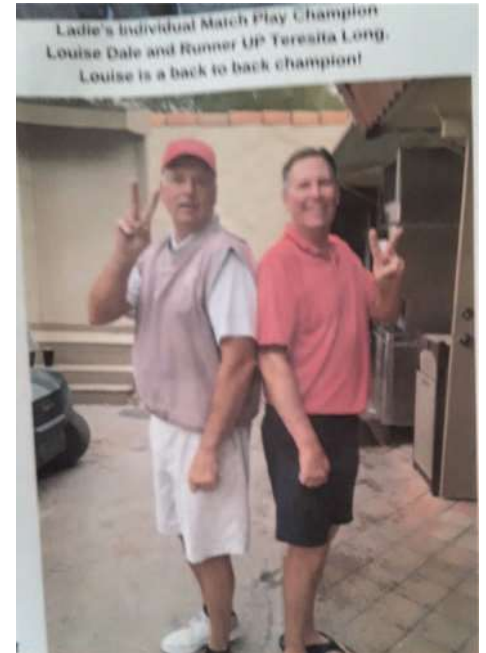


'77: Texting

Finally, we owe everyone an explanation for an errant entry on **Kirk "Buddy" Barker (9th Co.)**. Buddy had forwarded a photo of his

partner and him celebrating their second straight club championship, and since the photo, shown below...



...Included a caption for women's champion, who coincidentally had also just won her second-straight title, we thought we'd have some fun by cutting off the men's caption and keeping the women's, then adding the verbiage about Buddy transitioning to "Louise" to gain an edge by playing the ladies tees. As the caption was an integral part of the gag, it created some confusion when it was inadvertently edited out. Jokes are only funny if you provide the punchline!

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 7.82%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**

1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401

e: canoeu78@aol.com

Website: usna1978.org

I open, embarrassed, that I had meant to get the following into earlier columns and simply misplaced the news. So mea culpa, mea culpa, and apologies to my Foxtrot Companymate, **Dave Williams** (12th Co). Earlier this year, Dave sent a note to briefly update since he and I were in BGO training decades ago. He long retired as professor and dean of students at the Naval War College. He explained that after fifteen Navy moves his bride, Karen, issued him his final orders to the Jacksonville Florida area. "Quickest orders ever!" he exclaimed. In 2011, Dave was ordained a

78/78 CLASS NEWS



'78:

Roman Catholic Deacon. Since then, he's served in ministry to international merchant mariners in the seaport, and their parish. Most of the past 11-years acted as Chancellor for the Diocese of St. Augustine. Dave said, "Life has treated us well. Both sons are making a career of the Navy, happily married, and have blessed them with three grandkiddos." Oldest son, Joshua, is in Yokosuka, Japan as an air intercept control instructor. Dave had the pleasure to commission their youngest son, Kyle, who after 16-years enlisted in submarines, will continue his career in the cybersecurity field as an Information Professional.



Kyle, Karen, and Dave Williams

At the end of April, the Naval Academy Minority Association (NAMA) held a leadership conference in the Yard.

Ray "Raymoon" Luevano (6th Co) came out from California to attend and visit Bubbas in the east. At the NAMA event he noted seeing **Eddie Reid** (21st Co), **Mo Tose** (17th Co), **Mike Sears** (36th Co). **Ray** met up with **Chris Wode** (30th Co) and **Bruce Gearey** (36th Co) for golf on the Navy course. Later, I met up with Ray, Bruce, and **Ray Kwong** (32nd Co) for a tasty dinner and dessert at The Point in Arnold.

James Gafford (36th Co) dropped another note of a classmate encounter. In early May he was in Houston for a nephew's wedding. There he met Companymate, **Drew Nienhaus** for a

first-rate Tex-Mex lunch at Pappsito's Cantina. (They actually "see" each other often during 36th Company once-a-month video check-in.). Forty-four 44 years ago, on May 8th, James was diagnosed with Type I Diabetes at the Navy Hospital on Hospital Point. It was 30 days before he graduated. Since then, James has acknowledged it "has been (and will continue permanently as) a non-stop shaper" of his. He added that he's more than grateful to have made it this far. He's also grateful for the opportunities and experiences to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship of my classmates since he found his way "back into the "fold" in 2003, including and especially those from 36th Company. He concluded with, "like the alma mater says, '...we scatter far and wide...' But even though I wasn't commissioned and took about as perpendicular a path from graduation as one might imagine, just knowing I am and always will be part of the Class of 1978 is a thing I treasure beyond wealth." We hope we can find all our '78 "lost souls" by our 45th so they- like James- can enjoy the '78 family. In closing, James added that the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston awards a gold medal to Type I diabetics who reach 50 years managing the disease. He fully expects to collect his in 2028 (our 50th Reunion). At the ceremony he plans to shout out in his most stentorian voice..." BEAT ARMY!"



Drew and James

Alex "Dog" Callas (26th Co) dropped a note to invite anyone that would like to support his annual Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) golf tournament. As many may recall, Alex's family has been raising funds for the MDA ever since his late brother was diagnosed with neuromuscular disease. The disease is life robbing, and he lost his battle eight years ago. They've raised over \$1.2M for the MDA and vow they will continue their dedication to the cause until they raise that "magic dollar" and find cures that will make life better for so many.

