

HIGHTY-TIGHTY

NOTES



The official newsletter of the Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc.
Volume 48 Number 1 *Spring 2024*

HIGHTY-TIGHTY ALUMNI, INC.

Board of Directors - Elected Members



Chuck Rowell, Jr.
HT '71
President



Bertram Y. Kinzey III
HT '68
President Emeritus
Half-Notes Editor
Historian



George E. McMichael, Jr.
HT '70
Past President
Webmaster
Newsletter Editor



David P. Williams
LTC, VaARNG
HT '79
First VP
VP for Recruiting Retention & Mktg



Dirk I. McComsey
HT '92
Vice President
Alumni Operations



Scott Beman
HT '01
Vice President
Development



Maria Crookshanks
CDR, USNR (Ret.)
HT '87
Secretary



Lori Keck-Beach
HT '92
HTAB Drum Major &
Performance Officer



Mike Francisco
HT '74
Old Guard Liaison



Gene Harrison
HT '68
Director



William L. (Larry) Root
HT '72
Director



Thomas J. Verbeck
BG, USAF (Ret.)
HT '73
Director



Ed Wilkinson
HT '77
Director



Gary N. Jackson
LTC, USA (Ret) HT '78
Director



Michele Caldwell-Wrenn
HT '89
Director



Barry W. Baird
HT '92
Director



Scott Judd
HT '93
Director



Gregory R. Milas
HT '98
Director



Robert W. Mauck
HT '03
Director



Jennifer Boehm
HT '06
Director



Jennifer Harrison
HT '07
Director



Mariah Zwirb Cooper
HT '20
Director



Anthony LaVopa
HT '08
Director



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Our Endowments are Now Over \$5,400,000

Greetings and I hope this winter has been kind to you and your family. We have had a wonderful summer and fall season. The Highty-Tighties keep growing slowly towards the size and strength we have hoped for these last fifty years. There are 132 band members for the Spring Semester. They only lose 17 Seniors in May and expect to see 60 new freshmen in August. This will help the Band keep growing. We also have more brass instrumentation than we have had in many years. This has really helped with the sound of the Band this year.



Dave Williams HT 79' — Someone we might see more often on this page in the future.

The Highty-Tighty Commander for this semester is Cadet Major David Moon. Drum Major Paul Dragan continues in his role leading the Band on the street and field.

Director Sr. Chief Jim Bean has the Band marching in the Savannah, Ga. St. Patrick's Day parade on March 16th. They are excited about returning to Sa-

vannah where they have recently won the 1st place trophy.

Homecoming in October was very successful and a great weekend. The weather cooperated for both the Friday parade and Saturday's pregame performance with the current Highty-Tighties, which look and sound outstanding.

This year represents my final year as your President. The last seven years have certainly passed quickly as I look backward. We feel that your Highty-Tighty Alumni board has accomplished some excellent successes during these years. What we are most thankful for is YOU...!

Your combined support and attendance at functions and financial support has allowed us to continue to grow scholarships and operating accounts for the Band. During these seven years our scholarship endowments have grown from just over 2 million dollars to now over \$5,400,000.

We are extremely blessed to have each of you back home contributing in any way that you can do so. Thank you again.

HT Annual Giving Fund is #877055

New HT Excellence Fund is #861616



Sincerely

Chuck Rowell HT '71
President, HTA



DIRECTOR'S DOWNBEAT

Moving Beyond Covid Restrictions

Our Covid-induced issues are now officially in the past. After this article I promise to never mention Covid-19 again. However,

protocols during that horrible time truly hurt nearly every aspect of the Highty-Tighties. Marching intervals were ridiculous, indoor practice was out of the question, performances were few and far between, and last but certainly not least, most incoming freshmen had little to zero experience in marching. This year's senior class was the only class, as of late, to ever march using drill cards. Everyone else had only marched "drum major" drill (follow the leader). Our fall leadership team and I discussed our approach this year and came up with several goals for football season; bring everyone up to speed on the Highty-Tighty marching style, require all music for pregame performances to be memorized, and teach drill using drill cards. Happily, all of these goals were met and we even found time to produce a video performance for the Metallica band competition,

"For Whom the Bell Tolls." Although this competition was for Corps style marching and not military drill, I was extremely proud of the final product which can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0mIpYw2r7Y>

(It is interesting to note that although Covid times affected us terribly, we still managed to win First Place in the 2023 New York City St. Patrick's Day parade which we received via mail in October.)

