

# 77

**Annual Membership: 32%**  
**Life Membership: 55%**

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# 78

**Annual Membership: 20%**  
**Life Membership: 68%**

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I thought this was going to be a slow mail column—since last month's was only a couple of weeks ago (in real world time not *Shipmate* issue time). But as I look at what's before me, there really is quite a bit. Without further ado...

Al "Blues" Baker (BLUESBAKER@AOL.COM) wrote his fellow "former tenants of Bancroft 5-2" a pretty good synopsis of the game. For those of you who, for whatever reason (comatose, kidnapped, abducted by aliens), were unable to either see or hear the game; or for that matter, couldn't get a hold of the results, here's Big Al with the sports. (Pretend you're listening to WRNV.)

By now you have collected those Army bathrobes. It was an incredible day at Veteran's Stadium. Weather was short sleeves. Navy played great ball. The youngster quarterback, Midshipman Madden, loves to get hit. The announcer finally recorded "Madden on a keeper," in continuous play over the loudspeakers. The Army had the Golden Knights as a pregame show. However, the US Navy Seals stole their thunder by dropping before the Knights did and doing a number of entertaining stunt maneuvers as most of the Seals entered the stadium, while two Seals stayed high aloft on a slow drop (thereby keeping the Golden Knights from doing any aerial stunts). Seals completely upstaged the Knights. Set the pace until the end of the game. **Bob Schermund** (15th Co.) ended up purchasing a section of 60 seats and got a big crowd of '78ers including **Arch Griffin**, **Dave Mercer** (new CAG Commander at Oceana), **Chris "Dwarf" Nichols**, **"Fast Eddie" Reid**, and a number of others. As for me, the Bakers and the Butterfield family (**Fred Butterfield**, 22 Co.) took eight seats and had our homemade signs for each (B-E-A-T-A-R-M-Y) person. A wonderful 19-9 win. Spent some time with **Steve Holman**, who is now an MD teaching at Bethesda. Other '78ers at Bethesda include **Sean Donovan** (Radiology MD) and **Frank Shramel** (dual doc: psych and nuclear medicine).

Thanks for the news, Al. Interesting that Frank is a "dual doctor"—real interesting double too. Hmm, think of the options for treating depression—"take two prozacs and call me in the morning" or "take two plutonium capsules—and don't." Speaking of tenth company... here's another extract from the lost column of October '99.

**Alan "Blues" Baker** (NIG1D@BUPERS.Navy.Mil or BLUESBAKER@AOL.COM) sent over an update on "Good Time Ten's" email roster. Now get your lap top addresses ready 'cuz

here goes: **Al Nugent** (NUGENTIII@AOL.COM); **Bill Countryman** (wcountryman@juno.com); **Bill Yeager** (weyeager@tqci.net or yeagerwe@navair.navy.mil); **Bob Gulley** (73634.2232@Compuserve.com); **Chip Walston** (cswalston@pcisys.net); **Craig Diffie** (diffie@erols.com); **George Demarco** (george.demarco@ny.stratum.com); **Gerard Katilius** (Gerard\_Katilius@hp.com); **Glen Ives** (Weather03@AOL.COM); **James "Dusty" Gray** (ch1st294th@hotmail.com); **Jim Herbig** (JDNHERBIG@AOL.COM); **Joe Martin** (NAVYMARTIN@AOL.COM); **John Curtis** (basic5@juno.com); **John Ehlers** (JFEHLERS@AOL.COM); **Ken Waldie** (Kenneth\_Waldie@res.raytheon.com); **Larry McCracken** (WolfOne35@AOL.COM or mcrackens@navair.navy.mil); **Loren Divers** (loren@lava.net); **Ron Uglow** (ronald.j.uglow@nspco.com); **Sam Sowell** (Sowell@OSDJTF.eplin.af.mil); **Steve Petri** (swpetri@erols.com); **Terry Obrien** (etobrien@erols.com); **Tom Whitehouse** (WHITEHOUSE.THOMAS@HEB.COM).

