

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

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Dear 'mates, Well, here we are in 2021 — finally. I said to a friend, “It has to be better than 2020.” He said that he just envisioned 2021 saying, “Hold my beer!” This too shall pass, classmates.

I'm sure that all of you read your *Shipmates* cover-to-cover — just like I always intend to. But if you first read class news and then put aside the magazine (I'll get to it later), like most of us, be sure to take a closer look at the October and the November-December issues. The October issue has articles on The 50 Most Influential Alumni and another titled Influencers and Innovators. Exactly two people are included in both of these articles—Albert Michelson, 1873 and **Carl June**, 1975. Well deserved, Classmate! The November-December issue has an article on the Brigade Activity Committee's 1974 Army Shenanigans. Dig those *Shipmates* out of the “to-be-read” pile and read them!

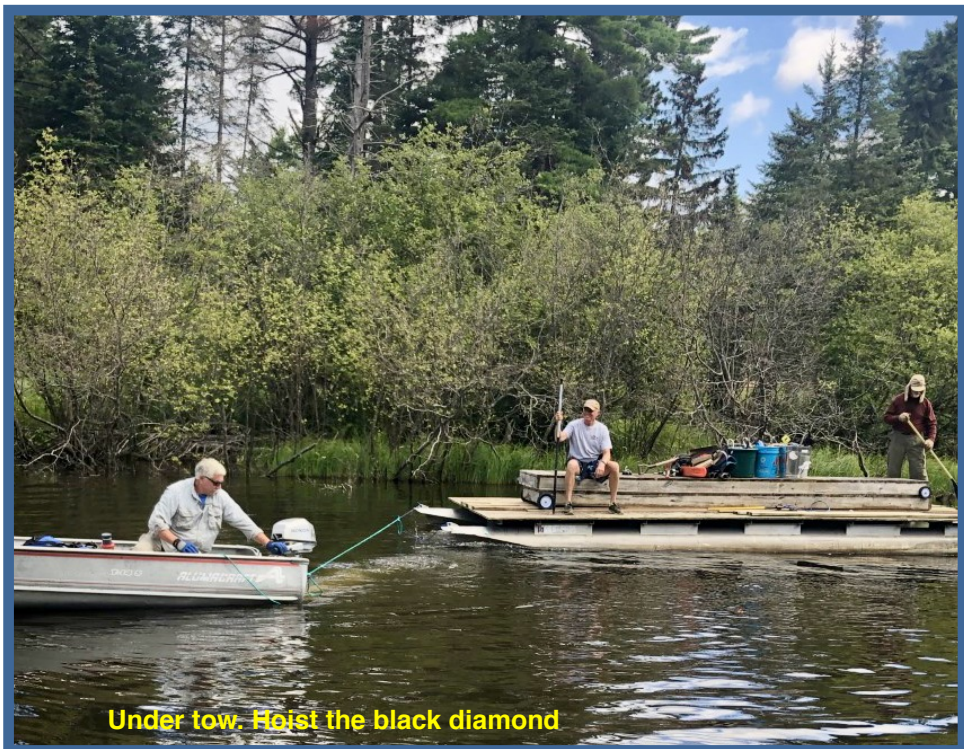
Our condolences to Annette Hall and family. **Chris “CJ” Hall** died unexpectedly on 2 October from complications resulting from a fall. A memorial service was held at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in November. A direct descendent of passengers on the Mayflower, CJ's ashes will be spread in Plymouth Harbor, MA.

Condolences as well to the **Scott Seney** family. Scott passed away on 21 October following a serious fall. RIP Classmates.

Dan Murphy, Mike Meier, and Ron Nicol had a heckuva summer in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Here's Murph's report:

“It has been a while since I reported on the summer activities in the Upper Peninsula. As you remember, after several years of persuasion by Mike and Gerti Meier, Ron Nicol and I purchased properties nearby at the Hiawatha Sportsman Club near Lake Michigan. Each summer has been exciting. Our families love this place.

Following the motto “**I will if you I will**,” here are a couple of events from this summer. (The only injuries were sore muscles



U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021



that were treated with ample quantities of post-event-debrief alcohol.) Project One was the replacement of a walking bridge over one of the many creeks on the club property. A couple of years ago, an ice dam wiped out the bridge and cut one of our most popular hiking trails in two. A few years of review by club management produced no results, so the **Meier/Murphy Old Guy Engineering Firm** decided to take charge and get the job done. We got an old pontoon boat donated and stripped it of everything but the basic deck. Using scrap lumber and an old dock, we created a floating bridge that could be cabled into place to span the 30-foot creek and also compensate for a 1.5' daily river level change. We towed it about a mile up the main river using my 14' aluminum fishing boat. Our YP instructors would have been impressed

with our ship handling skills. With a group of ten volunteers, we accomplished the task at minimum cost and time. All those Engineering courses from USNA finally paid off.

The next project was roof replacement on my garage. For this project we added Ron Nicol to the team. After two days of stripping shingles and laying new ones, the job was declared completed and totally up to code — as noted by many neighbors who watched in wonderment, waiting for one of us to fall. The story of dropping the

old shingles at the local dump will be saved for our next reunion (after several beers). Getting rid of the stench from the dump took longer than the roofing job. Ron had to participate in a couple of Board Meeting conference calls during this project. He explained to the other board members that he was taking the call during breaks while re-roofing his buddy's garage.

After recovering from our roofing experience, project three was the removal of an ice-damaged 25-foot long



U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

dock belonging to one of our elderly neighbors. After cutting it up using a battery powered saber saw (while standing in waist-deep freezing water), we hauled it down the river about a half mile to Mike's place, where we finished taking it apart to use on a future project.

