



24 January 2021

Dear Classmates,

It is still January so "Happy New Year" seems appropriate. Like me, I imagine you were glad to see 2020 recede into life's rear view mirror. With the craziness of the election and subsequent events in DC behind us, and the prospect of warmer weather and vaccine supported herd immunity in front of us, hopefully 2021 will be a better year. But the last year has been a tough time for many, including family, friends, Classmates and Shipmates, so I wanted to share a few ways we can help support others in this difficult time. We don't have a Class fundraiser for the next couple of years, so these are all great opportunities for you to join me in supporting USNA.

First and foremost, our Classmate (and NAPSTER) Alan Rodgers is demonstrating true courage in both battling Stage 4 face & throat cancer and also being willing to ask the Class and others for help. Please take a few minutes to visit his GoFundMe site and donate whatever you can - Alan and his family deeply appreciate it!

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/need-help-metastatic-face-and-throat-cancer?qid=254e5386a30b90c7ad2c884c9b1fb79a>

And I was on a call with the USNA Foundation last week and I asked how the Middies were hanging in there and not surprisingly, it has been tough on them. They have had significantly curtailed liberty, social and family contact and many of them are struggling. Throughout the course of the pandemic, requests for support from the **Midshipmen Development Center (MDC)** have increased dramatically. The MDC's counseling services, covering topics including peer advising, eating disorders, substance abuse, trauma, depression and anxiety, continued via secure video teleconference and phone calls when in-person support was no longer possible, ensuring that midshipmen in need of support have ready access to critical resources. While some midshipmen with serious concerns may need to be referred for medical treatment, the MDC's services are not part of a midshipman's medical file, which can be helpful for those who fear seeking support could affect career prospects.

Our Classmate, Len LaPorta has generously established a fund for the MDC which will be used to purchase stress/performance management equipment and technology as well as staff/brigade professional development. Support to this fund will assist the MDC with enhancing access and support available to midshipmen. You can [make a gift online](#) via the Naval Academy Foundation's secure form. Select "other" as the fund and indicate The LaPorta Family Fund for the Midshipmen Development Center in the box below.

COVID-19 has drastically transformed how current midshipmen learn and live together. The **Midshipman Activities Fund (MAF)** provides flexible funding that benefits every midshipman. Now, more than ever, support is needed to support key areas of the midshipman experience to boost morale. In March, the Academy was closed to outside visitors which drastically reduced business for the Midshipman Store, Drydock Café, the Visitor Center and the Naval Academy Club, all operated by the Academy's Business Services Division. The profits, which fund the MAF, have been diminished but the need remains.

The MAF supports Midshipman physical fitness facilities which is especially needed given social distancing policies. It also produces many morale enhancing programs and extra-curricular activities including musicals, the Glee Club and other initiatives that are particularly critical now. Please consider [making a gift to the Midshipman Activities Fund online](#) via the Naval Academy Foundation's secure form.

On a brighter note, we've started the early planning for our 35th Reunion slated for the Fall of 2022. We expect that by then things will have settled down enough for us all to be together to watch a Navy football game, drink some cold beers and enjoy simply being together.

In the meantime, take care of one another and if you find yourself in a difficult spot, remember that the Class is here for you so please reach out for support!

With warmest regards,

Jim

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