



'77 Classmates and their children unexpectedly meet in Houston, l to r: Steve Young, Paul Ring, Michael Ring, Connor Krcha, Cliff Hrcha, Kimberly Krcha, Ben Mulloy, and Rob Mulloy



'77 Classmates at Bill Garland's retirement ceremony: l to r, front row: Bill Daniels, Joe Clements, Bill Garland Robin Mickle, and Fred Kinkin; l to r, middle row: Dan McCarthy, Rich Snead, and Julius Caesar; l to r, back row: Dave Harding and Dan Beach

Daniels, Bill Garland, Dave Harding, Mike Kapsch, Bob Kautter, Joe Kernan, Fred Kinkin, Dan McCarthy, Robin Mickle, Jerry Miller, Jim Miller, and Rich Snead), including five who are still on active duty and five from 23rd Company. Bill reports that, "The ceremony was memorable, but the party afterwards and the golf outing at TPC the next day were really a great time." Bill plans on residing in the Virginia Beach area with his wife, Mary Anne, and their children, Billy and Jeanna, and encourages everyone to give them a call if you're in the area.

One last item. It seems that while digging through some "old stuff" recently, **Bob Vogel** (Robert.vogel@1977.usna.com) discovered a long lost photo from June Week '77 and thought he might share it with us. If I say so myself, I don't think that the three of us ever looked better. Needless to say, I still keep in touch with Bob after all these years, but neither of us have any idea what happened to **Steve Lessard**, so if anyone knows his whereabouts, please drop me a line.



June Week '77 photo op, l to r: Bob Sanderson, Steve Lessard, and Bob Vogel

Class Communication

For those of you who haven't checked-out the USNA Alumni Association web site lately (usna.com), you may want to surf on over and see the recent changes that have been made to it. One of the "improvements" that I thought you might enjoy is the greater usability that's now provided to those of you whose sight is not what it used to be. Instead of using a fixed font size, the redesign now allows for the user to adjust the font size through a browser setting. Additionally,

Internet Explorer users have an option at the bottom of the navigation bar that allows them to magnify everything on the page. Clicking once makes everything on the page larger; clicking a second time makes everything very large.

While you're figuring out which font size works best for you, you may also want to take care of some housekeeping tasks like making sure that your current profile is up-to-date, signing-up for a lifetime USNA email address, and reviewing the Class of '77 message board to see what's going on out there. Hope you enjoy the changes and let the Alumni Association know what you think about them.

Closing Remarks

Another summer has come and gone in Annapolis (as well as all of the summer tourists), the Brigade has returned once again, and the academic year has started in earnest. I hope we get a chance to cross paths in Annapolis this fall if you're in the area. In the meantime, keep the faith and Go Navy! —**Bob Sanderson**

78

Annual Membership: 3%
Life Membership: 73%

Acting Pres: **Bob Novak**
Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**
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Well, it's finally arrived. This month marks our 25th Reunion! Shortly after this *Shipmate* edition hits your mail boxes, we'll be gathering together showing old pictures, remarking on how much we've changed—and how in many respects—commenting on how little we have changed. We'll be telling sea stories that are even more embellished since we last told them five years ago—but still freshly embarrassing

for our spouses and children near enough to hear us recount them for their "millionth time" (but they'll still be fresh and funny to Classmates).

On 30 May, **Gary "Nils" Lovgren** retired from the Naval Reserve in a beautiful ceremony in Memorial Hall. A reception followed in Smoke Hall. Present from '78 were fellow 11th Companymates, **Scott Laser**, **Bart Buechner**, **George Billy**, and yours truly. Also on hand were Classmates, **Tim Stark** and **Drew Nienhaus**, as well as **Wes Johnson '77** (11). As a special treat, both Holly and Gary's sons were also in attendance and in uniform. Their oldest, Midshipman Andrew was allowed to take leave from the Merchant Marine Academy in order to make the ceremony (it helped to have a Classmate in charge). Their other son, National Guardsman Matthew, was able to delay reporting to basic training just to be there. Speaking for both of them, Andrew gave a tribute to his dad. In it, he expounded on the lessons he and Matt learned from the examples Gary set—chief among them was always finding some way in his busy career to make the family the priority, to have that family dinner together. Gary passed on his Navy officer's sword to Andrew and Matt got the bible Gary had gotten upon graduation. It was a touching moment and a proud one for Holly and Gary. The day marked the end of a long career for Gary that started out as being the youngest Plebe sworn in with our Class on that hot July afternoon; then came commissioning, NFO Wings (flying on E-2Cs) and then, due to medical reasons, a transition to the supply corps. As a "pork chop" Gary had active duty tours on MOUNT WHITNEY and FARRAGUT. Then came a first Reserve tour with the Military Sealift Command followed by pickup as a TAR. That sent him (and the rest of the Lovgren family) to NAS Lemoore, San Francisco, War College, Fort Belvoir, Norfolk, and Jacksonville and finally, Naval Supply Center Systems Command Headquarters. Life after the Navy is already set, Gary will be teaching in their hometown of North Conway, NH. Throughout it all, Gary has always had a smile on his face. In fact, that's his trademark. But he couldn't have been beaming any larger than he was on that warm May afternoon—satisfied with almost 30 years of honorable service to the nation (as a Mid and an officer), optimistic for a new challenge before him, surrounded by friends and Classmates, his two fine young sons, and content with Holly, as always, by his side. It doesn't get any better than that.



