**PARENTS’ WEEKEND (PW) - Aug 29 to Sept 1, 2014**

***There is no way to describe the pride you will have, nor the emotions that will bubble up when you first see your mature looking cadet in a sharply pressed dress blue uniform***, wearing white gloves, tanned and looking at least six inches taller than the kid you put on a plane in late June. There is just no way to describe this moment or the transformation that occurred in just over two months.

**Parents’ Weekend Website**:  <http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/parentsweekend/> .  This has lots of information for your planning purposes. Parents Weekend is always Labor Day Weekend.

* **If you have not already done so, you should be in the process of making your reservations for PW.** Plan to arrive on Thursday if you wish to accompany your C4C to classes early on Friday morning. Parents generally start arriving that day between 6 and 8 AM. Print out your parking passes and football tickets prior to your departure.
* At some point during the summer, USAFA will update the above website for this year’s Parents’ Weekend. You can then register, print out your parking passes and get the time and dates for activities. You will also be notified through our Association about when the football tickets are available for our group to buy online. This enables us all to sit together at the game.
* **Don't over-schedule activities for Parents Weekend (PW).** There will be three more PWs to do all kinds of activities with your cadet in the Colorado Springs area. If you really want to see a lot of the sights this first year, consider coming to PW a day or two earlier or stay a day or two later. Your cadet has had non-stop activities for the past two months and is ready for a break. Sleeping for some will be a very high priority, but there will certainly be a lot that they will want to talk about and share with you. When you leave your hotel, your cadet will have to be in dress uniform. Some don’t care and are more focused on going out to a restaurant to eat, seeing a movie, going to an arcade, etc. Others will prefer take out so they can eat at the motel, watch TV or just relax by the pool and not be in uniform. The best advice is to be flexible. Let them drive the agenda. Again, be a good listener.
* It may be helpful to order a monitor and printer before Parents’ Weekend and arrange to pick it up at the local Best Buy or Staples in Colorado Springs. The cadets will have just received their computers and will need these items. Also, don’t be surprised if you are also buying a sleeping bag. Many cadets will sleep in these on the floor or on top of their beds as to not mess up their perfectly measured bed for inspections.

The general **PW Itinerary** is:

* **Thursday:** Plan to arrive in Colorado Springs. If you wish to attend the parade, you will need to be at the Academy very early in the morning.
* **Friday:**  Attend the parade on Stillman Field in the morning and plan on having lunch with your cadet in Fairchild Hall. New this year will be the Academy Academic Open Houses. Due to the overwhelming turnout for PW in past years, safety has become an issue for everyone to attend their cadet’s classes. USAFA is planning on having open houses and demonstrations and professors available for you to talk with. Information Fair at Arnold Hall. Attend the Academic Advising for C4C parents in the Arnold Hall Banquet Room. Attend the individual Squadron Open Houses. After their Squadron Open House, cadets will be allowed to depart USAFA and they will be informed by their Squadron leadership, the time by which they must return to the USAFA on Saturday morning prior to the football game, usually for the tailgate.

**NOTE: When you leave with your cadet on Friday following the Squadron Open House, have your cadet bring along their weekend uniform/clothes so that you can take them with you that day. If you do that, following the conclusion of the football game, you won’t have to fight the crowds and traffic to get up to the cadet area to get the clothes and you’ll be able to head to your hotel directly from the Stadium. This will save you a lot of time.**

* **Saturday:** If your cadet stayed the night with you, cadets need to report back to USAFA. Make sure you have your football game tickets. Football tailgate parties will start early and will be occurring all around Falcon Stadium. Before the start of the game, the cadets will form up for the “March In.” Cadets must sit with the other cadets during the football game on Saturday.  The game will take about several hours. Following the game, most squadrons allow the cadets to sign out and leave directly from the Stadium. Cadets are now released for the remainder of the weekend. ***C4Cs, C3Cs and C2Cs must sign back into their squadrons usually by 7:00 PM on Monday Evening***. C1Cs will have until 10:45PM.
* **Sunday:** Morning – Cadets are not required to attend any of these events, however, at USAFA there will be Protestant, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox services in the Cadet Chapel. Bus Tours to Jacks Valley leave from Harmon Hall every few minutes. Some cadets will want to take you to see it, others may not. In the afternoon the Chapel is generally open for visitors to view and take pictures.
* **Monday:** Holiday – Cadet Chapel open to visitors. Evening - Call to Quarters. This means that all C4Cs, C3Cs and C2Cs must sign back into their squadrons usually by 7:00pm. C1Cs have until 10:45PM to sign in.

Again, the complete itinerary for PW 2014 will be available at the USAFA website listed above.

At our Annual Association Cookout on July 27th at the Whitman VFW Post 697, we will provide you with more information about surviving a first Parents’ Weekend.

***Parent’s Suggestion for returning to the Academy Monday evening****:* In order to avoid the rush of families trying to return 3,000 underclass cadets to the Academy by 7:00PM (verify exact time with your cadet), we did what an upper class parent suggested – we had a late afternoon picnic with our cadet on the Academy grounds!

Late Monday afternoon, we picked up sandwiches and returned to the Academy with our cadet around 5:00PM. Because we were early we were able to drive right up next to the dorm area. We parked and helped him carry up to his room the “stuff” we had purchased over the weekend as well as his clothes. He signed in, and then came back out (signing in indicates that you are back on campus as required). We then drove to the “Scenic Overlook” spot out behind the athletic fields. We parked, spread out a blanket (remember the C4Cs will be in uniform) and had a picnic. We were able to enjoy each other’s company for that last hour or so. We watched hundreds and hundreds of cars in long lines as they snaked their way up to the dormitory areas as everyone was trying to get their cadet back on time. Just before 7PM we drove down to the visitor’s parking lot behind Harmon Hall, watched the sunset from the Chapel Wall, said our good-byes to our cadet and watched as he “ran the lines” back to his squadron and out of sight. It was certainly a better experience than the frustration of those who were sitting in those very long lines of cars. While “hanging around” the Chapel walls after saying our good-byes, we got ready for the Christmas Songs.Yup, Christmas songs. It’s just the upperclassmen teasing the C4Cs and their parents. (You’ll soon learn that fooling/teasing gullible, new parents is a hobby for many of the upper class cadets.) On the stroke of 7:00PM, an announcement will be made throughout the dorms and the cadet area stating that Parents Weekend is officially over and all cadets should be in their squadrons. Almost immediately, that announcement will be followed by “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” being played by the upper classmen who had strategically placed the speakers of their sound systems in their dorm windows facing the Terrazzo area. Just know that it happens and that it’s done with tongue in cheek. One year, many of the parents along the wall were good sports and sang along.

**For Jack Bernazzani’s awesome PW brochure and these handouts, go to our website at** [**http://www.usafaema.org/**](http://www.usafaema.org/) **under “Resources”.**