

the navigator

We learned a lot from the publication of our first electronic newsletter on August 6, the happiest being that it seemed to be very well received. Responses came quickly from around the world asking about NDSA and our various programs. All were acknowledged and passed along to the appropriate folks within NDSA.



Cross-staff*

[The Golden Domer](#) was sent to 23,400 Senior Alumni who have current email addresses on file with Irish Online. (Irish Online does not include any subway alums, but does have a total of c73,500 active email alumni addresses on file. iMod which will replace Irish Online this Fall will include subway alums.) Marc Burdell thought we should restrict the mailing to Senior Alums because “many nonseniors could be turned off by your name, “Notre Dame Senior Alumni” (my paraphrasing).

At Reunion this Summer, our dozen apostles (led by Emil Herkert) wore NDSA T-Shirts and spoke to as many as possible about NDSA. Even though they were talking to Senior Classes (aged 55+), more than a few times they were met by some version of “I’m really not ready to be called a ‘Senior’ “. My own experience, including emails received after publication of *The Golden Domer*, is similar, especially when I am talking to female graduates from the Classes of the mid-70s.

Even though “NDSA” is itself a renaming of our group (founded in 1996 as the **Notre Dame Fighting Irish Retired Service Team, ND FIRST**), I believe we need to face the issue again: is our name undermining our message? “ND FIRST” was changed to NDSA because we did not want to exclude those who weren’t yet retired. We should make this reconsideration immediately, certainly before the next newsletter is published or other marketing plans are finalized.

My own conviction is that we would benefit from a name change. Our name should be meaningful, concise, inclusive (e.g., of subway alums), and close enough to our current name so as to avoid confusion. I have several suggestions:

- NDSA, for “Notre Dame Service Alumni”, which retains the current initials but suffers from an apparent exclusion of subway alums
- NDSA, for “Notre Dame Service Associates (or Association)” which addresses the exclusion issue
- NDSC, for “Notre Dame Service Corps”, which seems to satisfy my guidelines above.
- (Insert your suggestions here)

I would like to hear your feedback on this subject as soon as possible. The following items will be on the agenda of the September Meeting: 1) Should NDSA change its name (and amend Bylaws and Procedures Manual to reflect the change)? 2) If the answer to 1) is "Yes," what should the new name be?

Please form your thoughts on this important topic and send them to me. I will circulate everyone's thoughts to everyone else on the Board, so that we can resolve this issue at the September meeting, not just start the discussion.

I will not be able to attend the Wednesday and Thursday sessions of our Fall Meeting because of a funeral we will be attending at Arlington. We have flight reservations to arrive in SB late Thursday night. Hopefully, everything will work out; and I will be with you on Friday.

I will soon publish our statement of Goals and Priorities for 2010-2011. Your Committee Chairs are adding their final touches to the draft as this is being written. At the September Board Meeting, we will discuss our Summer accomplishments, not just beginning to plan what we will be doing for the rest of the year.

Your inputs and feedback are most welcome.

Mike

* The cross-staff was used to determine the altitude of Polaris. The phrase "shooting the stars" comes from the practice of holding a cross-staff up to the user's eye with one hand with the transom grasped in the other hand so that the person looks like an archer taking aim at the sun.

August 8, 2010