

## 76/78 CLASS NEWS

Class of 1876 looks like. I hope all my fellow classmates enjoy this photo.

**Kevin Stone** has a challenge for the Class:

✉ My brother was looking through our late mom's things and came upon this photo of me that I'll call "Midshipman Stone ... the Early Years". It was taken in around 1956-57 while my father was assigned to his first boat in New London. I'll claim this as "the earliest known picture of a member of the Class of '76 in a naval uniform." Does anyone have a similar one? Come on, it's time to go through that box of old photos, fire up the scanner and send in your entry! Think of the honors and prestige! I'll come up with a prize at some point ...



Midshipman Stone...the Early Years

**Tim Farrell** is looking for interested individuals to serve as Blue & Gold Officers:

✉ **Kent Higginbotham, Tim Naville**, and I are Blue & Gold Officer Area Coordinators and completed virtual Area Coordinator Training 15-17 September. We were proud to learn from one of the presentations that our classmates **Derwood Curtis** and **Ed Gilmore** are officers of Naval Academy Minority Association, a new organization of Alumni and Midshipmen, [www.usnama.org](http://www.usnama.org). Please consider serving as a Blue & Gold Officer. If you'd like to learn more about it please contact Kent, Tim, or me.

Our sincere condolences go out to **Patrick Giancatarino** whose wife, Marci, passed away on September 11, 2020. Speaking for the entire class, our thoughts and prayers are with you at this most difficult time.

## '77

**Life Membership: 74%**  
**Donor Participation: 19%**

Pres: **John F. Vuolo**  
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Sec'y: **Thom McKee**  
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*"It seems to be a law of nature,  
inflexible and inexorable, that those  
who will not risk cannot win."*

– John Paul Jones\*

\*Who must have, at one time, been a  
real estate developer!

Well shiver me timbers from me masthead to me keel, a dead calm's descended upon the Seventy-Seven Sea. Maybe the offer of a pirate's ransom of \$100 (payable from the Buddy Barker Retirement Fund, Thom McKee, Treasurer) for the best quarantine tale will put some wind in your sails...or, in this case, hot air. Consider said aforementioned ransom offered, under the strict rules of conduct as set forth in the Pirates Code...which, remember, are more guidelines than rules!

Now, on with the show.

First up, after 10 months of extended training, **Bob Barnes (22nd Co.)** successfully completed the virtual Boston Marathon, finishing in 5:35, and raising over \$14,000 for the Semper Fi & Americas Fund to aid Vets either wounded in combat, catastrophically injured or suffering from serious illness. Though not quite as fast as his 2009 time of 3:48, 11 years can make a bit of a difference, particularly when we're all closer to the finish than the start.



Bob Barnes

Bob observed it was a much nicer day than the original April 20th race date, with perfect blue skies, a bright sun and a steady 65 degrees. His prime sponsor, JetBlue, had a film crew with him from start to finish, and you'll be able to view Bob's segment as part of an upcoming documentary on virtual marathons.

In what Bob termed an exhilarating surprise, JetBlue arranged to fly Bob and Debbie's daughter Jill and grandson Aiden from Tampa to cheer him on as he ran past the stands.

Lastly, we were saddened to learn **Mike Golda's (32nd Co.)** wife Kathleen passed away in August.



Kathleen Golda

On behalf of the entire class we offer Mike and his family our most heartfelt condolences. Kathleen's inurnment will take place at the Naval Academy on Wednesday, 12 May 2021.

Magoo

## '78

**Life Membership: 81%**  
**Donor Participation: 45%**

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**  
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e: canoeu78@aol.com

Website: [usna1978.org](http://usna1978.org)

Okay- this will be the last column of a really (fill in the blank) 2020. Suffice it to say, I am sure we will all be glad when it is over and REALLY hope 2021 will be better. It sure as heck couldn't be worse! Oops,

didn't we say that about 2020 compared to 2019? Oh well.

One reason why every year it gets a little harder for your Class Scribe to write this column is that I more often seem to report on the loss of '78 brothers and their family members. This month's column is another example. One of the biggest nightmare parents have is to bury a child. Sadly, a few of you have experienced that horror. Regrettably, another of our '78 family had to experience such pain this summer. **Luke** [whom some of you remember as "Chip"] **Ridenhour (6th Co)** lost his first child, Jacob. As Luke said, "He fought a good fight, but cancer and its accompanying side effects proved to be a foe he couldn't defeat." Jacob also left behind a wife and two children.

