

missed anyone, please correct me), thanks for protecting our freedom. God Bless you and your families. Go Navy and Semper fi, Cork. ■

Dave Williams (williamsdt@hotmail.com) had these words to add to the Skater communications:

I'm still geo-bacheloring it in London, CT. Karen and the boys come over in June to live after the eldest completes High School this year in Maryland. I'm enjoying my job here working for NAVSECGRUEUR. Good chance we will be moving the whole HQ to Naples in summer '05. Working for the Navy (Cryptology Fleet guys) as a civilian has been great. Certainly different from Acquisition work at NAVAIR. ■

And finally, Ben Stein (SteinBM@mfr.usmc.mil) had this to say about himself:

As for the Steins, I will wrap up my time here at NTC Great Lakes in a couple weeks and then head back to Denver. Getting geared up to PCS everything and everyone back to Denver. On balance have enjoyed the period of active duty but ready to get back to our "real life." Louis and Ethan are growing like crazy, though still smaller than average for their age, talking up a storm and running us ragged. Their favorite activity seems to be jumping up and down on me which is fine for now, but another couple of pounds and they will start breaking ribs (mine). Susan had some health problems, but it looks as though they have pretty much cleared up which is great. Best of all, Tricare and the military really did a good job, I think, with her care.

Have found a new job working as an audit manager for the State Auditor. Perhaps not the most glamorous job in the world, but gets me back to Denver and off the unemployment line. Since I am not a CPA, I will not be doing financial audits, instead I will be mostly doing performance audits. This means looking at programs to see how or if they can be run better or less expensively. Actually has the potential to be quite interesting and once in a while, I may

even manage to accomplish something. This is a career position rather than a political appointment, so I do not have to worry the fact that the Treasurer is term limited and out in 2006. ■

And last, but by no means least, here's a short note from Paul McMahon (Mcmitaly@aol.com) on his pending (or possibly completed by now) retirement:

Hard to believe how time flies. My retirement is fast approaching—faster than I expected. In Navy tradition we will be having a change of command and retirement ceremony here in Charleston on Tuesday, 13 July 2004. And no, Pat and I haven't a clue what we're doing yet, but Charleston has grown on us and who knows . . . ■

Class Communication

According to a very reliable source (a.k.a., Rick White), we now have 2 more flags in the Class of '77. Our congratulations go out to Mark "Skins" Skinner (skin-nerm@erols.com) and Joe Kernan. Bravo Zulu to you both! Should make for a good wetting down party.

Closing Remarks

I think I've run out of words this month. Thanks to everyone for your many submissions, and I hope some of you take the rest of the summer off. 'Till next month, Go Navy!—Bob Sanderson

78 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 3%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 75%

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There are a lot of changes in the Balderrama household. After 15 years at Sikorsky Aircraft, it was time to move on. An opportunity presented itself at Lockheed Martin's Maritime Systems and Sensors unit and I took it. We've already found a house and had our offer accepted. Now on the market, our home in Connecticut is being overrun by prospective buyers under tow by anxious realtors.

Michael graduated from his high school—Hopkins, in New Haven, CT. He picked a couple of awards during the school's prize day. One was from the Arts Department (the Drama Award) and the other from his peers. We knew about the drama prize (They call parents the day before the ceremony so we can attend with our cameras and our parental pride.) but the second award was a surprise to us all. The announcement caught Michael completely unaware! (the student sdon't know until the prizes are read—like the Oscars). It put Elizabeth in tears and taxed my composure too. That award recipient was selected by the student council and is presented to the senior student who over their high school career "had most contributed the benefit of the school and its students". In the fall Michael will head off to Wheaton College, a small private college in Norton, MA. When he goes Elizabeth and I will move our household to Syracuse, NY. In the meantime, I'm a geographic bachelor through the work week. I commute on weekends back to Shelton. It's about a five-hour drive that I'm starting to make practically on auto pilot. I've discovered that **John Semcken's** daughter goes to Syracuse University so he knows he has someone nearby to look out for her if she needs it - not to mention a guest room available for him whenever he visits her. That guestroom is also open for anyone heading out this way. Just drop me a line. The e-mail address stays the same as shown under the column header. Work e-mail is vince.balderrama@lmco.com. Once we close on the house and take occupancy you'll note a change in the address. There are a couple of classmate at here at Lockheed Martin, Syracuse. I work with **Larry Easton** in the Business Development group. His office is just around the corner from mine. If I drilled a hole in the wall I could go right into his spaces. But I won't. Being the FNG I don't think I could get away with it. On the other hand maybe I could. **Mack Duett** is also employed in Syracuse. We're planning on a little lunch gouge session. Well, let's get this ball rolling shall we? — On to the news.

