

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

75 75 75 75 75 75 75 75 75 75

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

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

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

Dear 'mates, Welcome to the Dark Ages, '75. Here's some good stuff to brighten your winter day.

USNA recently installed a monument at the Naval Academy Cemetery recognizing James Henry Conyers — the first African American to enter the Naval Academy (in 1872). Mrs. Jeannette Lovett, Conyers' granddaughter, was able to attend the ceremony. Our class was well represented by **Carl Willis, Cleve Cooper, Kerwin Miller, and Kirk Donald**. The photo shows classmates and Mrs. Lovett at the monument for her grandfather.

Kerwin also led the effort to establish *The Rear Admiral Lawrence C. Chambers '52 Honor Scholarship*. This Naval Academy Fund for Athletic Excellence scholarship honors a trail-blazing leader. Rear Admiral Chambers became the first black officer to command an aircraft carrier when he assumed command of MIDWAY in 1975. Only two months later he led his ship and crew in Operation Frequent Wind — the evacuation of Saigon.

MIDWAY rescued 84 Vietnamese refugees from a sinking fishing boat and the skipper also ordered the deck cleared so that a South Vietnamese Air Force pilot could land a two-seat Cessna carrying his wife and three children. Rear Admiral Chambers was the first black academy graduate promoted to Flag rank. He became a Distinguished Graduate in 2018.

The ties to the year 1975 inspired four classmates to donate the funds to establish the scholarship. **Bill Montgomery, Tom Nollie, and Henderson "Hank" Lawson** joined Kerwin Miller in the significant effort. The first RADM Chambers Honor Scholar is Nicholas Brown (a distant cousin of RADM Chambers). He is currently a student at Northwestern Prep School in Crestline, CA. Kerwin is serving as his mentor.



U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

14th Company decided some time ago that five years between reunions was too long a period of



time to wait, so they began having mini-reunions in the years in between—starting in 2017. A great success, it allowed company mates to really catch up on things with each other over several days' time. **Mike Cecere** reported on the 2022 get-together.

“We scheduled this year’s event from 6-9 October. As an added twist, we decided to “Go West” this time, in a nod to our company mates who always have to travel thousands of miles to join in our reunions in Annapolis. The site was Ukiah, CA —hometown and current residence of Mary and **Dan Vilotti**. Other members of the “Western Division” included Sandra and **Scott Bauer** (Arizona), Terrie and **Bob Davis** (Idaho), Cindy and **Nyles Christensen** (Utah), and Karen and **Randy Jencks** (South Dakota). Representing the Eastern Division were Miriam and **Shaw Cohe** (Virginia), Linda and **Jesse Arildsen** and Sue and Mike Cecere (Maryland).

Like the Woodstock album, it was “three days of fun and music, and nothing but fun and music” — interspersed with lots of wine tasting, sightseeing, long talks and debates, and sit down dinners for eighteen (Nyles’s son Eric and daughter-in-law McKenna joined us) every night at Chez Vilotti — all wrapped around Navy’s awesome win over Tulsa Saturday afternoon. We stayed at the Vichy Springs Resort in Ukiah, which was just as delightful as the name implies. Warm mineral

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

baths, a hot tub and Olympic sized swimming pool (plus no open bottle restrictions). New stories told, old stories re-told, a good time was had by all, and we look forward to our next gathering before too long. The Oracle at Delphi has been consulted to find the geographic centroid of our respective domiciles as one possibility, so stay tuned.”

Dan “Rudy” Elins participated in his local Tellico Village, TN Pickleball Club (TVPBC) member tournament this past October. Rudy not only participated — he took home the gold medal in two categories! He won the Men’s Singles (Full Court) Level 2.5-3.0, 60-99 age bracket and the Men’s Doubles, Level 2.5, age 60-99. The TVPBC has nearly 900 members and holds club tournaments twice a year. Rudy has only been playing pickleball for about one year. This was his first tournament. Due to the rapidly growing interest in pickleball



across the country, perhaps it might be picked up as a club level sport or a good “carryover” sport at USNA.?

Eleven class of '75 couples invaded St. Lucia from 29 October - 7 November for a week of sun, fun, hilarity, relaxation, spa treatments, great food and drinks, wine tasting and fantastic company. **Dave Duffie** won the Halloween costume contest with his pirate incarnation. (The beard was shaved immediately afterward.)

Demonstrating the Flower Child spirit of freedom, our heroes held a Speedo contest that most certainly entertained the other vacationers at Body Holiday. From the left — **Chuck Geyer, Lane Wilson, Rich Torgerson, Dave Gray, Dave Duffie, Rick Udicious, and Randy Avers.** Randy

**U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023**

was the clear winner. **Phil Troy, Tom Frey, Ron Nicol, and Rod Repka** were too chicken (or too wise?) to be seen in speedos.

And with that, my friends, I have nothing more to say!
75 Sir! Larry

