



## 2017 Chapter Mid-year Update

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Hello Shipmates!

It is now July 2017 and I owe you an update on the state of our chapter. I'll start by telling you about our board and your new officers.

In March we elected Dan Quattrini ('81) to serve as our new Trustee to the Board of Trustees at the national alumni association. Dan replaces Ray Witter ('64), who served our chapter well for the past three years. Dan will continue Ray's great work.

We also elected Adam Sheppard ('07) to relieve Craig Benson ('91) as our Treasurer. Craig has been in that position for a long time and has dutifully protected our finances. Adam takes over a great finance portfolio for us and will continue the tradition Craig put in place when we became a non-profit organization last year.

Most recently, we've elected Michael Lester ('85) to relieve Chris Bentley ('79) as our VP for Membership, and Katharine Bonneson ('99) to relieve Chip Sharratt ('74) as VP for Events. Both Katharine and Michael will begin their turnovers with Chip and Chris, respectively, and they should have their transitions complete very soon.

*(Please see the bios at the end of this update for the new board members/officers.)*

We are always interested in alumni chapter members joining our board. We encourage all members to attend any board meeting you wish, especially if you are interested in joining. We all took that oath of office on I-Day, and that was a commitment to serve not only our commitment from our time at Annapolis, but a commitment to serve our nation for the duration of our lives. Being actively engaged in chapter business is a great way to "pay it forward."

*On to Events...*

Our Annual Meeting/Annual Picnic will be on Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, at Purgatory Creek Park Pavilion in Eden Prairie. We'll start our party at 5PM and finish around 8PM. We'll have Dickie's BBQ provide food again, but would welcome people to bring along a dessert, or drinks, to share with everyone. We've invited the commanding officers for both the Navy Operations Support Center and the Navy Recruiting District, as well as the CO of the NROTC Unit at the U of M. We'll get a full report from the local active duty units on their efforts to support the future of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

We're also only a few months away from our Anchor Sponsors' Dinner, which doubles as our Founders' Day Dinner as it coincides so closely with the anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. Naval Academy, and the birthday of the U.S. Navy. We'll keep you posted as we approach mid-October, and hope to have a good turnout at a dinner that celebrates the partnership we're building with local corporate sponsors. These sponsors enable us to pursue the many missions for which our chapter stands – support to USNA, expanding regional understanding of the naval services, and connecting national level national security experts with our business, academic, and political leaders in our region to foster better policymaking by all.

Mid-October will also be the Navy Birthday Ball, organized this year by the NOSC with the continued assistance from the Navy League. We donate each year to reduce the ticket costs for enlisted Sailors and for ROTC Midshipmen. We hope you choose to join us this year at both events for the guest speaker at both the Anchor Sponsors' Dinner and the Navy Ball will be the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Moran. We can thank our new chapter Trustee, Dan Quattrini, for ADM Moran's commitment to visit us here in Minnesota.

October and November is the time for candidate interviews. We are working with our fellow service academy alumni organizations to find ways to more effectively gather graduates from all three academies to support Congressional offices in their candidate interview process. We're starting with Minnesota and will expand our support efforts to Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota in the next couple of years.

Speaking of our collaboration with the other service academy alumni groups, we've formed a working group to engage with the West Pointers and USAFA grads in our regional area. Alex Plechash and Chip Sharratt are our representatives. We'll provide updates to you as the working group figures out areas for close and deep alignment and collaboration, as well as areas of alignment in which we can support each other more effectively.

And, finally, the football game parties and, specifically, the Army/Navy Game party. We'll announce details for all these parties as we lock down plans with Notre Dame, Air Force, and perhaps even West Point. We anticipate the Army/Navy Game party will most likely be at the Ballantine VFW Post in south Minneapolis. More details in coming months.

#### *Some Administrative Items*

Soon you will notice a change to a new website address: [www.USNAUpperMidwest.org](http://www.USNAUpperMidwest.org). This new website better aligns our chapter with both a name people can remember, as well as the .org domain, which is what most non-profit organizations use. You won't have to do anything except update your "favorites" with the new website address. Easy day.

From July 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, members of the board will be visiting chapter members in Iowa. We arrive in the Quad Cities for a dinner meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup>, then remain overnight in Cedar Rapids. On Saturday morning, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we'll have a breakfast gathering with the members from Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, then drive to Des Moines for a lunch meeting with members in that area. We have volunteers to assist in all three locations, and I am deeply grateful to Ted Olt, Dale Crosier, and Dan Roepke for their help!

#### *Significant Updates*

As you are likely aware, we held our very first Donald W. McCarthy Heartland Leadership Forum on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis. Our guest speaker was Vice Admiral Jan Tighe, class of '84. The event was a solid success with approximately 225 guests in attendance. We are already working on planning for next year's event, and we'd welcome additional volunteers to assist with planning, sustainment committee work (fundraising), and forum execution. If you are interested, again, please contact us.

## **Work Plan 2017 Updates**

Just like last year, I want to give you a sense of how we're doing in executing our strategic plan. We're in the second year of our three-year plan and on target to accomplish most, if not all, of our goals for the year.

