



MSL CAUCUS

A newsletter for and by Maryland Student Legislature Alumni members

Volume I, Issue 3

October, 2001

Editor's Welcome

Welcome again MSL members. While it has only been a few months since our last issue, it feels like the world has been drastically changed. Everyone has been impacted by the events of September 11, 2001. You'll find an essay addressing the tragedy in this issue. Also, there is a summary of this year's very successful Annual Assembly.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to our new alumni members. As they transition to life after college, I hope they enjoy the benefits that continued communication with MSL offers. As always, we'd love to hear from you!

-Kristen Fraser, WMC '00

Annual Alumni Event Gathers Grads

The first annual alumni meeting brought over a dozen Maryland Student Legislature alumni to the Calvert Room in Maryland's State House on Sunday April 29.

The event, held in conjunction with the 2001 MSL Annual Session, was the first of what will become an annual event.

"This first event eclipsed even our own expectations," said MSL Alumni Association Chairman Brian C. Griffiths (WMC '00).

"We're going to make these events an annual gathering in conjunction with the Annual Session. It's going to give alumni a chance to interact and share experiences with the current crop of MSL Students and help enrich their MSL experience."

The gathering included five former MSL Governors, three former lieutenant governors, and two former speakers of the assembly.

Being held in conjunction with the Annual Session allowed many of the alumni to interact and instruct many of the current students.

Chairman Griffiths was also accorded the opportunity to address a joint session of the General Assembly to encourage their continued participation with MSL after their graduation.

New 2001-2002 MSL Council of State

Continuing the tradition of electing new officers at the Annual Session, the following are members of the new governing body for next year:

Governor:

Gina Eosco (University of Maryland, College Park)

Lieutenant Governor:

Kathryn Weber (University of Maryland, College Park)

Attorney General:

Seth Kleiner (University of Maryland, College Park)

Secretary of State:

Mary Beth Molin (Hood College)

Speaker of the Assembly:

Timothy Daly (University of Maryland, College Park)

Students Pass Procedures and Protocols

A joint session of the MSL General Assembly passed the landmark document "Maryland Student Legislatures: Procedures and Protocols" by acclamation at the 2001 Annual Session.

The Procedures and Protocols is a handbook that describes the actions and procedures generally adopted by MSL.

The document was conceived and prepared by 2000-2001 Student Governor Jeremiah Kelly (WMC) and his Chief of Staff Matthew Burger.

Kelly called the document, "the most comprehensive how-to document to ensure that MSL continues to grow while maintaining basic but necessary standing operating procedures."

Kelly went on to state that the document was designed to "establish the roles and responsibilities for each position within the organization that is not specified in the Constitution or standing rules, these things that we have always done but never written down. It allows the student leaders to focus on issues and development, not logistics and timetables, which being undefined hindered MSL's effectiveness and prosperity."

The Procedures and Protocols document provides written directions and operating mechanism for all MSL events, meetings, positions, and events that would take place during the year. It also calls for the creation of a "Summer Leadership Retreat" which would bring the members of all MSL branches (Students, Alumni, Faculty, and Board of Directors) together to discuss the goals and needs of MSL in the forthcoming year.

"This document is the next step in ensuring MSL will be run effectively now, and in 10 years," said Kelly. "This answers all the questions, and fills all the gaps with a specificity not seen in the Constitution and Standing Rules. Efficiency is what we wanted, and we got it!"

Not all parties were happy with the documents passing. The Alumni Steering Committee filed a formal protest with the Board of Directors to remove sections of the document that dealt with the alumni.

"We felt that the document would be an albatross around the necks of the Alumni Association," stated Alumni Chairman Brian C. Griffiths. "But it was much more than that. The Procedures and Protocols document attempted to regulate alumni behavior and expectations without the direct consultation of the alumni.

Furthermore, there was confusion if the programmatic side of MSL even had the authority to legislate such things to the alumni."

"The establishment of mandates imposed on the Association by the student program was not a legal act under the student constitution," stated Alumni Steering Committee Member Peter Smith. "There is no clause in the student constitution reserving powers not enumerated in the document to the students, and so it necessarily follows that there is no logical derivation of that authority to be claimed by the program."

