



'77: JC, Rich, Sam and Corky



'77

passed away back on August 22, 2015. Jerry served in the CEC, and after leaving the Navy relocated his family near Houston in Katy, TX, where he worked in IT. He and his wife Carol also ran an academy of martial arts, in which Jerry won numerous individual competitive titles. He is pictured above in a photo from an earlier column with Carol and one of their two sons, either Chris or Brandon.

And **Craig Turley (36th Co.)** emailed that **Lester "Les" Carr (23rd Co.)** passed away February 28th. After earning his wings, Les flew H-2s until 1985, and at which point he went to NPS, earning a PhD in Meteorology in 1989. From 1989-1992 he was Forecaster and Deputy Director of the Joint Typhoon

Warning Center on Guam, at which point he returned to NPS, where he served in a number of positions, as well as teaching physics and mathematics at Calvary High School.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Terann, and their family and friends.

"Home is the sailor,  
home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill."

Finally, we'll close with an administrative note regarding registration for our 40th. Be advised simply registering on the website only provides your log-in credentials; it does NOT necessarily sign you up for any of the events. Once you've registered, you are then

required to log in and complete the process for each of the events you wish to attend.

Here's to seeing everyone in October.

— Magoo

P.S. Rob Lamb informed us Christofferson is feeling particularly cocky about his golf game at the moment, and so has challenged all comers in the 40th Reunion Golf Classic to a \$100 individual match with an automatic \$50 press once either player is closed out. **WE'RE** in; **so play hard Hose**; the only question is whether Ducky will accept the challenge!

## '78

**Life Membership: 79%**  
**Donor Participation: 9.38%**

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**  
1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401  
e: canoeu78@aol.com

Website: **usna1978.org**

It was a tough last few months for our '78 family. We lost a few of our loved ones whom I now ask you to remember and to keep their surviving families in your thoughts and prayers. "Eternal Father, Strong to Save..."

Heather Russell informed us that on April 11th she and her brothers lost their father and we lost a Classmate, Shipmate and friend, **Ken Eckman (16th Co)** to complications related to Pulmonary Fibrosis. Ken had fought a tough battle and was working towards receiving a lung transplant, but unfortunately his disease had progressed too far. As this goes to submittal the family was making arrangements and planned to have a military service at seas as was Ken's wish. His family asks that in lieu flowers that donations be made to the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation in his honor. There is a donation page set up in Ken's name to which you can make remembrance gifts: <https://pulmonaryfibrosis.donorpages.com/Tribute/KennethEckman/>



Last Family photo with Ken Eckman



Luis Rodriguez

We also lost **Luis Rodriguiz (14th Co)** too. He passed away on April 10th surrounded by family and faith in Tulsa, OK.

After leaving the Academy Luis had gone to Texas Tech to finish his education. His obituary told of his life, "He was an electrical engineer most recently employed by WPX Energy; Luis also did independent computer consulting in his later years. That being said, Luis enjoyed everything relating to electronics. Outside of his career, Luis also had a passion for all types of music—spanning from mariachi to polka—that he passed on to his two children. Despite his many avocations, Luis will be most remembered for his unwavering humor, spirit, and faith that impacted those around him through his final days. He is survived by his wife, Lenora Jean (Sewell) Rodriguez; his son, Josh Rodriguez; his daughter, Lutie Rodriguez; his sisters and brother-in-law, Helen & Julio Pena and Anna Rodriguez; and his brother and sister-in-law, Mike & Corina Rodriguez." The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be made in Luis' memory to either First Baptist Church Caring Center or First Baptist Church Student Ministry (403 S. Cincinnati Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74103).

Our prayers and sympathies also go out to **Tim Sawyer (6th Co)** who lost the love of his life, Bette Ann (Dolson) Sawyer, on Saturday, 18 March, from complications following heart surgery. Per her request there

was no service or funeral. Following cremation, interment will be with Tim at a later date. In lieu of flowers Tim asks that donations be made in her name to either of two Melbourne organizations where she was she was a founding member: Unity Church of Melbourne, 2401 N. Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32935; or The Brevard Zoo, 8225 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne, FL 32940.



Tim and Bette Sawyer

In April **Rich Jesmonth** (35th Co) and his fiancée, Debbi Brown, were in Hawaii and visited with Julie and **Mark Lindstrom** (35th Co). While there, they also saw **Hank Van Oss** (17th Co). Julie and Mark are now living in Hawaii. They've been there since January when Mark started with a contractor working with the State Department of Education. He actually got offered the position through an Academy grad (sometimes the Order of the Ring Knocker has additional benefits). Mark and Julie had lived there back in the '80s so it's been fun for them to get back to island life. One day Eric said he hiked up to Makapuu to catch the early morning vista. He noted that in the eight years he previously lived in Hawaii he never saw whales off of Oahu. He thought it was because then he had probably been too busy cycling and running. But that morning he hiked he estimated he saw about two or three dozen. Guess we now take more time to smell the flowers or in his case to look for the water spouts and splashes. Mark offers that they always have room for classmates. I'll miss seeing you guys at the Atlanta Alumni Chapter's annual Lobsterfest but Hawaii sounds very appealing, Mark!



