



Dec 2016

TWIN CITIES AREA ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

The Northern Zoomie



Upcoming Events:

AFA vs Gopher's Men's Gymnastics Sat. 21 Jan 2017, 2:30 pm U of M Sports Pavilion

Scotch Tasting at Terry Flower's home Sat. 28 Jan 2017 (more details to follow).

Lowell Inn Dinner, 4 Feb 2017, 6pm Stillwater Minnesota

Prez Prose – Chapter President Tom Wilson '61

PREZ PROSE

WE HAVE DONE IT AGAIN: ONCE MORE OUR CHAPTER HAS BEEN SELECTED AS A **"DISTINGUISHED CHAPTER"** BY THE NATIONAL AOG – OUR FIFTH STRAIGHT YEAR!!!

Congratulations to all of us – it is a well-deserved honor and a tribute to the efforts of so many. Thanks to all of you who have participated in our activities and accomplishments. Our intention is to make this an annual honor...

One of the questions or comments that has come up in our board meetings and activities regards our Chapter membership and the affiliation with the National AOG. To clarify this, please understand that ALL GRADS that live in our area are NON-DUES PAYING MEMBERS of our Chapter, REGARDLESS AS TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION WITH THE NATIONAL AOG.

So, please do not hesitate to join us in our events and activities. All are more than welcome.

In that vein, we are in need of

a grad to act as a coordinator with the Minnesota Parents Club. If any of you have a child or grandchild at the Academy now and are current members of the Parents Club, please let me know. The requirements are simple – we just need a grad to attend the Parents Club meetings and keep us informed as to how we can continue to assist the Parents Club in any way we can. We already have established a very good relationship with the club and want to continue to do so.

One of our efforts involves the old Ft. Snelling Officer's Club. As you know, the club was forced by the DoD to shut down and move to the All-Service Club facility on the Reserve base. Our mission now is to try to lease the building from the government and re-open the club as a private facility. This is a long and drawn-out process – one that by law, has to go through a red-tape procedure that gives many other government – both federal and state – units a chance to use the facility first. It is my understanding that the GSA controls this process.

My point is this: if any of you reading this have any "pull" with the GSA or congressional leaders, please use that influence to speed up the process and assist us in our

quest. The local Rawlings Chapter of the Air Force Association has joined us in this endeavor and is assisting in this effort. When the time comes, we will also be looking for someone to take over the operation of the club and return it to its profitable operation.

Those of you who were unable to join us on the St. Croix River Cruise in September missed out on a delightful evening. That was our second cruise and is one that we will continue to schedule annually in the foreseeable future. The next one is already scheduled for 16 September 2017, so please mark your calendar and save the date. In the meantime, please note the other planned events and activities mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter and plan to join us.

CONGRATULATIONS TO USAFA for regaining the "Commander-In-Chief" trophy and returning it to its rightful owner!!!

Respectfully,

Tom Wilson, '61

President, TCA AOGC

Twin Cities AFA AOG Distinguished Graduate Award

At the September 2016 board/general meeting of our chapter, the board created a chapter Distinguished Graduate Award program for us. A motion was passed to award our chapters first Distinguished Graduate Award to **Tom Wilson**, our current president. This award was based upon his untiring efforts in starting our chapter and leading us through the first years of

our existence as well as his distinguished career in the Air Force. Of special note is the fact that in our short 5 years, thanks to Tom's leadership we have been awarded the national AOG Distinguished Chapter Award for each and every year. Congratulations to Tom for his hard work and achievements.

-Rick Knoll '65

Upcoming Events

- **Lowell Inn Dinner** Feb 4th (Saturday) 6pm, Stillwater
- **AFA vs Gophers Men's Gymnastics** Jan 21st (Saturday), U of M Sports Pavilion
- **Burns Night Scotch Tasting** Jan 28th (Saturday), Terry Flower's home.



