

The Cult of Pain

By

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Prologue

The 1980's and the early 1990's were a rich and successful time in American Rowing history. US National and Olympic Team coaches like Stan Bergman, Rick Clothier, Steve Gladstone, Rusty Jablonic, Larry Gluckman, Kris Korzeniowski, Ted Nash, Harry Parker, and many others left an indelible mark on the sport. The United States took home a number of medals in International Competitions throughout these years, not a few of which were Gold.

This is the story of a few of these rowers who came through the US Naval Academy's rowing program under Head Coach Rick Clothier, who had his own International success with the Pan American Games Team and other Rowing Teams during this time. The US Naval Academy's abiding mission has been to produce officers for service in the US Navy and the US Marine Corps, so I think it fitting to make the first profiles in this story a Midshipman who was a prior serviceman. In between my story are profiles of different individuals who all made a mark on the rowing world in some way.

The first profile is of an individual with no prior connection to rowing before the academy, but who nevertheless went on to become one of the most successful rowers Navy has ever produced. After distinguished service with the US Navy, he then joined the FBI, and continued to serve America in an absolutely vital capacity. I can think of no greater honor than to be part of this illustrious group of people who rowed at Navy and afterwards for the US National and Olympic Teams. These individuals were successful in and out of the Navy, and in and out of rowing. Here are their stories.

Chapter 1 - A terrible accident

I opened my eyes, thinking it was a morning like any other morning. But it wasn't. I lay in a hospital bed, in pajamas with socks on my feet, and a brace on my right wrist. I didn't know where I was or how I had come to be there, but I felt no sense of panic or dread, because I felt in time I would know what was going on.

My father and wife were to my left, on the other side of the room, talking. My mother sat in a chair beside my bed and was the first to realize something had happened. She tentatively asked me a question she knew I could answer,

“Seannie, are you awake? Can you tell me who directed Dr. Zhivago?”

I tried to speak but could not. So Mom gave me a black marker and white plastic marking pad from the bottom of my hospital bed on which to write. I wrote the name ‘David Lean,’ my favorite film director, and showed what I had written to my Mother.

“My Seannie’s back!” Mom cried out. “My Seannie’s back! Tom, Maryanne, come quickly, he’s awake!” My Father came over. I took his hand and kissed it.

My wife was right behind him. She kissed me. I was bewildered by everything going on around me, but just went along for the ride. In time I trusted all to reveal itself. As I said earlier, I had no idea what I was doing in a hospital bed, or a hospital for that matter. I thought I had simply gone to bed the previous evening and awakened the next morning, like always. Upon waking, however, I realized I was in a strange room with members of my family around me.

I was not able to move my right side or speak, so I knew something bad must have taken place. I learned later that I had been in a coma for about five weeks. I had gone skiing with my brother, Ryan Coughlin, at Big Bear Mountain in California and we were racing down the mountain like we had done many times in the past. Only this time I hit some kind of a mogul, or an ice patch, and wiped out.

I was probably going over eighty miles an hour, and wore no helmet. This was the mid-1990s,, around the same time Sonny Bono died skiing, as well as Michael Kennedy. Neither was wearing a helmet. Nobody wore helmets back then. I didn't think they were cool. When able to ski again years later, everybody was wearing a helmet.

I'm just thankful today for my recovery, and for not hurting anybody else with my excessive speed and recklessness. From reports I read later, skiers riding the chairlift saw a prone body sliding at a high rate of speed down the mountain below.

They must have alerted the ski patrol, because I was soon located and the decision made to heli-lift me off the mountain. I think this more than anything probably saved my life, because I was seen by medical professionals at Loma Linda Hospital in a very short period of time. They did what they could to get me stabilized, then put me aside to see what would happen.

I was initially a three on the Glasgow Coma Scale, which is the worst score you can have and still be alive. This went up after a few hours. For the next

several weeks I would be an inpatient at Loma Linda Hospital, then at USC University Hospital, where I awoke from my coma and where I began learning to speak, walk and function again.

About two months later, after being released from USC University Hospital, I went to outpatient therapy at Daniel Freeman Hospital in Inglewood, CA.

When still in my coma, I remember trying to make sense of the many cards and letters I was receiving.. Maryanne would put the cards up on the walls of my room to assist in my recovery, and read the letters to me. I remember reasoning to myself in the mental fog that she was doing this to not hurt people's feelings.

Because I knew I was not sick, and thought to humor these generous and caring people, my wife had set herself to display the cards they were constantly sending, and to read out loud the many letters they wrote. Maryanne told me later she also did this to humanize me to the Doctors and Nurses treating me.

These same Doctors and Nurses in turn told me this was the exact right thing to do, and that in my recovery, Maryanne gets the lion share of the credit. I've been told I came out of my coma slowly, so I'm sure when I was thinking this way my coma was indeed coming to an end.

To those looking in it must have appeared a gradual process, but for me it was like flipping a switch. When my eyes opened that wonderful morning to what

I thought was just another day, the lights came back on for me and I could reason and think as clearly as I am doing now. It was truly a brand new and glorious day.

I had deficits and things I had to contend with, for sure. But I was alive. My recovery would be long and challenging, and I think I am still recovering today and will be for the rest of my life. Throughout the initial stages of my recovery I was surrounded by people who loved me, and who visited all the time. Also, having no children at the time, I was able to focus solely on myself and getting better. It still freaks me out today when I think back and remember having the thought that it would have been easier if I had died on the mountain. My recovery has simply been so significant, and my life so full of riches, especially with my two boys, now young men, and my beautiful and constant wife, Maryanne, that the dark thoughts I had when still in deep despair over my situation now give me chills.

If I had died on the mountain, my two boys, Thomas and Owen, wouldn't be here, and the last thirty years would not have happened. Today, I can say with resounding conviction that where there's life, there's hope. My time in the hospital now appears but a brief sojourn in a busy life. I'll always remember the Duty Nurse crying when I departed for my home, and a wonderful older woman, also an inpatient, who the therapists got very angry at me for telling to not allow anybody to boss her around and to do only what she wanted.

They were trying to get her to eat, and by telling her to do only what she wanted to do, they felt my advice somehow negated all their efforts. But this lady

always ate with me, and I think my telling her that her feelings were important was something she also needed to hear. Either way, I'm not sorry I told her to stay strong and do only what she wanted. Hopefully, it made her feel less alone in the world.

Why am I starting this rowing story by relating the events of my terrible accident? Because one, I think recovering from my accident was the most important race of my life, and two, because I think it reflects greatly on my life in crew.

Many people have told me, and still tell me, since my accident how much strength and will power I must have had to survive my accident and then awaken from my coma. I think, however, that conscious will power had little or nothing to do with my survival and eventual recovery.

I don't think I ever consciously chose life over death. Maybe subconsciously, but not consciously. I don't think this was a decision or choice I made consciously, clearly. In crew, I think things are often very similar. Some boats are fast, some not. Many coaches think they know exactly why this is so. Others are more humble. I believe you do the best you can to become fast, but to actually attain true speed remains a mysterious and somewhat half-understood process. A number of people know what goes into making good boats. And a number in important positions have no idea, but think they do.

Fast hands versus slow hands, a powerful catch versus a powerful finish, rowing hard versus rowing well; all make for speed, some make for other things. In the end, I think attaining speed in a rowing shell is a goal not often met.

To me this will always be the eternal mystery of crew, and why I find it such a wonderful and special sport. What follows is the story of my ultimately failed attempt to make the US Olympic Rowing Team in 1988.

I hope people use the lessons learned from my experiences as they seek to make future Olympic Teams, or to undertake other endeavors of similar importance. I've heard that there is more to be learned from failure than success, which is why the following will hopefully remain contemporary for years to come. Remember, in whatever it is you are trying to accomplish, time is fleeting. So get right on it, and best of luck.

Chapter 2 - My first year rowing

I began to row at the Belmont Hill School when I started there in the Fall of 1980. I was a frustrated athlete and had failed to make any mark in the many sports I tried, though I very much wanted to do so. In soccer, baseball, hockey, and football I definitely underachieved.

I was an active youth with my family, swimming, playing volleyball, and biking all over my home town of Duxbury. My two Brothers and Mother were incredible athletes. My Father and I were not as adept, but I think made up for our shortcomings with increased effort where interested. But I had no real patience and invariably gave up if not instantly successful at whatever I was doing at the time. All of which made for a number of bad experiences in team sports. In hockey, I was a late starter and never caught up to my peers. In baseball, I let older kids intimidate me. In soccer, I was the only boy in my class who didn't make the varsity team and who thus had to play junior varsity. And on the Duxbury High School freshman football team, I didn't understand enough to realize that in time I would have the ability to play at whatever level to which I aspired, and for which I could subsequently compete.

So I was more than thrilled in my early days at Belmont Hill when the Head Rowing Coach, Mr. Charles 'Kim' Bassett, heard me say I wanted to try crew. It was outside the Chapel on the grass after the all-school morning meeting that began each day. When he heard me express an interest in rowing, he responded by saying, "Good. You'll do well."

This thrilled me. The head coach of an important sport had taken a personal interest in me and was giving me a few words of encouragement. It made me feel like my decision to try crew was a good one. That fall, instead of football or soccer, I took the

bus down to the BHS boathouse on the Charles River and learned to row with mostly lower school students under the guidance of Coach Bradford Smith. He was a Penn grad and one of Coach Bassett's former star rowers who had returned to Belmont Hill for a few years to coach and teach. Thus, in a very relaxed atmosphere and under Coach Smith's excellent tutelage, I learned how to row and began my journey into the rowing world.

I found everything to do with crew mysterious and exhilarating. There was no pressure, and you learned at your own pace. I had always paid rapt attention to my various coaches in the different sports I had tried, but my diligence never seemed to pay off in success on the field or in the arena. Here, I seemed to fall right into a niche with crew, and soon picked up the rhythm of effectively moving one of the heavy and older wooden four oared shells that were used by the lower classmen. At Belmont Hill, Coach Bassett set the tone. He kept things simple. On the drive: slide, body, hands. On the recovery: hands, body, slide. Do the exact same thing as the guy in front of you did, and always pull hard.

Coach Bassett didn't bother with rigging. If you pulled hard the boat would set properly. The focus was on the finish. Get in the water cleanly. Pull or drive as hard as possible. Then get out and on to the next stroke after briefly gathering at the finish. I would eventually learn different techniques like slow hands, fast hands, and so on. And from US National Team Coach Kris Korseniowski I would learn how to hang on the oar and to hold the finish, but from Coach Bassett I learned all about the drive, which is the heart and soul of powerful rowing. Rowing hard is strenuous work, and there is no getting around it. If you want to win you have to row hard. Technique is important, but you can't replace power entirely with effective technique. Later on, at the Vesper Boat

Club in Philadelphia, I actually thought for a while you could do this. But Coach Korseniowski put things into perspective after he had seen our eight rowing at the Head of the Schuylkill. He said, "You look pretty, yes. But you are not moving boat!"

The Fall quickly came to an end, then it was on to hockey season. Belmont Hill was well-known for great hockey teams and its inimitable Coach Martin, now retired. I made the JV Hockey team as a Sophomore, but didn't play much and generally warmed the bench. My bad attitude toward sport began to reassert itself. In one game I didn't even put on skates because I knew I wouldn't play. My prophecy was self-fulfilling.

As a boarder in the new year, I was moved into Spear House, which was the Upper Dorm and where Coach Bassett resided, because they needed to make more room in Underwood House, the Lower Dorm. Then came the Spring crew season of 1981. I made the JV, in the fifth boat, and rowed for Coach Kurt Somerville.

Coach Somerville had rowed at Dartmouth College, and had made the 1980 Olympic Team in the eight. His Dartmouth teammate, Tom Hull, also made the team and rowed in the Straight Four with Dan Sayner, from Navy. The rowing world is indeed a small one, and personal connections abound.

Crew is a sport full of coaches and athletes who at a certain point in their lives had a real shot at making an Olympic or National team. A good rule is to never look down on another rower, because you really never know what they might be capable of in a certain situation. Coach Somerville was laid back and relaxed, but a very good coach who gave us more than we ever realized at the time.

Coach Bassett also took a personal interest in me during this time, and would have me accompany him in the launch to watch seat-racing as different rowers

competed for a place in the varsity boats. Again, I wasn't fully aware of it at the time, but this is how Coach Bassett helped me understand what seat-racing was all about and gave me insight into the sport that I wouldn't have known as a novice.

Our first race in the fifth boat was on Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester against the Quaker School, Moses Brown. Like every race in the coming years I swore to myself that right after the race was over I would quit crew and never look back. I kept imagining myself catching a boat stopping crab, and I dreaded the pain I knew would come. Rich Rodman was our stroke, and my friend Gardner Bradley rowed behind me. I forget who else was in the boat.

The race went off, and we quickly moved ahead of Moses Brown. We soon lead by a half length, then a full length, then a full length and a half, then two lengths. I was still pulling on the oar for all I was worth, because I thought Moses Brown would sprint back at any moment.

I couldn't believe how tired I was, and how hard I was pulling. I knew I couldn't keep it up, and desperately looked around for the finish line, which you are not supposed to do. 'Eyes in the boat, Men!' We crossed the finish line in the lead by multiple lengths. We had won!

The race over, we pulled the boats together and were given our opposites racing jersey as a trophy. It was very important to Coach Bassett that you did this properly, win or lose. No dragging your lost shirt through the grease on the runners to mar it before you handed it over in defeat, and no lording it over a defeated foe in victory.

"Rowing is a gentleman's sport," Coach Bassett always said. And Lord help you if you failed to act the gentleman in either victory or defeat on one of his teams.

Our first varsity that season was a very good boat. With stroke, Rick Weisenteiner, three man David Anderson, two man Tim Van Leer, and bowman, Preston Curtis. Their coxswain was the savvy and amazing David Kazanjian. Rick and Preston were seniors. David and Tim juniors. And cox David K. a lower classman. They were having an undefeated season when they lost one race, to the Groton School, but we all had faith in their eventual redemption at the end of the year schoolboy regatta in Worcester at Lake Quinsigamond.

I was busy traveling home to Duxbury on the weekends after our races, so I missed all of the drama about to unfold. Coach Bassett was a stickler for his athletes not drinking during the season, and his rowers followed this rule carefully. One of the rowers in the 2V was William 'Billy' Henderson, a classmate and a fellow boarder in Spear House. He made the unfortunate decision to attend a party the night before a race. He didn't drink, but his being at the party was enough for Coach Bassett to throw him off the team.

Rowers moved up appropriately, and I found myself in the 4V and rowing for Coach Chris Riley, a graduate of Dartmouth College and a classmate of Coach Somerville's. I was thrilled, but my feelings of not being on par with the athletes I was now rowing with were never far from the surface. Scott Strome rowed in the seat ahead of me. I would row with him again in the future. We conducted ourselves as well as could be expected.

Our first race was against the Middlesex School, which at that time was not particularly fast. I think we won, then began preparing for the final race of the season at the New England Schoolboy National Championships in Worcester at Lake Quinsigamond.

I was invited to the pre-race dinner, where we carbo loaded with bread and pasta the night before the race. We ate at Preston Curtis' house, since he was the team captain for 1981. It was a good night of bonding and relaxation before the next days pressure cooker of racing and tension. Our team lived on the success of the first boat, and we looked forward to the next day's races as a chance for our boys to have another go at Groton.

We ended the night with that in mind. I slept in the dorms, then travelled down to Worcester with Paul Kjellberg and Mark Terry. These were two second boaters I knew from theater and chorus. Paul was the brilliant student who scored a perfect 800s on his SATs. He also played the lead in many student productions, and was a terrific and moving singer. Mark was his best friend. Paul drove. Once at the race course we rigged the boats and tried to occupy ourselves for the hours of waiting between races.

This was a huge regatta, with boats and teams from all over New England. Belmont Hill, Kent, Salisbury, Middlesex, Brooks, Groton, BB&N, Nobles, Pomfret, and more. The NEIRA Regatta. The New England Interscholastic Rowing Association Regatta.

Everybody was present, with scores of athletes constantly walking the grounds of the park and eyeing each other warily. I was getting nervous before the race, as I always did, and swore after the regatta I would bid farewell to rowing forever. I was rowing in the fourth Belmont Hill Boat, so we raced early. We rowed fours, as did most of the teams we faced in the season. There were also eights, with schools racing like Phillips Andover Academy and Phillips Exeter Academy, St. Paul's School, and so on. But for us a four with coxswain was where it was at.

There were heats in the morning, Then a final and a petite final in the afternoon for the crews who made it. Those who failed to make either race were said to be in the 'truck' finals. These were to see who could get their boats off the water, on the trailer, and head out of town the fastest. In our heat we placed second or third and so made the final, but we weren't burning up anybody's back. Belmont Hill's other boats also made the final in each of their respective categories. 4V, 3V, 2V, and 1V. In a 1V heat our boys made their presence known, much to our delight. In a rival heat Groton made their presence known.

The final was expected to be something special. A real barn burner. Our school was known for its strong rowing program, and for that we had Coach Bassett to thank. He had an intense rivalry with the Groton Head Coach, Todd Jesdale, and the two men thoroughly disliked each other. This only added fuel to the fire.

In the afternoon, in our race, we finished in a semi-respectable fourth or fifth place, but well-behind the winner. The same went for the 3V and 2V. Then it was time for the 1V. The team's hope rested with our boys in the first varsity. At the finish line we eagerly listened to the loudspeaker as the race progress was relayed to the crowd. The Groton fans were going crazy, as Groton maintained a tight lead throughout most of the race.

I knew one of the Groton student spectators from Derby Academy, the Middle School in Hingham I had attended from 6th to 8th grade. This was Selden Wells, and she was leading the cheering for the Groton boat. I had an enormous but unspoken crush on her.

Finally, we saw the boats racing for the finish line. Groton in the lead. 250 meters to go. Groton still in the lead. 100 meters to go. Both crews sprinting. The fans of both

teams going crazy. The boats pulled even. 40 meters to go. Belmont Hill gaining. The horn sounded as the lead crew crossed the finish line, then sounded again almost in unison as the second crew crossed the line. There was confusion at the finish line.

The Groton fans were stunned. Their boat had led the entire race, then apparently had been overcome in the last few strokes by a ferocious Belmont Hill sprint. I saw Preston and his boatmates getting out of their shell on the docks and awaiting official word. Preston was literally shaking with exhaustion from his recent ordeal. I wondered if I would ever have the capacity to push myself to such an extreme, and was afraid that the answer was no.

Word came, and Belmont Hill was named the winner. Our entire team rallied around our champions, and Coach Bassett beamed at once again having bested his nemesis. Selden and the other Groton fans were stunned at the defeat of their heroes. I saw her crying, which I am ashamed to say made me feel even more victorious.

Terence Bartlett Harwood was one of the defeated rowers in the Groton boat. He would be a classmate at Navy a few years later. He told me memories of this race were still painful, and would probably be so for the rest of his life.

The victory of our first boat for the other members of our team was a profound moment of triumph for every single one of us.. We shared in their success, because we felt in some small way we had contributed to it. In our seat races and inter-squad competition we had produced a New England Schoolboy Championship crew, so all of us started our summer in the very best of spirits as our crew season came to a very successful conclusion.

Chapter 3 - Daniel Sayner, '77

Dan Sayner played football, wrestled, and threw the discus for his track team, but was not particularly distinguished in any of these activities. In 1972, with the Vietnam War winding down, he enlisted in the US Navy and was sent to Recruit Training Center, Orlando, for initial training. Upon graduation from recruit training, he had been designated to the Navy's Nuclear Power Program, but these orders were soon changed to send him to the Naval Training Center in Bainbridge, MD. This move would enable Dan to attend the US Naval Academy Preparatory School, or NAPS, and hopefully get him on track to eventually enter the US Naval Academy as a Plebe. His diligence and perseverance eventually paid off, for in the summer of 1973, Dan entered the US Naval Academy in the Class of 1977.

Dan was not in the best of shape when he went to Navy. He could only complete two pullups, and faced the prospect of being on a physical fitness sub-squad or go out for the rowing team as one of his Upperclassmen suggested. He chose the latter option. On the crew team he also failed to distinguish himself for quite some time. Dan was often left on the boathouse docks many times when boats went out for practices. When he was unable to make the fifth plebe boat, he approached the Plebe Coach, Phil Resch, for advice. Coach Resch, a former oarsman from the University of Wisconsin, told him to keep with it, as he had 'potential.'

During his Third Class year, Assistant Crew Coach Bill Byrd, a former oarsman from the University of Washington, suggested Navy Head Coach Rick Clothier give Dan

a ‘good look.’ He did so, and in good time Dan was off and running as a rower. Things clicked for Dan. He had found a non-contact team sport he truly loved.

In his words, “All the members of the boat depended on each other, and there were no individual stars.” Most of all, he felt the coaches had given him a chance to thrive, and thrive he did in this new sport. In his second class year Dan rowed in the 2+ at the IRA’s and took first place. He rowed in Navy’s First Varsity in 1976, and did so again in 1977. Unfortunately, 1977 was one of the worst years for Navy Rowing in the Coach Clothier era. They were in the third level finals at the IRA’s.