Rich, Mark and Hank



Julie and Mark Lindstrom

There have been a few job changes for a few of our classmates. **Mel Williams** (26th Co) is now Associate Dean of Engineering (External Affairs) at The Catholic University of America. **Mike Fralen** (29th Co) has taken retirement leisure to a new level. He got qualified as Captain on USCG 100 ton master mariner and now works for Watermark. That's the tour boat company that operates in Annapolis and Baltimore, **Shawn Tallant** (16th Co) is a Vice President at DELTA Resources, Inc. I heard that **Jay DeLoach** (29th Co) is the 1st Vice Chair of the Democratic Party of North Carolina.

**Jim Gafford** wrote that a group from 36th Company "plus spice (...the plural of "spouse"...)" got together the first weekend in March

for a "mini-reunion" in Las Vegas. He sent a few photos to show some of what went on but due to limited space the fact that was goes on in Vegas stays in Vegas I only say a couple of things and show only two pics. Gathered about the dinner table at the Texas de Brazil restaurant was the gang (clockwise): **James Pointer, Mike Moore, Duane Schoon**, Kelly Schoon (Duane's wife), Ann Vracin (Ralph Scaffidi's wife), Susan Horowitz (Rick Lowell's S.O.), **Rick Lowell, Paul Ross, Drew Nienhaus**, Jennifer Ross (Paul's wife), Tammy Wallace (Les' wife), **Les Wallace, Reny Pili, Ralph Scaffidi**, Gretchen Summer-Gafford (Jim's wife...he said they were still playing the newlywed card!) and finally, **James Gafford**.

Jim reported it wasn't a bad turnout. Most of them stayed at the Mira and as such some got to meet Siegfried of Siegfried and Roy Fame! The Mirage is home to an animal sanctuary that has housed the large cats used in Siegfried and Roy's since it closed in 2003. Siegfried, they were told, visits regularly. He was gracious enough to be photographed with the guys (left to right) **Paul Ross, Les Wallace, Siegfried, Duane Schoon, and Ralph Scaffidi**; and then with their ladies (left to right): Kelly Schoon, Ann Vracin, Siegfried, Jennifer Ross, and Tammy Wallace. (Yup, sorry the photo of **Jim Pointer** being detained by some, um "interestingly clad young "security" ladies was left out. But I had to share the wealth of

photos, guys. Besides, we have "young'uns" (Classes after '00) reading and looking at this stuff. Ha, ha.



Siegfried and '78



Siegfried and Ladies of 36th Co.

Let's close with a little fun. Cue up Kenny Loggins - da dum dum... ♪ ♪ "Revvin' up your engine, Listen to her howlin' roar, Metal under tension, Beggin' you to touch and go, Highway to the danger zone, Ride into the danger zone ♪ ♪..." Well our own Top Gun technical advisor, classmate and very good buddy, **John Semcken** wrote that his kids got him dogfight lessons for his 60th birthday last August. After almost 8 months he finally got the chance to take the lesson. Besides showing the instructor how an



'78: 36th Company in Vegas

## 78/79 CLASS NEWS

experienced Tomcat pilot could handle a dogfight what was even more impressive was that John still fit in his original flight suit from 1985!! He said he couldn't begin to tell us how much fun it was and it all came back immediately! I think I speak for most of us when I say we envy you, John; and to our families- now you know what we would want for Christmas!!



Launchin' Spot Four! 🎵  
Highway to the danger zone...

# '79

**Life Membership: 91%**  
**Donor Participation: 7.15%**

Pres: **LCDR Sean Cate, USN (Ret.)**  
e: Sean.Cate@1979.usna.com

Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**  
42498 Regal Wood Dr., Ashburn, VA 20148  
p: 240-556-0637; e: JDWithers@1979.usna.com

Social Network Links:  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/wizwithers>  
Facebook Group: **USNA Class of 1979**  
Website: [www.usna79.com](http://www.usna79.com)

Greetings, 79ers!

Last month I begged - for emails, photos, and the like. And this month - 79 comes through.

