



Navy Foundation Luncheon

No word on whether Kelly and Bethmann managed to squeeze in a quick 18 on the revamped Naval Academy course.

Moving on, the personal publicist of **Dave Vail (31st Co.)** (his wife Mary) wrote that on October 1, 2021 Dave's dad Ron Vail was honored as a part of the San Diego Honor Flight, a group which recognizes the contributions of veterans across the country. The service of Commander Ronald Vail, USN (Ret.) was particularly noteworthy, as he saw action in three wars, with a career from 1943-1968 which spanned WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

It was truly an honor for Ron and his entire family, as he's one of few members of the Greatest Generation left who saw action in WWII, let alone going on to serve the nation in two subsequent conflicts.

Shown below left to right, top to bottom are Dave, Bill Suiter, Bonnie Vail, Phyllis Vail Suiter, Ron and Cheron Vail:



The Vail Family

We know you join us in thanking Ron for his service and sacrifice.

Speaking of notable achievements at an advanced age, near-septuagenarian **Kirk "Buddy" Barker (9th Co.)** recently shot what head pro Mark Codianna described as "an incredible 67" to win the Seminole Lake Country Club's **prestigious*** Low Gross Low/Net

tournament by an astonishing 6 shots over a dispirited John Lisenbee, shown below being comforted by his daughter following Buddy's 18-hole tutorial in tournament golf:



Lisenbee

Third place finisher Lisa Ann Cordray was unavailable for a photograph as she was on a 3rd-grade field trip.

* Buddy claims many golf aficionados recognize the Seminole Lake Low Gross/Low Net tournament as the "sixth major", ranking only behind the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open, PGA and TPC...and just ahead of the Navy Homecoming Scramble...in stature.

Finally, we conclude our column on a somber note as we mark the passing of **Doug Meister (19th Co.)**.



Doug Meister

A number of Doug's 19th Company classmates took the time to collectively compose the following in honor and celebration of Doug's life which requires no editing:

✉ Doug Meister, Douglas Conrad "Mice" Meister left Des Plaines, Illinois, for the Naval Academy to fulfill his dedication to serving his country. His tenaciousness, loyalty and unique sense of humor endeared him to his 19th company classmates. He could be found studying with the ever-present pipe jutting from compressed lips. Doug traveled his own path with flair and confidence. After all, who smokes a pipe at age 18? Doug had great love

of the Navy and the sea. Graduating in 1977 from the Naval Academy with a history degree, he became a Surface Warfare Officer. This led to a master's degree in National Security Affairs and eventually back to the Naval Academy as history professor. Always competitive, Doug won several racquet ball tournaments. There was not an Asteroid or Missile Command video game in southern California that did not have his initials next to the high score.

Doug possessed a strong personal code of ethics which were not academic. He lived them. He loved to converse, particularly to challenge and debate. He could argue one side of an issue with someone and then moments later equally effectively argue the opposite side with someone else. This would serve him well after Navy retirement. He earned his law degree from the University of Maryland, passed the bar in several states, joined the firm of Meyers, Rodbell & Rosenbaum and worked his way to partner. This while raising two sons, Devon and Derric. Doug loved his sons. He especially enjoyed their time together as they grew into young men and brought two grandsons, Esca and Nolan, into the family. Doug also enjoyed numerous cruises with his father through the rivers of Europe. Football never appealed to Doug. While at the Naval Academy he used to carry a paperback under his cover while marching to the games. Then he would sit in the top of the stands, take out his book and read. On the other hand, Doug developed a fierce appreciation for all things soccer. As a season ticket holder for DC United he never missed a game. Doug's greatest pleasure was to read. A drizzly, cloudy day never brought him down. A deep comfortable chair, warm fireplace, swirling pipe smoke, glass of wine and book in hand cured all ills. Doug's infectious smile and wry wit carried his friends through tough times. His presence will be sorely missed. Fair winds and following seas Shipmate.

