



# The United States Military Academy



West Point, New York



Dear Society Members and Friends,

2008: a leap year, an election year, the 206<sup>th</sup> birthday of our alma mater. These are interesting times in America. With each year that goes by, a larger percentage of our nation's leaders have little or no personal connection with a family member or friend who has served in the military. I don't know about you, but this troubles me. Call me an optimist, but 20 years from now I think significant numbers of our current cadre of resourceful, innovative, audacious soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are going to be in positions of great authority in our country. Until then, I consider it my duty to keep educating the uninformed around me about what an admirable and important role our military members play in the stability and success of this nation.

One way that the New Mexico West Point society gets the word out about military service is through our Leadership program. It is an outreach effort to local high school juniors who have demonstrated leadership in their classrooms, churches, athletic fields, and places of employment. Jim Hickok is the society's coordinator for this program and he needs (the society needs) your help. Our goal is to get one or more graduates affiliated with each local high school. We'd like the school leadership to know you and recognize you as a resource if ever they have need for someone to speak about those hallowed concepts of "duty, honor, and country." In the near term, the dates when we will be conducting this year's Leadership program lunches are March 5<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup>, March 12<sup>th</sup>, and March 13<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Jim Hickok ([jbhickok@comcast.net/505-275-3910](mailto:jbhickok@comcast.net/505-275-3910)) if you would like to take part in this important program.

A new initiative that we instituted recently within the West Point Society of New Mexico is our monthly networking lunch. Held on the first Friday of each month, these are informal gatherings for our members to do exactly that, network. We plan to hold these lunches outside of Albuquerque periodically as the program gains more ground, but to date all of them have been conducted in the state's largest population center. We send out reminder notices about the network lunches by email, so if you'd like to be kept informed about these gatherings, please provide an email address.

In response to feedback we have received from members of our society, you will see some additional entries on this year's Membership form/Founder's Day reservation form. There is an entry for you to make a donation, if you wish, to defray the Founder's Day expense for another grad, whether that is one of our older graduates living on a fixed income or a younger graduate raising small children with the associated babysitter requirements that go along with a "night out on the town." There is also an entry for you to volunteer to drive another graduate to the Founder's Day banquet. Some of our members have indicated that driving is the biggest hurdle to their participation in our society events. If you can help transport others to and home from the

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Founder's Day banquet, please elect to do so. Also, if you are a graduate or spouse who would like a ride from someone else to Founder's Day, we will make the arrangements if you so indicate on the reservation form.

Our Founder's Day speaker this year will be Colonel Eugene Palka, the director of USMA's Geography and Environmental Engineering department. Gene was my Beast squad leader so please make sure you look presentable and study up on the newspaper headlines if you do attend. Just kidding! Gene has a son who is a USMA 2002 graduate and a daughter who plans to become an Army nurse, so he has an interesting perspective to offer us as both a trainer of our young officer corps and the father of two young service members. He is also the Officer Representative to the Army Football team, a position that left him without a voice after the Army-Navy game on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

Our efforts to hold a golf outing were disappointing last summer. If there is interest in golf among the society membership, please contact Jerry Janicke ([jerryjanicke@earthlink.net](mailto:jerryjanicke@earthlink.net)/505-856-1136) or Bob Phillips ([bobphillips4@msn.com](mailto:bobphillips4@msn.com)/505-352-8910), both members of the class of 1962.

Once again I'd like to remind all of you – we do have a society webpage where we post all of the documents which are sent out in snail mail and other pertinent news items. The URL for our society webpage is: [www.west-point.org/society/wps-nm](http://www.west-point.org/society/wps-nm). We also have an email distribution list serving the West Point Society of New Mexico. When I receive email items from the Association of Graduates or that I think would be of interest to the members of the society, I pass them along using the WPS of NM email list.

This year we are going to try to arrange a summer event/gathering. Any suggestions you might have about a theme – say a hike in the Jemez, a picnic in the Pecos, a night at the SF opera, or whatever else is “your thing”, please feel free to offer it up.

Let's keep our thoughts and prayers focused on the men and women who are serving in harm's way. See you at Founder's Day. Go Army!

Donna Alesch White