

WEST POINT PARENTS CLUB OF NORTH CAROLINA



PLEBE PARENT HANDBOOK Class of 2015

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This manual is intended only to supplement information you will receive from the Admissions Office and the Commandant of Cadets at the United States Military Academy. Some of this information was “borrowed” from other parent club handbooks, as well as the Public Affairs Office at West Point, while other information is uniquely “ours.” Much of the information contained herein is based on the experiences of the past few years, and as such, a word of caution: ANYTHING can change at any time.

This is Just the Beginning

West Point parents agree that the first year at West Point is the most difficult, not only for the plebes, but for their parents as well. This manual has been designed to help you through this special time in your lives as you give support to your son or daughter and still survive plebe year yourself.

You will have many questions as you make your way from here to Graduation Day. To assist you, all of our current parent club members are ready, willing and able to lend an ear. Remember that the only dumb question is the one not asked. We are available to you anytime you think you need help, have questions, or just to serve as a sounding board. We have all been through what you are about to begin and are here to assist you in any way.

We hope that this manual will handle most of your immediate questions and offer helpful advice. It is only intended to supplement the information you will receive through official West Point channels. And, so, let's begin!

Things that Should Have Been Done Yesterday

Convince your candidate to **RUN, RUN, RUN**, and then RUN some more. They should also be practicing doing “proper” push-ups, as they will be doing lots of these during Cadet Basic Training (CBT). Being in excellent physical shape before they arrive at West Point will greatly assist the new cadet through CBT, more commonly known as “Beast Barracks.” Caution! It is better to run on grass or dirt, or a good track surface ~ not on the North Carolina roads, to avoid shin splints and passing motorists. Try using golf courses, dirt roads, or high school tracks if at all possible. Even high school athletes in the best of condition find the physical training at West Point a challenge, as they are often working under very tense and mentally taxing conditions.

Complete and mail all paperwork requirements for West Point as soon as possible. Keep copies – papers can get lost. Consider using “delivery confirmation” to ensure peace of mind.

Purchase items needed for R-Day. Travel light. Candidates are only allowed one bag, and there is very little they are authorized to bring with them. Bringing one bag means the candidate will need to fill out only one tag (the first test of maintaining calm under tension). Check the “Instructions for Candidates” for required items and restrictions. You will find that many candidates take the items listed below although these are just suggestions. Pack lightly – your candidate does NOT want a heavy bag on R-Day.

- Low quarters: Black leather dress shoes w/laces. WELL BROKEN IN and highly polished. Plebes are not allowed to wear the highly shined plastic-surfaced Officer style Corfam shoes that are available from Military Stores. The Army posts do not usually stock leather low quarters. West Point is probably

the only post where your candidate can fit and buy the right leather low quarters. The overnight visit after a candidate has accepted his/her appointment is the ideal time to purchase shoes.

- Running shoes: A pair of well broken in running shoes – running shoes, NOT cross trainers!
- Combat Boots: The pre-purchase of tan combat boots is recommended but not required. You will be issued a pair of tan combat boots upon reporting for R-Day. We recommend the pre-purchase to allow for the boots to be “broken in”. See the URL provided:
http://www.bellevilleshoe.com/product.php?current_product=6
- Razor: Safety razor with shaving cream or electric/battery operated razor.
- Wrist Watch: A sturdy, inexpensive, a waterproof watch with an alarm and lighted dial.
- Sports bras: (female candidates - clasp bras tend to fall apart). These are issued items, but most female candidates prefer to bring some from home.
- Alarm clock: Battery operated (Meaningful redundancy - see watch).
- Small penlight: (mini-mag) flashlight with extra batteries.
- Nail clipper or small key chain type pen knife: To remove threads from uniforms.
- Leatherman-type multi-purpose fold up tool: Makes an excellent graduation gift and works well in the field (available at most sporting goods stores ~ the Leatherman Wave works well)
- Small lint-free cloths/rags for shining shoes: Cut up an old tee shirt.
- Small address book: Completely filled out including important dates.
- Stamps and supply of addressed stamped envelopes and stationary.
- One 8x10 picture in frame: Many cadets enjoy having a collage of pictures in the frame – a great gift idea! You can print several 8x10’s and store them behind the one picture on display.
- Bic-type lighter: Check with your airlines as these are banned in carry-ons.
- Chap stick
- Band-Aids: And moleskin or the high tech moleskin called Compeed.
- Gold Bond medicated foot powder

If you are planning to stay overnight for Reception Day (R-Day), you have hopefully already made your **hotel reservations**. If not, run to the nearest phone, and check local hotels/motels today for cancellations. You should also consider making hotel reservations for Acceptance Day weekend and Plebe-Parent weekend, if possible.

Set up a checking account for your candidate. They must have this so they can receive their pay from the Army. You can use your own local bank or one in the West Point area. You may already have received some literature from the Pentagon Federal Credit Union. One benefit of using the PFCU is that it is located on post, so there is ready access to both ATMs and real bank personnel. Additionally, PFCU serves military members worldwide, and your son/daughter will not have to change accounts upon graduation. If your son/daughter

chooses to maintain his/her account with a bank at home, check into their policy on charging for ATM withdrawals. USAA is also a wonderful bank for military personnel.

Regardless of where you choose to do your banking, make sure you have the "**direct deposit**" form **completed in advance**, so the form can be turned in by your son/daughter on R-Day.

Get telephone calling cards or an 800 number for your son/daughter. During Beast Barracks, your son/daughter will be allowed to make a few phone calls and the calling card or an 800 number is essential. During the academic year, when they have access to a phone in their room, cadets do not pay for long distance calls (this is new as of 2009 when the phone systems were changed). Cadets may have cell phones after A-Day (discussed later).

Consider having your son/daughter get a credit card. While this is optional, it is a good idea for them to have for emergency purposes and for arranging travel. Pentagon Federal Credit Union has indicated that they will be sending welcome packets to all new cadet candidates, which will include an offer to apply for a special pre-approved credit card with a \$1,000 limit.

Your son/daughter remains a North Carolina resident. If they are eighteen years old, or within six months of their eighteenth birthday, they should **register to vote** so they can vote absentee when the time comes. Call your Town Clerk's office for information and the procedure for requesting applications for absentee ballots.

Read and re-read "Information for New Cadets/Parents," the "West Point Parents Almanac" and "Instructions for Candidates Offered Admission" along with this manual.

Remind your candidate to **get a haircut** before leaving. This will help relieve the shock of that buzz cut on R-Day.

Again, encourage your candidate to **RUN, RUN, RUN**, and then RUN some more.

Before you leave for R-Day **write an upbeat letter to your son or daughter** to be mailed at West Point that day, once you receive their address. (Funny, encouraging, upbeat greeting cards are also a good idea anytime.) MAKE SURE your mail is addressed to "New Cadet <last name only>" during Beast. After the Acceptance Parade in August, address mail to "Cadet <first name (or nickname)> <last name>". Make sure everyone (friends, family, even the random person you meet in the grocery store whom you enlist to write to your son or daughter ~ everyone) follows these guidelines to save your cadet any grief as a result of mail. A very helpful rule of thumb - white stationery, white envelopes and a stamp that has an U.S. flag on it. Stay away from colors, stickers, glitter or perfume. AND, please impress on the girlfriend that it is NOT cool or cute to write "SWAK" or put cutesy lips on the envelope. Your son/daughter is trying very hard to blend in (if not become invisible) and distinctive envelopes will likely result in chuckles by the cadre ~ and earn the new cadet pushups. An occasional "Beat Navy" on the envelope can be a good thing!