The sections of the document causing the greatest concern for the Committee were clauses calling for all alumni members to attend the Summer Leadership Retreat, for the association to provide newsletters on bi-quarterly basis, and for the sitting student governor to also serve as co-chair of the Alumni Association.

"Most of the requirements for the Alumni Association, while well-intentioned, would just be improbable and impossible given the nature of the beast," said Griffiths. "These are all situations we could have avoided had we been made aware of the document before it passed the General Assembly.

Griffiths has been working to have these sections removed from the Procedures and Protocols Document. The Chairman has been negotiating a compromise with 2001-2002 Student Governor Gina Eosco. The two parties have agreed to suspend the sections of the document until a permanent compromise can be agreed to.

"We want to work with the students," said Griffiths. "But it has to be on terms that are acceptable to all parties. We are confident that we can agree to such a document. Griffiths hopes to have the compromise agreed to in time for the 2001 Fall Interim Assembly.

For the MSL Social Butterflies

Are you interested in meeting fellow MSL Alum in a relaxed, social setting? How about a no-pressure, networking opportunity in a crowd of friendly faces? Chances are that there are several MSL alumni that live and work in your own backyard! If you are interested in organizing an MSL Alumni social activity, contact Brian Griffiths at briancgriffiths@yahoo.com.

There are many students spread out through Annapolis, DC, Baltimore, and northern Virginia. Let's get together for an informal softball team, tag football, happy hours, or any other ideas that you may have.

Scholarship Sites

It seems that a large number of MSL grads are interested in pursuing graduate degrees of some kind. The costs of these endeavors can be quite cumbersome. Here are a few websites that offer scholarship information. Several of these scholarship sites might be of interest to current MSLers and Alumni. Hopefully, they will serve as a useful resource.

Undergraduate Scholarships & Awards

1. The Phillips Foundation
<http://www.thephillipsfoundation.org/>
2. Fulbright Scholar Program
<http://www.iie.org/fulbright/>
3. Daughters of the American Revolution
http://www.dar.org/natsociety/edout_scholar.html
4. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
<http://www.eliewiesel.org/EthicsPrize/EPIntro.htm>
5. BestWebBuys.Com
<http://www.bestwebbuys.com/books/scholarship.html>
6. Backpacker Magazine
<http://www.backpacker.com/scholarship/>

Graduate Scholarships and Awards

1. Fulbright Scholar Program
<http://www.iie.org/fulbright/>

2. Association to Unite the Democracies
<http://www.iaud.org/>

New Way to Support MSL Students

The MSL Alumni Association is excited to announce the creation of the new Alumni Speakers Bureau. We are pleased to invite all MSL alumni to become a part of the Speaker's Bureau. As a member of the bureau, you may be invited to discuss various topics of interest before the young men and women of MSL.

Opportunities may include leading seminars at the student program's Leadership Training Institutes, advising students on how to utilize their MSL background in making the leap from college to professional life, offering keynote addresses at MSL functions, and more!

This is a wonderful and unique opportunity to give something back to the organization - your wisdom and expertise. To sign up or to request more information, contact the MSL mailbox as displayed on the return address of this newsletter or by e-mail to Chairman Griffiths at briancgriffiths@yahoo.com.

A Nobler Calling: A MSL Alum Reflects on 9/11

Time stood still that Tuesday morning. A day so beautiful and glorious, a true gift from God, transformed into one of unparalleled darkness in our modern age. The time of day, where we were, who we were with, the things we were doing at the time, the terrifying images - all things forever imprinted in our minds. We were nearby, or maybe our dear friends and loved ones, when we were attacked in Washington and New York City. Some of us witnessed the horror with our own eyes, others watched the countless replays on television no less afraid and lives no less turned upside-down.

As we continue to mourn (and we all mourn) those lives stolen from us on September 11, 2001, our grief unifies us in spirit and our fear of such unimaginable evils gives way to our steely resolve to eliminate it for all time. We unify in spirit and strengthen

our resolve, yet we each undoubtedly deal with the traumas of the day in a very personal manner. As I rushed to a special evening mass that Tuesday, the pastor offered words of love and of hope that were surely to be repeated across this great land. Life is not ended; it is changed. From death springs forth new life in all of its meanings. To me, these words provided some small comfort, but these emotional and psychological wounds will need the great gifts of time and wisdom and love to heal.