Luke recalled that the Naval aviation safety program had a stress measurement system. It assigned points for anything and everything that one could experience like lack of sleep, going through a divorce, severe illness of a family member, lots of bills, etc. Depending on the threshold of the tally, a CO could take an action such as let them keep flying, watch them closely, or keep them off the flight schedule ["ground" them] for however long they needed until their life got less stressful. Luke noted that "Only one adverse event had an incalculable value, and that was the death of a child. Sadly, I now know why." That said, a lot of you came out and shared your experiences with Luke to help assuage his pain. You guys provided prayers and support for him- as you always do for all our families in need. Our prayers continue to be with Luke and all of you who have lost someone.

The lockdown has done nothing to prevent us staying in touch (though my email inbox *might* disagree). Where possible, we got together (appropriately socially distanced of course [sure]). Some have been very creative in staying connected- like the men of 21st Company...

**Charlie Love (21st Co)** wrote that "with the ongoing pandemic, opportunities to get together have

been limited. However, **Scott Provov** has stepped up and hosted a weekly Zoom call for the 21st company "Dirty Bastards". The Company has had lots of good engagement with a wide-ranging group and many spouses. Leslie and **Scott Provov** are the hosts with Maria and **Jerry Swartz**, Carol and **Steve Sutton**, **Paul Lynch**, Dana and **Charlie Nicol**, Sue and **John Wissler** (with Sue being a stand-in), Charlie Love, Caroline and **Jeff Carpenter**, Cathy and **Otto Bulich**, **Gary Rupp**, **Mark Broome**, **John Storvick**, **Jim Schlagheck**, Dale and **Vinny Rossitto**, and **Rick McClelland** as frequent members. They also had a rare **Tom Holman** sighting. Charlie added that "These have been great meetings and brought the company closer together. We really appreciate the great job Scott has done. We are all anxiously awaiting our next face-to-face get together." Bravo Zulu 21st Co!

Susan and **Chris Hassler** (17th Co) treated us this summer to a sailing jaunt on the Severn and out to the Route 50 Bridge. They have a sailboat that's large enough that my non-swimming wife feels comfortable enough to be on. (She tells people that if they see me looking at a boat to call the police because I am trying to kill her. Ha, ha. Since Coach Higgins is no longer with us, I may to arrange private "sub-squad" lessons with **Ray Bracy's** (25th Co) wife, Yvonne. She teaches adults to swim.) Anyway, the Hasslers were nice enough to host us and our five-year-old goddaughter, Elise, and her seven-year-old brother Chris. (Their parents are neighbors up the street— both '07 West Pointers.) Besides, reawakening some Plebe summer sailing lessons in me, we almost got young Chris bitten by the nautical bug. It wasn't enough as he still wants to "go Army" but we have his sister still pointed to USNA. "CAPT Chris" and "Miss Susan" did their best to make him "salty" but to no avail. It may take more lessons.



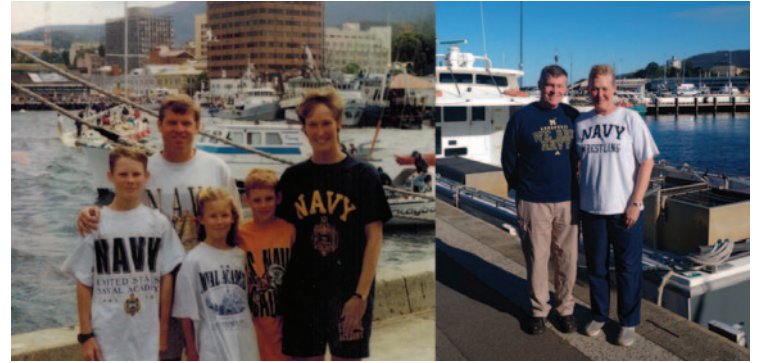
CAPT Chris teaching helmanship



Miss Susan and Elise

More retirement news: **Marty Thamm** (35th Co) retired in July from the "Death Star" [Lockheed Martin]. His CA-born wife, Rochelle, fell in love with his old hometown and now they have a lovely home in Spokane. They sold their San Jose home, though they still have their sailboat in Alameda. They were planning to sail her to sunny Mexico late summer/fall, but the pandemic changed that. They're shooting for the 2021 cruising season. Pre-Covid-19 they connected with Terri and **Jon Kolp** ('77). They also saw Patricia and **Ray Milton** (18th Co) at their high school reunion last September. Marty went to HS with Jon and Ray. All three of them were in the marching band. Jon was the senior drum major when Marty was the junior drum major. Marty thought Ray played trombone, but he did know that Ray had a rock band in HS. Big hair, big beards, and played lots of instruments. **Mark Lindstrom** organized a 35th Company European river cruise for 2020. They've deferred to Spring 2021.

