

dance class at the same time. Kerry is settled into her job, she just got back from taking an Assistant Secretary of the Navy and his entourage around Scotland and is now on leave so she can work on the unpacking, etc. Tim was disappointed to learn that his U.S. teaching certifications are not recognized here in the UK. He has engaged the services of an executive consultancy to help him make the transition from being a teacher in the U.S. to a different line of work in the private sector in the UK, and find work here soon he hopes. Every weekend the Farrells try to go on an "adventure" and see the sights around southwest England. They had lunch at one of the oldest pubs in England and went on from there to Stonehenge. Now that they are back online Tim hopes he can better keep in touch.

Jim Sanford (wb4gcs@home.com) (I seem to remember something about wb4gcs or was that WBGT?) just returned from a fun-filled six-months in the Ionian and Arabian Gulf on THEODORE ROOSEVELT. The Gulf in August is hot, as those who've been there well know. Jim is wrapping up his tour as Reactor Officer in THEODORE ROOSEVELT, and will go to ComNavAirLant as the Force Nuclear Propulsion Officer. After that, they'll see. Patti and the kids are well, glad to have him home, obviously (I seem to remember some cheering when the ship returned home).

Fred Hughes (fredlinda@email.msn.com) sent in an update. Linda and Fred live in Colorado in the "foothills" of Denver. At 7,500 feet, Evergreen has lots of snow and elk. They just wander around our yards. He is the COO of a small company, which is one of the four major contractors tearing down Rocky Flats Weapons Plant. When you see Bldg. 779 in the news in three to four weeks as the first plutonium building to be demolished, that's Fred's crew, Rocky Mountain Remediation Services (RMRS). They do waste management, environmental cleanup, nuclear facility ops, and D&D. About 1,400 employees and \$150 million-plus in revenue.

Bates Estabrook is one of my senior radiological engineers. They've lived here almost three years. And, with season tickets to the Broncos they haven't missed too many games over the last two seasons. Sheridan is eight years old and in third grade; Kyle is five and in pre-school; Fred is still in the Naval Reserve, an O-6 and CO of a SubPac Battlegroup Staff Support Unit that drills in Bangor, WA. Just getting over falling off his roof, 25 feet, and crushing vertebrae in his back. The doctors say it will be one to two years before he's fully recovered, but he is walking and back to work.

From **Joe McGowan** (jmgowan@pop.seas.upenn.edu) had some news about **Dave Laskoski** (now called Lawrence, Machdoc76@aol.com) who retired last year and now lives in Lancaster, PA. He had a nice career as a Navy radiologist (small world) and now is in private practice.

Well that's about all for now. I'll have more next time around. Please keep me updated of email address changes. We want to keep everyone informed. Take care, write often and *Beat Army!*

Vote for Trustees.
See the ballot
in next month's
issue.

77

Annual Membership: 32%
Life Membership: 55%

Pres: **CAPT Richard (Rick) White, USN**
1404 Hunting Wood Road, Annapolis, MD 21403
w: 703-605-5605 ext 145; h: 410-295-0089
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usna77@infi.net

78

Annual Membership: 20%
Life Membership: 68%

Pres: **Arch Griffin**
Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**
45 Little Fawn Drive, Shelton, CT 06484
e: VBalderrama@Sikorsky.com
Class Web site: <http://usna1978.org>

If you are reading this column, then it means the "millennium bug" didn't put an end to civilization as we know it, as had often been predicted. But then, think about the civilization we have known, Plebe Summer, Dark Ages, AC Boards, flight schools, TBS, SWOS, Nuke Power, then WestPac, Sigonella, heck any O' Club on a Friday night—no Y2K could put an end to that! So now that we're stuck with all the canned goods, MREs and bottled water, we'll just have to throw another party. Of course with the stockpile of toilet paper, perhaps a T-court pep rally would be more in order. Anyway, welcome to the year 2000, or zero zero or oh oh—heck how do we refer to 2000? In today's PC environment I'm certain we can't say "double n_ts." Years with real digits were more accommodating. I tell you what, after we figure it out, I'll be ready for the next millennial change. Yup, me and old Walt Disney, set for another thousand years. Just shrink wrap me Mr. Popeil and tuck me way back in the Frigidaire.

This and next month's column submissions come in quick succession, so I may need to stretch my meager mailbag between the two. (That is, unless in the next two weeks I get a sudden deluge of paper and AOL starts screaming "You've got mail!") Just be glad I haven't missed another column. Speaking of missed columns, I know we were both disappointed that this column was conspicuously absent from October's edition of *Shipmate*. For whatever reason, the submittal is somewhere in that e-file in the sky. I was particularly bothered as that column carried notice of the deaths of two of our Classmates, **Bill Kihn** and **Dave Nix**. I don't want their family and friends to think we had forgotten them. Here's the extract from that lost column:

This has been a tough summer for '78 families. Bill Kihn died suddenly on Monday, 19 July, of an apparent heart attack. His daughter, Alison, and his son, Billy, survive him. The wake was held on Sunday, 25 July, at the Friedrich Jones Funeral Home in Naperville, IL. The cemetery service was a private affair. If you wish to send condolences, please send them to Bill's sister, Tracy Sandkam, at 34 Gray St., St. Charles, IL 60174.

