

give what is fair. We all enjoy the tailgates and reunions but we should be more than that as a class - we should stand for a greater cause: the continual improvement of one of our country's finest institutions, your Naval Academy. Together, we can make a difference. ■

I look forward to seeing a lot of you this fall at the tailgaters. BEAT TOWSON!

77 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 4%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 70%

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Kicking off this month's offering, **Mike Reed (36th Co.)** wrote in to say he's contracted a common though rarely fatal malady that manifests itself in a variety of ways. The disease, commonly referred to as **Goat Gungianas**, was first contracted by Wally Tart on a weekend in the Hamptons with Copy Berg. Its symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Feelings of guilt having not attended at least one Navy sporting event per year regardless of geographic separation from Annapolis
- Your PIN number, garage door opener code and email password are all some variation of 1-9-7-7
- When the weatherman calls for a high of 77 degrees you say "Ooh rah! Beat Army!"
- You still do pushups in front of the television when Navy scores, but have to do them in sets when the score gets too high...otherwise your wife says you "owe her"

And the illness is highly communicable, particularly to immediate family; early indications of transmission may include:

- Your son knows how to rig the peanut butter
- Your daughter suggests "beatarmy" for your Windows password
- The kids ask "How's the cow?" when pouring breakfast cereal
- Your wife thinks Notre Dame Football, like Hopkins Lacrosse, can NEVER have too bad a season
- Your kids' favorite song is "Army Mule", including the all-important Jimmy Carter imitation at the end!

Our sincere appreciation to Mike for calling attention to this particularly pernicious pestilence!

Next up, **Stratton Hicky (35th Co.)** sends his regards along with two photos from our 30th. The first includes, from left to right, 35th Company-mates **Carl Fisher, Stratton, Dave Pyle** and **Jim Lare**.



Carl Fisher, Stratton Hicky, Dave Pyle and Jim Lare

In Stratton's words (NOT ours!), "Lookin' OLD '77!"

The second shows Stratton's two daughters in the stands, their Navy spirit, and their mother's beauty, on full display!



Stratton Hicky's daughters

While the 6th Battalion might be decommissioned, Mike and Stratton clearly demonstrate we will not be silenced!

We recently enjoyed a fine afternoon of golf with **Skip McKenzie (9th Co.)** and **Tom Bakke (9th Co., Class of '76)** at Raspberry Falls in Leesburg. The time and venue had been selected to accommodate the busy schedule of one **William Herberger (9th Co.)**, who somehow managed to become marooned in Cleveland the night prior, and thus was unable to attend his own outing! Regardless, the weather, golf and comradery were all first-rate, and we hoisted a toast to Herb despite his failure to attend!

Until next month, fair winds and following seas! And remember, we can't print what you don't write!

Magoo

78 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 2%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 76%

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Just a month to go until the big 30th reunion. It is starting to look like a big crowd for the reunion. As of June several hundred have already registered and over 600 football game tickets have been purchased. If you have not made plans to attend, we hope you will reconsider as this is looking like a great party in the making! We have confirmed that the ship the Class sponsor's, USS PORTER, DDG-78, will be the "ship in the yard" for our reunion weekend. We will keep you advised on visitation hours; we hope that many of you will take the opportunity to visit the ship and to greet the Sailors you see ashore. Finally, our Class Store has reopened! Go to www.usna1978.org and click on the banner on the right side of the page that says "The USNA 1978 Class Store." You will be taken to the class store web page. Go to the bottom of the page and click on the "Class of 1978 Merchandize" button located just above the "Go Navy - Beat Army!" banner. There you will find merchandize with our class crest that will be shipped directly to you. Once more, everything- and I mean everything (from schedule to registration to election balloting) will be found on our class website www.usna1978.org.

A few short sightings and quick e-mails. **Dana Sales** dropped a quick note that he, and fellow 27th Company mates, **Hall Van Vlack** and **Paul Wideorn** has gotten together during May. Dana had been in town for the graduation of his nephew, Ensign **Brandon Sales ('08)**. The three "senior alumni" (Dana, Hall and Paul) were over at the new Morton's steak house in Annapolis getting the VIP treatment. Dana's daughter also graduated with honors this year from NYU. Dana is a Broker Associate for David Lyng Real Estate in Watsonville, CA. If you go up on the company's website it says Dana has been Watsonville Realtor of the Year - 1993 and their Top Agent for Sales and Referrals over the last 10 years. It goes to say that he and "Lynn have been married for thirteen years and have two wonderful children. He is actively involved in the community through his twelve years of service as a School Board Trustee and volunteering his time as a volunteer for

*Support
them,
As They
Support Us!*

**Corporate
Members'**

the local schools. Dana is also a former Planning Commissioner and attends the St. Patrick's Catholic Community Church with his family." (Geez, hope I got the right website!)

