

Gene's ability to focus on his goals was exemplified in his passion for crew. Having never rowed before entering the Academy, he earned his varsity letter in that demanding sport. His competitive spirit sparked **Doug Isleib's (18th Co.)** memory of Gene playing a handheld video game in their apartment in flight school. "He was a picture of concentration. It was unbelievable how fast his fingers flew. He was one competitive dude!" Shown below are Doug, Gene and Corky Gardner after a 10-mile race in Virginia in September of '77.



Doug, Gene & Corky

And, when potential trouble arose, he had a knack for landing on his feet while making it look easy. During PROTRAMID, **Rob Creamer (18th Co.)** and **Dave Burdine (26th Co.)**, both Florida Gulf Coast natives, were home on leave when a group of classmates arrived in P'cola for Naval Aviation orientation. They picked up the '77 contingent in Dave's dad's Winnebago and headed home to show their shipmates some Southern hospitality. Crawling along in stop-and-go traffic led to a spirited verbal exchange with some locals in a souped-up Camaro, which resulting in the Mids hopping out at a red light and rocking the Camaro. But before push led to punch, the light changed and Dave had the Winnebago underway and making way and all was well... until a quick head count revealed Gene was MIA.

"We feared for Gene's welfare—abandoned at night in the middle of the Redneck Riviera with that accent!" Rob said, forgetting for the moment this was THE Gene McCarthy. "It seems we fretted for naught, as out of the darkness appeared a convertible full of beach beauties with one SMILING Sweet Gene in the middle of the back seat,

surrounded by his newest flock of females friends!" Shown below during June Week '77 are, clockwise from the upper left, **Shawn Morrissey (18th Co.)**, **Bobby Magee (18th Co.)**, **Sean O'Brien (18th Co.)**, Corky and Gene.



18th Co. Grads.

Gene always made a positive impression. Classmates who attended his funeral Mass in Brooklyn remember the strong showing of DEA agents...and the 77-mile dash across Long Island to the cemetery. "We were in my underpowered Toyota trying to keep up with the DEA agents in the funeral procession traveling at 90 mph minimum!" Mike Canders remembered. **Duane Heughan (18th Co.)**, who made the trek with his parents and wife Karin, also recalled the drive as a bit of an ordeal, but it was worth it for Gene. "He was a great friend to many, and I miss him," Duane said.

Like many of us, **Dave Kirkman (18th Co.)** wonders whether, "In the 30 years I've had that Gene didn't, have I made the world better for anyone? Gene packed a lot of living into his 36 years, particularly the 17 he spent with us and his other military and DEA brothers." Mike Canders thinks on the sacrifice Gene made "so many years ago on a MEDEVAC support mission in a combat zone far away."

Gene's spirit lives on in the *Major Eugene T. McCarthy, USMC, USNA Class of 1977 Memorial Scholarship* funded by the class yearly in support of a Naval Academy Foundation student, as well as an annual 5K run sponsored by his Brooklyn high school in honor his service and ultimate sacrifice.

The words of John 15:13 ring clear as we remember Gene: "Greater love has no one than

this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

May we never forget Gene or our other classmates who have gone before us: Rest in peace, brothers.

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 3.83%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

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

Website: usna1978.org

I must open with a little Class business and a note from our VP, **Sean Coffey (13th Co)**, talking about the "early" class gift project.

✉ "You may have heard that the Alumni Association is about to break ground on a new, state of the art home on College Creek, across King George Street from Bishop Stadium. Your Class Officers have conferred and decided to make a \$750,000 gift to the Alumni Center as an early part of our 50th Reunion Class Gift. (The overall target amount and other components of the 50th Class Gift will be set a couple of years from now.). The Class will, in turn, be honored in two ways. The main gate at the entrance to the Center parking lot will be named for us, and the Class will have one of the larger class plaques that will stand along the walkway of the Center's garden. Wait, there's more. Classmates interested in being listed in perpetuity as a "Plankowner" of the Center can commit \$2500/year for five years. In the "good deal" department - all the '78 Plankowner donations will count three ways at once: (a) you get to be a Plankowner of the Center and will be listed on a virtual scroll of honor within the Center; (2) you become a member of the President's Circle for the Naval Academy Foundation; and (3) your contribution will count toward the Class' \$750,000 commitment. We already have a head of steam on '78 Plankowners but invite others to join the growing list. Sean Coffey is again heading up the fundraising for

our Class Gift so those Classmates who want to assist can reach out to Sean or any Class Officer. Go hard, '78"!

