

**Upper Midwest Chapter**

**Annual Report**

**2016**

Your alumni chapter has had an extraordinary 2016.

A year marked by great changes, all for the better.

Your board would like to give you a detailed rundown on all we’ve accomplished this year so you can get a sense of the scope of our changes, and how your board has performed in pursuing the objectives we outlined in our Strategic Plan for 2016-2018, and specifically in Work Plan 2016.

To make things clear and simple, we’re using the format from Work Plan 2016 and providing you an update on how we did on each of the tasks outlined and proposed approximately one year ago.

We’ll begin with the main tasks set forth for your board in Work Plan 2016.

**Key Tasks for 2016**

**File for and achieve 501c(3) status**.

**Status: Complete**. We worked with MAP for Non-Profits and received approval from the IRS less than two weeks after our electronic filing. The board has since coordinated with the state of Minnesota for additional administrative filing and we’ll submit our first official report to the IRS in early 2017, covering this past year.

**Create a Sustainment Committee and develop the Chapter Sustainment Plan**.

**Status: Complete**. The Sustainment Committee was formed, and the committee crafted a coherent, integrated philanthropic fundraising strategy to build our revenue stream to sustain chapter activities and initiatives. We raised $56,000 in our first major fundraising dinner, secured Anchor Sponsors for the period October 2016 – October 2017, and are well on our way toward our first major community outreach event, the Donald W. McCarthy Heartland Leadership Forum. (More on this topic later in the report.)

**Identify five corporate sponsors and identify at least $5,000 in total financial support.**

**Status: Complete, and exceeded by a wide margin**. Your board secured the sponsorship from seven Anchor Sponsors, to include both corporate and individual support, as discussed in the Sustainment Committee paragraph above. We also secured additional funds as part of the fundraising drive in conjunction with the Men’s Hockey Team visit to Minnesota in September.

We received approximately $60,000 in total contributions for 2016.

**Increase chapter membership by 10% in 2016**.

**Status: Complete, but irrelevant**. With our approval to become a 501c(3), we shifted our membership structure to “Lifetime,” “Legacy,” and “Associate” members.

Lifetime members include everyone who has paid $25 dues. A portion of those dues are fully tax deductible, which means there is now a clear financial incentive for all the USNA graduates in our geographic region to become actively engaged in chapter activities. Additionally, those members of our chapter who have passed 50 years since graduation are now “Legacy” members and are covered for lifetime dues in perpetuity. Finally, those who are not alumni, but choose to support our chapter, can now join via “Associate” memberships.

Additionally, corporate sponsors automatically become Associate members and are entitled to full partner benefits. You can see those benefits in the advertising we have placed on our website, and in our upcoming public engagement events.

Finally, we are in the middle of our triennial census for the entire USNA Alumni Association, and signing up with your local chapter, and paying your lifetime dues, means we may remain in the top nine chapters (established by numbers of members), and therefore continue on with a seat on the Board of Trustees. *We need to maintain that seat for our chapter* for it gives us a seat at the table and allows us to influence decisions made by the national association – decisions that will directly impact our chapter here in the upper Midwest.

**Recruit State Directors for North Dakota and South Dakota**.

**Status: Incomplete**. We do not currently have State Directors for either North Dakota or South Dakota.

The board would like to assist volunteer State Directors, who will serve as voting members on the board, with identifying “concentration areas” where fellow graduates reside in your respective states. Our hope is to build camaraderie in key geographic areas by helping to sponsor USNA-related events. *Funding to offset costs for these events is now available* due to our Sustainment Committee’s success in gaining corporate sponsors for our annual operating budget.

If you live in either North Dakota or South Dakota, and you are interested in serving as a State Director, please contact Chris Bentley ‘79, VP Membership, or Craig Benson ‘91, Nominating Committee Chair.

