

I thought you and our Classmates might like to know that I was relieved as Commanding Officer of NR CINCUSNAVEUR DET 0513 at Great Lakes, IL, on Sunday, 22 Sep, after a two year tour. I'll miss the great trips to London and Europe! My new assignment effective 01 Oct '96 is on the staff of Readiness Command Region THIRTEEN as the Readiness Analyst.

Best wishes to all, Dirk

From **Bob Powell**, 11th Co, powellr@nxus.com

Just wanted to pass on the news that I am now a 'Grandfather'... On 12 September 1996 my oldest (adopted) daughter Shonté gave birth to a 7 lb 3 oz baby girl. Her name is Emma Layne Graves. Her father is an ET3 aboard RICKOVER out of Norfolk.

Still looking for some help in writing this column while I'm deployed. Please give me a call if you are interested. Happy Trails, **Bill**.

Get into the know, check out info on the new listserve in All Hands

78

Membership: 85%

Pres: **John Rudder**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**

45 Little Fawn Drive, Shelton, CT 06484

Sometimes it gets a little confusing at times doesn't it? Okay, let's see, it's really October; and I'm trying to figure out how much of that Brachs Candy I want to still have hanging around the house by the time you read this column in December. Those little teeth-rotting, possibly carcinogenic, sugared, orange-dye number ninety-two niblets have the half-life of plutonium and never ever go bad. By now I should be finishing the last of the candy corn tricksters treats (Wanna a piece?) and starting to gnaw on those candy canes Elizabeth is trying to hang on the Christmas tree. I keep telling her people shouldn't hang those things on trees, especially near the lights, 'cuz after a while the heat from the bulbs just contorts them into big old striped commas and apostrophes. "Interesting punctuational motif you have there, Vince" friends will comment. By now I'll also either have lost or won a bet on the Army-Navy Game (The way we're playing right now—Oct.—I just might have another Army B-robe!). With December's arrival, the "Boys of Summer" will also be long gone. Another World Series has passed into the history books. More importantly kids will have no reason to skip school and not hang around outfields, half-draped over fences and interfering with obviously about-to-be-caught fly balls; only to have some goof ball microphone carrying side line reporting ask them STU-PID questions, treating them like they were heroes when they shoulda' been grilling them for the interfering little thief they are!!! Oops, sorry I got a little carried away (GO Orioles!). We'll also be finally through the campaign that wouldn't quit. The pundits and politicians can give it a rest and catch they're collective breathes until the next campaign begins—like sometime next week. It'll all be over except the swearing-in. We now know whether to use the left hand or a darn good degreasing agent when we shake hands at a State dinner. Ah yes, December also means the resumption of normal TV. (If you call multiple

viewing of *Frosty the Snowman* and that stop action Classic *Rudolph the Rednose Reindeer*, NORMAL. Don't even get me started on the 24-hour "It's a Wonderful Life Channel"! December also means another column. A quickie, but a goody. Let's see...

One of those journalistic gems of the PAO, a Fleet Hometown News Release (FHTNR) reported that, before taking command of another fast attack submarine, **Ricardo Martinez** is at school in DC. Prior to the school, Rick had been the CO of GATO where he did a coast-to-coast transit of the sub from New London to Bremerton and directed her decommissioning. For all his hard work, Rick got a Meritorious Service Medal. Speaking of Co's, we've had quit a few changes of command lately. **Tim Hanifen** assumed command of HMM-266 at MCAS New River, in the other Jacksonville (North Carolina) on 20 September. He and his bride Anne are residing in J-ville. Anne (an attorney) is working for a law firm while Tim is doing the CO schtick and playing with his "Frogs on Sticks," demonstrating Tactical-Tim maneuvers. **John Page** is CO of a CH-53E squadron in Tustin, CA, HMH-462. In fact, his squadron was named Heavy Lift Helicopter Squadron of the Year at this year's Marine Corps Aviation Association Convention. **Andy Karakos** assumed command of GERMANTOWN, an LSD (number 42) out of Sasebo, Japan, on 11 October. On 8 November, **Dan Keuhlen** took over his second command—this time Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 120, in Norfolk, VA. Elizabeth and I ran into Barbara and **John Storvik** at a Mexican restaurant in Milford, CT, a few months ago. They were on their way to a night in "Nueve York" after having attended **Scott Langdon's** change of command in Groton. Scott took over one of the subs. As for John, he's working for the Naval Undersea Warfare Command at Groton, pending NUWCs move to Newport, RI.

Sean Coffey took over a Reserve P-3 unit (VP-92) at Brunswick, ME, on 19 October. I would've loved to have made it Sean, but I was playing Marine that weekend down in Willow Grove. Now, if the new CO of that P-3 squadron in Maine would've flown a bubba flight to get me, that would've been a BIG help.