As we start second semester, we once again have had an amazing retention rate. Our current numbers of 132 members are in no small part due to the fall administrative team and performance chain led respectively by Cadet Joey Vocatura and our drum major, Cadet Paul Dragan. I cannot say enough about these mature leaders and their ability to get the most out of the organization while fostering a positive working environment for all. This spring's band will be aptly led by Cadet David Moon along with drum major Dragan and will be busy with Women's Basketball pep band up to and including the ACC tournament in Greensboro, NC. The excitement surrounding last year's ACC championship has spilled



Senior Class Post Game Group Shot Fall 2023

Sr. Chief James Bean



Retention Rate is High

over to this year and everyone is eager to see what happens this March. Additionally, after a hiatus of six years, the band has been asked back to lead the

alumni. Many of our current experiences would not be possible without the contributions you make to the High-Tighty Annual Giving Fund.

With our small travel budget from the university, the cost of any traveling would not be possible without you. As our numbers continue to increase (a good problem to have), instrument purchases and repairs go up, as do scholarship needs for freshmen and sophomores. Please know that your support of donated new and used instruments as well as monetary gifts are hugely appreciated!



On the Drillfield Fall 2023

James M. Bean, Senior Chief, USN (ret.)

St. Patrick's Day parade in Savannah, GA for their 200th anniversary. This trip is always a favorite among the cadets and is remembered fondly years later. We also have started rehearsing concert band for our annual performance over the Change of Command weekend in April. This performance will also feature our jazz ensemble, The Colonels, another example of our band member's versatility.

Our continued existence as the face of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets is dependent on the strength and support of our dedicated



Veterans Day Parade Roanoke 2023



Alumni Relations Update

Dirk McComsey HT '92

The Highly-Tightly Alumni were busy in 2023! Local mentors met with new cadets for a donut social again this year, many stopped by the Lot 8 tailgate, and a group of us invaded Cape Charles, VA in August.

Once again, in April following the Spring board meeting, we held our picnic with current band members at Blacksburg Municipal Park Shelter Number 1. Thanks to all the alumni who attended and helped by purchasing picnic items, bringing grills and cooking. All alumni and bandsmen are invited to this picnic to socialize and relax before the cadets need to focus on exams.

In August, alumni assisted with new cadet move-in, meeting parents, handing out water and answering questions. This year, move-in occurred on Thursday and other VTCC alumni were there to assist as well. Parents are always appreciative for the assistance and information our alumni provide.

A few weeks after that, 15 alumni and friends from VA, DC, MD, WV, FL, and TN got together in Cape Charles, VA for a



Above: Ready for a bike ride along the Eastern Shore Rail Trail



Left: Alumni sipping wine at Chatham Vineyards

Below: Kayaking in the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge



long weekend getaway. Alumni from the 80s and 90s enjoyed kayaking, biking, sailing, playing pickleball, and dining on the Eastern Shore of VA while sharing stories and celebrating their time in the band. The 2024 getaway will be in Damascus, VA, July 25-28. Make plans to be there now! Please contact Dirk McComsey (dirk@mccomsey.com) for more information. Several of us have accommodations already prepared!

Alumni Relations Update



Bike Rides, Kayaking, Tailgating

This year was the first year of the official HTA tailgate in Lot 8 during football season. They were well attended by HT alumni from recent graduates to classes from the 70s. The November tailgate oyster roast was a huge hit. Thank you to the alumni who assisted with the tailgates throughout the season. This year, the oyster roast is planned for the October 17 night game against Boston College. Other tailgate menus will be decided closer to the day of the game. Stop by before the game and visit!

