

I've learned all those things, now I need to gain strength so I can use them. I'm eating full meals for the first time in quite awhile. I can "curl" five pounds—not much, but progress over one pound! It's been quite an experience—the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Your support and prayers would be appreciated; I need everything I can get to keep the fight alive.

I have a wonderful support structure around me—family, church, and work; they have all been unbelievable. I did get a few cards from '77 friends that I have not spoken to in 20 years and that was nice. Feel free to call me at home (540-338-4493).

USI had another good year—\$100M—so we keep growing. I see us going public very soon!

Look forward to hearing back from you and learning about your latest endeavors. Please let JC know what's going on with me, I'd love to hear from him. **Phil Nelson** has been a super friend; he's visited a couple of times at the house and helped out with all the stuff that "Dad's" do on weekends—house maintenance, yard, etc.

JC mentioned he called Tom's wife, Lynn, several weeks ago; unfortunately, Tom's condition has not improved. I'm sure that he would appreciate your calls, cards, and prayers.

Class Communication

Not much new to report in the area of Class communications since last month. Our Class Vice President, **Tom "Soup" Campbell** (Tom.Campbell@longandfoster.com), continues to look for and work with Classmate volunteers from each Company to locate and verify the email addresses of their missing Companymates and provide the updated information to the Alumni Association. You can continue to do your part by keeping your Alumni Association records up-to-date. If you have any questions about this effort, please direct them to Soup. My understanding is that at the end of this effort, Soup will have an up-to-date Class email list that he can then distribute to everyone on the list and we (the Class Officers) can use to get important Class information out to everyone quickly.

Closing Remarks

For those of you who are planning to attend this year's Army-Navy Game at PSINet Stadium in Baltimore, MD, be on the lookout for a '77 helium balloon. We're going to try and fly it somewhere in the parking lot to give Classmates a place to congregate if they desire. That's about all I know about any Class-wide coordination efforts for the game right now. These arrangements may change since the game is almost three months away at the time of this writing (which is why an up-to-date email list would be great to have right now to keep you informed of new developments on a real-time basis). Enough said about that subject.

As a final note, you did a better job with the input this month (we got up to 3,000 words), but we still have a ways to go before we hit the 4,000-word limit. Keep sending me news and stories about your latest exploits; I know there are a lot of people out there who can't wait to find out what you're up to. Until next month, *Beat Army!* —**Bob Sanderson**

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Annual Membership: 20%
Life Membership: 68%

Pres: **Arch Griffin**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**

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Class Web site: <http://usna1978.org>

Whoa campers, the mailbag is filled with tons of stuff! Can you say tons of shtuff? I knew you could. Let's get into it then...

Charlie Love (CLove1978@aol.com) gave a quick update on the Love family. Charlie left Raytheon last year when they relocated the missile business from Lewisville, TX, to Tucson, AZ. He split for philosophical issues—he didn't like the way they'd changed the TI Defense Systems business. He also came to the conclusion that he didn't like the desert—I mean, even your oven at 350° produces a dry heat but you wouldn't want to live in it. Charlie is now at Triton Network Systems in Orlando, FL (ah, a damp heat—but with Mickey Mouse). Charlie was recently named director of materials (purchasing, inventory, supplier management, etc.). It's a good fit for an old SuppO. The company also had a successful IPO as well. The rest of the family, Shelley, Brac (17) and Tye (12) have all adjusted well to Orlando. They live just four miles or so from Disney World. Brac works part-time driving the Jaws boat at Universal. (He must not have inherited Charlie's YP skills.) Charlie's come across **Don Brady**. Don lives in Melbourne but gets to Orlando pretty often. Moreover, Don is a manufacturer's rep for several companies that Triton does business with. Charlie proclaims that it's always good to do business with a Classmate. Look for the Loves around the tailgate party at this year's Navy-Notre Dame game.

Dave Brown (of the 7th Company Browns) came across one of my columns on our Web site and it sparked him to also send an update. It turns out that Dave probably also lives near fellow Classmates, **Jack Fernandez** and **Mike Clendening** in Tampa. Actually, he's in Palm Harbor, which is about 30 minutes northwest of Tampa airport. When Dave moved there two years ago he tried to get the personalized license plate, USNA 78. He found it was already taken—by Mike.

