

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY, CLASS OF 1975, SHIPMATE COLUMN
JUNE 2019

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President: **Chris Cikanovich**
Sec'y: **CAPT Larry Warrenfeltz, USN (Ret.)**
5732 Tamarack Drive, Pace FL 32571

(chicke975@gmail.com)
(usna75scribe@hotmail.com)
850-525-8727

Web Page: <http://1975.usnaclasses.net>

Dear 'mates: Lesson learned for your scribe ... a simple threat to fill the Class of '75 column with personal photos and memories will work wonders. Classmates and wives made sure we have plenty of gouge in the locker this month!

On 28 April, **Kerwin E. Miller Esq.** was inducted into the Washington DC Hall of Fame honoring his work in government and politics. Bravo Zulu Kerwin!

Tom Kelley married Betty (Elizabeth Betz) on 29 December 2018. It was a small wedding that included thirty close family and friends. Several classmates and company-mates joined the fun. In the picture: **Denis Powers** (F-14 pilot and Tom's roommate for three years); **Ray Martin** (SSNs and 1/c roommate); Tom (S-3A NFO); Paul Clouse (USS CARL VINSON shipmate; P-3 pilot); and **Mike Groothusen** (Plebe Summer roommate, A-7 and F/A-18 pilot, CO USS HARRY S TRUMAN). Paul is not an alum, but he has very close connections to USNA. His son, LT **Austin Clouse '12**, brother-in-law, CAPT **Brad McDonald '77**, son-in-law, CAPT **John Coutoumas, USMC '12**, and father-in-law, CAPT **Mickey McDonald '49** are all grads. Congratulations Tom and Betty!

<photo 75#1: "Betty and Tom">



<photo 75#2: "USNA at the Kelley wedding">

January was a great month for two of **Deke Ahle's** kids. His daughter **Melanie** (call sign *Bruce*) started her tour as the Navy military aide to Vice President Mike Pence. She should pin on commander this year and was recently selected for VAW command. Deke's son **Eric** has been serving with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in HI. Eric has made numerous deployments to Guadalcanal, Laos and Myanmar—searching for and recovering remains



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of service members killed in WW II and the Vietnam War. He has just selected for major in the US Army and will be getting orders this summer.

Rick Schwarting sent a nice note about his new “favorite classmate.” **John McTighe** provided a group of USNA ’17 families VIP treatment while attending the SEAL Pinning Ceremony for Rick’s son’s 20th Company roommate. In addition to providing special seating and parking for the event, John gave them a special tour of the SEAL training facilities and the quarterdeck of one of John’s prior commands—SEAL Team Three. Rick and John had never met until graduation day. It demonstrates the camaraderie of our class. A special thanks to **Jim Gibson** for helping the Schwartings connect with John in Coronado. [Rick’s son is now in USMC flight trading in Corpus Christi and should be back in Pensacola by mid summer.]

<photo 75#3: “McTighe and Schwarting in San Diego”>



Here’s a cool note from **Bill Chimiak**:

“After retiring from DoD, I moved to Chattanooga, TN where I joined the Basilica choir. One of the members heard me sing and suggested I try out for the Opera ... well, really, the Opera Chorus. (I did sing in the Catholic Choir at USNA in my Plebe year but the Physics/Math major combination did not allow me to continue that.) Well, I tried out for fun — a little of the solo from *Figaro* — and was surprised that I made it. I have sung in several concerts with the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera. Then came tryouts for the Opera *Carmen*. I had to try out because my mother sang in that opera as Carmen! So now I will be in that opera on 11 and 13 April in the Tivoli in Chattanooga. I get to be a townsman, a gypsy, and an inn keeper. I will sing in French in an Opera about the Spanish and the Gypsies—what a kick that will be! I hope I get a chance to flirt with Carmen. (I have to let her know there is a class of 75 in the Chorus—yes?!)”

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Larry Kloth and **Dan Elins** made a visit to **Bill Myers** and his wife in Delaware. The Kloths and Elins enjoyed spending some time with Bill — known to 18th company classmates as “Milo Mind Bender.”

<photo 75#4: “Kloth, Myers, and Elins in Delaware”>



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As a founder and past president of the Veterans Memorial Park Foundation of Pensacola, **Butch Hansen** routinely helps educate the community, and particularly our young students. The middle schoolers in the

photo below are participating in the Florida History day competition. Their project was Triumph and Tragedy—the story of the sinking and recovery of USS SQUALUS and the subsequent rebirth of the ship as USS SAILFISH and its WWII exploits. The photo was taken at the Veterans Memorial Park by the Submarine Memorial to the ships involved in the “Lifeguard Mission” rescuing downed aviators in WWII. USS SAILFISH was one of them, as was USS FINBACK, who rescued President Bush 41.



<photo 75#5: “Middle school history students with Butch”>

Erwin Wunderlich sent a “small world” report from the Southern

Appalachians. He ran into classmate **Mark Lindsey** at the John Campbell Folk School in NC. Mark was honing his guitar skills, and Erwin was working scrimshaw. Strangely enough, a West Pointer was running his scrimshaw class. Mark and Erwin’s wives were there for courses as well.

<photo 75#6: “Mark and Erwin at the John Campbell Folk School”>

Enough for now, everyone. Thank you all for keeping your classmates in the loop. ’75 Sir! Larry