Today, I take some solace in our nation's history. I started out one Sunday morning in Old Town Alexandria. I live near there. At a local coffeehouse, I sat down with a heavy Washington newspaper, a hot cup of coffee, and a mind full of personal thoughts and the endless chatter of Sunday morning's talking heads. Two weeks removed from that dark Tuesday, I dwelled for a few moments on the sermon of Saturday evening's mass. The evening's liturgy taught that we can not serve both our God and the things of man's worldly creation for we will ultimately have to choose between them, to glorify one and resent the other. I turned my thoughts to our Founding Father's and how the importance of both God and the freedom to worship Him in a manner of our choosing (or, not at all) was, and remains today, not just a cornerstone of these United States, but to democracy itself.

I returned to my car and drove north along the Potomac on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, not knowing exactly where I was headed. My instincts brought me first to the Iwo Jima US Marine Corps War Memorial, bounded by Fort Myer and Arlington National Cemetery. I suppose I thought that the first thing to catch my attention there would be our soldiers of years past, frozen in time, raising that Star Spangled Banner. It was not to be. What struck me first was lettered in gold on the base of this memorial and sent shivers down my spine: *"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue."* That tribute by Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz to the soldiers at Iwo Jima speaks just loudly today to those rescuers who worked to save lives, and especially to the many who lost their own doing so, in Washington and in New York. I studied this monument and eventually made the short stroll away from the Memorial to the

Netherlands Carillon. This gift of bells was bestowed on the United States by the Netherlands after World War II as a sign of eternal friendship and a symbol that freedom shall always ring. I thought about the response of our world neighbors, their displays of friendship and solidarity, in the face of these new attacks as I walked back to my car.

Feeling modestly hopeful, I continued on my day's journey. I crossed the Potomac into Washington, and took a short drive down Independence Avenue to Potomac Park. I strolled along the riverbank among trees bestowed upon this nation by Japan in the years after World War II as a gesture of friendship. I walked over to the Lincoln Memorial with a purpose that I had yet to recognize. I made my way amid the throng of people from the Reflecting Pool up the steps to the foot of our 15th President. It was about then that I was truly cognizant of what I was feeling - a kinship with all of these people and with Lincoln. It was the feeling of citizenship, the love of liberty, and the ideals of democracy. It was a feeling that hushed the shouts against this country's past misdeeds. But then I experienced something I had not truly anticipated - inspiration.

It has been difficult for me to find a source of true inspiration in the days since our nation was attacked. It came from the inscription on the north wall of the Memorial, Lincoln's second inaugural address. His second inaugural address spoke to war, to slavery, and the judgments of God. The entire address holds great meaning for virtually all Americans who become familiar with it, but on this day, it was the closing of the address that holds the most value for me. *"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."* The sense of kinship with this throng of people in an instant transformed into a sense of family. Lincoln has called us all to be brothers and sisters in peace and in freedom, and challenged us all to answer God's call to "love thy neighbor."

Although uncertain where my feet would guide me next, I knew I would end up in the right place. I felt bound to history as never before. For the first time, I had begun to tie the trials, hardships and challenges our time to our forefathers. I found that I had walked rather unconsciously to the Korean War Memorial. The first thing I noticed were the statues of soldiers in the field.

Remarkably, each of these statues are different, right down to facial features. I noticed the faces were of men of different races. The National Park Service explained that although American society was very segregated at the time, the armed forces had begun to integrate military units. It was not lost on me that, in the shadows of the Lincoln Memorial, the American family, made up of different races and creeds yet all serving the same God, was memorialized for fighting for the freedom of our neighbors.