Okay, did you get all that? Speaking of Good Times Ten, quite a few of them were in attendance at **Craig Diffie's** retirement ceremony, along with a few representatives of other companies. Besides your faithful scribe, there were: up from Tampa, **Glen Ives** (the master of ceremonies); swinging

by from the Pentagon was **Al Baker** (invocationist extraordinaire) and **Steve Petri**; up from Pax River were **Larry McCracken**, and **Bill Yeager**; and from around the civilian land of Maryland and Virginia were **Ray Kwong**, **Brian Hunter**, **Les Wallace**, and **John Rudder**. As for life after the Navy, Diffie landed himself a great job as director of European Development for a high-tech telecommunications company. Sure sounds like the perfect job for a guy leaving the Navy with language skills and an end-of-tour IT type of job in his portfolio. As we go over the 20-year mark, some of you may be planning to put in those retirement letters. If you happen to be in the D.C. area, I suggest you look up the folks at the Navy (Sailor's) Memorial downtown. Use of the theatre is free and they do a first class job in setting things up. That's where Diffie's retirement was held. The setting is ideal and the service runs relatively smoothly even amidst the tourists. Of course, what naval service ceremony wouldn't be without its minor glitches? In Craig's case, it was humorous one. As Al Baker was giving his closing prayer, "Taps" started playing over the speaker system instead of "Eternal Father." We all wondered if the staff knew something we didn't or whether that was a comment on



The '78 Gang at Diffie's retirement



Good Times Ten at Diffie's retirement



20th Reunion—Barb and Jon Sears, Terri and Chris Slack, Kim and Jeff Ewin

Craig's career to date! They quickly corrected things and started the right tune. You'd have been proud of Al Baker. He never missed a beat. He stretched out the prayer to match the timing. It was a good thing they finally got things in sync because Al was running out of stuff on which to be thankful and ask Divine blessings—"and Lord, look favorably on the diggers and fillers who presented us with obstacles during our years at the Academy; challenging us to hone our inventive skills on navigating our way from Crabtown after late nights at FOBs..." In closing his email, Al mentioned that he recently ran across his old WRNV master tape when he was tossing out some trash. He played it for his daughters. After about thirty seconds of listening, the girls asked him who the nerd was speaking on the tape. He was a little embarrassed to tell them it was dad—at a time in his life when he thought he was pretty cool. Al, just be grateful you didn't show them the pictures too! "Oh well," as Al wrote, "life goes on."



Sean Coffey at his Change of Command



The Pearce family at Kitty Hawk, NC



The Atkinson family showing their Navy style



Carl Jenson, Marina '03 and Jack Fernandez and Jim Carr



Brian McCormack, Jeff Ewin, Mike Fralen and Jay Deloach



Debbie and Kevin Ryah and the Ewins

As for that aforementioned email list, recently Al tried to update it. In the process he lost sync with **Tom Whitehouse** and **Bill Countryman**. If anyone has a beat on them, pass it on to Al. For recent news from his 10th Co. gang here it is: Karen, **Bill Yeager's** wife, wrote that Bill has already reported to Japan. She and Matt will join him sometime this summer, depending on where Andrew decides to attend College. On 1 December, Cammy and **Loren Divers** had their first child, a daughter they have named Soho Leona Divers. Loren reported, "She was 8 pounds 6 ounces, 19.5 inches long; very forgiving; doesn't cry much; has gas; peeps at us through cute 'Hong Kong' style eyes; has hair like Vince Balderrama." (No, that doesn't mean she has a balding spot on the top!) Once he figures out the way of photo scans, he'll be sending out some pics. He invites everyone out to "Babysit...er...visit any time you're in Honolulu."

**John Curtis** lives out in El Cajon, CA. He had been in a Pentagon job for four years. Actually, the last two were spent in a Crystal City office just

across the street from Peach (**Paul Peitsch**) not that they used to see each other very much. John has become an "acquisition professional" and works at SpaWar as the Deputy Program Manager for the Advanced Deployable System (part of the IUSS world). Mary and **Al Nugent** live in Chula Vista, CA. Susan and **Chip Walston** live in Honolulu. (Hey, Loren, babysitters!) **Jim Herberg** and his family live in Pacific Grove, CA. **Joe Martin** is in Fairfax, VA. And Wendy and **Terry O'Brien** are in nearby Burke, VA. Thanks for all the news, Al. Let's hear from the other companies too!