Gary Lovgren



Wes Johnson '77 and another guest



'78 at Gary's retirement

Buck Connally (buckaruu@aol.com) found a solution to the need to be repeatedly responding to the question, "So what have you been up to?" He simply published for his Companymates, his last family Christmas newsletter and work biography. Here's what I culled from both lengthy documents. Buck retired from the Navy Reserve in 2000. His active duty black shoe career saw him first aboard LANG (FF-1060), a seamanship instructor and Third Company officer at the Academy. Then he had a department head tour as weapons officer aboard STEIN (FF-1065). His last active duty was at the Navy Tactical interoperability support activity as the C4I systems standards configuration management branch head. His retirement from the Reserve was as the tactics instructor and war gaming director for the Tactical Training Group Pacific where he provided support to the command and control division of the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, San Diego, CA. Right now Buck is the interoperability branch head for the systems engineering and integration support division at MCTSSA. He manages those personnel involved in the configuration management of interoperability standards and interoperability testing certification boards. He acts as the Marine Corps representative to various Joint and NATO groups and boards that work to improve information interoperability of all C4I systems. Buck was selected at work to go back to school for a master's degree. Now he's on a two-year program to get the degree. Wow, from black shoe to combat boots, Bucks had quite the career. As for the family side of life, he and Kathy have four kids: Sean (22), Meghan (20), Ryan (17), and Kevin (15). It's a busy home life as he coached Kevin last year in a youth baseball league and even played a little himself on his own baseball team when he could. He was the booster club president for Sean's college lacrosse team. From his description, it wasn't your stereotypical lax team (or any team for that matter). Imagine having a non-swearing, non-drinking, and praying team around. Needless to say they gained quite a bit of notice and respect. Actually, the league leadership noticed and praised their conduct at the league meeting this past fall (Sean's a senior at Biola University but because of transferring in his junior year he has a couple more semesters to finish up. Meghan joined Sean this year at Biola. After finishing a year at the JC there in San Diego she transferred as a sophomore). Kathy continues to work at the elementary school. Buck says she runs a tight ship in the computer lab and really enjoys the kids. He notes it's funny how every kid in Wal-Mart seems to know her and the little ones want to hug her leg...sometimes the faces of the parents are classic! As for the kids, Sean likely spent the summer again as counselor at a church

camp up near Santa Cruz. Meghan is majoring in communications and focused on sound engineering. She hopes to find a niche in the Christian music business. She took up the guitar this summer, so now the whole family plays some kind of instrument. Buck's soliciting names for a family band. Anybody have any suggestions? Ryan's football team won the championship for San Diego CIF Section. For those of you unfamiliar with the size of California interscholastic sports, that equates to a state championship in many other states. It was the school's first championship in 37 years. He's been accepted at Liberty University in Virginia. But as this comes to print we don't know if something else hadn't caught his interest. Kevin may be the youngest of the Connally clan but at 6'1" and 220 pounds he is officially the family giant now. With that size it's hard to convince high school coaches to let you play running back instead of making the holes—perhaps this year. Well that's the *Cliff Notes* version of Buck's stuff, but I still think he'll be answering a lot of questions. See you at the Reunion!

A quick note came from **Andy Mohler** (Mohlerra@cs.com) down at NavAir Orlando Training Systems Division (where he is the CO and **Larry McCracken** is his XO) reported a "drive by" visit from another '78 Classmate—Andy's 18th Company Plebe roomie, **Ray Milton**. Ray is a GS working for Puget shipyard on the logistics aspects of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Andy says that NavAir Orlando is live now with the SAP version of ERP and it continues to challenge them. As you can see from the photo in Andy's boardroom, they had to result to adult beverages in order to make any sense out of it.