In 1976, Dan was invited to an Elite Development Camp held at Dartmouth, NH. The camp was run by coaches from MIT and BU. They provided individual critiques to each rower at the end of the week-long camp. During his interview, Dan was told he would never make it as an Elite Rower, but was just a very good collegiate oarsman. The people giving the critique instead pointed to another rower, from Syracuse University, who they said had the potential to be an Elite Rower. The next year, in 1977, Dan faced and beat this same rower in several seat races to make the 1977 US National Rowing Team. From this he took the lesson to never tell somebody what they can and cannot do to reach a goal, will never be good enough, or not have the potential to make a certain team or goal. It was a lesson he never forgot.

Sometimes there is little or no correlation between success in one area of crew and success in another, or from year to year. At graduation, Dan took his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the US Marine Corps. Despite Navy’s poor performance, he was invited that summer to the National Team Selection Camp and ended up making the

Heavyweight Men's Coxed Four. He rowed in the four oared shell with coxswain at the World Championships in Amsterdam. In the final they were twenty seconds behind the winning East German crew. Not great, but also not bad for a prior Enlisted man who had never even heard of crew before he attended the US Naval Academy.

On his return to the States, Dan entered and completed The Basic School for Junior US Marine Corps Officers in Quantico, VA. He selected Combat Engineer as his MOS, then transferred to Okinawa after completion of his Combat Engineer training at Camp Lejeune, NC. During this time he worked in the Fleet as a Junior US Marine Corps Combat Engineering Officer, and trained as best he was able to ready himself for more International Rowing Competition as a rower for the US National Team..

In 1979, with help from Coach Clothier, he was transferred back to the US Naval Academy to train and compete for the 1980 Olympic Rowing Team. Coach Clothier had Dan working at Navy as a player/coach on the team. He rowed with the Navy team daily, and did his coaching as necessary. This seemed to pay off for the Navy athletes Dan worked with, for a number of them went on to make the National or Olympic Team themselves. Dan Lyons, Gregg Montesi, Brian Hood, Kevin Proctor, and Tom Savidge were among them. Today they are all legends in Hubbard Hall. Back at Navy, Dan was assigned to Candidate Guidance as a Regional Director. He was also designated an Assistant Crew Coach. As an Assistant Crew Coach, when he returned from the Pre-Olympic European races in 1980, he teamed with a former Boston University rower to coach the Navy women. This fellow coach was Elizabeth Macalaster, who would later become his wife. Together they coached the Navy women for the 1981/1982 season.

In an excruciating and contentious Olympic camp, Dan kept his focus and drive and was eventually named to the straight four. The US, however, decided not to participate in the Olympic Games, which were to be held in Moscow, in protest of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Before this decision had been made, however, his Straight Four did some pre-Olympic rowing in Europe and won the annual Royal Henley Regatta in England. In Dan's boat was John 'Twig' Terwilliger, who would row in a later Olympics with John Walters. Neither John nor Dan fit the 'Ivy League' profile, but did very well for themselves. Dan had come out of Navy, John out of Seattle Pacific Lutheran. In later years, Thomas Bohrer would come out of FIT. Truly, if one sticks with it, glory and success can result, no matter from where on hails.

Dan received a Congressional Gold Medal awarded in lieu of America's participation in the games themselves, and met President Jimmy Carter, another USNA graduate, at the White House. And with that, Dan's rowing career was over. He married Elizabeth Macalaster in 1982, the same year he resigned his commission to enter the FBI as a Special Agent. The lessons learned at Hubbard Hall about drive, perseverance, and teamwork would come back to him time after time during his service with the Bureau, especially in difficult situations. In a long and distinguished career Dan investigated violent crime in Baltimore and Atlanta, and did Counterintelligence work in New York. He was intimately involved in noted espionage cases, and helped incarcerate the four individuals found responsible for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. He was a well respected supervisor as a Senior Agent, and retired from the FBI in 2004.

Dan has hiked all through the US with his wife, Elizabeth. Helped coach crew at Phillips Exeter Academy and The Putney School, has volunteered with the American Red Cross and the US Peace Corps, and more than anything wants to thank those who believed in him so he could believe in himself.

Chapter 4 - Dan Lyons, '81

Dan began rowing at Penn AC when he was only 10 years old. His father, Jim Lyons, made the US four-oared shell in the cancelled 1940 Olympic Games. Dan started as a cox, but at the age of 12 took up sculling in the single. He rowed and raced as a sculler and a sweep oarsman in bigger boats at Penn AC through High School. He won the 135 pound Lightweight Nationals in 1975, was recruited by Navy and sent to NAPS, entering the US Naval Academy itself as a 6'4" 165 pounder. He rowed for Coach Ken Dreyfuss in his first year as Plebe Coach.

Dan's Plebe boat finished 5th at the Sprints with him in the 7th seat. The following year he again rowed in the 7th seat, and again took 5th at the Sprints. During his Second Class year, he starboard stroked from in a boat which had such stalwarts as Steve Moreau, Brian Hood, Tom Savidge, Gregg Montesi, and Kevin Proctor. This crew didn't go to the Sprints, but won the IRAs over Northeastern. In Dan's First Class year, Navy took 2nd at the IRAs behind Cornell. Then it was off to the try-outs for the US National Team in Madison, WI.

The Navy gave him TAD orders, and his SWO School wasn't until October. Camp was grueling, but Dan made the 1st eight in the bow. At the World Championships in Munich, Germany, that summer, his boat took the bronze behind the Brits and Russians. After SWO School he was assigned to the USS Suribachi, which he served on for most of the year. In Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they were refitting, he was transported back to Madison, WI, for training camp in less than ideal shape at the beginning of the summer.

He did not make the eight this time, but formed a 4-, which won the trials for the 4-, and so went to the 1982 World Championships in Lucerne, Switzerland for a second time. There his boat won the Petite Final, coming in 7th in the world.

In 1983, after serving in the Mediterranean for the early part of the year, Dan tried out for the US Pan Am Team. He made the eight and won gold. In the fall he transferred back to the Academy to train for the Olympic Team and coach.

In 1984, he made the team under a new coach, but shortly thereafter tore an intercostal muscle. Coach Korseniowski believed in survival of the fittest, “Go home, take up sewing.” His muscle did heal in time, and in the 4+ trials his boat finished 3rd. Dan’s Olympic dream was done for the moment. He was assigned to a new ship, the USS Patterson, finally received his SWO pin, and found a new partner in Dave Krmpotich. The Patterson was stationed in Philly, so Dan and Dave rowed on the Schuylkill out of Penn AC in the early morning and at night. Dan’s immediate superior was not happy about the situation.

In 1985, Dan and Dave persevered and stuck it out as best they could. Their hard work eventually paid off, because in the US Nationals that summer, Dan and Dave and Penn AC won the pair, the four, and the eight. Then they won the trials for the 2- and went to the World Championships in Hazewinkel, Belgium, where the sub Chris Clarke was forced to fill in for the sick Dave Krmpotich. Their boat won the Petite Final handily.

In 1986, after some disappointing circumstances and not being allowed to row in certain races, Dan found himself stationed back in Philly and rowing with John Riley, Ted Swinford, and Robert Espeseth at Penn AC. He soon left the Navy, and devoted

himself full-time to rowing and trying to make the National Team. At the US Nationals Penn AC again won the 2-, 4-, and 8. Their boat also went on to win the 4- trials over the camp boat that had been formed in the very same camp that Dan had had to leave earlier. The defeated camp boat had been very fast, so all knew the Penn AC boat was very fast. In Nottingham, England they were set to race in the World Championships, and they expected something good to happen. It did. The US won, for the first and only time in the last 60 years of the event. The West Germans came in second, not realizing until it was too late that the Americans would not die at the end of the race.

In early 1987, Dan found himself at Oxford. Now a civilian, he was free to pursue whatever caught his fancy. Attending either Oxford or Cambridge, and rowing in the annual boat race, did such a thing. He chose Oxford, but instead of a free and joyous adventure, soon found himself at the center of what is now known as the Oxford boat race mutiny. It was a somewhat traumatic experience, though a good one in the end, and when summer racing started Internationally in the summer Dan was once again back with his World Champion 4-. They won a great deal of the races they entered that season, but in the World Championships in Copenhagen took bronze with an injured Espeseth.

In 1988, Dan and his crew in the 4- gave it another shot. They did well in the SDCC, and hoped for the best, but Espeseth soon hurt himself again, and the second Penn AC boat won the 4- trials in April. After a failed effort at the eight camp, Dan and Robert Espeseth ended up in the pair with coxswain, won the trials, and rowed at the Seoul Olympics in 1988, where in one of the heats Espeseth collapsed at the 1000 and was taken to the hospital. Today, Dan is still very much a fixture on the rowing scene.

Coaching, rowing, imparting wisdom and making his company, Team Concepts, Inc., the best it can be.

Chapter 5 - My second year rowing

In the Fall of 1981 I began my second year at the Belmont Hill School, and my second year of rowing. For a fall sport I elected to lift weights in Coach Bassett's individual weight-lifting program, which enabled me to lift, then head down to the boathouse with my senior friends and boatmates Paul Kjellberg, Mark Terry, and Steve Cogswell.

We would row a four with coxswain that Fall in preparation for the annual Head of the Charles, which we would compete in as a BHS entry. Quite by accident I had stumbled into a training regimen that I would follow for the next eight years. I would row or train for rowing year round, working with people I would row with during our competitive season in the spring.

Coach Bassett was pleased to see me lifting, and I rowed every day with people I would row with the following spring. I was never a power lifter, but I was diligent in my work, and performed basic lifting exercises at steadily building weights. Then it was off to the river, where Paul and I, with Mark and Steve would row in an intense but relaxed regimen to prepare for the Charles. School and life proceeded apace, and it was soon the last weekend in October and we found ourselves on the wooden Belmont Hill docks launching for the Head of the Charles. Crowds of people were everywhere, inside and outside the boathouse, and Tim Van Leer had come down to see us off. Taking it all in, I could tell he really missed the rowing.

"I should have done this," he said simply. Which I will never forget. I think he was the captain of the soccer team, as he was captain of the cross-country ski team in the winter and the crew team in the spring, yet more than anything he missed rowing. I

would find crew to be obsessive and all-consuming, but I knew at that moment I had found my sport.

We acquitted ourselves well in our race, and finished somewhere near the top, but Head Races are always loaded with competitors and it is very difficult to be number one. I would race again at the Charles many times, like I would at Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester, and I would see moments of great triumph, as well as moments of great defeat.

Like in any endeavor, sport, art, theater, dance, etc. I think all come to realize the journey is what you take away in the end, not the destination, unless of course you are Bill Russell, Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, or Tom Brady.

The 1982 school year would ultimately be very successful for me, but in the winter term things at first went badly. I was cut from the Belmont Hill JV hockey team, because I failed to make the Varsity as a Sophomore. The news was broken to me by Coach Smith, who was also a very good hockey player, in an effort to soften the blow. He suggested I try cross-country skiing, which he said was excellent training for crew. The x-country ski team was loaded with my friends, and I really didn't want to wrestle, which was also great training for crew, so I went out for the x-country ski team. I went to private school and had a very privileged life, but I was always very careful with money. So in Duxbury I purchased x-country skies on the cheap, with three stud old-fashioned metal bindings, and with my fairly bad attitude toward team sports, I did not set the world on fire as a cross-country skier.

Tim was a great captain, and I had numerous friends on the team, like Mark Sutton, Scott Strome, Gardner Bradley, Paul Kjellebrg, and Scott Bates, and Teddy MacMahon. I was kind of a jerk also, and made fun of another friend I had in the team

photo. This is immortalized in the school yearbook for 1982, and I cringe every time I look at it. Sorry, Bob Tracey. Hopefully, I am a better person today, and nicer - Coach Bassett's mantra, 'Be nice!'

So I enjoyed the season and was more than ready for the Spring crew season when it came. I didn't know it at the time, but this was the season that would change my life forever and enable many of my dreams to come true. I don't remember the seat racing procedures for boating in 1982, but I do remember our final piece of boat selection when Paul and I found ourselves in the bow pair with stroke David Anderson and three man Tim Van Leer.

We rowed a lightning fast half-mile piece and left the other boats far behind. At the end, as we lay panting over our oars, Coach Bassett approached us in his launch. He seemed very happy. "This is it, Boys. This is the varsity boat for 1982. Things may change, but this is it for now. Very good work. Now take it in."

Billy Heandersen would probably have been the one competing for my seat if he had not gone to that party, and if he had not subsequently left the school. Coach Bassett was always ready to give students second chances, but they had to ask for one. One night David Anderson and his roommate were out on the town and engaged in a drunken spree of mischief.

They forgot where they had parked their car, and by the time they found out had put themselves in a world of trouble with the police. Coach Bassett was the school's guidance counselor, so he was informed right away. Dave went to him and said, "Coach Bassett, I have a drinking problem. Please help me." His friend did no such thing.

In the end nothing happened to David. His friend had the book thrown at him by the school. Another student, a boarder, once tried to challenge Coach Bassett's

authority by smashing the door to his room in the dorm. He was gone from the school by the end of the same day. I have good friends who never rowed, but who say Coach Bassett, or Mr. Bassett as he was known to them, literally saved their lives. I have had a number of great crew coaches in my life, but he was the best. As a man and a teacher, he was simply unrivaled.

The student who expected to be rowing in my seat in the 1V was Joseph Driscoll. He was a classmate who had coxed and then rowed at BHS since 7th grade. He was quite upset, because he had put so much into the sport at Belmont, and so left the boathouse right away when Coach Bassett announced the line-ups. I must give credit to my boatmates, because if I ever grew too big for my britches or cracked a joke about Joe not making it, they shut me down right away. Coach Bassett had done his job very well, and the entire team reflected his values. "Be nice!" When Paul and Tim corrected me about a wise-ass comment I was about to make, I was mortified. But it made me a better person. In time Joe did just fine. He stroked the first boat the following year, and would go on to Harvard, the school he always aspired to attend.

I think from the time we did our blistering half-miler to consolidate the boat, Coach Bassett suspected he might have something very special on his hands. I have a theory that our boat rowed and steered itself very straight, because I was a bit stronger than Paul, and Dave was a bit stronger than Tim. With their leverage this made the boat row straight. I have to confirm this with David Kajanjian, who was a wonderful coxswain, but I think I'm right.

We would do pieces on various parts of the river, and beat the record times Coach Bassett had in his notes. In our races no boat was ever within a length of us, and Ted Washburn, the enormously successful and ultimately disgraced Harvard Freshman

Coach, once told David Anderson and I that we were the fastest High School four he had ever laid eyes on. Near the end of the season we did practice sprints at 48 strokes per minute, and we seemed to get faster and faster and faster as the season wore on. Our last piece before the sprints smashed the half-mile record on our practice course by over twenty seconds. This was the same space of water where Coach Bassett initially saw us come together.

But all this was in the future. At the time Paul and I were just thrilled to be in the First Varsity, and readied ourselves for our first race against our neighbor school on the Charles, which was Buckingham, Brown and Nichols.

In our first test I was nervous, as always, and asked myself just before we launched, why I hadn't quit crew when I had the chance. I swore to myself I would once this race was over. But we raced, and won, and I didn't quit. Then came Nobles and Greenough, which we again won. This was a home race, and notable for me for Tim screaming, 'so long Nobles!' In the middle of the race. We raced Groton, on their course, where I caught a crab just past the 500, but where I was able to wrestle the oar out of the water and keep going. We won again.

By this time all knew in our boat and in the boathouse and in the school that we had something special going on. Brooks was next, and we won again. We raced two rowers, Doug Burden and Dave Saxen, I would see again. I would row against them many times, then with Dave on the World University Games Team. They would both attend Princeton, and I would face them in competition for Navy many times over the coming years. This race was the first encounter of what would be many to come.

The next race of the season was against Middlesex, Coach Bassett's Alma Mater. As I said earlier, these years in the early eighties were a lean time for their

crews, but I listened intently to Coach Bassett when he said they would surprise us. So I rowed my heart out on their compact 1500 meter course.

When Coach Harry Parker from Harvard would drive by in his launch many of the Belmont Hill rowers would make an effort to look particularly strong and proficient. Our boat made a joke out of this, and would row particularly bad. The Seniors had all heard where they were going to college next year earlier in the season. Paul was bound for Yale, though he had also been accepted at Harvard. Tim was bound for Princeton. And Dave was bound for Penn. David's college experience was atypical for a star athlete, to say the least.

On a recruiting trip to Princeton he went wild one night and got himself roaring drunk. In the midst of drinking out of a punch bowl, the Princeton Head Coach, Larry Gluckman, told Dave to 'calm down.' Totally wasted, David told him to buzz off.

This doomed David's chances at Princeton, and almost every other school, where he was pretty much blackballed as a recruit. David and his parents were devastated. Coach Bassett got on the phone to Ted Nash, the extraordinary Head Coach of the University of Pennsylvania at the time, and assured him that in Dave Anderson he was getting a priceless commodity. "Kim." Coach Nash asked. "Is this Anderson fellow a drug addict?"

"No," Coach Bassett assured him. "He is not."

So Coach Nash took a chance, and Dave was headed off to Penn in the Fall. In our four oared crew, one would row at Penn, one at Princeton, one eventually at Navy, and one at Yale. Dave would be a second captain at Penn. Tim a captain at Princeton. Me a captain at Navy both as a Plebe and a Firstie. And Paul a captain of his freshman team at Yale. He left rowing his sophomore year to focus on his studies. Today, he is a

celebrated Professor at Whittier College whose specialty is Classical Chinese Philosophy.

Coach Bassett always claimed we were the fastest boat he had ever coached, and Harvard would get none of us. This would be a remarkable turn of events, as Harvard Coach Harry Parker was often heard to say that he had better boats walking the campus grounds than many schools had as their first varsity

Finally, it was time for the New England Schoolboy National Championships again, where we would face the crews we had defeated earlier in the season, and others, such as the Salisbury School, who Coach Bassett said would be gunning for us. Again the nerves and me vowing to quit when the racing was done, and things proceeding slowly throughout the day to our moment of trial. We won our heat in the morning, which put us in a nice lane in the final.

The race went off as it always did, and we soon took the lead and never looked back. Coach Bassett said later that throughout the season we had never really been challenged, and that he would have like to see what we could have done if we ever were. But I don't like being challenged. I like to win going away, and that's exactly what we did.

The Belmont Hill School first varsity four had won the New England National Schoolboy Championships for the second year in a row. I was simply astounded at our success, and all thoughts of quitting crew simply disappeared. I had finally found a sport in which I was making a mark. It felt very good and I knew I would relish this feeling all summer.

First, however, Coach Bassett told us he was taking our four to the Canadian Schoolboy Championships at St. Catherines in Ontario. So we had a few more days of

practice (school had ended), and we loaded up our boat and gear and made our way with spare Mark Terry to the St. Catherines race course for our final test as a boat.

The boats Coach Bassett was concerned with here was an American boat from Upper Merion in Pennsylvania, and a Canadian boat from Brentwood. Again in our heat we made it to the final, then later in the day lined up for our final race. I remember being very calm as we went off the line and thinking to myself that if we just rowed well and hard, we would win.

This is exactly what happened, and Upper Merion finished about two lengths behind us. On the awards stand I tried to keep my legs together, because my black shorts were badly ripped in the crotch. My shirt was also filthy from not washing it the entire season to not wash out the good luck. David, Dave, Tim, I and Paul stood there abashed and beaming as we received our medals from two beautiful young women. I think they were older than we were, but still young. Then it was off to home and summer vacation.

I finagled bringing the trophy home so I could show it to my parents, but my mother only yelled at me for beeping the horn when I pulled into the driveway. My parents always managed to keep me grounded. Thus, ended my second year rowing. My entire boat received the annual crew award at graduation, and I was elected team captain for the following year.

This is where my bad experiences in hockey really came home. I vowed on my teams never to let people feel excluded or left out, and this is exactly what I did. I literally owed the good feelings of my captaincy among all my teammates to the miserable times I had playing Duxbury Youth Hockey. So it was all good in the end.

Chapter 6 - Gregg Montesi, '82

Gregg Montesi started rowing at the Narragansett Boat Club in 1973 when he was 14 years old. Gregg's father was part of the Syracuse University Rowing Team that won Gold at the 1959 Pan American Games, and hoped his son would follow in his footsteps. He was a good swimmer, and quickly adapted himself to this new sport.

At age 16, he won the 16 and under US Nationals in the single scull. At age 17, in 1976, he won the 18 and under US Nationals in the single scull. Later that year he won the single sculls at the Junior World Championship US trials, and represented the US in Villach, Austria. He took home a Bronze Medal in the single scull behind East and West Germany. In 1977, Gregg again won the US Nationals and the Junior World's Trials, but missed the World Championships because he was sick at home with Mononucleosis. Also in the fall of 1977, he began to attend the Salisbury School in Connecticut on a full scholarship as a recruited athlete.

That season Salisbury won the four without coxswain at the NEIRA Championships at Quinsigamond, MA. As a Senior at Salisbury, he was recruited by Coach Ken Dreyfuss to row at the US Naval Academy. His Plebe year he stroked and his boat did well, but he thinks he was too focused on racing the plan as it was laid down by the coach, and not focused on being open to the moment. His Youngster year he made the Varsity, and his boat won the IRAs. As a Second Class he again made the Varsity, but this time took 2nd at the IRAs.

