



April 2016

TWIN CITIES AREA ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

The Northern Zoomie



UPCOMING - ST. CROIX RIVERBOAT CRUISE

5:30 PM to 8:30 PM --- Sat., 24 SEP 2016

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

Prez Prose - Chapter President Tom Wilson '61

Indulge me, please, as I state the "obvious:" The "MISSION" of our Chapter, as written in our by-laws, is "To serve and support the United States of America, the United States Air Force, the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military, and the graduate community by creating a business network, a support network and a social network that fosters the ideals of an enduring commitment to integrity, excellence and service to our country.

We will provide leadership, communication and support to all of the Air Force Academy graduates throughout our community as well as to military veterans."-----

I am very proud of the fact that WE – the active members of our chapter -- have been able to do exactly that!!! Since the first organizational meeting in May of 2011, our chapter has continued to grow in both participation by graduate members and in the various events and support to

the above referenced entities and networks.

Yes, there is ALWAYS more that can be done, but as a member of our Chapter, each of you should feel proud of our accomplishments and efforts to date. What we hope for is that our "active" membership will continue to grow so we may not only meet but also grow our mission goals.

For those of you who can spare some time, we encourage you to come to our monthly meetings to see first-hand what we do and how we do it. You can also volunteer your efforts, etc., in one or more of the committees, tasks, events, etc, in which you may have a special interest. We are always looking for fresh ideas and energetic people to help us carry out our mission.

Our website -- tcausafaaog.org -- has been updated and is much more useful now and easier to maintain. Please do use it often and feel free to join our

Facebook Group too. There are easy ways to link to other military organizations and events and to donate to help us meet our goals.

We are fortunate to be in the "black" financially but can always use additional funds to support the Academy Air Liaison Officer Program, Minnesota Parents Club, and to be able to go back to mailing copies of our quarterly Newsletters to all members, etc. We will continue to be judicious in our use of funds and promise not to be frivolous in our spending.

Personally, I am very proud to be a part of our Chapter and to work for and with so many outstanding graduates in our area. We offer many events – some well attended, some not – but those who do attend, enjoy the camaraderie, fellowship, and simply being with others who have shared experiences. Come join us and see why!!!

Tom Wilson, '61 – Chapter President

Upcoming Events

ST. CROIX RIVERBOAT CRUISE

5:30 PM to 8:30 PM --- Sat., 24 SEP 2016

ANASTASIA BOAT – ST. CROIX BOAT & PACKET CO. Stillwater

ITALIAN MEDLEY BUFFET:

Choose one of three main Entrées: Lasagna, Manicotti or Chicken Cacciatore

Accompanied by Penne Pasta, Marinara and Garlic Cream Sauces, Italian Meatballs, Crisp Green Salad, Garlic Bread sticks and Tiramisu for dessert. Coffee & water included.

Appetizers include Vegetable Display, Gourmet Cheese Display and Mixed Nuts.

Cash bar...

BOARDING FROM 5:30 TO 6 PM at St. Croix Boat & Packet Co. Come early as parking in Stillwater is sometimes a bit tricky – to say the least.

MAX CAPACITY IS 75, SO SIGN UP EARLY. MN Parents Club members are also invited to join us as well as West Point and Annapolis grads.

This is a great opportunity to get a CLOSE-UP view of the progress of the new Stillwater Bridge, as well as enjoy both the scenic St. Croix River and the camaraderie of our members, parents and fellow academy grads. COME JOIN US!!!

The price is **\$35.00 per person**, all inclusive except for cash bar. Sign at:

<http://www.event.com/d/1vq9m9>

Future Events

Oct 1st (Saturday):

Navy Vs. Air Force
Football Game at
2:30pm, Poor Richard's
in Bloomington

Nov 5th (Saturday):

Army Vs. Air Force Foot-
ball Game. Time is TBD,
but we will be meeting at
Poor Richard's to watch the
game



“Witchcraft and Faery Magic” at the Academy??? By Tom Wilson

Not too terribly long ago, I read a comment on the internet by the Judicial Watch president, Tom Fitton involving the Air Force Academy and ...”witchcraft and faery magic.” It bothered me so much that I decided to address the issue personally. First, I will quote the comment:

“In 2013, the Air Force Academy made “so help me God” optional to its cadet oath. Since 2014, the Air Force has allowed airmen to omit “so help me God” from enlistment oaths. The Family Research Council (FRC) has been keeping a record of incidents of hostility to religion within the armed services: “Unfortunately, pressures to impose a secular, anti-religious culture on our nation’s military services have intensified tremendously during the Obama Administration. This pressure exists across the armed services, but it has become extremely acute in the United States Air Force (USAF).”