In other Army-Navy game action, **Dave "Flip" Wilson** (Dave.Wilson@Jacobs.com) wrote that the Navy and Army Tampa Alumni Chapters went halves and rented the Club Level of Raymond James Stadium (home as Flip claims, of the "Super Bowl bound Bucs!"). They had a 25-foot screen, about 50 smaller TVs, big buffet and bar. (It was a cash bar in this politically correct age.) There were about 300 or so friends and foes. While in line for some pre-game snacks, Dave spied a Navy '78 nametag on a woman standing in line next to me. Turns out she was Carin, **Jack Fernandez's** wife. The two families spent the rest of the game together. They enjoyed Navy opening a can of "whup-\*\*\*" and reveled in explaining to the Woop alumni that a bad call isn't really a bad call if it goes in Navy's favor.

Dave was recently in P'cola gathering intel around the air station in support of his company's (Jacobs Engineering) proposal to win some of the base ops outsourcing jobs. He finds it ironic that a surface nuke might have an opportunity to straighten out those airdales. After two years on CARL VINSON, he can even talk with his hands. ("There I was, EOOW in Main Control...")

By contrast, **John Sturges** spent his Army-Navy game time in Bahrain for an exercise. Thankfully the exercise included some Army guys. So there was someone to pick on as Navy progressed. They watched the game at the "less than robust O'Club." There, about 50 guys formed around a 19-inch TV. There were beers and pizza, so they did have that going for them. Sturge said they had a great time. Just like the gang in Tampa, Sturge didn't see any bad calls either. (That didn't stop Army from whining about it though.) In the end, it was proved again that *any* Army loss is a good thing.

**Jon Kutler** (jkutler@qtrdeck.com) "cc'ed" me on an email to **Pat Curtis**. Jon was convinced that I'd cull some news out of it. Here's what I picked up (I hope I haven't put any SECRETNOFORN stuff.) As Jon wrote:

**Herb Jensen** is now living in Ochlocknee, GA. Don't ask me where that is. He's running a plant for a company called Oil Dri. Bert's email is lfbert@aol.com. Herb has two kids, Bryan and Kirsten. Bryan, their oldest, is the same age as my youngest, Brendan. I also have a ten-year-old daughter, Caroline. It's clear that Herb and I started later than you did on the kid front. Actually, Caroline is the one that pushed me into writing this. She grabbed the *Shipmate* out of the mail pile on the kitchen table, turned to '78 and asked why she didn't know anyone. Between my wife, Sara, daughter, Caroline, and assistant at the office, my life is clearly run by the women in my life. **John Anderson** is also a member of the "kids late in life" club. John is XO of the NROTC unit at George Washington (janders@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu). John and Sarah have a two-year-old son, Sean, and another on the way! I'm still in LA. Thankfully I'm traveling a lot less lately and, like what Gail described as your current desk life, am trying to spend more time with the kids. I've probably gone too far in the other direction. You know you're slowing down too much when your wife keeps saying, "Don't you have to go to the office?" What a switch.

Vote for Trustees.  
Ballot in this issue.

Thanks for the info, Jon. Sorry it took a little while to get in a column.

Some of you may have read about Navy's new 'dant—**Sam Locklear '77**. Well, '78 has our own 'dant too. I got an email from our Brigade Commander **Art Athens** (AthensAJ@compuserve.com). After serving the past five years as the executive director of Officers' Christian Fellowship for the past five years Art sensed that his mission with OCF had been completed and that a new opportunity would present itself in the near future. Well it did. This January, Art traded in his LtCol USMC Reserve commission for a commission as a captain in the United States Maritime Service. He then assumed responsibilities as the Commandant of Midshipmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. Once again he's wearing those all-too-familiar uniforms like service dress blues, khakis, and summer whites. Art feels as if he has prepared his whole life for this chance to invest in the lives of young men and women at a federal service academy. He says his only struggle will come in the near future when someone uses the term, "the Academy," and he has to discern which one they mean! The rest of the Athens household is doing very well and working on their Long Island accents! By the way, another former Marine (general) and USNA grad, is now a U.S. Maritime Service Admiral and is the Superintendent of Kings Point, **Joe Stewart '64**. Between he and Art, I guess Kings Point may have to drop the word Merchant from their title now!