First, here are some short rounds (try and suppress the sandblower comments). A quick congrats goes to **Sam Tangredi**. He was recognized as this year's winner of the Alfred Thayer Mahan Award for Literary Achievement. Sam is the prospective Defense Attaché to Greece.

If any you are around Annapolis on Friday, July 23rd stop by the yard for the Plebe P-Rade. It will be a '78 Recognition P-rade. Many of our flag officer classmates will be in review. Join us.

It's that time of year for moves, changes of command and retirements. **Mark Boensel** relinquished command of NAS Jacksonville on 7 May. A few days before, **Dave Eyler** [eyler5@earthlink.net] relinquished command of Submarine Squadron Four in Groton, CT. *The Day* newspaper noted that "keynote speaker Rear Adm. Joseph A. Walsh, the Commander of Submarine Group Two and Navy Region Northeast, said the true measure of the success of a commodore is not the squadron's staff, but how the ship's perform, and over the last two years under Eyler, Squadron Four has done very well. 'Dave Eyler has met every challenge in this tour with tenacity,' Walsh said, presenting Eyler with his third award of the Legion of Merit." Dave's next tour is at the Naval War College. He'll be commuting from Newport to their home in Groton so their third (and last son) can graduate from high school next May. Their eldest son just graduated from Georgetown. Dave and Nancy's #2 son Mike just wrapped up his sophomore year at Catholic University in DC but he won't be having a summer off. Instead, he'll be sweating in the humidity of a Maryland summer as a new Plebe in the class of '08. As Nancy put it, "the pull of the Academy was too much for him to resist" because he already has those two years of college already under his belt.



Ken Roey finished up his tour at NAVSEA with a retirement ceremony in Memorial Hall on April 14th, in Annapolis. Appropriately, on June 10th, Good Time Ten alum **Steve Petri**, retired at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, in West Bethesda, MD. The next day, June 11th, the Director of Fleet Readiness Division (N43) in the CNO's Office invited folks to attend **Mike Johnston's** retirement. The Ceremony was held at the Navy Memorial in DC. This month **Mike "Duffy" Dyer** (duffster78@msn.com) assumes command of Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni, Japan. He and Lisa were all packed up and ready to ship their stuff from Okinawa to Hawaii. His orders originally had him assigned to Headquarters and Service Battalion at Marine Forces Pacific then they were switched. Fortunately, their household goods had not yet departed the island. (Here's one time where the military household moving inefficiency was a blessing!) So it now looks like Lisa and Duffy will still be saying *konichi-wa* instead of *aloha*.

Looks like '78 continues to take key leadership positions at the Academy. Marla and **Al "Blues" Baker** and their two daughters, Rebekah and Hannah, will be moving onto Captains' Row this summer. Al replaces Luther Alexander as the new senior chaplain at the Academy. He leaves his position as Head of the Chaplain Assignment Branch in Millington, TN so you know the orders are for real. A qualified surface warfare officer before he resigned to study for the ministry, not only will Blues be able to help mids with their spiritual navigation through life but the no kidding grey deck shipboard navigation as well. Al's bleaching out his old whiteworks and dixie cup in anticipation

of the move. Looks like another red alert location for us on Captains' Row!

