

COMMITTEE LEADS' REPORTS

Memorandum For: Class of 1973 Reunion Planning Committee

Subject: After-Action Report for the Pikes Peak Bicycle Ride, September 18, 2008

Synopsis: For the USAFA class of 1973 35th Reunion, the planning committee organized an optional Pikes Peak Bicycle ride. Approximately 15 members participated at an individual cost of \$90.00. Challenge Unlimited (<http://www.bikithikit.com/pikes-peak-biking.htm>; 1-800-798-5954 or (719) 633-6399, or e-mail info@bikithikit.com) is the company that organized the event. Our group signed up for "the ultimate ride," which included all transportation, 2007/2008 K2 comps, all with rock shock front suspension forks, advanced mega-nine LX rapid fire shifting, disc brakes and 27 speeds, all weather gear, helmets, van support, experienced mountain bike guides, permits, tolls, safety equipment, breakfast and lunch (AM Ride) snacks (PM Ride), and a souvenir water bottle. Lunch took place at the world's famous "Wines of Colorado."

Lessons Learned:

1. Finding a time in the reunion schedule is critical. We planned this on a day where people were still arriving and the first scheduled event was the class meeting and reception later in the afternoon. This allowed those who wanted to participate to do so while also being able to participate in the afternoon events.
2. Getting the word out to all those who plan to attend is critical. Information needs to assure classmates and their significant others that this is an event that is very well orchestrated to accommodate a wide range of fitness conditions. There are a couple of points during the ride down the mountain where physical exertion is required (for about 3 to 5 minutes). The guides give us plenty of time to complete difficult portions and are there to assist when and if needed.
3. To best organize the event, it helps to have a reunion point of contact to keep track of the advertising via email and mail, listing of the event in AOG-released scheduling materials, and sign-ups with the bike company.
4. Riders want to wear comfortable but warm clothing, even though the bike company will provide additional gear at no extra cost, if needed.
5. Informal feedback from those who participated was very positive. Most or all those who participated are looking forward to doing it again for the 40th reunion.

Recommendation: Definitely plan on this event for the 40th reunion.

Ron "Chico" Scott
'73 Pikes Peak Bike Ride Organizer

PUBLICITY (Bob Munson):

- Start Publicity at least six months in advance

- Committee should include one focal point person, and the scribe and webmaster as a minimum, and one backup (if it's not the scribe or webmaster) to help with putting together details and covering the work when the primary is unavailable. The more people, the more ideas that come available.
- Main tasks:
 - get information out to all classmates via email, us mail, website,
 - coordinate with AOG on publicity efforts,
 - coordinate reunion preparation information amongst the committee members
- Get an updated contact list from the AOG (jack.mueller@usafaaog.com) with emails, home addresses, and phone numbers
 - If available cross-reference information from the scribe's list, last reunion's publicity list and any other source that is accurate and available
- Work with the scribe to get a note into his Checkpoints article(s)
- Most important is getting Squadron Reps lined up, these guys forward publicity emails to their squadron mates, in many cases act as whips to fire up their friends .
 - Get the latest squadron rep roster from the last publicity guy (Bob Munson) or webmaster
 - Email the reps to ask them if they'd like to continue as reps for the reunion, sometimes it's necessary to phone them.
 - If they don't want to do it, then hunt down someone else in their squadron. I sent a mass email to each squadron that didn't have a rep asking for one. For no responses/volunteers I then started calling.
 - Once you've got'm all lined up, send one or two emails with the AOG's contact information for their squadron mates. Ask for responses and corrections...this is really just to check the squadron reps are getting your emails. Even when I thought all my emails were getting through...I was wrong.
 - The reps will ask questions, send suggestions, make comments, provide compliments. Be courteous: acknowledge their emails promptly, answer their questions personally (even if it's another committee's area).
- E-mail information at least once/month at the start, and then once every two weeks toward the reunion date. Don't flood with spam. Send information on how to sign up, details on what the events are, information on changes, and answers to FAQs.
- AOG POC (tiffani.lusson@usafaaog.org) sends out mailed information, usually a warning card 4-6 months out, followed by a registration letter, and then you can have them send a last minute card about two weeks before the reunion.
 - Make sure your information agrees with the AOG's information.
- Unless the chair takes on this responsibility, make sure that everyone on the reunion committee knows what's going on across the committee
 - Ask each committee lead for regular updates
 - Send out emails with these updates regularly

