



BENNY-factor

FAMILY AUXILIARY: benefactors to shipmates of the
USS Bennington Association

February, 2014

www.aux.uss-bennington.org

Reunion Reunites Shipmates after 57 Years

By Sharon Leeds

The first morning of the reunion on the Queen Mary, Steve and I went exploring for a cup of coffee.

Having come from the East Coast, we were 3 hours ahead so when the Starbucks vendor on ship opened up at 6 am local time, we were there. We went back to the "A" deck near the check-in desk where we found tables and chairs near a window where dawn was breaking. We watched fishing and tour boats with the lights of Long Beach fading in the background.

We noted a tall gentleman with a staff standing at the desk who then came over to us to ask if we were "Bennington people." Registration was later that day, and Steve did not have on his hat. After an affirmative reply, the man introduced himself as Bob Walsh, a first time shipmate at a reunion.

When Steve introduced himself, Bob's face lit up and he reached across to shake Steve's hand saying "I remember you! We were both from New Jersey, went to boot camp together and boarded the USS Bennington together" (57 years ago). It was a delight to sit and listen to them reminiscing of their time together and then relating the paths their lives have taken since then.

Bob later rented a scooter, so you may remember him as he used it to navigate the long halls of the Queen Mary.

We visited several other times and sat next to him at the banquet.



Steve Leeds (left) and Bob Walsh visit in the Hospitality Room. It was Bob's first reunion, and they had not seen each other in 57 years when they left New Jersey, were in boot camp together and then boarded the USS Bennington together.



The guys of B Division

(Continued on Page 4)

Claudette Recalls the Past; Looks Forward to the Future



Jim and Claudette

Thanks for sticking with me even though you haven't heard from me for a long time.

Jim and I were very disappointed to not have been able to join you at the Bennington reunions since San Antonio.

Jim and I are doing well and have such fond memories of everyone at the San Antonio reunion— Especially everything that Moises and his family did to make it such a success ... The hotel with it's convivial lobby, the Bennington hospitality room, the trip to Fredericksburg and the visit to the Nimitz WWII Museum, the walk with Vaughn to and from the VFW Post, our boat tour on the river walk, our personal way on the river walk, our visits with both old and new friends throughout the Reunion, etc. Such fond memories!!!

Twenty-six months ago, I was diagnosed with stage 4 non smokers lung cancer. My doctors started my therapy immediately with full brain radiation and chemotherapy. I have received my lifetime max of brain radiation, but my chemo continues about every three weeks.

My doctors told me that my cancer was treatable and manageable but not curable. HOWEVER, that was over two years ago and I'm still here. So, we feel that God has a different plan for me, and we pray that it will bring remission in my future. Whatever it may be, I have already printed up our 2015 calendar, been able to spend quality time with friends and family and we have been able to enjoy some of those bucket list items.

I feel so very blessed and grateful that my cancer was detected early, that I have such wonderful family around me, such competent medical care, a very caring faith community, a strong faith that my parents instilled in me that has been nurtured by our Capuchin Franciscans Community during the past 36 years.

So, all in all, all is well and I love waking up each and every day. Jim has been such a FABULOUS and SUPPORTIVE partner during this journey and we continue to enjoy whatever the future holds for us.

Jim and I continue to think of all of his Bennington shipmates and their families fondly. We just watched a 2-part PBS special on Naval Aviation which was very good and we highly recommend. We were also very touched and humbled when we recently visited the Arizona memorial in Honolulu. The silence and respect of all those in attendance was palpable.

We wish you, your family and the Bennington shipmates and their families, a very Blessed, Happy and Healthy New Year and look forward to being able to join you once again at another reunion.

May you have fair winds and following seas.

—Claudette Main

Grandchildren: They're Adults Now

How could I have grandchildren who are getting older faster than I am?

Our granddaughter—Sara—turned 26 in December, is an occupational therapist and is planning a July wedding.

Our grandson—Aaron—will be 22 in April and will graduate from Texas Tech University in May.

He has wanted to be a pilot since he visited the airport on a kindergarten field trip. Today, he is living his dream.

Aaron earned his pilot license just before graduating from high school. He followed up by getting his instrument rating, then his multi-engine certification.

Today he balances his class schedule with frequent opportunities to co-pilot a private jet, taking business executives on business and pleasure trips.

— Vaughn Monigold

“Sexiest Man?”

Marge Britt recalls presenting Chief Jack Grantham a “World’s Sexiest Man” shirt for his 90th birthday five years ago.

Jack will turn 95 on March 1. Time for another shirt?