Gary Rupp is Senior Vice President for reVision, Inc. out in Denver, CO. It's a small disadvantage (8a) business that is big on management consulting and information technology company that serves federal government and commercial companies. **Bob Novak's** recent entry into civilian life finds him employed as Director, Maritime Systems and Requirements for BAE Systems. **Kevin O'Keefe** is the Director, Office of Plans, Policy & Analysis, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, at the State Department.

On June 6th, 2008, almost 30 years to the date when we threw our covers into the air and donned those of newly minted Ensigns and Second Lieutenants, it was time for thirty seven classmates to place those covers (now garnished with the "scrambled eggs" of Commanders, CAPTAINS and Colonels) in a box or on a shelf at home. After more than 30 years of service to our nation, it was time to retire. What a retirement it was— thirty seven standing tall in dress whites and blues, medals agleam, before a crowd of several hundred (I don't think that's an exaggeration.) classmates, family and friends in Alumni Hall. Together they represented the total of 65 classmates who have reached the mandatory 30th year retirement. Over a hundred classmates attended (more than half of our '78 "Flags") and classmates officiated- the Supe, our own **Jeff Fowler** officiated, Marine Corps Chief Chaplain (I like to call him "Brigadier-Admiral") **Al "Blues" Baker** gave the invocation, **Bob Schmemund** was Master of Ceremonies (I'm convinced he could be a hit as a game show host!); and **Kevin "Grinch"**

Lynch was a poignant surprise as the guest speaker. Those of you who know Grinch will understand when I joked that I half expected Grinch to identify each retiree by basketball skillset—"good shot off the dribble"... "can't move to the left"... "well, he at least occupies the middle". But he was serious, moreover he was perceptive, profound, and poignant — perfectly on point — as he touched on every facet of our naval careers... from the forgings of our class bond, adding another link to the Navy chain—"Our class crest is a timeless reminder of the special bond that was forged in those 4 years... We forged these ironclad relationships in the classroom, on the parade field, on the athletic field and for some of us in the multipurpose gym." He touched on the heartstrings as he recognized for us those who helped us forge our careers and become the men we are today- and I know it took a lot of steely concentration to fight back a tear or two. He acknowledged:

■ Our parents- "As a Naval Academy parent, your support and guidance were tested more often and much more stringently than our civilian counterparts were... Your never ending support in fielding those late night calls of self doubt as we cursed this Darwinist School, that we've come to love, will be remembered and forever appreciated. OUR PARENTS, who encouraged us to stick it

out, knew that lifelong friendships would be born from an incredible need for teamwork in a brutal academic and athletic environment."

Our children- "Let me publicly apologize here for missing: the play, the game, the induction, the recital, the appointment, and the graduation... I won't apologize for a life that helped to make you strong and wise... a life that gave you a global view of the world and the social conscience to change it. I won't ask for forgiveness for the pride in my heart when my son or daughter shakes the hand of an adult, looks them in the eye and calls them "Sir" or "Ma'am". As proud as I am of my military career, I am more proud of you than any accomplishment of your mother's or mine combined. She would agree."

Our wives: "The flowers or certificates you received over the years have been small tokens. Your moments of public appreciation have always been a conciliatory whisper usually following some accolade of mine. Your every victory was hidden in the shadow of my humble achievements. You shelved a promising career, and immersed yourself in total dedication to our military family... I will always remember as the ship left the dock, you on the pier, children in your arms or clutching at your hem. I remember younger wives searching your face for the



Retirees



Classmates

correct posture at that wrenching moment...and you effortless, beautiful, the picture of resolve. I stood next to YOU during the "Pass and Review" and saw your pride in every mother's son or daughter. It was you who moved our toddlers hand to his heart during the National Anthem. When there was no e-mail to keep us connected, no cell phone, and the dispassionate CNN bombarding our families, "YOU" kept it together.... With every care package, every phone tree and hor'doeuvre...you were my partner. I watched you from across the room at the "Hail and Farewells" There were no medals on your chest so others could see your worth...It was then I realized you did not require outward signs of your tremendous inner strength. You simply were the embodiment of it and I was in awe of you. Your belief in me set the goal I strove to meet...Attending this institution was the second best decision I have made in my life, asking YOU to be my partner in life will always be number one."

