

Happy Fiftieth Reunion to "The Hurricane Class"!

by Jose Femenia, Class of 1964

Fifty-four years ago, in September 1960, as Hurricane Donna was boldly tearing through the Northeast, a group of eighteen-year-old boys were not-quite-as-boldly falling in line for Indoctrination at Fort Schuyler. We would forever be known as "The Hurricane Class".

We were taken back to those days recently with a forty-minute overview of a "Class of 1964" DVD created by Steve Richter. This DVD included a slideshow - including cadet pictures of every single classmate - and a movie segment that showcased various experiences during our four years on campus including our three Summer Sea Terms.

In conjunction with the College's Homecoming this year, the Class of 1964 hosted a three-day (October 24 - 26) celebration honoring the 50th anniversary of our graduation from the college. It was well-attended with 66 classmates participating in the festivities.



Rick Kisling addressing the Homecoming attendees

The event commenced with a Friday evening casual reception at the Renaissance Westchester Conference Center in West Harrison (our homebase for the weekend). Classmates were presented with a Class Journal containing the biographies of 75 classmates; this bound journal was a special labor of love spearheaded by Joy, wife of Rick Kisling.

On Saturday, the Hurricane Class assembled in the Inner Gorge and proudly marched into the Pentagon with all classmates wearing the Class hat - a ball cap with the College's emblem above the peak, and the class year and nickname embroidered on the back. Rick Kisling addressed the Pentagon gathering, thanking the new College President, Adm. Michael Alfultis, and his staff for their assistance with



Sharing experiences: Regimental Commander I-C Victor Deveso (2014-2015) with Regimental Commander Robert Carty (1963-1964) at The Fort

the planning of the reunion celebration. He also recapped some of the class experiences. After the day's events on campus, the Class returned to the hotel for a reception, dinner, view-

ing of the "Class of 1964" video, the awarding of a bottle of "Cheap White Wine" to 12 classmates for various not-so-serious-yet-important-in-their-own-right achievements, and a presentation of thank-you gifts to the three ladies who helped in various ways, earning themselves the titles of Honorary Members of our Class: Joy Kisling, Mary O'Neill (the cardboard version, as Mary unfortunately could not be present) and Eileen Femenia. It was a most memorable evening.

Sunday began with an 0800 Mass by Father James Huvane, a Maryknoll Priest. Fr. Huvane was an original member of the class, having left after Third-Class year to enter the Seminary. While a Seminarian student, Fr. Huvane still served on the TSES IV (as the Captain's Orderly), allowing him to complete all three cruises with the Class of 1964. The Mass was held in a hotel meeting room to an overflowing attendance.

In addition to the Class reuniting, the 50th anniversary reunion was also an opportunity for the Class to help the College maintain the Fort Schuyler values and traditions that have contributed so much to the growth and success of the Class. It was decided that the most defining elements of "The Fort Schuyler Experience" were the cruises. Accordingly, it was decided that the Class establish the "Class of 1964 Cruise Scholarship Endowment Fund" through the Fort Schuyler Maritime Alumni Association (FSMAA), so as to better serve the goal of helping cadets defray the cost



The wives! Including "Cardboard Mary" in honor of Webmaster of the Class Mary O'Neill who could not attend.

50TH ANNIVERSARY



Front Row (left to right): John Hayes/Stan Pobutkiewicz/Vinny Barra/Larry Benincasa/Al Renz/Steve Richter/Frank Gallo/Don White; Second Row: Rick Kisling/Pete Baci/Al Trachtman/Bill York/Fred Lobbin/Randy Weber/Jim Levey/Art Decotis; Third Row: Bill Steffenhagen/Father Jim Huvane/Larry Kenny/John McMurray/Jim McNamara/Bill Fleming/Vito Gualtieri/Gene Sweeney; Row Four: Jay Barsin/Eric Anasteed/Jack O'Neill/Pete Wroblewski/Bob Carty/Al Paris/Bill Preeg/Charlie Fessler/George Koch/Walt Dabberdt; Row Five: Ed Ryznar/Jose Femenia/Tom Donahue/Frank Ragonese/George Bradford/John Ingram/Ernie Steighlener/Joe Diodati/Dennis Brennan; Row Six: Chris Ruoss/Tom Olsen/Gene McDonald/ Nick Esposito/Bob Schweiger/Steve Tommony/Roy Wrenn/John Halloran/Rex Helfant/Wayne Walter; Last Row: Christian Sweeny/ Fred Eisele/ Phil Lund/Bob DiNapoli/John Brennan/Bob Varanko./Jim Egan/Rich Eicoff/Andy Ferranti

of the cruises. The Class set up an initial goal of raising \$25,000 to meet the FSMAA's 'named fund' requirement. With the help of John Brennan's \$5,000 match challenge, the donations topped the goal and totaled \$38,153! As a result of the initial success, it was decided to gradually increase the fund corpus to \$100,000 by the 55th anniversary reunion - a challenge the class enthusiastically embraces.

The reunion committee, often referred to as "The Crew" consisted of five very compatible graduates: Rick Kisling, Ed Ryznar, Jack O'Neill, Steve Richter and Jose Femenia.

During the planning process, the entire Class was kept fully apprised by a very professional Class webpage developed and maintained by Mary O'Neill, The Webmaster of the Class. The webpage was received so well by the Class that Mary has volunteered to keep it going indefinitely. It was through her imaginative development of the website that the enthusiasm for the reunion gathered momentum.

In closing, fair winds were not bestowed upon us that September fifty-four years ago, but they have since followed each and every one of us. We in The Hurricane Class are all grateful to have attended Fort Schuyler for the education, the experience, the connections and most importantly, the friendships that bind us together now, as they did then.



The Class of 1963 marches in.



"The Crew" who organized the reunion: Ed Ryznar, Jack O'Neill, Steve Richter, Jose Femenia, Rick Kisling

Note to Classes Planning Their Upcoming Reunions:

From our experience, we advise that you start the process early, at least a year in advance, and work with both the College and the FSMAA in developing reunion plans. The planning, collaborating and anticipation are well worth the end-result! We are also available to talk with next up: The Class of 1965!