George AND Santa arrived on Christmas Eve

George and I were married Christmas Eve Day on December 24th, 1950. It was beautiful sunny day of 70 degrees! After our reception we took the street car [we had no car] to the Walgreen's Store on 16th Street in downtown Denver CO where Walgreen's had a small food service in it. We had small sandwich, chips and a coke. This was the bus station at that time also.



We took the bus to Colorado Springs CO, and stayed at the Alta Vista Hotel, for our honeymoon, as I only had a few days off from work. There is no longer an Alta Vista Hotel; it has since been torn down and a parking lot made of the grounds it occupied. By the time we reached the hotel, the dining room was closing for the help to have their Christmas holiday, but they did fix a tuna salad sandwich, chips and coffee for us.

On Christmas Day we woke to a foot of snow, and blizzard-like conditions. The hotel dining hall was closed for the holiday. The only restaurant that was open was the Indian Grill about a block from the hotel. We trudged through the snow and stood in line outside for about one half hour before we were even able to get into the waiting area of restaurant. We had a wonderful brunch, and ordered take out to take back to the hotel to have later on in the evening!

On December 26th the storm was over, the sun was shining, the streets and sidewalks shoveled!

Although there have been many more memorable ones as each one of our children was born, and the masses of presents under the tree grew, our first Christmas together really stands out.

Hope everyone had a Wonderful Christmas and New Year! Also since this will be the February edition Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

— Wilma Kardaseski

Christmas with the Family

We traveled to be with 23 members of Sharon's family in Pensacola before Christmas. The traditional Christmas dinner was prepared by the adult family members. Our only brother-in-law is now confined to a memory care facility and his wife hosted the gathering. Our son and family came from the Atlanta area and a great-niece and her Army husband came in from Ft. Campbell, KY. Both traveled in heavy rain to get there.

We then returned to Tallahassee for Christmas Eve services where we lighted the Christ Candle at the middle service. The next morning we checked out what Santa brought our granddaughter, Lauren, and exchanged gifts with Steve's family. A special treat was that Christmas dinner was Seafood Chowder cooked by our daughter.



Sharon Leeds

Our special gift came early when we traded our Honda Odyssey for a Honda CRV. Shortly afterwards we sold our truck so, I am enjoying better gas mileage and more room in the garage!

Together Again (continued from Page 1)

After several years when "B" Div. had only 2 or 3 shipmates, this was a year when they filled up two tables of 10. The photographer took a great picture of them and we look forward to getting our directory this year.

Bob lives in Connecticut with his wife and would love to hear from you.

You can contact Steve and Sharon Leeds at silshl@centurylink.net and we will send Bob your contact information.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Auxiliary still has 3 medium size white shirts which were sold several years ago. If you would like to buy one for the reduced price of \$15, please contact Sharon Leeds, (850) 577-6543.

Looking forward to T. Shurmur — our former Auxiliary president and husband hosting the reunion 2014.

Reminder: look at your membership cards, and if the expiration date is reunion 2014, your dues will be due by the Gatlinburg reunion this September. The treasurer would appreciate you sending the dues to her by August so she can spend less time collecting dues at the reunion.

Auxiliary dues and non-member subscriptions to the BENNY-factor are \$10 per year or \$25 for three years. Send dues to Sharon Leeds, 8603 Milford Court, Tallahassee, FL 32312.

Those whose dues and subscriptions expire in September are listed below:

MEMBERS

Karen Bacon	Bruce Hanke	Deborah Martinez	Pat Walker
Tootsie Batson	Irene Hatton	Louise McManus	Linda Weers
Marilyn Bigham	Rebecca Hoffman	Kelle Metz	
Susan Brophy	Georgi Holmes	Michael Moade	
Karen Y. Brown	Linda Howes	Vaughn Monigold	
	Marla Itzen	Sherry Nelson	<u>SUBSCRIBERS</u>
Kathy Carr	Bobbie Itzen	Lillian Peters	Gail Beauregard
Margaret Cole	Ty Itzen	Mary Petrie	Ralph Clark
Dotty Copeland	Connie Jenkins	T. Shurmur	Bill Connor
Joellen Carrao	Pat Killian	Betty Stanley	Grace Hartnett
	Linda King	Judy Stringer	Lisa Sloan
Dolores Dunn	Delores Koenig	Elizabeth Sullivan	Bob Walsh
Terri Ellam			
Gina Ganse	Diane Mack	Vangie Valdez	
Penny Gore	Patsy Manning		

Vaughn Monigold was notified Feb. 2 that the USS Bennington Assn. board had selected his proposal to produce the Gatlinburg reunion book.. The proposal will provide a 44-page magazine with photographs and text of all reunion activities. The book will be for sale during the Saturday afternoon portrait session at a cost of \$36 (including postage). All purchasers also will receive a full-color USS Bennington bumper sticker to promote membership. The book will be delivered by Dec. 1, 2014, according to the proposal. Monigold produced books for Bennington reunions at Asheville, Tucson, Reno, Albany and San Antonio.