On Monday, 19 July, Dave Nix was killed when he was hit by a semi-truck while riding his bicycle near his home in Bedford, NH. The wake and funeral were held that same week. **Tony Quatroche** tried to make it to the funeral. (He and other Classmates made it.) Dave was to be cremated and his ashes interred at the Academy. At the time of my writing this, the date of inter-

ment had yet to be settled. Dave and Diane were divorced and they had no children. Dave's family asked that contributions be sent in his honor to a food bank/homeless shelter in Manchester: New Horizon, 199 Manchester St., Manchester, NH 03103; 603-668-1877.

We remember them fondly and joyfully as roommates, teammates, Classmates, shipmates... forever friends. Our condolences go out to their families. With that I'll light a candle, say a prayer.

Some time has passed since that was written, but it takes quite a while to heal from the loss of loved ones. I'm sure Dave and Bill's families would still appreciate a card, note, or letter from you. Now on to the more recent news.

Dave "Flip" Wilson (Dave.Wilson@Jacobs.com) passed on his story of the North Tampa fishing report he took at the end of September with our own **CAPT Mike Clendenning** (also of Sunup Fishing and Tampa Bay AM radio fame). They spent the day on the water. Flip noted that Mike's got to be good if he can catch fish. And no, Mike wasn't putting them on the hook and letting Flip reel them in. Well, okay, maybe once or twice. Dave still can't figure out how Mike and he could be fishing with the same bait on the same rig, casting to the same spot, and Mike catches fish but Dave doesn't. It's probably because Mike's the guide. Overall, they had a great day. The weather was perfect, the fishing was great, and it was a lot of fun to catch up after all these years. Flip thinks Mike's neighbor who joined them had a lot of fun, too—especially when, after a day of listening to Mike and Dave regale him with stories of "Club 34" and the Boat School, while sitting on Mike's patio with cigars and Guinness. Of course, it was strange how he left suddenly when Mike says, "Let's get the yearbook out." Dave said it was nice to see Deb again after 10 years. She told him Mike made her take a quiz that he found on the Internet to see whether she was "high maintenance" or not. As he's cleaning fish on top of a cooler in the driveway with everyone else sitting around watching, she said there is no way a woman could put up with one of us for as long as she has with Mike, and be high maintenance. Amen to that. It was also nice to meet Mike's two beautiful kids. Fortunately, they're taking after their mom. In closing his note and this segment on the old man and the sea...here's a plug and an endorsement from Flip for Mike's guide business. When you guys are sitting up there in the Great White North (I'm talking to you, Wayne) with those cold winds howling, cash in some of those frequent flier miles, give Mike a call, and get out on the water. And Flip says don't forget to drop in and see him in Lakeland while you're at it. Thanks for the update. It's great to see that another Leidorf trained man (Mike) is doing well!

Bob Novak sent me the CY '99 Aviation Major Command Screen Board results—here are some '78 selections (I know I'll overlook somebody, but then, you'll write to tell me. Won't you? Screen Group '78 Selections to Major Command at Sea: Ship—**Charlie Hauta**; Selections to Major Command Ashore: **Mark Stephen Boensel** and **Stephen B. Latta**; Screen Group 79 Selections to Major Command at Sea—Carrier Air Wing—**Dave Philman**, **Brian McCormack**, and **Shawn Tallant**; **John Hollyer**, **Larry McCracken**, **Paul Pietsch**, and **Chris Powers**.

Scott Rodgers (Hrodg@aol.com) noted that **Matt Pasztalaniec** (21st Co.) just got hired by American. He said he'd have to look up Matt on their union Web site. Scott's golf game must be getting better now that he's working nine days a month. Recently he and his wife, Pam, played golf up in the mountains where they have the weekend place and Scott got a hole in one! (Usually he's happy to just get on the green.)

Will Pearce (Will78USNA@aol.com) took his family, wife, Nancy and kids, Melinda (15) and Justine (13) on a summer trip to Kitty Hawk, NC.