Home is the sailor, home from the sea, and the hunter home from the hill.

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 34.80%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**
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Jim Shulson (22nd Co) noted it's been "Tough times politically" so he sent something that is "so far away from politics that it should appeal to all". It's a "throwback" photo of a "lighter moment" in time. He added that "We see current photos of a bunch of gray-haired old men with great looking wives, but rarely do we get to see classmates as they were in their 'prime'." To rectify it, he sent a pic of him and **Bill "If" Fell** (34th Co) in their prime at a Christmas Party at Kadena Air Base BOQ in 1981. Well, it certainly is *unpolitical*, Jim and as you wrote, quite representative of "Wherever two or more shall meet...". When Jim sent the e-mail, he was escaping the summer heat of Las Vegas by visiting his son and his son's family in Minnesota. From there, he was going to NH to visit with family; then slide down to CLNC [Camp Lejeune, NC] to visit with an old Marine Corps buddy before heading back to Las Vegas at the end of September. He was looking forward to "some great Navy football games this year on TV". Unfortunately, like a lot of us, he was likely disappointed most of the time. He was very proud of his LAX teammate **Brian McCormack** (29th Co) for his election into the Navy Athletic Hall of Fame. [Belated congrats also to Hall of Famers: Football- **Joe Gattuso** (35th Co) and **John Sturges** (34th Co), Baseball - **Prentis Hall** (11th), Pistol- the late **Al Hammond** (22nd Co) and **Brent Obenour** (33rd Co), Basketball - **Hank Kuzma** (20th Co), Sailing - **Tim McGee** (15th Co), Rifle- **Tom Rentz** (5th Co), Fencing- **Robert E. "Dick" Richards** (35th), Tennis- **Walter "Buddy" Robinson** (2nd Co) and Squash- **Chet Seto** (13th Co).



Jim Shulson and Bill Fell

Both **Welling “Weps” Clark** and **Dan “Tex” Keuhlen** dropped notes to say that six of “Frat 5 [5th Co]” got together on 18 August. Since Tex hasn’t written anything since the last century, I’ll give him first crack at reporting the event. As Tex “wrote: “...since 1978, the sun was in my eyes, I tripped over a rock and due to the Coriolis Effect have been unable to write. But last month [Sept ‘21] 5th company had a little reunion in Colorado Springs when Terrie and **Artie Porcelli** were coming to the Broadmoor for a little golf action before winter set in. We had those 2, **George Ball** was coming down from Denver until he blew out a knee” [Welling commented that, “We kept telling him not to scrimmage with the Denver Broncos, but did he listen... NNOOOOO!!!!!!] Tex continued to report that “**Johnny O’Dwyer** came down from the Peoples Republic of Boulder, Sue and **Welling Clark** made it too. I even turned off the mine field at my compound at 9000’ and came off the hill...We invited **Ken “KC” Bates** and **Mike “Bernie” McGee**, but they couldn’t make it...whiners... As we joined up at the Garden of the Gods Club in Colorado Springs, the wait staff at this Elite Dining Emporium was particularly slow...did I mention ugly too? And as the waiters finally brought drinks and pulled their trays off their shoulders, there was KC and Bernie. What a friggin’ night... ‘course just shows you it is always hard to get good help...” Welling noted that Mike and Ken secretly flew out to surprise everyone for dinner. Weps’s remembrance was that Mike and Ken did not hide behind the waiter but instead acted