In the past, West Point sent out a postcard with the new cadet's post office box number on it. VERIFY that this number has not changed when you receive your post office box card and beast company card at Ike Hall on R-Day. In years past, parents have been given a card with the post office box number and the Cadet Basic Training Company (CBT) information – company number, such as E-3, and the names and telephone numbers of the CBT Company Commander and Company NCO. Save this card for absolute emergencies – your son/daughter will NOT want you calling the company commander or NCO just to find out how they are faring!

The West Point Experience

West Point is not only a place; it is a way of life . . . a new way of life which will affect both your offspring and you dramatically in the coming months and years. The United States Military Academy at West Point is a major source of the Army Officer Corps, which is the symbol of our nation's military strength. Nowhere is "tradition" stronger than at the Academy. Uniformity, obedience, duty and honor are the keystones of its existence. You are vicariously about to become part of this tradition!

Your son or daughter will enter the United States Military Academy on June 27 2011 as a “candidate” or “new cadet candidate.” Upon taking the oath, candidates become “new cadets”. They are at West Point because they have displayed an impressive combination of academic, athletic and leadership credentials. They possess both the ability and the potential to be successful.

New cadets enter into a time-honored tradition of Cadet Basic Training (CBT) or “Beast Barracks”. During this time they are indoctrinated into the military life, and at the same time, are exposed to traditions that have, in great part, existed since the 1800's. This experience is, in effect, a severing of the "umbilical cord" which linked your son or daughter to another way of life. During this six-week period, you may see a dramatic change in just about every aspect of your son's or daughter's demeanor and lifestyle.

Reception Day – R-Day for the Class of 2015 – June 27, 2011

This day marks the beginning of a unique experience for your son or daughter and to some degree for you. We strongly suggest that you accompany your candidate to West Point for R-Day. West Point, the oldest continuously operated military post in the country, is steeped in the history of our great country and its many exceptional leaders. It will help you to be able to picture where your son or daughter is going to be for the next four years.

Parents and R-Day visitors should wear comfortable casual clothes and comfortable walking shoes. Casual dress at the Academy is defined as: Men - slacks with collared shirt, sweater or sports coat; Ladies- slacks with blouse, skirt and blouse or pantsuit (while you will see blue jeans, shorts and T-shirts, you may feel more comfortable, or more appropriately dressed, a bit more in the classic style.)

Other family members may accompany you for this important day. Note - If elderly relatives come, it may be a grueling day for them because of the heat and the amount of walking, which is mostly uphill. No matter where you go at West Point, it always seems to be uphill. If you are planning to stay for the swearing in ceremony (which we recommend), it's a long, emotion-filled day.

With respect to arrival time, we would only suggest that you neither be too early or too late. Follow the schedule prescribed by the Academy, which is based on the last digit of your son/daughter's social security number. Your son/daughter will very rapidly learn to not draw attention to him/her and to become a part of the team. Being first or last in anything only makes them stand out. Be sure to say your long good-byes BEFORE you get to the reporting-in location. You will have 90 seconds to say a final goodbye after the greeting by the Officer of the Day and the instructions "Candidates exit." This will be the last that you will see your candidate until CBT is finished in August. Relax, your child will be totally occupied and in the best of hands. If you should happen to see your son/daughter or pass them during training on R-Day (very unlikely) DO NOT try to talk to them.

Once your son or daughter has taken the official Oath during the morning swearing-in ceremony, (which is actually held in a classroom, and not open to the public) they will be called “new cadets,” a form of address that they will grow to hate, for the next several weeks. Only after they complete Cadet Basic Training and are accepted into the Corps of Cadets at the Acceptance Day Parade, in August, will they become “cadets.”

After your son or daughter has departed, you will have the opportunity to visit all the vendors at the Parents Welcome center. You can order football tickets, purchase various 2015 souvenirs which are only available on R-Day, such as special T-shirts and tote bags emblazoned with the names of all members of the Class of 2015, and 2015 coffee mugs, hats, etc., visit various exhibits and most get your son/daughter's CBT company assignment and Post Office Box number. Some parents do not purchase all the special year memorabilia on R-Day, and are later disappointed that stock has run out and will not be reordered. If you place your order on R-Day, even if they HAVE run out (which happens often) they will ship the tote bags, shirts, etc., to you, and you are sure to have them. You may wish to purchase extras of some special items, as Grandmas are known to have been unhappy to be left out, and bragging rights go beyond parents! Remember to bring pencil and paper to jot down the P.O. Box number and other important information that is available at the various booths. You can place your order for Army-Navy football game tickets in this area.

During the day, you will most likely have time to walk around the Plain and Trophy Point areas, but will not be allowed in the Cadet Area, which is beyond the chains in front of the Barracks and Washington Hall. There will

be some locations near the central area where you can observe the new cadets being instructed by the cadre, but again remember even if you are close enough to talk to new cadets, please don't. Also, the large grassed parade area (commonly referred to as "The Plain") in front of the bleachers is off limits to pedestrian traffic. Stay on the sidewalk.

In the past, there has been a Superintendent's briefing for new parents in the Eisenhower Hall Auditorium sometime in the mid-afternoon. This will be an uplifting, emotional, and very informative introduction to Academy life and an opportunity for you to better understand the various aspects of cadet life.

In the early evening, there is the R-Day Parade and swearing-in ceremony that is usually held on the Plain or at Trophy Point. (Check your instructions on R-Day as to the exact time and location of the swearing in ceremony – this has changed over the past few years) Arrive early (up to one hour before the ceremony is scheduled to commence) to obtain a good location to observe this ceremony. It gets very crowded. Bring your camera, video cam, or binoculars. Remember that all new cadets will look alike. They are not easy to identify because all have the same haircut, uniform, and no expression. They will be lined up by height, front to rear of each company, and this may help you pick them out as they march past (yes, they will actually march! in uniform! and with a great sense of pride and accomplishment!) The information on your candidate's company assignment will also help. Be prepared for changes in schedule as well as weather!

After the ceremonial swearing-in, usually around a 6:00 P.M., the new cadets will march directly into Washington Hall (Mess Hall) for their first evening meal as new cadets. The day is over for you and your family at the conclusion of the swearing in ceremony. Don't forget to mail those letters and cards before you leave so that your new cadet will be among the first to receive mail.

HINT: Mail from home is extremely important during Beast and the entire first year. Make out post cards, envelopes or address labels with your new cadet's address and send them out to their friends and relatives. Write very often yourself. Keep it upbeat as you let them know how your summer is progressing. Be as newsy as possible, and you can even send news clippings of events back home. Be sure to give your new cadet an address book with family and friends' addresses, important dates, lots of stamps, envelopes and writing paper before they go to R-Day. However - **DO NOT EXPECT A LOT OF MAIL FROM THEM.** New cadets have almost no time to write. The cadre (upperclass cadets in charge of training) normally requires them to write a letter home the first night. It will be short and may arrive as early as four to five days after R-Day; but it may be a week to ten days before you hear from them. We found that we would go days on end without hearing from our son, and then receive two or three letters on the same day. The vagaries of the post office often delayed mail, but we religiously wrote, and sent comics, cards, etc.

