

## U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JULY-AUGUST 2022

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Dear 'mates, Observant classmates who opened the April-May Shipmate to the class news section were shocked — SHOCKED! — to find that your Scribe completely missed a column. I blame it on Putin. Actually, NO EXCUSE SIR! I have filled out the old Form-2 I keep in the gouge folder and have started serving daily sunrise observation sessions on my pool deck while performing the manual of arms with the leaf skimmer.

A couple of months ago, readers of our class Facebook page read a cool story from Lorin Fife. Here's Lorin's post from mid-March.

“Great news today! My book, *“One More Season: The Birth of Football's Modern Spread Offense”* has made it to the Finalist round of the 2022 Screenkraft Cinematic Book Competition. It continues to garner great reviews and sales. If you haven't already read it, I hope you'll pick up a copy and enjoy the read. You can find it on Amazon. Here is a brief summary of "One More Season:"

A magical saga unfolds when a scrawny young bookworm with unfulfilled dreams of football glory crosses paths with an aging high school coach whose dreams have faded. Over the years, football experts (Sports Illustrated, ESPN, CBS Sports, The Wall Street Journal, Hall of Famers John Elway and Dennis Erickson, among others) have recognized “Cactus Jack” Neumeier as the legendary inventor of a wide-open brand of football that electrifies legions of contemporary football fans. Neumeier's offense, initially known as “basketball on grass,” dominates football today at every level of play from peewee league scrimmages to NFL Super Bowls. But that was not always the case.

The year was 1969, a tumultuous time very much like the present. With a well-deserved reputation for mediocrity and his coaching job at Granada Hills High School on the line, Coach Neumeier looked across the Generation Gap at an undersized, inexperienced crop of candidates for his next team. Out of desperation, Neumeier, an unlikely revolutionary, threw out his playbook and formulated a new turbocharged offense now known simply as “the spread.” The offense relies more on teamwork, courage and intelligence than size and speed. In a single make-or-break season, Neumeier, together with that lanky bookworm and his teammates, changed “three yards and a cloud of dust” football into an exciting, unpredictable, high-scoring passing game.

It was a year when underdogs became champions, a year when a middle-aged coach reinvented himself and the game of football along the way — a season when

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fairytale came true. With echoes of "Friday Night Lights," "The Boys in the Boat," "Remember the Titans," "Rudy," "The Blind Side" and even "American Graffiti," sports fans of any age will love "One More Season." Caution: Salty language typical of teenaged football players may not be appropriate for some younger readers."

At column deadline time, our Another-Link-in-the-Chain class of 2025 was preparing to climb Herndon in just a few days. In the finest tradition of passing the gouge to our young friends, **Chick Cikanovich** is working with the leaders in Bancroft to try to arrange a presentation to '25 by our Herndon conqueror, Dr. **Mike Maynard**. Mike will be there this year as a mentor. Mike put together a great presentation on the differences between Herndon today and Herndon in 1972. It's probably the most valuable training lesson '25 received all year. I asked Mike to send a full report for the September issue.

*[Late breaking news: Despite our encouragement, it took the "no mo' plebes" 3:36:58 to complete the task on 25 May. Our record stands.]*





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**Al Eaton** sent a nice report on the inurnment of **Jim Gabor**. “As many of you know we lost Jim Gabor far too soon on 10 October 2021. Members of 14th Company and their spouses gathered with Jim’s wife Deb (in red) and their families for the Inurnment Ceremony at the Columbarium on 22 April 2022. We shared stories of special times spent with Jim, his friendship and his service to our country. Rest In Peace, Shipmate. We miss you.”



**14th Company supports Deb Gabor at the USNA Columbarium**

**Ric Johns** was recorded for posterity. One of his sponsor sons is doing a Life at the Academy series of podcasts for the history department. He asked Ric to be their first volunteer. The recording is at <https://player.fm/.../life-at-the-academy-1-capt-ric...> . Note that he even gave Ric a promotion—but apparently DFAS didn't get the word.

I certainly hope you are enjoying your summer. Re-stock the gouge locker for me, will you? Otherwise, I will recount the entire Florida high school softball season for you in September. (Yes, that’s a threat.) ’75 Sir! Larry