GOLF OUTING (Joe Kahoe)

- Reserve the golf course the moment we learn of our reunion date ... typically the Friday morning of the reunion weekend for max participation. Many people travel on Thurs and Sun, and the football game is Saturday.

- Visit with the golf club manager asap to ink the best deal possible

- PM activities will be planned as early as 1300, so tee off NLT 0800 and do not have a lunch buffet, since most people will want to depart for other activities. If a lunch buffet is tacked onto the cost, it will add another \$10 or \$12 to everyone's price and many will miss the hot dog, hamburger, and soda.

- The cost of the golf includes \$5 per player that will be refunded in coupons for winners to redeem in the club house. Typically, coupons are awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th places and to longest drives for men and women and closest to the pin. ... but, whoever is in charge can award prizes as he wishes.

- When the advertisements circulate, ensure golfers provide cadet squadrons, handicaps, emails, and any special requests for playing with someone. The toughest part of the tournament is pairing everyone. I went through about a dozen iterations (fully expected to do so) to set the final pairings. Priority should be given to wishes of the reunion golfers, with almost no regard for handicap. The handicap comes into play for setting foursomes of individuals who signed up, but have no preference for partners.
- The club house will set up a score board, but whoever is running the tournament must collect score cards and post the scores. Typically, only those in the running will stick around until the end to see if they won something. The rest split to attend the PM functions.
- One final note Remind everyone to bring cameras and get someone to snap a picture of the foursome on a tee box or green.

CLASS GIFT: Trapper Carpenter

Three phases of the Class Gift as you approach the next reunion:

- 1) Monitor the progress of the current class gift both in terms of how the fund raising is going (AOG POC: Al Burrell AlBurrell@usafaog.com) and the impact of the gifting (currently the National Character and Leadership Symposium – NCLS POC: Maj Matt Alley Matthew.Alley@usafa.edu)
- 2) Based on the above, get a feel for whether you'd recommend that the Class continue to support the project for the next reunion or move to a different project. If a different project is considered, two good POCs for USAFA gift needs are: Gary Howe (Deputy at the AOG) Gary.Howe@usafaog.org and Nancy Burns (USAFA/CMA) Nancy.Burns@usafa.edu
- 3) Build a game plan with key dates to both identify the Class Gift and begin to build support within the Class

Between reunions, on a yearly basis as the Class gift is monitored both in terms of gifting and the gift's impact, provide an update to the Class Committee and the Class as a whole. Provide an update on the impact thru the gaining organization, especially thru the eyes of cadets.

A year out of the next reunion have a dialogue with the Class President as to the way ahead for the Class gift. Dust off the Class Gift Fund Agreement with the AOG and look to see if the purpose of the gift and the funding priorities have been met.

If the project for the Class gift is to be continued, develop a timeline to "sell" the gift up thru the reunion.

- 1) 4 to 6 months out: Identify a Class Gift Committee to assist with the overall effort
- 2) 3 to 6 months out: Begin coordination with the below game plan thru the AOG and the benefiting organization
- 3) 3 months out: Have the Class President send an letter to the Class with an update of the impact of the current gift and the announcement of the proposed gift, from the Class Gift Committee, for the upcoming reunion
- 4) 2 to 3 months out: Plan the specifics of the Class Business Meeting to include agenda, time and place. Recommend the Meeting be held one hour prior to the informal dinner on Thu night. Do not attempt to conduct Business during the formal dinner on Fri night.
- 5) 2 months out: Have the Class Treasurer send a more detailed letter to the Class with the proposed gift rationale and potential overall gifting amounts.
- 6) 1 to 2 months out: If the previous gift(ing) was successful in terms of meeting its purpose and objectives, then coordinate with the benefiting organization to send a letter of thanks for the Superintendent's signature to the AOG. Have the AOG forward the Supt's letter to the Class with an accompanying note from the AOG CEO.

