '63. Flyer enclosed.

September 19, 2002, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm: **Luncheon. President's Report on West Point Society Leaders Conference, Petite Auberge, Toco Hills Center. Take Exit 89 off I-85 (North Druid Hills Road); go East approx 2 miles.**

October 17, 2002: **Luncheon. Program and location TBA**

November 21, 2002: **Luncheon. Program and location TBA**

December 22: **All Service Ball, Renaissance Concourse Hotel Sponsored by West Point Parents Club of Georgia**

March 8, 2003: **Founders Day Dinner, The Commons, Fort McPherson. Guest speaker will be the Superintendent, USMA**

RSVP for all events to:
WPSA Voice Mail 404-881-8081

Board of Governors Meetings
Second Thurs 7:30-8:30 a.m.
The Commons, Ft McPherson
All members welcome

Based on member feedback, we're pursuing charitable organization tax-exempt status, affording donors the benefit of tax deductions and enabling the Society to contribute more to worthy causes supporting the ideals of USMA and its graduates.

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to all the dedicated, hard-working members and friends of the Society who make things happen on a near-daily basis. Many of you work behind the scenes to all our benefit, and make the West Point Society of Atlanta a prominent organization which is well-respected among all graduates. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to serve you as President, and look forward to another outstanding year.

If you're interested in some of the latest information from the AOG and USMA Administration, and evidence supporting whether or not the Corps has, attend our September 19th Luncheon, where I'll be giving a short presentation based on the mid-August Society Leaders Conference. Surprises abound!

Ali Gelineau '81

Past President's Report

Beginning with the vision of being "the model West Point Society in support of the U.S. Military Academy," the Board of Governors last year adopted the mission of cooperation "in service and civic activities and social projects to promote the principles and welfare of U.S. Military Academy, its graduates and former cadets." The successes earned in the Bicentennial year came from that vision and mission.

The luncheon program featuring such luminaries as **Jean Sasson**, author of *The Rape of Kuwait*, **Doug Middleton** of the Metro Atlanta Red Cross, and **GEN Al Haig '47**, continued to draw graduates and friends together, as

did the evening social with the Naval Academy alumni at Dante's Down the Hatch. Our Bicentennial Founders Day celebration set attendance records, and was the talk of the town.

In keeping with our commitment to our community, and to having fun, the annual Army-Navy Golf Challenge netted about \$1800 which was used this summer to sponsor several deserving students at SummerScape at Georgia Tech. Our support of the youth in our area included the Governor's Send-off of Academy appointees from all over Georgia in June.

We also supported with donations and attendance the Forces Command Celebration of the

Army's 227th Birthday in June, with many of our members participating in the week-long activities.

Of course, the efforts of so many graduates also contributed to our being named a Distinguished Society by the Association of Graduates for the seventh straight year!

It was a great year, and I enjoyed immensely meeting everyone and working with our fabulous Board of Governors and our great membership. I wish Ali Gelineau and the rest of the Board of Governors, and the Society at large, the best of experiences in the coming year. Thanks for the opportunity.

Dan Baker '73

Executive Director's Corner

When I look at the calendar, I'm reminded that I'm in my 23d year working with WPSA. What I thought was going to a temporary, part-time duty has turned out to a permanent, part-time (?) position. I continue to enjoy the camaraderie and friendships I have developed over the years and I sincerely appreciate the many acts of kindness extended to Dave and myself.

You will receive an individualized data sheet and invoice in the next mailing. It is very important that you review the information carefully and provide me with any necessary corrections or updates in a timely manner. This information will be published in the next directory, which will be sent out this fall to all current dues-paying members. **Dues are payable by calendar year.**

Checks should be payable to WPSA in the amount of \$35 and should be mailed to the post office box address shown on this newsletter.

Rich St Denis '70 would like all Career Transition Networking inquiries directed to him via email:

RichStDenis@compuserve.com.

Jan Heath
Executive Director

Atlanta Joins USMA/St Cyr Bicentennial

How many CONUS-based West Point Societies can say they had two representatives at the joint USMA/ French Military Academy at Saint Cyr Bicentennial Celebration in Paris, France? WPSA can! **Ali Gelineau '81**, WPSA President, and **Chuck Benardo '70**, currently living and working in Paris, both attended the July 12th festivities widely covered by the news media. Representing USMA was the Superintendent, **LTG William Lennox, Jr. '71**, and **BG Dan Kaufman, '68**, the Dean, along with some 160 members of the Classes of 2003 and 2004. St-Cyr was represented by members of their Class of 2003. Three members of the Class of '46 held up the 'old grad' side while two members of the Class of 2002 contended the Corps Has Not.. On July 14th, the USMA cadets led the Bastille Day Parade down the Champs d'Elysses, the first time US soldiers have marched with the French in Paris since 1945. A truly historic event!