Once the academic year begins in late summer, your son/daughter will have a computer and you can communicate by e-mail and instant messenger as well as "snail-mail."

R-Day Practice Event, Friday, June 24, 2011

Volunteers are needed (age 14-55) to help the cadre with their "dress rehearsal" for R-Day. If your son/daughter is entering with the Class of 2015, you (and any siblings or friends of the right age) may wish to participate in the practice R-Day. Please make sure all understand that this is practice for the cadre ... and remember, no candidates are permitted to participate.

More information is available through the West Point Public Affairs Office, and the Directorate of Communications, Debra R. Dalton, Contact her at 845-938-5650 or deb.dalton@usma.edu

Cadet Basic Training (CBT)

"Duty-Honor-Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying points, to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn." (*Excerpt from General Douglas MacArthur's Farewell Address delivered to the Corps of Cadets on 12 May 1962.*)

R-Day is the start of CBT or “Beast,” as it is affectionately known. Some new cadets actually like it, but others hate it. It is a time when a group of high school graduates are molded into West Point Cadets. It is intentionally tough, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

During Beast Barracks, a new cadet's daily life begins before 5:00 A.M. and will extend well into the evening hours. Lights out is at 10:00 P.M. Lights out is strictly enforced to ensure that new cadets received an appropriate amount of sleep. Likewise, the cadre ensures that no one is up and about before the prescribed morning revelry call. In addition to extensive military training, including military courtesy, marching and the handling of firearms, the new cadets will be schooled in the traditions of West Point and will learn what it takes “to make it.” They are constantly challenged.

This is a particularly difficult adjustment period for the new cadet. His or her lifestyle will undergo a complete change, as he/she is totally immersed in a military setting. Stress is a major part of the program along with the ability to memorize data, learn military drill, courtesy and the “West Point Way” It is a time when all are in need of encouragement and support. You may hear a lot of negative reaction on the part of your son/daughter. Encourage him/her to hang in; insist that he/she give it a fair trial. Staying power and the ability to perform well under stress is the hallmark of a West Pointer and a valuable attribute for anyone.

For the first few weeks of Beast, new cadets will be very, very busy. The concept of “One-Day- At-A-Time” (1DAAT, or for the e-mail generation, 1D@AT) will help them over this initial experience and adjustment. Actually, one of our grads (who is also now a cadet dad) counsels that new cadets may prefer to think in terms of “**One Meal At A Time**” – a day is too long! Sometime during the first two weeks, your son/daughter will be allowed to make a short, timed, and sometimes supervised phone call to home. This call can come at any time so an answering machine comes in handy. However, if he/she does not make direct contact with you, he/she will be allowed to call until he/she gets through to you. This is a time to let your son/daughter do the talking, and you do the listening. It will probably be a few weeks before your son/daughter will be able to call again. This first call is usually filled with emotion and may even be a real “downer” ~ or he/she may just be very quiet. This is all very normal! All the new cadets have had it with standing in lines, learning Plebe Knowledge, getting haircuts, testing, mess hall formality, and the intense nature of the whole experience. It may seem to be the worst time of your son/daughter's lives at this point. Encouragement and support is what he/she needs the most from you. “1DAAT” or “1MAAT”. Remember, more than 200 plebe classes have survived, so can he/she. If you do not get a phone call in the first couple of weeks, don't panic. Sometimes new cadets will intentionally pass on the first opportunity to call because they are not yet ready to hear their parents' voices and all the emotions a call to home bring (or sometimes they choose to call the girlfriend/boyfriend!). Relax and let your son/daughter, and the cadre supervising them, choose the time.

Of utmost importance is to keep those cards and letters coming. Don't be discouraged if another parent tells you that they heard from their son/daughter and you have not. Assignments and free times differ greatly throughout the various companies.

At some point during Beast Barracks, your son or daughter will likely be allowed to visit the Cadet Store to purchase some necessary supplies. One of the most popular purchases is a small 4” electric fan. The rooms in the barracks can get very hot during July, August and September.

IMPORTANT: Toward the end of July, just when the new cadets are starting to get comfortable with their cadre, the upperclassmen change with a completely new detail of cadre and leadership. (This is training in leadership for the upperclassmen as well as basic training for the new cadets) This change can be particularly stressful for the new cadets. Prepare for a possible “downer” communication after this change. **THE ICE CREAM SOCIAL:** The silver lining to the change of cadre is the fact that on the day of the change of command, all new cadets are “treated” to an afternoon at a West Point family's home, with the attendant opportunity for possibly an extended phone call home, some relaxation and perhaps even a nap, and some good food. Most importantly, the new cadets enjoy the opportunity to be away from the “ever watchful eyes” of the cadre. Mark your calendars now to expect a phone call on **Sunday July 17, 2011!**

While the first half of cadet basic training is spent largely at the garrison, there is substantially more field training during the second half of cadet basic training. Recently, the last week of Beast is spent at Camp Buckner, a military camp on the West Point reservation. The new cadets will bivouac (camp out, for us laymen) learn

military skills and really bond as a class. On the last night at Camp Buckner, the Class will relax with a variety show and prepare for the long march back.

At the end of the bivouac, the class marches back 10 miles to West Point proudly displaying their new class motto at the head of the column. The entire community of West Point turns out to welcome the class of proud new cadets as they march back in fine fashion. They are met at the North (Washington) gate by the military band and the Army mules as they proceed to march the last two miles, winding their way through the West Point community, culminating in a Pass in Review at the Superintendent's house (Quarters 100) where the Superintendent and honored guests will receive the Pass in Review. For the class of 2015, this march will occur on **Monday, August 8, 2011**. They'll be passing the Superintendent's house around 8:30 or 9:00 a.m.

The Association of Graduates (AOG) each year invites some "old grads" to join the members of the Class of '15 in the March Back. Last year about 120 grads marched the full route with the new cadets, showing the strength and pride of the long gray line.

If you are able to attend the arrival of the March Back, be sure to take your camera or video cam, and possibly make up a large sign congratulating the Class on the successful completion of Beast Barracks, and their return to West Point. Be aware, however, that you will not be able to talk with your son or daughter as he/she marches quickly past, and more than one mom has missed even catching a glimpse of her son or daughter!

