

'78

Life Membership: 81%

Donor Participation: 46.88%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**

1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401

e: canoe78@aol.com

Website: usna1978.org

At the end of 2022, **Bill Bonwit (29th Co)**



Bill Bonwit

retired as the Executive Director at Naval Information Warfare, Pacific, out in San Diego, CA.

Jeff Fowler (12th Co) is now the Executive Vice President of Technica Corporation, a cyber and IT software developer in Sterling, VA.

Jeff provided a "family update." In February, Katie's "Grammie Nanny" duties transitioned from granddaughter, Ella, who started kindergarten, to McKenzie Leigh, their newest granddaughter. Katie will be "deploying" this time, as she'll commute to Chevy Chase, MD during the weekdays to help. Her "duty" ends in June. She continues to be co-chair of the Society of Sponsors Scholarship Committee and stays involved with her boat, USS NORTH DAKOTA (SSN 784). Their daughter, Britt, got engaged to Ken! They live in Leesburg, VA with Ken's girls Lily (14) and Kayleigh (12) with Ella (5) plus dogs Minnie and Milo. Ken was promoted to Division Controller at K. Hovnanian and Britt was promoted as a Lead Scientist in Pharmaceutical Drug Development at Labcorp (formerly Covance) in Chantilly, VA. Their other daughter, Lynsee, and her husband, Gavin, welcomed their daughter, McKenzie Leigh Gibbons, on 16 September at 6lbs 9oz and 19.5 inches long. Big sister, Molly, is totally smitten and has already given McKenzie a few dozen nicknames. Molly is a freshman at Bethesda Chevy-Chase High School and excelling in choir. Gavin is Vice President of Communications at the National Fisheries Institute. Lynsee returned to work in February; she is also in Strategic Communications. Son, Connor received a promotion to Principal Associate Software Engineer at Capital One, moving from Commercial Tech to Card Tech Rewards. He still enjoys playing drums with Richmond's punk rock band, Almost Gone. Connor and his girlfriend, Erin, spent a week hiking and exploring Iceland in September. Erin continues to work as a Surgical Physician Associate with HCA in Richmond.

Catching up on Jan and **Jim Fiorelli's (2nd Co)** Christmas newsletter, we hope Jan is on the full mend. Besides dealing with some debilitating migraines, she had rotator cuff surgery last March, but it was aggravated by a



'78: The Fowlers at Christmas

fall in October that led to a small break in the same shoulder. Jan was accepted into a post-COVID treatment program and was able to get treatment at the Mayo Clinic in August for those migraines and with some positive results. They enjoy homeschooling granddaughter Emmy (5). She and her brother Beau (2) attend class at "Grandma's House" four mornings a week. They also are joined by their fraternal twin siblings, Rosie and James (1). This summer the family spent several days at the Jersey shore together, courtesy of Jim's USNA 2nd Company roommate and wife - Barb and **Vin Bellezza**, who offered their beautiful home in Surf City, NJ. Their son, **Mike ('04)**, joined them from Virginia Beach for a few days, and Jan's Mom - Mary Lou - came all the way from Kansas. Other travel highlights last year had Jan and Jim visiting their two Marines, son **John ('19)** and daughter-in-law, Liza (nee **Harris '18**). Woop son, **Matt** (West Point '14) and his wife Andrea, hosted the family Thanksgiving. Matt completed his masters at Princeton in '22 and has probably reported by now to West Point as an instructor, I think. Courtesy of daughter-in-law, Andrea, Jan also got to see her first Broadway musical. She and Jim saw *The Music Man* with Hugh Jackman. (Elizabeth saw it too with our West Point friends and their kids- our goddaughter and her brother.) One thing is certain for 2023- you'll be seeing Jan and Jim all around the country!



The Fiorellis in Surf City

Just a quick update from out in Ukraine on our brave humanitarian classmate, **Dennis Otoshi** (33rd Co). He wrote in January to his Companymate **Greg Baur** about what he has been doing. By the way, Dennis was awarded a medal by the Ukrainians for his service ("For Humanity"). Here's what he wrote Greg:

✉ "Quick update on the cold and the mud in Ukraine. I have needed to wear my facial mask and hood because of the sub-zero temperatures. This has given me a certain ninja look, so I try to avoid wearing dark colors. When I first came to Ukraine in March 2022, the grandmothers on the train asked me if I was Jackie Chan, the martial arts actor. During the summer, a taxi driver told me that I looked like him. Yesterday, the clerk at the supermarket asked me if I was Jackie Chan. My Ukrainian colleagues have been asking me to adopt a "callsign". They have been calling me Dennis, but now they call



'78: Dennis Otoshi- Ninja

me "Jackie Chan". Here [below] is a side-to-side comparison. I think the resemblance is all in the glasses."



Dennis or Jackie Chan?