WPSA MEMBERSHIP

You have been selected and are maintained at public cost not for what you have done, but for what you are to do; not for deeds of great benefit to the State already performed, but for services you are expected hereafter to render. By entering this Academy, and becoming the recipients of the thorough instruction here imparted, you have incurred the most weighty and solemn obligations. You have no longer the privilege of common citizens to live and die obscurely.

Ashbel Smith in his address to the Corps of Cadets in 1848

Smith's leadership mandate to West Pointers is just as applicable today as ever. And especially, it seems, in this bicentennial year as media throughout the nation and around the world chronicle achievements and contributions of the Long Gray Line as soldiers, statesmen, and civic and social leaders. Recently **Tom Murphy '67**, posted information by email that links to many of these reports. Check them out if you have not done so already. They will make you swell with pride.

Our West Point Society of Atlanta has led the country with professional and innovative programs in fulfilling these leadership obligations. Examples of the society's leadership and programs are highlighted throughout this newsletter. At least a few should appeal to your interests, abilities and passions as a graduate or friend of West Point. If you feel we ought to do more in other areas please send your suggestions. However, your participation and leadership in support of the society's activities would be even better yet.

The minimal degree of participation the Society is seeking from each graduate in the Atlanta Metro Area (AMA) is membership. Graduates become members of the WPSA by contributing \$35 to the West Point Society of Atlanta annually, thereby endorsing what the Society is currently doing and allowing more to be done.

To facilitate paying of annual dues in support of all the activities of the WPSA, effective in mid-September,

dues can be paid on-line via credit card and secure servers at our WPSA website (<http://www.west-point.org/society/wps-atlanta>). This payment method will also be available for individual events as well (Founders Day Dinner, golf tournament, etc.).

As an early incentive, all graduating cadets from Georgia are given a complimentary two-year membership to WPSA. In addition, we have reduced the dues for all active duty grads in our area to \$20 per year while stationed in the area.

If you are already a member we ask that you please take the time to call a classmate, a company-mate, or someone you know who simply has not taken the time and ask them to join the society. If you have any other ideas on how to increase our AMA graduates' participation in society activities, please let me know via jeberle@mentora.com or call 404.255.5491. I would appreciate your feedback and, most importantly' your participation in the form of membership. But as Smith reminds us, sitting by as a "common citizen" smacks of shirking our **"weighty and solemn obligations"** as West Pointers.

Jim Eberle '71
Chairman, Membership Committee

LOGGING LIVING HISTORY

To preserve the experiences of our most senior graduates for those that follow in the Long Gray Line, Past-Presidents **Jim Eberle** and **Dominick Crea** have teamed with **BG (Ret) Phil Browning** to produce the next installments in the Society's Living History program.

Last September's *WPSA News* reported that Jim, **Jay Haney '69**, **Irv Schoenberg '48**, and **Sonja Klein** (wife of **Michael '89**), assisted by Mary Lynn Moore, produced the first living history interviews of **LTG Louis Truman '32** and **MG "Pop" Duncan '32**. The first of these were presented to the USMA Library and the AOG at the 2001 Society Leaders Conference at West Point.

We've also included the interview of **BG Bob Scott '32**, produced by the Aviation Museum in Warner Robins. Using a "60 Minutes" format, the team has already begun its work on an interview of **BG Graydon Essman '33** and, his health permitting, should finish it soon.

Don Reinhard '59 has agreed to craft a special memento for each "old grad" in appreciation for their participation. Stay tuned for more details.

Dominick Crea '70

Internet contacts

WPSA: www.west-point.org/society/wps-atlanta
Career Transition Network (Rich St.Denis '70):
RichStDenis@compuserve.com

USMA: www.usma.edu

Association of Graduates: www.aog.usma.edu

Army Athletics: goarmysports.ocsn.com

Virtual West Point: www.virtualwp.org

West Point ORG: www.west-point.org

West Point Parents Club of Georgia:

www.west-point.org/parent/wppc-georgia

The WPSA News is published quarterly by the West Point Society of Atlanta, P.O. Box 492511, Atlanta, Georgia 30349-2511. Your input is appreciated. Send news items and articles to the Executive Director, WPSA, Jan Heath.

