



February 2021

TWIN CITIES AREA ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

**The Northern Zoomie**



## Inside

- Prez Prose
- History of Founders Day
- Heritage Dinner Save the Date
- Community Support & Giving Back
- ALO Update
- USAFA Memories
- USAFA AOG Election
- Web Person Needed

## Prez Prose

### Jason VanOverbeke, President

Fellow Twin Cities Area Grads, welcome to another TCAAOG newsletter! I hope you are all staying healthy and well. No one can ever say that 2020 wasn't an eventful year. As an organization, that is true for us as well, even though it was nothing like we anticipated. Moreover, I'm looking forward to this year as we can hopefully be getting back to a sense of "normalcy" and get back on track with some of our priorities and goals.

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Jason VanOverbeke '03 and I'm the current President of the TCAAOG Board of Directors. I've been a board member since 2019 and was elected as the President last spring. There were big shoes to fill as previous board presidents, Tom Wilson and Rick Knoll made significant contributions and efforts to advance the TCAAOG for the past several years and we continue to offer our gratitude to them.

The TCAAOG exists to support the graduate community and to function as a social and support network. We do that through social events and participation from all of you.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt most plans and way of life as we all dealt with trying to keep ourselves, our families and our neighbors safe and virus-free. Hopefully

you and your families have weathered the pandemic and will have a renewed sense of health security once we're able to go back out in larger public settings.

In most cases, our time together this year has been virtual, or with very small groups, but in 2021 we're planning to pick up where we left off with events such as the St. Croix River Cruise, Falcon Football viewing parties, the Scotch tasting, Veteran's Day and Winter Dinners and our annual Heritage Dinner too. I'm also going to be reaching back to you on your input on activities that have an extended appeal that might be new to our group such as rotating happy hours or service projects.

We are all busy and there are a lot of demands on your time, the Board of Directors understands this sincerely. The activities we have traditionally done might not be what you're looking for, but as I said before, we exist to support and socialize with the local graduate community and we're happy to add events and activities that support our alumni community.

Currently most of our activities are to socialize, but if 2020 did anything, it hopefully demonstrated the need to help out and provide the service to our world; something no one in this group hasn't already done. We would like to become more involved by volunteering or community involvement right here in the Twin Cities. Ideas to support Academy graduates or local veterans' organizations are always welcome.

Our experiences at the Academy have all been unique, but I think we can agree that the Air Force Academy has provided all a strong foundation from which to find success both personally and professionally. The AOG, much like our local TCAAOG is a platform that allows us to support the Academy as an institution that has been a positive force in our lives. Many of us are now at a point where we are able give back to the Academy as it trains leaders for new challenges in the future. We have a shared experience and kinship that extends from the earliest graduating classes though to the cadets currently studying at the Academy. When we support the Academy and the AOG, we connect ourselves to that tradition and forge bonds with our future leaders.

You may have already read the article about the upcoming AOG election in the newsletter, but if you haven't, there's an election that will occur February 8 through March 22, 2021. On a personal note, I have decided to run for a seat on the Board of Directors and would appreciate your vote. I plan to continue to serve on the TCAAOG board, and as a member of the AOG Board of Directors, I would plan to give the TCAAOG a voice, while continuing to act as a steward of our well-respected institution.

You can find my statement of candidacy on the AOG Website at [https://www.usafa.org/election/candidate/jason\\_vob](https://www.usafa.org/election/candidate/jason_vob) The AOG has also set up email addresses for all of the candidates in case you have specific questions; I can be reached at [Jason.vanoverbeke@aogusafa.org](mailto:Jason.vanoverbeke@aogusafa.org). Please take some time to look at the candidates and proposed by-law amendments and vote.

There appears to be a light at the end of this COVID tunnel and we look forward to returning to our mission and activities. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for upcoming information. As we dive further into 2021 let's all come together, for each other and for our community.

Jason VanOverbeke '03

## History of Founders Day

On April 1, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed Public Law 325 formally authorizing the establishment of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). The official birthday of the Academy is now reverently known as “Founders Day” and is celebrated annually by graduates worldwide.

While USAFA’s history ostensibly began at the brief 1954 White House ceremony, the first effort to create an American air academy occurred in 1919 when California Congressman Charles Curry introduced legislation providing for an academy. Curry’s legislation failed amid disputes about cost, operation, curriculum (to include the amount of flying training) and location (a sticking point throughout the decades, as virtually every Member of Congress thought his or her district would be the perfect setting).

Advocates such as Brig. Gen. “Billy” Mitchell continued their efforts between WWI and WWII to convince the Army and Congress of the need for an academy. Air power’s pivotal role in World War II rekindled support for an academy and the National Security Act of 1947, creating a separate Air Force on equal footing with the Army and Navy raised airmen’s hopes.

