

The JMLC stood up in 2004 and I was previously involved in its inception while serving as the XO of the NROTC unit at USF.

My family and I are enjoying retirement from active duty and living in the Tampa Bay Florida area. ■

From **Mike "Mac" McConnell**,
15th Company,

■ Doris and I proudly announce our daughter Megan's graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point (it is a long but interesting story). Megan took her degree in Mechanical Engineering and was on the Dean's list every semester. She rowed crew for 3 years and participated in the Sandhurst competition as a Plebe. She was selected for the aviation branch (service selection) and will report to Fort Rucker, Alabama in late July to begin flight training. At this point she wants to be an Apache driver. The accompanying photograph is her bar pinning "oath of office ceremony" with her former crew coach. ■



Mike McConnell's daughter, Megan, at West Point during the bar pinning ceremony

Tim Farrell sent a 27th Company update:

■ This picture was taken Monday night, 11 June 07, at Citizen's Bank Park in Philadelphia, the occasion is 27th Company Boys' Night Out. **Scott Jenkins** initiated our quarterly boys' night out series in August 2002 when I moved to the Philadelphia area. Usually it's just Scott and me, but this was our best-attended boys' night out ever. Many thanks to **John Lovasz**, **John Stamos**, **Kip Nicely**, and **Dan Galik** for driving up from the Washington area to join us. ■



Standing L to R: Kip Nicely, Scott Jenkins, Dan Galik
Seated L to R: John Stamos, John Lovasz, Tim Farrell

Kudos to the following Classmates:

—**Elmo Collins** for being appointed Regional Administrator, Region IV for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

—**Frank Drennan** for his assignment as commander, Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command, San Diego, CA

—**Garry Hall** for being assigned as commandant, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, Washington, D.C.

—**Keith Weaver** for his appointment as USO's first chief operating officer (COO). As COO, Keith plans and manages the day-to-day activities of the organization, including its centers and mobile canteens worldwide. Prior to accepting this position, the Florida native was USO's Senior Vice President, Operations. Way to go, Keith!!!

I look forward to seeing you at the Class tailgaters. *Go Navy!*

Finally, our deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers go out to Mara & **Tim Traaen** and family. Tim reported with great and profound sadness the news of his eldest son's murder in San Diego on 15 July. Tim's son, Timothy, age 30, had spent a wonderful evening with his girlfriend, Nikki, when they were robbed at gunpoint as they were getting into their car to head home for the evening. Nikki survived the attack and at the time of this writing, the gunman in this senseless killing is still at large. Timothy was a handsome and talented graphics artist who worked at Tshotchkey's designing logos for college gift items nationwide.

77

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 4%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 68%

PRES: CAPT **Richard "Rick" White**, USN

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78

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 2%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 76%

PRES: **Glen Woods**

SEC'Y: **Vince Balderrama**

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No excuses for the loss of a column last time. Let's just say brain flatulence exacerbated by the loss of some files were contributing factors. I'll be walking off the demerits all next week. Anyway, lots to catch up on. This will be a little "photo intensive" which eats up the word quota

so I'll apologize for being too "Cliff Note's" and try to curtail my asides and witticisms (or *nit-witticisms*). Here we go—

First big news—a classmate and his family now occupy the Supes' House! Before a large audience in Alumni Hall, **Jeff Fowler** relieved **Rodney Rempt** as the 60th Superintendent and was promoted to VADM. An alumnus and former company officer when we were there (okay—which of you did he fry?), CNO (by now JCS) ADM Mullins was the guest speaker. There were many other alumni on hand that included among them senior Navy officials (SECNAV and former SECNAVs), Navy and Marine Corps general officers, various corporate big-wigs, senior officers and other "important people"—but none were more important, supportive or *vocal* as the many classmates from '78. (The big whooping yell that erupted from us as we were recognized in speech and in support of Jeff still echoes in the hall!). I'd be a nut to start naming names of who was there because I *know* I didn't see everybody and I *know* I would be excluding names but what the heck—no guts no air medals—attendees I saw (or *thought* I saw) were: **Bart Buechner**, **Craig Cowan**, **Tom Crowley**, **John Rudder**, **Bob McMasters**, **Cabell Greenwood**, **Chris Hassler**, **Art Athens**, **Steve "Jock" Maloney**, **Bob Schmermund**, **John Rudzisz**, **Ray Kwong**, **Steve Hincks**, **Tom Dudley**, **Jim Rennie**, **George Wadzita**, **Steve Petri**, **Bob Novak**, **Glen Woods**, **John Cooke**, **Maurice Tose**, **Tom Abernathy**, **Scott Provow**, **Charlie Hautau**, **Kevin Olsen**, **Terry O'Brien**, **Joe Martin**, **Gary Eisenmann**, **Joes Schmitz**, **Gary Vinciguerra**, **Mark Nault**, **John Kovalcik**, **Sean Coffey**, **Charlie Sotomayor**, **AJ Wise**, **Bruce Latta**, **Dave Heinz**, **John Newcomb**, **Will Kramer**, **Drew Nienhaus**, **Ralph Scaffidi**, and **Ray Milton**. (I'm standing by for the e-mails from folks who'll say—"don't you remember?!")



