

# The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



President.....Ralph E. McComb, Jr.  
Vice President.....Jim Porter  
Treasurer.....Lloyd Mahan  
Benefits Officer.....Robin Leong  
Recording Secretary....Sonya Domingo  
Executive Secretary.....Veronica Cullum

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2034, Vallejo, CA 94592  
Street Address: Bldg. 535, Mare Island, Vallejo, CA 94592  
Voice Mail and Fax: (707) 562-1812  
E-Mail Address: [benefit@mareislandnya.com](mailto:benefit@mareislandnya.com)  
Website Address: [www.mareislandnya.com](http://www.mareislandnya.com)

Volume VI, Issue 1

March 2006

Published Quarterly

## NYA Bulletin Board

If you wish to reach more than 600 of your fellow NYA members, this bulletin board is available for your use to post information. Contact Veronica Cullum or send e-mail to [benefit@mareislandnya.com](mailto:benefit@mareislandnya.com)

### Shop 38 Luncheon

Sardine Can Restaurant, Vallejo;  
Second Wednesday of each month  
POC: Rudy Lukes, (707) 643-3225

### Vallejo Chapter of NARFE Meeting

Florence Douglas Senior Cntr, 333 Amador St., Vallejo  
Second Tuesday of each month at 1:15pm  
POC: Elsie Babcock; (707) 643-7914

### Napa Chapter of NARFE Meeting

Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa  
Last Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm  
POC: Dick Champion; (707) 253-7242

### Mare Island Historical Park Foundation

Mare Island Quarters "A"  
Third Monday quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) at 10:00am  
POC: Ken Zadwick; (707) 557-1538

### Nuclear Inspectors' Luncheon

Sardine Can restaurant, Vallejo  
First Wednesday of each month at 11:30am  
POC: Dick Barlow; (707) 642-6022

### Ocean Engineering Luncheon

Sports Bar inside the Marriott Hotel, Napa  
Last Wednesday of each month at 11:30am  
No POC at this time

membership (or become a first-time or returning member!).

Becoming a member means that you are interested in what's happening with Mare Island and future development plans; hearing what's being done to preserve the legacy of the Shipyard's history by the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation; and want to stay touch with former co-workers. For many of us, Mare Island was more than a job. It was a community, with a rich history and a strong, enduring bond. The naval base and shipyard may be closed, but Mare Island's rich history will continue for future generations.

We look forward to seeing you at the reunion on April 1<sup>st</sup>!

## Mare Island Celebration/Reunion to Commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Mare Island's Closure

More than 150 people have already signed up for the upcoming celebration/reunion to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard on Saturday, April 1, 2006. Reservations have been received from as far away as Bremerton, Washington, and Kailua, Hawaii. A copy of the reservation form is included in this newsletter. Please make your reservations today!!!!

This celebration is open to the public and will be held indoors in the Old Pipe Shop, Building 46, which is now the Mare Island

## President's Corner

Ralph McComb

This newsletter contains key information about our upcoming reunion on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard. By coincidence, this is also the newsletter issue that highlights our annual membership drive. We sincerely hope you both attend the celebration and renew your NYA

Historic Park Foundation Museum. In addition to the catered luncheon, there will be many give-a-ways as remembrances of this historic event, and the Mare Island master developer, Lennar LLC, will have a display depicting the future visions for the ex-Shipyard. Tours of Mare Island will include historic locales (such as the Admiral's Quarters, St. Peters Chapel, and the Navy Cemetery), as well as some of the newly developed areas on the island. As a special treat, the Trans Quest and its bathysphere will be at the seawall, and tours will be available (the Trans Quest was a Navy vessel that was used to retrieve space capsules in the 1960s).

**Tickets to the event are \$5 for NYA members and \$15 for non-members. Reservations may be made by contacting NYA Director, Mary Rutland. Mary can be contacted via email at [mrutland@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mrutland@sbcglobal.net) or by phone at (707) 426-4296.** Checks for tickets to the reunion should be made payable to 'NYA.' The commemorative tickets for the event will be held at the door and can be picked up as early as 10:30a.m., on the day of the event at the entrance to Building 46 (located on the west side of the building, near Alden Park). Based on early reservations, walk-in admission at the door on the day of the event cannot be guaranteed.

Membership in the NYA is available for the low-low annual dues of \$15. Those interested in becoming a member can do so by sending the upper portion of the reservation form (included with this newsletter) along with a check payable to the 'NYA' to PO Box 2034, Mare Island Station, Vallejo, CA 94592. In addition to your mailing address and telephone number, please include your e-mail address (if applicable).

We look forward to seeing all of you on April 1st!



## Mare Island Historic Park Foundation Update

Bruce Christensen

### BRINGING THE EX-USS DRUM BACK TO MARE ISLAND

A revised ship's application was sent to the Navy Inactive Ships Office in January 2006 requesting donation of the SSN 677 (ex-DRUM) to the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation and the City of Vallejo for display as a museum ship in historic Dry Dock number 1 at Mare Island. As indicated in earlier NYA newsletters, the ex-DRUM was the last nuclear submarine built by Mare Island Naval Shipyard, has been de-fueled and decommissioned and is awaiting reactor compartment removal by Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Currently, that ship work on ex-DRUM is scheduled for no sooner than 2007, followed by preparations for towing to be completed by 2008.