Having read the December issue, I noted that it was '79's Class Secretary's last column. In closing, I wanted to say I'm gonna miss that guy who used to write the column after ours. You know the guy who once in a while traded friendly barbs with me—my fellow scribe, fellow Marine, squadron-mate, crew-buddy, godfather to my son, and one of my best friends—**Ken Russell**. KR, you are going to be missed. You humored me and often put a spin in your column that few of us would have dared—but you were always on target! You inspired me to keep up with you and try my hardest not to miss a column; to try to be creative. I just wish we would've taken the time to write that "special" column of ours. Perhaps we'll get that chance in the not-to-distant future. Enjoy the break, relax, recharge.

*Launchin' Spot Four*

# 79

**Annual Membership: 5%**  
**Life Membership: 88%**

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Top o' the mornin' to ye, lads! 'Tis time for the wearin' o' the green, when we think fondly of the old country, the Emerald Isle. Folks in Pensacola, FL, are trying to cram in to McGuire's Irish Pub to kiss the moose and find a bare spot of ceiling, wall, pillar, door or floor, upon which to staple a dollar bill. Revelers in Coronado, CA, are crowding into McP's, celebrating the turning of the "Days To St. Paddy's Day" calendar to zero. In downtown Chicago, the river is green. In Milwaukee, WI, the only place to be is O'Danny's Pub and Pit, owned by our illustrious star athlete **Bob Leszczynski**. (Sec'y: No charge for the plug, Bob, consider it a

gift from one Irishman to another!) At other "respected" establishments in the U.S. and Hong Kong, Americans are celebrating the *Single Most Important Holiday of the Year!* Well, after Army-Navy, but that goes without saying. I am among those fortunate few who are Irish during the other 364 days of the year as well. A couple years ago, my wife gave me a copy of the book *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. I was absolutely amazed: I thought it would be the history of how we invented whiskey, and then went on to drink it all, thereby keeping ourselves from taking over the world. At least that's what my father, the owner of a bar, told me! And the Irish are well known for *never* embellishing, exaggerating or just plain inventing a good story. Now that *that's* settled...On St. Patrick's Day 1984, I found myself underway aboard O'BANNON (DD-987) as part of the Standing Naval Forces Atlantic. The CO's name, I remember, was CDR Callahan. A more Irish ship and wardroom would be difficult to find. Through a heinous plot and grievous miscarriage of justice, we found ourselves underway for the blessed event (SurfLant must have been worried about us taking over the world). Since Navy regulations prohibited a "true" celebration, our Supply Officer thought it would be clever to offer green scrambled eggs at breakfast. Unfortunately, no one noticed the difference...I could wax eloquent regarding the customs of the ancient Celts (no, not Larry Bird and Kevin McHale), but I must tend to business.

We begin this month once again with a word from our Irishman-in-Chief, Class President **Sean Cate** ([stcate@prodigy.net](mailto:stcate@prodigy.net)):

I would like to take this opportunity one final time to thank all of you who came to the Reunion in October and made it a fantastic success. I also want to thank my Classmates who have entrusted me with this Class leadership position for the next five years. I am proud to be associated with each and every one of you.

From time to time I hope to use Wiz's column to pass along Class news from the Academy and Alumni Association perspective. I want to maintain a dialog with the Class through which you can know what your Class is doing to support the Naval Academy. To this end, I solicit your inputs on how our Class may better serve the needs of the school and the needs of our Class. Our Class gift to the Academy is the bridge wing at the Visitor's Center. Is there more that we can do? Suggestions so far have included providing upgrades to the bridge wing and supporting the proposed new soccer facility. Please let me know what ideas you may have and they will be considered by the Class officers. Contact me at [stcate@prodigy.net](mailto:stcate@prodigy.net).