After the Homecoming parade, GunnyFest was another success. Thank you to those alumni who contributed to help make it happen. Once again, a few of you exceeded all expectations. The party couldn't have happened without some of those heavy-hitters. Every year the cost for this event goes up, but we pull together and make it happen.

If you have not already done so, please join the Highy-Tighty Alumni Facebook group and register



November 2023 Tailgate Oyster Roast

to receive the Half Notes email. Events and activities for the alumni are posted to the Facebook group and also mentioned in the Half Notes.

Upcoming Events

New Cadet Move-In - August 2024 - Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Please email Nate Brown at vtcalumni@vt.edu, if you can help with new cadet move-in.

GunnyFest - Homecoming 2024 - Hilton Garden Inn, Blacksburg, VA. Following the Homecoming parade.

HTA/HT Spring Picnic - 4:00 PM after the Spring HTA Board Meeting, Upper Quad in front of the CLMS building

Highy-Tighty Alumni Getaway - July 25-28, 2024, Damascus, VA. Join fellow Highy-Tighty Alumni in the mountains of Virginia. There will be group activities and events organized around the area for the week-end of July 25-28, 2024. Details are still being worked out, but alumni will be biking, hiking, and socializing at various locations in the Damascus and Abingdon area throughout the weekend. For more information please contact Dirk McComsey - dirk@mccomsey.com

Tailgates - Lot 8 throughout the football season.



From the Commander

Cadet Major David Moon

It is my privilege to assume the role of commander for the Spring 2024 semester. My musical journey began in my

earlier years with the violin, cello, and guitar, eventually leading me to join the band during my freshman year. Motivated by the desire to test my abilities and contribute to a greater purpose, I found a sense of belonging within this unit. I have resided in many different areas including Fredericksburg, Virginia, Leesburg, Virginia, Fairfax, Virginia, and Vancouver, Canada. While engaged in numerous pursuits on campus such as being a member of AFROTC and Industrial Systems Engineering, my dedication to the Highty Tighties remains my top priority.

The Highty Tighties experienced tremendous success last semester. As the 4th Battalion Executive Officer during Fall 2023, I witnessed firsthand the band's impressive resilience and perseverance amidst a demanding football schedule. Without exception, the band consistently met the high standards we set for ourselves. Notable achievements included performances at football games, Hokie walk showcases, participation in the Virginia Tech Homecoming parade, and the alumni pre-game spectacle. Throughout these endeavors, the band demonstrated its unwavering commitment, work ethic, and loyalty to both the Corps and the University.

This semester, my primary objective for the company is to cultivate an environment that individuals are willing to buy into, fostering a sense of pride in being able to call themselves Highty Tighties. My goal is to establish a culture where every member commits to giving their utmost effort. By doing so, we will continue the legacy that the Highty Tighties have upheld for numerous years.

Following our successful representation of Virginia Tech at the ACC Women's Basketball Tour-

namment, we eagerly await the opportunity to showcase our talents once again in the Savannah Saint Patrick's Day Parade on March 16th. The increased number of personnel and the continued refinement of our musical proficiency leave me with no doubt that our performance will be a standout highlight of the event. As we march through the vibrant streets of Savannah, we carry with us the motto of "Deeds not Words" and the excellence that defines the Highty Tighties. This upcoming parade presents an invaluable chance for us to further elevate our reputation and leave a lasting impression on all who witness our display.

We would like to express our gratitude to the alumni whose support has been instrumental in sustaining the excellence of the Highty Tighties. Your dedication to our organization, whether through mentorship, financial contributions, or simply your continued presence at events, serves as a source of inspiration for our current members. Your commitment to upholding the legacy of the band fosters a sense of pride and belonging among us all. It is through your generosity and guidance that we are able to continue our tradition of musical excellence and represent Virginia Tech with honor and distinction. Thank you for your enduring support and belief in the mission of the Highty Tighties."