Larry, Ray, and Andy

Eddie Reid (ERNetworks@comcast.net) wrote of a trip he and his wife, Jane, took back to the "mother country"—Ireland. While there, they visited their niece, (Maggie and Bob Fallon's daughter) ENS Keely Fallon, on board LEYTE GULF. It was Keely's first deployment of her new naval career. Jane, Eddie, and Keely's brother, Bobby Fallon (UPenn 2005) joined Keely for a reception on the helo deck as the ship was in port at Cobh (Gaelic for COVE) County Cork Ireland Reception. Security kept the reception small but hundreds of Irish well-wishers showed up later at the local bar called—no kidding—"The Titanic." Cobh was *the*

TITANTIC's last port of call and Eddie noted that they ironically served all drinks with "plenty of ice." The local Irish blues singer played nothing but American Southern greats; so much in fact that they nicknamed him "Marvin Gaelic!" The night ended with a rousing chorus of "Bye Bye Miss American Pie" (which evidently the guitar player had spent weeks learning in honor of the "secret American warship visit"). Eddie also noted that one of the pub-locales questioned the Yanks, "JMJ—What kind of Rowdy's are ya?" as they had been having way too much fun! Eddie says if you look *really hard* in the group photo you may just be able to spot **Sean Coffey** three miles away. (Sean was also in Ireland at the time.) As for Keely, she can still plays hoop and hopes for that rematch with Jock and me. As for her other Fallon twin, ENS Lauren, she was in Poland and Germany.



Eddie and Jane Reid



Reception onboard LEYTE GULF



Class punishment—Irish style

Brent Obenour (obenourb@cox.net) is working on the Pentagon Renovation Program and has been for five years. He's the information manager for the project and takes care of the nearly 700 government and civilian workers on the project with regards to their computing requirements. He ended up here at the suggestion of his old roommate from 33rd Company, **Dan Holoubek**. Dan's been there more than six years and is heavily involved in the hardening of the IT infrastructure to the Pentagon as a result of the post September 11th vulnerability studies. They both work for Sytex, Inc. and have found it a remarkable program and a pleasure to work on. Besides good employment, another side benefit to the job was Brent finding his lovely wife, Ellen Suarez. Next month, 4 October to be exact, they will celebrate their fourth year of marriage. They live in Falls Church, VA, only 15 minutes from work. Brent still participates in the Naval Reserve and is a certified chief inspector for conducting explosive safety inspections at the major naval installations around the world. He says it's good work, with a real mission, and some interesting travel. After a nearly 20-year break from any competitive shooting, he started



Go '78! Happy 25th

again about four years ago. This spring he participated in the Atlantic Fleet and All Navy matches in Dam Neck, VA. He says he did "pretty well." Well he actually did "damn well" and proved himself to still be a dead-eye shot, as he came in first in pistol and rifle winning the whole thing!

I attended Blue & Gold officer training up at Newport in June. Our Class dominated the attendees, as along with me were **John Kovalcik**, **Dave Williams**, and **Kevin Liddy**. John is the president of a consulting company called Intepros, Dave is the dean of students at the Naval War College, and Kevin is an economist with IBM. After the training session we tried to link up with **Kevin "Grinch" Lynch** but he was doing husband penance and in the middle of working off a lot of "honey-do's" that piled while he was away from home for a week (to include his playing in the annual Dog Callas golf tournament). We did link up with Classmate and NAPS CO, **Bruce "Baja" Bole** for lunch, beer, and sea stories. He kept us in stitches so be forewarned—he's warmed up for the tailgater and reunion.

In a show of "we're not getting older but our kids are" here's a photo of Kevin and his two daughters, Carrie (the younger) and Ashley. As you can see they got mom's looks so Kevin's probably gonna need some shooting lessons from Brent to help him fend off questionable boys and future suitors. All I can say is, I'm glad I have a son and don't have the worry.



Kevin Liddy and his girls, Carrie and Ashley

Well that's it for now. See you at the reunion and remember if you see a Classmate at the bar to "roll 'em over so the brass buttons don't show!" In closing here's a photo I came across of Navy cheerleaders, circa '77. If you turn up the volume, you'll hear them cheering for us!