**Create and implement the Chapter Communications Plan**.

**Status: Complete and implemented**. David Bruns ‘88, our VP for Communications, has fully engaged on this task.

We continually seek material to include in our semi-annual chapter newsletter and for our regular Shipmate submissions. Our website also includes news and information about all the events to which we are connected or that we sponsor or run. You can usually find that information in the “Events” section under a drop-down menu.

**Enhance coordination and cooperation with other military service organizations in our region**.

**Status: Actively engaged and ongoing.** Your board succeeded in cooperating with active duty, reserve, guard, and veterans groups on many events this past year, to include:

* Minneapolis Public Schools STEM Expo (February)
* Superintendent’s Visit to Minnesota (March)
* Plebe 2020 Welcome Aboard (June)
* Annual Alumni Chapter Picnic (June)
* Duluth Tall Ships Festival (August)
* Navy/Air Force Football Game Party (September)
* WCCO Radio One-Hour Interview with VADM Ted Carter ‘81 (September)
* WCCO Radio One-Hour Interview with Midshipmen on the Navy Hockey Team (September)
* Visit by the Navy Men’s Hockey Team to Minnesota (September)
* Medal of Honor Convention (October)
* Coordinated All-Service Academy Escort Duties with Medal of Honor Recipients (October)
* Navy/Notre Dame Football Game Party (October)
* WCCO Radio One-Hour Interview with ADM Jon Greenert ’75 (October)
* First Annual Upper Midwest Chapter Business Partnership Dinner (October)
* Navy Ball (October)
* Minnesota Student Leadership Seminar (November)
* WCCO Radio One-Hour Interview with USNA Midshipmen for OPINFO (November)
* 75th Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremonies (December)
* Army/Navy Game (December)
* Twice monthly All-Service Academy Breakfasts (January to December)
  + Guest speakers included ENS Biehn from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, BG (Ret) Tim Kennedy from the MN National Guard and MN Chapter of MOAA, and Col (Ret) Don Patton who serves as the coordinator for the World War II History Roundtable

**Enhance direct coordination and cooperation with our sister service alumni groups**.

**Status: Enacted and ongoing**. Your board aligned with the West Point and Air Force Academy alumni groups in our region for the Medal of Honor Convention, the Student Leadership Seminar, and the Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremonies.

We plan to engage even more with our sister service academy groups to expand what we do together in 2017.

**Planned Initiatives in 2016**

**Upgrade and expand the Chapter Website.**

**Status: Ongoing.** We’ve done a great deal to improve how we use the website. Most communications you receive from the chapter will point you to a link on our website where you can quickly and easily see the full details for events and opportunities.

The Air Force Academy Association is finishing their work to reboot the Tri-Service Employment Hub, which was the victim of a rather vicious hack early this year. The website went down, but should be back up again soon. There is a dedicated link on our website to reach the Tri-Service Employment Hub, and any chapter member who has a hiring opportunity, or is seeking new opportunities, should feel free to post on the Hub.

**Enhance our cooperation with the Blue and Gold Program and the Parents’ Association of Minnesota.**

**Status: Ongoing, but needs even more focus.** At every possible opportunity this past year, the alumni chapter offered to support the Blue and Gold Program’s community outreach. We were generally successful in this effort as we have a Blue and Gold Liaison Officer on our Board and a great working relationship with our Blue and Gold Area Coordinator. This direct connection between the alumni chapter and the BGO Program greatly aided engagement with students during the Supe’s visit, the Navy Hockey team’s visit, and as part of the candidate interviews with the senators and representatives from the MN Congressional Delegation. We would like to create even stronger bonds of cooperation in this area over the remaining part of our Strategic Plan 2016-2018.

Regarding the Parents’ Association, this is a partnership that still needs much more engagement. The Parents’ Association is our alumni chapter’s direct connection to all the current Midshipmen – our fellow future alumni members – from our geographic area. We can provide a wealth of knowledge to concerned parents, and to Mids seeking mentors for their careers. However, we have not made much progress in building this partnership this past year.

Anticipate this initiative being one of our more important efforts in 2017.