Gregg struggled academically at the Academy, and only realized much later that it was due primarily to an undiagnosed learning disability. He thinks his love for crew

came from succeeding in an arena where he was thought of as ‘dumb.’ He could do physical. It was the mental that did not come easy. To focus on his academics, he took the fall season off from crew, and in the spring stroked the 2V. This boat ended up winning the Junior Varsity race at the IRAs.

Gregg had selected the USMC for service selection, and after TBS found himself in Boston to train for the 1984 LA Olympics. After being cut from a messy sculling camp, he teamed with three other guys and went to the quad trials. Gregg’s Quad won this in what has become known as ‘Bloody Sunday,’ since none of the camp boats had been able to actually earn a place on the team. At the Olympics the quad did not do well, and Gregg hoped for another Olympic opportunity in 1988. For the moment he bided his time, and soon found himself stationed at Camp Pendleton, CA, as an Infantry Platoon Commander.

He expected his men’s physical abilities to tax him to the utmost, and so prepared himself continually as he drove from the East Coast to the West Coast. Jogging, doing endless push-ups and pull-ups, he was anxious that his fitness level would be well below that of his men. He needn’t have worried. Midway through their first run, a Master Sergeant asked him to please slow the pace. When he looked back his men were strung out in a long and ragged line behind him having enormous trouble keeping up. Just as he had as a Plebe at Navy, he was learning to process what was happening around him, and to not always be so focused on the written plan.

Early in 1986, during a Western Pacific Cruise on the USS Cayuga, a Tank Landing Ship, he constructed a home-made model of a Concept II Ergometer out of 2x4s,

a bicycle wheel, and a chain, with the seat and tracks out of his single. He had begun training for the 1988 Olympics, and actually visited Seoul two years in advance during the West Pac and sat in the stadium that was then under construction for the 1988 Olympics. He would be back.

In 1986, Gregg was stationed by the USMC in Long Beach, CA, to train for the upcoming World Championships. He failed to qualify for the single, but did qualify with an old friend in the double. At the World Championships in 1986, Gregg felt his double's performance was less than impressive. Newly stationed by the USMC in the JAG Office at El Toro Air Base, he trained hard through the winter in Long Beach to get ready for 1987, which now feels like a bit of a lost year for him. He qualified for the US sculling winter training camp, and was really moving the boat well, but soon crashed because he was doing too much. He was spent physically and mentally. Gregg pushed through this bleak moment in his life and continued to train for the 1988 Olympics, but realized he now only felt loyalty to the US Marine Corps, his friends and his family. Crew became less important to him than it had been, but he continued to train.

Spring, 1988. Gregg qualified for the US Sculling Camp and was doing well. The US Heavyweight Sculling Team, however, was not. Coach Jim Dietz had people training out of the US Coast Guard Academy in Groton, CT. Conditions where they rowed were not good, but Coach Dietz seemed to pay this no mind. Moral and spirit deteriorated. Gregg and some others decided to leave camp and train for the upcoming trials. His boat won the quad trials, and so earned the right to represent the US at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.

After another poor showing at the Olympics, Gregg had had enough. He retired from rowing. Today he focuses on being a good father and husband, on paddling his kayak and riding (not racing) his road bike, and on doing his best to be there for his daughter, who suffers from a similar learning disability that made life such a challenge for Gregg. Fortunately, his daughter's learning disability was diagnosed early in her life. Gregg's was not. He remains an extraordinary individual, and all who know him speak very highly of all for which he stands.

Chapter 7 - John Walters, '85

Coach Clothier has called John Walters 'the complete package' as an Elite Rower. He is strong, technically proficient, and has enormous stamina. In 1982, his Plebe Eight was the Freshman Winner at the Eastern Sprints. In 1983, he was in the Navy Varsity boat that took 2nd at the IRAs, then in 1984 in the boat that took 1st.

In 1985, he was captain of the team and stroked a Navy Varsity that beat both Princeton and Harvard early in the season, which included such luminescent rowers as Chris Penny and Andrew Sudduth, both Olympians from two widely celebrated crews. That same year he was also invited to try out for the US Pre-Elite Team. He made the team in the eight, and this boat went on to finish second behind the Russian National Team's First Eight at the Lucerne International Regatta in Switzerland. Following this success, the US Navy gave him special orders to live and train for the 1988 Olympic Team in Philadelphia, PA, where he was also able to perform his duties as a Junior US Naval Officer in the Fleet.

In Philly, he trained at Penn AC and rowed for Coach Ted Nash. His hard and diligent work paid off, and in 1986 his four oared shell with coxswain took 3rd place at the World Championships. In 1987, his pair oared shell with coxswain placed 1st at the US National Championships, and 5th at the World Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In 1988, for the Seoul Olympics, Coach Kris Koseniowski made him stroke of an immensely strong camp boat (with rowers such as Tom Darling, John Terwilliger, and

Chris Huntington) that placed 5th in the finals. John hung up his oar soon after this to focus on his remaining time in the US Navy.

He studied to become a MD after resigning his commission, and today is a VA Physician in Salem, Oregon. Retired Navy Coach Rick Clothier thinks him a prime example of what an Elite Navy Rower is all about - which is service, sacrifice and serving a higher calling.

Chapter 8 - My third year rowing

That summer I was flying high. I felt like my life had been redeemed from my honest to goodness new found success in a sport. I was a bit full of myself, and insufferable, hopefully not too much so. One unfortunate acquaintance, who had been the quarterback on the Duxbury High freshman football team I played for, got an earful when he picked me up hitchhiking across town one day. I didn't mean to be this way, but for a time my success in crew made me euphoric about life in almost every way.

I also found love that summer. For the last half-year I had pined away for a girl from Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, NH. But she did not return my affections, and instead I found myself drawn to a Winsor student, also a rower, who had been Paul Kjellberg's girlfriend the previous year. With Paul headed off to Yale, I began seeing her on a regular basis.

I also convinced Mark Sutton over the summer to try crew, and in the fall he did. He is simply one of the best athletes I have ever known. He was the star cross-country skier on a star cross-country ski team, and both an avid soccer and lacrosse player. He played goalie in both those sports, and was spectacular. I thought he'd be equally formidable in crew. Now it was him rowing with the lower form kids and heading down to the boathouse after school. While I once again did Coach Bassett's weight program and trained in a four for the Charles.

I also had more confidence in school, and wasn't afraid to be a force in the classroom keeping order when the rougher or more 'macho' students spoke out against studying things like poetry or art. At the Charles we again finished in a respectable fashion in a very proscribed race, and on the docks of Belmont Hill I first met Coach Ken

Dreyfuss, the Plebe Coach for the US Naval Academy and a prospective coach in college.

I had always wanted to go to Annapolis, ever since I was about eight on the dock behind my Grandmother's house in Manasquan, NJ. I remember asking my Father what was the best college in the world? He immediately replied, "The US Naval Academy." This planted the seed.

I was a very uneven student, doing very well in English and History, but poorly in Science and sometimes Math, I think because these things didn't come easy for me, so I wasn't sure how I could even get into Navy if I wanted to. The previous year I had introduced myself to Coach Dreyfuss, but he paid little attention to me at the time. Now I was a legitimate commodity with something to sell - my 1982 crew accomplishments. It was heady stuff.

This year when I introduced myself and expressed interest in attending Navy, he was most attentive. He invited me down to the Academy for a recruiting visit, and informed me I would be staying with Plebe Bill James, who had been in the Upper Merion boat we had defeated at St. Catherines at the Canadian Schoolboys the previous June.

And so began the odyssey that would ultimately get me to the US Naval Academy. I have to give my Father and Coach Dreyfuss credit for keeping me on the path to something I almost pissed away because of youthful ignorance. I wanted more than anything to be a film director and writer, and thought that going to Navy would remove me from pursuing that goal. So I went through my senior year at Belmont Hill not really committing in my mind to any school. My girlfriend from Winsor was also dead set against me going to Annapolis, and Belmont just wanted me to follow my heart, which

many of the teachers couldn't imagine to mean going to a military school. So when it came time to commit to a college, I committed to both Navy and to Penn.

I would have loved to row with David again at Penn, and I had loved everything about the Quakers when I visited. I also applied to Harvard, Princeton, Yale, BU, and Syracuse. Coach Harry Parker from Harvard would test his recruits by seeing how committed they were to being at Harvard. I really didn't understand this, and so left the place I had been told to meet him when he didn't show up after twenty minutes. It was all very confusing. Needless to say, I didn't get in there. My Princeton interview was also a disaster. My interviewee, a Doctor of Medicine, asked me why I felt like I deserved to go to Princeton? Being ever the wise-ass, I said because I was maybe the top rowing recruit in the country. I didn't get in there, either. My interview for Yale was wonderful and was with a Professor from Wellesley College, but Yale apparently put no premium on athletic recruits in crew at the time, so Yale too was a no.

I did get into Navy, Penn, BU and Syracuse. Coach Dreyfuss called me when he learned that I had also told Penn I was going there the next year, and demanded to know what I was doing. Confused is what I was, but my Father increasingly demanded that I attend Navy, and not pass up such a priceless opportunity. I romanticized this whole thing and thought of myself as something of a martyr (I am truly so full of myself - which my closest friends and family know full well), as July 7, 1984, Navy's Induction Day, inched ever closer.

Here I was, given a priceless opportunity by the powers that be, ready to piss it all away because of my half-assed thinking at the time about the future. A word to the youth of tomorrow when trying to decide on paths in your own life. Always choose that which makes you special, and which will make you stand out in some way. Penn, BU,

and Syracuse would have been fine schools to attend, but I don't think I would have grown as a man and as a leader as much as I have at Navy. From the US Naval Academy came my being an Officer in the US Marine Corps, the greatest fighting organization in the world, being a Veteran of the Persian Gulf War, and my eventual marriage and fatherhood. This may have happened at other schools, but it did happen at Navy, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Which is why I truly feel my Father's refusal to allow me to attend any other school, Coach Dreyfuss' persistence and patience in allowing me to sort out my own feelings while keeping pressure on me to make a good decision, and the gift Coach Bassett enabled me to seize from his longtime role as mentor, coach and guidance counselor at the Belmont Hill School, really more than any other factors in my life, enabled it to turn out the wonderful way it has. For that I am truly blessed.

In the winter, I was like a new man on the cross-country team. Even Head Coach Bates remarked upon my total turn in attitude toward the work. It was no longer important to me to be in any kind of ordered rank. I simply worked hard and to the best of my ability at whatever task or work-out we were given to accomplish for the day. Running roads and hills in pre-season, skiing on road-rolling practice blades in season, going hard all the time; I took it all in stride. In one race I even raced at the first JV skier, which for me was quite an accomplishment. On my old-fashioned skis and in my leather boots I didn't do that well, but I made an attempt.

In the spring, crew came again, and after one early practice of trying me out at stroke, Coach Bassett put me back in the garbage seat, where I could crank away without the pressure. I would stroke later on in my rowing career, but I think I was far

better oarsman in a supporting role, and I don't know how but I think Coach Bassett understood this.

We had early morning practices for a spell, and I became quite sick, and unfortunately we lost our dual race at Groton. We had a very good season, defeating Nobles, BB&N, Brooks, and Middlesex. So we were set to have another go of it against Groton at Quinsigamond. I still felt enormous pressure through all of this, so when our coxswain swerved slightly in his course and partially crossed into another lane during the heats, which we easily won, and as a result were disqualified from the final, I am ashamed to say I was a bit relieved. I learned later that the Officials at Quinsigamond were tired of BHS winning every year, and so were probably harder on us than they would have been otherwise, but there it was.

So my High School crew career came to an end, not with a bang, but a most decided whimper. Another thing I still don't feel good about from the end of the season was my failure to attend the crew party thrown every year to celebrate. For some reason my girlfriend was against me going to this party and not spending the time with her, so I didn't go. I felt like I was a good captain and looked out for all the rowers on the team and not just the first boaters, but this was definitely a mistake. I will always wish I had not missed that party, and finished the season with my teammates. Alas, it was not to be. Joe received the award for most inspirational oarsman at the end of the season, which I thought was the right thing to do.

My entire boat had received the same award the previous year, and Joe had given so much to the program over the years. Our 1V in 1983 was Brian McCarthy - cox, Joseph Driscoll - stroke, Scott Strome - three seat, Sean Coughlin - two seat, and Mark Sutton - bow.

I think we were a very good boat that was never able to show how good. I enjoyed my time with friends and family through June, then on July 7, 1983, reported to the US Naval Academy for Induction Day. I had visited Bill James the previous fall and spent a few days seeing what being a Plebe was all about, and at the time I had mentally decided to pursue my directing dream at another school, because what I had no need to define myself by the rigorous demands of Plebe Year to prove my worth, or some such other drivel. This was all total self-justification for me deciding I would not attend the US Naval Academy. My Father listened to this BS politely, then told me I had my head up my ass.

He would never be so crude, but this was his message. I would attend Navy or else. It wasn't hard to convince me to go, because I loved playing the martyr. I felt at the time my Father was being selfish and callous and told him so in a letter I sent to my girlfriend.

When I read that letter now I can only laugh at how shallow, entitled, and privileged I was as a young man. I cringe at what I would have thrown away had not my Father stood his ground. It wouldn't be until I returned to the Academy after Winter break that I would fully embrace what I had entered into, much like the boy in the French film *The 400 Blows*, directed by Francois Truffaut, who at the end turns from the sea and his turbulent past and fully accepts his new life, which I thought an apt comparison, Attending the US Naval Academy, for me, would eventually become the greatest experience of my life.

Chapter 9 - Sean Coughlin, '87

Sean was a highly recruited rower when he gained admission to the US Naval Academy. In 1982, his prep school four oared shell with coxswain had won the NEIRA Schoolboy Championships at Lake Quinsigamond, MA. And the Canadian Schoolboy Championships at Lake St. Catherines in Ontario, Canada. He was invited to the US Junior National Selection Camp in 1983, but was unable to attend because of Plebe Summer.

At the IRAs he placed third with his Navy Plebe crew in 1984, and again third place with the Navy Varsity in 1985. In 1985, he made the US National Pre-Elite Team as a spare and rowed in the pair with coxswain in Lucerne, Switzerland, taking 2nd place in the Petite Finals. His boatmate John Walters made this team in the eight oared shell and won silver behind the Russians in the same Regatta.

In 1986, Sean again rowed in the Navy Varsity and placed fourth at the IRAs. That summer he attended the Pre-Elite selection camp, and took first place in the Heavyweight Men's Senior Four With Coxswain and the Senior Eights events at the US Nationals in Indianapolis, but he was not invited to continue to the National Team Selection Camp.

In 1987, he was named captain of the team and again rowed in the Navy Varsity. They took 4th at the IRAs, then Sean was invited to row once more at the Pre-elite Selection Camp once more, with Navy teammate Mike Gaffney. Together they made the US World University Games team slated to race in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in the four with

coxswain event. They asked Coach Clothier to be their coach. In Zareb they placed 6th in the finals.

Sean had not been invited to the National Team Selection Camp coming out of the Pre-Elite Selection Camp, and the core of the eight that had come out of Pre-Elite Camp won Gold at the World Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark, making the prospect of unseating anyone in the boat highly unlikely. He spent the rest of 1987, and the first half of 1988, on special orders from the USMC to Willow Grove in Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, where he was stationed to live and train for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

At the culmination of this process, he found himself in a strong boat competing for the Heavyweight Men's Straight Four at the first Olympic Trials. Unfortunately, and primarily due to his poor performance as a lookout in the bow, his boat collided with the boat that would eventually win silver in Seoul, Korea. Recovering quickly from the collision, Sean was invited one again to attend the Pre-Elite Team Selection Camp, but not invited to the following National Team Selection camp. He eventually asked one of the other rowers, Rick Flobeck, from his straight four, and who had been invited to the higher camp, after his being cut, to row in the pair. They decided not to try for the 2+ trials, but instead focus on the 2- trails. Rick and Sean had a great row and won their Heat over the Swinford/Riley pair, but did not do well in the Final. Rick went to the Olympics as a port spare. Sean stayed home and watched the Olympics on TV.

Refocusing his efforts on the single and double, he made somewhat of a half-hearted attempt to make the team for the 1992 Olympic Games, but soon realized he

had had his chance in 1988, and so moved on to other things. He was an active participant in the Persian Gulf War in 1990 and 1991, and if rowing had interfered with his being involved, he never would have forgiven himself. He will always be grateful for the chance the US Marine Corps gave him in 1988 to try for the Olympic Rowing Team. Alas, it was not to be.

Chapter 10 - Michael Gaffney, '87

Mike had his first taste of rowing in Wiesbaden, Germany the summer before his Junior year in High School. It was a week long sculling camp, and he received 'the most likely to flip award.' An auspicious start to what would be a stellar rowing career. In the summer of 1983, Coach Ken Dreyfuss picked him out of the crowd at the Halsey Field House, and encouraged him to give rowing a try. He soon did, and developed lifelong friendships and a shared camaraderie with the men he would row beside for the next four years.

He won bronze at the IRAs as a Plebe and in the First Varsity as a Youngster. His Second and First Class years he placed 4th. In the winter he had rowed a high erg score for US National Team Coach Kris Korseniowski, and so was invited to the National ID camp at the end of the racing season. By the end of camp, he had made the WUG four with coxswain shell with classmate Sean Coughlin, which was coached by Navy Coach Rick Clothier. In Zagreb, Yugoslavia they came in 6th place.

They then prepared for the Pan American Games trials, but lost to a Penn AC straight four and so did not go to the Games. Also in 1987, Mike won a Rhodes Scholarship to live and study in England for two years. That fall he embarked upon his new adventure in Great Britain.

Mike Spracklen was the new coach at Oxford, which was still reeling from the Oxford boat race mutiny of the year before. Spracklen was a big proponent of small boats, so when Mike walked on to the Oxford Crew Team he soon found himself rowing with Johnny Searle, a young high school International.

Mike and Johnny did quite well as a pair in the fall, so in the spring they were a welcome addition to the boat designated for the boat race with Cambridge. They won, and won again the following year with Mike as stroke. He competed with Oxford one more time after his final Rhodes Scholarship year, which he had extended, dividing his time between England and America and his new assigned US Navy duty location in Washington, DC. Oxford again proved victorious. In the midst of his Oxford sojourn, with much encouragement from Oxford Coach Mike Spracklen, and excellent ergometer scores, Mike attended the National Team Selection Camp in America for the 1988 Olympic cycle. At the camp he raced twice for the four seat in the eight, but failed to unseat the current occupant, who had been in the World Championship eight the year before when they won Gold in Copenhagen.

Mike soon joined his Navy teammates John Walters and Sean Coughlin, who were already rowing at Penn AC, and finished a fun summer with victories at the US Nationals and the Canadian Henley. He paired with WUG teammate Kevin MacLeese for the 2+ and 2- trials, but unfortunately was diagnosed with left lung pneumonia shortly before the trials. At the trials, the Gaffney/MacLesse pair rowed two powerful races, but won neither. And so ended Mike's Olympic quest. He leaves a very strong legacy of success at both the US Naval Academy and Oxford, and today is CEO of the Bancroft Group LLC.

Chapter 11 - My fourth year rowing

On July 7, 1983, I reported to the US Naval Academy for Induction Day like hundreds of other Plebes. I think most of us were nervous about what we were getting into, anxious for the future, and wondering if we had what it took to make it through our Plebe Year. After dropping me off in front of the then reception center, my Father and Brothers drove off. Plebes felt power in the shared misery of those going through the exact same thing all around them. Gear issue, haircuts, endless formations of both welcome and disparagement,, checking into rooms in Bancroft Hall (also known as Mother B - the Midshipmen's massive and multi-winged dormitory), eventually eating in King Hall, the Navy wardroom, which was and is the biggest eating facility in the world. You ate a square meal, where your eating utensil made a squared arc from plate to mouth and back again, where you took tiny bites to be ready to answer your 'rates' or information you had to know for the day, like menu items at each meal, breakfast, lunch and dinner, the various command billets of the day, two newspaper articles and a sports story from any newspaper to which you had a subscription, like the Washington Post, the Baltimore Sun, USA Today, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, etc., and of course your rates from *Reef Points*, the pocket sized book you carried with you throughout the day and took every spare moment to memorize.

This included basic Naval Information like rank structure, silly and old rhymes and sea sayings which were a favorite question of upper class, and just about any fact you could imagine about the US Naval Academy and the US Navy. Any Upper Class was responsible to ask you questions. At meal time they would ask you rates when you were least prepared to answer. Such as right after taking a piece of food into your mouth, or a drink, or at any moment you physically could not answer without completing a

previous task. My two roommates and I quickly developed reputations as 'shit screens.' This was because we were invariably unprepared for formations, were always slow or at a loss with our rates, and generally were poor Midshipmen. Shit screens earned a lot of demerits, so they did a lot of marching in the few times you had to yourself. After awhile the demerits and marching were nothing, and the anger and disgust coming to you from the Upper Class rolled right off your back. In think from future experience this was the purpose of it all.

