

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 46.98%

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As this arrives at your mailboxes, we will be deep into the "Dark Ages". One can arguably say that we have been in it for the last 15 months. It certainly seems that way as over the past year my columns have had some mention of loss- the loss of a classmate or classmate's spouse. Sadly, I have to say, this month's edition is no different.



Bill Davis

In January, we put out word of the death of my Foxtrot Companymate, 12th Company's, **Bill Davis**. He succumbed at his home to

pancreatic cancer, but throughout it he was strong- like the Marine he was. Bill was one of our more senior classmates, having come to Mother B after a couple of years as an enlisted Marine. A quiet, sure of himself, "Texas cowboy", he was a solid guy and a true friend. Our prayers go out to his family, his widow, Chery, and our brothers in 12th Company, who knew him best. You can read his obituary on the Memorials tab on our website, along with the many others we know we have lost to date. (By the way, please let me or our webmaster, **Matt Elias** (11th Co), know of anyone we've missed or to pass on a missing obituary.)

Our deepest sympathy also goes out to our brother, **Mark Peterson** (28th Co) over the loss of his husband, Wendell "Wayne" Murphy. In recent years, Wayne had been suffering from Alzheimer's. Throughout, many of Mark's friends marveled at his devotion and loving care of Wayne. It was the embodiment of unconditional love. Anyone who has been a caretaker

for a loved one knows what a toll it can take out on you. That is especially true for dementia caregivers. It was no different for Mark. On occasion, he relied on the wonderful memories of their travels together, fine dining and the arts to sustain him. Other times he needed the bolstering of help from friends and classmates, and their prayers, hugs, and humor. He still needs it - so we are here for you, brother.



Mark and Wayne in Happier Days

But where there is grief, there is always relief at some point; some "light at the end of the tunnel" of the Dark Ages finally appears. Something eventually comes or happens that takes the place of SCREAMING out our goat court window and is the pressure relief valve that keeps us from exploding. For me, one "light" is the *positive* news that you send or which I glean from social media, classmate "sightings", rumor control and graffiti (okay- maybe not graffiti). I am buoyed by hearing those



'78: Jerry, Scott, Steve, "Carp", John and Charlie

uplifting aspects of your lives and of the things you are doing in the world to make a difference.

Among them are new beginnings - like the new life together of **Vinny DiGirolamo** (26th Co) and his new bride Susanna Deruvo. Vinny and Susanna were married this January. We wish them a long life together.



Vinny and Susanna

Other inspiration comes from hearing of the work you do to enrich lives- like the work of **Ed Henkler** (20th Co). He dropped an update that shows his rewarding post-retirement work. After early retirement from Merck, Ed became very involved in a passion driven by his Mom's loss of sight in the early 1990's. He created a website called The Blind Guide (theblindguide.com) that helps people (and their caregivers) thrive with vision loss. He said he's had the privilege of supporting around the world a few young startups that are developing novel assistive technology. That technology includes beaconless indoor navigation, smartcanes, tactile

tablets and more. Most recently, he's focusing on reducing unemployment for veterans, military spouses, and people with disabilities (especially blindness). Ed would appreciate classmates directing any relevant jobseekers to the "Employment Partners" tab on his website (<https://theblindguide.com/employment-partners/>). Even better- if you can provide an introduction for him to companies that believe in hiring these wonderful candidates, he'd really appreciate it - because that's the goal!

I also love hearing of how you manage to arrange for time together ("when two or three shall meet..."). **Scott Provow** (21st Co) reported on their Company second "mini-reunion". It was held at Grayton Beach, FL. Despite COVID, they had six couples attending: Maria and **Jerry Swartz**, Karen, and **John "Zip Zap" Simmons**, Dana and **Charlie Nickell**, Carol and **Steve Sutton**, Caroline, and **Jeff Carpenter** and of course, Leslie and **Scott Provow**. Scott wrote that, "It was fun". He noted that they celebrated John's 65th Birthday and Leslie's retirement from United after almost 32 years of flying. Scott added that Jerry retired "for good" from CENTCOM after 16 years as a "post action/lessons learned debriefer". Jerry and Maria are planning a move to Venice, FL this year. As Maria wrote on her Facebook page, the mini-reunion was "Epic stories, great food, and amazing company! Simply, the best of times!" With good friends together, how could it not be the best of times? (By the way, Scott says they still have their weekly-Wednesday Company Zoom calls.)



Dana, Caroline, Carol, Maria, Karen, and Leslie

What is also uplifting is reading how guys like **Lloyd Prince** (7th Co) and **Alan Jaquith** (3rd Co) rebuild homes, neighborhoods and lives with their volunteer work with church, community, and disaster relief organizations. I know they are representative of a lot you who do the same and the rest who also “serve” and help your communities in other ways.



Lloyd and Al

If all that fails to uplift me (or you). Go to a window. Open it... and yell “AUUUUUUUUUUGH!!!!” There, feel better?