However, legislative action to establish the Academy was delayed each year in the early 1950’s by among other things, the Korean War, conflict within the Department of Defense and Congress, and some of the same issues that dogged the project since its inception. Finally, in May 1953, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Dewey Short of Missouri introduced a bill “To Provide for the Establishment of a United States Air Force Academy.” Hearings were postponed until early the following year, but the concept finally had the momentum necessary to carry it to passage on March 29, 1954. President Eisenhower signed it two days later. (NOTE: As a West Point graduate, perhaps President Eisenhower picked “April Fool’s Day” as a permanent “jab” at the Air Force??? Just saying, since he is no longer around to ask!!!)

As all of you may know, Our TCA AOG Chapter was established on 18 May 2011. We have worked very hard to keep a viable Chapter and have been fortunate enough to have been recognized **ANNUALLY** since then as a “Distinguished AOG Chapter.” One of the requirements to be so recognized is that we must hold some kind of a “Founders Day Celebration” each year between mid-March and mid-May. It could be in the form of a dinner, a picnic or any other type get-together announced for the celebration purpose. We elected to have an annual dinner and have done so since the first one in 2012.

We have been fortunate to have outstanding speakers for each dinner, beginning with Gen. Norty Schwartz, ’73, the then CSAF; followed by ex-POW, Col. (Ret) Jerry Driscoll, ’63; CSAF Gen. Mark Welsh, ’76; Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger, ’80, the first female 4-Star (AFLC); Col. Curt Brown, ’78, NASA Pilot and Astronaut Hall of Famer; B. Gen. Steve Ritchie, the lone Pilot Ace of the Vietnam War; M. Gen. (Ret) Suzanne Vautrinot, ’82, Commander of Air Force Cyber Command; and Lt. Gen. Jay Silveria, ’85 USAFA Superintendent. (Note: due to Covid-19 restrictions, we did not host a dinner in 2020.)

To backtrack slightly, I would like to remind our membership that we began to co-host the Founders Day Dinner in 2016 with the Minnesota Parents Club. The Parents Club normally held their Annual Spring Banquet to recognize those High School graduates from the state of Minnesota who have accepted appointments to the Academy. Our respective Board of Directors decided it would benefit each organization to combine the two dinners and to co-host the event. It has been a proven success, so we will continue doing so for the immediate future. It is a truly enjoyable way to spend an evening together and to share our military and life experiences with classmates, fellow grads and spouses, as well as Cadet Candidates and their parents – many of whom who have absolutely no experience with our military forces and way of life.

We need to encourage these “selectees” and to prepare them – as best we can – for their “Beast” training AND to remind these “New Cadets” how tough the Academy used to be!!!

We also agreed to rename the event as the “Heritage Dinner” to better represent the dual purposes of the dinner. For the present year, we are proceeding with plans to hold our “Heritage Dinner” on Saturday, 1 May this year, in hopes that Covid-19 restrictions are lifted to the degree that we are allowed to hold the dinner. Plans are underway now for a guest speaker, but it’s too early to get a commitment. Still, we are planning and hoping for the best. Please reserve the 1 May date and look for additional information as we approach that date. You will not be disappointed if we are able to proceed.

Hope to see as many as possible!!!

Tom Wilson, ‘61

President Emeritus, TCA AOG Chapter

## Heritage Dinner Save the Date

The Combined Twin Cities Area Chapter of the Association of Graduates and the Minnesota Parent’s Club are planning to host our annual Heritage Day Dinner on Saturday, 1 May 2021. This event will combine celebrating the founding of the Air Force Academy, recognizing the newest appointees to the Air Force Academy and acknowledging our combined heritage as members of the Long Blue Line.

We are closely monitoring the ongoing situation with COVID-19 and will make a final call on if we will hold the event in-person or find an alternate to celebrate. Please stay tuned for details!

## Community Support and Giving Back

Recently the TCAAOG provided a donation to support the Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) at the Minneapolis International Airport. The AFSC recently sent a letter thanking us for our support. Over the years there have been many USAFA Cadets and graduates who have passed through the center and utilized its facilities. The AFSC has a patch board of over 3000 patches given to the center. TCAAOG board member Denny Sultany, '64 is a volunteer there and has found over 14 USAFA squadron so far; grads traveling through have left hundreds of their unit patches. The AFSC is great oasis for our present and past fellow Zoomies!!!

In addition to monetary donations, the TCAAOG is always looking for opportunities to support the AFA grad, Air Force and veteran communities. If you are aware of a worthy cause that could use some volunteer support, please contact a member of the TCAAOG Board with more information.

