

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JULY AUGUST 2020

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Dear 'mates, All class scribes and alumni chapter secretaries eventually adjust to the ten-week lag time between our deadlines and the arrival of *Shipmate* in your mail boxes around the world. Typically, we avoid current events and predictions (since events are no longer current and predictions are too easily proven incorrect when readers peruse our columns).

But as this is our 45th Reunion year, I must proceed with a *prediction* that the big *current event* (COVID-19) will not prevent the Flower Children from gathering in Annapolis on the first weekend in October. If you have not registered, go to www.signupnow.events/usna1975 to remedy that short-coming. Please note that there is a money-saving combo offer for the class dinner in Dahlgren Hall on Friday and the football tailgate in Navy Marine Corps Memorial's Akerson Tower on Saturday. Of course, you can sign up for one without the other — but just don't automatically click on all the buttons, or you'll be charged for dinner, tailgate, AND the dinner-tailgate combination! The Westin is our headquarters hotel.

Chris Cikanovich has personally contacted all the powers-that-be at USNA and at NAAA to cover our bases in the event that unforeseen developments force us to alter our plans. For example, if the football schedule changes, we may have to quickly make some adjustments. Like everyone and everything else, we will just have to wait and see.

Enough of attempting to read my dysfunctional crystal ball. Let's turn to good class news. First up is a great note from a first-timer—**Brian Wegner**:

“Since retiring in 2004, I've pretty much disengaged from the Navy, particularly since I left the rat race of DC in 2006. I am blessed to have loved my entire time in the Navy. There were down times, trials, sacrifices; but when all was said and done, I left with only good memories. EXCEPT those first six months on the Joint Staff in 1995, immediately after my command tours. It was indeed difficult to transition from being THE MAN, THE CAPTAIN ... to producing color copies of power point briefs for my J-5 flag officer.

I've also always felt lucky. Lucky that as a nuke, one was able to make it to command largely based on performance and not politics. Lucky that being a sub CO who managed to not get fired carried sufficient weight to justify selection to O-6. Not being blessed with a silver tongue, I never held much hope of making flag. I'm sure my 15th Company mates can understand. There probably wasn't a greener, more naive, ignorant-of-the-world plebe in the class of '75. Certainly not of Flower Child pedigree! It's a wonder I survived the summer of 1971 and plebe year. For that I thank my classmates.



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Two months after retiring, I lost my 15-year-old daughter in a tragic double suicide. I worked for a time as a DARPA contractor before reuniting with family in my home town (Mishicot, WI) in 2007. I traveled a bunch, did volunteer work, discovered Colorado, tried on a few lady friends. If I were to take the time to delve into my marital history, our column wouldn't be big enough. Suffice it to say that after taking three different subs to deactivation as CO, being dubbed the "lady killer" is too appropriate.

In October 2013 I met Cyndi (who I promised would be my last wife) on the deck of "The Expedition" while pulling into Port Stanley, The Falklands, on a cruise to South Georgia Island (think Shackleton) and the Antarctic Peninsula. We have since settled outside the small town of Paonia, CO (western slope of the Rockies) and pursued our dreams—gardening, planting a vineyard, and in 2019 opening a small winery and B&B, Endless Endeavor Winery (endlessendeavorwinery.com). We are in the midst of spectacular mountain views in the North Fork Valley of the Gunnison River. It's a remote but beautiful place, 75 miles from Grand Junction. The B&B (if available) and a bottle of vino is "on the house" to any visiting flower child! We love hosting."

Congratulations to **Ed Zapolski**, who was selected by the National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (Walter J. Zable /San Diego Chapter) as the Outstanding Football Official for 2020. Zap is really hoping and looking forward to the 45th reunion. (Hopefully he can work his schedule so that he doesn't have a football game to officiate that weekend.

The thirty-six company reps (plus their alternates) went through an extensive drill in April and May in an attempt to update our list of classmates who did not graduate with us. Our non-grad database has 519 names. Of those, we've successfully placed 428 men in their plebe summer platoons. Company reps are reaching out to these members of our class to invite them to join us for the 45th.