Speaking of small worlds, while on a recent family vacation to Pensacola, Dave and his family went out to the Boardwalk with a couple that had just recently been married (it was a second marriage for each of them). While they were all enjoying the beverages and the breeze, they not only ran into the guy's ex, but his new bride's ex as well (her ex happened to be there with his *new wife* too!). Even more, Jaye (Dave's wife) saw a bunch of her old friends there. They told them Dave and Jaye would probably see someone that Dave knew very soon. Sure enough, about that time **H. Scott Rodgers** walked by! Dave said he called out to Scott using a name that only a few people who really know Scott would use—"H!" That got his attention. They shot the breeze for a bit. It seems that both Scott and Dave are American Airlines captains. In fact, Dave reported that **Matt "Paz" Pasztalaniec** is a recent American Airlines hire. Anyway, if anyone is in Tampa give Dave and Jaye a shout. By the way, Mike and Jack, be on the lookout! Dave says he'll be tracking you, down. Neither of you guys owes him money do you?

Jack Christensen (jilljackchristensen@erols.com) answered the question "What's a body to do when you retire?" As he put it, Jill and he decided he needed a hobby during retirement so the "hobby" they chose is fatherhood. Yup, Jill is pregnant and due in late February. At the time he wrote, Jill was about 12 weeks along and is showing. By December she'll wish Jack had chosen gardening as the hobby. Right now Jack is in the study mode of how to be a good "care provider." He welcomes all pointers and suggestions. Of course he says that he is also rethinking this retirement business. That Navy retirement pay only goes so far with Pampers and future college bills. Good luck!

Jennifer and **Rich Polek** (Richpolek@aol.com) are playing keeping up with the Christensens. Jennifer is pregnant with their second child, due around Thanksgiving. Nadilee will get to be a big sister. Rich started a new job as a project manager at Alstom Power in Richmond. He reports to another grad—**Rob Casey '73**. The **Mark James** family hosted a celebratory dinner for Rich on the new job. He passed on a report from **Ron McNeal's** retirement ceremony held in at Memorial Hall in June. Besides Rich and **Arch Griffin**, also present were Ron's roommates **CAPT Bill Burke** and **Roy Cranford**, as well as Jack Christensen and **Mark Koepke**. Mark is a non-graduating Classmate from 31st Company who went on to obtain his Ph.D. in physics. He's now a professor at the University of West Virginia. During the ceremony, the Academic Dean spoke highly of Ron and Ron gave a personal and touching speech of the people who supported him throughout his career. Best of luck on the retirement, Ron. Don't talk to Jack about hobbies!

Bryan Livingston (livingston33@earthlink.net) sent word that the twins arrived on Thursday morning: Audrey Grace (4 pounds 7 ounces) and Chloe Rose (5 pounds 7 ounces). Everyone, including mom, is doing ok.

Kevin "Grinch" Lynch (USNAGrinch@aol.com) claims the following is no sea story. If you don't believe it, he said you can ask **Eddy Reid** and **Bob Schermund**. They're the ones who told him about it. During the dedication ceremony of our sponsored ship, **PORTER**, Eddy and Bob said that the CO, **Ken Spiro '81**, told them that our Class was great "Firsties." (Okay, so far the story has some credence.) They then asked Ken *which* Firstie had the greatest influence on him and he "ponies up" that it was Kevin—the Grinch! (Now, we're treading in the fictional section. By the way, Ken Spiro was in 26th Company with Grinch.) Well, Ken's comment got a flabbergasted (We're back to reality.) "Why?!" from Schermund, Eddy and even **Arch Griffin** and **Dwarf (Chris Nichols)**. Ken Spiro explained the reason was... "Cause he never sweat the system... was funny and a great guy." (Ummmm, that makes it sound reasonable.) You see, Grinches goal, as **John Sturges** so articulately put it one day, was to "make friends and influence people." Additionally, comic relief was one of his objectives to provide to the down trodden in the Plebe ranks. Consider it Grinches form of "Farm Aid"—comedy with a military twist. Grinch opined that Spiro must have been one Plebe who grasped his "concept" because if Ken learned anything from him it was how to entertain (which he did magnificently for his '78 firsties). Here's an example of a typical exchange between MIDN 1/C Grinch and Plebe Spiro: *Grinch*: "Spiro what the hell are you doing?" *Spiro*: "I'm bracing up Sir!" *Grinch*: "Who told you to do that?" *Spiro*: "Midshipman First Class O'Keefe Sir." *Grinch*: "Well stop doing it you're making my neck hurt!" Wow, déjà vu—I had a flashback with that

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story. Thanks for the walk down memory lane, Grinch. You tested our senses of reality but in the end I guess we believe. After all, it *does* sound like the Grinch we know!