**Membership drive.**

**Status: Ongoing, but this will always be a continuous process.** With our shift to non-profit status, we can now offer our members lifetime membership in our chapter. This means a one-time dues payment covers you for life. Considering the “value” we are working to create for chapter membership, and a single dues payment of $25, we anticipate an easier time convincing alumni in our chapter area to become involved in activities.

We have increased our active membership to roughly 200 members, but our total number of graduates in the four-state Upper Midwest Chapter region is around 750 people. We will endeavor to persevere in our efforts to bring everyone into the chapter as an active member. We are always interested in feedback from inactive alumni in our region, so, please communicate to your board if you can recommend changes that might summarily convince you to join us.

Additional initiatives in this area include lobbying the national Alumni Association to create a single website and data base management tool for every chapter to use, eliminating redundant data bases and websites for the roughly 100 local chapters spread around the globe. If successful, this change at the national level would annually save local chapters tens of thousands of dollars in web hosting, data base management, and financial transaction fees. Your chapter leadership submitted such a proposal through our Trustee, directly to the Board of Trustees, as part of the May 2016 Board of Trustees’ meeting. We wait final decisions from the BoT, and are hopeful they drive the entire alumni association in this direction.

**Expand Upper Midwest Chapter alumni events to out-state Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.**

**Status: Ongoing, but we generally failed.** We succeeded in hosting a single out-state event in Duluth in August as part of the Duluth Tall Ships Festival. Many thanks to Lynn Wegner ‘65 for hosting that event!

We lack State Directors for North Dakota and South Dakota, and without a local POC, it is nearly impossible to arrange these events. Iowa has been problematic due to the geographic spread between alumni “centers of mass.” As stated earlier in the annual report, funds are available to help offset costs should one of our alumni members in the region wish to spearhead a gathering. Please contact your board if you are that graduate.

**Create a “Signature Event” for our chapter.**

**Status: Complete, and coordination is moving forward apace for our first annual event in May of 2017.** We’ve created the ***Donald W. McCarthy Heartland Leadership Forum***, which, on an annual basis, will bring senior flag officers or defense officials (USNA graduates primarily) to our area to address business, political, and academic leaders in an effort to educate and inform these audience groups. Our first keynote speaker will be Vice Admiral Jan Tighe, ‘84. VADM Tighe currently serves as OPNAV N2/N6, which is the Deputy CNO for Information Warfare, and also the Director of Naval Intelligence. VADM Tighe’s biography can be accessed using this link: <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio.asp?bioID=609>.

Don McCarthy is the senior graduate in our chapter – class of 1944, graduated in 1943. Don served on active duty in the Pacific theater during World War II, and as CO of a minesweeper during the Korean War. His career included becoming President and CEO of Northern States Power, the precursor to Xcel Energy. Don’s lifetime of leadership in business, philanthropy, and his service to the Naval Academy Alumni Association makes him the ideal person to honor by naming this leadership forum in his name.

We anticipate roughly 350 business leaders from the greater Twin Cities’ metro area will join us for this luncheon. We hope our chapter members join us in great numbers as well!

**Expand the number of smaller events in the greater Twin Cities’ metro area and across the entire chapter.**

**Status: Failed.** Frankly, we had the busiest year we’ve ever had in our chapter in 2016. More events, and greater engagement by chapter members, partner organizations, and with USNA in general, than we’ve had in many years. Perhaps ever. Still, no excuses. We need to do better.

We will include this initiative in our Work Plan 2017 and work to expand the number of events for graduates, not only in the Twin Cities’ metro area, but across our entire chapter.

Again, we need State Directors to help us to expand the number of gatherings available to our graduates.

**Bring SACC to the Twin Cities.**

**Status: Dead on arrival.** We engaged with USNA and the SACC coordinating office. SACC is permanently set in key locations where there is a major concentration of active duty personnel, including service academy graduates. SACC takes advantage of the availability of transitioning service academy graduates, generally in the junior officer ranks, to pair them with companies interested in hiring them. The Twin Cities’ metro region holds no interest for SACC, even as a “One-Off” kind of event. We were told, in no uncertain terms, that SACC would never take us up on the option to hold one of these events in our area, even if we had the full support of the West Point and Air Force Academy alumni groups.