**Al Kuntz** (28th Co) retired from Southwest Airlines at the end of August. It was his second retirement. As he wrote, "21 years



'78: Lillys in Tasmania (then and now)

in the Navy and now 20 years at Southwest Airlines. I opted for the (slightly) early retirement package that was offered and am happy to know that I no longer have to live out of a suitcase! Over 16,000 hours flying the 737, about 10,000 miles flown each week (including commuting from Montana to Oakland, Chicago or Denver), and tens of thousands of happy passengers delivered safely to their destinations.



Al and Lisa

In September, I got a great update from **Sale "Bubba" Lilly** (6th Co). He wrote that in March of last year, he and Karen were fortunate to be able to return to Tasmania. The last time they were there was 25 years ago with their three young children. The 2020 trip was planned a year in advance. Luckily, no part of their month-long trip was altered in anyway. They got back home by the skin of our teeth...as things started shutting down. They were almost the LAST flight out of Melbourne before Australia closed their borders due to Covid-19. While they have visited Australia/Tasmania THREE times, they still found new adventures, cuisine and beauty every time they go. Bubba wrote that luckily Tasmanian Devils are still around and were a sight to see!! They showed their USNA pride at the harbor of the Tasmanian capital, Hobart, IN THE SAME SPOT as they did with their kids (Sale IV ('04), Reid & Sarah) 25 yrs. ago, with. GO NAVY! On their long trip home they got "an EXTRA blessing" with a stop in L.A. to pick up their little grandson, Sale V whom they took for fun back home in Mississippi). Bubba said they "HAD THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES!"



Al's Last Flight

**Kiehl Norris** (25th Co) retired from Delta. He wrote that in "attendance during this VERY quiet Covid period were my lovely bride Lisa and our classmate and my company mate **John "JR" Rudzis** (25th Co)." Delta and the pilots' union negotiated a decent early retirement, so Al got out 10 months before the mandatory age 65. John is hanging in there until next March and will retire as a Delta Captain, having also retired from a full career in the Marines about 20 years ago.

**LUCKY BAG OF BOOKS**

To check out all the options for your reading pleasure, visit [usna.com/LBB](http://usna.com/LBB)



Well that's all folks! See you 2021...no, seriously, I hope to SEE you - no masks and shoulder to shoulder over drinks- in 2021. Launchin' Spot 4 to 2021.

# '79

**Life Membership: 91%**  
**Donor Participation: 20%**

Pres: **CAPT Dave Jackson, USN (Ret.)**  
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Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**  
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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!

As some of you know already, my wife Karen and I both enjoy photography. I would consider myself an "enthusiastic amateur", but Karen is absolutely passionate about it. Landscapes, wildlife (especially birds), architecture, flowers - she can spend hours on end "in the field" and not realize how much time has gone by. We typically take several photography trips a year, ranging anywhere from 2-3 days to two weeks.

A couple of days ago I was backing up Karen's digital catalog (in addition to being her equipment Sherpa, I'm also her IT support), and it struck me yet again just how different 2020 has been. In reviewing her image folders I realized our last trip of any kind was in March - we were flying out to Utah when the shut-down was announced, and although we completed our trip, we returned home earlier than planned because of flight cancellations. By the time restrictions began to relax and national parks reopened, we were so busy dealing with changes in our respective work lives that we really didn't give much thought to traveling.

None of this is unique to us, of course. I would venture to say all of you have had your normal habits interrupted by the events of this year. **Dave Jackson's** emails detailing the changes in routine at USNA - modified Plebe summer, Bancroft Hall quarantines, staggered

graduations and class return dates, football games without fans - are just more examples of how we've all had to adapt. We can argue the merits of certain decisions and debate whether we've done too little or too much to address the issues. Regardless, we've all been knocked out of "normal" to some degree.