George Tyree (TGeorge678@aol.com) sent some photos from Parent's Weekend. If I have any luck with the file you'll see a picture here. If not, I'll get a computer expert (my 14-year-old kid's classmate) to work it out. George isn't among those who had to suffer trying to get through the phone line at Ticketron for Army-Navy tickets. (Sold out in five minutes!) He already put out his order for the Parents Section seats. He hopes his trial schedule will allow him to go to the game for a change, for once! George's Plebe son, **Michael Tyree '04**, bumped into **Rich Holzknicht** at the Academy recently. Rich gave Michael one of his business cards that indicated Rich is the Naval Attaché for Air at the Embassy in Tel Aviv. George heard that Rich and his wife might have a new baby (which should be their first). How about a confirmation, Rich? By the way, we have a call on **Kevin White's** Plebe son's first name is the same as his dad's—no not *that one*—**Kevin White '04**! We also got confirmation that **Jock Maloney's** son, **Chris Maloney '04**, is a Plebe in Good Times Ten and is a QB on the JV football team. Good luck to all of '78's Pleberats (former rugrats now Plebes) and continued good luck to the rest of our sons and daughters working their way through the halls of Mother B. It's not as hard as you think it is—when you look *back*.

Charlie Pangburn (CPangburn@hemmerlaw.com) reports that all is going well on his homefront. His daughter, Kim, is now a senior at Georgetown College (the one in Kentucky). So far, she has maintained a 4.0 GPA. She intends to go to grad school and eventually get a Ph.D., which Charlie says is proof she didn't get her smarts from dad. His son, Chas, is doing equally well and is now an eighth grader. A little over a year ago, Charlie and four of his partners left the firm Taft, Stettinius & Hollister and started their own law firm (Hemmer, Spoor, Pangburn, DeFrank & Kasson PLLC in Fort Mitchell, KY). They've done well and now have a Cincinnati and a Northern Kentucky office and 11 attorneys. Charlie is still active in the Marine Corps Reserve. This April he gave up command of MWCS-48, headquartered in Chicago. He now drills with an IMA unit at the Pentagon. Charlie picked up colonel on the Reserve promotion list along with **Chris Dougherty**, **Kevin Carmody**, **Greg Bauer** and **Art Athens**. Charlie's reserve boss found justification to have him frocked, so he was wearing the eagles but not getting the pay. By now he should have the paycheck. During his active duty at the Pentagon this summer Charlie saw **Ron Brownley** and **Dan Barnd**. Ron lives across the Bay from Annapolis. He and Vicki have two daughters, one of whom (Holly) is a senior in high school and may be considering the Academy. Ron's a captain with American Airlines and flies out of Reagan (National) Airport. Dan is stationed at the Pentagon. Prior to that Dan completed a year as one of the first commandants of the Marine Corps Fellows. Charlie said he *just missed Tom Algeo*. Tom owns a law firm and a development business outside Philadelphia.

Ray Bracy (Raymond.Bracy@PSS.Boeing.com) is back from China. Responded to little email of mine chiding him for being out of touch with his Class scribe. He sent the following:

My family and I are indeed now in the D.C. area. In fact, we relocated very recently to a new home in the Oakton area. In fact the moving van just left this week past. (As a footnote, we live on Navy Drive and my children attend Navy Elemen-