Got some news on my 11th Company classmates. My roommate, **Tom Crowley**, relinquished command of the USS BOXER on June 21. This month he, Gretchen and the kids will be back in the DC area. Tom's new assignment is at the Surface Warfare Directorate in OPNAV. Our other first class roommate, **Ted Plautz** [t_plautz@hotmail.com], is doing fine in the San Diego area. His daughter Jessica was among this June's graduates at UC Santa Barbara. He hopes she'll also be among the employed graduates in the class of 2004. Back in March **Matt Elias'** (MPGEE@aol.com) roommate **Phil Winters** flew into Dallas and paid him a visit. They took the opportunity to have a "mini-78 reunion" at Uncle Julio's Tex-Mex restaurant in Addison, TX. Matt and Phil were joined by **Andy Cuca** and **Rusty Cone**. Andy lives in Plano, TX and flies for Northwest Airlines. Rusty lives in Allen, TX and is President of Alliance Technologies. Matt said they were very fortunate in their rendezvous because Andy was supposed to be on a trip but then his schedule changed; and Rusty just got back from a business trip and came directly from the airport. The four of them reminisced and commented on the connections and mutual experiences that weaved among them. Of course Phil, Rusty and Matt were all 11th Company Tigers, but Rusty, Andy and Phil also spent first class cruise together in the Mediterranean on the USS Inchon. (There were quite a few stories from that cruise.) The other thread was that Phil and Andy went through flight training together and were stationed in Hawaii for their first tours. Matt closed with the quip we used to write in the logs about "a great time was had by all."



For spouses of Alumni Life Members. For information go to www.usna.com

JOINT MEMBERSHIP

Marilyn and **Scott Langdon** (MS Langdon@aol.com) continue to enjoy their time in Brussels, Belgium. Marilyn wrote that in their commitment to keep the local economies going, they see all that they can and keep their travel schedule full. This summer they're flying to Finland, taking a ferry to the Baltic's, traveling through Switzerland enroute to a shopping trip back in Naples, and in August Scott's father joins them for a journey to Russia. They use their week-ends (when school and work are in session) to explore the regions and events around them. One such event to view every spring is the spectacular tulip gardens in Keukenhof, Holland. During their visit this year they had had a "classmate encounter". After purchasing the admission tickets they proceed through the gate when the Shipmate proximity device went off—walking through the gate next to them were Jill and **Jack Christenson** and their two children. Talk about a small world! (As you read from my last column, Jack is retired from the Navy and is "Mr. Mom" to his and Jill's children at their home in Stuttgart, Germany). This spring they got news that Patti and **Rick Martinez** left Jakarta. Rick's tour of duty finally ended and they were heading for New Zealand. Not a bad way to end your Navy career. Marilyn rightly noted that after several uprisings and Patti and the kids being evacuated more than once, that they were certainly entitled to some peace and quiet. I second that! As for the Langdons, they have one more year in Brussels (July 2005). Like most of you, they have no idea where we're heading next but Scott hopes they like it because Marilyn has no intention of moving again—at least until Erin is out of high school.

Just when I got the Langdon e-mail, **Jack Christenson** sent along one that also recounted the same tulip encounter story. Jack also clarified that the family will be in Stuttgart until this time in 2006 and that Jill is a liaison at Headquarters, European Command. He added that they also have room in their home for classmates and fellow travelers passing through the area. Sounds like an Oktoberfest rest stop to me.

