

# The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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Vice President.....Jim Porter  
Treasurer.....Lloyd Mahan  
Benefits Officer.....Robin Leong  
Recording Secretary....Sonya Domingo  
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## 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 Laird or send e-mail to [benefit@mareislandnya.com](mailto:benefit@mareislandnya.com)

### Shop 38 Luncheon

Denny's, 4355 Sonoma Blvd (Hwy 29/37 intersection), Vallejo  
Second Wednesday of each month (except July/August)  
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

for late summer or early fall in 2009. Information on the reunion will be featured in upcoming issues of the newsletter (as well as the NYA website).

As you'll read in the next column, the 2008 NYA Barbeque held in October was an unqualified success! As your NYA President, it warmed my heart to see so many familiar faces. Even more exciting, though, was meeting new people. It reminds me that the legacy of Mare Island will continue on for future generations. My sincere thanks go out to the many dedicated volunteers who helped ensure a good (and tasty!) time was had by all.

On a sad note, I learned of the death of Chuck Butkus in mid-November. Chuck was a retired Code 138 inspector and also the loving husband of longtime NYA Secretary Shirley Butkus. Chuck was an all-around great guy and enthusiastic NYA supporter; he will be sorely missed.

As I do each year, I want to express my sincere appreciation to James Porter, Lloyd Mahan, Robin Leong, Bruce Christensen, Sonya Domingo, Veronica Laird, all of the NYA Directors, and so many silent supporters for keeping the NYA fresh and going so many years after the Shipyard closed, and for allowing me the privilege of serving as your NYA president for the past 10+ years

## President's Corner

Ralph McComb



Let me start by wishing you all the happiest and healthiest of holiday seasons and continued blessings throughout the New Year.

As we look forward into 2009, mark your calendars for an NYA reunion planned

## Around Mare Island...

Bruce Christensen

### NYA Membership Picnic a Huge Success!

On Saturday, October 4, 2008, about 175 NYA members and guests gathered at the grounds

of Mare Island Quarters B to enjoy a delicious picnic lunch. The warm temperatures provided ideal conditions for those attending the picnic. Among the long-time NYA supporters attending the event were Eddie Martinez and his wife Barbara; Lou Burgelin and his wife Betty; and Sue Lemmon and her traveling companion, Phyllis Honodel. Lou Sowersby, attending from Tucson, AZ, no doubt was the member who traveled the furthest to attend the picnic.

Because free guided tours of the Mare Island Museum were offered during the day, approximately 150 of those attending the picnic visited the museum; many for the first time since the museum opened in 2004. Those who visited reported that they were pleasantly surprised at how professionally the Navy artifacts were being displayed.

Thanks to the NYA Officers and Directors who helped to make this picnic so memorable. In addition to the talented culinary skills of Sonya Domingo and Veronica Laird and their spouses, special thanks go out to Charlie Johnson who provided the “industrial strength” barbeque for the picnic.

The NYA is pleased that so many members and guests partook of this free event; some guests in attendance were so moved by the picnic that they joined the NYA on-the-spot!

### NYA Website Updated!

In November 2008, the NYA’s newest member, Bill Strong (formerly Shop 36 and Shop 38 at Mare Island), answered the call for a volunteer to take on the gnarly task of updating and revitalizing the NYA’s website (which has been hopelessly outdated for quite some time). Visit our newly-updated site at [www.mareislandnya.com](http://www.mareislandnya.com).

Some unique features awaiting those who visit the web site include a list of the more than 600 NYA members, photographs taken at past Mare

Island reunions, and historic photographs from past events at Mare Island. Please note that contact information for NYA members will not be provided on the site; however, if you wish to notify a NYA member of your whereabouts, the interactive website offers that feature.

In the future, the webmaster will post on the site the quarterly NYA newsletters dating from the current newsletters to those newsletters issued several years ago.

Bill Strong is open to suggestions for the web site, so please visit the site and provide your feedback to him.

## **Membership update**

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 635—steadily progressing towards our 2008 membership goal of 700. Dental membership stands at 341 members.

We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of William Engels.

Welcome to new members Case Blazyk (recruited by NYA Director Vic George); Clifford A. Clark; Ronald Cole; John Chamberlin (recruited by NYA Director Bruce Christensen); Paul J. Gravelle (recruited by NYA Director Gordon Triemert); Ralph C. Hendricks (recruited by NYA member Rodney Yaeger); Howard Hitt and Russell A. Hold (recruited by NYA member John Gray); Robert Morgan of the Vallejo Coin Exchange and Bruce Schiller (recruited by NYA Director Rich Wright); Willie L. Smith (recruited by NYA member Tom Cosso); and Simeon R. Vargas and Joyce Venturini (recruited by NYA member Joyce Giles).

Welcome back to returning members: Rodney Pieper (from 2006) and Sara Turley, widow of Bill Jackson (from 1995).

### *Interesting Factoid!*

In 1908 (one hundred years ago), the five leading causes of death were:

1. Pneumonia and influenza
2. Tuberculosis
3. Diarrhea
4. Heart disease
5. Stroke

Your NYA officers have adopted the following award schedule for recruitment of new members (awards subject to availability).

