

Also, please remember the USNA Class of 1977 Facebook page, connecting you with over 200 classmates and a great way to get The Gouge.

Magoo

78 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 1%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 79%

PRES: **Glen Woods**

SEC'Y: **Vince Balderrama**

1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401

E: canoet78@aol.com

WEBSITE: usna1978.org

A lot of you have been having "min-reunions." Here's new of "Fun One" from **Bob "Zool" Schwaneke**. This year marked First Company's 10th anniversary of their annual "Fun One - Week at the Beach" in Sandbridge, VA! It was started in 2004 at **Mark Hubal's** parents' beach house in Sandbridge. But it got larger each year, so they had to find a larger house. **Ken Heffernan** came up with one about 5 years ago that sleeps about 18 folks and they rent it for a week every fall. All 1st Co classmates are invited to spend a week at the beach! They usually get about 11-13 folks attending every year, some for a day, some for the full week. They do several theme nights for chow, pizza first night, a seafood night, burrito/taco night, steak night, etc. (They're currently looking for the official recipes for USNA Texas Sauce and Ham Francisco.) **Warren Krull** is famous for his blueberry pancakes for breakfast at some point (if he's not fishing). And **Frank Hunt** does a great crab night! They just hang out, go the beach or the hot tub, work-out, tell sea stories and catch up with each other. And of course, there's the annual movie viewing of "The Big Lebowski"!!! (Couldn't find "Lightning Swords of Death"...ha!). This year's attendees (in no particular order) were: **Doug Grau, Bruce Carter, Mark Hubal, Ken Heffernan** (To Whom Bob sends "Thanks" for setting it all up!), **Warren Krull, Bill Landay, Jack McCourt, Bill McAlpine, Bill Truxal, Jimmy McClean** (who came all the way from California!), **Ron Lovelace** (31st Company), and **Bob Schwaneke**. Sometimes they have local get-togethers in DC, and sometimes they do a "Winterfest" at **Bruce Carter's** home in New Hampshire. Next up is they're shooting for either a European River Cruise, or a bare-bone sailing charter to somewhere! They've also been toying with a "Springfest" in Rolla, Missouri over St. Pat's, but as Bob wrote "that's a

whole other story...ha!" As for "Zool", Bob retired in 2006 as a CAPT from the Supply Corps after 28 years of service. He moved back to Rolla, Missouri in 2008 (his hometown) after his Mom passed away. He took over the family property...40 acres of woods, house, outbuildings, cars and tractors! He has a part-time logistics consulting job with the Navy through Alion Science (it takes him to Naples, Italy frequently). He's also the South Central Missouri USNA Blue and Gold Officer for about a 50 mile radius (most all of south-central Missouri), substitute teach at Rolla High School occasionally and tries to keep the property in shape! Did he say he RETIRED?! As for all that property, he says he's found it's not all that worth it to try and push back to woods as the more you clear, the more you have to mow. He's up to mowing 5 acres and bush-hogging about 10! (Get goats- they'll keep the lawn and brush clear.) He says the kids are great and living in Chesapeake, VA, so all is well! Bob invites anyone heading down I-44 in Missouri, to "best stop by"! I would add that a scythe or mower is not required!



"Fun One" Reunion 2014

Speaking of mini-reunions, in many ways each tailgate is a form of one not to mention a smorgasbord of delightful dishes and drinks! One attempt to capture a photo of a gathering at the VMI game attendees was like herding cats. It was a particularly large group as 14th Company had come from their mini-reunion gathering at a rented house and 15th



'78 at a Tailgate

Company and the rest just crunched in. Among the attendees you'll find (in no particular order or correlation): **Tim McGee, Ray Miskowski, Chris Nichols, Kevin Olsen, Bob Schmermund, Larry Galvin, Al "Blues" Baker, Joe Martin, Mark Bolin, Doug Meyer, Ben Richter, Mike Kalnoske, Charlie Hautau, Tom Martinez, Pete Flynn, Bill Hession, Bob "Bubba" DeStafney, Larry Newby, Sale "Bubba" Lilly, Mike Fralen, Chris "Doc" Dougherty**. (I apologize to those of you I KNOW I've left out. But it'll prompt you to write and correct me!)

One of the neat things about traveling for the Foundation is the classmate-meeting surprises! One big surprise was at the Air Force game when whom should I find sitting right in front of me were none other than Brenda and **Brad Thomann!** Brad landed at Virgin America in August of 2014. He says it's a great company and he's humbled to be leading a fine group of pilots and support staff. He came to Virgin America from Virgin Australia where he held a similar position as GM Group Flight Operations and Chief Pilot. Living in Brisbane was a fantastic experience and it takes first place in his airline career as his *longest commute* to home in Colorado. (It definitely makes my old DC or Owego to Baldwinsville commute a trifle.) Speaking of neat experiences, Brad got to be the preacher at his oldest daughter's wedding this past summer. Despite his fatherly advice, she married a pilot anyway. Brad's nephew is a Navy Reserve pilot flying C-40's and his niece is married to a former Navy NFO, so it would seem they are keeping it all Navy Air in the family. (and as I recall- to think he *almost* thought about an inter-service transfer to the Army at graduation- but got straightened out at the last minute).