David Moon
Cadet Major, VTCC
Spring 2024 Highty-Tighties Commander





New Feature

Alumni News

We are going to try a new feature in the Highty-Tighty Notes that you may or may not see in future issues depending on responses from readers. The photo at right represents the type of thing we would like to see in our new “Alumni News” feature. The groom here is Chuck Kneyse HT ‘69-70 with his new bride Cathy at their wedding on February 10th of this year. Chuck lost his wife of 49 years tragically to cancer in May of 2022 and Cathy lost her husband of 46 years to Lou Gehrig’s disease. It is a touching story worth sharing—read the whole story at <https://www.theknot.com/us/cathy-erickson-and-chuck-kneyse-feb-2024/our-story>. Many publications like ours feature births, deaths, marriages, etc. of their members to help keep folks informed. Do you have anything you would like to let your old classmates (“buds”) know about? How you respond will dictate how Alumni News looks. If we just get a few items, we can do pictures much like Chuck’s or many responses will result in just one liners about your



news. Let me know what you have via my contact info on the back cover. Be sure to include your class. Love to hear from you.

George McMichael HT ‘70



Homecoming (Reunion) 2024

Details are coming together for our Reunion festivities for 2024. This will be our game against the Yellow Jackets of Georgia Tech on October 26th. We will continue with our new schedule that features the homecoming parade on Friday night rather than Saturday morning along with practice being moved from Friday night to Saturday morning on the Drillfield. The annual meeting of the HTA Inc. along with our great feast of a lunch will follow practice. The specific times for all of these events won’t be finalized until two Sundays before Reunion. (Oct 6)

So mark your calendars for **October 25-26**. Registration is not up yet but keep an eye on <https://vtcc.vt.edu/alumni/ht-reunion.html> for details later. Note: that site is currently showing details from homecoming 2023. See you on October!

2024 Football Schedule

31 Aug TBA	@ Vanderbilt
7 Sept TBA	Marshall
14 Sept TBA	@ Old Dominion
21 Sept TBA	Rutgers
27 Sept TBA	@ Miami
5 Oct TBA	@ Stanford
17 Oct TBA	Boston College
26 Oct TBA	Georgia Tech Homecoming
2 Nov TBA	@ Syracuse
9 Nov TBA	Clemson
23 Nov TBA	@ Duke
30 Nov TBA	UVA
7 Dec TBA	ACC Championship



Homecoming 2023

Homecoming Parade Friday Night



The Homecoming Parade Friday evening was a thrill for the alumni band as usual. We had a great time catching up with other HTs and it was just great to march through downtown Blacksburg one more time. We hon-

ored our newest Distinguished Hightly-Tighty Alumnus, Gary Jackson HT '78 (photo upper left). We enjoyed connecting with current bandmembers on the drillfield after the parade as always. Band practice Saturday morning was a bit soggy





Homecoming 2023

Band Practice and Pre-Game Show



but we got it done just the same. (Note the new instrument we added this year in the top left and bottom right photo bottom of preceding page) You can see the Highty-Tighty spirit in those faces in spite of the rain.

Things dried out nicely for the game against Wake Forest — that was a ‘W’ - go Hokies! The atmosphere in that jam packed stadium is always electrifying and something that keeps the Highty-Tighty Alumni coming back for more year after year — even when the W’s don’t show up. We are tuning up again for October 25 and 26 — don’t miss it!





HTA Annual Meeting

Old Guard and Award Presentations

During our annual HT Alumni meeting, the Class of 1973 was recognized as the newest Old Guard Class. Those present were Martin Bush, Louis Ostendorff, Lee Spradlin, Gary Thomas, Paul Toffenetti and Tom Verbeck. Three members of the class: Jamie Alga, Russ Carpenter and Tom Perry had passed away.

The Company Commander, Martin Bush, shared memories and accomplishments of their class during their 4 years at Virginia Tech. They included the Governor's Inaugural (1970), President Nixon's Inaugural (1973) and participating in Chery Blossom and Apple Blossom parades.



We want future Old Guard classes to be well represented when their 50th year comes around. It would be a good idea to reconnect now with your classmates, renew old friendships and encourage as many of your class as possible to attend Homecoming on their 50th year.