Over the years, **Mike Crisp (22nd Co)** has never have submitted any news. That is, until now. While Mike's e-mail was not a "thumbnail, of the Cliff notes to the novel" of his last 42 years since we graduated, it at least brings everyone up to date. Here goes. Mike fully retired at the start of December 2020. He spent the last few month "decompressing" and taking care of his wife, Jane's, "honey-do's", as well as a long list of things he said he should have done years ago. In 2001, he retired as an O-6, after a great career as a Naval aviator in the fighter community. He then served in the Pentagon as the Director, Air Warfare, Director Operational Test & Evaluation (OT&E) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). He immensely enjoyed that job as it still allowed him insight (and a bit of influence) for DoD aviation systems, aircraft carriers, and advanced weapon systems. He and Jane are blessed with three sons, all on active duty. LCDR Thomas Crisp is flying F-18 Hornets out of Lemoore, Maj John Crisp is at school, on his way to a Special Forces Battalion at Ft Carson, CO, and CPL David Crisp is at Camp Pendleton. [Note that trifecta of the *combat services* (lol) - just like the Fiorellis!] Mike and Jane currently live in Herndon, VA but are looking to move to greener pastures in retirement. Mike said he sees "a family farm in [their] future". Maybe a vineyard instead, Mike, as that is a great picture you sent of you and Jane from November at the Trump Winery near Charlottesville, VA. Just sayin' as you do look like well-off vintners! Thanks for the update and let's not wait another 42 year- please.



Mike and Jane Crisp

78/78 CLASS NEWS

Mike McCrabb (8th Co) dropped me a note. Like many of you (to include my family), he wondered at my still having an AOL e-mail address. "Crabber" admitted that he didn't realize AOL was "still in business with regards to email addresses". I could change it but y'all have known this as the way to reach me since the end of 1988. Like that old car grandkids tell grandpa to trade-in, I say, "Hey, it still works, right? So why bother". Mike gave a little update on Eighth Company. Mike and wife were trying to make it an annual habit of spending a week each winter in Hawaii. They'd been successful the last two winters, but with the pandemic it's not going to happen this year. Last January they were able to hook up with Laura and **Rich Chapman** for dinner at the Hale Koa. Crabber used to be able to catch Rich at Camp Smith once a year when our four-star classmate Harry headed USPACOM. Mike noted that "Harry, by the way, was always gracious about seeing classmates in his office while at PACFLT HQ and USPACOM." More recently Dotty and **Don Boland** (8th Co) had Mike over for dinner in mid-January 2021. He was down in Jacksonville, FL trying to find some warm weather for golf. Don retired a short while ago and is enjoying that new lifestyle. Dotty and Don have sons (plus families) in Orlando, Jacksonville, and Whidbey Island (the latter still on active duty), so they are surrounded by grandkids. Mike is hoping to arrange a mini-reunion lunch or dinner of DC-based Eight Company classmates if we can ever get some relief from the pandemic restrictions. Crabber believes other 8th Company mate like Elaine and **Brian Rochon**, Rae and **John Costello**, **Kevin Walsh**, and **Joel Gonzalez** are all nearby. He also pointed out that his e-mail address was missing the "Navy.mil" and said it's been almost two years since he switched over to the FAA. He works in their UAS Integration (International) HQ office and said, "It's been a very interesting switch". Mike will probably be working with them for another 18-24 months before pressing the big RETIREMENT

button. That said, he's not waiting until then to build a retirement home down in Tennessee. He hopes to be down there by this time next year and telework for his last year. In January, Mike started a blog. It's his first try, no prior experience, so he says he's making all sorts of rookie mistakes. Its most unimaginative title is "McCrabbisretiring.com". He adds, "Whereas most everyone else starts a blog because they're pretty smart about a given subject, and wants to share that knowledge, my goal is to have everyone else help get me smart on retirement issues. If I get anyone to read the blog ... I just raise a subject (timing, where to retire, why, health, Medicare, Social Security, travel, family, part time work, etc.), and hopefully somebody responds with their wisdom. We have a bunch of classmates already retired and probably just as many about to. Hopefully, somebody will actually read it. I need at least one person to respond so I can get smarter."