7) 1 month out: Finalize the presentation of the gift proposal at the Class Business Meeting. If appropriate, include the benefiting organization in the presentation especially if the focus was on cadets.

8) Reunion: With the Class President, run the Business Meeting – prior to the Thu night informal dinner. Have the AOG POC in attendance. Announce an overview of the chosen gift and gifting game plan before the formal Fri dinner.

9) Post Reunion: Have coordinated with the AOG Class Gift POC the game plan for marketing/soliciting the gift.

Friday Dinner (Donna Felton, ably assisted by Charlie)

Table Decorations, Sitting Charts and Assignments and Food Selections:

1. The hardest part of the table decorations was finding all of the original squadron patches. This took some digging by the AOG (Tiffany) who managed to find almost all of them. For those we could not find, we went back to the year books to make enlargements. Since some of the squadrons patches were changed over the years, this was the hard part. I had a comment from someone at the AOG just to use the current patches...I don't think they understood the need for the originals!

Once these were made, we went to Kinkos and make more enlargements, laminated them and cut them out.

2. The seating arrangements were really very easy to do. The hard part here was that we had to find the squadrons to match up with the attendees. I mentioned to Tiffany that at the reunions from now on, they should include a place on the form for the graduate to put their squadron number on. This has not been part of the form in the past (much to my surprise) and would have eliminated a lot of time used in trying to find everyone's squadron. Also, the year book can not be counted on for correct information. So if the form could include a place for the squadron number, this would help.

the upside of the seating was that this was done without assigning seating. Not open seating but keep it as seating by squadrons. I had a lot of compliments the night of the dinner on this. No one had to run and grab seats and everyone was with their squadrons.

I thought that the squadrons patches at each table looked really nice and added a great touch to the dinner.

3. The charts were easy to do. I had to make some changes even at the last minute, but I did it all in pencil until about 1 hour before, then went over it in pen.

I did walk around at the dinner making sure that everyone found their tables, many people were lost, but it worked out great. I would do this again since I am detail oriented and I found that Tiffany was easy to work with.

4. I also helped with the food selection and choices for the dinners. Again, easy to do and I would also do this again.

Merchandise (Stefonik)

**Have another person on the committee, a few decisions to be made as to selection, number of items to be offered, always better to discuss with another (Johnny Wittaker was great).

**Meet with AOG merchandise person to select items offered to class: different packages available depending on number of items. (Tiffany sat down with us and reviewed about one hundred possible items) Final decisions are required about 3 months (more if possible) prior to reunion.

**Present suggestions to the full committee for comment and change (Trapper added the rugby shirt).

**Once the committee agrees on the items and package, AOG takes it from there. All items are available online and directly from the vendor.

**AOG provides "door gift "(coasters or stadium blanket, this time) at reunion sign in.

**Several decisions as to size of logo, "sew out" of final crest, \$\$ committed to project all able to be coordinated by email with AOG contact person.

**Possible input at reunion: was helpful to be available for a few minutes as classmates started signing in and AOG had a few questions.

LESSONS LEARNED

Feedback from Committee Members and Classmates

- Sunday brunch was terrific but under-attended; I understand that the Marriott provided breakfast coupons and that may have competed with Sunbird attendance. Next time we will again try to set this up at the O-Club or a good restaurant like the Sunbird, but make it pay in advance.
- Class meeting attendance is really boosted when you have door prizes
- The toughest single task was seating assignments at the dinner. Donna Felton is the go-to gal for the toughest reunion jobs; Charlie is a good team player.
- Bike ride down Pikes Peak was well attended (24); a number of folks later wished they had gone. Doing that again, or trying something similar, might be a good idea
- Checkered Past band was a great success; I think we're going to have to do that again
- Parachute team asked if we wanted to have 'our flag' jumped into the stadium. No one knew if we had a flag that can be attached to the parachutist or his risers. Skip Sanders ('73 Wings of Blue) will look into this for the next reunion...perhaps have the current team present the flag to our jump team grads on the field.
- A number of classmates wanted to sit by squadron in the reunion area. As of the printing of this after-action, the Athletic Dept/Ticket Office doesn't think this is practical. However, the ticket office does have the capability of on-line reservations for groups...even though the buyers buy separately. Sooooo, I recommend that in five years the ticketing process may be sophisticated enough to make sitting by squadron do-able. I recommend that this be worked on early in the Spring prior.