tary. Really!) My current assignment in Boeing is to oversee and coordinate all issues as they relate to our government and to international political environments. Examples are: regulatory issues, safety issues, international trade matters (Permanent Normal Trade Relations for China), international sales support and international export finance. It is a particularly broad and undefined area—a new job created in our D.C. office—and I am learning to be diplomatically and politically astute. As for my last assignment in China, my official title was President, Boeing China Inc. It was a terrific experience, both professionally and personally...this was a "plum" assignment...as a manager and businessperson, I had a degree of autonomy that does not typically exist when you work for a big company. The family really prospered while we were in China. My wife, Evonne, learned to communicate quite well and contributed to the economy with her shopping forays with her many expatriate friends. The local antique, jewelry, carpet, pottery and artwork merchants probably grieved at the Bracy's departure! Our children (Dale, 10, and 7-year-old triplets Nathan, Clara and Eric) also adjusted well to the new environment. The triplets were a bit of a sensation because China has a one-child policy! Their school was great—52 nationalities represented in the student body. They got a real global experience in a formal way but also informally as the family traveled to Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong and inside China. My wife and I have a good deal of family in the immediate area so there is a real blessing in this assignment. Moreover, the proximity to USNA is a real treasure for me. The family already went to the first home game and my son attended a summer soccer camp on the Academy grounds.

Ray will be plugging into the '78 activities in the area so save him a space by keg at the tailgaters.

In the category of boy-look-what-I-found-when-we-cleaned-off-the-pile-of-papers-on-the-desk are a couple of letters and photos. The first is from **Jim Pointer**. Jim was elected this year to be the president of the Montgomery Area Licensed Psychologists. This past year has been a busy one for Jim. Besides working as a psychology director at Greil Memorial State Psychiatric Hospital in Montgomery, he serves on the executive council of the Alabama Psychological Associations, its legislative committee and as a liaison to the psychological licensing board. He became board certified this year in Clinical Psychology. That all means he's got enough sheepskins to say we're all nuts—(of course in today's PC world, I'm not nuts. I have "Reality Issues.") That reminds me of the joke about the doctor who took his mental patients to the baseball game...oops, that's not one I can tell here. (Laugh if you know it anyway.) Jim got a chance to visit with **Bill Martin** and **Drew Nienhaus** at Billy's house in P'cola. You've all read about Billy and his son, Sean, in one of my recent columns. Drew works at the Chief of Naval Reserve Headquarters. He and Jan's boys are already in college in Louisiana. It was rumored that this summer Drew may be a geographic bachelor. He had orders for San Diego. Jan was staying in Louisiana to be near the boys. Of course, as Jim put it, when she visits Drew in San Diego and sees all the dental floss-thin thong bikini wearing beach bunnies living around there she may just figure it's better to be near the big boy!

Well that closes it up for the month. There is another ten pounds more of news that I can't squeeze into this five-pound bag. It'll have to wait until next month. In the meantime, Happy Birthday to all my fellow Marines—the Men's Department of the Department of the Navy! (I just couldn't resist. I'm a second-generation grunt Neanderthal at heart.) Adios! Launchin' Spot Four.



Jim, Drew, and Billy and Sean Martin



36th Company at the 20th Reunion

79

Annual Membership: 5%
Life Membership: 88%

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Greetings, '79!

You know, I was sitting here poised (well, slouched) at the keyboard, ready to type out a "bang-up" opening for this month's column. I mean, come on! November? How hard can it be to write something appropriate for November? The entire month can be devoted to the theme of gratitude. We take a day to give thanks to our Creator for all of life's blessings. We take a day to say thanks to all those who have served the greatest country on this earth, and to all their families for putting up with the trials that that choice brings with it. November is a time given to thoughts of family and friends, as we ready ourselves for the big upcoming holiday season. Add such topics as Navy football and the presidential election, and I have a nearly inexhaustible list of things to discuss.

So with all this, what is the first thing that pops into my mind? Cigars. Or rather this story about cigars that arrived in my email traffic last week. I'm usually suspicious of emailed stories, because there are just so many hoaxes out there (like a five-cents-per-email tax and the Nieman Marcus \$250 cookie recipe, to name a couple). Yet some, like a lot of the "Darwin Awards" out there, are just funny enough that people *want* them to be true, even if we know they probably aren't. So I make no claim whatsoever to the authenticity of this, but I find it humorous nonetheless. As my father (the Irish bar owner) used to say, "Never let the facts get in the way of a good story!"

It seems that this gentleman bought a case of very expensive cigars, so expensive that he insured them against (ahem) fire. Like many cigar owners, he smoked them, and after the last one was gone, he submitted a claim against the insurance company, saying he had lost them in "small fires." The insurance company, you might expect, didn't buy that one and, after the man sued for payment, they