Like all great Navy-wives Brenda continues to take care of everything in Colorado while Brad is "deployed" to San

Francisco with Virgin. As Brad says – and don't we all agree – "Once a Navy [or Marine] wife- always a Navy wife." What a great surprise and I hope to see them the next time I pass through Colorado or San Francisco.



Brad and Brenda Thomann

George Tyree came through on his promise to provide an update and a family photo. This one was taken at his youngest son Matthew's commissioning ceremony earlier this year after he graduated from the University of North Georgia. You see the happy and proud faces of (left to right): middle son **Timothy ('12)**, George's wife Lynn, Matthew, George and the oldest son **Michael ('04)**. The event was made more special for George and Lynn the elder sons were there to help me with Matthew's swearing-in ceremony. Since the picture was taken, Michael has screened for early command and has reported to begin his XO/CO tour on board the USS Chief [MCM-14]. Timothy has received orders to the USS Chicago [SSN-721]; and Matthew is approximately half way through his Ranger training track before reporting to his first command. George continues to enjoy retirement and Lynn is teaching school locally in Florida.



Tyree Family

Ed Henkler wrote that he suspects many of you may have already seen one of his book notifications on social media. Just in case you haven't, he wanted to make you aware of a book to which he contributed a chapter. The book, "Here's How I Did It" chronicles the journeys of 21 individuals who confronted challenges and reinvented themselves. (Hey! Wasn't that also the title

of Dr. Viktor Frankenstein's book in *Young Frankenstein* (I mean "Frankenstein")? Anyway, Ed welcomes your input to his chapter and suspects you'll find at least a few of the other chapters interesting. Not sure if the Free downloads are still available but you could still try: <http://goo.gl/BDhxjw>.

On Oct 11th, 2014, **Jack Fernandez's** daughter **Marina ('03)** was married to **Ed Stevenson ('05)** in a ceremony in DC that overlooked the Capitol. Marina follows in her dad's flight boots having also been a Naval Aviator and now an attorney. Marina received her JD cum laude from the American University, Washington College of Law in 2013. (AND as I recall I think she once was a Navy cox's'n!) We wish Marina and Ed the best.



Marina Fernandez weds Ed Stevenson

In closing, we ask for prayers in solace for **Chris Davidson's** family, his wife of 27 years, Anne and their children Elizabeth and Michael. They and we lost Chris on Oct 24th. He had been fighting brain cancer for 5 years. He took a turn for the worse about a month before he died, but fortunately did not have much pain and was able to remain at home. Throughout his fight Chris always kept a great attitude and sense of humor. The funeral day was a perfect autumn day in St. Louis with a very large gathering of friends and family. It was an absolutely fitting way for all to remember a loyal Classmate and great guy. Besides Anne and his family, including his brother VADM **Phil Davidson ('82)**, his '78 family was represented by **Kevin Liddy, John Hueseman** and **Chuck Wendt**. (Phil is currently ComSixthFlt, on is on his way to ComFltForces and a 4th



Chris Davidson and that Smile

Star. Chuck had flown in from Tampa.) In lieu of flowers, contributions may be given to Brain Cancer Research at Siteman Cancer Center, Washington University, CB 1204, 7425 Forsyth Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63105-2161, or to the Episcopal Church of St. Michael and St. George. Chris was a friend and Lightweight Crew teammate. I guess it's fitting to give him one last cox's'n command- like we did after a long, hard row to the source and back. Your row's over, Chris, "way enough."

Launchin Spot Four with a prayer.

79 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: 0%
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: 90%

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

E: Sean.Cate@1979.usna.com

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

22445 Bluebird Ct., Leonardtown, MD 20650

P: 301-997-1980; W: 240-556-0637

E: JDWithers@1979.usna.com

SOCIAL NETWORK LINKS:

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/wizwithers>

<http://www.facebook.com/wizwithers>

WEBSITE: www.usna79.com

Greetings, 79ers!

Happy 2015! I haven't had the chance to chat with you all since the fantastic 35th Reunion last fall. Between the reunion, the holidays and my travel schedule, I've been in a bit of a whirlwind for the last couple of months. So it's nice to sit down for a few moments and update you on what's been going on since my last column.



'79 Alumni Row (l-r): Brian Decker, Scott Morrison, Steve Squires, Ken Russell, Ray Dolan and a fill-in rower from a later class.

Speaking of the reunion: in what continues to astound me, **Brian Decker** forfeited the opportunity to attend the class meeting. His excuse? To participate in the Alumni Row at Hubbard Hall that morning. Not only that, he coerced **Scott Morrison, Steve Squires, Ken Russell, and Ray Dolan** to skip class and play in the river as well. When I send him the academic accountability form for signature, I'd better not see "I was there" in the remarks section. Thanks, Brian, for the photo! You missed a great review of the meeting minutes by your class scribe, though...