Tom Atkinson (TFAtkinson@aol.com) is just up the road in Hauppauge, NY. Tom was a Youngster casualty of the Ac Board (I myself faced the "Inquisition" as a segundo!). He's doing corporate accounting. For a while he was the controller for A&E/The History Channel (a favorite site of the Balderrama family viewing!). That was followed by a couple of years at a children's hospital in New York. Now he's with a major law firm in Manhattan—justifying how they can defy the laws of nature by accounting for individual daily billings of 25 hours for a 24 hour day!—Must be some alternate dimensional kinda thing, huh, Tom? Tom offers that if anyone gets out to Long Island—especially his former Companymates from 30th—please look him up. You can call him at 516-366-3611, or just drop him an email. Great to hear from you, Tom—cool shirts!

Jack Fernandez sent me a letter awhile back, which just seemed to miss the last deadlines. Seeing as he let me crash in his room over Homecoming this year, the least I can do is run the note.

Jack saw **Carl Jensen** and **Jim Carr** over parent's weekend last summer while visiting his daughter, **Marina Fernandez '03**, in her Plebe Summer. Jack reports that Carl is in the FBI. He teaches profiling courses at the FBI Academy in Quantico and researches various threat assessment issues. Carl was a strategic weapons specialist on Boomers while on active duty. Jim is still on active duty. A four-striper, he just completed his tour as CO of JOHN ROGERS. He's now the Chief Engineer of ENTERPRISE (after which he'll take command of a cruiser). As for Jack, he's sort of a real world JAG, not the TV fiction. After flying F-14s off INDY he left the Navy and went to Cornell Law School. Today, he's a partner in a law firm in Tampa, FL. You'll note that Jack's meeting is more than just a "USNA family affair," it truly is a family event. You see, Carl and Jim are Marina's uncles. Carl is married to Jack's first cousin, Brenda. (They have two girls, Gena and Elise.) Jim is Jack's brother-in-law (and vice versa—yeah, it works that way too). Jim's sister, Carin, is the better half of Jack. Aside from MIDN 4/C Marina, they also have Moose (17) and Abbey (13). Jim and Dana have three kids as well, Natalie (13), Cavan (10) and Doran Abbott (8).

Homecoming was a fun time, following a bad game. As always, a great tailgater; the Carrs, Jack and myself had a wonderful dinner with Marina and some of her Classmates. Suffice it to say, the Navy's future will be in good hands with these kids. One thing is certain, they're a lot smarter than we were, albeit probably a bit more naive too. But then that could be just the over 40 syndrome in me talking. No doubt summer cruises, four years at the Academy and the responsibilities during their first tour will put an edge on them. As the evening drew to a close we extracted a hopeful promise from Marina and her friends to join us in four years for a graduation dinner.

Dennis Pricolo (DenPricolo@aol.com) sent in a great story, but a little too late to make the December edition. Here it is:

I had lost my ring on my first ship, PREBLE (DDG-46). Wasn't overly concerned, was so pissed off at the Navy after that tour I was planning on getting out and had no intention of paying a fortune to replace it. Later, I came to enjoy the Navy and made it a career, and I missed the ring, but not to the point that I ever popped for the funds to replace it. Well, recently I got a phone call that the former comm officer on the ship had it and had been trying to track me down for years and had finally thought of getting my address from the Alumni Association.

Seems the ring had been found in the bilges of ship by the DCA after I had left. I had my name engraved in it so they knew it was mine. Well, the DCA was about to leave for a tour of instructor duty at the Brazilian Naval Academy, so he gave it to the comm officer who over the years would make attempts to track me down, and finally succeeded. It got to me just before I got promoted to captain. I was wearing it when I pinned on. Bet you I have the cherriest ring in our Class. Twenty-two-plus years old and only has four years of wear on it—First Class Year, three years first tour, plus last couple weeks, plus some good cleaning by a unique AFFF and oil mixture along the way.

Yup, that's another ring story for the books. My question to Dennis was—how did his ring get into the bilges of PREBLE? I don't think I want to know. I also wondered what kind of Comm O that guy turned out to be if it took him this long to find Dennis.

Speaking of Class rings, those of you who frequent the email shopping sites may have noted an add on ebay.com that there was a certain Class of '78 miniature on sale. Here's how it was presented:

Item Description:

This is a very nice ring. On the top it says United States Naval Academy. On both sides it has an eagle. On one side it says 1978, other side it says Naval Academy. On the top it contains one round blue zircon 4mm and it is surrounded with ten round single cut diamonds approximate total weight .15/100ct. The gold weight is 11.5 grams. Inside it is engraved (B A B). The ring is made by Jostens and it is 14kt yellow gold. The finger size is 6. I have a very low reserve for this ring.

Both your Class officers and our Alumni Association Ring Bank Coordinator, Timothy Woodbury, have attempted to locate the original owner from the initials (BAB). Mike Holden put the news on our Web site, but nobody has come forward yet. While the auction has ended and the ring was sold (to a 1966 grad), we are still looking for the original owner. If it's you, or if you know who it might be, drop one of the Class officers a note. We'd like to keep all our rings in the '78 family. Also, if this one isn't yours, and you've lost your ring or miniature, check out the Ring Bank Web site on the Association's site (www.usna.com).

