

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ATLANTA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009



LUNCHEON VENUE – SHERATON SUITES – MARCH 20TH

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The February meeting of the Atlanta Alumni was held together with the West Point and VMI alumni associations. West Point hosted this joint meeting. Navy had hosted a joint meeting with West Point last summer. West Point had arranged for the Israeli Consul General in Atlanta, Ambassador Reda Monsour, to be the speaker. Almost one hundred alumni and guests gathered to hear Ambassador Monsour.

Those in attendance from USNA included: Win Rorabaugh '70, Bill Rentz '55, Paul Borer '70, Paul Hurst '62. Ed Sundberg '68, Kent Chruchill '90, Jim Slemenda '66 and his beautiful bride Susan, Gerald Mackey '54 and his wonderful bride Connie, Pete Knoetgen '77 with his bride Sue, Tim Phillips '89, Bill Donges '71, Ton Ariaal '84, Karl Schwelm '71 with USMA guest Roger Hill '00, and Ples Bruce '77. There were more in attendance and I'm sorry if I left your name off the list. Not everyone signed in at this joint meeting and several of our members had guests that also did not get on the list.

Ambassador Monsour has had several books published, including three books of poetry. He is a PhD candidate in Syrian Studies. The Ambassador has held four similar positions on three different continents. He noted that he finds Atlanta to be the most friendly of the cities in which he has been assigned.

Ambassador Monsour started by showing a map of the Mid East. On a map that shows the Muslim world, Israel is so small that you can't even write the name of the country in the space it occupies on the map. Trying to divide such a small country into two countries is not easy.

Israel has made a miraculous transformation in only sixty years. Before 1948, Israel was an unimportant providence in what was left of the Ottoman Empire. It was a desolate area. Israel is now number 23 on a list of the world's most developed nations. Many of today's technological advances originate in Israel. Cell phones actually got their start in Israel. Israel is second to the United States in companies listed on NASDAQ and is even ahead of Canada. On a per capita basis, Israel has more doctors, lawyers, engineers, classical musicians and theater tickets sold than any other country.

Surrounding Israel, the Mid-East leads the world in poverty, dictatorships and political instability. Countries controlled by dictators need an enemy to unite the population. Israel and the United States are the enemies of choice for most of these regional dictators. Saddam Hussein sent cash to the West Bank from the United Nations Oil for Food program even while people in Iraq were starving. Today, Iran supports Hamas even though it is a different culture and a different form of Islam. You can tell where dictators think their real enemies are by where they station their elite units. Those units are always posted near the capital against internal threats, not the borders for the external threat.

The Ambassador pointed out that border wars were common in South America when most countries there were dictatorships. Ecuador and Peru signed a Peace Treaty in 2001, ending 160 years of warfare. As the countries of South America embrace democracy, the border wars stopped. Democracies do not want to waste resources on war. There are much better ways to use those resources.

Information Technology is changing things all over the world. In Iran, the Moral Police enforce dress codes on women by using clubs to hit women with skirts that are deemed too short. Within seconds, someone with a camera phone has posted those pictures to YouTube. The internet also shows the freedom that citizens have in democracies. People want that freedom whether in Africa, Latin America or the Mid East.

These changes will not happen quickly though. It took Western Civilizations 500 years to change from church controlled states to democracy. The Mid East is about 300 years behind. Part of the problem is that in Islam,

they remember the great Islamic Empires and they want to return to those empires.

Iran is not an Arab country and some Arab countries are beginning to see Iran as a bigger threat than Israel. It is Iran that is funding the instability in Gaza, Lebanon and Pakistan. Some countries are beginning to worry that Iran may try to destabilize their governments. This is providing an opportunity for progress.

Upcoming Events:

I want to remind our members that the Dark Ages Party will be held on March 28th at the Commons at Fort McPherson. This is a members only event. Invitations will be sent to everyone who was a member in 2008 and has joined in January or February of 2009. If you want to come, *AND YOU SHOULD WANT TO COME*, send in your membership form or join online at our website usnaaaa.com.

We will also have a dinner at Babette's in April. This is a wonderful place and we get a great meal at a bargain price. The unfortunate part is that the seating is very limited.

Also on 01 May, we will have our annual Army-Navy golf tournament at Fort McPherson. We have our win streak started again and I'd like to keep it going! So, put these dates on your calendar.

Also, and this is very important, we need members who would like to join the Board of Directors. For our organization to improve, we need to keep getting new and enthusiastic people to serve. It is these new people who come up with the new ideas that help our organization improve. It is not very time consuming, usually about two hours per month. Please call me at 770-487-9746 or e-mail me at grumpymitch@yahoo.com if you would like to help.

Beat Army,

Mitch Rowland '71

Social Calendar:

**Saturday, 28 March 2009- Dark Ages Party - The
Commons @ Fort McPherson-**

TBA/April 2009 - Dinner At Babette's

**Friday, 01 May 2009 – Annual Army-Navy Golf
Tournament @ Fort McPherson**

For more information on any of our events, visit our
web site USNAAAA.com.

Luncheon Details

The luncheons are held at the
Sheraton Suites Galleria Hotel Atlanta,
2844 Cobb Parkway – this is just across Cobb Parkway
from the Cobb Galleria Convention Center near the
intersection of Cobb Parkway (Hwy 41) and I-285.

Luncheon Calendar

Friday, 20 March 2009 – 1130
Monthly Luncheon – Sheraton

Friday, 17 April 2009 – 1130
Monthly Luncheon – Sheraton

**U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
ATLANTA CHAPTER
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Address Correction Requested