Early this year, **Mark James** and his family moved from Atlanta to the Richmond, Virginia, area. As their treasurer, Mark played a BIG role in the Atlanta USNA Alumni Chapter. His move is a big loss to them, but it's Richmond's gain. I look forward to seeing his name on some Virginia USNA Alumni Chapter bannerhead. Big kudos go out to those who helped set home the Homecoming Tailgater. Quite a few '78ers stopped by for some cold beer, hot crab soup, sliders and dawgs. Among those I recall: **Tom Abernathy** is at the Pentagon working in OPNAV N-8. That's one of those war-fighting assessment pigeonholes. Tom was looking fit, as if he could still wield a pretty good lax stick. **Brent Obenour** and his family are living in Severna Park. Brent used to be with USPA IRA and is now with another insurance group (Of course when I was talking with him I was having some LITE induced fuzzy memory, so this might not be wholly accurate.) I think I got him hooked up with **Mark Hubal** for some Reunion Committee work. Successful small company owner, **Ray Kwong** was passing on his wisdom on how to be a business mogul—"Find a niche and milk it." Of course he coulda told how to find the money too! **John Rudder** started up an executive search service site in Annapolis for the company he's now with, System One. **Bruce Carter** and **Archie Griffin** are assigned to Naval Intelligence in DC. **Larry Galvin** is a department head (Physic?) at Navy. **Rodger Welch** was running around with his new daughter hoisted on his shoulders—ever the proud papa. Two of my fellow Willow Grove Marines were also in attendance, **Steve Maloney** and **Alex Dimitrew**.

John Sturges and the No. 1 Navy Fan—**Bob Schmermund** were also visible. Schmerm was obviously the more visible in his signature Navy gym wear and fuzzy Navy football helmet. Mr. GQ he ain't, but you gotta love the Schmerm!

As for the Three B's—The Balderrama Clan—I'm still hanging in there at Sikorsky Aircraft. As the Program Manager for the CH-53Es, it's been a rough last half-year. By now I hope to have all the aircraft back up in the air. They were grounded after the fatal accident we had here at the plant back in May. It's been a long struggle back, but by now we're through it. I finally finished up the MBA at UCONN which was why I missed a couple of columns. I'm hanging out with Jock, Alex and few other Alums at Willow Grove doing the Reserve thing. I've long since hit my Peter Principle with Uncle Sam's Misguided Children (USMC). Right now I'm just hoping they let me retire, so I can have my beer money in my 60s. Elizabeth is working in the Admin Office of a retirement home just walking distance away from the house. (But she's doing the California thing and driving to work.) She does nurses and nurses aide scheduling and arranging for temps in those "emergency situations," like on New Years Day (you can figure out why). Besides trying to keep me in check (a losing battle) and being the great mom (any brownie points for smacking?), she's pretty active with our church, Sunday School and the PTA, not to mention her craftwork. Her only vice is the addiction to Longaberger Basket. A catalog and the smell of wicker just is doing much for her. As for the only one we claim on a tax form, our son Michael is now ten. He's a typical fifth grader, who far exceeds his dad's maturity; but there's hope yet. He's a great kid who loves music, reading and like all kids—Gameboy and Nintendo. We also had another addition to the family over the Summer—this one has long ears and a tail—no it's not my off-spring. This one's fuzzy and likes carrots. We got a starter pet that's a little above the food chain from the 10 cent goldfish—a dwarf rabbit. He's a pretty cute fellow, and we're all getting the hang of the pet responsibility thing. As I said he's a starter kind of pet. If we do well, and my allergist says I can, we may fleet up to something larger, like a dog. Of course, Elizabeth says they could still trade me in and get the dog anyway. Either way, dad just gets moved down the pecking order.

Well that's it for now. I hope the New Year is better than this last one. But isn't that the typical lament? I won't bother with resolutions, they're just more lanes on the path to Hell of good intentions which is now an eight lane freeway. Suffice to say that there remains hope and a firm belief in our own ability, our family, friends, Classmates and shipmates to make things right, to make them better. After four years at Mother B and now almost twenty years of testing ourselves in the big bad world, we've proved it outright. From the Three Bs, best wishes to you and your families, for good health and happiness in the coming year. I'm looking forward to reading all the Christmas cards and getting them on the *Shipmate* scope. See you in '97, Launchin' Spot Four (and on to my Christmas Eve mad shopping spree!!!!).

**Remember to update your
address—Call 410-263-4448x112
or E-mail
mlaabs@pensacola.nadn.navy.mil**
