

THE VOICE OF THE REGIMENT



November -December 2012

United States Merchant Marine Academy

Since 1943



Midshipmen gather for a safety briefing before joining the relief effort in the Rockaways on Monday, November 12. In total, over 200 plebes and midshipmen spent the day assisting the people of Queens in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The Plebe Class also worked to clear the trails of Kings Point Park as part of their service project.

“Acta” of Kindness

By MIDN Joshua Asaro, Staff Writer

Allow me to be among the first to admit that if you had told me a few weeks after returning from sea that I would be spending the last day of my first long weekend back at the Academy being marched through the streets of New York by a former enlisted Seabee, I would have asked you what you had purchased from the slop chest. I’m not sure any of us expected to return to such an injured state which acted as the scene for one of the most devastating natural disasters in recent memory. I’m not sure that if asked that I would have believed much could be done in the way of help upon seeing doomsday images that circulated in the national media in the days following the strike of Super storm Sandy. However, on Monday, November 12th, I was privileged to witness a selfless sacrifice of time by many members of the Regiment of Midshipmen at Kings Point. This changed my mind on that matter and frankly, changed the minds and hopes of many people upon seeing this blue-clad cadre move together down tattered streets in hopes of restoring houses and hope for victims of Sandy.

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West Point Student Conference

By MIDN Dustin Downing, Staff Writer

The 64th Student Conference on United States Affairs found itself playing host to two Kings Point Midshipmen and students from around the world to gauge “American Priorities in the Age of Austerity”. Hundreds of Liberal Arts majors converged on historic West Point to discuss 16 different topics put forth by the Eisenhower institute (a Washington think tank) ranging from Sino-American relations to Arms Control and Proliferation. We Engineers felt out of place from the get go, but were sent to represent the Merchant Marine opinion, so we dove in with gusto. For three days we discussed our assigned topics with field experts and our peers—with our peers being exposed to three days of Military Academy living. Chow calls each morning (a West Point plebe ritual) woke these civilian students early for their fully scheduled days, and we Mariners were free to be amused by such awakenings.

The laughter was short-lived as the groups reconvened; I was plunged into the world of Cyber Security and for hours a day tried to understand the language these Poli Sci majors already spoke fluently. After understanding the lingo, I was finally able to submit opinions with our own international studies in mind. The value of this education became apparent as others struggled with concepts such as foreign law and technicalities of sovereignty, and was able to lend a sense of practicality to the idealism of those who have not been outside of the classroom.

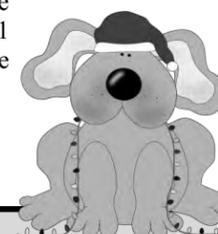
Our findings over the course of those three days were to be presented in a paper to the Institute and a skit for our fellow attendees. This provided us with an excuse to hack faculty and staff from the event, culminating with a colonel being very embarrassed to see his own credit card information. When the dust settled and the groups had shown their findings, each attendee had gained a little more perspective of both their peers and the world.

The Hidden Harbor Tour:

As always, this year’s Hidden Harbor Tour was a great success. It was our pleasure this year to have the following guests aboard our annual Holiday training trip: Professor Nagy Hussein, Lt. Schneider, Mr. Campbell, Capt. Kennedy and his wife, RADM Helis and his wife, Ms. Ross, and Ms. Harding. It was a great opportunity for them to observe our midshipmen in their element, navigating a ship through one of the busiest harbors in the world.

Everyone was aboard the T/V *Liberator* at 0715 for a pre-departure safety and familiarization briefing. There was TM food for the Midshipmen as well as any snacks, donuts, and bagels that were brought by our great guests. We also served hot coffee and cider in the Galley. We departed from Flag Landing Saturday at 0730, undocking under the guidance of Plebe Zubchevich, an engineer. We made our way down river enjoying the beautiful morning and the scenic Manhattan skyline. We proceeded through the Buttermilk and around Governors Island, witnessing the lone container terminal on Long Island. We then crossed the Bay Ridge Flats to Staten Island to circle around the *Kennedy*, Mass. Maritime’s training ship. After a little exploring in the Kills, we passed the Statue of Liberty and paid our respects. We concluded the nautical part of the trip by docking at North Cove Marina in the financial district. Here on September 11, 2001 and in the days following, midshipmen from the Waterfront and Waterfront Staff assisted NYC and NYFD members in moving personnel and supplies. After pausing to reflect on this, we walked a short distance to the 9/11 Memorial and received a private tour.