Most of the emails I get are from events where classmates have gathered together, bumped into each other, or in some cases met each other for the first time. Those opportunities have been extremely limited in 2020. Contrast that to 2019: we had our big reunion in September, and the following March we were confined to our homes. What a difference in a mere six months! Consequently, I don't have a whole lot to report this month.

I did receive a couple bits of news here and there. Our previous class president **Sean Cate** emailed to say he went "under the knife" for back surgery on August 3 at the Winchester (Virginia) Medical Center. In a fortunate coincidence, the top anesthesiologist at WMC is Sean's company-mate Dr. **Howie Green**. In addition to his anesthesiology duties, Howie spent some time with Sean's wife Janet, including ushering her in for a quick visit prior to the surgery. He also stuck around to provide the post-op news, which was all good. Sean remarked that he did not get the obligatory *Shipmate* photo, but since he and Howie were both wearing masks it didn't really matter.

Even with all the changes, some things are apparently "pandemic-proof." Specifically, we've had several classmates become grandparents (or grandparents again). This past summer Howie Green became a grandfather for the first time and expects a second grandchild soon.

Janet and Sean Cate became first-time grandparents in August when their son Stephen and daughter-in-law Anh welcomed "Sweet Caroline" (USNA 2042?) into the world. Sean pointed out that she arrived with her own theme song! Sean's surgery and COVID restrictions mean that they have yet to hold their granddaughter in

their arms, and they hope that changes soon.

In the congratulatory emails that followed, **Scott Hegarty** announced that he and his wife became first-time grandparents on the same day. Reagan Leigh Hegarty was born a mere 7 minutes after Janet and Sean's granddaughter, and as Scott says, "timing is everything" Congratulations to the Greens, Cates and Hegartys on the newest additions to their families!

Finally, a rare in-person gathering to report. **Frank Dombrowski** is building "Patriot Ridge", his retreat on a mountain top in Romney, WV. In his travels back and forth to the city, Frank stopped in for a drink at the "Fouled Anchor Pub" in the Lake Frederick, VA home of Janet and Sean Cate. Sean and Frank both earned their SWO pins as young Ensigns on "Big-T" Tuscaloosa. Frank and Sean both extend an open invitation to their respective retreats, "where 79ers drink for free." Frank also has a nearby weapons range for those interested in shooting sports.



Sean Cate (with coronavirus beard) and Frank Dombrowski at Sean's "Fouled Anchor Pub"

As we wind down the "eventful" year that was 2020, let's take the time to enjoy all the things that make this holiday season so special. Thank you all once again for allowing me to serve another year as your Class Secretary - a privilege I truly enjoy. Karen and I wish all of you a happy and blessed holiday season, and look forward to a bright 2021.

See you next month!  
**Wiz...**

### UPDATE YOUR PROFILE

Log into **Online Community at usna.com** to update your profile.

# '80

**Life Membership: 96%**  
**Donor Participation: 22%**

Pres: **Tim Kobosko**

Sec'y: **CAPT Joseph A. Grace Jr., USNR**  
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Website: <http://1980.usnaclases.net>

Greetings Classmates,

Navy just pulled off an amazing comeback to beat Tulane in the final seconds of the game! Special thank you to all of the Classmates who reached out to make sure all was ok in the Big Easy with all these storms! We were lucky that it moved west and east - however, I did receive a note from **Tonto Otano**, otano@lundbeck.com sharing the damage in his neck of the woods of Point Clear, Alabama. At the time of this writing he was out of power, intermittent cell coverage - and yet fortunately his new house had no damage. Glad you're ok Tonto!

Over the past few months, we executed a solid election process to fill our two leadership vacancies. Congratulations to **Janie Mines**, jlmynes@aol.com and **Barb Geraghty**, barb.geraghty@cox.net as our new Vice President and Treasurer for the Class. Well done and thank you for stepping up to serve. Also special thanks to **Bruce Grooms** and the Nominating Committee for their efforts and a very well-run election cycle.

Another member of the Class who lives down here in Louisiana (Baton Rouge), **Russ Granier** rjgranier@gmail.com sent in a great note that epitomizes reaching out to our Classmates!

✉ Joe:

As we look forward to our reunion, many of us are reaching out to long lost Classmates. My plebe summer roommate was **Glen "Arky" Howard** and I had lost touch with him. Arky left Annapolis prior to graduation and none of our Dirty30 classmates knew of his whereabouts.

I was unable to locate Arky. He doesn't have a social media presence and having a relatively common name and not knowing the