- Recruit 1 new member: Mouse Pad, key chain, decal, or tie-tack
- Recruit 2 new members: T-Shirt
- Recruit 3 new members: Hat
- Recruit 4 new members: Mare Island Clock
- Recruit 5 new members: Briefcase
- Recruit 7 new members: Watch
- Recruit 10 new members: NYA Jacket or Windbreaker



## Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

I hope you had a great Thanksgiving and are as thankful as I am for the 5.8 % annuity increase, with only a slight increase of health premiums!

### Change in Dental Plan Administration

There has been a change in administration of the NYA Dental Plan. Premier Claims Administrators, headed by President and Owner Laurie Nicolary, has taken over for First Tier Administrators. This change has been approved by the requisite insurance regulatory agencies and will become effective in mid to late December.

For those who utilize the NYA Dental Plan (both pre-paid and Blue Shield), please note the following change:

**Toll Free Number: (866) 565-7557**

The pre-paid plan brochure is being updated with new contact names, addresses, and phone numbers and will soon be available for download on the NYA website. ([www.mareislandnya.com](http://www.mareislandnya.com)).

### Frank Sharkey Retires

Frank Sharkey, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard administrator who was the authorized signature for our Retired Government Employee Identification Card applications retired this past August. We offer to Frank our belated and sincere wishes for fair winds and following seas!

### Kingsbury, Inc., needs machinists

If we have your updated e-mail address, you likely received the e-mail I forwarded to NYA members on September 26, 2008, regarding Kingsbury Inc.

An employment tip was sent in by Mike Brawley, recruiter for Kingsbury Inc. As some of you may know, former Mare Island Naval Shipyard Production Officer, Admiral "Skip" McGinley (Ret.), serves on the Board of Directors for Kingsbury, Inc. Board of Directors. Kingsbury Inc., the nation's oldest and most respected manufacturer of babbitted bearings, is looking for a few good machinists for their new, state-of-the-art Bearing Repair and Service facility in Yuba City, CA.

Kingsbury Inc. needs trained machinists who have a minimum of 3-5 years experience on Lathes, Bridgeports, and Horizontal and Vertical Boring Mills. Babbitt bearing and welding experience are both pluses. Experience with tight-tolerance, high-precision parts also a plus. What better place to look for machinists than the ranks of highly-skilled former Mare Island machinists?

The new Kingsbury plant in Yuba City opened in April 2007, and is about 24,000 square feet. They currently employ 8 machinists as they continue to build experience and order volume in the region, with plans to double the staffing by 2010. Their machining work consists primarily of turning, milling and drilling of low quantity, relatively tight-tolerance flat and round parts for babbitted thrust and journal bearings, so babbitting

experience would be valuable, as well as experience with joint finishing.

Interested applicants may contact Mike directly. His contact information is as follows:

Mike Brawley  
KINGSBURY, Inc.  
Repair & Service Division  
215-956-0565 office  
215-837-9283 mobile  
215-956-9027 fax  
mjb@kingsbury.com

You can also find out more about the company by visiting their website at: [www.kingsbury.com](http://www.kingsbury.com)

I wish all of our NYA members a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

## **And then there was yesterday**

Sue Lemmon, Shipyard Historian

### Causeway and Causes

The dictionary describes a causeway as a highway or paved way; raised road or path across low or wet ground.

The Mare Island Causeway was first opened on July 3, 1919, and has been modified many times since. It took 83 years, however, before an official name was assigned to it. At a formal ceremony on December 1, 2002 a bronze plaque was dedicated to Ernest D. Wichels, Mare Island's much loved historian. His long career included many devoted years of service to several organizations, including Presidency (21 years) of the Navy Yard Association. He died on April 17, 1989 but his legacy lives on in the countless articles he wrote on history of this area and books which he co-authored.

While the causeway is utilized by hundreds of people daily, it is especially appropriate for former Mare Island employees to recall Ernie as they cross over the Napa River on the Wichels' Causeway.

According to the dictionary, a cause is defined as a reason or motive for some human action; a person or thing that acts, happens, or exists in such a way that some specific thing happens as a result.

Recently we learned of a contribution made by another Mare Islander, Norma Ross Walter. Her cause was recently revealed by Louis I. Sowersby, Employee Relations' Specialist. As a co-worker and friend of Norma he knew of her interest in furthering education for young women who majored in English. She served in the Navy (Waves) during World War II, graduated from U.C. Berkeley, and received a master's degree in literature from Mills College. She became editor of the GRAPEVINE in 1957, a post she held until her retirement in 1973.

Norma was an avid reader of Willa Cather's works and frequently visited Red Cloud, Nebraska. Upon Norma's death in 1982, she bequeathed a scholarship to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation. It is designed for women students who graduated from Nebraska high schools and who planned to continue their higher education as English majors in accredited colleges or universities.

Reading comments made by recipients of the scholarship is compelling evidence of the merits of Norma's "cause." One recipient wrote "I can only imagine that Norma Ross Walter would be overjoyed to know how many lives she has touched already by her generosity. She must have been an incredible woman to have left such a legacy, and I wish I could have known her. Karen Hartmann Roggenkamp, Ph.D."

Norma's legacy continues. Her generous endowment awaits many future recipients. Thanks, Lou, for sharing this information with us. And the door is open to learn about other "causes" pursued by Mare Island employees.