Once in the Gulf War I was out with a driver and a sergeant delivering radios when we drove into a certain camp the wrong way. We evidently missed a massive sign saying, 'Wrong Way!' I reported to a Major, who proceeded to chew me a new one in front of my men. I remained unfazed, and took my dress down properly. Then, when he asked us why we were there, I told him to deliver his radios from higher headquarters. I was very respectful in all I said, but basically in my tone of voice told him to buzz off. The sergeant with me was impressed. Later when I poked a hole in our tires through my negligence, he told his CO the tire had gone flat because we must have hit a rock. My men looked out for me, and had first developed respect for me when they saw me not wilting under a senior's rebuke, and this all came from my year of massive rebuke taking as a Plebe in my First year at Navy.

We awoke early every morning and dressed in our morning outfit of white cotton USNA t-shirt, blue polyester shorts, white cotton tube socks and canvas sneakers, then entered formation in the hall and proceeded to the athletic fields beside the Severn River for PEP with Coach Heinz Lenz. He was the unforgettable coach who would lead us every orning in calisthenics, various runs around the athletic fields, and other activities to whip us into shape. He had a thick accent from I don't know where, and was always

telling us to follow 'the man in the red corvette.' This was the Upper Class who would lead s in our daily run.

After PEP it was back to the Hall and a quick shower if you were fast enough, then change into white works or athletic gear for breakfast and a start to the day. My roommates and I were often too screwed up to manage a shower at Plebe Summer, so I am reluctant to say how few times I really was able to grab even a quick one during this time.

I'm sure this fact would also appal my classmates, but my roommates and I were truly terrible Midshipmen and far too disorganized to shower on days other than Sundays, where you actually still had some very slight time to yourself. Bailey Dabney and Bob Burns were my roommates during Plebe Summer and the Fall semester of Plebe Year. Bailey was from South Carolina and had a vicious Southern accent. Bob was a Christian, and today a Minister and Commander in the US Navy. For the spring semester Bob would move into another room and Andrew Wickerson, 'slick,' into the room with Bailey and I.

Andy was a better Midshipman than either Bailey or I. Though none of us won high marks in performance. Through it all I found meaning and focus in Hubbard Hall, the boathouse and home of the US Naval Academy's crew teams. This was my refuge, and crew became more than a sport for me at Navy. It became my way of life.

I went to bed at 10 when I could my four years at Navy to be ready to give my best in the boathouse the next day. The rowers who became my best friends at the Academy, among them men like Mike Gaffney, Erik Shay, Mike Fields, and Marc Ruggiano, would go to be much later studying and still have to wake up at five or six the next morning to begin the day. Mike Gaffney would be a Rhodes Scholar in time, Erik

Shay a Submariner, Mike Fields a helicopter pilot, and Marc Ruggiano a fighter pilot. I found the boathouse and the crew team a place where I was definitely at home. The recruited rower a year ahead of me was Bill James. His experiences as a Navy rower were not good ones. I think he was impatient at the slow progress of his peers, and never warmed to Coach Dreyfuss. As a result the 1986 Plebe Crew Team had not been successful. I hoped to not make similar mistakes.

Crew at Navy has a long and glorious history. Navy earned the right to represent the US at the Olympics in the eight in 1920, 1952, and 1968. In 1952 the 'Great Eight' won the Olympics and went on to three undefeated seasons. The sixties and the seventies were lean years, I think mainly because of the Vietnam War, but In the early eighties Navy was having a Renaissance of sorts under the direction of Head Coach Rick 'Rex' Clothier.

Every year, in the early eighties, Navy would dominate the Fall head races in Boston and Philadelphia against other colleges, and also against the US National Team. The US Naval Academy's Heavyweight Varsity Crew Team would also win most of their dual races early in the season, then invariably be a finalist in the culminating races at the end. In races such as the Eastern Sprints, held annually on Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester, and the IRAs, the National Intercollegiate Championships, also held annually on Lake Onondaga in New York, Navy made strong and often triumphant showings. Harvard was a key rival, as was Princeton, Penn, Brown, and Wisconsin. Harvard and Yales raced at the Eastern Sprints, but not at the IRAs. Instead they raced their annual Harvard/Yale competition. Some years their presence was missed in Syracuse. In other years it was not.

In the eighties Harvard had become the team to beat. Under the guidance of their amazing Coach, Harry Parker, they amassed a formidable record of success. It didn't hurt that the rules didn't seem to apply to them. The great rower Andrew Sudduth, an Olympic and National Team Champion, rowed at Harvard at various times from 1979 to 1985. Coach Parker often boasted he had better eights walking his campus than most other schools had in their First Varsity, since Harvard could be so phenomenally successful at recruiting. A good example of the aura surrounding the Harvard Crew Team at this time is the presentation made of it in the David Fincher film, *The Social Network*. The twin brothers who had partnered with Mark Zuckerberg and later sued him, the Winckelvoss twins, were both Harvard rowers. They expected to win and took victory as a matter of course. If they lost, the Universe was out of kilter. Probably because of this attitude on part of Harvard and the teams they rowed against, this often made winning for the Crimson a reality. But it also engendered a lot of anger and rage, which I'm sure had an impact as well. I speak here of the future, but that will come.

Coach Dreyfuss often joined the Pebes in our PEP sessions every morning. He would pick an athlete, sometimes a recruit and sometimes not, and accompany them through their morning evolution. He was a dynamo and a constant ball of positive enthusiasm and energy. During afternoons Midshipmen began attending the different sports they might take up for the Fall. I and other recruited athletes knew exactly what we would be doing and welcomed being able to commit ourselves to a certain thing in a life suddenly full of uncertainty.

Rates, rates, rates... drill and marching in the early evening... classes in the beautiful academic buildings on Naval custom and heritage, on the Laws of Warfare and the UCMJ and other similar professional subjects... lessons in sailing in the Academy's

small sailboats and lessons in ship handling of the larger Yard Patrol Craft, or YPs....
and constant immersion in a brand new world of duty, honor, and courage.

Plebes continued to dine in King Hall for breakfast, lunch and dinner, but only in one wing. The return of the entire Brigade in August would open up the entire space for usage. We were fed very well, and simply held up an empty juice or milk carton to have it replaced by a new one. The wardroom was served by an army of paid personnel who saw to such matters. As Plebes we were coddled and taken care of. Our laundry was placed in the hall outside our doors dirty and came back clean. We learned to get haircuts from the Academy barbers once a week. Our dental and medical needs were met by a full staff of Doctors and Nurses, as well as Dentists and Technicians.

You did everything together, and for a time, like in Boot Camp, in the Peace Corps, or in any other intense evolution that demanded total commitment, for a time you felt closer to your peers than anybody else on the planet. I totally understand how that US Air Force Academy cadet would feel safe enough to reveal the terrible crime her boyfriend and she had committed prior to entering the Air Force. Your emotions and psyche are warped in a way, and for a time the things you are going through as a Midshipman, or Cadet, or something else seems all encompassing. For a brief time there is no other reality than what you are currently undergoing. This is why I think former enlisted personnel or those who spent a year at Foundation or NAPS are so much better equipped to handle being a Plebe.

Where I and my roommates were totally incompetent and felt lucky to just make it through the day, there were other Midshipmen in my platoon who performed admirably and who did very well in everything they undertook. John Titus, Kent Van Horne, Joseph Deleon, Heidi Moser, and Mary Miles made everything look easy. They were always

squared away, always knew their rates, and always ready to help out the rest of us as best they could.

My roommate Bob was made to write a sign that said, 'I am a screw-up, sir. Please ask me a rate!' Unfortunately, either on purpose or by mistake, he spelled screw-up wrong, so it read 'srew-up.' Needless to say, I and the other miscreant Midshipmen failed to set the world on fire with our military bearing. Near the end of Plebe summer I also grew very disappointed with my performance on the pistol range. I had always defined myself as a military man, but on this particular day I didn't follow the instructions effectively and kept yanking the trigger just before I shot, which we were told most definitely not to do. This led to my rounds missing the target every time. I was almost in tears at my failure to carry myself in any manner of a soldier, but Heidi told me to shake it off and do better next time.

Rowing and the boathouse became my refuge. When our platoon toured Hubbard Hall early in July, Coach Dreyfuss told me to go sleep in the weight room. I did, and got the best sleep of my life. It was probably only twenty-five minutes that I slept, but I woke up entirely refreshed, recharged and totally recommitted to my life at Navy.

I had been invited to the Junior National Camp at the end of our season at Belmont Hill, but couldn't attend because of Plebe Summer. Instead I found myself rowing in massive barges with Plebes who had never rowed before. This was how Coach Dreyfuss introduced the mass of rowers he had access to, to the basic dynamics of our sport. A barge had two rows of slides on either side of it, making it possible to learn how to row from an absolutely stable platform. This process I think is what drove Bill James crazy because he was so far ahead of his peers and wanted to jump into an eight as soon as possible. Coach Dreyfuss had let me know this, so instead of taking

that tack with my potential boatmates, I did the exact opposite and embraced rowing in the barges. This was a golden opportunity to be the same thing that John Titus, Kent Van Horne, Joseph Deleon, Heidi Moser, and Mary Miles were for me in the Hall. I could assist my peers in mastering the complex new thing they were facing, and this is exactly what I did.

My attitude and diligence in helping my classmates pleased Coach Dreyfuss no end, and this reinforced my commitment to being an aid to my classmates and not a hindrance. Parent's weekend finally came, after five weeks of Plebe Summer, and my girlfriend made the trip down to Annapolis from Boston to see their son and boyfriend, respectively. It was fun to see my girlfriend caught up in the life of a Mid and wearing the appropriate sweatshirt, and to see my Father and Mother beaming with pride. Then they were gone, having to leave early for my beloved Grandmother's eightieth birthday party.

The brigade returned eventually, and as Plebes we were a bit discombobulated to see so many Upper Class intruding into a space to which we felt a special entitlement. Classes started in earnest, as did crew. We jogged down to the boathouse every day after class to get on the water or do land training. The rowers who stayed with the sport would follow this same routine day after day for the next four years. Very rarely Coach Clothier would give us all a mental health day, which meant a day off from practice. At other times we would row early in the morning before class to get calm water, You would spend class gazing out over the Severn hoping for calm water, or maybe rough water, depending on the work out planned for the day. Crew became all-consuming, and what you thought and talked of constantly.

As the Plebe boats slowly came together, the upper boats competed in the Fall head races. In 1983, they won again, at both the Head of the Charles, and the Head of

the Schuylkill. Our dominance in these races was a great source of pride. Other crews would invariably said Fall head races were unimportant, but that's because they didn't win year after year like Navy did. For us it was a great source of pride and a sign that our program was coming up.

On Christmas break I attended a Ball with my girlfriend in my marching uniform. An ROTC Lieutenant looked at me like I was crazy. It was the wrong uniform. I should have worn my Dress Blues, as he had. Maybe the Upper Class of *Serene 18* (the Company I was in with a well-earned reputation for being 'flamers', or Upper Class who yelled at their Plebes a great deal of the time) could have spent a little time explaining the proper dress code for special events and less time on their endless rates.

In January, it was back to the Academy, and like I said, coming down the hill on the old Route 50 just outside Annapolis, I remember making peace with my life and accepting where I was finally. The Dark Ages began at Navy, which is what the winter months of January, February and March are known as at school. With shorter days and not much sun, and for the crew team, winter training. Waking up, formation, breakfast, class, lunch, class, crew, dinner, study, and bed. This was the rigid routine.

My roommates were Bailey Dabney and Andrew Wickerson. We played a lot of table football with a folded paper triangle as the ball. We also did a lot of talking, since there wasn't much else to do besides talk and study.

"You be stinkin'?" Andy would ask.

"Yea," Bailey answered. "I be stinkin'."

And so it went. When crew season arrived in March we sent our spring break in Hubbard Hall instead of traveling anywhere else. You rowed in cold water (still nothing like New England or Wisconsin). So backslash was far more bracing, and possibly

flipping much more of a danger if it ever happened. Crew season also meant team tables, where Plebes could sit with their fellows and enjoy eating a meal without harassment.

I loved this, and being away from the madness that was my company. One day I took it too far, however, and was reamed out when returned upstairs by my nemesis, First Classman Richard Lee, from Poughkeepsie, NY. Because he saw me laughing and joking far after the meal was done with my stroke, Bob Dietz. Being reamed out later was a smile price to pay for the wonderful time I had spent with Bob earlier.

For some reason I think Mr. Lee hated me. I think I became his bugaboo and he singled me out for abuse constantly. When the Plebes all danced in the hall during one of our 'breaks', I think he was angered by my dancing abandonment (as a young man I think I was a fairly good dancer) in the music. And when we rumbled with the upper class he always stayed well-clear of me. One second class who I went after in a particular rumble chewed me out for my aggression when none of my classmates followed me. I think he chewed them out later even more for leaving their classmate in the lurch. Another Firstie, Simon, gave me french fries because he was impressed with the way I had conducted myself in a particular rumble. And my First Semester Squad Leader, Dave Brumley, later that Spring apologized to me for being such a dick. He had let Mr. Lee set the tone for the squad, so I had become a target. Fate works in funny ways, however. As a Firstie myself and team captain with three stripes, I encountered Mr. Lee out in town with his fiance three years later. When this wonderful woman asked me what kind of person he was when I was a Plebe, I looked him straight in the eye, smiled, and said he was a first-class leader and an inspiration. What I should have told her was to run while she still could. This is always a reminder to me to walk softly and not think too

much of yourself. I have had more than my share of moments when I was full of myself and acted like a horse's ass, but hopefully these were few and far between.

Early in the semester I had an experience that still marks me today. I thought of myself as an athlete and something of a tough guy who could take care of myself. One day at evening meal I would be reduced to a quivering blubbing mess, because I was unable to say, "Deputy Vice Honor Chairman in Charge of Investigations, Sir!"

For some reason I was incapable of saying this properly, whether because I wanted to experience the depths of humiliation, or because I was just a loser, but the Firsties who disliked me pounced when I gave them the chance. They literally screamed at my ineptitude, and soon the entire dining hall was witness to my failure. The Eighteenth Company First Class carried on to such a degree that the Officer of the Day came over and told them to quiet down.

I don't know how I made it to my deck soon after, but I was in my room and a total mess when our First Class Company Commander, Roy Sexton, came and told me to try and get a hold of myself. He said one should never allow others to reduce you to such a state. Later, my friend Heidi came by and tried to cheer me up, and later in the boathouse Coach Dreyfuss presented me a signed memento of our Plebe Team which I still have today that told me to believe in myself. The image of who I was in life was constantly challenged at the US Naval Academy, and it taught you to not hold those made-up images and potentially false barriers too tightly so as not to allow them to ultimately blind you in the face of adversity.

I think it was from this moment that I began to build myself up again. I stood up, dusted myself off, and sought to make myself a better Midshipman and not a target. Again, the experience of being dressed down and thoroughly maligned in a situation

where you had no ability to fight back was one of extraordinary growth. Looking back I don't know what certain of my Firsties were thinking. It takes no effort to rip people apart when you are their complete superior. I reserve my respect and admiration for individuals like Mr. Sexton and Heidi Moser, who instead of abuse offered comfort. You earn much more respect and loyalty with care than you do with brutality. I have since mentioned my less than warm feelings about much of the Eighteenth Company leadership to others who attended Navy at the same time. I love it when they laugh and tell me Eighteenth Company did have a well-earned reputation for being a very strange place to be. I can only say I think because of what I went through as a Plebe, I never raised my voice in anger or disgust at any fourth class I came across. I tried always to model strong leadership and a professional demeanor, but that being said, I do believe sometimes abrasive and loud leadership has its place. If only to show you how not to lead.

Hubbard Hall became a refuge for me in almost every way. Because of my encouraging and positive attitude, I became well liked and a leader on the Plebe Crew team. I was elected captain at the beginning of our season. Our first race was against Columbia University, on the filthy Harlem River. At the time Columbia was not good, and we easily swept. Next up was Princeton, which I knew was a very powerful and strongly recruited crew. They had Doug Burden and Dave Saxen in their midst, among a few other very capable oarsmen. I knew it would be a huge challenge to face the Princeton Frosh in 1984.

Most of my teammates, who knew really next to nothing about the sport they were engaged in, thought of this as just another race. Our race would be home, on the Severn River, but was blown off because of high winds until early the next morning. So the Princeton rowers would spend the night in Bancroft Hall. I showed Dave and Doug

where they would sleep, in some of the rooms where Midshipman were gone for the weekend.

Next morning, at five am, we trudged down to the boathouse. The Princeton rowers all looked half-awake and miserable. This probably explains the result, because our Plebe boat actually defeated Princeton. We moved ahead and never looked back. Bob Dietz did a great job stroking, and our boat had its second victory.

None of my boatmates knew what we had done. They thought we had simply rowed well and won another race. I, on the other hand, went crazy. I was screaming and yelling with joy at our victory and was vigorously splashing water all over us. I was three man. Ernie Harper, 'Big Ern,' was four man. He angrily told me to quit splashing. He didn't want to get wet. This made me realize how special Navy crew was. With little experience and even less hubris we had managed to defeat one of the most highly recruited Freshmen crews of the decade. I stopped my splashing to make Ernie happy, and then later with Coach Dreyfuss shared my euphoria over what we had just done.

I think Coach Dreyfuss sensed with us that we could be a very fast crew. Once we even traded short pieces with the varsity, who would be a National Champion that year, and on the following day when we rowed longer pieces and did not do as well he vented his frustration by calling us cowards. I knew some individuals in the boat, like Ernie, would be highly insulted at this, which I think was Coach Dreyfuss' aim, but I just ignored the tirade and had us take our boat in. I thought the coach would mention this later, but he did not, and the fact that he didn't makes me think he was putting on an act more than anything else.

It was just out of character for him to resort to such tactics as calling us cowards, and I don't think he really meant it. It just shows what a smooth system he and I had

developed, that we could work off each other to such a degree and not take away any hard feelings. I look at my time as a leader and rower on the Navy Plebe Crew Team as the time I probably grew the most as a man and a leader in my life.

Then our wonderful stroke, Mr. Robert Dietz from Wisconsin, came down with Chicken Pox. Next up was the Adam's Cup, a dual race with Harvard and Penn, and where Princeton was on one level, Harvard was on an entirely other level of greatness and pure boat speed. This was also a key race for our Varsity boats, because Harvard and Penn were our fierce rivals all the time. Harvard took the lead early and left us far behind. Erik Shay was our new starboard stroke, and did a fine job of keeping us in the mix. Far behind us was Penn.

For some reason the Penn Frosh boat in '84 was terrible. I was almost part of it, and I was surprised knowing who was in the boat just how slow they were. They would be a big part of winning crews at Penn in the years following, but in 1984 they were just out of it and not even part of the discussion. Many in the Harvard First Frosh who kicked our ass would also be a key part to very fast crews in the future, but under the eventually disgraced Coach Ted Washburn, the Harvard Freshmen were always a force to be reckoned with.

Our First Varsity had a powerful and successful race against both Penn and Harvard, and our team came away from Philadelphia on cloud nine, for our premier boat had soundly beaten Harvard's premier boat, as well as Penn's. Harvard and Penn were missing a few of their best athletes because of the upcoming '84 Olympics in Los Angeles, but notching a win against Harvard and Penn is always an achievement.

After the Adam's Cup came the Eastern Sprints, again at Quinsigamond in Worcester, MA, where we all expected our Varsity to shine once more. They did not, and

rather limped into the finish. Our entire team was distraught. Was it the exams? Which fell right in the middle of the race. Or overtraining? Or something else. In the Plebe Crew we finished I think around sixth place, and a surprised Coach Dreyfuss simply asked us why we never raced?

We had rowed the final in complete control, with no sense of urgency, and no sense of having to beat other crews. We simply rowed well and hard, but not ferociously. It would be back to the drawing board for all the Navy crews. We were disappointed, but the 1V and Coach Clothier were devastated with our team/s performance at Quinsigamond.

The 1V had been undefeated in all their dual races, and we all expected their domination to continue in the larger, end-of-the-season regattas. Alas, it was not to be. If sport and crew teaches you anything, it is to be humble. Winning is hard, and to win it all, all the time, often impossible. But you stand back up, dust yourself off, and try again. That is an especially important lesson to learn at Navy.

General US Grant and General Washington lost their share of battles, but they also won their fair share, and as a result were able to achieve victory in the American Civil War and the American Revolution respectively.

Losing I think teaches you more about yourself than winning, and like Coach Bassett always said, losing well is just as important as winning well. And, after any setback, the best thing is often to regroup and move forward. Which is what we did under the leadership of Coach Clothier, and of Team Captain Andrew Bigelow.

Our next race was against Wisconsin, a generally very good opponent. I think both the Plebes and the 1V were victorious. Then it was off to Syracuse and Lake Onondaga for the IRAs - the Intercollegiate Rowing Association's annual race to

determine the best college crew in the country. It was three days of intense racing that culminated in a single victor in each category.

Eights were 1V, 2V, 3V, and Freshmen. Fours and pairs also raced. Both straight and coxed. You first had heats, where the victor would automatically make the semi-final, then heats for the others to also qualify for the semis. Three boats from each semi would make the final, and then the final would decide the overall victor.

