

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column
September - October 2015

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Dear 'mates, This will be a rather different column. Firstly, I can't run with the opening paragraph that I've been using all year. ("The Flower Children's 40th Reunion is coming ...") Secondly, some of the biggest news I have this month concerns events that will take place sometime between this late July morning and the morning that the hard copy issue finds your mail boxes in October. In fact, you are probably still recovering from the reunion as you read this. I'm confident that we had a good time, drank lots of beer, ate a ton of crabs and crab cakes, laughed out loud, told outrageous sea stories ... and kicked Air Force's behind. If not? Well, it's not the first time in my career that I've blown a forecast.

The last Flower Child standing—Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jon Greenert—retired shortly before our reunion. Jon invited all Classmates to attend the ceremony. At column deadline, the retirement was scheduled for 18 September at 1300 at USNA in Alumni Hall. Final schedule confirmation was pending Senate approval of Jon's relief. All of us are proud of Jon's years of dedication to the Navy and to the country. I say thank you and congratulations on behalf of the class. And thanks for the many, many pictures that classmates snapped with the CNO. They provided your Scribe with an easy source of column material for years. (I figure that I can milk his retirement for at least three or four more Shipmate columns.)

Election Results! The class held elections for class officers in June. Roy Hawkens served as election supervisor and webmaster Andy Howard provided publicity and the Survey Monkey electronic balloting. I really hope you had an opportunity to read the candidate biographies of the nine classmates who volunteered to serve in the four class officer positions. It was a truly impressive list of men who were willing to throw their dixie cups into the ring. The most common opinion from classmates was, "No matter who wins ... we can't lose." Once again, I will speak on behalf of the whole class in thanking outgoing President Steve Hubbard and VP Ray Wassel for their many years of service and leadership to our class.

Here are your new class officers for the five-year term beginning in January 2016:

President: Chris "Chick" Cikanovich

Vice President: Gary Jones

Treasurer: Dave Duffie

Scribe: Larry Warrenfeltz

On the 23 July, the American Shipbuilding Suppliers Association hosted the 30th Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Jonathan W. Greenert. Chris Cikanovich is the president of the ASSA. Here's a quick note from Chick:

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“I had invited Jon to join us for a roundtable discussion on shipbuilding. While we had to work around his schedule (including going up to the hill to explain why the Navy is surely the best use of the defense budget), in the end we were able to lock in the date and time. It was a great meeting and as always, Jon did the Class of '75 proud in his usual witty and informative comments. The group included VADM **Terry Blake**, who also serves on my board of directors. I always enjoy these meetings because at a minimum, you have to wonder if we ever thought 40+ years ago that I would be on a first name basis with the CNO (I call him Admiral) and we would be sitting around the table having a casual conversation.”

Photo #1: “CNO and the new class president”



Harry Selsor’s work as a birdlife photographer just gets better and better. Below is his winning photo entry in the Wild Amelia 2015 photo contest. Harry’s photo of a Tricolored Heron ‘trucking’ down the beach won the Pro/Advanced Amateur Bird category. It also made the cover of the 2016 Calendar the Wild Amelia group will produce. Check out Harry’s weekly photo blog at www.reflections-on-broward.com.

Photo #2: “Harry shows off the winning photograph”

Here is a fascinating note Dave Shutler, Colonel, USAF (Ret) sent from Dallas on the 44th anniversary of our Induction Day. In July 1973, Dave left USNA for Duke and received an Air Force ROTC commission in 1975. He retired from the Air Force as a JAG Corps O-6 on the first day of 2000. He started an energy business in Dallas in 2005 and just celebrated his 10th anniversary as owner.

For many years, I had a dream. Once or twice a week. The same dream. For 35 years. Like the movie *Groundhog Day* ... only more repetitive. It started soon after I left the Academy in 1973. In

the dream, I am standing near Tecumseh, returning from an event somewhere at dusk. I become

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alarmed as I see the evening meal formation is gathering and I am in the wrong uniform. It occurs to me I can get a set of Service Dress Blues at the Midshipmen Store and I make my way there, only to find it's closed. As I return to Tecumseh, I see the brigade moving up the steps towards the dining hall and I can't find my company. There the dream ends. Over many years, I had this dream (or one like it) maybe 5,000 times. I have associated it with stress, and to be candid, with feelings of wish fulfillment to return to the Academy and finish up those last two years.