John Rudder, Supes and Bob McMasters



Vince, Bart, Bill Chatfield, Mr. and Mrs. Dalton and Joe



Fowlers flanked by Cowans

Sad news came on April 5th with word of the death that day of non-graduating classmate, **Bobby "Chico" Garcia** in Jacksonville, FL. After leaving the Academy, Chico went back to Texas A&M (where he had already finished a freshman year before coming to Annapolis) and received his degree in '78. In 1983 he married Kate Higgins and together they have four children Alexander Garcia (22), Nicholas Garcia (20), Olivia Layne Garcia (18) and Jamie Garcia (11). Bobby worked twenty years for the United States Postal Service. He was a strong Christian man, loved serving God and attended the Jacksonville Church of Christ. We wish his family well.

The tragedy at Virginia Tech touched every around the nation but none more closely than the **Surgent** and **McEntee** families of '78. Kathy and **Dave Surgent's** daughter, Stephanie, was a senior engineering student at VA Tech. She had not gone to class yet that day and was safe from the horrible events. Stephanie is now in Tampa for an internship this summer and plans to return to VA Tech for graduate school. **Mike McEntee's** daughter (Monica) and son (Mark)—who were in their second and first year at Tech, respectively—were also fortunate to be spared. His class having been canceled due to his prof's illness, Mark was safe in his dorm at the time of the shootings. Monica had left her class building at the time of the shooting and walked right past Norris where she heard the shots and saw students running out of the building and jumping out of the windows. We are glad that all were safe

and empathize with the emotional impact of such horror. We wish them well as they and everyone in the VA Tech family continue their healing process.

More retirements—On May 18th, **Brett Ayotte** had his Navy retirement ceremony in Memorial Hall at the Academy. Classmate and former reserve boss, **Jay Deloach** officiated and was also the guest speaker. Jay regaled on Brett's career and accomplishments that make me wonder what the heck the Navy Reserve force is going to do without him around?! It was a great ceremony and a fun party at the club and later at the Ayotte home—stead! Also on hand were **Steve Petri**, **Mike Yurina**, and **George Billy**.



Jay presents awards to the Ayottes



The Gearys and their Anchor Baby

In late June **Bruce Gearey** attended **Chris Wode's** retirement ceremony in Memorial Hall. Bruce reported it was a wonderful event and filled with remarks that brought back many great memories. Bruce wanted to publicly correct a few erroneous facts that Chris had mentioned—When Bruce took a couple of chip shots at the Commander in Chiefs trophy in the Rotunda from the 4-2 balcony, it was a Wedge, not a 9 iron and he did, in fact, hit it one time before the OOD came running after them. Then, Chris tried to have them remember the number of glass panes in Memorial Hall. All could not remember, but **Lew Wolfrom** could recite how many stairs there are from 4-2 to Steerage. The following week Bruce had dinner with **Larry Easton** in Suffolk and shared more "great trips down memory lane". (Larry

was down there for some business.) Bruce expects that one day he will have to relinquish the Anchor Baby title to one of our classmates at some point, but until then he enclosed a current photo of his current title holder.

Jock Maloney (samaloney@comcast.net) and **Marty Thamm** (MartyThamm@aol.com) are soliciting any interest from classmates who might want to be involved in a "group" retirement ceremony in Annapolis. The occasion would be 30 years to the date of our graduation and commissioning—June 6, 2008. If interested—drop them an e-mail.

Flag officer updates and assignments: **Bill Burke** is assigned as director, Assessment Division, N81. **Rich Cellon** is now the commander, First Naval Construction Division, Norfolk. Two-star promotions announced in April went to: **Mark Boensel** (Benz is currently the Commander, Navy Region Southeast, Jacksonville, FL), **Vic Guillory** (Deputy Director, Surface Warfare Division, N86B), **Cecil Haney** (Commander, Submarine Group Two, Groton, CT), **Harry B. Harris, Jr.** (Director of Operations (J3), U.S. Southern Command), **Joe Leidig** Director, U.S. Naval Forces Europe—Sixth Fleet, Plans and Operations/deputy commander, Sixth Fleet/commander, Submarines Allied Naval Forces South/commander, Submarine Group Eight, Naples, Italy), **Charlie Martoglio** (Commander, Carrier Strike Group Seven, San Diego, CA), and **Rick Wren** (Commander, Carrier Strike Group Five, Yokosuka, Japan)

Well that's all the space for me... See you next month. Launchin' Spot Four

79 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 0%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 90%

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

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SEC'Y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**

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Greetings, 79ers!

I remember that as a little kid, I didn't like "September". September was always the month where I looked back at summer and said, "Where did all that time go?" In September the days were still hot, although now I had to spend them in a classroom with the nuns of St. Thomas Parish. There seemed to be little to look forward to: Christmas was too far away to contemplate.