There were adjustments to this, of course, which took into consideration the number of boats entered into any certain race, and the overall level of competition. At the Eastern Sprints the regatta was a one day affair of heats and finals. At the IRAs it was a multi-day affair of heats, repechages, semi-finals, and finals. Harvard and Yale often didn't compete in the IRAs, as their special race took place at the same time, but when Harvard or Yale was not a contender for Our the top spot anyway, this was unimportant.

At the IRAs in 1984 our Plebe boat came in 3rd. Our 1V won going away. They had redeemed themselves, and that summer the Navy boathouse was a very happy place. I was soon off on my Third Class cruise, aboard a Minesweeper in Hawaii and San Diego, and when I came home I watched the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics on TV.

I remember seeing the eights race. The US was expected to win, but Canada shot out and held on for the Gold. The US put on a furious sprint, but it was too little too late. The stars of the LA Games in the rowing world was the double of Brad Lewis and Paul Enquist. In his wonderful book, The Amateurs, David Halberstam described their ordeal of chasing and winning gold. I remember this book being almost required reading among crew athletes. There are many similar stories of succeeding against impossible odds, but for several months Lewis and Enquist were at the top of the list.

During Plebe Year, crossing the campus at night and listening to the night sounds of Mother B, I remember too, thinking that I would probably do well at Navy as a Plebe Rower, but as time went on I would also probably have to resign myself to rowing in lower boats. The others would catch up, and my head start in rowing would no longer be as decisive. I resolved to do as well as I could for as long as I could.

Chapter 12 - John Hall, '87

John Hall grew up on the banks of the Mississippi River, and never lost his love of water and water sports. In High School he was a four sport athlete - football,

basketball, track, and cross-country. As a Senior he remembers reading about a lightweight rower training out of the New York Athletic Club who rowed the two seat in the US National Lightweight Eight, and the story planted a seed. On Induction Day at the US Naval Academy, like so many other Plebes, John was encouraged to try out for the crew team by Freshman Coach Ken Dreyfuss.

John rowed a strong erg, but needed to work his kinks out on the water, so in 1984 he did not make the First Plebe boat. In 1985, however, he found a home as stroke of the straight four that Navy sent to the Eastern Sprints and the IRAs. They won both races.

In 1986, John made the First Varsity boat. That winter he competed in the Crash-B erg races held every year in Boston and came in 4th overall in the Lightweight category. He also had the 2nd fastest college time. When Coach Korseniowski came to the Navy Boathouse with his Norwegian Ergometer to test, John did so as a Lightweight. He was one of the top five rowers in the Nation on the test, and was invited that summer to attend the Lightweight National Selection Camp in Philly. John worked hard that summer managing his weight and training for the US National Lightweight Team. Rowing for Vesper, his eight soon won the Lightweight Eight event at the US Nationals in Indianapolis, and placed 4th in the Heavyweight Eight event two hours later. He held on through final cuts, and eventually found himself in the US National Lightweight Eight in the two seat, the exact seat he had read about two years earlier.

At the World Championships that year John's boat made the Final in Nottingham, England. Back at Navy John weighed in at about 154 pounds. Already a somewhat

smaller rower, Coach Clothier told him to put some weight back on his frame if he hoped to make one of the varsity boats. He eventually made the 2V as the stroke, and enjoyed a thoroughly enjoyable season his First Class year. After graduation John went straight to BUDS and spent the next eight years as an elite Navy SEAL. He would occasionally toy with the idea of having another go at making the US National Lightweight Team, but now only rows for fun and encourages his son in his own rowing career.

Chapter 13 - DALE HURLEY '89

Dale Hurley was a swimmer and a very good water polo player from Texas when he entered the Academy as a Plebe in the summer of 1985. After unsuccessfully trying out for the Water Polo and Swim Teams at Navy, he gave rowing a try in November.

He took to the sport very well, and with assistance from crew teammates and coaches, made it through a very tough Academic year after being placed in a Second Class Math section as a Fourth Class Midshipman. Dale's Plebe team First Boat finished 4th in the finals at the 1986 EARC Sprints, and Navy Crew found itself another true believer. In 1987, Dale trained with Mark Hamilton, '87, in the pair to get ready for the 1987 World University Games trials. This is where Dale learned a great deal about physical preparation and weight management as a lightweight from Coach Pat Manion. He never had the chance to race at the WUG trials, but loved the time rowing with his teammates and coaches. In 1988, in his best season as a Navy Lightweight rower, Dale would go on to compete at the IRAs as a Heavyweight in the Open 4+ division, where he and his partner, Greg Strauser, made the final. In his First Class Year, 1989, Dale was elected team captain, and won the petite final in the annual Crash-B rowing competition in Boston. He finished the season by being elected to receive the 'Spirit of the Lightweight's Award' from his teammates, and decided to give making the US National Rowing Team as a Lightweight a try.

He was not invited to the Pre-Elite Camp that summer, so took vacation time and headed to Philly with his Heavyweight classmate, Bill Serad. In Philly, Dale ended up rowing a Lightweight Pair in an Elite category at the US Nationals. From his excellent showing at the Nationals, he was invited to the National Team selection camp. His coach was Kevin St. Clair at the Bachelor's Barge Rowing Club in Philadelphia. A teammate at the camp was his successful Navy classmate and boatmate from Navy's lightweight eight, Paul Montanus, who had been invited to the Pre-Elite camp and attended. Dale

made it through the entire National Team selection camp and was the last starboard rower to be cut. Paul made it into the US Lightweight Eight and competed at the World Championships that summer.

The Navy called back home, so Dale left rowing behind for the time being, and reported to the USS Kitty Hawk as an Ensign. On the Kitty Hawk his roommate was Bill Serad. Dale and Bill worked on the ship while it was in dry-dock from 0700 to 1600, training every morning and evening before and after these times at their respective clubs in Philadelphia.

In the summer of 1990, still at the Bachelor's Barge Rowing Club, Dale won Intermediate and Senior Nationals at the US Rowing Nationals, then won a bronze medal as the five-man in the Lightweight Four Without Coxswain at the Olympic Festival. As a result of all this success, Dale was finally invited to try out for the Lightweight National Team. He made it into the Lightweight Eight as a five-man, rowing for National Lightweight Team Coach Stewart MacDonald.

At the World Rowing Championships in Australia, his boat finished 6th in the Finals. In 1991, Dale again trained in Philly under Coach Kevin St. Clair at the Bachelor's Barge Rowing Club and Vesper. Dale made the US National Eight (now as a six-man), and this time took home the Bronze medal at the World Championships.

In 1992, Dale transferred back to the US Naval Academy to work as a PE instructor in the Athletic Department, and coach the Plebe Lightweights. His partner in the LWT 2- at the time was Kane Larin and went with him so they could train. With Dale

as coach, the Navy Lights took 4th at the EARC Sprints. He was two-seat of the LWT 4- on the National Team that summer, and in the World Championships placed 4th.

In 1993, Dale earned his SWOS pin aboard the USS Sumter during a 6+ month Med Cruise. He also married a woman he had met while rowing. Beth Dean was an accomplished Lightweight Rower herself, so it makes sense that Dale's son, Cooper, would also make a mark in the shell game.

In 1994, he was back in Philadelphia aboard the USS Kennedy, and began training again at the Vesper Boat Club. At Henley that summer he rowed 3-seat in a US Lightweight Eight that won the final of the Lady's Plate Championship in a very tight race against the British Lightweight Eight. Later that summer, Dale made the US Lightweight Eight as three-man and finished 5th at the World Championships in Indianapolis, IND.

In 1995, working as an Assistant Safety Officer in Earle, NJ, and still training in Philly, Dale paired with Ross Flemer, the 8-man in the World Championships. The pair moved to Penn AC to row for coach Ted Nash. Their target was the Lightweight 2- at the World's, but along the way they won the Elite Open Pair and took second in the Elite Open Straight Four at the US Nationals. They eventually won the US Lightweight Pair trials, and finished 9th at the World Championships in Tampere, Finland.

Dale hung up his oar after this race, but stayed in coaching, both at Navy and other places. Today he is a Math teacher and Head Crew Coach at Phillips Academy, Andover. He also coaches water polo and swimming.

Chapter 14 - My fifth year rowing

After my summer duty aboard a minesweeper, cruising from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to Seattle, WA, I embarked upon my second year at the Academy. In Hubbard Hall we prepared for the Fall head races and worked hard to put together our strongest boats.

Coach Clothier did this by generally having us do longer pieces and working on our form, and by having an 'hour of power' race every Friday where several boats raced up the river for a half an hour and back. In college you really learned to pace yourself. In High School I couldn't imagine rowing all out for an hour. In college it was just another work out.

In time I realized I did best when I started out at about 80% in my power application. The trick was to maintain this, so at the end you were still rowing at that 80%. At the end of a race, the 80% which in the beginning felt comfortable, was pure agony. But if you could maintain that a good result often followed. This is the same strategy I used on the ergometer, and what would result in some very good ergs for me. I once rowed a Norwegian ergometer for National Team Coach, Kris Korseniowski, in the Navy boathouse and did so well for a brief time I had the highest Norwegian erg score in the country. I remember Kris saying, "How can little man pull so hard?" and "You row the bow seat in my eight!"

On the Dreissigacker ergometer and the Norwegian ergometer I often did well. I also did well sometimes on the Concept II ergometer. And I sometimes did not do well. One time in the 1986 Crash-B's in Boston I made the final with a ferocious leg drive and a low rate, but then put the fullest load possible on the gearing expecting to do the same and could barely finish the piece. A big hole in my rowing education was proper adjustment and use of equipment.

Coach Bassett took absolutely no interest in boat rigging, so I took no interest in it. An athlete should be a master of his heart, his body, his mind, and his equipment. When I tried out for the Olympics in 1987 and 1988, I think my failure was in not knowing how to steer a boat, in not knowing how to row both sides, and in not knowing how to

scull. If I had known any of these things my chances of making the team would have increased exponentially. Without knowing them the path I had for making the team was much narrower and hard-pressed.

In the Fall of 1984, on September 22, at a Navy dance, I met and started to see Maryanne Chidsey, the woman who is now my wife and the mother of my two children. Around the same time, two of my classmates and I also made the varsity boat that would race the Fall Head Races in Boston and Philadelphia.

Mike Gaffney, a port, Erik Shay, a starboard, and I, also a starboard, joined First Classmen John Walters, Bruce Thompson, John Beach, Ben Wright, and Pat Percey. Navy had won the Head of the Charles the last four years, beating all other college crews and the US and German National Teams. We were expected to do so again.

In our warm-ups headed down to the Basin I heard a rower in another boat, I think Andy Sudduth, tell us to, "beat those fucking Canucks!" We smiled and resolved to give it our best, thinking this was a real possibility. It was not.

The Canadians were remorseless as they chased us down and passed us. Our coxswain, Rob White, didn't help things when he had us trying to fight them off on the turn going up river after the Harvard Boathouse. This lost us an enormous amount of time, and exhausted us. After four years of dominance, Navy had lost the Head of the Charles. We did win the Head of the Schuylkill a week later against very strong American crews from Penn AC and Vesper, and all was right with the world again as we proceeded into our winter training.

Coach Clothier sensed something special going on in our boat, and knew we could surprise the rest of the league who expected a fall off in performance from last

year's National Champion. 'Stirring the pot,' is what he called it, and Coach Clothier had us totally fired up and ready for a new season at the end of March.

Our first race was in the end of March against a very stacked Princeton boat. They had an Olympian from the previous year's eight, Chris Penny, as well as Doug Burden and Dave Saxen and some other great recruits. Navy was not expected to win, as we had lost a number of our best rowers from the previous year's National Champion boat.

The race was a scorcher, and went bow ball to bow ball for almost 1900 meters. Then something happened in the Princeton boat, and we shot ahead and over the finish line. A clear victory. Our side was ecstatic. The Princeton side, not so much. I think what happened is that some in the boat mentally couldn't take the pressure. They crabbed or missed a stroke or something, and we took a clear lead to the win. Coach Clothier was beside himself. What he thought about our quality may well have been coming to pass. The Princeton Coach was Larry Gluckman, and to pick an oppositely motivated coach to his well-heeled athletes would have been impossible. He had come out of the Northeastern University program in Boston, which was blue collar and hard fought all the way.

Everything about him was the antithesis of how Princeton had raced. Dave and Douj told me later that the next time they met Coach Gluckman started off the meeting by booting a rusty metal bucket noisily across the floor. Then he laid into them. They must have taken the lesson to heart, because they would go on to an absolutely wonderful and triumphant season and even placed third at an International Regatta in Lucerne, Switzerland.

“Stirring the pot,” Coach Clothier had said. We were on our way. I had a secret plan of matching or beating the crew record of Navy’s Great Eight, which had won the Helsinki Olympics in 1952, then went on to three years of undefeated rowing.

Next up was the San Diego Crew Classic, where we would face the top West Coast crews of Cal Berkeley and Washington. Washington was Coach Clothier’s Alma Mater, so he was motivated to beat them. We rowed well in the heats and made the final, where we lost to Washington. My plan for an undefeated season ended right there. We took silver, but were not happy. I have often wondered at what kind of speed our Navy boat was capable of that year, and I think the Crew Classic gives me a clear answer. We were a very good crew and capable of racing with the best, but we were not a great crew. Great crews win. We won sometimes, but we also lost sometimes, and as Coach Bassett always said, ‘the best boat on race day will always win.’ Our Navy boat in ‘85 was a very good boat with very good rowers, but we were never the best, and needed to race knowing this. I think Coach Clothier did not take a similarly negative view of things. When he looked at us, he saw the best, and he wanted us to achieve what he thought us capable of. We would ‘steal’ some big races in ‘85, but in the end couldn’t match the speed of the preeminent boats.

Our stroke in the beginning of the season was First Class John Walters, our captain for the year, and he was truly a monster of an oarsman. He would row in the ‘88 Olympics in a very powerful four with coxswain, and I think would medal in the finals. With him as stroke we were a formidable boat, but events would transpire to move him back in the line-up and try John Beach in the stroke seat and me at seven.

This was probably a mistake, but again we all made too much out of losing. Sometimes you should just lose and move on. Not remake everything to try and find a

reason. In crew, you lose sometimes. Other times, with no explanation and against impossible odds, you win.

After the San Diego Crew Classic we flew back East, then raced Cornell and Syracuse at Cornell. We expected to win, and we did. Next up was Harvard and Penn at Navy. We all knew this race would be a challenge, and it was. Penn was still more or less recovering from an athlete's revolt against Coach Ted Nash, and their new Coach, Stan Bergman, had yet to work his magic. Coach Nash was and is a wonderful coach and I will say nothing against him, and I have friends on both sides of this event who may be able to explain things better than I.

All I know is that they went from one wonderful coach in Ted Nash to another in Stan Bergman. Freshman Coach Bruce Kanopka may have been filling in as the Head Coach at the time. I'm not sure. Penn, however, was not really a factor in this race. My future teammates and friends of David Anderson, John Pescatore, Bob Meyn, Rick Flobeck, and Josh Collins were a year away from making their indelible mark on the collegiate rowing scene.

The '85 Harvard Varsity is widely celebrated as one of their all time greatest boats. They had Andy Sudduth at stroke, who had started at Harvard in 1980, was expelled for a year in 1981, when he won his first World Championship, was back at Harvard in 1982, won a National Championship in 1983, took a second year off to compete in the 1984 Olympics, then came back to Harvard in 1985 to finish his Undergraduate education. This was a span of time of six years. Eligibility rules didn't seem to apply at Harvard. Things like this, along with Coach Parker boasting about his better eights walking the campus than other schools had varsities, made Harvard a pariah among the coaches and athletes in the rest of the league. Harvard did have a

well-earned reputation for excellence. Hey also had a well-earned reputation for arrogance and entitlement. I know many of the Harvard rowers personally, and they are all good people. There was, however, an enormous and real animus toward them from the rest of us.

I think this, more than anything, explains what happened that morning. Coach Clothier had us our boat so fired up to race Harvard with all his talk of 'stirring the pot,' that we were like a compressed coil of spring ready to explode. John Walters was the Navy stroke. Andy Sudduth was the Harvard stroke. Both were phenomenal athletes and Olympians or future Olympians. On the command to race our boat shot out to a considerable lead in the early going, just like the Canadians had done in the Olympics. Then we held on, also just like the Canadians. Harvard came back considerably with a ferocious sprint, but it was too little, too late.

Navy had won! In our boat we were ecstatic. Coach Clothier was beside himself with joy. Harvard, on the other hand, was stunned. Coach Harry Parker said later that "three times in my life I have seen an inferior crew beat a superior one. This was one of those times." I saw him lying in the grass outside of Ricketts Hall later, lying on his back and staring up at the sky. I thought about approaching him and saying 'good race' as a way to annoy him, but I did not, and I'm glad I took the high road. In the Harvard boathouse today there is a great deal about the 'great' 1985 Harvard University Heavyweight Men's First Varsity Crew, which would go on to win the Eastern Sprints, and then Henley in England, but nothing about their sole loss of the season to Navy. At the time, we were convinced we were among the fastest crews of the season and only fell off later. Today, I am not so sure. Results speak truth, and I think rather we 'stole' two key races that season. One against Princeton, and the second against Harvard. This

does not lessen our achievement. If anything it makes it more significant. Nobody can undo the past, so nobody can ever take away from the fact that a Navy boat with smaller guys like myself, Patrick Piercey, and Ben Wright, the cocoon (from the James Bond movie Thunderball - 'release the cocoon'), defeated highly recruited and amazingly manned boats from both Princeton and Harvard. Perhaps we were inferior, but we have their shirts, and that's what matters.

Coach Bassett always said, "The fastest crew on race day is always the one who wins." On the Adam's Cup race day we were that fastest crew. Coach Clothier had keyed us up to this moment, and with our victory he pulled out all the stops. We trained, and trained, and trained for the upcoming Eastern Sprints.

None of us wanted to leave any stone unturned in our quest to do well at Quinsigamond. So we blew it out in the weeks between our success at the Adam's Cup and the Eastern Sprints. Once again we thought we were keyed to win. Unfortunately, we were apparently not keyed up enough. We underperformed and finished fifth.

Then, however, is when I think we made our real mistake. Not the coach, not the individual rowers, but the crew as a whole. We started looking around to find some magic bullet that could fix things. Our solution was to hopefully 'lengthen' the boat by reordering the lineup. John Walters and Erik Shay, the stroke and seven-man, moved back in the boat where they could better use their power, while John Beach and I moved forward. We also took out First Class Bruce Thompson and substituted in my classmate Mike Fields. I've always felt that Bruce was unfairly blamed by his classmates for our poor performance at the Sprints. He became the sacrificial lamb, and Mike was in. Our first race after the Sprints was against Wisconsin. We won. Then it was up to New York for the IRAs, where we made the final, and had a very good race to take third.

In the race itself I experienced a moment where time literally slowed down. My stroke cycle seemed amazingly slow, and I couldn't imagine how I was able to row and not catch a crab because I was doing everything at a painstakingly slow pace. Then time resumed its normal pace, and we soon finished the race.

We had won a Bronze Medal, just as we had the previous year in our Plebe boat. A strong and solid showing, but not the best. Coach Clothier asked us later by the picnic tables if we wanted to continue rowing as a crew and pursue other opportunities in Cincinnati and Henley. The consensus was no.

I remember John Beach crying at the realization that his rowing career was over. Mine, however, unbeknownst to me, was just beginning. I had been invited with John Walters to the Pre-Elite Team tryouts in Boston the following week. So after sending the boats on their way, I went home to Duxbury and prepared to row at a higher level than I had ever rowed before. I didn't think I had much of a chance to make the team, just like as a Plebe I thought I would be unable to make the Navy Varsity, but Coach Clothier arranged for me to have the time I was slated to do Navy stuff reassigned as TAD (Temporary Active Duty), and I was able to give it a shot.

Rowing on the Pre-Elite Team in Europe that summer is what planted the seed for me to try out for the 1988 Olympics two years later. It is also where those exact same plans to make the 1988 Olympic Team began to unravel. I had a wonderful time rowing with John Pescatore in the spare pair, and would spend much of my Olympic effort trying to recreate what had been so good. But you can never go back, and instead of looking clearly at the future, I kept myself chained to the pursuit of a result I would never be able to make happen again. I almost missed my first day rowing. I stayed at home in Duxbury, and intended to commute everyday to Boston.

The other candidates stayed in the two dorms at the Belmont Hill School, of all places. I was caught in heavy morning traffic on my way to the Newell Boathouse at Harvard, and frantically but uselessly willed things to go faster. When I finally made it to the boathouse I jumped out of my car, ran down the dock, and took my place in an eight-oared shell. Bruce Applebaum was the rower who would have replaced me. Thankfully it didn't come to that.

We were to compete for the team with seat racing and erg tests, then those who had made it would represent the US at the Henley Royal Regatta, and in another International Regatta to be held in Lucerne, Switzerland. We first worked on technique and hard rowing. Coach Washburn from Harvard was the Head Coach. His assistant was named Blocker. A clean and fast catch was emphasized, and a deliberate finish and recovery. Washburn was a tremendous coach, but he always did have a great deal to work with as the Harvard Freshman Coach. Harvard was the premier rowing destination for High School rowers, and Coach Harry Parker boasted often about having a better eight walking his campus than other school's had and their First Varsity.