Here are our objectives in Work Plan 2017 and the status for each:

- **Membership Drive.** It is the Board's objective to add at least 50 more alumni to our chapter's active lifetime member rolls in 2017.

**Status:** We once again achieved 7<sup>th</sup> largest chapter in the 100-chapter alumni association during the Triennial Census, completed at the end of January. Thanks to the coordination and dedication of Chris Bentley, our VP for Membership, we now have approximately 390 of our region's 600 graduates accounted for and part of our active member rolls. We also have a significant number of Associate Members, which includes anyone who would like to actively support USNA. This group includes members of the Parents' Associations, Blue and Gold Officers, business leaders, and anyone else who wants to be part of our alumni chapter. So, we really did quite well on this task and hope to continue to increase membership throughout the rest of the year. If you know someone who is a graduate but not yet a lifetime member, please send them our way.

- **Donald W. McCarthy Heartland Leadership Forum.** The Board will coordinate with an event planner to prepare for, and then execute, our chapter's first "Donald W. McCarthy Heartland Leadership Forum."

**Status:** As mentioned above, we did well on May 15<sup>th</sup>, but learned many valuable lessons, all of which are being incorporated into next year's Heartland Leadership Forum. We hope you will join us next year, it really was a great evening.

- **Enhance and Expand Corporate Partnerships.** The Board will seek to continue partnerships already established with our current Anchor Sponsors, and to add additional sponsors in 2017.

**Status:** We expanded our network of corporate partners as a result of the Heartland Leadership Forum, and have been contacted by companies in attendance about more sponsorship for next year's event. Our Sustainment Committee will be coordinating with our current Anchor Sponsors as we approach the Anchor Sponsors' Dinner, and will also be engaging other companies to see if they would like to become corporate sponsors. Any leads you can provide to the Sustainment

Committee, especially personal connections, would be deeply appreciated. As we are now a 501c(3), all corporate support is tax deductible.

- **State Directors and Alumni Events.**

**Status:** We still need someone to step up to be state directors in both North Dakota and South Dakota. A relief for Jim O'Keefe in Iowa would also be appreciated as he's been plugging away in the position for three years now. The state directors would greatly aid the board in supporting alumni chapter events and other needs in these three respective states. Please consider volunteering your time to support your fellow alumni.

- **Enhance Partnerships with Other Service Academy Alumni Groups.**

**Status:** In motion. As mentioned above, Alex Plechash and Chip Sharratt are our chapter's volunteers on the Tri-Service Working Group. We anticipate a robust set of collaborative efforts, and more effective supporting efforts on the part of all three alumni organizations for our respective events and initiatives. Stand by for more updates as the Working Group pushes forward with their work.

Additionally, the Tri-Service Working Group is looking at a local organization called Bunker Labs. Bunker Labs connects veterans who desire to be on the entrepreneurial track and who are looking for a "leg up" in understanding what they can offer customers, how to build their business plan, et al. Bunker Labs will be holding a big event in October, and here is the link if you'd like to sign up to attend:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/muster-across-america-tour-prestented-by-jpmorgan-minneapolis-muster-tickets-35464813211>

- **Blue and Gold Program / Parents' Associations.** The Board would like to greatly expand our direct cooperation and coordination with the Blue and Gold officers and with the USNA Parents' Associations of Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

**Status:** Ongoing. The MN Parents' Association new co-presidents have attended our board meetings and we've been part of their "Welcome Aboard" event for the incoming class of 2021 plebes. As we cement our working relationship with the MN Parents' Association, in full coordination with the BGO Program in Minnesota, we'll start expanding our efforts to Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota, seeking to energize these relationships and support mechanisms.

We've already funded a scholarship for a student from Iowa who is attending the Summer STEM program at Annapolis. We have the funds to support additional students and Brad Gawboy, our Blue and Gold Liaison Officer on the board, is the primary POC for all such funding requests. We'd be happy to support students in all four states so they, too, can attend the Summer STEM program, and the Summer Seminar at Navy.

- **Create an Energetic Board.** The Board of Directors should be a place where all our members seek to serve.

**Status:** As you can see at the end of this update, we have a number of people who've stepped onto the board and taken on leadership rolls just recently. This is exactly what we'd hoped for when we initiated the strategic plan in January of 2016, and we anticipate the momentum will continue to build as the strategic plan continues to be executed. Your interest in board membership is of interest to us! Please let us know if you'd like to serve.

- **New Platforms in the U.S. Navy.** The Board feels our chapter should find ways to support the commissioning for LCS-21, USS MINNEAPOLIS/ST PAUL, and SSN-790, USS SOUTH DAKOTA. We have not decided on how to best execute that support, and are eager to hear from chapter members regarding this opportunity.

**Status:** This item was an "oh, by the way" in this year's Work Plan. We still don't have total clarity on how we plan to support ship commissioning for vessels named after the states/cities in our chapter's geographic area, but we are interested in exploring options. If you'd like to join a chapter committee to brainstorm options, we'd love to hear from you. While this mission is primarily a Navy League effort, our alumni chapter is a far more powerful organization due to our size and direct corporate connections, and we should be able to leverage both to make sure these commissioning events are wildly successful.