Marty Thamm got back from active duty in the desert and returned to work as Manager, Technology Integration and Initiatives at Lockheed Martin's Advanced Technology Center in Palo Alto, CA. He's back into a SMCR billet and serves as the Deputy G-3 for the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing. More importantly, he's glad to be back into the civilian workforce and sleeping in his own bed ... well, for at least as often as he's home (He says through mid-March he's already flown 40,000 work miles.) He's also been out on his sailboat a bit too. He's sailing because, as he put it—because he can. Besides he's always loved it; especially since he blew out his knee in Plebe year. Offered sailing as a sport alternative he became hooked for the three years left at Mother B. He's even skippered a luders yawl for a couple of years. As for more sailing info, he saw **Pete Craig's** name in some sailing rags. He was impressed with Pete's leadership in "right-coast sail racing". He thought it "downright awesome and well respected". Of course he noted to himself that he ought to hit Pete up for some cool hats. I jokingly asked Marty if he'd done any surfing while in the Gulf (He and Jock picked it up while they were activated for a stint in Hawaii a couple of years ago). His response—"the surfing in Arabia sucks. One of my guys did some surfing in Bahrain, but Iraqi surfing is much like Bahamian bob sledding." Belated condolences also go out to Marty as at the end of January he unexpectedly lost his father. He was still a young 70. In closing his e-mail, Marty echoed to me some good advice that Jock had given him during their MFP times together—spend as much time as you can with yours [father], if you still have him" of course that also applies to your family and other loved ones as well. Someone who also knows that truer words were never spoken is **Ed Reid** and his family (which includes his sisters, Maggie (and Bob) Fallon and Donna (John) O'Neil). In March, their dad, Lar Reid, finally succumbed to a long illness to which he gave a valiant fight and had endured with strength, grace and humor. Ed expressed his thanks to all of you and the abundant

outpouring of supportive letters and e-mails he got. It was, in his words, "overwhelming". He's trying to work through the "thank yous" individually but it still takes a while. Many of you knew his Dad and how much he enjoyed meeting all us "boat schoolers". He came to all our football games and was on the Tiger Cruise with **Jim Degree** and Ed in Pearl onboard the USS Standley (CG-32) and even rode the USS Porter (DDG-78) a few years ago down to Norfolk. A veteran who served in WWII, Korea, Berlin, and the Cuban missile crisis, he was buried with full military honors with a bugler and Bagpiper. Maggie and Bob Fallon's twin daughters' ships (Ed's nieces) - both at sea in the Persian Gulf—saluted him from long distance with their ship's guns. It was all a fitting tribute to a man, who though a retired Army Master Sergeant, loved the Navy, our Class of '78 and Navy Football. He always routed for the Navy at the Army / Navy game. As Ed said—you can draw your own conclusions from it. To Ed, Donna, John, Maggie, Bob, Marty and all of you who have may have lost loved ones this year we offer once more our condolences and prayers.

Well, as much a reality as it is a cliché, life is a series of endings and beginnings... endings and beginnings. One event that most visibly encompasses them both is a graduation, especially one that is a part of the continuum that is the Navy Blue and Gold. Among this year's newly commissioned graduates at Navy-Marine Corps Stadium was Lynn and **George Tyree's** son, Michael. George thought the day was made even more special by the fact that a classmate, **Joe Leidig**, the Commandant of Midshipman was part of the ceremony. Since Lynn was the outgoing President of the local USNA Parents Club here in North FL, the Superintendent was kind enough to provide them with two VIP Tickets for seats on the field close to Michael and his class. That gave them the opportunity to get a clear picture of him receiving his diploma. They were grateful to Joe too for taking some time during the Superintendent's garden party/reception to speak to Michael and the rest of our

family in what they all knew was a very busy time for him. George said his son was doubly lucky on service selection night. He got his first choice in both platform (one of the newer Tico Class Cruisers) and initial duty station assignment. Even better for Lynn and George, Michael will be close to home; ported in Mayport. Among Michael's classmates who tossed those covers into the air were Chris Maloney (Mary Jane and Jock's son) and Jeff Griffin (Erin and Archie's son). I'm sure there were other sons and daughters of '78 among them as well but I can't recall and I haven't heard from you—yet. Still, congratulations to all of them and welcome to the fleet and a great world of "Shipmates". It's a special group that was best summarized by Erin Griffin when she invited everyone to be a part of Jeff's celebration. She mentioned the bonds we share and relayed the story of how during a morning run on the final day of Plebe summer, Jeff took his Plebes around Hospital Point and taught them just that lesson. Let me allow you to read it for yourselves because her words are far more eloquent than any of mine. (The full letter is on our website):

“I don't know what it's like to be a boy and lose your father. I know my own pain and grief, but can't compare it to what my children went through. I do know that when Arch died, he left Jeff a surrogate father in each of you. To see the way you came to Arch's side during his illness and death, and the way so many of you personally supported Jeff during this difficult time, has been heartwarming and comforting to me. Even though I may have not known many of you personally (although Arch seemed to know everyone!), the bond of the class of '78 has been created by all of you, and it's that bond that has seen so many of us through difficult times. We are by no means the only family whose hardships have been lessened by the love of this group.