I did very well at this camp, I think because Coach Clothier had us in such great shape from our previous season. But looking back on it makes me feel a bit dirty, because the coach in charge of the camp was a very troubled man, and we all paid little attention to his bizarre behavior of traveling overseas with a young boy and playing with him on the bouncy hotel beds clad only in underwear.

Coach Theodore Washburn, from Harvard of course, was a twisted man. A Princeton rigger once told me, "I wouldn't give that guy the sweat off my balls!" So I think he was not well thought of by the rowing community. He was a teacher at BB&N, and his

family was intimately tied to the Boston Museum of Science as its original founders and sponsors. He also had a very dark side which was slowly beginning to emerge.

In time it would be revealed that he was a criminally exploitative abuser of middle-school aged boys. I didn't like him at the time because he made me and John Pescatore spares for the eight, and did this for no apparent reason. So at dinner in Europe later I would make jokes about him playing the skin flute, which angered Blocker no end. I wonder what Blocker thought later when it came out that Coach Washburn was a chronic abuser of underage boys. The camp itself was run out of Harvard.

There would be two ergometer tests, a 2000 meter piece, and a turnover erg. I did well on both using my plan of maintaining a steady but doable pace over the length of the piece. There was also much seat-racing. My strategy for the seat races was to act scared and overwhelmed at the prospect of racing my opposite, then to beat them before they realized what was happening. In this camp I seat raced very well. Both John Pescatore and I were undefeated, I think.

One day John and I were consigned to a four with two others while the two eights raced. John was enraged and felt we were being ignored. Then Coach Washburn brought our four and an eight together and moved John into the four seat and me into the bow. The boat we were in won handily. John turned and gleefully gave me a thumbs up. Coach Washburn took us out again. The two eights raced again. From the distance we saw the boat we had just been part of now lose. John turned and clenched his fist at me in joy. We took it in.

I was in great shape from the previous season at Navy, and the easy rowing in camp brought me to what I felt was a peak. I heard later Coach Washburn said that after John and I did so well in the eight seat race, he never would have cut us, which makes it

all the more perplexing what John and I were quickly moved to spares when our team went to England. There were many excellent rowers at this camp, many of whom did not make this particular team in the end, but who nevertheless would make a major mark on US Rowing in the years to come.

Rowing as a spare with John Pescatore on the Pre-Elite Team in 1985 was a great experience. John was angry that seated before him was Keir Pearson, who was not even a Harvard Freshman. Keir was an excellent rower, to be sure, but Coach Washburn was already giving his Harvard Freshman Crew of 1985 a leg up. Keir would spend the summer racing for the Pre-Elites, then in the Fall join his Freshman class. This was yet one more instance where the normal way of doing things was just not for Harvard.

In the eight was David Anderson (as Starboard stroke), Rick Flobeck, Bob Meyn, John Walters, Mike Still, Keir Pearson, Alex Hubbard, and Scott Armstrong. Not sure about the lineup. Later, Alex would always ask John and I if we were going to 'do it in Lucerne?' So our greeting whenever we saw each other soon became, "We're doing it in Lucerne!" John and I were on a mission, and soon sort of distanced ourselves from the rest of the team. David Anderson, who was stroking the eight, remained close. The others, among them John Walters, did not.

I loved firing up John day after day by saying how maligned we had been by Coach Washburn and the others. John ate this up and I could see a cold fury burning in him. He would use this rage the following year to make Penn one of the three contenders for the National Title, but for the moment he could only lash out in helpless fury in the pair with, which is the boat we trained in. John elected for us to skip the spare pair race at Henley because he felt it too humiliating, so we focused on racing the pair

with coxswain in Lucerne, where we would come up against the undefeated and legendary Abbagnale brothers.

At Henley the Pre-Elite eight had a miserable race, and I hoped for personnel changes to follow, but Coach Washburn kept the line-up intact and we proceeded to what was and is the most beautiful course I have ever rowed on. Harvard University won Henley that year, but my attention was occupied elsewhere, so this really never had an impact on me. Good for Harvard, I thought at the time. I think this today.

Lake Rotsee was a pristine and ever calm lake in the heart of the Swiss Alps. This is where we would row. In the pair with which was the last boat two smaller guys should have been rowing, I think we acquitted ourselves well. I think we came in second place in the petite final. This was a fairly good showing, I think, as the pair with coxswain in the Olympics of Robert Espeseth and Dan Lyons and Jon Fish would come in eleventh place against many of the same crews. It was a regatta with heats and reps, like the IRAs, so there was much rowing.

In the Eights race it was Russia one, the Pre-Elite boat two, and Princeton three. I'll always remember Doug Burden telling me in astonishment and delight at the end of the race that, "this is the biggest thing I've ever won!" Two years later, John and he would be the stern pair of the eight that won the gold medal at the World Championships in Copenhagen. That, however, is later in the story.

We spent the last week in Europe visiting John's Grandmother in Cassella, Italy, a town just outside Genoa, and where I promised John's cousin Andrea to say, "Come passe faire s'il de monte maggio?" when I hiked into the mountains hunting mushrooms. It was a magical end to a magical trip, and John and I each returned to our schools with a keen sense of purpose.

I finished off the summer in the highest of spirits, and entered into my naval duties with vigor and gusto. On the Yard Patrol Craft we used for shipboard training and larger craft steerage and navigation, I stacked boxes above the bilges after telling a fellow Midshipman, who I could tell was somewhat put off with what had to be done, that I would take care of it. I remember this striking me at the time being a good and easy life lesson - to always embrace whatever was before you and carry it off in the best of spirits with no resentment.

In the US Marine Corps and afterward this has always served me very well, and I owe this enlightenment to coming back to my pedestrian duties at USNA after having had a disappointing, but wonderful summer before. My new mission was to make Navy again into a rowing force to be reckoned with.

Chapter 15 - Paul Montanus, '89

Paul Montanus was a runner when he entered the Academy, and spent Plebe Year on the cross-country and track teams. Second semester of Youngster year he took himself

to Hubbard Hall seeking a new challenge, and soon found himself rowing with the Plebes while learning to row. At the beginning of Second Class year he made the Varsity Lightweight First Boat, and remained there until graduation.

During his First Class year he went up to Boston to compete in the annual CRASH-B indoor rowing race, where he finished in third place in a blistering final. Coaches took notice, so that summer he was invited to attend the Lightweight Pre-Elite Camp in Cincinnati, Ohio. By the end of the camp he was the top ranked starboard rower, and rowed in two Lightweight Pre-Elite boats (the 8+ and 4+) that earned silver medals at the US National Championships.

This result led to an invitation to the National Team selection camp in Jim Thorpe, PA. Navy teammate Dale Hurley joined him there. Paul did well at the camp, and he won his place in the 3-seat of US Men's Lightweight Eight. They trained at Cornell and Dartmouth Universities before departing for the 1989 World Championships in Bled, Yugoslavia. At Bled, the US Lightweight Eight placed fourth by a very narrow margin behind the West Germans.

This result earned Paul a place in the US Naval Academy's Athletic Hall of Fame. Putting his rowing behind him, he set forth on his career in the US Marine Corps, where he's made significant contributions to America's warfighting capabilities as a Special Operator.. Today, he is retired from his beloved US Marine Corps, but still working hard as the Director of the NATO Special Operations School in Belgium.

Chapter 16 - Michael Russonello, '89

Mike Russonello was in the Navy Plebe boat that took 3rd place at the Eastern Sprints in 1986. Then he was a key member of the First Varsity for the next three years. Upon graduation in 1989, he spent the summer rowing at Penn AC, where he was a

National Champion with Penn AC in the straight pair and the four oared shell with coxswain.

This earned him the right to represent the United States as a member of the four oared shell with coxswain at the World University Games in Duisburg, Germany. He placed 5th in this race. In the fall he left rowing behind and embarked on his career in Naval Aviation.

Today he is a pilot working for a commercial airlines, and remembers his time rowing after Navy at Penn AC as some of the best times of his life.

Chapter 17 - My sixth year rowing

The Class of 1986 had had its problems, and really the only stand out rower among them was Jim Coe, who took a huge leadership burden upon himself as captain and tried to make it as good a year as he could.

My class also stepped up, and had strong rowers in Mike Gaffney, Erik Shay, Mike Fields, Marc Ruggiano, John Hall, and myself. As we rowed our hours of power and prepared for the Fall Head Races, Mike Gaffney became our premier stroke. I rowed in the seven seat. This line-up with Mike stroking was a great one, and I regret to this day not staying with it for our First Class year.

At Penn, John and David and Bob and Rick were also rowing with a new found vengeance, and had their eyes set on a wonderful spring season with their new Coach Stan Bergman. John and Bob and others had rowed for him at Holy Spirit High School, one of the best High School rowing programs in the country, and I think it was them more than anyone else who pushed the administration to go with him. They would not regret their decision.

At the Head of the Charles I think we came in a respectable third, behind the US Team and Penn AC, but at the Schuylkill we won. We were disappointed to not dominate the Fall races like we once had, but it was still good when all was said and done.

It was now clear sailing to our Spring Season.. The year of 1986 would be another wonderful and productive one of rowing for me and my teammates, and I think in many ways we overperformed. I credit this most of all to our wonderful stroke and future Rhodes Scholar, Mike Gaffney. He was an incredible rower, and I would row with him again in the summer of the year we graduated in the four with coxswain at the World University Games in Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

My terrible attitude and resentment at not being on the National Team I think may have limited our success, but the boat was a good one and had enormous potential. Coach Clothier was our coach, but this will come later.

As the year 1985 had come to a close, my life in rowing had a new found purpose. I was now positioned to compete for the 1988 Olympic Team in Seoul, Korea, and I committed to seeing just how far I could go on the National Team. My first experience rowing Internationally for the Pre-Elite Team and Coach Ted Washburn had indeed been a strange experience, but rowing the pair with John Pescatore was a situation I hoped to make happen again.

The prior year had planted the seed for me to continue rowing on a higher level, but it had also fixed me on a course of action that contained within it other seeds of inherent failure. They say insanity is repeating the same action again and again and always expecting a different result.

I had competed for the Pre-Elite Eight, and was made the spare for no reason clearly expressed to me. Thus, I came to district the camp system, but knew it was effective in limited measures. My future plans should have been based upon this, and I should have gone to Penn AC at some point and thrown my fortunes into the hands of Coach Ted Nash. I should have rowed in whatever combination in which he thought to put me, to the best of my ability, while also learning to steer a straight boat and scull, which I would do when it was really too late to have any effect. But I was afraid of losing the position I had already made for myself in the camps, and settled into the role of a second tier rower. I hoped I would somehow get a shot at the bow in the eight, but did not realistically take stock of my situation. I believed what I wanted to believe, that my chance would come eventually, and ignored the reality all around me.

This is why I think in the end I failed in my chance to make the 1988 Olympic Rowing Team. The way things transpired a case can be made that I was very close to

making it, but like many other athletes in a different but similar situation, I was also a million miles away from going to Seoul.

Looking back, the year 1986 was in fact a most fulfilling one for me in rowing. Coach Clothier might not agree with this assessment, but he might. The 1986 Plebe Crew had not done well. Jim Coe, our crew captain for the year, was really one of the only members of his class still rowing, and he was in the second varsity.

We beat Princeton in late March (Doug and Dave again and other excellent rowers), took 3rd at the San Diego Crew Classic behind Penn and Cal, beat Syracuse and Cornell, then tied Harvard and lost to Penn in the Adam's Cup.

John Pescatore and David Anderson and Bob Meyn and Rick Flobeck and Josh Collins (NROTC and a future US Marine) and my other friends were on a tear in the Penn boat, and carving their path to the National Championship. John especially was hell bent on proving Coach Ted Washburn wrong when he made him a spare for the Pre-Elite Team. John told me once he believed he was the best port rower in the country. I knew I definitely was not the best starboard rower and would never make such a claim. I wasn't sure at the time if he was serious. But he made the team in 1988, and I did not.

Maybe having such a belief in yourself, right or wrong, is what allows you to succeed at the highest level? Maybe. Something else happened in the Adam's Cup which I will never forget. Going into the last 200 it was Penn way out, then Harvard, then Navy. Mike took the rate up for the sprint, and all of a sudden we were flying. I thought we had pulled even with Harvard and even had a seat on them when we crossed the line. I think, and I actually think today, we placed second at the Adam's Cup.

But we had nobody on at the finish line who would fight for us. We needed our Officer Representative, who would have fought hard for what he had seen. Instead we

only had our manager on the line, Steve, who shrugged his shoulders and agreed with the Harvard linesman that it had been a tie. I guess Steve didn't like conflict, and so the race went into the book as a tie between Harvard and Navy for second place.

This goes to show again how arbitrary and half-assed even some of the biggest sporting events can be. For no good reason, Harvard had once again flexed its muscle and achieved a status they didn't have. After a dual race we won against Columbia, we finished in sixth place at the Eastern Sprints, lost to a very good Wisconsin crew in our dual race (which taught me again to never underestimate your opponent), and finished fourth at the IRAs. The University of Wisconsin had an excellent crew in 1986, as did Brown and Penn. Each crew traded places at the end of the season for who would be named National Champion. Penn won the Eastern Sprints, Brown won the IRAs, and Wisconsin won Cincinnati, which was the race briefly in place to determine the NCAA Champion in the rowing world. For the summer, Mike Kraft and I were invited to Indianapolis for the year's Pre-Elite Camp.

At the camp we would row for the new National Team Coach, Kris Korseniowski. He was the one who would say to me later in the upcoming winter that "you row in my eight in the bow" after I had pulled such a strong Norwegian ergometer while on his visit to the Navy boathouse. I think I first impressed him in Indianapolis, because I was able to make the changes to my rowing exactly as he asked for them to be made.

"My God, Sean!" He said. "You are so easy to coach!" The Pre-Elite Team this year would not row in Europe, but would finish up their time together at the US National Championships in Cincinnati in July. I did not make the first camp eight, but made the first four of the second two camp eights. I rowed three in my four and seven in my eight. Kris put the first four and the fourth four together to make a second eight.

Then the second and third four together to make a third eight. Mike Kraft was in this second eight made up of the second and third four. The first camp eight, which I had not made, raced in the Elite Race and did not do well.

The other camp eights would race in the Senior National events for both four and eights. In the four I rowed behind Struan Bryer Robertson, from Yale, and with Mike Still, from UCLA. We won the fours race. In the eight we had this lineup in the stern and four others in the bow, including Tom Bohrer, from FIT. We won again in the eights race. It is no wonder we won, because Tom would eventually be recognized as one of the finest rowers in his generation, and Mike would become a World Champion in the Eight in Copenhagen in 1987.

This wasn't the result I wanted, but it was a strong end to another fine season of rowing. Tom would go to Philadelphia that Fall, and end up rowing with Mark Berkner from Wisconsin at Penn AC because nobody else would row with them. In the spring their straight pair would win at the US Nationals and earn the right to represent the US in Copenhagen. They defeated other pairs like Teti and Strotbeck, Lyons and Kromptich, Riley and Swinford, and Pescatore and Anderson. In crew, especially, 'people are always rising and falling in America.' Another great rowing figure from this year I met at our camp in Indianapolis was John Terwilliger. He was the gifted athlete from a second rate school who 1984 Olympic Coach Harry Parker tried to dismiss by consigning him to the tanks and then ignoring him, only to return hours later to find 'Twig' still rowing hard. This impressed Coach Parker and John found himself in the eight along with Andy Sudduth and Chris Penney in Los Angeles. Twig would often regale John Walters with exhortations of what he could do with his body and mindset. I listened along with John and ate everything up motivationally, even though I was not the one being addressed.

Perhaps this was John Terwilliger's way of having John Walters lower his guard, since John Terwilliger knew that both incredible athletes would end up competing for a similar if not the same seat? The two did end up rowing together in the camp four with coxswain for the 1988 Olympics, so wherever their initial purpose, Twig's motivation worked.

After spending August on the USS England in CA, I returned to the Academy for my First Class year. I had been elected team captain the prior spring, and now my motivation was to go undefeated for the season.

Chapter 18 - BILL SERAD '89

Bill was another highly recruited rower for Navy. At St. Joseph's Prep he was a 1984 Scholastic National Champion in the Varsity Eights, and a runner up at the 1984 Henley Royal Regatta in the Princess Elizabeth Cup. He was invited to the Junior National Team Selection Camp in both 1984 and 1985, but was unable to attend because of Henley in '84, and then Plebe Summer in '85.

At Navy in 1986, his Plebe First Boat took 3rd place at the Eastern Sprints, and 2nd place at the IRAs. During the summer of 1988, after completing his Navy fleet cruises, he teamed up with Ken Piree (a High School teammate from St. Joseph's Prep) to compete in the US Olympic Rowing Trials for the Straight Pair.

They finished in sixth place, a wonderful showing for two young rowers who threw things together at the last minute. In 1989, he was elected Navy Varsity team captain, and lettered for the third time.

Upon graduation in 1989, he attended the US Pre-elite Camp, and from out of this earned the right to represent the US in the Heavyweight Men's Eight at the 1989 World University Games in Duisburg, West Germany. His boat finished in 5th place. Like many Navy rowers before him, Bill commenced his Naval career in Philadelphia, aboard the USS Kitty Hawk(CV 63), where he also had the chance to continue his International Rowing at Penn AC.

In 1990, Bill won both the Heavyweight Men's Open Four with Coxswain, and the Heavyweight Open Men's Pair, at the Canadian Henley Regatta. In 1990, he raced in the Heavyweight Men's Four trials for the 1990 World Championships, placing 2nd. He placed 4th in the trials for the Men's Pair. In 1991, he had a better experience in the trials,

and won the right to represent the Heavyweight Men's Four with Coxswain at the Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba. Fidel Castro awarded him the Silver Medal.

Then in 1992, after a challenging season with numerous pair combinations, he competed in the 1992 US Olympic Trials for the Heavyweight Men's Pair. After the trials, and for the last time, he competed at the 1992 US National Championships, where he won the Heavyweight Men's Pair event with Ken Piree.

In the US Navy, Bill served as a Weapons Officer, a Deck Department Head, and a Navigator. He was XO of an Amphibious Construction Battalion, and CO of a Destroyer Squadron Reserve Unit. He did time in Afghanistan as a trainer and advisor. Finally, he worked for a time as a US Naval Recruiter, then served in the Navy Reserves until his retirement as a Commander in 2014.

Chapter 19 - Chad Jungbluth '91

Chad was a basketball walk-on as a Plebe, but following his freshman season the JV basketball coach told Chad that he would “do really well at the boathouse.” This was good advice, since less than three months later Chad won an IRA silver in the freshman four with coxswain. Classmate Andrew McMarlin was also in the boat.

Chad progressed quickly, and lettered in the Navy 2V in 1989, then the 1V in 1990 and 1991. The success of those crews and improving erg scores earned Chad invites to US Rowing development camps. In the summer of 1990, he attended the US Rowing Development Camp, culminating in the US Olympic Festival where Chad won a silver medal in the Eight. The summer of 1991 brought an invite to US Rowing Pre-Elite camp and selection for the Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba.

Chad won another silver medal in the Eight, which was presented by Cuban president, Fidel Castro. National Team Rowing Coach, Kris Korzienowski, invited Chad to the Princeton Training Center to train that winter of 1991-1992 for the Barcelona Olympics. At the National Selection Regatta in the spring of 1992, Chad did not finish high enough to earn a seat. He considered joining Mark Berkner at Penn AC for a go in the 2+ trials. He even rowed a few times with Mark, but decided it was time to get on with the ultimate goal of becoming a Navy Pilot.

Before starting flight school, Chad helped coach the Navy small boats for the 1992 IRA Championships, and his Varsity 4+ won the gold medal. A delay in flight training in 1994 allowed Chad to return to the Naval Academy as an assistant crew coach, where he again led Navy small boats to IRA medals. During this time, he joined

Navy freshman Coach, Dan Lyons '81, John Shields '93, and Dan's friend, Chris Clark, rowing and training towards 4- trials.

That summer, when Dan was free of his coaching responsibilities, the group transitioned to Penn AC and Coach Ted Nash. It was a busy summer of training, but in the end Chad was the only one of them in the Straight Four trials. His boat finished second. Chad hung up his oar once more and embarked on a career as a Navy helicopter pilot. In 2004, Chad's orders brought him to the Navy Staff at the Pentagon, and he joined Potomac Boat Club in Washington, DC.

In the years since, Chad has won many medals at national regattas and even three trips to Henley Royal Regatta with Potomac including advancing as far as the semifinals of the Thames Challenge Cup for Club Eights. His basketball coach evidently knew what he was talking about when he suggested Chad give rowing a shot. He gave it a shot, and continues to excel in the shell game.

Chapter 20 - My seventh year rowing

We began our preparation for the Fall head races and the Spring season with our usual program. Technique and form drills, longer pieces, and an hour of power every Friday. The First Class picked line-ups for the hours of power, and I had come to learn how things worked generally, and knew every rower on the team, so I was able to pick very good crews for the races every Friday. In fact, I don't think my boats ever lost. I would pick for the greatest number of very good rowers being in my boat, and not select the stars. If you selected a star you lost a pick in the next round, so I never selected a star. I selected all those just a step below being a star. Thus, my boats generally had a full complement of very, very good rowers, where the other boats had amazing rowers pulling those who were less accomplished. This made for much success. Coach Ted Nash always said not to ignore the rowers in the lower boats, because this is who made up the program. I had stumbled into a similar way of thinking.