**Shift the Upper Midwest Chapter’s Annual Meeting to coincide with the Annual Picnic.**

**Status: Complete.** We hold our annual picnic in June of each year. We host this event to celebrate our connections to each other as graduates, and we hope all our chapter members will make the annual meeting a priority event in late June. We’ll set the date for the Annual Picnic in 2017 soon. Please make sure you join us next summer!

**Bring together regional area naval service organizations and commands toward common goals.**

**Status: Ongoing.** We’ve had success in these efforts, primarily as part of the Navy Ball, but also for initiatives like the Duluth Tall Ships Festival, the Navy Hockey team’s visit to MN, the Supe’s visit to MN, and, perhaps most significantly, the Medal of Honor Convention.

Still, this is an area where our alumni chapter can provide real leadership. We will reassess this initiative as part of Work Plan 2017. We will seek ways to make this collaboration even more effective.

**Provide chapter members with opportunities to advertise their businesses, engage with fellow alumni, et al.**

**Status: Complete.** Active membership affords you, as a small business owner, the opportunity to advertise your company on our website. Please contact our VP for Membership/Sustainment Committee Chair, Chris Bentley, for more information. This is your chapter at work supporting you; “value” for being an active member. Don’t miss out! It’s free!

**Other Notes of Interest**

**USNA Superintendent’s Visit**. The Superintendent, VADM Ted Carter ‘81, visited us in March, and has promised to visit Minnesota again. We are coordinating dates with his office. We’re hopeful even more of you can come to hear him speak when next he visits us.

**Men’s Hockey Team Visit.** In September, the men’s hockey team came to Minnesota for the very first time. The program has been in existence for 40 years, had many dozens of Minnesotans skate on the team, and never visited our state before. Midshipmen from the team spent their first afternoon in Minnesota meeting with high school students from around 10 Twin Cities’ area high schools, then played two games as part of their MN tour. The team beat the University of St. Thomas’s club team on Friday evening at the Xcel Energy Center by a score of 3-2. Navy lost the second game, against the University of Minnesota’s club team, also by a score of 3-2, but in a shoot-out. From Coach Fox’s perspective, the entire trip was a massive success, and we received word from the Superintendent’s office he, too, felt the trip was a great achievement for our alumni chapter, and the Navy hockey program in general.

**Ryder Cup**. This year’s Ryder Cup was at Hazeltine National Golf Club from September 27th to October 2nd. Our very own chapter member, Mike Langley ‘75, was instrumental in getting all military veterans free access for the practice rounds ahead of the Cup itself. We’re hopeful you were able to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

**Navy Ball**. Former Chief of Naval Operations ADM Jon Greenert ’75 visited us from Thursday, October 13th, through Sunday, October 16th.

We ran ADM Greenert ragged while he was here. He visited the U of M’s NROTC Unit, spending about an hour and a half with the Midshipmen. Those future naval officers will never forget the time he spent with them. We also got him a private tour of U.S. Bank Stadium, hosted him at an informal alumni chapter lunch at Lou Nanne’s in Edina, and treated him to a round of golf.

ADM Greenert served as our keynote speaker at our first annual chapter fundraising dinner, and as keynote speaker for the Navy Ball.

**Army/Navy Game**. The Ballentine VFW Post on Lake Street in Minneapolis was our venue for this year’s Army/Navy Game. This is a change from previous years, when the Mall of America supported our needs. The board felt moving the venue to one the VFW posts provides long-term support for veterans, ensuring these facilities remain to provide a haven and place of gathering for all our veterans.

We are now deep into planning a stellar 2017 and we’ll communicate that plan to you as soon as we’ve finalized it.

Sincerely,

JON R. OLSON

President

Upper Midwest Chapter