**Keep in mind, Beast Barracks and Reorg week
are likely the most challenging times
– emotionally, physically, and psychologically –
your son or daughter will experience
during their entire four years.**

**During this time, you should be as supportive, positive, understanding,
and upbeat as possible.**

Reorganization Week, Monday, August 8-12

Reorganization Week, commonly called "REORGY" is considered by many to be the absolute worst time of the plebe year. Throughout Beast, there has been only one upperclassman for every twelve – fifteen plebes. Just as the plebes are feeling happy and proud that they survived Beast and look forward to being cadets rather than "new cadets," they are confronted with a mass infusion of the dreaded upperclassmen. These upperclassmen are returning from various summer assignments all over the world and have nothing more important to do than to get up close and personal with the new plebe class. The ratio is now drastically changed to three upperclassmen for every plebe, and much worse, they have to live with them in their new companies and eat with them in the Mess Hall. During this week, each plebe will move in with new roommate(s) from their own class and become part of one of the 36 companies that make up the Corps of Cadets. This company will be their home for the next year. They will also receive their computer and something new - a homework assignment for each class - to be completed BEFORE they report to the **first class on Monday, August 15**. Such is the Thayer method of teaching.

The good news about Reorg week is that the new cadets are once again linked to the outside world, and once they have their computers up and running, and the phones assigned, they can contact you with their new email address, phone number, etc.

Acceptance Parade, August 13, 2011

On the Saturday following the march back from their encampment, the Class of 2015 will be formally accepted into the Corps of Cadets during the Acceptance Parade. This is one of only a very few parades that is totally dedicated to a particular class during the entire West Point experience. (R-Day, the parade at Plebe-Parent Weekend and the Graduation Parade come to mind as others). CBT training culminates with the Acceptance Parade. Toward the very end of Beast Barracks or during Reorg week, your son/daughter will be able to tell you which company he/she has been assigned to for the academic year, and you will be able to place yourself

in the stands aligned with his or her new company using the markers on the parade field. The upperclassmen march onto the field and the new cadets march along the outer edges of the Plain forming in front of the bleachers. After their “acceptance,” the plebes take their places with their permanent academic companies as members of the Long Gray Line and pass in review. It is really exciting to see the new cadets march toward the Corps and then disappear into the ranks, as they become one with the Corps!

For the Class of 2015, this Parade is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on August 13, 2011, on The Plain. The new cadets will wear their white hats for the first time and be formally accepted into the Corps. If you can attend, it is a truly happy occasion!

CONGRATULATIONS! Your sons/daughters are now officially cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point. In past years, Acceptance Day also marks the day when cadets have enjoyed their first family visitation since R-Day!

Typically, the new plebes are released from duties by mid-afternoon at the latest, and enjoy “walking privileges” until approximately 10:30 p.m. on Saturday night, and then again on Sunday until approximately 5:30 p.m. “Walking privileges” refers to that area outside the gates of West Point where it is “legal” for a plebe to be (within a five mile radius of certain points)... they do not necessarily have to walk there – they can accompany you in your car. The parameters of walking privileges are:

- To the North: Washington Gate
- To the East: The west bank of the Hudson River
- To the West: The easterly side of Route 9W, with the exception that cadets traveling via automobile may travel down the westerly side of Route 9W to go to a location on the easterly side of Route 9W (is your head spinning yet?)
- To the South: The Bear Mountain Bridge Circle, with the exception that cadets traveling via automobile may travel part way around the circle to go into Bear Mountain State Park.

As you will quickly learn, the “tether” of walking privileges is very limited – basically, the Villages of Highland Falls and Fort Montgomery and Bear Mountain State Park, but considering that the cadets have not been off Post since R-Day, this will seem like a journey around the world to them!

In the past, some plebes have conveniently misunderstood and reported that they were granted Off Post Privileges (OPPs - explained later) on Acceptance Day weekend. Needless to say, this was NOT correct, and they were noticed. If your son/daughter tells you that he/she can travel down to the Palisades Mall or up to Newburgh, they can't. Plebes enjoy walking privileges only during their Plebe Year, with the sole exception of Plebe Parent Weekend (discussed later). Those that violate the boundaries risk confinement and punishment tours (walking hours).

Plan a picnic by the river, a meal at a restaurant located within the limits of walking privileges or a happy reunion somewhere on Post (and remember, the Army has Posts and Forts, the Navy has Bases). Without a doubt, your son/daughter will enjoy the opportunity to eat some home-baked goodies, rest, and share their experiences of the past several weeks!

Academic Year

The academic year commences immediately after Reorg week and before A-Day. The first day of their college classes at West Point will be Monday, August 15, 2011. Classes usually have less than eighteen students and are very challenging to even the brightest students. Encourage your son or daughter not to neglect his or her academics. Academic standing accounts for 60% of their class rank grade. (Military 25% & Physical 15%) The Academy, while educating the whole person, obviously stresses academics. Your son/daughter will be well advised to study hard and develop good study habits. One of the most important lessons to be learned is **TIME**

MANAGEMENT. The Academy offers a short course on this subject for plebes. Your son or daughter may wish to consider taking advantage of this course.

The beginning of classes also creates another type of stress. The Thayer method of instruction is study and application first with explanation later. This is a unique approach that usually creates frustration until adjustment can be made. Many top honor students who have never had a grade below a "B" fail their first few quizzes or WPR's (Written Partial Reviews). This is also normal; not to panic.

In addition to the new academic strain, there are also plebe duties, room management, and personal military inspections. Upperclassmen are also "helpful" in reinforcing high standards and then some. This time under pressure is when your son or daughter will learn the most efficient way to manage time. Homework is done before the class, not after. In order to succeed, cadets must be prepared BEFORE the first day and BEFORE every class.

We suggest that you encourage your son or daughter to become involved in clubs and similar activities in order to afford some outlet from academics and to fully experience West Point life. Several extra-curricular activities are performed outside of West Point and these can provide cadets opportunities to leave the Academy for an occasional weekend.

Sunday is a day of relaxation, unless your son or daughter has a specific duty. He or she will be free to sleep late, attend church and do as he or she pleases, within prescribed limits, until Sunday evening study period. Due to the heavy academic schedule, many cadets will use Saturday afternoon and Sunday to complete their assignments.

Recognizing the rigors of CBT and the emotional impact of Reorg Week, Acceptance Day and the first week of classes, West Point offers plebes the opportunity to participate in a "Plebe Retreat" at the beginning of the academic year. The retreats are all run by the respective Chaplaincies (Catholic, Jewish and Protestant) and offer a weekend away from the barracks; a time to rest, reflect and share with others. Traditionally, the Catholic retreat and the Protestant retreats have been held at Camp Buckner – but it will be a very different experience than they "enjoyed" during CBT, as they will be housed in the barracks (or bays) surrounding the lake. Your son/daughter may enjoy this opportunity – other duties (sports commitments, etc) permitting.

Passes

Officially, plebes are only authorized one baseline "pass," or weekend away from West Point, per semester. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break do not count as passes. In the past few years, some cadets in some companies have been able to earn additional "performance passes," but this privilege is not guaranteed, and was substantially curtailed a few years ago.

When you first see your son or daughter after Beast Barracks, either on Acceptance Day or thereafter, expect to see a changed person ~ yes, they may have lost weight, but more importantly, they will have experienced so many new things about themselves that they literally *have* grown up before your very eyes, and may seem older than their years. Also when your son/daughter comes home, be flexible. As much as you want to see him, he is also anxious to reconnect with old friends, or may just want to sleep. While he is happy to be home, he may also seem preoccupied. After all, he is fully aware of the work and duties awaiting him upon his return!