**Alumni Chapter Board of Directors  
Officer Biographies**



**Adam "Shep" Sheppard ('07)  
Treasurer**

Adam "Shep" Sheppard was born and raised in southwest Minneapolis. He graduated from Minnehaha Academy in 2003, from the US Naval Academy in 2007, and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business in 2016. Upon graduation and commissioning from the US Naval Academy, Adam progressed through flight school in Pensacola, FL and San Diego, CA, became an H-60F/H helicopter pilot, and at the end of 2009 joined his fleet squadron in Norfolk, VA, the world-famous HS-5 Nighthoppers. During his time with Nighthoppers, Adam completed three full carrier deployments with his squadron, based on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69), to the Middle East area. Following his tour with HS-5, Adam transferred to Purdue University where he served as an NROTC instructor for over 130 Midshipmen.

After nearly 10 years of Naval service, Adam separated from the Navy and returned home to Minneapolis, and now works in a finance role at Best Buy's corporate headquarters. Adam and his wife, Kit (of Hopkins, MN), have been married for 10 years and have two girls, Lucy—3 ½, and Marlys—2, and are expecting a boy in July. Adam enjoys exercising and the outdoors, and is an avid hockey fan, playing in high school and at the Naval Academy. Since being back home, Adam has been spending lots of time with all of his extended family here in the Cities and up at the cabin in Alexandria, where they enjoy general Minnesota lake life activities, such as water skiing and fishing.



Katharine Bonneson ('99)

VP for Events

Katharine Bonneson is an Associate Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the University of Minnesota's Academic Health Center. Katharine is a 1999 graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy where she majored in Oceanography and played varsity soccer and women's rugby. She earned a master's degree in management from the University of Maryland, and a Doctorate in public administration from the University of Baltimore in 2009.

Over the course of her career, Katharine has also served as a senior management analyst with BearingPoint Consulting in McLean, Virginia; a management analyst for the Department of Defense; and lead program analyst for the National Centers for Environmental Prediction. She lives in the east metro area with her husband and three children and spends a good deal of her time on soccer fields and in ice arenas cheering on her own kids or continuing to play the game with other adults over the age of 35 who are brave enough to play.



Dan Quattrini ('81)  
Chapter Trustee

Dan graduated from the Naval Academy in 1981. As a surface warfare officer stationed in San Diego, Dan served aboard Schofield, FFG-3 and Cleveland, LPD-7. He then taught at Surface Warfare Officer School Coronado before separating from the Navy in 1988. Dan received a Master's Degree in Business from The University of San Diego in 1991.

Dan is a lifetime member of the Alumni Association, member of the President's Circle, and a trustee of the USNA Foundation, Athletic and Scholarship Program (A&SP) since 2006. He has been active within the class of 1981 since graduation and was currently elected as one of three 'members at large' on the class of 81 board.

Dan has spent his civilian career in the sales and marketing space, dealing primarily with industrial manufacturers and their distributors. His company, Pennant Group Inc., represents Thomas Industrial Network in Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and the surrounding Midwest states.

Dan and Mary, his wife of 32 years, currently reside in the city of Edina, MN. Daughter Katie graduated from Drake University in 2011 and lives and works in Minnesota. Son Tony received his graduate degree in architecture in 2016 from the University of Colorado and lives and works in Denver.

In addition to being a new chapter trustee for the Upper Midwest Chapter alumni association, Dan also serves as an advisor on the newly formed Naval Academy Rugby Association board and also serves on the Midwest board for *Tee it up for the Troops* ([www.teeitupfortheroops.org](http://www.teeitupfortheroops.org)), a 12-year-old non-profit that raises money for various veteran groups through charity golf events around the country.



Michael Lester ('85)  
VP for Membership

Michael Lester is the Chief Information Security Officer for Magenic Technologies and CoFounder and Director of LegacyArmour, a Secure Digital Asset Delivery company. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and the Naval Postgraduate School, Michael was a decorated U.S. Marine Corps pilot and an IT and leadership instructor at the Naval Academy. Early in his career Michael worked as a software developer, a QA manager, and a project manager. He also served in multiple leadership roles both local and national as a General Manager, National Director, VP, COO, and now as the Chief Information Security Officer. He is a member of MENSA, a security patent holder, has a Bachelor's degree in History, a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering, and an MBA with emphasis in Leadership Development. He is a Certified Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/US), Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), and is a frequent speaker on security topics.



David Priddy ('80)

Secretary

Dave Priddy graduated from USNA in 1980 and was winged as a rotary wing Naval Aviator. He spent most of his active duty time in West coast squadrons, but deployed to the Med before leaving active duty in 1986. Dave has spent 25 years in pharmaceutical sales & sales leadership, leading to his current role in sales skills development. Dave is actively engaged in his community with church and sports organizations, and the Upper Midwest Chapter of the Alumni Association, recently joining the board as Secretary.