Thank you all and I hope to see you at Homecoming.

Mike Francisco HT '74
Old Guard Liaison



Gary Jackson HT '78 Receives the Distinguished Highty-Tighty Alumni Award

Outstanding Sophomore Benjamin Hardin receives the Jim Schaeffer Memorial Scholarship for 2023





Commandant To Retire

Gen. Fullhart's Last Semester as Commandant

The photo at right shows General Fullhart receiving an appreciation award from the Highy-Tighties at the Annual Meeting. The Award features the Band's white citation cord and a brass plaque that reads: "Major General Fullhart — In appreciation for all your years of support to the Highy-Tighties — Deeds not Words"

There is a great article at the Virginia Tech News website that covers General Fullhart's accomplishments as Commandant across his 13 years in that role—the longest tenure for a commandant in the history of the Corps of Cadets, by the way. We don't have nearly enough room here to cover the contributions that the general has made, so be



"It's gratifying to see the buildings, to know that facilities match the quality of the young men and women who aspire to come here. But you really measure success in the lives that you touch, and know that through them, others may be served as well. They will go out, and they will touch the lives of hundreds or thousands of other people. That, I think, is most gratifying."

sure an see for yourself at: <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2023/08/CM-commandant-retirement-2023.html>.

Politicians are often criticized for focusing too heavily on buildings as opposed to people. General Fullhart has had great success in the building department as the photo of the CLMS building at right attests but the Fullhart quote and the photo above shows that his heart is focused well beyond mere buildings.

Thank You, SIR!!





Alumni Recruiting

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

Memory has a way of playing tricks on you, but I'm pretty sure that Bill Deal and the Rhondels came to Virginia Tech and played for a Military Ball that my wife, Liz, and I attended when I was a cadet in Band Company. For the younger generations of Highty-Tighties, Bill Deal and the Rhondels were a Virginia Beach band that had a national following back in the late 60's and early 70's. One of their lesser-known hits was a song titled "Nothing Succeeds Like Success".

Fast forward to today, and the Highty-Tighties and the Highty-Tighty Alumni are experiencing a level of success that could hardly be imagined back in the late 1970s. Financial support in the form of scholarships to Highty-Tighties is significant and growing. The Band itself has doubled in size and assigned strength stands at 132 this spring. I'm always reluctant to make recruiting predictions for a coming fall semester, but if recent trends continue, we may exceed the long-desired goal of having 144 or more Highty-Tighties on the street and the field.

Every month a committee made up of a portion of the Highty-Tighty Alumni leadership along with our University Admissions representative, the Band Director, and key personnel from the Commandant's staff meet to discuss, plan, and implement recruiting initiatives for the Highty-Tighties. The Corps has reintroduced a summer orientation for incoming cadets and the Band has a very effective recruiting team of cadets present each summer. This linked with hometown recruiting by the cadets at the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks, recruiting by way of the internet and social media platforms, and alumni presence at college fairs in the fall and spring are a winning combination. Furthermore, new printed recruiting material will make a major leap forward in effectiveness this fall.

Something we have all known intuitively since our days as Highty-Tighties is there is no

better recruiting tool than seeing, in person, the Highty-Tighties in a parade or on the football field. Adding in on-campus events like concert band, the Colonels stage band, pep rallies and pep bands the Highty-Tighties performed over 100 times in the past year.

I'll leave you with a closing thought and challenge. We are all recruiters, many of us have young family members, or know of the children of neighbors, church friends or social acquaintances who are approaching college age and play in high school bands. These are potential future Highty-Tighties. If you have any of these contacts, please exercise that old VTCC tradition – SPEAK UP about one of the finest military marching bands in the nation. As to success, I'll quote Lieutenant General Lane, a former Commandant and one of my mentors, "we have done well and we can do better".