We are just ending one of the biggest, most expensive political campaign seasons ever!. If you are like me, you received a ton of requests, almost incessantly, from politicians themselves and representatives from every cause there might be. Seems like the phone never quit ringing. The last thing you wanted to hear was another request for money, this time from the Association of Graduates. Well, I'm not going to ask you for money, at least not right now. I just simply want to explain to you why we need some money and what we do with it.

I was fortunate to represent our local, Twin Cities Area Association of Graduates at the annual Presidents Conference in Doolittle Hall in September. At the two day event we received our banner indicating that your local unit has been a distinguished unit ever since we formed in 2011. The idea itself is sort of cool, but what makes us distinguished and why is that so important? To understand this you need to consider the fact that out of some 85 chapters around the world, not all of them are very active like we are.

We meet every month (at the VFW Club on 84th and Lyndale in Bloomington.) Yes, it is a meeting of your Board of Directors, but it is open for every one to attend. And of course, we start off each gathering with a social hour. By the way, the food that is served by Fat Lorenzo's is fabulous and at reasonable prices. In addition to the monthly meetings, we host frequent social events including football parties and events where the Academy might be participating. When they played the Gophers in Hockey I recall that literally hundreds of you turned out for the gathering. I did ask the Athletic

Director to keep us in mind when any of the USAFA athletic teams can compete here in Minnesota.

Additionally we host a couples dinner once a quarter (or thereabouts) at some interesting place. I think the next one is scheduled to be held at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. Earlier this fall we also had a cruise on a paddle boat on the St. Croix river. We had the boat totally to ourselves for dinner and fun. Yes, it did have a cash bar as you might expect. It was Rick Knoll's job to order the perfect weather that we had.

One of the biggest events held annually is the Founders Day Dinner. Some chapters might just host a happy hour at a local watering hole but we have been doing it up right. Our speakers included Chiefs of Staff, Jerry Driscoll our Vietnam POW, and next spring (mark your calendars now!!!) we are bringing in Steve Ritchie, Class of 1964, the only living Air Force pilot Ace. Did I say he is a member of the Class of 1964? Plan now if you want to know what it was like to fire Sparrow missiles at MIGs. We are now partnering with the Parents Club so that together we can make the event bigger and better than ever.

Additionally, we led the nation in developing a web site that has become the model Employment Hub. We made it open to all three service academy graduates seeking employment after transitioning into civilian life. And if that doesn't make you step back and think a bit, we are also developing a Higher Education web site to help graduates (and their families) get that further education they might need or just want to pursue.

I know I haven't even begun to mention our quarterly newsletter that goes out and monthly Happy Hour gatherings so graduates can get with others to see what's happening. We've not let any grass grow under our feet. Not only is your board busy but all of these things cost some money. We do seek sponsors to help us make things happen. We have a lot of ideas and if we can find sponsors we can make things happen. We acknowledge our sponsors on our web site and in our Newsletters.

When you pick up a newsletter and see a sponsor listed, you can know that they helped bring it to you. When we host the Annual Founders Day Dinner, know that we want newly accepted nominees and their families to attend. Know that when the ALOs (Air Force Academy Liaison Officers) travel to interview candidates, someone has to support, at least in part, some of their activities.

Yes, there are a lot of things we are doing to make this a Chapter you can be proud of. And yes, it does take money. Now, we are not going to hound you for bucks. We will make an annual request around Veteran's Day. But if you know of a corporate sponsor who might be able to help right now or any time, kindly let me know so we can help them work through the process. Of course, if you want to give right now, our web site makes that possible as well. But don't think of it as the Chapter asking and you giving. Think of all we are doing and what more we can do to make the experience continue. God bless you all.

How We Communicate

Facebook

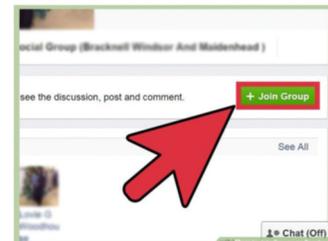
How to join the Minnesota Twin Cities Area United States Air Force Academy AOG Facebook Group:

1. Enter this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Minnesota%20Twin%20Cities%20Area%20United%20States%20Air%20Force%20Academy%20AOG%20Group>

It will take you to the Facebook page for our group.

