



76 on DDG 76

**Pat Tracy** gave an account of his attempt at a recent 300-mile bicycle trip around the Upper Peninsula of Michigan:

■ Several people expressed interest in how the bike trip went. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is indeed beautiful, and the weather was as good as we've seen for a week-long bike tour: low-to-mid 70s, some clouds, rainstorms almost only at night...but headwinds most of the way... Lisa, her sister Laurie, our niece Lizzie, and our friend Julie all did very well on the ride. Average daily routes were over 60 miles, over rolling hills and along the shores of Lake Superior. The scenery was better than promised. Bugs, owing to the low temperatures, were fewer than expected, although those we did encounter were pretty hungry...I was able to ride only about 100 miles of the planned 300+. At about the 35-mile point (before lunch) on the second day, the road was broken by a series of deep cracks that extended all the way across. I stood up for one, in an effort to 'save' my backside from the coming jolt, and twisted my knee. Suddenly, I could not push the left pedal down at all - so it was a very slow 10-12 miles to the lunch stop, where I ended my ride for the day. I hoped that, with the next day being a scheduled rest day in Sault Saint Marie (home to the famous Soo Locks) I would be ready to ride Thursday. But it was not to be - not Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Thankfully, the fellow who had volunteered to drive the luggage truck between campgrounds each day was more than happy for the chance to ride! So I got to see most of the scenery, but from a truck seat instead of the bike seat. ■

Well, that wasn't too painful (writing the column, that is - I wasn't referring to Pat's knee problem). I look forward to continuing to see many of you at the great tailgaters. Our Class really does a great job in attending the Navy football games and representing the Class at the tailgaters! BEAT ARMY!

## 77 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 4% LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 70%

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**This too is a law of the Navy,  
Things that are iron don't float,  
So take heed lest you inhale seawater,  
If there's too many holes in your boat!**

Okay, we may have made that one up, but it's been a slow month for classmate submissions. And frankly, it's getting tougher and tougher to come up with original salty opening remarks!

First up, **Craig Langman (28th Co.)** took time off from enjoying a beautiful summer in Virginia Beach to travel to Roscoe, MT, where **Scott Spiker (28th Co.)** hosted a few days of fly-fishing, cards and swapping sea stories (what else may have been swapped remains clouded in mystery!) at Scott's fortress of solitude.



Craig and Scott were joined by fellow survivalists **Tom Behrle (14th Co.)** and **Brad McDonald (28th Co.)** at the Spiker compound, which is in a river valley (elev. 5,200 ft.) surrounded by a couple of hills topping out at nearly 10K ft.: truly God's country! Our intrepid adventurers spent several relaxing days drifting down the Yellowstone and fishing other local rivers Scott has been working for some 20 years. No wonder there were plenty of fish to be had; the Lang Man at one point landed 6 fish on 7 casts! In all seriousness, Craig informs me watching Spike cast flies was like seeing Jordan work the baseline: artistry in motion! In any event, Langman took home the vast majority of the poker pots, but promises everyone a chance to win back their money! Pictured below are Scott, Craig, Brad and Tom decked out in true midshipman style! '77 never looked soooo good!



In other '77 happenings, two classmates recently made the news. First, Virgin Mobile USA welcomed **Dan Acton (15th Co.)** as its new Chief Information & Technology Officer. Dan will focus on integrating key business and technology processes to move Virgin Mobile USA ahead as a full service wireless provider. Best of luck to Dan in his new position.

Next, Jim Fairbank (33rd Co.) joins the ranks of published authors, as detailed in a press release from Penn State University - University Park. Jim, a member of the management faculty at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, co-authored *The Daily Art of Management: A Hands-On Guide to Effective Leadership and Communication* (Praeger 2008). The step-by-step manual is designed to be a manager's go-to resource for everyday management issues, large and small. Sincere congratulations to Jim and co-author Peg Thoms.

We had hoped to report the results of two golf matches with classmates **Marc Troiani (4th Co.)**, **Dave Ziemba (19th Co.)**, **Bill White (32nd Co.)** and **Jerry Miller (19th Co.)**, but the Troiani-White/Ziemba-Magoo Texas Death Match was postponed due to Yours Truly suffering a shoulder injury whilst completing various domestic honey-dos, and the Miller/Troiani/Magoo triumvirate was called on account of rain!

That's all the news that fit to print! Remember, no submissions...no column! Go Navy, Beat Hopkins!

—Magoo

## 78 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 2% LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 76%

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It's been a *very slow* month in the old mail bag. *Next month* I'll be faced with the dilemma of how to edit down all the news that results from October 30th reunion. Hmmm, guess I'll have to make the column a serial work over those

ensuing months... "To be continued..." Either that or refer you to any website postings for, as Paul Harvey says, "the *rest* of the story!" As this is being written preparations are underway for our reunion and as this goes to print the reunion weekend itself will be winding down. Such is the time warped magic of publishing—which explains a lot of my mixing of tenses. "Am I writing about *now* or *then*? Is this it *then* or *now*?" It's all too confusing sometimes.