## MN Admissions Liaison Officers (ALO) Program Update (Feb 2021)

The MN ALO Team remains fully engaged in the Class of 2025 Admissions Cycle, successfully adapting to COVID-19 restrictions and maintaining a steady flow of high-quality applicants to the Air Force Academy. The impeccable leadership of Outreach Squadron Leader (OSL) Lt Col Ron Killins ('99) and ALO Area Coordinator Lt Col Bill Fields ('99) embodies the principles of AFI 1-2: "Commander's Responsibilities" to 1) Execute the Mission, 2) Lead People, 3) Manage Resources, and 4) Improve the Unit. The performance of these two officers reminds many graduates why the Class of 1999 continues to be named in 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (right behind 1995) on many "Best of USAFA" class lists.

In other news, Lt Col Grant McCall ('01) received the ALO Program's National Outreach Flight Leader of the Year Award for his outstanding service on the MN ALO team working with applicants, families, the MN Parent's Club and MN Congressional offices. Grant's above-and-beyond service extends to the national Admissions Action Council (AAC) team where he is instrumental in driving critical process improvements to the ALO Hiring efforts and championing continuous advancement to many ALO Training initiatives. Lt Col McCall's performance reflects well on the Twin Cities Area Association of Graduates (TCAAOG), an organization fearlessly led by Jason Vanoverbeke, that relentlessly pursues "Excellence in all We Do" and the coveted "Distinguished Chapter" designation.

Lt Col Bill Fields, Class of 1999

## USAFA Memories

At one point during my first year at the zoo, we were all in our rooms. We could hear the upper classmen coming down the hall screaming our names as they reached our rooms. Still trying to be the best of the lowest doolies, I stood at the door ready to throw it open when my name was called. Soon I heard the scream "Knoll get our here." I threw the door open with a flourish and hit something or someone hard. It turned out to be our cadet group commander who was reeling from the hit. If you know the cadet wing you can imagine that the entire squadron of upper classmen descended on me and I was called multiple foul names and offered the right to complete hundreds of pushups and recited more knowledge things than I even knew.

Later in the year (still my first), we were in formation when the squadron commander ordered dress right dress and I had to move to my left to get in the right position. I felt a shoe under my foot as I moved and sure enough it was the same cadet group commander mentioned above. He had been behind me in the formation checking uniforms I guess. Again I gained the wrath of the upper classmen who called me more foul names and threatened other punishments. The cadet group commander came around in front of me, looked me in the eye and said sadly, "You really don't like me do you Mr. Knoll." And this is one instance of why I was on the Commandant's "other" list at the end of my first year.

Rick Knoll, '65

## USAFA Memories – Part 2

I was in a Mechanics course at the zoo one day with a good professor who was a major in the AF, He sent three or four of us to the boards to work on separate problems. I started my problem but hit a wall and needed help to continue so I turned to the professor and asked "what should I do now?" He replied that I should "try a little skill and cunning, Mr Knoll." The remark stung a little but I went on to solve the problem, as I remember.

The Mechanics department, at that time, was known for having a quiz every day that the sun shined somewhere on earth. It usually was a simple problem based on the previous days lesson and just took a couple of minutes. It was administered by showing it on an overhead projector. One day, after the incident of the stinging remark, the professor showed us the quiz and we worked on the problem. When we were done he usually put the approved solution overhead up so that we could see the proper answer. This particular day he couldn't find the solution sheet and as he looked he muttered something about what are we going to do. Someone from the students said, in a voice just loud enough to be heard by all, "Try a little skill and cunning Sir." No one pointed out the foul perpetrator and after a few chuckles the class went on.

Rick Knoll, '65

## USAFA AOG Election

Starting on 8 Feb 2021, there will be an election held by the Association of Graduates. There are five seats up for election on the board of directors and two proposed by-laws changes. The election will last until 22 March 2021.

The first proposed by-law change would change the wording of Article VII, Section 1 to make the President of the Class Advisory Senate (CAS) to be a voting member on the Association of Graduates Board. Currently the CAS President sits on the board, but is not a voting member.

The second proposed by-law allow the Association of Graduates Board of Directors to propose and amend the by-laws by a two-thirds vote. Currently amendments are only approved by a majority vote of a quorum of 25 percent of AOG members. As the AOG membership has grown, changing the by-laws has become much more difficult. The AOG membership can still propose amendments and vote on them, but the amendment would give the board more flexibility.

For more information on the election or the proposed by-law changes, go to <https://www.usafa.org/election>. To find out about the candidates go to <https://www.usafa.org/election/candidate>. Feel free to reach out to any of the TCAAOG Board members as well for more information. Remember, the AOG is our voice in supporting the academy as well as a connection point for our shared Air Force heritage. Please vote in the upcoming election.

