

# U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column OCTOBER 2021

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Dear 'mates, While our Link-in-the Chain class of '25 brothers and sisters were preparing for their I-Day on 30 June, the older half of the link was hitting the links. Vice President **Gary Jones** provided an update on a recent outing of the *FIRST COMPANY GOLF GANG*.

"The Gang is made up of golfers (and non-golfers) from First Company. We've been getting together for golf (and other adventures) for 10+ years now. Previous golf outings were conducted in California, Maryland, Florida, Virginia, Oregon, South Carolina and Scotland. Our most recent adventure was at Myrtle Beach in early May, and marked the third time we've gathered in Myrtle. With COVID-19 Vaccination Record Cards in hand, we



assembled for three days of golf that included the reciting of previous golf exploits. The *GANG's* Golf Commissioner—**Doug "Rhino" Ayars**—outdid himself yet again with arrangements, formats, detailed spreadsheets, etc... As Commissioner, Doug is authorized to provide "amplification" and on-course rulings that oft times seem to benefit the non-aviators

## U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column OCTOBER 2021

in the *Gang*. Other members of the *Gang* include **Bob Phillips** (Doug's fellow Seabee), the "flyboys" (**Rob Reed** and me), plus **Jimmy Miller** and **Terry Blake** (the Old Salts). For this outing, Terry's brother Tom and Bob's brother Wayne joined us. Tom retired from the USNR as an EP-3 pilot, while Wayne is a retired USMC O-6.

While this trip did not include wives, our brides often accompany us to ensure adult supervision. Their general observations often include comments like "... why do they always laugh so hard at the same ol' ridiculous stories ..." and "... there they go, acting like juveniles again ..." We count it as a blessing that most First Company Classmates still enjoy good health and are able to share in the special bonds of friendship, laughter and camaraderie that USNA '75 formed 50 years ago.

The first photo shows us just prior to our second 18 holes on Day 2. Note the forced smiles as we prepare for additional muscle aches and pains that evening. The second photo is proof that history was made during this Myrtle Beach outing. I was finally able to win \$\$ for what seemed like the first time in ten years. Rob and I are proudly displaying our \$20 winnings from the final match. I was able to get the Commissioner to sign and date the \$20 bill to officially document the historic occasion."



Gary took his solid game to the Central Virginia Chapter's Navy/Marine Corps golf outing on 26 May. Chapter President **CB Morgan '83** reported the results.

"The chapter's diehard golfers gathered at Zion Crossroads for a 'Friendly' match, which was broadly supported by classes from 1955 to 1985. Present were: **Jack Renard '55, Alan Swinger '66, Jim Barron '71, Gary Jones '75, Jeff Bust '75, Bill Murray '83, CB Morgan '83 and Dan Newman '85.** Gary Jones was the spark and organizer of the event, held at the exquisitely maintained Spring Creek course. The field promptly began on Hole #10 on a warm morning with 'youngster' Dan Newman '85 paired with the wise Jack Renard '55, facing off with Alan Swinger '66 and Jim Barron '71, followed by the Class of 1975—Jeff Bust and Gary Jones—and the formidable upstarts from 1983—Bill Murray and CB Morgan. After nine holes and a heat index of 90, the first foursome retired to more genial matters of sea stories and wisdom sharing. While the upstarts from 1983, only trailing by a stroke after the first nine holes, felt victory remained well within their grasp and pressed on in pursuit of the 75ers. Following a grueling back nine, with brilliant play by Jones and Bust (from the Class with the best Herndon time in modern history) '83 finally gave up the ghost when 75 made their 17-foot downhill eagle putt to finish the contest with a 73 to 76 victory. Many thanks for the course accommodations and the generous 19<sup>th</sup> hole refreshments courtesy of Gary Jones."



## U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column OCTOBER 2021

In other golf news, **Rod Repka** hosted **Phil Troy**, **Steve Laabs**, and **Mark Milliken** for four days of golf at Rod's local club in Easton PA. A good time was had by all.

In June, **Trent Powers** and his wife Debbie traveled to Washington DC to have lunch with **Ed Jablonski** and wife Dee. It was one of the few times that Trent and Ed got together since the Jablonskis wedding in 1977. They decided to meet at the Hawk & Dove in downtown DC, only to find on arrival that the H&D was victim to a five-store electrical outage, forcing them to find another restaurant on a crowded Saturday afternoon. Ed's superior navigation of downtown DC got them to the Scarlet Oak, where they spent a few hours re-connecting. Debbie and Dee had never met, but after only a few minutes, they were talking like long lost friends. Ed works at the Library of Congress. His office has a view of the West Portico of the Capital. He was in his office on 6 January and had a few stories to tell that never made it into the press reports!



Troy, Repka, Laabs and Milliken in PA

Jablonskis and Powers in DC



## U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column OCTOBER 2021

**Chick Cikanovich** reported on an impromptu brunch in Ocean City:

“Earlier in the year, Diane and I were in Key West on vacation. Cindy and **Bob Sweeney** were on a post-retirement road trip for Cindy, who had not been to Key West since her father was stationed there when she was a child. Bob called for a dinner recommendation (not knowing we were there). That led to some good partying in Key West and an agreement to get together again when they were in Ocean



**OC Brunch - George, Jo, Bob G, Diane, Steve, Cindy, Bob S, and Chick**

City. Fast forward to May. Bob and Cindy came to OC to get their condo ready for the season, so we got together for dinner. As the week progressed, we got a phone call from **George Melnychenko**. He was headed to Ocean City for some golf with his lady friend, Jo. In the meantime, **Bob Guida** had contacted George to say that he was in Annapolis for USNA Graduation. George convinced Bob to take the ride to the beach. Diane and I decided that we should all get together for brunch the next morning. When we couldn't find a restaurant to take a large group, we decided to just host it at our house. Diane made her world-famous breakfast casserole. I brought out the vodka and Prosecco so we could have some morning beverages. Bob and Cindy brought donuts, George and Jo brought some great homemade lemon blueberry bread and more vodka. (Ukrainians always bring extra vodka.) We called Ellen and **Steve Howse** to join us (they live across the bay). Ellen had to stay home and baby sit her



**U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column  
OCTOBER 2021**

daughter and son in law. But Steve joined in for what turned out to be a five-hour brunch.

As we shared stories and talked about the remainder of the weekend, we mentioned that we usually go to church and then to Fager's Island in Ocean City for brunch. The Sweeneys attend the same church when in town, so they were already on board for brunch. George and Jo joined, and the six of us had a second brunch together on Sunday morning. (Unfortunately, Bob had to get back to his Senatorial duties in New Hampshire.) Cindy and Bob brought a second round of donuts. There is a small market across the street from their condo that has the best homemade peanut butter-filled donuts. Since it was early in the season, they only make them as a special order. For Saturday's brunch, Cindy could not get the special donuts, so we had just "regular" donuts. They talked the baker into making some special peanut butter-filled donuts for Sunday and felt compelled to bring a dozen. They were fantastic. Even our waiter decided to sit down and join us in a donut."

If you follow our USNA 75 Facebook page, you saw some great pictures and posts of our guys on I-Day (30 June) and of the presentation of Honor Coins to '25 on 19 July. See you in Annapolis in November! '75 Sir! Larry