Speaking of publishing, did everyone get their 2008 Alumni Directory? You had to pay for it. So if your answer is "No"; you didn't buy it. Or it means you didn't get the notice from the Alumni Association; which means you either aren't a member of the Alumni Association or haven't updated your mailing address with them which means—I AM TALKING TO THE WRONG FOLKS—because *you do* have this magazine in your hands! It's those *other* folks I need to reach. Hmm, if you know of a classmate who falls in to those categories ask them to join up. If they *are* members but have never updated their information just have them call the alumni association and give them their new address. (Or if you joined as a lifetime member when we graduated—like many of us did — but haven't made *any* address changes since — tell your parents to send it to you because in all probability it's still going to your home of record!). By the way, those of you who *did* buy a Directory will note that I am listed as *Lt Balderrama* not LtCol. Elizabeth noted the typo. (or was it really and editorial comment? Inquiring minds want to know.) Hope your info is accurate. I called the publishing house to complain after all the got the *billing* name as LtCol. I got some bucks credited back as their "mea culpa". Hmm, I think I need to complain more often!

By the way, "Semper Fi" to all my fellow Devil Dogs as we celebrate this month the 233rd Birthday of our nation's — and the world's— finest fighting force, the United States Marine Corps. I hearken back to the words of the late President Ronald Reagan who said, "Some people wonder all their lives if they've made a difference. The Marines don't have that problem." To all of you who have worn — or continue to wear — the uniform of a Marine, thanks for helping make a difference.

This summer our class was represented at the USS PORTER

(DDG 78) Change of Command in Boston by **Terry O'Brien** and **Joe Martin**. We have been involved with "sponsoring" the PORTER since her commissioning and have established very close ties with the ship and her crew. Our biggest initiative is a leadership award which a few years ago we renamed in honor of our late friend, classmate and Class President, Arch Griffin. The *Arch Griffin Memorial Leadership Award* recognizes crew-nominated leaders of all pay grades on the ship. This year Arch and Erin's son, LT **Jeff Griffin** ('04), traveled from San Diego for the ceremony. The outgoing CO mentioned the Class of 1978's efforts with the Leadership Awards and how we also provide all of the warfare insignia for their newly qualified crew. Checkout the link to PORTER on our Class Website. (By the way, PORTER was also scheduled to be the "ship in the Yard" during the weekend of our 30th reunion.) I'd like to take a second to publically acknowledge the hard work and efforts that Terry puts in to spearheading the coordination of the leadership awards with the PORTER. BRAVO ZULU.



As this gets submitted, I just received a phone call from **Jon Kutler** who gave me the sad news of the sudden death of **Herb Jensen** from what I understand was a heart attack. That's all I know. Any more information I get I will pass on to the website and speak of in next month's column. Until then, please remember Paula and the rest of Herb's family in your prayers. Launchin' spot four — with prayer on our lips.

**79** ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 0%  
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 90%

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### Greetings, 79ers!

"The In-Laws are coming! The In-Laws are coming!"

Karen & I have been scrambling around making the house more presentable for the upcoming visit of her parents. The major challenge: converting Karen's office back into a guest room. This has set off a chain reaction of closet and cabinet clearing as we struggle to hide the stuff we won't need for the next week.

I was making room in my "junk" drawer (*to hide more junk, of course!*) when I came across a splintered fragment of wood. I knew immediately what it was. Taking it out of the drawer, I slowly rotated it in my hands, and smiled. There, written in pencil (and later traced over with a black marker) were the words:

"29 Nov 75 — Navy 30, Army 6" It was a piece of the goal post from our Plebe Year victory over Army at JFK Memorial Stadium in Philly. Can that really have been 33 years ago?

What was ironic about the whole thing was that, when I checked my email about an hour later, there was a note from **Kevin Derbin** (Kevin.Derbin@alcan.com), one of the guys I met 33 years ago as we sweated out Plebe Year together in 19th Company (aka "Cloud 19"). Derbs wrote to tell me about the recent exploits of his youngest son Joel, a sophomore at the University of Cincinnati. Last summer Joel competed in — and won — both the 2008 National Teen Middle-weight Bodybuilding Championship and the National Collegiate Middleweight Bodybuilding Championship in Pittsburgh, PA.

Derbs says the whole thing was "...a kind of a 'Cloud 19' galactic convergence" in that the competition was held on July 19, Joel wore bib number 19, and he was 19 years old. Derbs was so overcome with emotion by this cosmic revelation that he hoisted a Guinness in honor of all his 19th Company comrades. Then he added to following:

■ On the trek from Louisville to Pittsburgh, we drove by Zanesville, OH. I couldn't help but tell Pam and Joel that this was your hometown if I remember correctly. I told Joel about having to