The Air Force Academy leadership is attacking traditional Christian beliefs but will fund witchcraft and ‘faery magic’ said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. “These records show the misplaced priorities in the Air Force and why traditional Christians increasingly feel unwelcome in the Air Force Academy.”

I emailed both the Superintendent and “T” Thompson of the AOG and sent a “cc” to the CSAF, Gen. Mark Welsh, to inquire as to the validity of the comment and to express my indignation that we don’t seem to have done anything about refuting the allegations. I received personal replies from “T” and Gen. Welsh, in that order, and an indirect reply from Gen. Johnson. Allow me, please, to summarize the respective responses:

“T” reminds us that ... “ the Acade-

my, under Mike Gould’s leadership, made a decision to establish a small area outdoors for a group of permanent party and cadets who followed the tenants of “Earth-based” worship. This, as I understand it, was based on a desire to accommodate a broader range of religious beliefs for our service members and cadets.”

This came as a result of the Air Force following the basic direction of the DoD regarding such social issues. This should come as no surprise to me, to you nor to any military personnel. “T” went on to express his personal feelings about the situation, but he and I agree that our personal feelings are basically irrelevant. Religious freedom is paramount here.

Next I received a response from Gen Welsh, which I will quote in part:

“... the AF position is to follow the law of the land. For the military, the law states that every member of our profession must have the right to practice the faith of their own choice, or to practice no faith at all, free from persecution or persuasion. We are required to provide the environment that makes that possible. People, typically people who do not currently serve in the AF, sometimes allege that we persecute people of a particular faith, or of no faith, or improperly promote the interests of those from a different faith. We investigate every allegation, and I’m very confident in saying that those people are wrong. While there have been isolated, and I mean really isolated, incidents over time, very few of these allegations are supported by facts. The Academy is often in the center of these firestorms, mainly because of the large numbers of both Christian and Secular organizations in Colorado Springs. I’m very proud of the way both Mike and Michelle have handled those issues over the past several years.

They are often the only ones in the debate bringing logic and the law, and not just emotion, to the table. It’s a tough subject -- but a good one to put on the table occasionally. I would appreciate anything you can do to keep your circle of influence informed on this so they don’t get all their “facts” from on-line sources...”

Please note that the last sentence is the reason I am sharing this with all of you. I believe in the Air Force Leadership and feel strongly that the vast majority of us do also. We follow legitimate orders and often put our personal feelings aside for the “common good...”

“Yes Sir, No Sir, No excuse, Sir!” was ingrained in all of us and most of us still feel the same way.

At least, I hope so!!!

The Superintendent responded to all this by sharing with the Chief (as well as “T” and me...) that her staff has drafted a response to Tennessee State Representative, USAFA grad John Ragan, '71, who basically asked the same questions that I raised. The proposal has been forwarded to the Legislative Liaison section of the Secretary of the Air Force for their review prior to its release. I will leave that for you to read at the appropriate time. (Note: It is my understanding that the “Earth-based worship” area was funded by private donations only).

In short: I should have known better than to question why the Academy must provide for a variety of worship, etc. We all know the reasons why! What we need to know, however, are the facts of a situation and not jump to conclusions. Have we heard that before???

I guess I’m not too old to learn!!!

Respectfully,

Tom Wilson, '61

TCA AOG Chapter President

Newsletter Possible Thanks to these Great Sponsors!



TCA AOG Key Personnel Roster

TWIN CITIES AREA CHAPTER— USAFA ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

04-17-2016

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