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Engraved in the black granite wall beyond these soldiers, I found the phrase, *"Freedom Is Not Free."* I had heard it uttered before, but today these words have never held more meaning to me, or, I suspect, to our younger generation. Sure, we have long understood on some basic level that past generations fought many a battle to win and preserve freedom for all Americans and its neighbors. But to a large extent it seems that we, the younger generation, have taken our liberty and freedom for granted; that is, until now. We have taken this liberty and freedom for granted if only because we have, but for a few television wars in foreign lands, had little personal, palpable connection to the struggles and heroic human sacrifices and triumphs of our forefathers. We have known little of the forces that seek to destroy our freedoms, to shackle us to fear and to tyranny; that is, until now. We are the baby brothers and sisters of the American family, realizing for the first time what it is to love your family members.

Family members do not always get along and do not always agree, but the incontrovertible fact is that we belong to a larger family. We stand together in times of crisis, and we stand willing to make any individual sacrifice to help our family in times of need. Our freedom is not free, and those who have paid freedom's price to preserve it have done so out of love for their American family.

And so it struck me, as I walked from the Korean War Memorial to wherever my feet would guide me next, that although life is changed after these terror attacks, perhaps it is only our life that has changed. Perhaps the strife is different, perhaps the evil has a new face and a new name, but as I meandered along the sidewalks, I felt steeped in history and the sense that maybe this nation, this American family has fought this fight time and again. It occurred to me that time and again, generation after generation, America has beaten back this evil.

Walking blindly, just as before, along the banks of the Potomac, it was almost as if I were being visited by Dickens' ghosts of past, present, and future. As I realized that I walked upon the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, it seemed that Divine Providence led me there. I felt that God was showing me something rather than that I was searching for something. FDR led this nation through, and out of, some its darkest hours. It was along this stop of my day's journey that I realized that history has continually prepared us for the strife and challenges to come, and that history has continually provided men with the means to overcome them.

I saw this day the humanity that guided FDR through the Great Depression and World War II. I saw this day the overarching love of and support for the American family. I found it engraved in stone, as though it were meant to speak to myself and all those who encounter times of personal despair and national crisis. I found it in a campaign speech he gave in 1932 in Detroit. *"In these days of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must and shall choose the path of social justice, the path of faith, the path of hope and the path of love toward our fellow men."* I found it in an address to an organization that sought to protect foreign-born citizens in 1940. *"We must scrupulously guard the civil*

rights and civil liberties of all our citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization." I found it again in a speech given to White House press correspondents in 1941. *"They (who) seek to establish systems of government based on the regimentation of all human beings by a handful of individual rulers call this a new order. It is not new and it is not order."*

FDR showed us time and again that the cradle of liberty has a responsibility to defend liberty the world over and for all of time. *"We must be the great arsenal of Democracy."* Though this does not always mean a defense of liberty through war, it does mean that any defense must be carried out with justice. It is because of FDR's example that I hope for our future; and though they present challenges for us all, I take comfort in his words. Like this nation's fathers before him, FDR left us with words that shall guide us in the fight ahead, words that give us hope, and words that admonish us to be just in the preservation of the American family. *"We have faith that future generations will know that here, in the middle of the twentieth century, there came a time when men of good will found a way to unite, and produce, and fight to destroy the forces of ignorance, and intolerance, and slavery, and war."*

As I continued on my way, I walked away with a sense of something so completely profound. Although I found fewer overt references to God and to the core principles that this country was founded on at the FDR Memorial, I also realized in a way that I never did by reading history textbooks that this was a time of great ethnic and religious expansion in the United States. Despite this, I walked away with the knowledge that our God and our shared religious principles were as evident at that time as any other time in American history. FDR realized that our American family was expanding and endeavored to keep it together in times of great difficulty. I was moved by my experience there, as I was at each stop before.

My feet, as divinely guided as they may have been (guided also by the soothing sounds of music), led me around the Tidal Basin. This time, I knew that my next

destination would be the Jefferson Memorial. I was going to the place where one man's accomplishments and philosophies have girded this nation for more than two centuries. So it was to be, and how fitting it was. As I made my way to the northern side of the Memorial, facing the Tidal Basin, a small band played the sweet songs of tranquility. I made my way to the steps and sat down to enjoy the sounds. Soon after, the arrival of the President at the White House competed for the audience's attention, marked by the tell-tale 3-helicopter convoy that carries him to and from Andrews Air Force Base. This day was, as the last several days have been, a little different. Maybe it accompanied every presidential helicopter transport, but today was the first day I truly noticed the F-15 fighter jet-roaring overhead circling the sky above the White House.