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Exploring Mars
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The White Papers

Reprinted with Commentary

The *White Paper* was written in response to RADM Gordon McClintock's address to the midshipmen, where he inquired regarding the reason for unrest among the Regiment. He only ever received positive reports from the Command Board (made up of the Regimental Commander and Battalion Commanders) but perceived that there was negative opinion among the ranks of the average midshipmen. This paper explains to the Administration why the Regiment is upset and demands immediate, major reform in policy. This first reintroduction of the White Paper in 2012-2013 Hear This!, will demonstrate what midshipmen of the 1960s thought were the biggest problems with Kings Point. Without further ado, the *White Paper* (13 January 1969):

Preamble:

"This paper is a comprehensive study and list of recommendations that the Regiment of Midshipmen strongly feels require the attention of the Administration. It is an explanation and categorization of the most obvious and the most evasive problems that Kings Point is faced with..."

(To RADM Gordon McClintock – USMMA Superintendent)

"Sir Kings Point recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. The regiment of Midshipmen feels that it is time for the Academy to emerge from necessity-born practices instituted during the war into an atmosphere in keeping with a school designed to meet the needs of tomorrow.

To a man, the Regiment is dissatisfied with the systemized absurdity under which we live. The medieval logic with which each of us is treated cannot be allowed to continue... Today, the midshipman feels... that, while his education is the only justification for the very existence of the Academy, he is receiving a limited education both professionally and academically... He wonders how he can, in good faith, support a system that has been used as a weapon against him, how he can justify adhering to regulations that are circumvented by those very people charged with their administration... He is willing, finally, to take any and all steps necessary for the realization of those goals that he feels are vital to his education as a student and a Merchant Marine Officer, and to his dignity as a man.

This memorandum, then, is a statement of those goals. It is the considered position of the Regiment of Midshipmen that re-examination of the following must be effected immediately if this institution is to become a school of higher education in the true sense of the phrase. This is not a series of complaints; rather, it is a sincere attempt on the part of the men who live under this System to define its myriad defects and to delineate some means of correcting them. Each of the following headings will first be described briefly and then explored more fully:

We question the validity of an educational system which demands that the midshipman become 'educated' and then burdens him with so many courses that he survives academically only by brute force of memory. Rather than feel enlightened after having completed a course, we feel only relieved... that the course is over. We find that an attempt to actually learn is only a waste of time and that cramming is the only way a man can pass a course... grades are not relevant to what [we are] supposed to have learned.

We highly suspect the educational worth of the Regimental System as it is presently administered at Kings Point. As potential officers in the Merchant Marine, we are appalled at the deficiencies apparent in the system designed to train us for that position. We question whether we are being trained at all, or are, in fact, merely being administered to for four years... We find the causal factors in this situation to be a number of ill-advised and, in some cases, even inept officers who feel little empathy for our chosen profession and demonstrate little knowledge of it.

We feel strongly the lack of an effective class system at Kings Point... We find it difficult to have any respect for a system that requires we respect those placed in authority in the Class System when those Midshipmen themselves are dealt with (sic) without respect by the Administration. We find it absurd to live within the regulations of a system which tells us, if we live by the regulations, we will enjoy the respect and benefits due an upperclassman – while, at the same time, we see those men who should be enjoying those benefits struggling to obtain them...

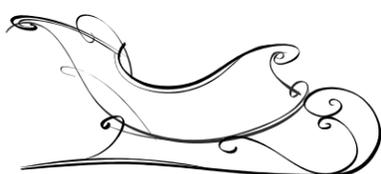
[Regarding the paying of m/n fees.]

We find a total lack of interest and respect for our views concerning the state of the facilities at Kings Point. We are the men using and inhabiting the buildings and classrooms but we are neither listened to nor asked for opinions or desires as to what needs improving...

