Classmates,

Greetings from Northern Virginia where the thermometer hit 90 degrees recently. I pray you’re all well and enjoying the warmer weather. I’ve just returned from the USNA Council of Class Presidents (COCP) meeting and wanted to give you a brief update.

But first, a few comments.

It’s been a privilege to serve as your president again after eighteen years. I was happy to find that Mike Haskins and Carl Fulford have cleaned up all of the messes I left behind in 2004 and the USNA 66 ship of state remains underway in great shape. Carl and Mary Ann have moved from Annapolis and are firmly ensconced in North Carolina, enjoying being near family.

The 55+1 reunion was a great success, and the Executive Committee (EXCOM) is already involved in planning the next one. We’ve had several Class activities including (as reported in *Shipmate*) two leadership award presentations on our Class-sponsored ships (GONZALEZ and HUE CITY). Sadly, HUE CITY (CG-66) was decommissioned late last fall. Her three plus decades of service were bookended by ‘66ers including Tom Eubanks who served as both commissioning CO and decommissioning speaker.

The Class luncheons have resumed in DC, and we were blessed to have the Honorable Dan Coats, former Director of National Intelligence (DNI) speak to us recently. The next meeting will be in Annapolis on May 10 in Annapolis and – thanks to Chuck Grutzius – our speaker will be the new Navy football coach, Brian Newberry. I encourage you to come if you can. (Please let Mike Baird know at pmbaird@verizon.net if attending).

USNA Update.

As you may have heard, the new USNA Superintendent has just been announced. In fact, the public announcement came in the midst of the COCP meeting from Superintendent Sean Buck as he was giving his update.

Rear Admiral Yvette Davids was nominated for appointment to the rank of Vice Admiral and assignment as the next superintendent. If confirmed, she will be the first female USNA Supe and USNA will be the fourth of five service academies (less West Point) to have been led by a woman. She is a USNA ’89 graduate, and is married to a ’90 grad, RADM Keith Davids, who is himself a two-star Navy SEAL. Additionally, Sean also reported that the next Dean and Provost would be Prof. Samara Firebaugh, a 21-year veteran of the Naval Academy faculty.

In his update, Sean focused on the challenges and accomplishments of his tenure. He has - in my opinion - done a commendable job under very difficult and trying circumstances including – but not limited to – COVID.

’66 Update.

While many things remain the same, one of the key takeaways for us as a Class is the obvious one – we don’t live forever.

As we approach the biblical milestone of four score years, over a fifth of our initial crew have crossed over the bar. Those of us who remain are increasingly feeling the effects of wear and tear and, as a result, face new and different challenges. As a result of our common experience, one of the best and most trusted sources for information is each other.

We have done, I believe, a reasonably good job of staying connected as a Class through a variety of venues, including an infrastructure of battalion and company representatives, Zoom meetings (including wives and widows), a website, and Shipmate. But there is room for improvement, especially in the areas we are now facing as we age. In that vein, ’65 has developed a model for connecting Classmates seeking information on a variety of issues common to aging. They briefed their model to a previous COCP meeting, and the results were encouraging.

Accordingly, after consulting with the Executive Committee leadership, I’ve asked Phil Bozzelli to look into what such a model might look like for ’66. More to follow.

Finally, as noted at the last reunion, ’66 has been a generous Class in terms of giving back to the Academy, including financially. While our primary earning days are largely over - and the Alumni Association understands that - there’s an opportunity to show that ’66 is still alive and kicking on the field. The “Great Class Challenge” runs from May 8-12. This is a participation challenge (rather than total amount). We tied for third in the sixties decade last year (’65 was the top of all classes) with 33% participation. If, and only if, you are so moved, you can give online at [www.navalacademychallenge.com](http://www.navalacademychallenge.com) during the five-day period. Anything $10 or over counts.

Blessings!

*Non Sibi Sed Patriae*

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