2. Look for the Join Group button on the page. Here is what it looks like:



3. Click the Join Group button. It will take a couple days to verify your request and then you have access.

Website

Please visit <http://tcausafaaog.com> to view upcoming activities and photo summaries of recent events.

Mailing

We have discontinued mailing due to the costs associated. Please send your comments if you would like to see us communicate differently.

The Back Page: Foxhole Brothers and Sisters

As I watched the Gophers football Holiday Bowl Boycott play out, I couldn't help but admire the effort, even if it was poorly timed. The love and support for their teammates in need clearly indicates to me that the Gophers coaching staff is doing some things right. Football is about many things, and for a successful team—or a team on its way to being successful—football is as much about playing for your teammates as it is about anything else. It seems clear that Tracy Claeys and his coaching staff have instilled the principals of teamwork into their players in a manner that the entire team was willing to give up their reward for a well-played season to support their teammates. But they still have a little work to do teaching their young men moral courage. That is evident from the timing.

We all remember from basic training that there are two opportunities to support your classmates: 1. Preventive – in your room or tent, away from the demanding and discerning eyes of the cadre; and 2. Reactive – in the hall, on the terrazzo, or in the field, when your classmate is already in trouble. While reactive support is necessary, preventative support is more effective. The Gophers coaching staff still has some work to do. The ten teammates facing expulsion and suspension needed someone to “support their classmates” on September 2nd—the night of the incident—before they were under the magnifying glass of the police,

the media, and the University.

The fact that different players are being punished in different ways suggests there are different levels of culpability, different levels of transgressions against the young lady that night. To me, that indicates that some within that group of players had concerns about what was taking place that evening, that at least some of those ten players had a pit growing in their stomach signaling that what was about to happen—what was happening—was morally wrong. Yet it seems none of them had the moral courage to stand up against the inertia of the moment and say, I'm going to be a good teammate and prevent you from making a harmful decision. Harmful to the victim, harmful to the team, and most of all, harmful to you.

I also suspect that there were players who weren't there that evening, who aren't in trouble now, that knew the plans for the recruit that night. Maybe not to the level of how the events played out, but even if the plan was simply to help the underage recruit get drunk and/or “get laid,” that in-and-of-itself should have been enough cause for teammates aware of the efforts to attract the recruit to the Twin Cities to be concerned and act. The intensity of the “reactive teammate support” may be directly linked to a level of guilt for not preventively supporting their teammates when the option was still available. A morally strong team

would not be in the Gophers' current situation.

And there is also the not-so-minor detail that the young lady who was assaulted that night is also a “classmate” of the football players. She is a University of Minnesota student, not to mention she is a fan and supporter of the football team. In the team statement ending the boycott, the team acknowledged that the football team not only plays for each other, but that they also represent their fellow students, the University and the state of Minnesota. That playing football at the University is bigger than themselves. It seems that realization came three months too late. Someone should have had the courage to stand up for the victim on September 2. Ending the boycott is in some way reactive support for her—after they realized that she is a classmate, she is someone they represent every Saturday.

Fortunately, most leadership lessons are not so public or polarizing. I hope that the significance of this lesson sticks with the coaching staff and players in such a way that the program will grow its moral courage and preventative teammate support becomes ingrained in team culture. If it does, then the Gophers football team will be closer to its true north, and situations demanding bowl boycotts to reactively support teammates won't be necessary. Ski-U-Mah!

Charlie Nelson-'96

Newsletter Possible Thanks to these Great Sponsors!



NELSON
CONSULTING
GROUP

TCA AOG Key Personnel Roster

TWIN CITIES AREA CHAPTER— USAFA ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

12-20-2016

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Treasurer: Rick Knoll '65 (Kathe)	952-518-3737	rickknoll@msn.com
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