It occurred to me later that the F-15 was not a flex of military muscle, but a soft blanket of security. For a nation already in crisis, the American family be thrown into turmoil if it were to lose its contemporary patriarch. Life would, of course, go on but would we remember the callings of our forefathers in such a desperate time of strife? That single fighter jet, that soft blanket of security, represents the endeavor to keep our American family together in times of trouble. As I reflected on this, I knew that I was also meant to see this show of family strength, just as I had been guided to each of my other stops today.

After the commotion subsided, I entered the rotunda of the memorial to our 3rd president. I did not ponder the towering statue of Jefferson's likeness. I pondered instead the inscriptions on the walls of the rotunda. And it was here that I found the roots of the American family tree and its family values. *"Almighty God hath created the mind free...All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens...are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion...No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion."*

I know but one code of morality for men whether acting singly or collectively."

I think I found, finally, a real sense of patriotism on this day. All of the songs that I learned in the first grade praising God's blessing on America never held more meaning to me than now. To be a patriot is to be a man of God first. Make no mistake, our nation's noblest foundation is the freedom to religious practice, not freedom from religious practice. Our Founding Fathers had recognized that man cannot serve both God and the worldly creations of man. They created this nation as a haven for all those that might worship God in a manner of their own choosing, without the threat of religious persecution.

I am reminded of a modern mystery in the Catholic faith that perhaps illustrates the wisdom of the Founding Fathers' gospel of religious freedom. The Blessed Virgin is said to have appeared to a group of children and adolescents in Medjugorje virtually daily for a period of time in the early 1980s. It is said that she still appears to them a small number of times each year, even today. While these apparitions were still occurring daily, the children asked her many questions. One of the children is said to have asked Mary whether there is only one form of worship, one religious sect, that is acceptable to God. Her response was "no," that God is pleased by all forms of worship that do not pervert His love for creation. She is said to have cautioned that while He is pleased by any such manner of worship, mankind has a historical tendency to be intolerant of such differences.

And so we find ourselves in today's crisis. We find ourselves victims of a terror attack by men who have perverted the teachings of their religion. Dealing with terrorism on a scale as broad as the one on which we have been attacked will be difficult. However, the war that our President has declared on terrorism is a fight with a devil that we have fought before. This devil has a different face and a different style, but his objective is the same as that of any tyrant throughout history. Michael Walzer, a social science professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton N.J., addresses terrorism in his book, Just and Unjust Wars. In his book,

he tells us what we have known intuitively as a human race from the beginning of time, that terrorizing ordinary people "...is first of all the work of. . .tyranny." He also reminds us of the words of Aristotle, that, "[t]he first aim and end [of tyrants] is to break the spirit of their subjects."

We are servants of a good and loving God. And as torchbearers of the flame of democracy in the 21st century, the ghosts of our forefathers to defend our God-given liberty and freedom from these religious tyrants call us upon. We are to act with courage, justice, and compassion when we are called to action; and to sacrifice, for freedom is not free.

It was Jefferson who said that "[t]he tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." As young present and future leaders of this blessed country, as brothers and sisters in the American family, and indeed in God, we are drawn to such nobler callings - we are drawn to show our love for each other.

Let us remember to serve our God first, regardless of the name we ascribe to Him. Let us remember to pray for God's blessings and for forgiveness for any deadly actions we must undertake in our defense, whether military or political.

Our freedom is a cause for which we must persevere. As products of the Maryland Student Legislature and as men and women of God, I know that we will. Our spirit will not be broken. To those MSL alumni who are sworn to protect this land in law enforcement and in the US military, you are in the foremost of our minds. God bless you.



Coming Soon

- Look for some upcoming information about the Fall MSL events, including the LTI, and other meetings.
- Watch email for updates and other social events
- Next issue will have more information about the newly instated MSL Speakers Bureau

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