I remember one particular hour of power where the boat starting behind us (Mike Kraft's boat), came roaring up and passed us in a blaze of speed. Bob Pescatore was rowing behind me in the seven seat (this was John's younger brother, and though even a bit smaller than John was one the best rowers I've ever rowed with and a favorite to compete beside - he would eventually be a decorated fighter pilot in the USMC), and later told me he thought to himself that they were gone and totally out of the picture for us to catch up to entirely. After about fifty minutes of the piece and coming back, lo and behold, out the corner of our eyes we could see the Kraft boat slowly being reeled in. Just as in the pieces, I had started at a pace which felt comfortable, and then worked to maintain it throughout. Coach Clothier was grooming me for stroke, so I could set the pace for my rowers, and my plan, though unspoken, made firm believers of my boat that

day. Now we were the ones doing the roaring, and we soon left the other boat in our wake thrashing away frantically to keep up speed.

I think Coach Clothier built his crews around those he perceived as among his strongest rowers. Thus, in 1984, Charles Melcher was the very successful stroke. In 1985, it was John Walters. In 1986, there was a lack of rowers among the First Class, so my classmate Mike Gaffney was picked to do the honors. And in 1987, I think he put his hopes in me.

Coach Clothier is an amazingly accomplished crew coach, and did a great deal personally in my life to help me advance myself in rowing and everything else, but I wish he had not made me stroke that year. Maybe I could have done the job and been a very good stroke. Maybe not. I just know we had a much better stroke waiting in the wings, and he was never given his chance. Today, I think we should have gone a second year with Mike. He would be named a Rhodes Scholar in 1987, and study and row at Oxford for the next two years. He would win the Oxford/Cambridge boat race as stroke during this time. After his brilliant performance in 1986 with a less than amazing lineup behind him, I think both Coach Clothier and I, as coach and captain respectively, missed what was staring us in the face.

Our First Varsity Eight would win some big races in 1987 in the early going, and this probably blinded us to reality. Hindsight is always twenty-twenty. Perhaps things would not have worked out much differently. Then again, perhaps they would have.

I know I just would have really enjoyed seeing what we could do in a lineup different from the one we went with in the end. I honestly don't think I'm a great stroke, but that is what we tried. In our first race in 1987, we beat Princeton. Kris Korseniowski,

watching from the sidelines, liked what he saw and told me so we walked our shell up off the dock after the race to the stretchers.

Coach Korseniowski had emphasized a strong and powerful finish, and I had inculcated this into our crews through the Fall and Spring. You caught cleanly, then drove with the legs, with the body, and with the arms. But before finishing completely you reversed the direction of your momentum and continued pulling yourself back toward the oar with your arms. Thus, when you finally pushed the oar handle down and exited the water, your momentum was carrying you back up the slide. In this way you held the finished and added to your constant boat movement at the same time.

This is what I had learned the previous summer, and this is the lesson I would use and make part of mystroke for the entire Olympic cycle. Again, this was an amazing thing to have and try to master, but within it a sole focus on one way of doing things was limiting and contained within it seeds of not succeeding.

In the San Diego Crew Classic we came in third behind Harvard and Washington. A decent result, if not the best, but we had learned from experience that San Diego was not our moment to shine. Back on the East Coast, we were victors over Cornell and Syracuse, and then, amazingly, over Harvard and Penn.

Our coxswain was a product of Holy Spirit, where he excelled and his crews had remarkable success for now Penn Coach Stan Bergmann, so I rationalized Coach Bergmann reaped what he had sowed when Jim told me he had cut a line in the middle of the race. The race was a very close one, and at the end there was a bit of confusion.

My friends in the Penn boat asked me who had won?

“Who cares,” I answered. “Best race ever!”

I remember driving up to Baltimore to see Maryanne Chidsey, who was my girlfriend at the time and who is now my wife, and shouting with joy in the car. I was truly thinking we were on top of the world. We had defeated Harvard and Penn, and nothing stood in our way of winning the Eastern Sprints and the IRAs in the coming weeks.

The future looked bright. This was brought home to us when the Boston Globe featured a photo of our boat's stern four in mid-stroke on the lead page of their Sunday sports section, and had us picked to win it all in Worcester. We trained hard, but I didn't think we did too much as I had two years earlier. Then I thought our boat just wasn't firing as fast as it had earlier in the season. Our leg drive was nowhere near as powerful. In 1987, I had no such reservations.

I don't know why in my era the Eastern Sprints proved to be such a disappointing regatta year after year, but it was, and my First Class year was no different. Just as in my final Quinsigamond Regatta in High School for the NEIRA Championships, we had a steering problem. We crossed into another boat's lane, and as a result were consigned to row in the Petite Finals and not in the Finals. Everybody was devastated by this, but I quickly resolved to do our best and not allow ourselves to be second or worse in the Petite Finals.

At the San Diego Crew Classic I tried to impress my boatmates with my resolve to do whatever it took to win. I think at the time most of them thought I was losing it, and my performance didn't work at all. Probably because I wasn't being real. In Worcester that year I would be very real and entirely unaffected. My crew and I rowed strongly and we won the Petite Final. This is why, also at the Eastern Sprints, it struck me as so comical in the final at the end when Harvard literally had to have one of their rower's physically carried up the dock from his seat in a fourth place boat. I guess they did this

because he was unable to stand himself, having rowed so hard and with such abandon in the race itself. A race, by the way, which Brown won handily. Harvard would prove itself an outstanding crew later in the season by winning the US National Collegiate Rowing Championships in Cincinnati, against the same Brown crew, also winner of the IRA, for whom Harvard felt in their words “a ruthless contempt.”

In Cincinnati Harvard would win the right to represent the US in the eight at the World University Games, which they also went on to win. Brown had had a great year, despite their crushing loss at the end of the season. They were victorious in both the Eastern Sprints and the IRAs in '87, behind a stroke who I think was less than six feet tall, Michael Tuchen. That Coach Gladstone had had the creativity to put such an unlikely candidate as stroke in the key seat, with wonderful rowers like Bill Danaher and Ted Patton behind him, is one of the reasons I think so highly of him. I think Coach Bassett would say Harvard's behavior at the end of the season very much lacked class. In 1987, Harvard won San Diego, they won Cincinnati, and they would win the World University Games. But they lost the Adam's Cup, and they were entirely out of the medals at the Eastern Sprints, so they definitely had a checkered season.

But they must have rowed harder than the rest of the crews competing at the Eastern Sprints, I say facetiously, since I don't remember any other oarsmen on another team having to be physically carried up the docks after their race.

Coach Clothier tried to rally us after our disappointing race in Worcester, but we lost to Wisconsin for a second year in a row soon thereafter. Our glory days as the powerful crew who had taken down Harvard and Penn were gone. I hoped now for a great showing at the IRAs and a clean finish to a season that had started out so well. Alas, this was not to be.

In the IRAs we came in a respectable but disappointing fourth place behind Brown, Wisconsin, and Penn. As Plebes we had come in third, but were about as fast respectively as we had been four years earlier. So all in all we had not stumbled, as we had done at the Eastern Sprints just weeks earlier. I always wonder if things would have been different with Mike Gaffney stroking? I don't think we would have done any worse, and perhaps better. I totally blame myself for not pushing Mike's case when I should have.

I think I add much to any boat. Less so in the stroke seat. On the Pre-Elite Team and in 1986 I think I was an excellent seven man. Would that I knew what this meant then, and pushed for Mike to stroke. As is always the case in life, most lessons are learned too late. My takeaways from the upcoming Olympic cycle are that I should have learned to steer a boat and scull, and that instead of failing in the same old cycle of trying to make the bow on the eight, I should have rowed 'quietly' as Coach Korseniowski always said in a pair or a double and set my sights on making my impact in the trials. But I was afraid of losing the status I had heretofore earned, and thus never took the chances I should have taken.

I sought security in my quest as much as possible, and as a result ended up with nothing. Lessons learned to be sure, but lessons learned too late. After the IRAs Mike Gaffney and I headed off the 1987 Pre-Elite camp. Coach Korseniowski would use this camp to select a four with for the World University Games, which would then race in the trials for the Pan American Games, as well as the athletes and boats he would have in his next camp to make an elite eight and four with. John Walters was there, as well as many of the people I knew in rowing from over the years. Doug Burden and Dave Saxen, and many other teammates and competitors. The rowing community is a small one, and

people really get to know one another in their constant effort to be the best. Coach Korseniowski again worked his magic for the camp, and selected a four to represent the US in the World University Games, as well as the athletes who would go on to his elite camp in preparation for the upcoming rowing World Championships in Copenhagen. Mike and I made the WUG four with.

Alden Zecha from Princeton was our coxswain. Kevin Macleese from Wisconsin was our stroke. David Saxen from Princeton rowed three. Mike Gaffney from Navy rowed two (the boat was bucket rigged). And Sean Coughlin from Navy rowed bow.

Kris asked Coach Clothier to coach us. So our boat was set and we proceeded to Yugoslavia for the 1987 World University Games. Coach Clothier did the best he could with what he had, and everybody rowed hard and well, but I never felt the kind of speed you feel in boats that win Championships. I wonder if we would have seen increased speed in a different lineup. Perhaps with Mike stroking, Kevin rowing three, Dave two and me bow? But Coach Clothier had inherited a specific lineup, and was set on making it work. There are times in my life I think I rowed above myself and really accomplished more than I ever could have imagined.

I think in 1987, my faults and personal failings made our boat far slower than it would have been otherwise. As a Plebe I shined because I made the people around me better. In the WUG boat I made them worse. And poor Mike Gaffney, who had to row in front of me, had it the worst. I was intent on us rowing the stroke as I understood it from Coach Korseniowski. This meant a quick catch and leg drive, then a powerful finish and a reverse of momentum. As a Plebe I tried to row exactly as the rower in front of me rowed. Quick hands, slow hands, long finish, short finish, whatever. I sought to mirror the

man in front of me, who in turn I hoped would mirror the man in front of him. I did this in the camps I was lucky enough to attend, and at Navy, and it always served me well.

Now I was behaving as if there was only one way to do things, and that I understood that way and must impart my understanding to others. Mike was a model of forbearance. I was insufferable. At a certain point he said, "Sean, I'm doing my best!"

To which I replied, "Wowsy, wowsoy, woo woo." This was from the animated *Pebbles and Bam Bam Show* of the early seventies. It was the saying of 'Bad Luck' Schleprock, and for me now just a wise-ass answer to Mike.

He took a swing at me. I quickly slid back on the slide to avoid his fist. It is not my proudest moment. I am so sorry, Mike. I hope you can forgive me.

The World University Games was quite an experience. There was a walk on into a packed stadium, just like in the Olympics, and I saw that Mike had tears in his eyes as he took it all in. I was disappointed at not being in the group Kris was bringing to his Elite camp, and in my disappointment I was missing all the great things happening around me and to which I was part. Mike's deep emotions at this wonderful moment reminded me that we were all truly very lucky to even be involved in such an event.

The Harvard Varsity had won Cincinnati and so the right to represent the US at the Games, and they all behaved like perfect Gentlemen. I vowed to be less of a jerk going forward, which is a resolution I owe entirely to Mike. At the World University Games our boat came in sixth in the final. Then it was back to America and training for the Pan American Games trials. We decided to coach ourselves when we returned to the US. I forget why we made this brilliant decision, but we would proceed from there without a coach and worked quietly in Princeton to prepare for the Pan American Games trials.

At Princeton, Dave arranged for us to live and sleep in one of the Eating Houses on campus. This was a wonderful existence, even with the two I think students had wild and loud sex every evening where the woman was very vocal and exuberant in her pleasure. The Pan American Games straight four trials would be in Mercer County at the end of July, and were for the straight four and the eight.

Coach Ted Nash had tried to recruit us to make up the stern four of a Penn AC eight to compete in the eight trials, but our boat decided not to do this. We thought we had a better chance in our four. Again, a lost chance, because I think we were much better as a stern four in an eight, as we were a straight four. We decided against doing this, for whatever reason, which today seems like another opportunity missed.

Coach Clothier, bless his heart, showed up trying to get us energized for the final, but we lost a close race to a Penn AC straight four with Rick Flobeck stroking and Brian Colgan rowing bow. In the Pan American Games themselves, Rick's boat was winning handily as they went into the final 500. Then for some reason Brian Colgan suffered something like a breakdown and started rowing like a wildman, totally disrupting the boat and allowing the second place boat to easily pass them and win.

"This is pathetic," Rick later told me he screamed from the stroke seat. To drown our sorrows my boat travelled to the Canadian Henley with Penn AC to compete in the eights race. I rowed bow, or three, in a Penn AC boat with Kevin, David and Mike rowing in the stern. The three of us were much better in an eight, and had that sense of speed and power I thought we missed in the straight four and in the four with coxswain. In a thrilling final we won in a ferocious comeback for the last thirty strokes. It always feels good to win, and I no longer missed being on the National Team as much as I had.

I looked forward to giving it another shot next year. Then Copenhagen happened. At the World Championships in 1987, in Copenhagen, Denmark, the United States stunned the world by winning everything with a young and almost all college-aged crew. Coach Kris Korseniowski had done something the US had failed to do for a decade or more. His eight brought home gold. John Pescatore was the stroke, finally in the place he envisaged for himself since he started rowing. Doug Burden, from Princeton, was seven. Jeff McLaughlin, from Northeastern, was six. Pete Nordell, from Yale, was five. Mike Still, from UCLA, was four. Ted Patton, from Brown, was three. And Jonathan Smith, from Brown and Mike Teti, from Temple, were the two and bow seat respectively. They were the elder statesmen and the only two in the boat older than twenty-four. Seth Bauer was the cox. Every one of the young guys had been in camp with us. Now they were World Champions. Right away, I knew in my heart of hearts that my task of making the 1988 Olympic Rowing Team had gone from being very difficult to impossible.

I thought Coach Korseniowski would value having a veteran rower in the bow seat, and I had little faith in my ability to unseat a Mike Teti. Instead, I set my sights on rowing a pair with Mike Teti's old partner, John Strotbeck, who I reasoned would be looking for somebody new to row with. But first I needed to clear things with the US Marine Corps. I had selected USMC at service selection, and was now a brand new Second Lieutenant in the Corps.

Coach Clothier came through for me, providing me all the specific documentation I needed, and I was soon assigned to a USMC Inspection and Instruction Reserve Center in Willow Grove, PA. This would allow me to train in Philadelphia in preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games in 1988.

They would be held in Seoul, South Korea, and in the rowing world people were already gathering at rowing centers throughout the United States and strategizing their campaign to make the team. In Philly, I rented an apartment at 1616 Spring Garden Street. It was a dump, but I loved it.

Chapter 21 - Andrew McMarlin '91

Andrew McMarlin first tasted success as a Plebe in 1988 at the IRA's by winning Silver in the Freshman Four, then again in 1989 by winning Gold in the Open Four. Classmate Chad Jungbluth was also in the boat. In 1990 he was boated in the Second Varsity and won Gold once more. He hoped to continue this success, so like many rowers before him, he eventually began rowing at Penn AC for Coach Nash while performing his job in the US Navy. Many medals followed in his pursuit of rowing for the US Olympic Team. Andy was National Champion in the 1x, 2x, and 4x in 1992 at the Undine Barge Club. He was again Champion with Undine in the 4x in 1993, then at Penn AC in 1993 and 1996.

This boded well for making the Olympic Team, and he and his partner were the 2x trials winner in 1996 and so named the US double for the upcoming Olympic Games in Atlanta. Unfortunately, his double failed to make the qualifying time at Lucerne, Switzerland, that summer, and so would not be one of the crews to race in the Atlanta Olympics themselves. Disappointing to be sure, but after making the 2x again the following year, 1997, his boat finished in 13th place at the World Championships in Aiguebellette, France.

He continued to row for Coach Nash at Penn AC, and in 1997 won a number of FISA World Cup races in the 4x and 8+. Today he is a Medical Doctor in South Carolina and often competes and wins in the International Dragonboat Federation World Championships.

Chapter 22 - Kari Hughes '91

Kari Hughes began rowing at Stanford as a Freshman when she attended during the 1987 school year, but had to leave her club team to work. For her Plebe Year at the US Naval Academy in 1988 she had no such conflicts, and could focus on her rowing and school exclusively. After being elected team captain her First Class Year, and spending six months after graduation in 1992 as a TAD PE instructor, helping CDR Wendy Lawrence, USNA '81, coach the novice women, she decided to continue her rowing and try to make the US National Women's Rowing Team. The idea to do this was planted by seeing Dale Hurley, USNA '89, who was stationed at the US Naval Academy coaching the Plebe Lightweights and training for the US National Men's Lightweight Rowing Team.

Kari's next step was to go to Supply School in Athens, GA. She was picked up by Navy Sports soon thereafter and given help through the next four years with no-cost TAD orders for National Team training and competition. She spent time in Norfolk, VA, on a Sub Tender, then was stationed at the Academy itself again in 1995. Her last duty station was in Washington DC at the Naval Communications Center at the Navy Yard.

She trained on her own during most of this time in a single, eventually rowing exclusively in DC on the Potomac River, starting in 1995. In the beginning Kari would wake in Annapolis early every morning, then transport her single strapped to the top of her little Ford Escort to Thompson's Boat Center and the Potomac Boat Club in DC, then launch and have to find the morning's sculling group. She soon proved herself in the

club, and her dedication to elite rowing, and as a result was allowed to boat out of PBC, as well as to row in team sculling and sweep boats.

At PBC she trained under Coach Dan Lyons, '81, and Coach Ken Dreyfuss. In her National Team career, Kari won Club Nationals in the 2x and 4x, and solidified a partnership with Olwen Huxley, Harvard '92, that lasted until 2000. Together they won the Elite 2x at the 1996 Canadian Henley, placed 12th at the 1997 World Rowing Championships in Aiguebelette, France, won the Open 2x at the 1998 Head of the Charles, and placed 2nd at the 1999 Pan Am Games in Winnipeg, Canada. Afterwards she continued coaching different levels at Navy, is a co-founder and administrator of the Navy Rowing Camps, and today is the Head Women's Rowing Coach at Washington College.

Chapter 23 - My eighth year rowing

My refrigerator was from the 1960's and no very good, so milk went bad quickly when it was placed inside, but I lived a very bohemian life and often ate out with my friends, John Pescatore and David Anderson, who lived near an old historic prison about twenty blocks away. John Walters was also trying out for the '88 Olympic Rowing Team and was stationed in the Philadelphia shipyards with the US Navy.

Dan Lyons was coming off a disappointing year after his straight four failed to repeat their success from the year before, but he had high hopes that his stroke, Robert Espeseth, would soon be whole again, recovered from his injury, and that their boat would have another shot at glory in Seoul.

The Blue Bird Cafe was across the street, and the Philadelphia Art Museum only several blocks away, so I did really enjoy living in my small apartment. The lady below me was a hoarder, and our building was infested with cockroaches, which disgusted Maryanne no end whenever she came to visit me. In the bathroom one morning three roaches were racing around in the tub. She was busy getting her Masters Degree in History at UVA in Charlottesville, so she didn't have all that much free time to come North to Philly. Thinking back now, maybe this was a good thing.

My living space was sparse and unadorned. I rowed in the morning, then drove out of the city to the Willow Grove USMC Instructor and Inspector (I&I) Reserve Support Center, where I was stationed for the year. Once there I would work on an Amphibious Warfare Correspondence Course from the US Marine Corps University and involve myself with the I&I Unit in its daily activities. Captain Schwalm, a Combat Engineer, was my immediate supervisor. A peer was Corporal Raute. I had yet to attend The Basic School for the US Marine Corps, so I was a real 'boot' and 'butter bar' Lieutenant.

I think Mrs. Schwalm was initially expecting to dislike me, because of my being a US Marine Corps sponsored athlete, but she warmed to me when she saw me making an effort to better myself as an Officer with the Correspondence Courses.

In the end I would not make the team, and I felt like I had somehow let the Marine Corps down, and I shall always be grateful to Captain Schwalm for presenting me to the staff as somebody who had tried to achieve something very difficult to achieve. He made me feel great about the entire journey, even though I had failed in my effort. Another place I went to for solace was back to Hubbard Hall.

Soon after the final trials I was rowing again for Coach Clothier with the Navy Varsity. It was then I realized just how far I had come and how much better of a rower I was from the year before. This was another moment that took the sting out of my failure to make the rowing team for the Seoul Olympics, and life slowly began moving forward for me again. My failed quest yet another chapter in what I hope is a long and fruitful life. I had to make some choices when I arrived in Philadelphia.

I could row with Dan Lyons and John Walters at Penn AC for Coach Ted Nash, or row at the Vesper Boat Club with John Pescatore and David Anderson and the Penn guys, or go with another and smaller club like Undine.

I hoped to row with John again in the pair, but if not him, a veteran who I thought could guide us very well through the trial process in the pair or the pair with. The person I identified to do this with was John Strotbeck, Mike Teti's old partner. I hoped John would make a go off it with Mike, and I could make a go of it with John.