Our classmates: "...This venerable institution created a brotherhood in four years that would last a lifetime" ■

Then he let **Bob "Bubba" Destafney's** words speak about the rest on what retirement means—

■ "I got my retirement orders in the mail last week. They read that on 1 July, I will have spent 30 years and 24 days on active duty. They've all been worth it, thanks to you and so many others who have had a profound impact on my life for more than three decades. Your encouragement and support, your laughter and friendship your commitment and courage have inspired us and for that, we'll be forever grateful.

Attached to my orders is a letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In it, he refers to retirement as "BITTER-SWEET". I respectfully disagree. I feel no bitterness. I'm humbled by the opportunity to wear the uniform of our country for thirty years. And the Marine Corps owes me nothing while I owe the Marine Corps nearly everything I have achieved. I will never be able to repay her.

I am a better husband, a better father, a better brother, a better son, a better friend, a better American for having been a United States Marine. I'm excited about the future.

I look forward to trying something completely different and distinct from the Marine Corps. I look forward to joining

my classmates no longer in uniform, and taking on new challenges." ■

My words pale against all that eloquence. Go to our class website to read the rest of Grinch's speech and see the photo album link put on by Debbie Latta. I hope this helps to encourage you to try and make the reunion. Launchin' Spot Four.

79 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 0%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 90%

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Greetings, 79ers!

September has arrived. The Class of 2009 has assumed leadership of the Brigade, and we're starting another season of Navy football. The talk, of course, is the future of the team under new coach Ken Niumatalolo. Coming off a 5th straight win over Army, a 4th consecutive CIC Trophy, and a victory over Notre Dame, Coach Johnson's rather abrupt departure took the wind out of a lot of sails. Regardless of the coaching change however, this year's "tailgate season" is shaping up to be an exciting one. I have "roving reporters" contracted to help me cover the tailgate activities that I miss, so I'll do my best to keep you apprised of the happenings at the stadium.

On to the news. Back in May I let you all know of an effort led by **Greg Costello** and other 9th Co. classmates to replace the sign marking the temporary site of USNA during the Civil War years. Greg sent along the following update:

■ Dear Class of '79: Beginning last winter, our classmates undertook to fund the restoration of an old sign in the yard of the Newport Rhode Island Elks Lodge, in partnership with the Elks. 15 June 2008 was the culmination of that project, with several of us from 9th Company traveling to Newport to celebrate Flag Day and the unveiling of the new sign with our new friends at Elks Lodge 104. In attendance were **Doug Patton, Gary Stahl, Don Brummett, Scott Pursley** and **RADM Jeff Lemmons**.

As background, USNA was moved to this location in 1861, the former site of the Atlantic House Hotel, in central Newport. The reason for the move was that the Union feared the Rebs might capture the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. The USS CONSTITUTION boarded all

the mids then sailed to Newport to relocate them at the Atlantic House Hotel. Once they arrived, all the upper-classmen were immediately drafted into the wartime Navy. The plebes remained. USNA operated here until the war was over. The Atlantic House Hotel was torn down and replaced with a beautiful Victorian home, which is now the domain of the Elks Lodge 104. Our mission was to replace the sign commemorating the site, since it was in very poor condition.

What was most rewarding was the seriousness with which these local citizens treated Flag Day and the partnership with us. There were emotional speeches about the history of the American Flag, a color guard presentation by local Sea Cadets, a Flag presentation by a Boy Scout Troop, a very professional "retiring" of the Flag by high school kids in Sea Cadet uniform, the singing of old patriotic songs. (I'm embarrassed to admit that I didn't remember all of the words).

Our classmate (and my former roommate) RADM Jeff Lemmons spoke of the special naval heritage of USNA and Newport. US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) spoke of the maritime heritage of Rhode Island. It was truly a Rockwellian experience, and one that filled us with appreciation not only for our country's history, but also for the good people of Newport.

I suspect you may feel all this sounds corny, but the whole experience was very moving and totally rewarding. It was also a great excuse for us 79ers to get together once again.

Annie and I are looking forward to next year's 30th reunion! Regards,
Greg Costello '79 ■

He enclosed several photos of the event, and I re-printed an earlier photo of the original sign, so you can get the full "before - after" effect. Thanks to Greg and all of 9th Co. for their efforts!



USNA (Newport) sign installation ceremony: (l-r) Scott Pursley, Greg Costello, Don Brummett, Doug Patton, Jeff Lemmons. Not pictured: Gary Stahl.