’78

as the waiters and carried out the trays to catch all off-guard. He admitted they “were not the most dexterous tray handlers” – unlike the Stewards we used to have in King Hall. Weps said they started dinner around 2015 and they shut the place down well after midnight. He added that Bernie brought pictures of them all “during our imprisonment... err... at USNA (including a “shoot-the-moon” one that Artie denied was him). Terry commented about the “family” resemblance.” He went on to add that “Tex brought that Budweiser t-shirt that Artie got hit with 50 demerits (or was it 75?) for selling (among other things at Boat School).” Both confirmed that they had a great time, laughing, and Weps added that the staff and surrounding tables put up with them. When they heard the story of their get-together, other dinners took pictures for them and were good sports given all the laughter coming from their group. Tex closed his e-mail by saying he would retire 29 October from Cheyenne Mountain. He claimed he’d “been running the alien autopsy room the last 20 years... It’s kinda time. I have T-LAM mensurated coordinates for the ranch if anyone wants to drop by... .It’s at the end of a mile and a half dirt road in the Keuhlen National Forest...would be best to call first though so’s I can turn off the mine field.....”. Enjoy retirement Tex. Thanks to you and Welling for the input. I have been to both the Broadmoor and Garden of the Gods- not too shabby! You were right to thank Artie for picking up the dinner tab. Then again, if he said the words “First Command”, maybe

he counted it as a business dinner, talking to some old guys about retirement investments.

Glen “Wheels” Wheless (24th Co) wrote of his mid- Sep ‘21 link up with 24th Co. mates, **Dave Surgent** and **Scotty Godfrey** in Virginia Beach. Dave was headed to the Outer Banks for beach fun with some of his P-3 buds. For the last three years, Wheels worked with a small group, led by **RADM ‘Bad Fred’ Lewis** (‘62), to fund and construct monuments to the F-14 Tomcat. Scotty was there for the Monument Dedication ceremony at the Naval Aviation Monument Park on the Boardwalk in Virginia Beach. The guest speaker was my Wheels’s old Tomcat buddy, **ADM Chris ‘Lung’ Aquilino** (‘84) who now leads INDOPACOM. Other ‘78 guys present were former Tomcat squadron mate **Dirk Berry** (26th Co) and high-time Hornet guy **Rodger Welch** (11th Co). Wheels’s grandson Beau (future Class of ‘38) got to meet another former squadron mate of his (and my 11th Companymate), **NASA astronaut Pierre Thuot** (‘77).



Dave, Wheels and Scotty

During business trips In Oct, Yolinde and **Chet Seto** (13th Co) caught up with Ann and **Ralph Scaffidi** (36th Co) in Ventura, CA. **Jim Oldham** (8th Co) and **Marv King** (34th Co) joined Ralph and Chet for the Class of 78 UCF game watch at the Barrelhouse 101. **Wade Tallman** (8th Co), **Scott Peterson** (7th Co) and **Rob Westberg** (7th Co) could not attend. Chet reported that Ralph and Ann are enjoying retirement and traveling all over the world.



Setos and Scaffidis

Julie and **Joe Stanik** (23rd. Co) welcomed their fifth grandchild, a healthy girl christened Navy Jay (Yes, you read that right!). Joe wrote that “her name honors her grandparents, both Navy Veterans, and that’s not all. She was born on June 7, 2021, the 43rd anniversary of our graduation! Big sister Leah and big brother William Bodhi, also decked out in Navy gear, welcomed their new sister.” With credentials like, that she is definitely a future Class of ‘43!



Welcome Navy Jay!

14th Company gathered in Minneapolis to celebrate **Ray Baltera’s** last final as an airline Captain. **Brad Richardson**, **Fred Webster**, **Don Beverlin**, **Jim Lippard**, **Doug Meyer**, **Mark Bolin**, **Vance Berry**, **Ben Richter** and **Phil “Doc” Dougherty**. No details

78/79 CLASS NEWS



'78: Ray Baltera's Final Flight

on the event except that I received no requests for bail and the police blotters were clean.

More on mini-reunions next month (21st and 4th Co).

Launchin' Spot Four!

'79

Life Membership: 91%

Donor Participation: 21.19%

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!

Welcome to 2022!

Last month (or last year, if you prefer) I related a note from **Craig Majkowski** about Kathy and **Abe Ellis** hosting their somewhat-annual 3rd Company gatherings at their Salmon River Lighthouse and Marina on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario in New York. I misplaced the accompanying photo - how I can lose a digital photo, I don't know. Craig sent me another copy, which I didn't lose (yet) and now bring to you in full color. Thanks again, Craig!