I thought we had a great row together in the pair, I thought I was rowing just as Coach Korseniowski had taught us with a powerful finish that set the pair very well, but John was carefully measuring his own chances and would soon leave sweep behind and

make a go of it as a sculler trying to make the quad or double. The ultimate impact of all this was really lost on me, because I could involve myself in the Vesper eight and our preparations for the Head of the Charles and the Head of the Schuylkill.

I went to Vesper primarily to be near John and to take a seat in the Vesper eight. At Penn AC I would have to prove myself all over again and might not make it into the eight. So I went with Vesper. I think today that this is pretty much where my quest to make the Olympic team began its downward spiral.

At Penn AC I could have thrown myself into the mix and let Coach Nash boat the best prospects in the best combinations for victory, but I was impatient. I wanted to be in a good boat and be in the boat soon. Mike Teti was the man I had to unseat, and I had chosen to row at a club where he could keep close tabs on me.

In the Fall he would often tell me how bad my catch was, which annoyed me but which I dismissed. Today I think he was doing the same things Arnold Schwarzenegger did to Lou Ferrigno in *Pumping Iron*. He consistently and very effectively undermined Ferrigno's confidence, and so easily defeated him in the Mr. Universe competition. Mike Teti was probably a better rower than I was, but he was taking no chances.

I am a strong rower who rows best in fast boats. The eight, the double, and the quad are the boats I am best suited for. After the 1988 Olympic Cycle I made an effort to go for 1992 as a sculler, but it was too little, too late. My biggest mistake of 1988 was thinking I could pursue the same path I had been pursuing for some time, and expect a different outcome. This is the definition of insanity, and I think looking back a bit of insanity dogged my efforts throughout the year. My mistake was tying my fortunes to those of John and Mike by choosing to row at Vesper. Mike was a great runner and a proven starboard oarsman. I would have my hands full trying to unseat him, but I wrongly

believed if I just persisted, things would work out accordingly. He was also a pretty miserable human being, and I really should have just taken myself as far away from him as I possibly could.

Rowing with John in '85 was an incredible moment for me, but in constantly trying to make it happen again, I consigned myself to a very narrow path of success. Because of what happened in '85, I also didn't put much trust in coaches, so the one man who could have really enabled things to happen, Coach Ted Nash, I took entirely out of the equation. This was a huge mistake, and probably the reason more than any other that my Olympic efforts were doomed to failure. Lesson learned - always surround yourself with good people, and run like Hell from those who would bring you down.

The Teti/Pescatore faction were definitely among this latter group. But this is all hindsight. I attended Coach Korseniowski's camps whenever he held them in the Fall and Winter, and this took my mind off the fact that my plans to make the team were faulty. I remember one time in December we went out on the river in freezing cold weather. It was miserable, even with the hand warmers we used to cover our hands on the oar handle. The cold on the river was so intense and penetrating that I thought to myself, "to Hell with the Olympics." Perhaps Coach Korseniowski had his athletes row in such conditions to force them to ask this exact question. Other coaches have told me of similar experiences. Maybe this was his way of winnowing the field?

I attribute most of my success in crew to rowing hard. When I rowed hard, the boats I was in went fast. When I didn't row hard, they did not go fast. At Penn AC I think I would have rowed hard. At Vesper I fell into thinking I could row easier, but still go fast. In both the Head of the Charles and the Head of the Schuylkill, Coach Korseniowski said our boat looked like we were rowing very well, but we weren't going very fast. Penn AC

beat us in both races. Sometimes in crew you look for ways to minimize the excessive pain you know will be coming, but there is really no way to escape it. You just have to suck it up. "Embrace the suck," as the SEALs say.

At Vesper I fell into the Pescatore/Teti way of thinking that rowing well trumped rowing hard. I don't think Mike Teti really ever believed you could not row hard and still go fast, because he is an exceptional rower and runner with a long record of success, but I'm sure it didn't keep him up at night not having one of his main competitors thinking rowing hard was not the answer to making boats go fast.

And so the weeks and months passed. Lifting, erging, running (I remember one particular eight mile run from bridge to bridge that was a favorite), working at the Willow Grove I & I. Life proceeded apace and I lulled myself into a false sense of complacency.

In January and February, David Anderson and I tried to make a go of it in the double. I had Special Orders cut, and Dave and I headed down to Atlanta with a double and oars strapped on the top of my Camaro. We spent a few weeks in a mini-camp of our own learning to row the double. Maybe if we stayed with it we might have done something in the end, but I grew impatient and soon went back to sweep when we returned home. I was able to get into a very good boat in the Elite Eights Race at the San Diego Crew Classic. This boat had Rick Flobeck stroking, then the great Tom Kiefer, who had been in the LA Olympics in the straight four, then Chris Huntington, Kurt Bausback, John Walters, Bob Meyn, Henry Mathieson, and myself in bow.

Our boat raced in the Elite Fours race earlier and had finished around the middle of the pack. This was the lineup we intended to race in the straight four trials; with Rick Flobeck stroking, Bob Meyn rowing three, Chris Huntington rowing two, and me in bow. For the Elite Eights race we teamed with another four from Boston. Some of these guys,

like Bausback and Mathieson, were cuts from a troubled sculling camp. Others, like Walters and Kiefer, were on the fence about where to go to make their final effort. In the Eights race were strong boats from Great Britain (I have been told since that the great Sir Steve Redgrave was in this boat, and it was he who I think I heard berating his teammates at the end of the race for losing in the sprint), Vesper, and Penn AC.

We rowed a great race, and won a thrilling come from behind victory in the last few strokes. I think this the pinnacle of my rowing career. At the end of the race, when we received our medals, I heard the announcer say that many of us were candidates for the 1988 US Olympic Team, and from a finish like that, he fully expected many of us to make it. Bittersweetly I thought, "If only you knew."

Chris Huntington and John Walters eventually made the four with coxswain that raced in the Olympic Games for the US. This boat also had John Terwilliger and Tom Darling rowing in it. John stroked. They finished in fifth place. I can think of no other boat with such power and ability as this, and only can surmise that with proper time together they would have been the best and taken Gold.

In the eights race we had defeated both Penn AC and Vesper, so on the plane trip back home I enjoyed needling Mike Teti and asking him why he thought his boat had done so poorly. He was upset at allowing an athlete to row in the boat who was given consideration because of his financial contributions to Vesper, and not because of his quality as a rower. I asked him why in the world he and his boatmates, like John Pescatore and John Strotbeck, would ever make such a decision. I forget what Mike answered, but I enjoyed his annoyance, which was clear. My relationship with Mike Teti had been a difficult one, to say the least.

I think Coach Korseniowski used me to put pressure on Mike to stay at the top of his game. Mike was an incredible rower and a runner, and undoubtedly a voice of wisdom in a very young eight. I think he had first rowed for the US National Team in 1977, and always let people know he felt he had more than paid his dues.

He resented my showing up on the rowing scene in Philly sponsored by the US Marine Corps. This is why choosing to row at Vesper I think was such a massive blow in the negative to my ever making the US Olympic Rowing Team. Being at Vesper was putting myself in the very place he could keep tabs on me throughout the year, and where he had a clear idea of my progress. In hindsight this was not my most strategic or tactical moment. The first trial was to select the straight four, and upon returning home from San Diego, I found myself in a straight four with Rick Flobeck stroking, Bob Meyn rowing three, Chris Huntinton rowing two, and me in bow.

In our race in San Diego we did okay, but didn't set the world on fire. But who knows what may have happened in the trials if we had raced. Unfortunately, and I take full blame for what transpired next, we never had the chance to find out. For, at the beginning of the race, in the warm-ups to the actual race itself, I failed to pay proper attention to where we were going, and our boat had a head on collision with the straight four that eventually won silver in Seoul.

The boat that ran into us was an Empacher, with a fist sized bow ball. This is the reason I am here today writing. If it had been any other boat, with a typical pointed bow covered by a ragged half of a tennis ball, I probably would have been impaled and possibly killed in the collision. As it was, in the bow, I had just taken a quick look over my shoulder and saw another boat fast approaching, then found myself in a sea of green. The straight four of Richard Kennelly, Tom Bohrer, Dave Krmpotich and Raoul Rodriguez

had hit me in the lower back and launched me out of our own shell, ripping out my tied in sneakers in the process. “Where is Sean? Where is Sean?”

I heard Coach Korseniowski yelling from his launch when I surfaced. Chris Huntington grabbed my outstretched right arm and held me tight to the side of our boat. I remember seeing my friend, Tom Bohrer, hanging his head in his hands.

Our moment of possibility was finished. My boatmates and I watched the trials from the dock, and saw the Kennelly boat win. Then it was off to the Hospital. People tell me I was in a bit of shock, because as I watched the results I kept saying that my boat would have been right in there had we raced. I greatly admire athletes like Tom Brady and Peyton Manning, who compete on the highest levels time after time and never seem to lose their sense of self. Maybe I don't have this?

In big moments, such as Quinsigamond in High School, Quinsigamond again in college, and at the Straight Pair Trials in the Olympic Cycle, things had a tendency to go wrong. In the day to day rowing at Navy I thought of myself as a somewhat superior rower. From these other moments I feel much less so.

I'm sure the truth lies somewhere in between. In the Hospital I was cleared, and heard from my friend Joe Michaels, another Philly contender who hoped to row in Seoul. Coach Korseniowski had invited us both to the first camp for selecting the US Olympic Rowing Team's eight oared shell with coxswain, and four oared shell with coxswain.

For lack of a better word, this was to be the under-23 camp, after which came the final camp, where selection for the Olympic Rowing Team's big boat lineups would be completed. In between the two camps would be the US Nationals in Cincinnati. The first round of cuts would come in this first camp. I was thrilled, to say the least.

I was afraid I would not be invited, one because we hadn't raced in the trails due to my mistake, and two because our four had yet to make a mark. So I felt my invitation a bit of reprieve from my error. All the usual suspects quickly gathered in Cincinnati. I saw many old friends. Coach Korseniowski was focused on making his fastest possible young eight, and Jack Rusher from Harvard soon replaced Mike Still in the first boat.

Mark Berkner and I and others tried our best to get Mike back into the eight, but our efforts were too little too late. Kris also tried Rick Flobeck at stroke, but quickly stopped the seat racing in the eights when Rick's boat began destroying John's boat.

John was at this first camp. I think with Mike Teti. He and Mike had taken to hanging out together at all times, and you could feel among the rest of the rowers a building resentment toward these two. I remember thinking that really John had no chance against Rick, because the rowers in Rick's boat were all so motivated to show John up. I think Kris felt this as well, and realized any result he gained from further racing proved nothing. At the end of camp the rowers who had made the cut went on. I and the rest went back to Philly or Boston or from wherever else we had come.

For a short while Henry Mathieson and I made a go of it in the pair, but we never felt we were achieving any real speed and soon parted ways. The final trials would be for the pair with coxswain, then the pair without. The pair with coxswain was first.

Word soon came from the final camp that Rick had done very well, but that in the end had been cast aside. Maybe Kris was using Rick to motivate John in the same way I thought he had used me to motivate Mike? Whatever the case may be, I wasted no time when Rick returned to Philly. I asked him to row with me in the pair.

The camp process had burnt him out, I think Bob Meyn was also a casualty of this, but Rick graciously (probably because I was so eager) accepted my invitation and

we began training on the Schuylkill in a straight pair. Rick had no interest in the pair with coxswain trials, which came up first, so we skipped these and focused on the straight pair. Thus, during the weekend of the 27-28 August, on Mercer Lake in Mercer County, NJ, we faced our final opportunity to make the US Olympic Rowing Team.

In the heats we performed well enough to make the semi-finals, then we actually won the semi-finals. In our heat we beat John Riley and Ted Swinford, who had won the gold at the World Championships in the straight four two years previously. Rick and I were stunned at our success, and excited. Both of us began thinking we might have a chance at being the straight pair and going to the Olympic Games.

On shore after our semi-final victory I remember being congratulated by Henry Mathieson and many others. We had had a great start off the line and I had steered well. The future beckoned. In the final, however, I did not steer well, and we never found the rhythm and power we found in the semi-final. The race was won by Ed Ives and Kurt Bausback in 6:36.08. Second place was John Riley and Ted Swinford in 6:41.68. Third place was Lindsey Brown and Mike Still in 6:46.4. Fourth place was Peter Sharis and Jon Bernstein in 6:50.16. Fifth place was Sean Coughlin and Rick Flobeck in 6:50.6. Sixth place was Bill Serad and Ken Piree in 7:08.12.

We rowed in, loaded our boat on the shell truck, then made our way back to Philly. The Olympic Men's Heavyweight Rowing Team was now set, and I would not be part of it. Rick Flobeck was asked to go as a spare, and accepted. So by finishing with him, I felt my year-long Olympic effort had been worth something in the end. Rick went to Seoul as a port spare and would have rowed if necessary. Lindsey Brown was to be a starboard spare. Mike Still had been his partner in the pair, and stayed home like me. The other two spares were John Riley and Ted Swinford, both Penn AC guys.

Epilogue - Hanging up my oar

At the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, the American eight won a bronze medal in almost the same lineup as the year before. At the 1987 World Rowing Championships in Copenhagen, they had won gold. Jack Rusher replaced Mike Still in the lineup for the Olympics. Maybe the change made this difference. Maybe not. Such is the mysterious and enchanting world of rowing. After Cincinnati, I returned to Philly, and Willow Grove, and Captain Schwalm told me in front of his Marines that I had made an effort, and that in life, this is what mattered. This made me feel better.

Rowing with Navy again a few weeks later also made me feel better, and saw clearly that I had grown enormously as a rower in my abilities from the year. Perhaps I would try again in 1992. In the Fall, I watched the 1988 Olympic Games on TV. Rick kept in touch by postcard. I did feel like my effort had at least resulted in somebody making it to Seoul. I distracted myself from it all when Captain Schwalm sent me to WSSI School in Camp Lejeune, NC. Then I was off to The Basic School in Quantico, VA, for all newly commissioned USMC Officers.

I was a year behind my classmates from the US Naval Academy, but had a number of friends in the class below me, so I enjoyed TBS tremendously. I was ranked in the bottom of the top third, so I received my 6th choice as my Military Occupational Specialty, or MOS. I was to be a Logistics Officer.

My first choice was to be a Tanker, and second choice an Infantry Officer. I found in time being a Logistician fit me like a glove. In thinking back over my failed bid to make the Olympic Rowing Team, I thought I definitely should have learned how to steer a boat, and also learned how to scull.

After TBS in Quantico, VA,, then Logistics School in Little Creek, VA, I began to both scull and steer a boat with a toe when stationed at my first duty station at Camp Pendleton in Southern California. It was late 1989, and I had finished with all my initial USMC Junior Officer schooling, I soon began rowing evenings in a single out of San Diego Rowing Club on Mission Bay in San Diego.

Sometimes I rowed in the dark, and sometimes in a double or quad with John Hall, now a US Navy SEAL, and Mike Fields, a US Navy Helicopter Pilot. In time I found myself rowing with Lieutenant Junior Grade James Smith, from Berkeley, a Penn AC guy and Commissioned Officer in the US Navy. Jim and I competed in a few races and did well, and I had settled into a nice life where I could row quietly and on the side.

I deployed to Southwest Asia for the Persian Gulf War, then was reassigned up to El Toro, CA, with MWSG-37, the unit I had deployed with. I put in for permission once again train to make the US Olympic Rowing Team, this time for 1992, and my new unit accommodated me. I based my effort in Orange County, at the Newport Beach Aquatic Center. I started with a focus on the single, hoping to find myself in a double, but soon found myself once again rowing a pair with John Pescatore, who now lived in the San Francisco area. We traded weeks at each other's house to live and train. It was a nice life, and I was working again toward making the Olympic Rowing Team, but I thought if I should have the US Marine Corps sponsor such an effort, a second time, it would only be right to extend my time and do another tour with the USMC, which at this point would probably be overseas in Japan.

Film school became another option when I applied and was accepted at UCLA, USC, and the London School of Film. I requested an audience with my Commanding

Officer, Colonel Coop, to discuss my options. He agreed with me that if I proceeded with the Olympic stuff I by all rights would owe the US Marine Corps some time.

Making the Olympic Rowing Team had never been an ultimate goal of mine. Making it in the film world was, so I left off rowing at that point and have only looked back occasionally. John Pescatore made the 1992 Olympic Rowing Team in the straight pair with his partner Peter Sharis. Sharis was a Harvard guy who had beaten me in a seat race back in Philly during the '88 Olympic cycle.

John and Pete made the team as the US straight pair, then came in sixth in the final, which was a remarkable finish and a testament to their abilities. John also coached a straight pair later that came in second at the 2000 Olympics.

This boat had a rower from the Belmont Hill School in the boat, though he actually only began to row after leaving BHS. When I look back on my year-long Olympic effort, and my entire rowing career, it now seems a bit haphazard and disorganized. I now see clearly, I think, where at times I was misguided and even a bit manic.

In the end I had become so fearful of losing my status that I quit allowing myself to grow. I should have thrown myself into the Coach Nash system at Penn AC and lived with the result. Instead, I wanted to row in an eight for the Fall Head Races, and keep getting invited to National Team camps. So instead of striking out on my own. I sought a semblance of security, without really getting it in reality.

At Belmont Hill and Navy and afterwards I was best at making myself totally adaptable to the person I was rowing behind. This made me a thorough team player. I also rowed very hard all the time as best I could. This constant need to pull hard wore on me, however, and I looked for places to gain boat speed in ways other than pulling hard.

At Penn AC I would have had to continue to pull hard. At Vesper I thought I could pull less hard while rowing better and somehow achieve the same result.

But you have to row hard, and row well, to attain boat speed. There is no getting around this fact, and the best rowers know it intuitively. The story of Coach Gluckman angrily kicking the metal bucket across the shell bay floor in the Princeton boathouse; of a bewildered Coach Parker staring up into the sky as he lay in the grass outside of Rickett's Hall on the US Naval Academy grounds; and of Sir Steven Redgrave bawling out his teammates after being sprinted through at the San Diego Crew Classic; were clear signs to me of when athletes who knew better had to deal with others not living up to their standards, and to their understanding of what it took to make boats go fast and win crew races. Having Rick Flobeck be a spare for the 1988 US Olympic Rowing Team redeemed the whole experience for me.

Him deciding to row with me, and so completing the Olympic Cycle as my partner, in the end I think enabled him to be in a proper situation for Coach Korseniowski to ask him to be one of the spares. So my efforts over the course of the whole year had something very much to do with his success.

I will be forever grateful to Rick for making the US Olympic Rowing Team, and to Coach Korseniowski for asking him to be a spare in the first place. To sum up my rowing career - I won some big races, and lost some big races.

I was a better rower than many people initially took me for, but I guess not as good in the end as I believed. I continued to row off and on throughout the following years, in an attempt to somehow recapture past glory, but one can never step in the same river twice. Life moves on, and it is best to move with it.

On December 16, 1994, at Big Bear Mountain in CA, I suffered the catastrophic ski accident with which this story began. In Physical Therapy later I would come to understand that pushing through pain and forever doing a little more was no longer always a good thing. I now had to listen to my body carefully, and to pull back when pain flared at all. What I learned as a neophyte to the Cult of Pain in rowing was something I had to unlearn. Coach Harry Parker hated the title to this story when I first started talking about it. He thought there was altogether too much focus on the 'pain' and 'agony' of rowing. There was, he often told me, so much more to the sport.

But after having been inculcated into its mysteries for many years, I know that crew is indeed very much about pain. It is also about other things as well, but in the end you cannot escape what makes a boat go. You place the blade in the water and pull. Usually, the harder, and as time passes, the more effectively, you pull or drive the blade through the water, the faster the boat goes. When you do this over a length of time, lactic acid builds in your muscles. This is what causes the pain you feel.

The pain comes from your body dealing with increased amounts of lactic acid coursing through your muscle tissue. Some individuals are better at dealing with this than others, whether because of body chemistry, or because of an extreme mental ability that allows them to compartmentalize, the fact remains that few crew athletes have the ability of a Thomas Darling, or a John Terwilliger, or a Sir Steven Redgrave, or a John Walters, or an Andrew Sudduth. Most of us mere mortals simply do not have this ability and suffer appropriately. Writing this makes me realize how few there are of us ever in the category of these rowing giants. Many of us, however, can also row a boat quietly and well for a long time, and eventually hope to have a real shot at making a National or

an Olympic Rowing Team. This is, I think, the true beauty of crew, and what makes it such an accessible sport in the end.

I think every crew athlete profiled in the previous pages has had to come to terms with what the act of rowing meant to them personally, and how to deal with the very significant amount of pain it engenders. This is why I have decided to call my story, *The Cult of Pain*, which Coach Harry Parker had reservations about my using as a title. In the end, I think the word 'pain' describes the most central aspect in the sport of crew. It hurts when you row hard, but it's a glorious hurt at the same time, and a hurt you share fully with the people with whom you are rowing. To those who have made it this far in the course of my narrative, I wish you the best of luck in your own endeavors, be they in rowing, or something else. May all your dreams and wishes come true. Semper Fi!