

## ***Parents' Suggestions***

### **From Elaine Brye (graduated 3 Mids from USNA, '05, '07, '09)-**

Here are my guidelines for a less stressful week.

1. Nail down your Firsties and find out the list of must attend events and parties. I have already told her I need her to be with me at least for a while at the Firstie Open House at the Alumni Assn-hope to see many of you there.
  
2. Make a master list of the weeks schedule -highlight what the "extra people " must be there for with departure times (in our family that is pretty much just Commissioning). Kindly tell them if they are depending on you for a ride you are leaving at departure time-I always couch it with we are on the military schedule now -five minutes early and you are late. Also give them the phone number of a cab service if they need more time . I also include a master list of everyone's cell phone numbers.
  
3. Airport pickups-these can kill you-flights get late and in can cause mayhem in a tight schedule. We have our later in the week arrivals stay at a hotel with airport shuttle service near BWI. They get to the hotel and then we go pick everyone up at the same time. Much more sane for everyone.
  
4. Tickets-I give everyone who will be with us their tickets on Friday morning. I pass the others out on Thursday night at dinner. The closer to the event seems to be the better.
  
5. My three sons will be there but will all be flying in on late Thursday night-backup plan for a delayed flight is tickets at hotel and a cab to the stadium. My mom flew in on a redeye two years ago-we made arrangements to leave the car unlocked so she could stow her bag and it worked out beautifully.
  
6. Decide which meals you are providing and then let others pitch in or just let them get their own. This week is for my celebration of a momentous accomplishment and I am not going to be Martha Stewart (actually I never could be her if I tried). Something most likely will go wrong-yield the temptation to be cruise director and let other people handle situations if need be. For example there is an Instacare near the mall-don't ask how I know.
  
7. Ladies -clean out your purse. I highly recommend getting a lanyard for your id this week even if you just leave it in your purse. I spent ten frantic minutes on my knees at Gate 1 one year before the Marine briefing with a mom in crisis. She could not find her id and we were dumping the purse on the ground trying to find it. The stress of ex-husband, family , nervous Firstie , and the exciting week all hit her in an ID meltdown. We found it

and made it to the briefing(which by the way you cannot miss if you are a Marine parent. She was already crying -but everyone was crying by the time the brief was over.)

8. Things not to worry about -seats for Blue Angels-you can see well from just about anywhere-I have watched from Hospital Point, the track , grass in front of the aero building-all good. What people are wearing-no one will be denied entrance because they are not in suit and tie. Control what you can control-for example my 13 year old will be in khakis and polo shirt-my husband in suit and tie. My nephews-heaven only knows and I don't care. As for me I will probably have my "screaming yellow" hat which continues to be a great source of amusement for my family.

9.Food-we will be tailgating on the big day before and after. Cold drinks a must afterwards. Before we will leave some folks in the parking lot while the first wave goes in. Then those with the least amount of patience or who want to keep eating will join the others in the stands. The graduates begin to march in at 9 am-and then just like the Army Navy game there is a wait until the actual ceremony occurs. There are moment so great solemnity-but there are also many light hearted moments. People shout and cheer when the name of their grad is spoken-it is not a completely staid event like some imagine it to be.

10. The bottom line-don't sweat the small stuff. Realize that stuff will happen-and it won't be the perfect week. But we aren't the perfect family either so it goes with the territory. As long as she gets that diploma and makes it to the Banquet Room for her Commissioning after the main event it will be a successful mission. If everyone has a great and memorable time-well that is even better.

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### **Notes from 2008 Commissioning Week**

*Courtesy of John Krebs*

1. Found our rental house on [www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com) (Vacation Rental by Owner), and reserved it 1 year in advance, i.e., in May 2007 for May 2008. Also since graduation was a Friday of Memorial weekend, we rented it thru the holiday weekend, rather than a Sat to Sat rental.
2. We wanted a waterfront rental because we are boaters & brought a boat down for the week. It was 3 miles up the Severn & very convenient to downtown by boat, vs. heavy car traffic & stadium buses.
3. We booked a block of 7 hotel rooms in September '07. Be very specific with the hotels for minimum stay periods as this is very popular weekend in Annapolis, and the hotels know it. Get all confirmation info in writing.
4. Weather all week ranged from cool, (50's), cloudy & rainy to bright sunshine

high 70's for commissioning day. Pack for a range of weather.

5. Buy lots of camera batteries & have them with you.

6. Events we attended during the week, all were wonderful.

a. Sunday- Baccalaureate Mass, Alumni club soccer game

b. Monday- USMC Silent Drill Team, Sups Garden Party, Men's Glee Club

Concert

c. Tuesday- USMC brief for families & selects, Alumni Picnic (held in Halsey due to poor weather). Abbreviated Blue Angel practice due to poor weather, garden party hosted by another Firstie family that we had met during Firstie parent weekend, and all good friends of our mid.

d. Wednesday- watched Blue Angels by boat, anchored in the Severn - incredible!

e. Thursday - Brigade Color Parade

f. Friday - Commissioning, told all guests to be at stadium no later than 7:30am, had a pre-tailgate and entered stadium by 9:00. Used cell phones & text messages to alert guests of graduate & where to meet later for pictures.

Awesome!

### **Logistics:**

1. We invited guests in January and asked to confirm rooms & numbers by April 1.

2. On April 1, we mailed a package of information to all guests with the commissioning week schedule, addresses and directions to hotels, stadium, rental house and contact info for everyone, as well as a stadium diagram picked up off the web.

3. Our midshipman arranged graduation tickets based on our numbers, and we distributed them, some by mail, some in person.

4. Caterers we used, who were all arranged via the internet & phone during April. We met or phoned with each when we arrived in Annapolis to verify all on track. All were excellent, cooperative, timely & professional.

a. Whole Foods Supermarket in Annapolis- appetizers & desserts - outstanding!  
[www.wholefoodsmarkets.com](http://www.wholefoodsmarkets.com)

b. Adam's Ribs, Edgewater, MD 410-956-2995, excellent!

c. Party Perfect, tent, tables, chairs, for backyard party 410-540-9151, excellent service

d. We bought our own table clothes and balloons at a local party store in NJ.

e. Beverages we picked up at a local Annapolis package store in the Giant Stores Food market plaza in Annapolis

f. As a small gift to guests, we typed up copies of the Navy Hymn, with Marine Verse, and placed them in 4x6 frames bought from a Michael's craft shop, and put in little gift bags from the party store.

### **Other thoughts**

1. Find a way to get a few hours to yourselves away from all the running around, Passer's in the Marriott, with a "Painkiller" was good therapy.

2. Try to allot a free day when you return home, you'll need the rest.