

## Inter-Service Warfare

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By Mary Ann Akers, Roll Call Staff

That decades-old rivalry between West Point and the Naval Academy gets more intense every day and the barbs get ever-more colorful, thanks to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a proud Naval Academy grad.

At the eighth annual Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund Congressional reception in the Capitol last Thursday night, McCain took a friendly, if rather shocking, swipe at Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), a West Point grad who hosts the Hoop Dreams reception each year.

Showing that typical blend of wit, toughness and restraint — and an officer's art of offending without actually uttering an offensive word — McCain said he chose the Naval Academy because "my parents were actually married."

Susie Kay — the founder and president of Hoop Dreams, a nonprofit organization that helps send inner-city public school students to college — was among those laughing the hardest, though she tried hard not to take sides. Though Reed is her Senator and has been deeply involved in Hoop Dreams, McCain's father attended the Naval Academy along with Kay's dad.

So was McCain calling his colleague from Rhode Island a love child? More to the point, is Reed a bleep? We called his office to find out and heard laughter on the other end of the phone. "I can confirm that Sen. Reed's parents were married," a senior aide assured us.

Bill Clinton, Peacemaker. Partisanship and acrimony are two words most often associated with the 109th Congress. But peace, love and understanding are three words that come to mind when looking at the lineup for today's Senate Energy and Natural Resources subcommittee on national parks hearing.

Nestled amid a slew of bills being considered by the panel today is one to designate "the President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace home in Hope, Ark., as a National Historic Site and unit of the National Park System."

Ah yes, from impeachment trial to national park — a natural progression, of course. One might think that such a bill would go over like a lead balloon in this GOP-controlled

Senate, but Marnie Funk, spokeswoman for Energy panel Republicans, says aw shucks, this is nothing.

"We're the people who got the bipartisan energy bill done holding hands and singing 'Kumbaya,'" she joked. "A hearing on the Bill Clinton birthplace won't even raise an eyebrow over here."

Round Two. The left-of-center group Americans United is launching the second in an aggressive series of ads today on CNN and Fox News that attacks the Bush administration on the issue it has long touted as its strength: national security.

As Americans United waits with bated breath to see whether President Bush's brain, aka Karl Rove, is indicted as part of the CIA leak investigation, the group's ad reminds Americans about indictment No. 1, former vice presidential aide Scooter Libby, and how administration officials at the highest echelon have reacted to critics of the Iraq war. The ad begins with a nighttime view of the White House, flashes to Bush at a news conference in 2003 saying, "I want to tell you something — leaks of classified information are ... are ... are ... bad things. ... If there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is."

Cut to an April 7, 2006, headline in The New York Times blaring: "Cheney's Aide Says President Approved Leak." (The leak being a classified, pre-war intelligence estimate, not Valerie Plame's name.)

Then, floating backwards again in time, you can see then-President George H.W. Bush at the CIA headquarters dedication ceremony on April 26, 1999, saying, "I have nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the names of our sources. They are in my view the most insidious of traitors."

A voice at the end of the ad says, "Tell the president to listen to his father. Call 202-456-1414." (For the uninitiated, that's the main White House switchboard.)

It's not exactly coincidence that the ad is released just as the Senate prepares to question Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, Bush's nominee to head the CIA, about the propriety of wiretapping and data mining.

'The Da Vinci Hoax.' Lots of Washington movie buffs are looking forward to an early screening of the much hyped film "The Da Vinci Code." But who needs Tom Hanks when you can have Carl Olson?

Who's Olson, you ask? He's the author of "The Da Vinci Hoax," a Catholic response to what the church believes are historical inaccuracies in Dan Brown's best-selling novel. Just a block away from the Motion Picture Association of America, the Catholic Information Center — yes, it's run by Opus Dei, the Catholic movement that doesn't come across too well in Brown's novel — will be sponsoring a counter-screening of "The Da Vinci Hoax," a documentary of sorts.

While Olson takes his book and his mission quite seriously, he's having a self-deprecating blast thinking about all the folks he'll woo over from the MPAA screening. "A lot of people tell me I look like Tom Hanks," he said.

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