The only minor complaint I heard was the scheduling of the class photo. More than one person said they showed up at the scheduled time of 4 PM, only to find out the photo had been moved up to 3:30. I was spent after the golf tournament and went home and rested, so did not make it to the photo or memorial ceremony, so can not give any first hand testimony. The first schedule had 1600, the final schedule (which was sent out and also put in the packets) had 1530. The lesson learned is that we should 1) spend a bit more time on the early schedule and/or 2) emphasize changes that are made to the events schedule.

1. Preprinted name tags.
2. Preprinted event tickets (especially those that involve payment) that fit inside the name tag holder. For example, Lunch at Doolittle Hall 1100-1300, Friday, September 19. Bus transportation to and from the Cadet Area. Drop-off/Pick-up at the Cadet Chapel.
3. A picture taking venue at the banquet. The backdrop could be our class emblem.
4. Additional logistical details in preprinted materials to answer common questions, such as:
 - a. POV transportation from hotel to Academy events
 - b. Shuttling to cadet area for Thursday and Friday events from (and return) to Doolittle Hall; drop-off and pick-up at the Cadet Chapel
5. A campaign between now and the next reunion to
 - a. Make contact with widows and/or children to ensure good contact information and support
 - b. Other classmates who did not graduate but are encouraged to stay in contact
 - c. Encourage honorary membership with AOG
 - b. Encourage attendance (with a sponsor, if appropriate/needed) at future reunions

We need to get a computer sort that shows who is attending by squadron. It would also help if people would put their associated squadron on the initial sign up sheets. That would eliminate half the problems during planning.

- I had an agenda and Bob had an agenda for Friday night, little closer coordination (my bad) would have made it easier for Mitch as he stood before the class.
- Marriot room prizes at business meeting were only for the COS Marriott, I said any Marriott.
- Each event I attended had a few classmates that had not signed up wanting to participate. I believe we should facilitate the maximum participation, to include an "at the event" option (first come first serve/space available), and make that option know. I worked with the Marriot "Captain" to add at least one classmate to the Friday night event. Most organizations plan for a 2 or 3 percent overage.
- AOG and Marriott had several small questions as things came up. It will be good to have two or three officers/reunion committee members let their presence be known and ready to respond.
- Tailgate was a 20-30 minute wait for food. Wonder if there is a way to speed things up for '73 at the 40th?

Sunday Brunch: On the poor attendance at the Sunday brunch, I agree that getting money up front is a good idea. Especially something in the morning after the big festivities are over – there tends to be a “let’s just skip this one” response.

This is a thought from my own high school reunions that we have been using for 30 years. The names tags are pre-printed along with the senior (or other) picture of the person. As we are all getting "older" and having more difficulty recognizing each other (sometimes!!) our memories are those of how we looked the last time we were all together. It is so much easier to see a picture of how they looked at the senior year along with the name! This has worked so well at my reunions.

Bees Kellenbence ('78) was at the tailgate from the opening on. There was no/little line for food until approx 1245 to 1300 when people came in large numbers. Bees said the wait grew to about 15 mins. Maybe in the future all reunion classes (3 this past weekend) can encourage folks to come earlier to the tailgate to help spread the line out.

AD has discussed football ticket prices for reunions. The thought being that \$28.00 per seat is pretty reasonable. I bought a ticket in U5 in addition to my other season tickets in L22 -- U5/U6 seats have good views. There may be some ticket season holders that have less expensive seats on a per game basis.