The final project of the season was a multi-day tree cutting event. We cut six trees that were too close to my house, five more from Mike's property, and then a big one that threatened Ron's access road. All this was split and stacked for firewood. Not ready to put the chainsaw away for the year, we spent another day clearing out a couple big trees that endangered a neighbor's proposed garage. (We don't need gyms up here to get in our exercise.)

The summer wasn't all work. The fishing was good. **Pat Sloan** can report on the walleye fishing trip he organized down on the mainland of Michigan with Mike and me. Summer is over and snow is on the horizon, so Ron and I have headed back to Dallas and Mike is preparing for Deer Camp. We can't wait to see what adventures next summer holds."



West Point Raid (Episode Two—Raising Cain on the Plain). When we left our intrepid Brigade Activity Committee members in the last issue ... **Tom Dempsey, Bob Meissner, Jake Jennings, Tom Gadzala, Mike Reust, and Harry Lee** had checked into the Hotel Thayer at West Point a few days prior to Army-Navy 1974. After breaking into his hotel room, they were reassured that they were actually going to meet **H. Ross Perot '53**. Demps picks up the story.

"Returning from dinner, we went to Perot's room and introduced ourselves. He began peeling off several hundred dollar bills from a roll in his pocket to cover our additional expenses. He then went on to explain his plan and how he was able to co-opt this Army Chaplain who would let him into the Chapel to play Anchors Aweigh and the Marines Hymn at midnight. We told him our plan and he said that would work well with what he had in mind. We were to split off after a few minutes at the pep rally - some to hang Go Navy sheet posters all over their barracks while others did the painting. Our plan was to accomplish those missions and then to create as much confusion and chaos as we could so as to divert attention from the main target, the Chapel.

Perot continued to explain his ruse and what roles we were to play during the evening. He then explained that we would be escorted throughout the evening. He told us one of the escorts was a really sharp, highly decorated, combat wounded, medically retired Army Captain so we needed to be on our guard. This was the same Captain that Bob had talked to earlier in the day. We waited for our Army escorts to take us to the pep rally. When they entered Perot's suite, he introduced us as his "associates." Because the Captain insisted on driving us around, we had to do some rapid re-planning. Two of the team would have to hustle back to the Hotel Thayer where our car was parked to retrieve the paint and all our gear after being dropped off in the parade field for the pep rally.

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

Arriving at the pep rally site, we got out of the van and began walking toward the pep rally. We listened intently as our escort explained to us the significance of the Army-Navy football rivalry while we walked slowly to the pep rally area, all the while carefully surveying the surroundings and firming up our plans. To hide our true identities, we kept asking really naïve questions of the gracious Captain. As the pep rally began and the bonfire lighted, one by one, we snuck away to accomplish our missions. Sometime after the pep rally ended, the calm of the evening was broken by the wail of sirens and flashing lights all over the valley as the Woops began to discover the banners and the MPs drove frantically around trying to find us. It seems our plan had gone really well until the Cadets in North Barracks started to discover the banners and wised up to our escapade. As we hastily withdrew toward the Chapel, several car windows were soaped with "Beat Army" and Navy bumper stickers were slapped on several parked cars along the route.

Near the Cadet Chapel, Bob, Mike, and Jake were surrounded by Cadets who were now on the hunt for all of us. Bob was talking his way out of a crowd of Woops when a plebe ask why Jake had summer weight trousers on with a winter weight tunic. Instead of reaming out the plebe for questioning him, Jake said, "Hey, look here, Doolie!" This resulted in Jake getting hoisted into the crowd. Bob, who was in a suit and tie, kept using the Perot business associate line which for a time kept the Woops from hauling him immediately into the mob. Bob kept working his way to the steps that led down from the Chapel area to the parade field, figuring he could handle one or two Cadets on the narrow stairs but he was a dead man in a mob. Bob kept easing his way through the crowd in an attempt to escape. He got to within ten feet of the staircase when an MP drew on him and yelled, "Stop or I'll shoot." Bob was big on pranks but wasn't ready to get shot ... he stopped.

As the MPs finally closed in, Bob and Jake were arrested. Mike Reust was caught as well but escaped temporarily. He was later surrounded by another bunch of MPs who threatened to shoot him if he didn't get out of a car that he locked himself in after running away from them.

Tom Gadzala and I just kept roaming the grounds until it was time to rally up. Our original plan was for the whole team to meet at 2350 at the chapel for the playing of Anchors Aweigh and the Marines Hymn. I walked into the Chapel just as the Hymn was ending. As the last note sounded, three police cars pulled up to the front of the Chapel and the MPs stormed the sanctuary, ready to arrest us. I called out several times to Perot, telling him the MPs were here, but apparently he couldn't hear me from where he was. I remember distinctly being asked by one of the MPs if we were "middies" to which I said no. I was asked once again if I was a "middie," to which I responded, "No, I'm not a 'midi' — a midi's a (expletive deleted) dress." Exasperated at having had to ask me several times and aggravated from chasing "ghosts" around West Point all night long, he finally asked if I was a Midshipman. I said yes and was taken into custody and taken outside to a waiting police car.

As I was being escorted to the police car, I spotted Tom Gadzala up on the hill in a tree line across from the Chapel entrance. Faking a yawn and stretching my arms in the air, so as not to give his position away, I stealthily waved to him before I was placed in the back of the cruiser. I watched from the back of the police car as Perot was also taken into custody. My car drove away first. I was taken to the West Point Provost Marshall's office to be locked up. Bob, Jake and Mike had already been arrested. A short time after I was taken away, a couple of MP cars pulled up behind Tom Gadzala as he was walking away from the Chapel area. He too was arrested and taken to the Provost Marshall's Office."

To be continued in March ...

'75 Sir! Larry