

# 78

Annual Membership: 20%  
Life Membership: 68%

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# 79

Annual Membership: 5%  
Life Membership: 88%

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Greetings, '79!

And a Merry Christmas to all '79ers scattered around the globe! I hope the holidays find you in good health, in good company and in good spirits! I know, there are a million things to do, and time only to do 347,684 of them. But you make time for the important things, like reading the Class column in *Shipmate*!

Odds are that the percentage of us overseas or otherwise separated from family and friends is decreasing, now that most of us have completed our military service. I consider myself very lucky in that regard: I was only deployed for two Christmases during my career. Karen has been overseas for only two as well. And while not ideal, those holidays away still offer some great memories. In 1988, Christmas came just three weeks into a six-month deployment, and about three days before the battle group pulled into Subic Bay. About 2:00 p.m. on Christmas Day, the logistics helo arrived overhead, a cargo area full of mail for our little frigate. There was no shortage of volunteers to help carry the stuff to the post office so it could be sorted and passed out. One of my JOs received a box of cookies from his girlfriend. She had sent him packages before, but on the outside of this one she wrote, using a thick black magic marker: "*Fragile!* Please toss underhand!"

Last year at this time I had just been elected as your Class secretary. I had no idea how much fun this job (if you can call it that) would be. I do remember being a little intimidated at the prospect of following on the heels of the Give King, **Ken Russell**. In preparing one of my early submissions, I remember looking through the December 1999 *Shipmate* to see what the other Classes were doing. One of them—I believe it was '81s column—had been written completely in verse, along the lines of "The Night Before Christmas." I was impressed. I thought that with a little work, spread out over the course of a year, I could produce a similar article for Christmas 2000. Well, life then intervened, time sped up, and the best I had was:

T'was the night before deadline  
and all through the home,  
Wiz was frantically trying  
to come up with a poem.  
His wife was nestled  
all snug in her bed,  
but he wasn't there with her:  
he was typing instead.

And out in the office  
there continued the clatter,  
and Wiz just sat there  
getting madder and madder  
...because he couldn't remember how the  
blasted poem goes and the book is still tucked  
away in the attic with all of the Christmas decorations  
that we have to get out because we have company  
coming over for dinner!

You can see where that was heading. So I thought I'd spare you and put that on the back burner for now. Maybe next year...

Enough reminiscing. It's time to open the presents. Let's look in "Ye Olde Bag o' Mail" and see what goodies can be found! Well, right after last month's deadline I received this email from **Shawn Hilvers** (Gecko1956@aol.com):

Just a note to say I'm still alive. I guess you might have figured that from the recent *Shipmate*. **Brian Decker** was able to catch me in the picture of the rowing outing. I've been with American Airlines for over 14 years, flying captain on the 767, doing transcons from Washington Dulles to Los Angeles and the red-eyes back. **Gary Labuda**, also with American, and I have shared many cups of coffee on those flights. I retired from the West Virginia Air National Guard over two years ago. I'm engaged to a fine lady, Kelly Trax, who I had the privilege of escorting to our last Reunion.

Thanks for the note, Shawn! And congrats on your upcoming nuptials!

**Sean Cate** (scate79@home.com), Class president extraordinaire, forwarded a note he received from **Scott Hegarty** (brian.hegarty@sap.com). Scott is currently the global support manager for SAP America, Inc. Judging from my cursory look at its Web site (mySAP.com), the company is involved with assisting other corporations' e-business efforts. Scott reports that there's been another recent "Phil sighting":

Have you seen **Phil McConkey** on his new TV show? He and five to six other folks are the football experts on a new pre-game show. They all discuss trends, strengths and weaknesses for each game, but the panelists also tout their own toll-free phone and Web sites where people can get their "picks" (for a fee)...I forgot to write down the name but it's a nationally syndicated show on Sunday morning! I had read about it in *Sports Illustrated* and just stumbled across it this past weekend. Phil hasn't changed a bit. Just a hint of gray at the temples, but I'll bet he's still within five pounds of his Plebe Summer weight. Still high-energy, etc.

In the same email Sean passes that:

Phil has some deeper TV roots to brag about. Last year, in the Cartoon Network Super Bowl spoof—*Coyote vs. Road Runner*—and I think we all know who won that one—Phil provided on-camera commentary on the strengths of the Road Runner against his foe. I haven't seen this (sports picks) show, it may not be on here in the D.C. area, but Phil does crop up from time to time on some sports broadcast.

Let's see, the last time I saw Phil was when we were slogging it out through flight school together. We were flying together on a solo tactical navigation flight: Phil and I in one helicopter, and two instructors following behind in a chase helo. We weren't "lost" in the technical sense of the term. Really, we weren't! I knew what state we were in (panic), and I knew our position was *somewhere* on this chart. One of us (memory has dimmed this slightly) suggested that we go "a little" off of our planned route and verify our position by reading the name on that water tower over there. It was then that we learned a valuable lesson in Naval Aviation: water districts names—not town names—are painted on water towers in NW Florida. Confusion reigned supreme, but we managed to find a high-

way and follow it home. Thanks to Scott and Sean for the update.

And speaking of Sean, word is that he's looking for a volunteer to be the 25th Reunion Chairman. Sean will be able to assist with much gouge and support, along with other Classmates in the Annapolis-D.C. area. Since we are now four years out, we need to make some very preliminary plans, such as choosing a date, a headquarters hotel, and most importantly, a tailgate caterer! The 20th Reunion extravaganza will be hard to top, but the available opportunities to improve upon it will diminish as we get closer. Anyone interested in chatting with Sean about this can email him at scate79@home.com.



The Brothers Reilly: Kevin "Duke" and Dennis

Special thanks this month go to **Dennis Reilly '78** for the photo of himself with brother **Kevin "Duke" Reilly**. Dennis writes that the photo was taken this summer at Duke's country estate overlooking Cattaraugus Creek, about 50 miles south of their hometown of Buffalo, NY. Duke—with the backwards hat—is wearing his favorite t-shirt: "Big Daddy—Large and In Charge!" Dennis, if you're scanning the adjacent columns, thanks for taking the time to pass on the photo. We really appreciate it. I might even be convinced to do something nice for the fellow-sandblower-helo jock that writes your column!

And speaking of photos, they are always welcome and actively sought for inclusion in these pages. Digital or paper, color or black and white, I'll take whatever you can send this way. For publication, however, *Shipmate* requires that the grad, or widow of a grad, must appear somewhere in the photo. Also, for digital photos, a resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch) or higher is required (at 2.5 inches wide). The standard Internet photo is about 72 dpi, which is too low for publishing—it looks like a mass of gray pixels. If you're scanning your own, please send them in grayscale (300 dpi) and, if possible, in a .jpg or .tif file. Now, if you're not a computer photographic expert, don't let all this stuff throw you off. I can accept most any file or paper photo and convert it to meet publication requirements. The one thing I can't change is the resolution of digital photos. But please, send the paper photo, or send whatever digital files you have. I know you're taking lots of pictures during the holidays. If I can't work the right magic on them, I'll let you know. (Sorry, **Grant Thornton**: that great photo of your Colorado scouting trip was of too low resolution to make it in!) "When in doubt, send it out!"

This month's edition of "'79ers in the News" features another update of the business career of **Don Hubbard**, as announced in the 19 September 2000 issue of *Business Wire*:

TeleCommunication Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: TSYS), a leading developer of wireless messaging and data solutions, has named Donald C. Hubbard Jr. senior vice president for Corporate Development, responsible for TeleCommunication Systems' (TCS) mergers, acquisitions, and other strategic relationships.