A mini photo review of '99 and more extracts from the lost column of October will appear in next month's issue. Until then I'll be in the pattern.

Launching, Spot Four

79

Annual Membership: 5%
Life Membership: 88%

Pres: **LCDR Sean Cate, USN (Ret.)**

e: scate@prodigy.net

Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**

22445 Bluebird Court, Leonardtown, MD 20650

h: 301-997-1980; w: 301-342-4936 ext. 156

e: (h) WithersJ7@starpower.net;

(w) WithersJD@navair.navy.mil

Class Web site: www.usna79.com

Greetings, Class of '79! On 22-23 October 1999, during the 20th Reunion weekend, elections were held for Class officers. The following individuals were elected to five-year terms:

President: **Sean Cate** (17th Company)

Vice President: **Mike Parrott** (14th Company)

Treasurer: **Jeff Johnson** (29th Company)

Secretary: **John "Wiz" Withers** (19th Company)

To launch the New Year, we have a message from our new Class President, Sean Cate:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some very special people, without whom our 20-Year Class Reunion would not have happened.

Valerie and **Fred Gerheiser** stepped up to the plate and delivered two evenings of outstanding

social events. When we were faced with the challenge of losing our original headquarters hotel, Fred went to bat with the staff of the Holiday Inn, now the Radisson Hotel, and arranged to make them our Headquarters Hotel. His timing was perfect—the hotel facilities and rooms were renovated over the summer, and provided an outstanding backdrop to our activities. From choosing a delicious menu to arranging for the perfect decorations, Fred and Valerie made the weekend events at the Radisson truly special. As if that wasn't enough, they also arranged for the photographer services, and for the DJ, who provided a fantastic and non-intrusive level of entertainment. The staff of the Radisson was also first rate and made our Reunion a complete success.

Many Classmates, though, were never able to make it to the Radisson. For them, the Saturday tailgater in the stadium parking lot was the highlight of the weekend. As he did for the 15-year Reunion, **Mac Silvester** coordinated this, our biggest weekend event. Working with Truffles Caterers from Baltimore, Mac arranged for a diverse menu that went on and on, serving nearly 1,000 people over a seven-hour period. No one could possibly have gone away hungry or thirsty after that remarkable feast. We held that feast under a vast tent and had clean, comfortable "facilities" to utilize for "recycling." **Grant Thornton** was the tent and toilets man for the tailgater, and he deserves superlative kudos from each of us who attended. Grant's coordination with the stadium, tent, and port-a-potty folks, ensured that we all could enjoy the tailgater in a comfortable environment.

Tom Gebrki was also there for the Class, scrounging hotel rooms all over the Annapolis area, and getting them at the best price possible. **Joel Shugars** introduced us to Ree Baumgartner of Odyssey Travel. Ree helped several Classmates with their travel plans. Thanks to **Jeff Johnson**, Class Treasurer, for handling all of the money and paying all the bills. My personal thanks go to the Rev. **Mark Edwards**, for leading us in our Class prayer and in remembrance of our fallen Classmates. Thanks also to all of those who stepped in, on short notice, to man the check-in tables. A big thanks goes to **Ken Russell** for all of his work as our Class Secretary and for his assistance in getting Reunion information to the masses. Another thanks goes to **Grant Thornton** for running the Class Election.

Our Class Webmaster, **Dan Vortherms**, brought our Reunion planning into the Internet age. Dan started our Web site, www.usna79.com, all on his own and has been maintaining it ever since. We were able to keep Class mailings to a minimum, while still providing a wealth of information to the Class through this Web site. I encourage each of you to visit our Web site often and provide Dan with any helpful feedback.

Two special ladies also need our thanks. Daryl Thornton, Grant's wife, spent many hours manning the check-in table and assisting with all of those details we guys tend to overlook. And, I want to thank my wife, Janet, for all of her recommendations and hands-on assistance during the many months leading up to the Reunion.

Finally, what would the Reunion have been without each of you who attended? A total of 394 '79ers attended the Reunion. For some, this was your first trip back to Annapolis in 20 years. Congratulations to 22nd and 29th Companies for returning the most Classmates, 16 each, and to the 3rd Battalion Companies for most by a Battalion, 72. If you didn't make this one, you won't want to miss the next one. I encourage everyone to start saving your pennies now for an even bigger blowout in 2004. The only excuse for missing the next one is "No excuse, SIR!" Omnes Viri!

And now, from the new Class Secretary:

Well, The Moment has arrived. Deep down inside, I knew The Moment would come. But up until now I had been successful in keeping it out of my mind.

In Naval Aviation, they call it compartmentalization: aviators learn to put life's stressors into little compartments of the subconscious, thus