In the past, many of our North Carolina cadets have chosen to take their one pass for the Labor Day weekend, even knowing that that may be "it" for the entire semester. For many plebes, Labor Day weekend provides a much-needed respite after the strain of Beast Barracks and the tension of the first few weeks of academics. Other plebes find it preferable to catch up on sleep and school work in a quieter environment, when many upperclassmen and fellow plebes are away. Some plebes even have their families visit them at West Point during this weekend. Still others will have guard duty that weekend, and will not be able to take pass. However, the type of guard duties performed by plebes are minimal both in time duration and number of positions to be filled ~ and often plebes will trade guard duty with someone who is not leaving post for the weekend. Remain flexible, and let your son or daughter decide what works best.

Remember at all times that your son/daughter is only guaranteed one pass per semester, and even that is dependent on maintaining good grades, having passed the APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test), not being in any "trouble" and is subject to duty assignments, etc. Living within driving distance, you may also find that your son or daughter would like to invite a friend or multiple friends home ~ many of their friends and classmates live too far from West Point to make even a long weekend trip home possible.

"Spirit Passes" – For certain events such as away football games or other sporting events cadets were enticed to attend the game by being able to take a "free" pass – a spirit pass (cheering on the Army team). Many cadets took advantage of that "spirit pass" and enjoyed an extra weekend away from Post.

The Rest of the First Semester

From Labor Day on, things start to settle down. There will be emotional ups and downs along the way. Be ready to give your support and encouragement. There may be poor grades on papers, an "F" on a quiz or an unsatisfactory grade on a WPR.

At this time, the challenges may seem like mountains to students who have never had a "C" on a paper before. By the end of the semester, most cadets will be able to work things out and will hopefully be doing well by the time finals roll around. Looking forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas leave and the Army/ Navy Game keeps all cadets going.

Weekends at West Point

While plebes are not free to leave on weekends (except for that one precious pass), there are many opportunities to visit with your son/daughter on weekends. Plebes enjoy "walking privileges" (parameters listed above) after "last duty" on Saturdays and all day on Sunday. "Last duty" depends on the particular weekend – for example, on a Saturday when there is a home football game, the Corps is required to attend the game and support the Army team, and so, walking privileges only commence after the game and will continue until midnight. On other Saturdays, there may be inspections or other required duties until about noon.

However, you should be aware that with over 130 clubs and activities, there are ample opportunities for cadets to stay busy each and every weekend. Clubs and sports also provide opportunities for cadets to "get away" on additional weekend trips.

Thanksgiving Weekend Leave, November 24-27

Cadets are released at the end of their duty (after last class) on Wednesday and will be due back by 1800 hours (6:00 P.M.) on Sunday. This is the heaviest travel weekend of the year.

Army/Navy Game, December 10, 2011

"What counts is not the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog."
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Army has not won an Army-Navy game in more years than we would like to admit, but there is always hope for the next year. Indeed, the Army-Navy game is one of the most intense collegiate football rivalries in the nation. From Thanksgiving to "The Game," USMA resounds with the cry **BEAT NAVY!** This is the salutation your son/daughter will give upperclassmen. The Army/Navy game will be played this year at FedEx Field on December 10, 2011. It is a time of great school spirit and friendly rivalry before everyone buckles down for final exams. GO ARMY! BEAT NAVY! We have been assured that tickets have been set-aside for you to purchase on R-Day. The big game has been sold out the past few years, so be sure to order those tickets on R-Day if you wish to attend. More importantly, it could be a very cold game, so if you plan on attending, pack all the winter wear in your home, and layer up.

GO ARMY! BEAT NAVY!

Term End Exams (TEE)

TEEs will run from December 12-17. Nothing need be said – the term speaks for itself! The good news is that finals are followed by winter leave!

Winter Leave, December 18, 2011 – January 3, 2012

Traditionally, West Point has permitted the cadets to leave immediately after their last term final, and so, while we reflect the leave period as commencing after last duty on December 17, many cadets may be able to go home a bit earlier in the week.

If you are planning to attend any formal affairs, including the annual All-Academy Ball encourage your cadet to bring their full dress uniform home. Do not be surprised if your son or daughter is reluctant to do so. Many cadets are just tired of wearing it and want to be a civilian for a short time. But they may also find their uniform to be more impressive and actually fun to wear on special occasions away from West Point!

NOTE: One of the hardest farewells often comes when your son/daughter returns to West Point after the Christmas leave. The time spent at home was so much fun, and the freedom felt good. It can be tough to go back to the regimentation and all the "gray." The post holiday time is aptly named the "gloom" period. Prepare for a readjustment. Cadets will have new rooms and roommates for the spring semester.

Winter Reorgy Week

The week after Winter Leave will be spent as another Reorgy Week. The cadets prepare for second semester classes, setting up and adjusting to new rooms and roommates, as well as having some military briefings.

The Gray Period or Gloom Period

From January through March, (and sometimes well into April) everything at West Point seems and is GRAY - uniforms, buildings, the mountain and the weather. While it can be fun to watch the "southern" cadets slip and slide and ultimately learn to walk after the first snowfall, the pervasive gray ultimately gets to everyone. Keep those words of encouragement coming.

Plebe Parent Weekend, March 9-11, 2012

Plebe Parent Weekend is an absolute must for all parents who can possibly make it. You will receive a booklet from West Point with schedules for this special weekend. Your son/daughter will have the opportunity to show off the Academy to family and friends. You will have the opportunity to see your son or daughter's room, classrooms, meet their roommates, instructors and TAC officers, their Mentor, and get the grand tour of such places as the Superintendent's Quarters, the Uniform Factory, the Mess Hall, and the Barracks. On Saturday night there will be a formal banquet and Ball. Tickets are required for some of these events and some require reservations. Your son or daughter must order tickets in advance. You may have to remind her to do so, but we will also "walk you through" this adventure as we get more information, and we get closer to the actual event. Last year, cadets were granted **Off Post Privileges** ~ the ability to leave the main garrison area ~ as long as they remained within 75 miles of West Point ~ on Friday evening, from approximately 1800 – 2330, on Sunday from 0520 to 2400 and on Monday from 0520 to 1700 hours.

Many families come to West Point to visit their cadets during Plebe Parent Weekend and include younger siblings and grandparents. And yes, just to answer the question that the cadets will likely be interested in ~ dates are welcomed, as long as you, the parent wish them to attend. Many forget that the weekend is called Plebe-PARENT Weekend, and fear they will be interfering with their son/daughter's enjoyment if they (the parent) come! Nothing could be further from the truth.

During Plebe-Parent Weekend, you will have the opportunity to visit some facilities (that are not open to the public. This is a once in a lifetime experience that you should not miss. Be aware, however, that the security measures put into place after 9/11 include vehicle searches, and when large crowds are expected on post, restriction of parking to outer areas. Please allow lots of extra time, maintain your sense of humor and realize that this is all done for the safety of all the cadets, our sons and daughters included!

Spring Leave begins immediately following PPW.