(Recognize—**John Gardner** and **Tim Sprague** up front? **John Casey** was injured that day) Launchin' Spot Four for the Annapolis and our 25th Reunion!

79

Annual Membership: 1%
Life Membership: 89%

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

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

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Greetings, '79!

Sir, you now have 365 days until 25th Reunion formation. Uniform for 25th Reunion is '79 Party, wear Reefers, carry rain gear, stripers carry swords. Menu for 25th Reunion is:

Grilled commodore steak with "Beat Vandy" sauce

Z-burgers

Hot dogs and Texas sauce

French fried potatoes

Sliced lettuce and tomato wedgies

Tater tots

Adult beverages of all kinds

More adult beverages

Iced tea with lemon wedges, milk

The officers of the watch are: The officer of the watch is...

Well, it's begun! The official countdown for *Class of 1979 Gala 25th Reunion Extravaganza* has started this month. As soon as you purchase your calendars for the year 2004 (you can find them in bookstores today!), open them up and circle the dates of 23-27 September. This has the potential for being the most-attended reunion in the history of our Class, and it's something you definitely don't want to miss! Each month I'll be providing as much new information as I can. Or you can always go to the Class web site, www.usna79.com, for the most up-to-date information available. **Colin O'Neill** is doing a fantastic job as webmaster of the site, and the reunion committee will be providing him regular updates. There will also be individual mailings, both electronically and snail mail.

One quick point of emphasis: this reunion is for *all* members of the Class of 1979, graduates and non-graduates, families, and friends. The goal is to gather as many of us who took our first oath in T-Court on that hot July day in 1975 as possible. It's not going to get any better than this one!

Now to the important stuff: the **Names of Bold**. I feel as though I should be writing this particular column for TROA rather for *Shipmate*. I know, TROA (The Retired Officer Association) recently changed its name to

MOAA (Military Officer Association of America). In this case, however, the old name is more appropriate, because I've recently received a spate of retirement announcements. For example, when the news broke about **Artie Johnson's** and **Ray Spicer's** flag selections, I heard from former Squadronmate **Tom Herrmann** (therrmann@att.net), who included this tidbit:

Yeah, Wiz, heard about it this weekend. Great news for 17th Company. Ray deserves it all the way.

Hope all is well with you. Looks like retirement is in the cards for me this fall. Looking to have a ceremony on CONSTITUTION in Boston with a couple Reservist buds of mine. It's been a fun ride which I will certainly miss.

Take care. I've attached a pic of the gang (minus Betsy) from '02 Army-Navy day in Nashville. This is also the day we always get our Christmas tree, every year.



Tom Hermann and brood

Hey, congratulations, Tom! I really admire all you guys who completed a career in the Reserve along with holding down full time jobs. A couple of summers ago, I attended the decommissioning ceremony for HSL-84, the last squadron to fly the SH-2G "Awesome Sea Sprite." The guest speaker (an admiral in the Reserve) discussed the importance of having balance in one's life. And for the Naval Reservist, "balance" is defined as having your spouse, employer, and Navy immediate boss equally (bleeped) at you! That was the only part of his talk I can remember. Anyway, Betsy and the kids now only have to compete with your employer. Enjoy your "retirement."

On the heels of Tom's email came an announcement from **Tom "Croc" Joyce**, announcing his retirement last April at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC. At the time of his retirement, Tom was working as the deputy, Naval Aviation Plans and Requirements on the CNO's staff. I didn't hear what his immediate plans are, but I'll pass them on when he writes next.

Also exchanging Navy blues for civilian togs is **Al Drake**, who writes:

'79ers: I am retiring effective 1 August. I am having a retirement ceremony here at National Naval Medical Center this Friday, 27 June, at 9:30 a.m. in our Memorial Auditorium, with reception immediately afterwards in the Building One (tower) Pride of Place area on the fifth deck. All are invited. My apologies for not getting out formal announcements/invitations: office here was very late getting them in and I was away TAD when they finally arrived. Just returned today.

After retirement, I will be at ECU School of Medicine in the endocrinology section, in Greenville, NC, teaching and seeing patients and attempting to do a bit of clinical research. My home address as of 1 July will be: 103 Pinecrest Dr., Farmville, NC 27828; 252-753-5537. (We are a convenient stop on the way to the southern half of the NC beaches...and always enjoy having visitors.)

And finally (for the retirement announcements, anyway), there's this announcement from **Bob Huddleston** (bobhuddleston@cox.net):