Perhaps the primary discrepancy between stated and actual practice at Kings Point is the largely theoretical powers of the Midshipman Council. The Regiment feels very strongly that this organization is its only representative... The Council, however, is not really allowed to represent us and is, therefore, merely a figurehead. We are suggesting that the powers of the Council be more clearly defined in such a way as to enfranchise it as the proper spokesman for the Regiment of Midshipmen...

We urge that our proposals be acted upon immediately. To deny the validity of our arguments is to insure that the Academy be forever relegated to the backwater of higher education and to make certain that Kings Pointers of the future will feel, as we do, that they have not been adequately prepared professionally...

These, then, are our major contentions. On the following pages we will examine each more closely, demonstrate their validity, and present the measures that the Regiment feels are necessary for their successful resolution.



West Point Wedding

By MIDN Katie Schmidt, 1/C

KPU

On December 1, 2012, the Kings Point Unity Club attended the marriage of Brenda Sue Fulton and Penelope (Penny) Dara Gnsein. Sue Fulton graduated from West Point in 1980 as part of the first class of cadets to include women. Sue and Penny were legally married at the West Point Cadet Chapel.

For 17 years, Sue and Penny have supported and loved each other through the ups and downs of life. Together, Sue and Penny have stayed strong in love even through breast cancer, the daily struggles of MS, hate mail, ignorance, and endless scrutiny. They are living proof that love conquers all. They were together when the state of NY legalized domestic partnerships, then when unions were legalized, they committed to each other again, and when civil unions were the law, they went to the courthouse to sign the papers. During the ceremony, the reverend proclaimed, "Now that they've been domesticated, unionized, and civilized, it is exciting for them to finally be married!"

The Kings Point Unity Club met Sue and Penny at the OutServe Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida this October. Four members of the Kings Point Unity Club attended the conference, which included a number of informational seminars and workshops that addressed issues such as: life in the military after the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," current policies held by businesses and corporations such as offering benefits to same-sex couples, and the current state and federal laws regarding same-sex marriage equality.

OutServe is an organization that started as an underground network of gay and lesbian service members who were forced to keep their sexuality secret under "Don't ask Don't tell" and worked on repealing the policy. After the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the group became public and continued to support gay and lesbian service members. They provide one of the largest LGBT employee resource groups in the world and work to create an environment of respect in the military with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity as well as working towards equal rights for committed same-sex couples.

This conference was a very valuable leadership experience because we are all going to be leaders in the future, whether it is in the military or private sector. It is essential that we, as leaders, hold ourselves to the highest standards of respect and integrity, and view people with equality no matter who they are or what they believe.

At the conference, we made quite the impression on Penny. It started uniquely in the bathroom during a break between seminars when the door to the handicapped stall was locked from the inside. One of the girls offered to crawl under the stall door and unlock it for Penny, but Penny said "No, don't do that, you're in a dress and that has got to be against the lesbian code." Of course, this did not stop the midshipman from crawling under the stall door anyway and from there a new friendship was formed. We invited Penny to eat lunch with us. Penny joined the KPU club for lunch and a few West Point Cadets joined us as well. Soon we were joined by Sue, Allyson Robinson, the executive director of OutServe, and Jonathan Hopkins, the spokesperson director. We were naïve to the fact that the simple act of kindness, opening the bathroom stall door, also opened the door to opportunity. We were quick to learn that we had accidentally become close and acquainted with some of the most inspirational and dedicated individuals working towards fundamental fairness and equality.

At the reception, when Sue and Penny shared their first dance as a married couple, Sue lifted Penny, who has struggled with multiple scoliosis for the past 15 years, out of her wheelchair and held her as they danced. There was nothing but love in their eyes as they danced together, finally married.



Pictured above, from left to right: M/N Kate Radzwill, M/N Katie Schmidt, Sue & Penny, M/N Jim Ensz, M/N Sarah Feldman, M/N Ben Evans, and West Point Cadet Joseph Koning.

Crossword Answers for October 2012 Issue:

Across

6. rouge
7. free surface
12. occulting
15. cable
16. Hear This
17. non displacement
18. Salty the Seagull

Down

1. cabotage
2. zephyr
3. backstay
4. bravo
5. Fulton
8. range
9. half breadth

10. finger
11. porthole
13. azimuth
14. seven
19. abeam
20. ahull