Spring Leave, March 12-18, 2012

After spring break, everyone prays that the weather will improve and moods lift. In early to mid April, the APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test) will be administered. Passing this APFT twice yearly is required. It consists of doing sit-ups, push-ups, and a timed two-mile run, and is not as easy as it sounds, as the weather usually "cooperates" to make it a miserable experience. This is very important to all cadets and failing the APFT will get you a one-way ticket to STAP (summer term academic program) in lieu of leave.

Promotion

Until the Class of 2004 entered, there was an official recognition ceremony. In the past, the recognition ceremony followed the graduation parade. In more recent times, this rite of passage occurred during the week before Spring Break. The upperclassmen would shake hands with the plebes and recognize them by their first names for the first time. This was a milestone bringing additional rights and privileges, and in a way, help bind the newly recognized class to the long gray line. Recognition essentially marked the end of the intensity of Plebe year. For the Class of 2004 and thereafter, Recognition was replaced by a Promotion ceremony. Officially, the stated main difference from past years was that Plebes did not shake hands with upperclassmen and address them by first names. Many upperclassmen recognized the unstated significance of extending a hand of welcome, and unofficially recognized plebes in their companies.

Summer Leave

All plebes MUST remain at West Point until after the graduation exercises have been concluded. Cadets of the Class of 2015 will probably be released around noon on May 26, 2012.

In prior years all new Yearlings were bussed out to Camp Buckner (which is where Cadet Field Training occurs) with their gear. After any additional duties at Camp Buckner, they signed out and then were free to depart for their summer leave. Needless to say, the cadets did not linger – and all the busses departing for the various airports were lined up and waiting to hit the road.

All newly minted Yearlings enjoy summer leave immediately following graduation. Summer leave will be determined by the new summer training schedules. All new Yearlings will report to Camp Buckner for cadet field training (CFT) also dubbed "the best summer of their lives." Someone, somewhere so dubbed Yearling summer training, and no one will either admit or deny the truth and veracity of the statement.

Congratulations!

Your son or daughter is joining the oldest fraternity in the United States, with the likes of Lee, Grant, MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Schwartzkopf. Cadets receive more than just a college education. They are developed to be leaders of character for our Nation. REMEMBER, nobody at West Point wants your plebe to fail!!

You and your son or daughter have made it through the first year. The cadets are now on their way to being all they can be mentally, physically, and emotionally. They have withstood the test and they can be proud. You are button popping proud of all of them. You are now experienced West Point Parents - we're proud of you.

Bring your son or daughter, with his/her proud status as a Yearling to the Hail and Farewell Picnic next June and help welcome the Class of 2016.

Nothing comes without sacrifice and your son or daughter will make sacrifices during the years at West Point, but the reward is overwhelming, in the education he or she receives and in the sense of pride that can never be taken away from him or her. All cadets at West Point will have paid the price and when they walk out to get that diploma on graduation day in just a few short years, they will be a part of one of America's greatest traditions - they will have joined the Long Gray Line.

More Tips and Advice

Computers and Printers

Laptop computers and printers are issued to all cadets. You need not worry about selecting / ordering a compatible printer. Later this summer, the exact specifications for the computer ordered for the Class of 2014 will be available – but rest assured it will be top of the line.

Additional Instruction

For those cadets that are experiencing some problems with their studies, Additional Instruction (AI) is available and highly encouraged. Each instructor at the Academy has only one responsibility ~ to help students learn and succeed. Professors are available each day to provide special help to any cadet that schedules an appointment. Professors will not *require* that a cadet come see them for additional instruction ~ they may strongly suggest that the cadet consider obtaining help, but the cadet must make the final decision and that first step.

However, back “home” in the barracks, a cadet *can* be required by his team leader or squad leader to seek help in his studies. Quite frankly, the success or failure of each cadet rests not only on himself, but also on the cadet’s chain of command ~ and no Yearling will suffer a failing military grade because “his” plebe did not get the academic support and assistance he or she needs when it is so readily available by a variety of people, and at all hours of the day and night.

Encourage your son or daughter to avail him or herself of the various tutoring services as often as needed. Get help **EARLY**-- do not wait until it is too late. In addition to classroom professors offering support, sponsors have also been known to help cadets with additional instruction. Additionally, both upperclassmen and classmates can also provide academic help ~ and do so willingly. Each company has an academic officer, and many cadets have voluntarily taken national standard training to serve as tutors. It is also the responsibility of the plebe’s team leader (a yearling) to check on his/her charge’s academic well being, as well as military and physical training.

Simply put: There is always someone to help a cadet in need. All the cadet has to do is *ask*. Asking for help is not a sign of failure or weakness but a sign of maturity. It is also recommended that if/when a cadet seeks additional instruction; he/she keeps a log of the date/time/tutor or instructor. Should the cadet find himself before the Academic Board for having failed a course, the ability to show that he sought help often means the difference between the ability to attend summer school vs. academic separation from the Academy.

Keeping in Touch

Keep sending those cards and letters. Once the academic year starts you can send **BOODLE BOXES** - those care packages from home with **HOMEMADE** cookies, candy, snacks, etc. Send the local Sunday comics. (The online version of the Washington Post, which all plebes must read and memorize for breakfast responses to upperclassmen, does not have comics.) Also, local sports and news articles about local high school teams are often appreciated. Cadets are permitted to keep a container in their barracks room in which to store their boodle. Ask your son or daughter for guidance about the size of the container he or she can accommodate, since storage space is severely limited, and varies tremendously according to which barracks they occupy (most boodle box containers are around 17”X10”X7”). Cadets can also purchase boodle box containers at the Cadet Store and the PX, and last year the PX made a superb effort to anticipate the needs of all the plebes ~ both for boodle boxes as well as cleaning supplies, irons and coffee pots! A-Day weekend is a great time to hit the PX on Post and stock up.

When shipping packages to your cadet, the easiest way is to use the U.S. postal service and ship to the P.O. Box. If you use any other service, such as FEDEX or DHL you MUST use the following address:

Cadet John Doe
P.O. Box _____
745 Bremerton Road
West Point, New York 10997

Make sure you include the PO Box number.

FEDEX and DHL both have a contract with the USPS where they get the packages in White Plains, NY and then from White Plains they deliver the packages to the USCC Post Office - they do not deliver to the Central Guard Room as they did in the past. In order to deliver to the cadet's post office box, the postal employees need a PO Box number. Given the number of cadets, the postal employees cannot be expected to look up this information each time a package is delivered.

NOTE: Be aware that new cadets are not authorized to receive packages sent via common carrier, so do not send anything during CBT unless it is an emergency situation.

When shipping letters, postcards, packages, etc. via US Mail use the following address:

Cadet John Doe*
P.O. Box _____
West Point, NY 10997-xxxx (the P.O. box number)

Remember during Beast, just address the mail to "New Cadet (last name)". No first names.

EXPECT THE WORST AT TIMES: Remember that you may hear the worst from your son or daughter. You should be a safe outlet for all his or her frustrations. When you talk to other parents, it may seem their sons and daughters are doing better than yours (NOT SO!). Most times your son or daughter will feel much better after the phone call while you feel worse. Remember, what appears to be an insurmountable problem today is often forgotten tomorrow, or resolves itself, and while your son/daughter moves on and gets immersed in other matters, you are stuck at home, worrying how x, y, or z turned out!