On the last day of Plebe Summer, 2003, Jeff took his company of plebes on an early morning, five mile run. He ended the run at the columbarium, where Arch's remains have been placed. He gathered

the group of young men and women, who would someday be members of the class of 2007, around him. He said to them, 'Look around you. These are your classmates, your shipmates. These will be some of the most important people in your life.' He went on to tell them, 'When my Dad was sick and dying, his Naval Academy classmates came to his side to support him, and our family. My Naval Academy classmates came to my side as well, stood by me and helped me through this difficult time. The next four years will help you create the bond that will tie each of you to each other for life.' ■

He then he left them to think about it and about the commitment they'll make to each other—and in the course of it better serving the nation and the Naval Service as they jogged on back to Mother B. Thanks, Erin for sharing that with us...I'll just ponder on it warmly as I close out this column.... Launchin' Spot 4.

79 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 0%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 89%

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SECY: LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)

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Greetings, 79!

Well, after a year's worth of announcements, fanfare and banner-waving, the Gala 25th Reunion Extravaganza is just about upon us. By now you've all got your registrations, your football tickets, and your hotel reservations, and are just waiting for the party to begin. I can almost hear the chow callers: "Sir you now have 10 minutes to evening party formation the uniform for evening party formation is..."

Now I know that what I'm about to say doesn't apply to any of us. But I feel obliged to say it, kinda like a disclaimer. There exists a statistical possibility, however slight, that a couple 79ers have waited til the last minute. This stems from the uniquely midshipman habit of waiting as long as possible and then pulling an all-nighter. If we had anyone like that in the Class of 79, I'd tell them that IT'S NOT

TOO LATE. Deadline for registration is 23 August, so although time is rapidly running out, there's still a little left. I would then direct them to the Official Source of Reunion Information: www.usna79.com. Got all that? Great! Looking forward to seeing you in just a few weeks!

I begin the bolded name section of this month's column with more good news on the Flag selection front. **Mike Mahan** and **Scott Van Buskirk** were selected for Rear Admiral (LH) by the FY05 O-7 Board. Also, **Greg Shear**, Civil Engineer Corps, has been selected by the FY05 O-7 Staff Board. Mike is currently assigned as the Branch Head, Staff Plans, N50C, OPNAV. Scott serves as Chief of Staff to Commander, Submarine Allied Command, Atlantic/Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. And Greg is currently the Deputy Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Washington, DC. Our heartiest congratulations go out to Mike, Scott and Greg! It's going to be one monster wetting down!!!

I was very pleased to receive an email from a very good friend, **Jeff Niner** (britrose@juno.com). Jeff and I were company-mates for 4 years in "Cloud 19", and we were roommates during Youngster year. Jeff was always studying for his Mechanical Engineering courses, and I was always trying to find something to do OTHER than study. We both were long distance runners. Jeff was much more accomplished in that area than me, but as **Scott Belanger** reminded me a couple of weeks ago, Jeff was always running injured. He introduced me to terms like "orthotics", carb "purging" and "loading", and "fartlek."

Jeff's family lived on the north side of Baltimore County. When we had to memorize our classmates' home towns during Plebe Summer, Jeff caught max grief for "Cockeysville". Somewhere around second class year his family moved to "Monkton," prompting more grief (it even made it into his 1979 *Lucky Bag* biography). I had the good fortune to spend a few weekends at the Niner homestead. Jeff's parents were two of the