Ex-Mare Islander and Past NYA President Dennis Kelly has been the driving force behind the preparation of the application for ex-DRUM. There is still a need to raise funds to cover towing, dredging, and docking costs, so please keep the ex-DRUM Project in mind when making your charitable donations this year. Donations should be made payable to the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Please mail your contributions to:

Mare Island Historic Park Foundation  
328 Seawind Drive  
Vallejo, CA 94590

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE MARE ISLAND HISTORIC PARK FOUNDATION

There are many tasks for which those interested in helping to preserve Mare Island's proud Naval History can volunteer. These include, gardening of the grounds around St. Peters Chapel and Quarters A and B; maintenance work and/or cleaning of the Chapel and Quarters;

serving as a tour guide for historical tours or as a docent to oversee events that take place within these historic buildings; inventorying and cataloguing of Mare Island and Navy artifacts; as well as working on individual public displays at the Mare Island Naval Historic Museum in Building 46.

These tasks provide an opportunity for ex-Mare Islanders, as well as those interested in learning more about Mare Island's history, to become involved personally. Many of the tasks can be scheduled to be worked on at the volunteer's convenience, and most allow people to work together in an environment that often results in the making of new friends. Each task can provide personal gratification, and many are informative and educational. If you're interested, please contact Ken Zadwick at 707-557-0662.

There are also openings on the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation Board of Directors. If you'd like to observe one of the meetings, plan on attending the next Director's meeting as a guest. The meeting will be held on Monday, April 24, 2006 at Quarter A in the dining room. Several NYA members are currently on the Foundation's Board, so you will feel right at home when you attend the meeting.

## **Membership update**

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 690, which surpassed our 2005 membership goal of 650! Dental membership stands at 394 members.

We offer a warm welcome to new members Michael G Hansen (Dave Runge); W. Gordon Bennett; Captain Thomas Brovarone; Wesley Carnes; George Carter; Glen Cottrell; Kathleen F. Davis; Gino M. Del Chiaro; Bill Downs; Jim McClary; Frederick Parker; Frank Rhodes; Charles J. Scandlyn; David Schaefer; and Anna R Vickers. Welcome back to former NYA members Nancy J. Matlock, Frank F Palmaymesa Jr., and Fay Singletary.

Recently, the NYA Directors made an effort to obtain/update member e-mail addresses in order to provide for more effective communication between us and our members. Through this effort, we were able to update our e-mail database considerably. However, we are still lacking e-mail address contact information for many of our members. If you think we don't have your current e-mail address, please consider sending it to us. We will never sell or otherwise disclose your address to any third parties, nor will we send frivolous messages.

## **Benefit Officer's Column**

Robin Leong

Every time the NYA organizes a reunion, more ex-Mare Islanders are amazed that the NYA even still exists. More amazing is that our membership is growing again. So, one of the most frequently asked the question is: "Why should I become an NYA member? What's in it for me?" For added emphasis, I'll list them here (but, they are always found on the last page of every newsletter).

1. You can get a discount of 10% off the listed prices at [www.giffordlaw.com](http://www.giffordlaw.com) to have a Living Trust drawn up by Attorney Jean Gifford. This could potentially save you thousands of dollars.
2. If you are an active or retired Federal government employee, you can get dental insurance through our NAONE trust. We offer both a pre-paid and a Blue Shield plan.
3. You can get free Notary Public work done by our Secretary, Sonya Domingo.
4. If you are a retired Mare Island employee, you can obtain a DOD retired card through the NYA. This could save you money by allowing you to stay at military bases, RV parks, hotels, cabins, and utilize military golf courses—but more than that,

you can make reservations for the leftover condominium timeshares.

5. Kelly Moore Paint and Wallpaper offers 25% off on some items, but at least 10% off all items for NYA members.
6. Beaver Creek RV Park and Campground offers a 15% discount to NYA members.
7. Napa Valley Day Spa offers a 10% discount on their services to NYA members.
8. Napa Wine Train offers NYA members a 10% discount.
9. Handy Consumer tips, emerging benefits, job announcements, and notification employee reunions and what's going on at Mare Island may be received by sending your e-mail address to me at robin\_leong@netzero.net.

## **And then there was Yesterday**

Sue Lemmon  
Shipyards Historian

### WHY PORTHOLE?

The question comes up fairly often: How come holes in the starboard side of a ship are called portholes instead of starboard holes? Many old timers will offer explanations, but actually the name “porthole” has nothing to do with its location. According to ORIGIN OF NAVY TERMINOLOGY, the word originated during the reign of Henry VI of England (1485). Apparently the king insisted on mounting guns too large for his ships and therefore the conventional methods of securing weapons on the forecastle and aftcastle could not be used.

A French shipbuilder named James Baker was commissioned to solve the problem. He solved it by piercing the ship's sides so the cannon could be mounted inside the fore and after castles. Covers, gun ports, were fitted for

heavy weather and when the cannon were not in use.

The English word “porte,” meaning door, was used to designate the revolutionary invention. “Porte” was anglicized to “Port” and later corrupted to porthole. Eventually, it came to mean any opening in a ship's side whether for cannon or not.

### AND WHAT ABOUT LOG BOOK?

The answer to another “how come” is explained in Navy Terminology. Today, any bound record kept on a daily basis aboard ship is called a “log.” Originally, records were kept on sailing ships by inscribing information onto shingles cut from logs and hinged so they opened like books. When paper became more readily available, “log books” were manufactured from paper and bound. Shingles were relegated to naval museums – but the slang term stuck. There is a lot to learn!