In closing, many of you have probably gotten ballots in the mail for the Alumni Association’s Mid-Atlantic Trustee position. That position covers DC/MD/VA. Yup, that’s me on the ballot. I was nominated by some buddies from ‘79- **Scott Bruce** and **Ken Russell** - and I made the cut. If elected, one thing I want to do is to engage alumni in the region to ensure their voices are heard in what the Alumni Association does and asks of us. I want to try to be a little proactive by soliciting their input and not reporting “after the fact”. I hope I can count on classmates in the area for your vote (and for all of you to spread a good word about me to alumni friends). Regardless of how it ends, you’ll always find me here. In the meantime, I must go “kiss some babies”. Launchin’ Spot Four.

BLUE & GOLD OFFICER

Would you like to mentor interested students about the opportunities at USNA? Become a Blue & Gold Officer and contact USNA Admissions at 410-293-1813.

'79

Life Membership: 91%
Donor Participation: 23.07%

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Greetings, 79ers!

Last month I updated you on the arrival of **Bill Jones’s** new grandchild. Right after I sent the column off, Bill emailed to say that he just had a minor heart operation right before Christmas - if there is such a thing as a “minor” heart operation! The surgery went well, and Bill was describing the developments in medicine that have taken place in our lifetimes. For example, Bill was up and walking the very afternoon of his surgery! He went home a few days later, and by the time you read this he should be back in the left seat of an airliner. Glad your recovery is going so well, Bill - hope the airline industry recovers as fast and as completely!

Bill’s wife B-J always sends me in their annual Christmas letter. It was - like most - a list of what DIDN’T happen in 2020, and how they made it work anyway. They were especially sad to miss their 40th wedding anniversary trip to the Orient. But their second-best news (after the arrival of their granddaughter) was that everyone in the family was still employed, although at the proverbial “new normal.” Still, they’re all grateful and are looking forward to better things in 2021.

Dave Stehlin emailed to say that he and his wife Heather are the proud grandparents of three boys, ages 5 years, 4 years and 5 months. As all you grandparents can attest, Dave and Heather are having the time of their lives!

Dave also mentioned that he was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the American National Standards Institute. ANSI’s mission is to enhance the global

competitiveness of U.S. businesses. Among other things, ANSI works to foster and develop voluntary consensus standards across the globe. To that end, it represents more than 270,000 companies and organizations and 30 million professionals worldwide. Congrats, Dave, on your election and we applaud all you do to help US businesses and our economy.

I recently received a great email from my company-mate **Gary Rossi**. Gary and I have not crossed paths since we left Bancroft Hall in 1979, although we “see” each other every so often on Facebook. After recovering from CV-19 he found a great opportunity with Right Management as a Senior Career Management advisor. The best part is that the job allows him to work completely remotely. He’s also working with a boutique management consulting firm owned by two NAVY grads, so he’s not lost for things to do!

During Plebe Summer I had to memorize Gary’s hometown (“Napa California, Sir!”). After many years living in San Diego he was looking to return to the Napa Valley. Unfortunately, he lost his father in January 2020. However, his new remote gig allowed him to move to Napa last summer to help his mom and brother with the family ranch/farm there.

Gary got married to Maria while still in San Diego “in a nice beach wedding”. Like many multi-career couples, they are doing the “geographic bachelor/bachelorette thing” right now. Maria remains working as a Regional Hospice Marketing Leader in San Diego. She’s positioning herself to work remotely and simultaneously expand the business to the Napa Valley area, hopefully within a year.

After completing his career as a Navy SEAL, Gary developed a training program to help aspiring young frogmen/SEAL prospects to gain entry to BUD/S. He did this in San Diego for over 9 years and had a good track record of getting his trainees accepted into the program. Now he’s looking to develop a similar program in northern California.

He closed with an invitation to any classmate in the area to stop by for a visit, where good wine and cold brews are always available. Thanks, Gary, for the great update. Congrats on your marriage, and good luck in all your endeavors. Hope to take you up on that invitation when travel returns to some sort of normalcy.

I was fortunate to receive several Christmas letters over the holidays, including one from Diane and **Mac Silvester**. In our first careers Mac was a fellow LAMPS pilot, and more recently (before the pandemic) we met up a few times in northern Virginia to train for cycling events.

Mac retired from the US Postal Service Engineering last October. He says he doesn’t miss the day-to-day grind, but it was difficult saying goodbye to his talented and devoted co-workers. He’s found that retirement is as much an exercise in time management as being employed. Much of his time is spent downsizing - archiving several generations of items and donating where possible. He also was recently elected to an “at large” board member for his Hawaii State Society chapter. Even with all that, he still finds time to work part time at the local REI in the camping/backpacking department.

Mac’s wife Diane is still working as a public health nutritionist for Fairfax County, VA. She has given notice she will be retiring in March 2022 but hopes to stay involved part time. Otherwise she enjoys her role as “Nana” and also keeping Mac on a short leash. Congrats, Mac, on your retirement. The place has clearly gone downhill since you left - I was still receiving Christmas cards in the mail in February!

I also received the annual family letter from Cindy and **Pat Dennis**. Like all of us, they ended up canceling a lot of their plans for 2020, including a trip to Europe to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. Instead of their normal year of traveling, they enjoyed a simpler pace with scenic day trips and hiking. Pat still works for TSA, albeit remotely these days (which their cat loves), and he also teaches