Duncan Richardson checked in long enough to say that he and Liz are enjoying retirement (8 years now!), moving seasonally between Boston, MA and the west coast of FL (Venice.) They're also loving grandparenthood: 2-year-old and

2-month-old grandsons - both in the Boston area.

Every once in a while I receive a note from another member of the Naval Academy Secretaries Club (NASC), an organization of esteemed, dedicated yet humble individuals whose mission is to help other members fill column space in *Shipmate*. **Darlene Delk '99**, forwarded a note and photo (nope, didn't lose it) from one of her classmates in Abu Dhabi. Last summer **MIDN Tyler Magee '25** had the chance to work out with **VADM Bob Harward (Ret.)** and Blue & Gold Officer **Jason Moore '99**. Tyler had been training for plebe summer in Abu Dhabi via Bob's famous "Build Our Body" workout. Tyler never made it to 100 pullups, but he learned valuable lessons on "always having a buddy" at PT.

Bob is currently CEO of Lockheed Martin Middle East. Jason "JMoo", an entrepreneur in Abu Dhabi for the past 14 years, emailed me separately with an invitation for a "no expenses paid" visit to Abu Dhabi. It was a tough decision, but I opted to decline...



'79: Co. Reunion. Back: Henry Jones, Bill Williamson, Craig Majkowski, Jeff Sherman, Jim Hicks, David Knab, Jim O'Connell, Pat Garcia, Joe Miller, John Quigley, Bob Wiesenberg, Pete Levoci. Front: Mert Price, Abe Ellis and Denny Olsen.



'79 at Cincy tailgater



Jason Moore '99, Tyler Magee '25, and Bob Harward

Class President **Dave Jackson** reports that despite the somewhat disappointing results on the gridiron, the 79er tailgate season was another huge success. Dave sent a photo taken at the tailgater before the Cincinnati game.

Besides Dave, attendees that Saturday included Jim Isom, Tom McLernon, Steve Smith, Dave Kreuger, John Brigante, Rich Phares, Mike Doyle, Fred Gerheiser, Ed O'Brien, Alex Urrutia, Chuck Dixon, and Jeff Johnson. It's a testament to Dave's leadership skills that he was able to get everyone together at one time and (almost) all looking at the camera. Thanks, Dave!

Fellow cyclist **Mark Shell** checked in with an update on his family's annual participation in Ride Allegheny:

✉ I have been doing Ride Allegheny since 2007. I did not ride in 2020 but jumped back on my bicycle in 2021 with **Jason Shell '05**, Caroline

& Justin Shell. I rode 150 miles for 2 days while Jason, Justin and Caroline did the full 4-day ride of 310 miles. Therese and I took care of two of Justin & Caroline's children while they finished the ride. We met them at the post-ride picnic.

We had approximately 156 riders this year on the ride from Pittsburg, PA to Gaithersburg, MD via the Allegheny Passage and C&O canal trails (30 September to 3 October). The weather this year could not have been better. The riders raised \$685,000 for Operation Second Chance.



Ride Allegheny 2021: Mark Shell, Justin & Caroline Shell, and Jason Shell '05

Congrats, Mark, on yet another successful navigation of the Allegheny Passage. **Mac Sylvester** has been trying to get me to do the Ride Across Iowa next summer - we shall see. Many thanks for the update and photo - which I managed to hang onto.

Unfortunately, I have some somber news to share this month. On Sunday, 7 November, **Ashton P. McCombs, III** (23rd) passed away in Fayetteville, AR surrounded by his family after unexpected complications from a recent illness. After graduation Ashton joined the Supply Corps, but he left active duty shortly thereafter due to a medical issue. From there he went to work at Gallo Wines for a short period until he joined Nalco Chemical Company where he worked for