

Still Going Strong

I never meant to land Asa Strong, BA '77, in the doghouse with his wife, Mary, when I concluded my essay for GW Magazine's summer 2001 issue with something he said: "I'm upset because I know that I'm not going to have this much fun again until next year."

At that time, we were eight years into what had become an annual reunion of a group of 15 friends who had first met at Thurston and Mitchell Hall as sophomores in the mid-1970s. I'm an exception, having transferred to GW as a junior.

Now, 13 years later, the reunion is still going strong—I wish I could say the same for our hair and waistlines.

We're still known by our college nicknames: Stork, Pooks, Uly, Mr. Happy, Warnie, Arno, Hulks, Coner; about half of us live in the Washington and Baltimore areas, the other half travels to D.C. from New York, Chicago, Atlanta, St. Louis, Wyoming, and elsewhere.

Since the last essay ran, much has changed: not only our career shifts, but also those of our "young adult" children. We've all managed to stay relatively healthy, with the exception of Mark Bleiweis, BBA '77, our classmate who passed away from pancreatic cancer in 2004. Captain Bli, a gentle, quick-witted soul who lived in McLean, Va., worked the hardest to make our reunion an annual tradition. He is sorely missed.

The odds were that there would be a few success stories among us, but no one could have predicted that Captain Bli's college roommate—Sen. Mark Warner, BA '77, or "Warnie" as we call him—would become the 69th governor of Virginia. That monumental event occurred a few months after my first essay appeared and, for the next several years, Mark hosted the event at the governor's mansion in Richmond. Not too shabby.

Now we're back in our more familiar routine in Washington, where Mark's star



Back on campus in 2013: (bottom from left) Scott Johnson; Asa Strong, BA '77; Jeff Holcomb, BA '77; Alan Cohn, BA '77; Rick Morris, BA '77; and Larry Arnowitz, BBA '77; (top from left) Charlie Turner, BS '78; Dan Uslander, BA '77; Scott Pakula, BA '76; Mark Warner, BA '77; Brad Stevens, BA '76, MFA '79; Bill Glovin, BA '77; and Jerry Matt, BA '77

now shines as a U.S. senator. Our reunion's itinerary always begins with hugs and cocktails at a hotel bar near the Foggy Bottom Campus. We then head to a place where we can sit around a long circular or rectangular table and easily schmooze over dinner. This year we moved to Nopa Kitchen+Bar after three straight years at the City Tavern Club in Georgetown. Wherever we end up, though, the laughter, merriment, and recycled stories abound.

Saturday always begins with a late morning friendly but competitive basketball game at GW's Lerner Health & Wellness Center, a long way from where we once played pickup games as students: the bubble-like Tin Tabernacle, a shrine for hoops aficionados. (Its center circle now hangs mostly unnoticed at the Smith Center.)

About five years ago our full-court run evolved into a half-court jog. Even at age 60, though, some things never change: Warnie's elbows are just as sharp as they were when we competed in an elective, no-credit basketball course, and Pooks (Scott Pakula, BA '76), Stork (Brad Stevens, BA '76, MFA '79), and Charlie Turner, BS '78—all around 6-foot-5—still dominate.

Our reunion is also built around sitting in the cheap seats behind the basket of a GW men's basketball game. We are all long,

devoted fans; this year's game, a 66-58 victory against George Mason University, was particularly meaningful in the team's successful effort to capture an at-large bid to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament. We were thrilled.

"What holds together 15 guys who met in the 1970s but have since spread across the world with diverse lives—from running a homeless shelter to being governor of a state; from advising world leaders about the U.S. economy to delivering vehicles for a car dealership; from writing magazine articles to painting great leaders who inspire millions?" Gary Friend, BBA '77, MBA '79, asked me at our Friday night dinner. "Fifteen people with seemingly nothing in common except one very important thing: GWU."

— Bill Glovin, BA '77



Bill Glovin, aka Gloveman, is editor of the online neuroscience journal, Cerebrum, in New York City.

What's your reunion story? Let us know at magazine@gwu.edu