

respectful manner than Murph, and (b) not mention the fact we'd just been fried for an additional 50 the night before.

All was well in the end. The 35th Company Officer, LCDR Schissler, reduced the 50 for an unauthorized television to 20 for an illegal electrical appliance, and prior to June Week, a number of us graced CDR Martin's office with the presence of one of the torpedoes from in front of Dahlgren Hall.

Oh, those zany Mids!
—Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 80%
Donor Participation: 11.06%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

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As I write this column, summer has truly started in Annapolis with hot, muggy days marked more often than usual with thunderstorms. Newly minted Ensigns and Second Lieutenants are a week into their basket leave, some getting married (no one ever listens to the pitch about trying to wait), others stashed at the Academy as sailing instructors, coaching assistants, candidate guidance and other office "worker bees". The Academy is still buzzing in the month between Graduation and I-day like when we were Mids. Between sports camps, STEM camps and Summer Seminars the Yard is alive with our nation's youth- not to mention the tourists.

By the time this issue gets to your doorstep the reunion will be a few weeks away. Hopefully, you've been seen and studied the e-mails, plans, notes, registration links etc. for the event. The Reunion Committee hopes that some of it sank in and you still aren't sitting there in front of the Registration screen with the same look you had staring at the pages of a Thermo Final. From what we have seen from a couple of months ago you seem to have gotten the word. In fact, in May, we already had all the blocked rooms

reserved. **Remember**, it is being held the weekend of the Navy versus Lehigh game, Sept 13-16. We open up with the Golf tournament and informal welcome and reception on Thursday the 13th and conclude with a farewell brunch on Sunday the 16th.

Also, by now those of you who brave going online to our website will know it has a new and exciting look. Our webmaster, my company-mate, **Matt Elias** (11th Co) has done a great job of improving the look, functionality, and efficacy of it. By now, it is up and running. But a website's only as good as those who use it and add to it. I encourage you to go online and take a look at it; play around in it and spread the word. Let's make it an active and living source of information and memories by keeping me and your webmaster, Matt, aware of updates and news to add.

I've been getting a few pictures from some of you for my attempt at a slideshow of sorts during the reunion. I also have many images from the days when you had to send a hardcopy picture to me that I hope to finish scanning in time for the reunion. Everyone can get some chuckles from these old views of how we once looked, some of what we once did (Of course, some images we'll instead keep "classified". Ha, ha). I'm sure there'll be a lot of "Oh my God, is that me?!" or "is that so and so?" and "Hey, look at this!"

Reunion time will also be a time to remember not only those who couldn't be with us because of jobs, schedules or other conflict, but especially for remembering those whom we have lost over the years. At last reflection- of those we know about - that number is approaching 70. In May, we lost two more who are included in that number. We lost **Fred Hilder** (5th Co) and **Alex "Yogi" Hnarakis** (13th Co). Fred's death came after an eleven-month battle with glioblastoma. Alex succumbed after a three-year long struggle with medullary thyroid cancer.

Fred's funeral service was on May 6th. He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Cindy, and their six children, Cortney Hilder, Brandon

Hilder, Daniel Wood, Timothy Wood, Matthew Hilder, and Olivia Hilder. In '86, Fred received a Master of Divinity from South Eastern Baptist Seminary, and a Master of Education in 2009 from Liberty University. He served 28 years in the Navy, five years as Surface Warfare Officer as well as Lay Leader, and twenty-two years as Chaplain. Retired from the Navy in 2010, he worked as a guidance counselor at Grafton Middle and High School where he cared for many students, families, and faculty members. Fred found the Lord at fifteen years old and dedicated his life entirely to serving Him. He was a model of faith, love, and trust in Christ. Fred had a powerful spirit of benevolence and hospitality and always wanted the best for everyone. The family had asked that memorial donations be made in lieu of flowers to Servants in Fellowship Ministries (SIFministries.org).

Alex lived his childhood dream to fly; becoming an F-14 Tomcat pilot and inspiration for the movie *Top Gun*. He went to Navy Test pilot school and became an experimental test pilot. He was squadron commander for VF-103 "Jolly Rogers" and the "Bloodhounds" of VX-30. He flew in 23 different aircraft, amassed over 4700 flight hours (over 3300 of those hours in the Tomcat), and had over 900 "traps". Not content with flying aircraft, many of us remember that Alex also enjoyed jumping out of perfectly good ones. While at the Academy, he amassed 210 jumps and competed at the Collegiate Nationals. His post-graduation jumps included the first demonstration jump at the Washington Monument and jumps from 'Fat Albert', the Blue Angels C-130 aircraft, for a record all-military freefall formation of 28 jumpers. His companymates can recall Alex out in the company area hallway with his parachute laid out, carefully folding it. Alex was buried on May 10th at Assumption Catholic Cemetery in Simi Valley, CA. His wife, Joette, said "Alex' day was beautiful: 2 Catholic priests, 2 deacons, family and friends, USNA buddies, lots of love and hugs. FOOD after the mass, always makes me happy.

At the cemetery was Taps, folding of the flag and 3 gunshots which impressed my boys. And then more FOOD!" In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations to Lazarex.org, the only non-profit foundation that supports families in clinical trials. Most trials are not free and not reimbursed, so Lazarex helps those in financial need to save their life by traveling to a trial when money is a problem.

We send our prayers and love to Cindy, Joette and all the Hilder and Hnarakis families. We were all blessed to have had Fred and Alex as classmates, Shipmates, squadronmates and friends.

With the passing of friends, it is always rejuvenating to catch one where you least expect to see them. I attended the Hillsborough County Bar Association's annual banquet in Tampa, FL, as the guest of my good friend, **Art Fisher '62**. The guest speaker was ADM Wes McRaven, Navy Seal of "Make Your Bed" fame and Chancellor of the University of Texas. As I got to my table I hear this loud "Vinnie Balderrama!" I turned to see who is yelling at me. It is none other than **Jack Fernandez** (9th Co). Jack is an attorney in town and was there with his beautiful wife, Terry (also an attorney). Their "ping-pong" residences- where they go back and forth from his place in Tampa to hers in New Orleans - seems to work well for them. They both looked great! Jack looks like he could still strap on an F-14 and make a few shots and traps. The next afternoon, Jack treated me to lunch near his office. (I also twisted his arm to contribute to our class project- as I again remind you to do!). It was great catching up with him- though briefly- and to hear that his kids are doing well, that being a grandpa is great, and thoughts of/actual retirement is not too far down the road (for all of us). I just wish we had more time to have spent along that Hillsborough River Walk. It had some great views and the day was a beautiful day. Then again, any day with classmates and friends is a beautiful and great day! With that, I look forward to sharing some beautiful days with you guys at the Reunion.

Launchin' Spot Four.