In closing, our 45th Reunion will be here before you know it. It is the weekend of the Air Force game (Thursday-Sunday, October 19-22). Here are some of the key events: Thursday, we'll begin check-in, have a golf tournament and evening "Welcome Reception". Friday morning we'll have our Memorial Service. There is a P-rade that afternoon. We are leaving Friday night (Oct 20th) open for companies and groups to have a little, private gatherings of their own. Feedback from our last reunion indicated that a lot of you did that anyway and many stated a preference to have time to quietly gather in smaller groups. Saturday is loaded with our prayer breakfast, class meeting, tailgate and game. Sunday, we bid each other farewell with a brunch. Between now and then, you'll continue to get more info and details via emails from Glen, me, your company reps, and in our social media.

With our reunion, 2023 will also be time for class elections. Soon you'll receive more news about it from Glen and the process and timeline. Every slot is available for someone to run- like this job as Class Scribe. If you are interested in running for any of the four class officer or five Member at Large positions, please toss your hat in the arena. You can read more about the process in our Class By-Laws located on our class website.

I ask you again to update your contact info in your profile on our class website (usna1978.org) and the Alumni Association website (usna.com). Those are our sources for knowing how to reach out to you and keep you informed. Lastly, we need your help in finding and connecting with "lost classmates" -

not only does that mean those who have died but those who have become detached from us for whatever reason. In the case of the former, we want to be sure we capture all deceased classmates to honor in our memorial service and in our website's Memorial page. In the latter case, we want to "welcome them back in the fold" and let them know we are all still brothers and always here for them.

Well, that's it for now. *Launchin' Spot Four.*

'79

Life Membership: 91%

Donor Participation: 20.59%

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**

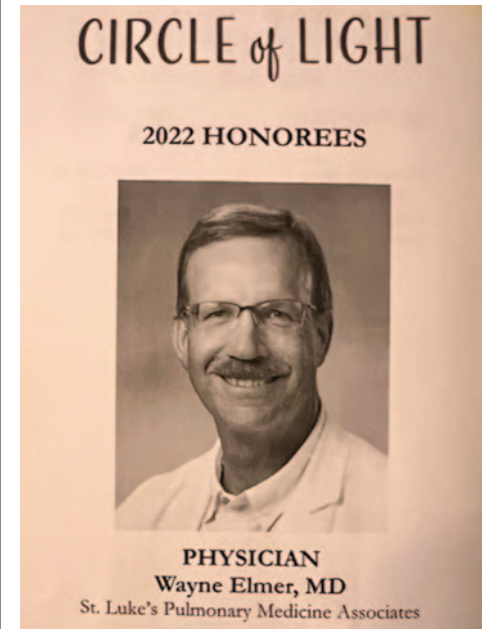
Website: www.usna79.com

Greetings '79ers!

Right before the holidays I received a note from one of our regularly contributing couples, B-J and **Bill Jones**. Bill is now enjoying the leisure life, having officially retired as a Captain from Delta Air Lines on 30 September. Not surprisingly - as a lot of us are finding out - the biggest challenge was jumping through the hoops to sign up for Medicare! B-J retired in May 2021, so now the Joneses are at the beck and call of their 4 grandchildren, including twin grandsons born last May. They don't see leaving Pascagoula, MS anytime soon, except to travel to see said grandkids. That, and to complete B-J's bucket list of visiting all 50 state capitals (only 5 left!). This explains why they haven't figured out what to do with their "spare" time: since they haven't found any yet! Thanks, B-J, for the update. It's always great to hear from you. And thanks for the Christmas card!

Kimberly Elmer emailed to let me know that **Wayne Elmer** was selected as St. Luke's Foundation 2022 Physician of the Year. The foundation provides innovative patient care, research,

and community health. The Circle of Light recognition dinner raised \$150,000 in donations for St. Luke's Rehabilitation Services. During his remarks that night, Wayne said, "At the end of the day, you close an exam room door or walk up to the side of a bed and you give it everything you have to help another human being, and that is an amazing privilege in life." Congratulations, Wayne!



Wayne Elmer, Physician of the Year

Mac Silvester checked in to say that after a year's hiatus, he will be riding in his eighth Face of America bicycle ride in April. This two-day cycling event brings together retired and active military, first responders, and adaptive military veterans to benefit the nonprofit World TEAM Sports.

Mac reports that semi-retired life is good, although he is just as busy as when he was working full time. He and Diane plan to stay put in northern Virginia for the foreseeable future. He's working part time (20 hours/week) for REI in Fairfax in the action sports/backpacking/camping section. He says, "keeps me off the streets and out of trouble." They also now have 4 grandkids close by: 2 one-year-old twins, a 3-year-old and a 6-year-old. Amid all that he still occasionally gets a ride in. Thanks, Mac, for the invitation to visit - I hope to take advantage of your employee discount at REI!

Bill Toti is another of our regular contributors to this column. You may remember he and company-mate **Parks Stephenson** were working together on a project chronicling some of the lost ships of WWII. Bill emailed me over the holidays with an update about some other challenges he's been dealing with:

✉ In January 2019 while in the UK for work, I suffered a respiratory illness that seemed like COVID, except in theory COVID did not yet