The Flying Nun's "Brother" Receives Medal of Honor

Three Class of '59 WPSA members, **Don Reinhard**, **Norm Rosner** and **Bill Luther** were in attendance at the 8 July White House ceremony to award the Medal of Honor posthumously to their classmate, **Rocky Versace**.

The Medal was presented to the surviving siblings of Captain Rocky Versace. Led by brother Steve, the two remaining brothers, their sister and all their children finally received the richly deserved Medal of Honor from President Bush in the White House. Rocky's father was **Col Joseph Versace, '33**, and his mother was the author, **Tere Rios**, who created "The Flying Nun." The Versace family was accompanied by 89 members of the Class of '59 who were among the 225 witnesses who, on a typically steamy July day, shoehorned themselves into the East Room for the presentation. Two members of Col Versace's class (with wives) also made the pilgrimage, MG Sparrow and Col Walters. My class members are all in their mid-sixties; these people were in their mid-nineties! Unfortunately, because of space constraints, very few of our wives were able to get into the White House.

Rocky received what will probably be the last Medal of Honor from the Viet Nam War. Another class member, **COL (Ret) Roger Donlon**, who was awarded the first MoH from the war, also attended the ceremony. Roger earned his as a special forces captain defending a small outpost in the far northwest. Rocky earned his as a special forces captain while spending two years in captivity in the south. This is the first MoH ever awarded to an Army member for actions as a POW. Wounded three times when captured, during his two years Rocky was tortured, beaten, starved, sick, attempted to be brainwashed, dragged from village to village like a zoo animal and kept tied spread-eagled in a crate at night. He tried to escape within days of capture, dragging a bullet-wounded leg behind him into a swamp. Two more unsuccessful escape attempts followed. Fluent in certain aspects of three languages (French, Vietnamese and English), Rocky greeted every attempt at political indoctrination with a loud argument and a lesson in the finer points of obscenities in those three languages. He intentionally acted in a manner to take the heat off two fellow captives; one was **Nick Rowe '60**. Nick immortalized Rocky's story in his book *Five Years to Freedom*. Rocky was a challenge to the VC; but, after two years of frustration with the Rock's intransigence, they had all they could take, and executed him on 26 September 1965. His parents heard the announcement at the same time as every other American - on the evening news, when Radio Hanoi announced that Rocky had been executed in retaliation for the South Vietnamese execution of three of their men.

Nick Rowe escaped in 1968. During an interview with President Nixon, the President was so moved by the Versace story that he turned to a military aide and told him to see that Rocky received the MoH. It took until 8 July 2002.

Rocky lived up to his name. All who knew him will attest to that. He was the hardest, most dedicated, patriotic man to wear the West Point gray. He was a devout Roman Catholic and a staunch American who firmly believed in a that our country stands for. To him, the ordeal was merely a final exam in life. When captured, he was about two weeks from coming home to release from the Army and entry into the priesthood – he had been accepted into a seminary. His body has never been returned, and until he death in October 1999, it is reported that Tere still expected to see him walk out of the jungle. During the festivities before the presentation a reporter asked Steve if he often thought about Rocky in captivity, tortured and tied in his cage. Steve told them, "No, I think of him as a vibrant, enthusiastic radiant young man; because that is the way I saw him before he left." (Or words to that effect.) And that is the way the class of '59 approached the event: as the celebration of a short, enthusiastic life of a man we served with and loved as a brother, –because he was!

Don Reinhard '5

BENNY HAVENS, OH!

As announced in "The Days," over the past few months we have hosted several very successful monthly happy hours for AMA graduates and friends. The gatherings support the purposes of our WPSA as an informal forum for networking, job placement and recruitment for local (and sometimes not-so-local) USMA grads. Many have found it helpful to talk to others seeking employment, meet new people or just exchange war stories.

The function is open to anyone and everyone, and we are especially looking for AMA grads, associates and friends with civilian careers, current or retired, to share lessons learned and to provide informal mentoring to others.

So come join us the last Wednesday of every month at Frankie's Sports Bar (3 blocks inside I-285 on Roswell Rd) at 6:30 PM. Please contact me at 404-459-3833 for more information. BEAT NAVY!

Max Hilsman '96