Finally, a current concern at the Academy has to do with recruitment of quality candidates for admission to the Brigade. Our youth today have many choices for education and jobs after college, and thus, a military career may not have the appeal that it once did. At least that is what they may think. Each one of us needs to do his part to dispel that impression. Our country's and our Navy's future demands that we step forward and assist our recruiters by identifying quality youths and selling them on the many tangible and intangible benefits of service in defense of our country. If you know someone who has high-school-aged children that would make quality Midshipmen, take the time to let them know what an Academy education means. Omnes Viri, Sean.

Thanks, Sean! I know it's bad form to correct Numero Uno in public, but I have one small clarification: it's not Wiz's column, it's for the Class. I just have the privilege of writing it. (You can almost sense the forthcoming begging for info, can't you?) Next up is an email that just missed the deadline for my debut column last month. Brought to you direct from the Windy City, here's honorary Irishman **Mike "McKnapp" Knapp**:

Congratulations on your appointment as Class Secretary! You certainly have a tough act to follow given **Ken Russell's** entertaining tenure. Ken, thanks for your time and creativity over the past several years. Mary Ann and I are your biggest and probably your quietest fans. We really appreciate your contribution to our Class.

John, we were so excited to hear of your new Class post, we just had to write in hopes of making it into one of your first few articles. Believe me when I tell you that it had nothing to do with your not so subtle threat to share a number of amusing and totally fictitious anecdotes about the Von Knapp family.

Mary Ann and I have settled in the Chicagoland area where the winters are long and the pizza is thick. The good Lord has blessed Mary Ann and I with four beautiful and fantastic children, Sarah (13), John (12), Daniel (9) and Hannah (7). They inherited all of Mary Ann's best qualities, good looks, great smiles and warm personalities while Daniel inherited my feet and John the instinctual need to sit on a heat vent when the furnace kicks on.

We actually live in the small town of Mundelein, IL, which is halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee. Our civilian walk has taken us from the nuclear industry to an Internet business with a lot of fun in between.

Please pass on that all are welcome if they ever find themselves in this neck of the woods. You of all people know how much fun we can have on a trip, in a van, in the snow, in the ditch.

Thanks, Michael! And you're right about the fun you can have driving through Western Michigan in a lake-effect snowstorm. But you left out the parts about singing "Kumbayah," the college student from India, the "stealth" cell phone conversation, and above all the invitation to do it again! Those of you who spend winters without snow just don't know what you're missing!

I also received a great email from Kate and Irishman-in-training, **Jeff "O'Niner" Niner**. Karen and I had chatted with them quite a bit at the 20th, and they were nice enough to follow up with a note. Jeff spent three of his eight semesters at Canoe U sharing a room with yours truly, and after 20 years, we're just now beginning to speak with each other! (Only kidding!) To escape me, he moved in with his "twin," **Larry Maguire**. Jeff and Larry look so similar that to this day they are addressed by the other's name. Jeff was a great roommate; his parents lived just outside of Baltimore, and I took full advantage of Jeff's invitations to escape from the rigors of life in Mother B. We laughed when the Niners moved from Cockeysville to Monkton, but we always had a good time at their home. Several months ago, Jeff successfully completed his command tour on UNDERWOOD (FFG-36) and transferred to, well, I'll let him tell you:

OK, OK, I've resisted the urge (primal as it is) to write for the Class article for twenty years. Call it false modesty. Oh well, I guess just once won't hurt.

My present job is the Washington placement officer at the Bureau of Personnel. I'd have bet that desk would have been in D.C., but alas, there is some great wisdom, which I cannot and will not question. The job is in Millington, TN. Millington is an interesting place. We are here for approximately two years and that could be flexible based on Major Command Board selection results. Our motto: we go where called (I just wish sometimes we could disconnect the phone). The job itself is tremendous and I get to talk to tons of interesting folks from the D.C. arena without many of the hassles of being there. My working hours are relatively sane compared to other jobs I've done, about a ten-hour workday. I have zero traffic and a one-minute commute to work. Of course, some of the Pentagon folks can brag about that too, but that's only because they *never* go home. They truly have my respect for the hard work they are doing and I just do my best to support.