Received a great email from a proud **Abe Ellis**. As you may remember, Abe is the owner and proprietor of the Salmon River Light-house and Marina in upstate New York, on the shore of Lake Ontario. But what had him all jazzed up this time was something even more close to home:

✉ I rarely, if ever, publicly boast about my children but I do enjoy reading about other classmates' occasional, proud announcements about their own kids. Our son David, a recruited Division 1 soccer player out of Virginia Beach, has been playing Club soccer at University of Virginia for three years. In this his final season, David was elected team captain and also filled

the role as head coach, in that UVA does not finance coaches for their Club teams, unlike the majority of the other D-1 programs. D-1 Club soccer is a nationally-governed, well-organized and very competitive sport with six different regions across the US (well over 100 teams) and holds Regional qualification tournaments leading to possible invitations to the annual National tournament.

In somewhat of a Cinderella story, UVA advanced through the National tournament two weeks ago in Foley, Alabama and brought the National Championship trophy home to Charlottesville. I was extremely blessed to be there (my son had NO idea I was going to show up and the surprised...shocked!... look on his face when he first saw me was priceless!) and the emotion watching his 16-plus year soccer career end on such an incredible note was immeasurable.



**Abe Ellis with son David, Captain of the D-1 National Champion UVA Soccer Team**

Abe - we all share in your proud moments, and please send our congrats to David.

For some strange reason, I keep hearing references to 60th birthdays. That doesn't make sense - 60 is still a long way off, right? Or maybe it's me that's not making sense (feel free to disagree at any time). Anyway, I received a 12th Co. update from **Chris Cable**:

✉ On 11 March a few 12th company '79ers met in NW DC and helped **Bob Graham** celebrate his 60th birthday! **Mark Decker, Mike Foreman, Dave Moroney** (and me) were there. Turns out that all four of us had roomed with Bob at one point

over our four years at USNA. We were honored to meet and spend time with many of Bob's siblings and offspring (both from big families!) as well as his fiancée Nora. Somehow "60 years old" sounds worse than "planning our 40th reunion"!! For some of us, it is still surprising to see that "old guy" looking back at us in the mirror! For some others, there is still a full head of hair and hardly any gray! But we are all still pretty young at heart and very happy to catch up with some classmates.



**60th Birthday Party (l-r): Mark Decker, Dave Moroney, Mike Foreman, birthday boy Bob Graham, Chris Cable**

Thanks, Chris! I hear ya on that "hair" business! Thanks for sending the update and the photo.

Speaking of which, did any of you see **Mike Foreman** on the PBS TV show *This Old House*. Mike was invited to share some of the tools used on the International Space Station. It was about a 4-minute segment, and as I type this, it's available to watch online: <http://bit.ly/2oRlFvp>. Or you search "This Old House Captain Mike Foreman" and find the link that way. Check it out!

Next up is from our regular Gulf Coast correspondent B-J Jones:

✉ My husband, **Bill Jones** started his military career in Pensacola slated for flight training; however, he was stashed at NARF for a bit before he could get started. While at NARF, his first boss, **John "Jack" Hood '63** (now retired CAPT) showed him the ropes. Jack and his wife, Ginger, took us under their wings and explained how the Navy "really" works. It was because of their guidance and friendship throughout the years that enabled us to better "enjoy" the Navy experience. Bill and I met up with them for brunch after the

Army/Navy game (December 2016). Thirty-three years later we are still in touch and want to thank the greatest mentors ever!!! Thanks for allowing us to that. What a great example of "Links in the Chain".



**Links in the Chain: Bill and B-J Jones, Ginger and Jack Hood '63**

Thanks, B-J, for the update.

**Sean Cate** recently heard from **John Jolliffe**. John and Sylvia are enjoying retirement and are traveling the world, having covered South America in 2016, and currently in Asia. John would like to hear from classmates that are either living overseas or know of an interesting place to visit that may not show up in typical guidebooks. Contact John at [j.jolliffe@casasinternational.com](mailto:j.jolliffe@casasinternational.com).

In further retirement news, **Mike Kennedy** retired from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) at the end of April. Mike will the join the public sector and he Coco will remain in the Annapolis area.

**VADM Phil Cullom** retired from active duty in April. A number a 79ers gathered at the Washington Navy Yard for the occasion. Jim Davis sent along a couple of great photos - thanks, Jim! And congrats and best wishes to Phil!

**VADM Joe Mulloy** will end his career on May 30th at a ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard. That will be precisely 38 years since we tossed our hats! Best wishes to Joe and Beth - I hope to see you at the ceremony! When Joe retires, that will leave **LtGen Bob Walsh, USMC**, as the last 79er on active duty. Bob is CG of MCCDC at Quantico and has about one more year to serve in that position.

Before I sign off, there's one more thing. During the shift in the Classmail email system, it's possible I missed an email or two. Anytime someone sends me an email, text,