In some short rounds: **Paul Wiedorn** (27th Co) retired from teaching in June last year. They sold the house and are now hanging out on Anna Maria Island in Florida. **Carlos [Charlie] "Soto" Sotomayor** (16th Co) won my little contest to identify from where came the line "Fasten your seat belts, we're in for a bumpy ride". He was the first to write me to say, it was from movie classic, *All About Eve*. (**Edgar Vaughn** (4th Co) also wrote me with the right answer but Charlie was quicker.) Soto is still in Newport and retired from the War College in November 2018. He says he's a happy house husband now, "doing lots of projects, mostly badly." He said they spend a lot of their free days hiking in the region. Last June, they did Mt Marcy, NY. If I make it to Newport, Soto said he's got plenty of time for a pub crawl on lower Thames Street -when/if things get back to normal. It sounds great Charlie, haven't done that in Newport since I was in Justice School as young 1stLt (along with company mate **Jim VanDerKamp** (11th) and fellow Marine rotorhead and future squadron mate, **Roscoe**

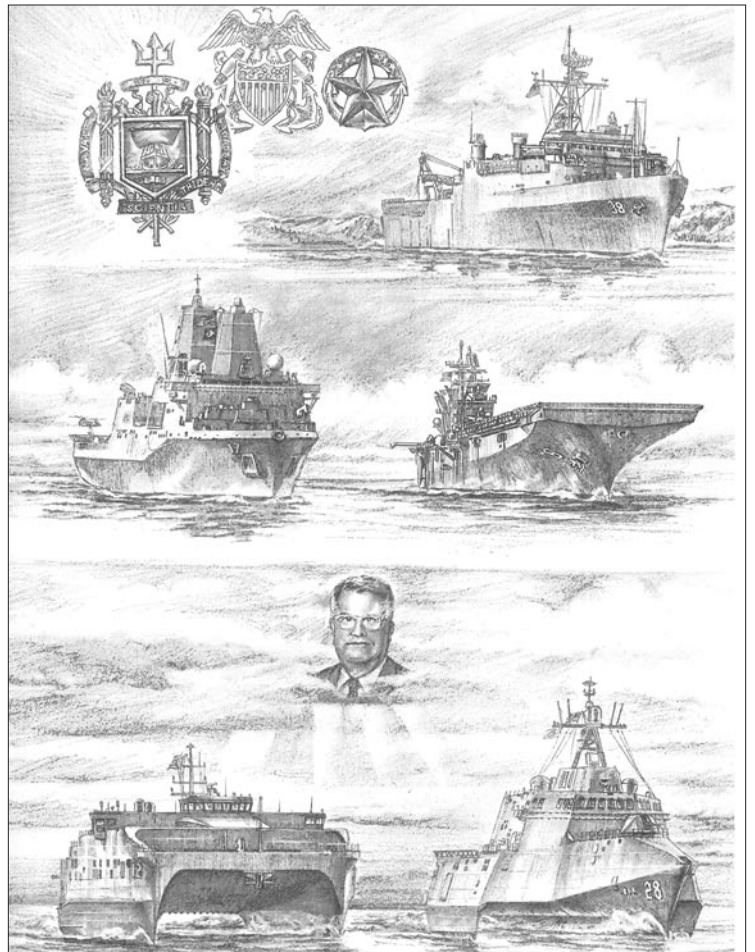
"Scoe" Godfrey (6th Co)). You can see, **Jim Shulson** (22nd Co) in a podcast on YouTube. Just look for something call "**Uncle Sugar's Magic Circus** podcast, Episode 28" (Note the "USMC" in the title?). It's Jim being interviewed and sharing "sea stories" and his Marine Corps experiences with the podcasters - his fellow Marines and friends. It's great! Jim is a great storyteller and was in true Shulson form. **Kevin Liddy** (17th Co) wrote to say that his daughter, Dr Caroline (pediatrician), ran the Boston Marathon last September in Greenville, SC. All the runners ran the Marathon distance wearing GPS trackers to show they did not pull a Rosie Ruiz. Caroline was a runner in high school and set a state record in the 2-mile. She earned an athletic and academic scholarship to Wofford, so she was fit. While Kevin is in "PT gear" in the pic he sent, he didn't run but was her cheerleader/road crew.

Her husband and others ran with her in intervals.



Dr. Caroline and dad (Kevin)

Like many columns lately, I end this month's edition with sadness and the loss of another brother. On Thursday morning, February 25th, we bid a final farewell to our classmate and friend **Terry O'Brien** (10th Co). Terry lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. He was at home surrounded by his wife, Wendy, their family and close friends. As his roommate and best friend



'78: Illustrations by Peter Hsu

Joe Martin wrote, “[we’re all]... thankful that he was at home with family, that Susan [Joe’s wife] could be there with them for support, and I am very thankful that he did not suffer very long. Wendy and Kristen are doing as well as can be expected.” Joe proposed that “we all raise a glass of your favorite whiskey (Jameson is preferred if you have any of that)” Terry has been a key member of our Class Officers for many years. He was our liaison with the Captain of the USS PORTER, DDG-78, for the annual Arch Griffin Memorial Leadership Awards and was the drive to make it successful and meaningful to the crew and our class. Terry always put our Sailors first and saw the good and potential that each has within them. He will be deeply missed. Please keep Wendy, their daughter Kristen, and her husband, LCDR Kenny Prindle, and Terry’s grandsons in your thoughts and prayers.