WILMA'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY? Lots of them.

I can't say that I have a favorite holiday. All holidays were always special to me for one reason or another.

Growing up holidays were always days off from school, the only thing special was **HOW LONG WAS IT GOING TO BE!!**

Summer was always one glorious holiday. Of course there were always your 'chores'; no matter how much you goofed off, they were always there when you got back. Thus I learned at an early age, get them out of the way, and then the time was your own!

In the summer there were always so many wonderful things that you could do, lazy days in the sun, walks in the park, ball games with your friends, picnics and all the fun times that went with them.

As I grew older and the teen age years came to pass, there were so many more grown up things to do; Dancing at the Trocadera Ballroom at Elitch Gardens, or the old Lakeside Ballroom. Great bands of the era to dance to their tunes, Lawrence Welk, Guy Lombardo, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, just to name a few! If you didn't want to go all the way to The Fun Parks, there was always the Rainbow Ballroom at Broadway and Speer Boulevard!

Bicycle riding from South Washington Street and Louisiana to Lowry Air Force Base at 6th and Quebec, Roller Skating and Roller

Dancing at the Roller Rink on South Broadway! What glorious times were to be had! Three months of nothing but fun and happiness!

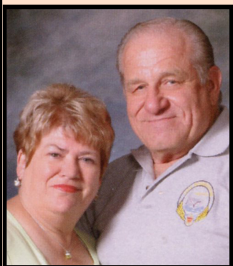
By the time Labor Day rolled around in September you were glad to be going back to school, at least I was; as things were starting to become lackadaisical!

I was ready for the challenge that the new school year would bring. Getting together with school friends, as you didn't always see them in the summer, school sports were starting, football games, then basketball, baseball and track. Always some place to go. Never lacking for dates, I always had a great time. Most of the time they were group dates, so there was always a lot of fun and laughter.

Time flew by, July 4th, Halloween parties, Veterans Day, parades to watch or participate, Thanksgiving Holiday, and then the Spirit of Christmas rose in the air. New Year's parties, Valentine Dances, Spring Break, whether it was sunny or a nice snowy one, Easter, Mother's Day, then Memorial Day, a time to remember. Then again the glorious days of summer!

Oh, what memories of reminiscing this all brings back, ones never to be forgotten, but many new ones were made after this time in my life, but I will always remember my wonderful teenage Years.

— *Wilma Kardaseski*



Christmas with the Grandsons

This past Christmas Season was special to Diane and me, you see we have a grandson in Post-Grad School in Indiana working on his Masters Degree, and he came home for Christmas, then a few days later his younger brother in the Army, and in Combat Medic School came home for Christmas.

It was a joy to see our grandson for the 1st time in uniform come down the ramp at the airport. We know many families that have members in the Military, and I can assure all of you, that we have top quality people serving our country in uniform, in all branches.

After graduating from COMBAT MEDIC SCHOOL at end of Feb, he will be assigned to Ft Campbell, KY in the 'famous' 101st Airborne - Screaming Eagles.

It was also an early Christmas present to be able to attend the 25th annual USS BENNINGTON reunion on THE QUEEN MARY in Long Beach, California.

May God protect and bless each of our friends and loved ones, as they have stepped up to the plate to serve all of us, while in the uniform of the U.S.A.

Doug & Diane Madison

Reunion Hotel is Holding a Room for You



Fireplaces • Jacuzzis • Luxury suites



Amenities



Complimentary continental breakfast



Indoor/outdoor pool and Jacuzzi



Magnolia Ballroom

**USS Bennington Reunion
Sept. 24-27, 2014**

**Gatlinburg, TN
Edgewater Hotel & Conference
Center**

Rooms are \$99 plus 12.75% tax

**Reserve Your Room
1-800-423-9582**

Auxiliary Officers

President Lydia Martinez
raylydm@aol.com

Vice-President Linda Weers
weerslin@hotmail.com

Secretary Jacqueline Covington
jcov1@cinci.rr.com

Treasurer Sharon Leeds
sjlshl@centurylink.net

Chaplain Gean Tinsley
rgtin64@yahoo.com

BENNY-factor Editor

Vaughn Monigold
1409 Palm Drive
Texarkana, TX 75503

southcrestgallery@windstream.net

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.