The family continues its commitment to the MDA and this year will mark the 51st consecutive year that the Callas Family will conduct their fundraising campaign. They've aligned their efforts with the Tanks Direct Muscle Golf Tournament where Dog is on the event Board of Director. The tournament will be September 26th at Queenstown Harbor Golf Course in Queenstown Harbor, Maryland. Alex and his family would certainly appreciate your participation and support. Alex chairs the auction and can use items to support that part of the day (Merchandise, Gift Certificates, Experiences etc...). Donations are always welcome. Over the years many classmates have participated and have supported this effort. Alex is very pleased and proud to say that your dedicated and unwavering support has been critical to their success.

The event website is: <https://tanks-direct-muscle-classic-golf-tournament.perfectgolfevent.com/> You will find all the info for the event that you need.



'78:



On a personal level Alex still works on the Canadian F/A-18 Program. He hopes to "ride that until [he] hits the beach in 2 years." Thankfully, Canada continues to extend the platform life, so he'll remain gainfully employed. He's been on the Program for 42 years and joked that the word on the street is that I have more cracks in my fuselage than the jet." Dog also returns for his 45th season as a Football Coach. If I remember correctly, his teams have won more than handful of championships.

Back in May, **Jim Fiorelli** (2nd Co) attended a "Men's Advance" at Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, VA to hear (and see) **Art Athens** (18th Co) share three messages on "Overcoming Adversity." The event was hosted by CAPT **Tom Joyce** '79, USN (Ret), Pastor of Discipleship and Family at Immanuel. Jim said that Art did a fantastic job sharing some excellent thoughts on this topic. Other classmates in attendance were: **Mark Fox** (18th Co), **Greg Baur** (33rd Co), **Ray Milton** (18th Co), **Ray Luevano** (6th Co), and **Andy Funke** (34th Co). Mark at the time was just a few weeks post-open-heart surgery and looking great. Jim also ran into **Jeff Upchurch** ('81), who looked at Jim's nametag and said, "You were my plebe summer first set squad leader — the first firstie I met!" Thanks to the many years in between, Jim said Jeff seemed to have fond memories. Jim and Jan are enjoying Princeton. They are a 5-minute walk from their son Matt, his wife Andrea, and four grandkids. Near the end of May they had lunch with Companymate Barb and **Vin Bellezza** at their place at Long Beach Island. Vin is working "part time" winding down his leadership at ASEC (Jim's impression) and they are enjoying their grandkids and working hard helping care for them in three separate locations — NJ, MD and VA. If you see a young-looking Bellezza down at Pax River, that is NOT Vin — it is his youngest son, John, a Navy LCDR stationed there!

Kim Tageson (36th Co) and his wife, Jane, hosted Nancy and **Will Pearce** (5th Co) to an evening boat ride on Falls Lake. Kim sent a picture of he and Will checking the boat safety equipment. Kim reported "No one went overboard, though I had the "Oscar" flag ready. I think all went well, though you may need to check with Will to get his side of the story."



Gotta dash! See you next month, Launchin' Spot Four.

'79

Life Membership: 91%
Donor Participation: 6.02%

Pres: **CAPT Dave Jackson, USN (Ret.)**
e: djackson@usna.edu

Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**
1886 Woodpoint Ct., Lawrenceville, GA 30043
p: 240-298-1006; e: JDWithers@1979.usna.com

Social Network Links:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/wizwithers>

Facebook Group: **USNA Class of 1979**

Website: www.usna79.com

Greetings 79ers!

So how is everybody doing? So far this summer has been a blur – a series of quick trips separated by work. Fortunately for me,

most of my work is out of my home office, so I don't have to deal with Atlanta traffic every day. Believe me, every time I head to the airport, I'm very grateful that I don't have to face commuter traffic every day.

The word of the day seems to be "travel". I mentioned I've been on a series of short trips. I've also spoken with several classmates who are traveling or are planning to travel this summer. Even with prices the way they are, seems as though the desire to "get out there" is still strong.

A couple of '79ers have taken a few minutes out of their adventures to update us all on what they've been up to. **Tony Konecny** (10) sent me a note from the Good Times Ten's "mid-term company reunion" in March at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Attendees included Sylvia & **John Jolliffe**, Sheila & **Tom Gibson**, Sharon & **Tom Brandl**, Jil & **Steve Jordan**, Corinne & Tony Konecny, **Pedro Leon-Guerrero**, Betty & **Charlie Mark**, Nancy & **Warren McAuliffe**, Geri & **Dave Olmstead**, Mitzi & **Dave Rogers**, Bobbie & **Frank Scholley**, **Scott Whitney**, and **Ted Williamson**. Tony continues:

✉ Thanks to host John Jolliffe and organizer Tom Gibson, all basic needs were provided, and we were able to just to relax and socialize. Highlights included a welcome reception and dinner hosted by John and Sylvia, a night at "Cirque du Soleil - The Beatles LOVE", and a hike at Red Rock Canyon. There was much eating, gossiping, and some gambling. Most left their money at MGM Grand except for John Jolliffe. This was 10th Company's first "off-site" reunion, and based on the success of the event we expect to do it regularly, at a variety of locations, between the regular reunions in Annapolis.

Thanks for the update, Tony. It's a good idea to have these at different venues – those Vegas trips can get rather expensive!



'79: 10th Company "mid-term reunion" in Las Vegas