Be a good listener, be positive, understanding and supportive, but also remember to keep a sense of humor and perspective. Some parents have found that it is better not to ask how their son/daughter likes West Point. You may even wish to postpone that question for about 20 YEARS. Both you and your son or daughter will chuckle when you remember all the distressed phone calls. Remember, your son or daughter may be leaving home for the first time, and he or she is expected to do many things peers and friends at home could not even imagine doing! Many an "old grad" is fond of saying that West Point is a place you love to be from, and the best view of West Point is from the rear view mirror on graduation day! However, judging by the popularity of reunions, this "love/hate" relationship is more the former than the latter.

During these four years, your son/daughter will also forge friendships that will last a lifetime, despite separation, as they have all lived through common experiences, and truly care about each other.

The best answer to questions from friends and relatives on how your son or daughter is doing is: "He or she is still there," or "He or she's surviving." This may seem callous, but surviving itself is a MAJOR accomplishment.

Remember that in addition to phone and mail contact, your son or daughter can enjoy **email contact** with the outside world during the academic year. It is often easiest to send an email with any questions you may have or to request information you need to obtain from them. Ask them to reply when they have a spare minute. Remember that your son or daughter may very well be up to his or her eyeballs in alligators just at the moment you place your friendly phone call, and while he or she doesn't intend anything personal, there is nothing worse (for either party) than a terse "Gotta go, Mom" when all you wanted to know was how many batches of brownies he or she wanted brought up for the next visit!

West Point Sponsor Program

Each Plebe will have the opportunity to sign up for the West Point Sponsor/Mentor Program. Encourage your son or daughter to do so. Military personnel at West Point volunteer each year to help three to four plebes as personal mentors. Sponsors provide a “home away from home,” a place where plebes can go, when invited, and relax in a family environment. However, you should be aware that the amount of contact with the sponsor may be limited, and depends on the sponsor’s own schedule and duties and on how much time the sponsor/sponsor’s family can devote to this volunteer position. Many cadets develop lasting friendships with the sponsor families – others meet only once or twice. Some cadets have also been “adopted” by professors’ families after developing a relationship with the professor.

This sponsor very likely will be different than the family that will volunteer to host several cadets for the mid-Beast “ice cream social” which takes place in July. And... just a hint... the ice cream social is really intended as a seamless transition between the cadre – those upperclassmen who served on “Beast Detail I” will now go on to other military training, or start their summer leave, and when the new cadets return from the ice cream social, they will be “greeted” by a different cadre – and a different focus for the second part of cadet basic training.

Paychecks and Reimbursement

The government will reimburse the cost of transportation to West Point for your son or daughter on R-Day. Your son or daughter must submit forms for this reimbursement and the reimbursement will appear in your son or daughter’s bank account some time during the summer, and is often a welcome little surprise.

Monthly paychecks will be deposited directly in your son or daughter’s bank account. Any bounced check from a cadet’s account will cause extreme anguish (demerits and discipline details) so remind your son or daughter to be careful and responsible in handling his or her finances.

Boodle Restrictions

DO NOT send boodle until after your son or daughter has been officially accepted into the Corps on Acceptance Day. Even a single stick of chewing gum in a letter during Beast can cause extreme anguish and disciplinary action.

Medical Care

Don’t worry about medical attention for your son or daughter. The Academy has excellent facilities in the cadet area and at Keller Hospital, which is on post. Since cadets are not allowed to remain in the barracks if they cannot attend class, they may be admitted to Keller Hospital for relatively minor maladies like the flu. Don’t worry, if a problem is serious, you will be notified.

Emergency Contact

If there is a family emergency, you can contact your son/daughter’s TAC Officer. You will receive the TAC’s name and phone number on R-Day for the CBT Companies, and the West Point website maintains a listing of all academic year tactical officers by company. You can also call the Central Guard Room, which is open 24 hours a day, at (845) 938-3030 or (845) 938-2555.

Remind your son or daughter to always have his or her TAC Officer’s phone number in case of a need to call for problems like a travel delay in returning from a pass or leave. Needless to say, delayed returns should be avoided. Period. End of discussion. However, in the unheard of situation wherein a timely return is physically impossible, a call beforehand is not only appropriate; it may save your son or daughter from a great deal of grief.

Set a pre-arranged spot to always meet your son or daughter when you are visiting West Point. It seems as though something always comes up for your son/daughter and the set time to meet is usually long gone and still no son or daughter. Stay put, cadets generally show up as soon as they can. Many parents routinely pack a chair and book so they can be comfortable while they wait!

Taxes and Tax Preparation

In most cases you will not be able to claim your Plebe as a dependent for tax year 2011 and thereafter. However, since tax scenarios vary from person to person, it is best to consult with your tax professional for expert advice on this topic. Cadets at West Point can ask for assistance with tax preparation and filing through the Treasurer's Office.

Car Insurance

Check with your car insurance agent to determine if your son or daughter should be removed from your policy, or if a reduced rate is offered. You may also wish to inquire whether they offer a special non-owner policy. If so, you can remove them from your policy, and they will have their own policy. This not only covers them no matter what cars they drive, but will help them establish a payment history which will be useful when seeking credit in the future.

And Also...

Be prepared for at least one letter or phone call where your son or daughter says that he or she wants to quit. This may happen after your son/daughter has had some contact with a friend at another college telling him or her about all the free time and parties and lack of rules and regulations, or after a particularly stressful contact with a seemingly unfeeling upperclassman, or during a week when there are more duties/tests/papers due than minutes in a month!

When and if that challenge arises, you may need to remind your son or daughter and yourself why he or she chose West Point to begin with: advantages to be reaped in the future, developing the ability to lead and command, attending a prestigious and well-respected academic institution, excellent student-teacher ratios, opportunities to travel and participate in activities that many people have never even heard of, etc., etc. Or even better yet, remind your son/daughter of why West Point chose him: he had and continues to have all the necessary qualities, those same academic and athletic ability, and the raw material to become a future leader.

Be sympathetic and flexible. Try to persuade your son or daughter to give it one more day or week. Quitting is a serious decision and there is no second chance. Keep in mind that Plebe year is a very stressful time, but there are periods that are set aside for fun! It is amazing to see a cadet who literally hated West Point as a Plebe but decided to stick it out for a while become a mature leader and a defender of the system (and it happens more often than not!) The decision to quit is made easily – it is another story to live with that decision. Many who have decided to leave regretted the decision later. If you sense problems with your son or daughter, remain calm and objective, but try to have him seek help before the problem starts to seem insurmountable.

Having said all that, there is something of **equal importance** that you and your son/daughter must remember. Quite simply, West Point is not for everyone. There is no shame in leaving for someone who comes to realize that he or she was intended for a different lifestyle, and has the maturity to recognize it.

More Info to Befuddle and Help You

Several Web sites and networks provide a tremendous amount of information about West Point. The primary West Point home page is <http://www.usma.edu>. This site will link you to many others for helpful and up to date information about the Academy. You should bookmark this site, and visit it periodically, and the information contained, not only on the front page, but all the underlying links is updated regularly. One of the most valuable tools on this page is Search/Reference. By going to www.usma.edu, and then clicking on Search/Reference on the left hand side, you will be able to access a great deal of information.