Jason VanOverbeke, '03

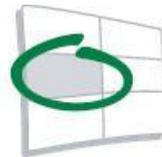
President, TCA AOG Chapter

## DO YOU HAVE ANY "IT" BACKGROUND?

Bob Hickcox has now been in North Carolina over a year. He is still helping with our website, Newsletter, etc., but his new AOG chapter needs his services so we need to replace him soon. We are in search of a new WebPerson to keep our two websites up to date and humming smoothly. This work is typically 2-3 hours a month, with a guaranteed hour a few days before our monthly board meeting, and the other time spread out over the month, usually in 30 minute to 1 hour increments. The work consists of editing existing web pages to update or replace text and picture content, adding new pages (usually events) to both the website and facebook group page, updating web software (very easy), and deleting new members of our employment website, who are not Academy graduates (usually known spammers), also easy. The ideal candidate would be someone who breathes, has operated a personal computer from time to time, and is willing to learn something new. While helpful, knowing HTML is not really required, as most of the website editing is done in an easy to use editor. Our websites are implemented in WordPress, using the Divi theme and a visual editor, so if you understand Microsoft Word, or something similar, and have used some of

the intermediate features, you will probably be able to pick this up. You will have support from Dave Carpentier, who handles the more technical aspects of the website, such as hosting and backups. And Bob Hickcox ( [robert@hickcox.org](mailto:robert@hickcox.org) or 952-738-2318 ) will provide an orientation and as much training as you need to get going. He is also willing to answer questions and do all of this via Zoom while you learn.

## This Newsletter Is Possible Thanks To These Great Sponsors



SPEECE THORSON CAPITAL GROUP, INC.  
INVESTMENT MANAGERS



## TCA AOG Key Personnel Roster

Twin Cities Area Chapter - USAFA Association of Graduates June 2019

### Chapter Officers

President	Jason VanOverbeke '03 (Holli)	612-382-2602	<a href="mailto:jasonvanoverbeke@mac.com">jasonvanoverbeke@mac.com</a>
Vice President	Chris Sedlacek '97	612-382-2602	<a href="mailto:csedlacek97@gmail.com">csedlacek97@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Bob Youngquist '72 (Jo)	651-731-0363	<a href="mailto:bobyoungq@aol.com">bobyoungq@aol.com</a>
Treasurer	Rick Knoll '65 (Kathe)	952-518-3737	<a href="mailto:rickknoll@msn.com">rickknoll@msn.com</a>
Legal Advisor	Charlie Nelson '96 (Vanessa)	952-240-2784	<a href="mailto:mustabusa@gmail.com">mustabusa@gmail.com</a>
President Emeritus	Tom Wilson '61	651-275-5167	<a href="mailto:twil906k@aol.com">twil906k@aol.com</a>

### Board Members (10) with term expiration included:

Tom Wilson '61 (2021)		651-430-2269	<a href="mailto:twil906k@aol.com">twil906k@aol.com</a>
Chris Sedlacek '97 (2021)		612-382-2602	<a href="mailto:csedlacek97@gmail.com">csedlacek97@gmail.com</a>
Pete Swanson '95 (2021) (Angela)		612-810-1546	<a href="mailto:swanyafa95@gmail.com">swanyafa95@gmail.com</a>
Zach Turcotte '00 (2021) (Jessica)		701-610-1736	<a href="mailto:myzteriously@hotmail.com">myzteriously@hotmail.com</a>
Terry Flower '64 (2022) (Margaret)		651-437-2005	<a href="mailto:tfflower@stkate.edu">tfflower@stkate.edu</a>
Rick Knoll '65 (2022) (Kathe)		952-518-3737	<a href="mailto:rickknoll@msn.com">rickknoll@msn.com</a>
Bob Youngquist '72 (2022) (Jo)		651-731-0363	<a href="mailto:bobyoungq@aol.com">bobyoungq@aol.com</a>
Denny Sultany '64 (2020)		612-221-1821	<a href="mailto:dennissultany@gmail.com">dennissultany@gmail.com</a>
Tim Hess '93 (2020)		952-221-2464	<a href="mailto:tim.hess@hotmail.com">tim.hess@hotmail.com</a>
Jason VanOverbeke '03 (2020) Holli		612-382-2602	<a href="mailto:jasonvanoverbeke@mac.com">jasonvanoverbeke@mac.com</a>

### Committee Chairpersons

Advanced Education	Terry Flower '64	<a href="mailto:tfflower@stkate.edu">tfflower@stkate.edu</a>
ALO Programs	Bill Fields '99	<a href="mailto:bfields701@gmail.com">bfields701@gmail.com</a>
Financial and Budget	Rick Knoll '65/Terry Flower '64	<a href="mailto:rickknoll@msn.com">rickknoll@msn.com</a> , <a href="mailto:tfflower@stkate.edu">tfflower@stkate.edu</a>
Fundraising	Open	
Membership	Zach Turcotte '00	<a href="mailto:myzteriously@hotmail.com">myzteriously@hotmail.com</a>
MN Parents' Club Coord	Bob '89 and Christine Hockman 952-233-1588	<a href="mailto:bckswdock@msn.com">bckswdock@msn.com</a>