Attached to his list of 26-12-32 non-grads, **Bill "Monk" Montgomery** sent a May 2019 picture of a few company mates at Rudy's at The Inlet Bar & Grill in Virginia Beach. They got together to celebrate when

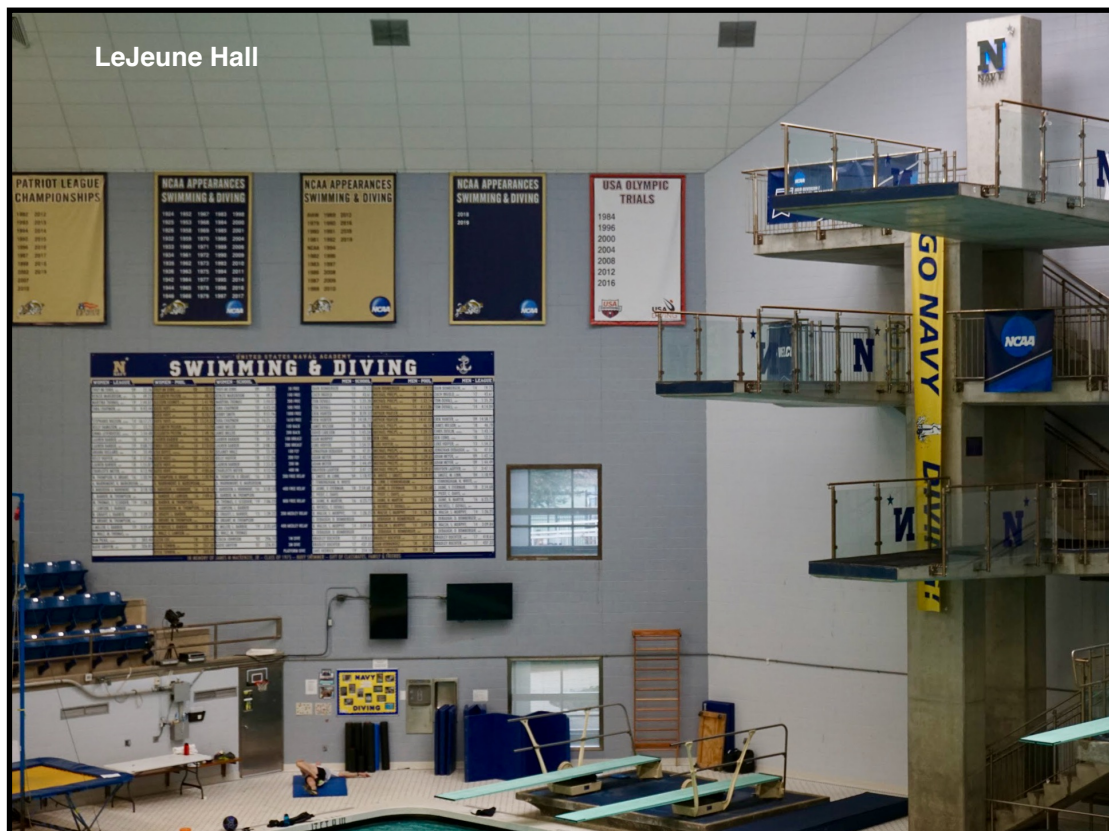


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John McTighe was in town. Reportedly, a good time was had by all. Seated are **Fred “Sky” Wiseman, Matt Breitenberg,** and **Bob Riche.** Bill and John are standing.

Erwin Wunderlich provided a few notes in May. He’s writing, growing citrus and other crops, doing scrimshaw, and tending bee hives. But he was also hoping that Orlando will restart senior softball soon! Susan sews masks, and supports the kids and grandkids and their families. Erwin and Susan’s oldest son E.J. (USNA ’99) retires this summer from the Marine Corps. Youngest son (an ’04 USAFA pilot) took command of an Air Force squadron in May, and middle daughter (’01 USCGA) keeps getting called back to extended active duty.

Erwin has a new historical novel published — *Drummer Boy On the Run*. [Scribe’s note: I’ve read it, and I enjoyed it.]



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Dave Gough and **Kirk Donald** documented the newly-installed records board near the diving well in Lejeune Hall. The 24th Company classmates, family and friends of **Jamie MacKenzie** donated funds in his memory. The pictures were taken by Nancy Gough. The line at the bottom of the board reads, "In memory of James M. MacKenzie, Jr. — Class of 1975 — Navy Swimmer — Gift of Classmates, Family & Friends." It's a beautiful tribute to a good man.

Once again, I must bid you adieu until September ... as the sun sets on the Western Gate to the Sunshine State. '75 Sir! Larry