Another helpful site is <http://www.west-point.org>. This site has all sorts of information about West Point. From here go to <http://www.west-point.org/parent/wpp-net/> This web page has links to lots of helpful information. Finally, but more importantly, go to <http://www.west-point.org/parent/plebe-net>. This web page has lots of information of interest to plebe parents. You can subscribe to Plebe-Net on this page. On Plebe-Net you can ask questions and receive information that applies directly to you and your son/daughter during this unique time in his/her (and your) lives. The moderators of Plebe-Net are trying to ensure that Plebe-Net remains a friendly, warm environment, where you can safely share your concerns and questions ~ and receive appropriate replies, and you are personally invited to call the moderators and take them to task if the environment ever becomes unfriendly! Plebe Net will be your "internet home" for next year, should you choose to join one of the forums hosted by West-Point.Org.

All of these forums offer an exchange of ideas and information among parents of West Point cadets. Remember, however, that any "advice" you receive on these forums is coming from individual parents' own experiences, which may or may not be relevant to your situation. We would caution you that while these forums are valuable, you should rely on official West Point communications before making irreversible plans, and above all, remember that liberties/privileges extended to past classes may not be extended to the Class of 2010. West-Point.Org cautions that it is NOT supplying official information, unless so stated and published on its information only net, WPP-Net. <http://www.west-point.org/parent/wpp-net/>

If you are interested in ARMY athletic scores, you can call the ARMY hotline at (845) 938-ARMY. It is a long distance call but a regularly updated message will greet you. Scores are also available on the West Point Web sites, including www.goarmysports.com

Visits to West Point

Always make lodging reservations as early as possible when visiting the Academy. If you have any hopes of staying in the West Point area for special events, make your reservations **TODAY**. The Thayer Hotel, located on post, will also begin accepting reservations for Graduation for the Class of 2014 at 8:00 A.M. on R-Day (by phone only, so have your cell phone handy). For the past four years, the entire hotel has sold out (complete with substantial deposits being charged to your credit card) within an HOUR of accepting reservations on R-Day!

There is a Holiday Inn Express in nearby Fort Montgomery, so there is a bit more availability – but I fear that the owners of the much anticipated Holiday Inn Express discovered the very day they opened that the facility could have been ten stories high, instead of three, and still be "sold out" every weekend! Chain hotels typically do not take reservations until one year from graduation, but I believe that the Holiday Inn Express in Fort Montgomery is an exception to this rule. The privately owned motels and hotels are willing to accept your reservation/deposit much earlier than one year out, and will book up quickly. Be aware, however, that all the hotels in the area (and that means as far away as Fishkill) will be increasing their rates substantially, and often require five nights' stays during graduation week...

While you have probably already received a listing of hotels and motels in the West Point area, you may wish to bookmark and peruse the following sites:

<http://www.west-point.org/parent/wppc-ne-ohio/Motels.htm> <http://www.roundthebend.com/hudson/hudshotl.html>

The listing put together by the WPPC of Northeast Ohio solicited opinions from parents who have stayed at the listed motels. However, you should recognize that what one person finds acceptable, another may not, and for this reason, the WPPC-NC does not endorse or recommend any specific hotels. Further, we believe that this list was prepared several years ago, and many of the facilities listed have enjoyed renovations.

When looking for accommodations, you may also want to contact the following agencies:

- Orange County Tourism: (800) 762-8687 or www.orangetourism.org

- Westchester Convention and Visitors Bureau: (800) 833-9282, or (914) 995-8500 or www.westchester.com
- Dutchess County Tourism Promotion Agency: (800) 445-3131 or www.dutchesstourism.com
- Putnam County Visitors Bureau: (800) 470-4854 or www.visitputnam.org
- Rockland County: (845) 708-7300 or www.rockland.org
- The Town of Highland Vision: www.visiontownofhighlands.com
- The Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, Inc.: (845) 567-6229

Whenever you're visiting West Point, expect to "be adopted" by your son/daughter's friends as well. Make sure you bring plenty of food – cadets are ALWAYS hungry! One parent once wisely stated that what other parents are spending in airfare, we, who are close to West Point and able to visit more often, spend at the grocery store!

Remember that transportation around West Point is usually by foot – and is always up hill. Forsake footwear fashion and wear comfortable shoes!

Even non-camera buffs will want to be prepared for those Kodak moments, so remember to take your camera whenever you visit.

More About the WPPC-NC

We exist, as an organization, not only to support our cadets, but also our families. We would like to plan more social events and regular meetings. Please consider joining us up at West Point for the annual NC Tailgate party prior to an Army home football game. There will also be some fun opportunities to get together for boodle stuffing parties for the cadets, in October and again in January.

Before all home football games, Grant Hall will serve as the official gathering place for any/all members of West Point Parents' Club from around the country. This is a wonderful chance to meet parents from other states. Stop by Grant Hall on your way to the parade, and get to know parents from other areas as you share coffee and ideas.

The West Point Parents Clubs Presidents' Coordinator/Liaison from the USMA Public Affairs Office attends these coffees, and will have reserved seating tickets available for the parades. In addition, each company has designated reserved seats. You may con your cadet into getting reserved tickets from his company training officer or get tickets from Deb Dalton at Grant Hall before the parade.

WPPC-NC is YOUR club, and we welcome any ideas for social functions, speakers, fundraising activities, etc...

WPPC-NC Contact Information

Be sure and visit the WPPC-NC website at www.west-point.org/parent/wppc-nc

Here is a short list of some of the 2011-12 Officers. Please feel free to contact anyone below with any questions and we'll do what we can!

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
President: Buz Moser	336-682-5151	moserdj@wfu.edu
Membership: Cathy Speight	252-237-0538	Cathysp8@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Herb McKinley 919-562-8725 Hmckin9094@aol.com

ZONE VP's

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Western NC - Michelle Swicegood | 828-989-0800 | michele.swicegood@gmail.com |
| 2. Charlotte - Cheryl Bennett
Becky Mulholland | 704-242-1591
704-365-9732 | cherylben@earthlink.net
rebeccaym@aol.com |
| 3. Greensboro/Winston Salem - Claire Clark | 336-706-0943 | clarkllc@triad.rr.com |
| 4. Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill – Tom Wells | 919-848-4474 | tomwells@designdevelopment.com |
| 5. Fayetteville - Open | | |
| 6/7. Greenville/Jacksonville - Bill and Jerrie Fath | 252-923-7541 | bfath@redscable.com |

North Carolina is divided into 7 geographical zones to make it a little easier to get together for our activities. Parents can participate in any Zone that they wish.

A Final Word

As you prepare for the next four years of your life, remember that the West Point Parents Club is here to help you, as much, or as little, as you desire. Join the West Point Parents' Club and participate in our social activities ~ as many or as few as you wish. We also invite you to share your ideas for additional outings, but be aware of the "he who rule": he who suggests an outing or event may be deemed to have volunteered to coordinate!

Remember, many of us have survived "beast summer" and the plebe year experience ~ so can you and your son/daughter..... and we're here to help!

Congratulations and Good Luck!

Acknowledgements

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