Ever Forward
David Williams HT-79
VP for Recruiting
Retention & Marketing



Development Update



Hightly-Tighty Fundraising Update - March 2024

The band is continuing to represent the organization, the Corps of Cadets, and the university with professionalism and pride. The pep band traveled with the Lady Hokies basketball team to Greensboro, North Carolina over spring break for the ACC Tournament, and then the whole band headed to Savannah, Georgia for the 200th St. Patrick's Day Parade where they led the parade. With more than 20 Hightly-Tighty specific Scholarships available, and yet another nice increase in HT Endowment values for FY24 even with some ups and downs in the market totaling \$5.4 million in Endowments. The new HT Excellence Fund that we are trying to get to \$1,000,000, is at \$102,000 right now. This is another great opportunity to show our support and dedication by helping to hit this new goal.

The Schaeffer Endowment Fund continues to need funds in order to maintain the \$1,000 stipend that each incoming band freshmen and sophomores receive. This fund is attractive to prospective band members, so there is always a need to maintain this great asset.

The Hightly-Tighty Annual Giving Fund (Fund # 877055) continues to grow quite and currently has around \$170,000. The Sears Operating Fund is doing well also and that currently sits at \$62,000. The Brick Program has been a good example of a way to give to these. When an individual gives to an operating fund in the amount of \$2,500 (that is not part of an endowment). They get their name on a brick style plaque that will go into the new Corps Leadership and Military Science (CLMS) building.

This donation can be given all at once, or broken up over a five year period. Please contact Scott Lyman if you are interested in taking part in this, and having your name in the CLMS just like you signed your name in the bricks on Lane Hall when you graduated.

With our support these current and future band members can continue to strive and understand what it means to be a Hightly-Tighty. If you are interested in providing financial support, please contact Scott Lyman (at rlyman@vt.edu). It truly does make a difference!

Once again thank you all for being so supportive of the band and the corps, and we are once again looking forward to another great fall 2024 season of being Hightly-Tighty Alumni, and enjoying the sights of what we all have helped to build over so many years, and when you are back on campus, definitely take a walk around Upper Quad. The new buildings have created so much good morale for the band and the rest of the cadets.

Scott D. Beman HT '01
Vice President for Development



The image above shows the plaque mentioned in the article which is created from an image of a Lane Hall brick.

Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc
141 Lane Hall, Virginia Tech
280 Alumni Mall
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Non-Profit U.S. Postage PAID Bedford, Va Permit No. 3
--

REQUESTS TO ALUMNI

Very Important!

There are three things all Highty-Tighty Alumni need to do to help ensure you get the newsletter and stay connected with Virginia Tech and the Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc.

1. Be sure that your address and other contact information are up to date with Virginia Tech. You can update your information by sending an email to alumnidata@vt.edu. Use this address if you have a change to your email or mailing address. **Please do not provide your contact information or changes of address to the newsletter editor.**
2. Everyone needs to go to the Highty-Tighty Alumni website and check their contact information in the database. Go to www.hightytightyalumni.org and click on Database. The site provides a way for you to provide and request an update of your address, phone number, and email address.
3. If you know of any Highty-Tighty Alumni who are not receiving the *Highty-Tighty Notes* newsletter or the *Highty-Tighty Half-Notes* email updates, please pass this information on to them.

HIGHTY-TIGHTY HALF-NOTES

Subscribe Today

The *Highty-Tighty Half-Notes* are periodic emails sent to Highty-Tighty alumni and friends of the Regimental Band. They are intended to supplement the news included in the *Highty-Tighty Notes* newsletter, which only comes out twice a year. These email updates include both photographs and information about the present Band and Alumni. Early information about the reunion and other items of interest to alumni are often subjects of *Half-Notes*. If you would like to receive these occasional emails with photographs and updates about the Band's activities, as well as information about alumni, please send your email address and your request to receive the *Half-Notes* to: bertkinzey@gmail.com

You may have your name removed at any time.

Please forward any Alumni notes, articles, or other materials for the *Highty-Tighty Notes* to:

George McMichael, Editor
2333 Idavere Rd. SW
Roanoke, VA. 24015
gmmname@aol.com