But something changed a few years ago when one of the Boy Scouts in our troop decided to go to the Air Force Academy. He asked if I would help him prepare for Doolie (plebe) summer. I welcomed the opportunity and set about teaching him the needed skills that I wished I'd known before hand—the manual of arms, how to march in formation, how to wear the uniform, spit shine shoes, and think like a military man. I explained Colonel Sylvanus Thayer's notion of military training in which the former individual must be emptied out to make room for the soldier. We spent four weekends getting him ready before he left for the Academy in June 2011. On the last weekend before he left, I decided to take it up a notch and without warning, began screaming at him about one inch from his face. This went on for about 30 seconds, after which he asked me what the hell I was doing. I explained that at the Academy he'd see a lot of this in your face "guidance." It was a quick way to load him up with stress. So that when he faced severe danger in an airplane, in combat, or in a disaster, he would be able to stay calm and find the quiet space he needed to think clearly and solve the problem. I explained studies had shown that the more accurately training resembles live combat, the more likely the trainee is to survive actual combat. In fact, this method of loading on stress was a way to prepare him for survival in the direst circumstances. And even though it doesn't look like it when you are on the receiving end of a contemptuous screaming tirade, it is a form of tough love. Tough, but love nonetheless. I asked him, "So what should your response be during Doolie summer when you are screamed at?" He got the drift. "Bring it on," he said. "Well done Grasshopper," said his teacher.

And then the teacher had an epiphany. I realized if this is true for my student now, it must've been true for me four decades ago during my plebe summer. This idea worked its way down and rerouted the river of my soul. Maybe all those firsties screaming at me were preparing me for the hard times ahead. Maybe it was tough love and I just didn't understand. Maybe I missed the point. I don't want to discount the possibility that the firsties did indeed hate my guts, but in that moment I could see that whatever their intent, and however messy, plebe year had toughened me and yanked me into manhood. Later on, in Law School, I remember being grilled by the professor in contracts class and wondering, "What's the big deal?" I had been screamed at a lot worse by firsties in and around Bancroft Hall as an 18 year old.

After he had completed Doolie summer, I asked my trainee what he thought of the program. He told me he was having a blast. Whenever the firsties came down on him, he realized what was going on and he didn't take it personally. He understood that the harder they pushed, the more likely he was to survive in combat. So he just rolled with the program and enjoyed the game. Later the upper class became his friends. They liked his attitude. Others of his classmates felt differently than he did and a good number ended up leaving the Academy. Fast-forward four years. My cadet graduated from the AFA in May 2015 with a double major in Chinese and astronautical engineering. He thrived. I was honored to commission him and pin on his gold bars.

Which brings me back to the dream. About a week after my epiphany with the cadet in 2011, I had a different dream. In this new version, I find myself among my classmates marching into Bancroft Hall. This time in Service Dress Blue, the right uniform. Night is falling into crisp autumn air. Up the steps, into the Rotunda, past Steerage, into the dining hall. Then the scene shifts, I am seated at a table enjoying evening meal. It is now dark outside, but the lighting warms a thoroughly convivial scene. **John Brodhead** is across from me, **Tim Schacherer** is on my left, **Rick Tryon** is on my right, **Mike Keane** is laughing at a story **Walt Maximuck** is telling. Then the dream fades

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to a calm resolve. That was my final Academy dream. In the four years since then, it has never again occurred.

Last year Rhonda and **Chuck Geyer** organized an island getaway for a large group of classmates. They are leaving (just left) on the Sunday morning of Reunion weekend for a return engagement. We look forward to another great sea story. ----- 75 Sir! Larry



Photo #3: "USNA 75 Pirates in St. Lucia in 2014"