As I close the column, I leave you with an image created by Peter Hsu and the folks at PEO Ships and Austal who worked with Terry. (Peter does the official drawings and paintings for all new ships upon the occasion of their commissioning ceremony.). It is a fitting tribute to a true Sailor and our brother. “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” ... Launchin Spot Four, once again with the “Sky Pilot” aboard.

'79

Life Membership: 91%
Donor Participation: 3.88%

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

Greetings, 79ers!

There are some people you meet and for some reason, you just don’t ever forget them. **Brian Yanagi** is one such guy. We met for the first time on 7 July 1975 when we were both assigned to “Kilo Company”

in Plebe Summer. Brian always had a smile on his face. I mean, always. Uniform races, platoon drill, PEP – whatever was going on, he smiled. He’s the only guy I know that could “brace up” and smile at the same time. That’s why we called him the “Smilin’ Hawaiian.”

I caught up with Brian at the 40th Reunion (which seems like a lifetime ago), and again just recently through an email exchange. I told him that he was the first Hawaiian I had ever met. That’s when he told me that his first step on the US mainland was when he got off the plane for Plebe Summer. And I thought I experienced culture shock! I can’t imagine what that first Annapolis winter must have been like for him.

Today Brian is fully retired, settling in the Tacoma, WA area near his wife’s family. But he took some time away from his golf and his swimming to pen the following update:

✉ As a NOAA - UNESCO International Tsunami Expert (retired), I thought our sea going classmates would be interested in reading about the Tenth Anniversary of the March 11, 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

The event brought the stunning reality of the combined power of two of the earth’s most powerful natural hazards. Over 19,000 were killed or missing within Japan, but only two were killed outside Japan in the Pacific Basin. Tsunamis in general can occur at any coastline throughout the world.

If you are interested in reviewing the event, I compiled a newsletter summary of significant scientific findings shortly after its occurrence. These included the main shock magnitude 9 great earthquake (equivalent to over 30,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs) rupturing the ocean floor and its numerous aftershocks; the response of the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (PTWS) and US National Tsunami Warning System (formerly West Coast / Alaska Tsunami Warning Center) and promulgation of emergency messages; GPS ground movement

of Japan’s entire continent; size of tsunami waves inundating Japan and the entire Pacific Basin; cause of deaths and more. However, the newsletter does not address how the tsunami waves overwhelmed the Daiichi nuclear power plants. See the link: <https://bit.ly/2ZVd7l0>

Japan is considered one of the most earthquake and tsunami prepared nations in the world. Japan began its tsunami warning system in 1952, and the PTWS in 1965. In contrast, with no tsunami warning system in place, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami killed over 236,000 within a 24 period from a comparable magnitude 9 great earthquake in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. Over 160,000 were killed within Indonesia alone.

Soon thereafter, my NOAA - UNESCO colleagues and I were dispatched to “fast track” the creation of an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, based on the PTWS model. Later, we focused on creating a Worldwide Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System.



Brian Yanagi at the site of the 2011 Great East Japan Tsunami. Note the 3-story building lying on its side.

Brian included a photo above of some of the damage from the East Japan tsunami – an area of empty

foundations save for a single three-story building, mostly intact, lying on its side. A great example of the power of the natural forces at work on our planet. Thanks, Brian, for the update – it’s always good catching up with you!

The only other news I have this month is personal. After 20 years in the mid-Atlantic, Karen and I are relocating to the Atlanta, GA area for my work. This has been an idea of ours for a while now, and so we finally decided to pull the trigger. This is our first PCS move in some time, and we’re constantly amazed at just how much “stuff” we’ve acquired over the years.

My new mailing address is at the top of this column – all other contact info remains the same.

Now I’d better get back to work, sorting out things to keep and things to be rid of. I have to be careful – Karen has already threatened to put me in the “discard” pile. Twice...

Late entry – just as this column was being sent to Alumni House, **Ken Gray** called me with some extremely disappointing news. On 28 February **Russ Keller** lost his six-month battle with lupus in South Carolina. His wife, Chris and children, Katie and David, were at his side.

Identified early on as a hot-runner, you may recall Russ was our 1st set Brigade Commander. Russ was a submariner, wicked smart and had a dry wit. Russ finished a career in submarines as an O-6, including a command tour. Thereafter he served in a senior leadership position for Advanced Technology International, a nonprofit in South Carolina that focused on incubating



'79: Fall 1978—First set Brigade Staff. Russ Keller, seated, second from left.