

The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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NYA Bulletin Board

If you wish to reach more than 700 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@mareislandnva.com

Shop 38 Luncheon

Country Kitchen 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 2:00pm
POC: Helen Zajac; (707) 644-7565

Napa Chapter of NARFE Meeting

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

Mare Island Historical Park Foundation

Mare Island Quarters "A,"
3rd Monday quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) at 10:00am POC:
Ken Zadwick, (707) 557-1538

Navy League

Red Lobster Restaurant, 1180 Admiral Callaghan Ln, Vjo
1st Monday each month at 12:00 noon
POC: John Hoffman, (707) 642-4925

President's Corner

Ralph McComb

Welcome to the 2005-2006 Membership Drive!

I'd like to use this month's column to excite some interest and participation in our plans for 2006. The Navy Yard Association is planning a Reunion of Mare Island Employees on April 1, 2006, in recognition of the 10-year anniversary of the closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

In the coming issues of this newsletter, plans for the reunion and closure anniversary will be outlined. We sincerely hope that it will be a very successful and well-attended event.

In order to get the word out and ensure a successful reunion, we'll need your help. That's right, you! For the event we envision, we will need volunteers for the many details to be planned. The NYA membership is a rich networking resource that we can use to pass the word to individual groups. If you attend a monthly or semi-annual shop or code get-together, pass the word to your group's organizer and ask him or her to contact me via phone at (707) 290-7268 or by e-mail to rmccomb@aol.com. We are planning a meeting to outline needs and assign tasks in the very near future. Please consider donating your time to this exciting planning effort.

Check out our website, www.mareislandnva.com, for updates. We will regularly post updated information, needs, etc., on the upcoming reunion.

Mare Island Historic Park District

Bruce Christensen

Museum

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation (MIHPF) Museum, located in the old pipe shop, Building 46, is now available for group tours, by appointment. It can also be rented, by the day, to stage events for which large open areas are required. If you are interested, contact Ken Zadwick at (707) 557-0662. The Foundation has

a need for volunteers to work on setting up additional displays in the museum, so if you can help, let Ken know.

USS DRUM (SSN-667)

MIHPF representatives met with Navy representatives and the City of Vallejo in December 2004 regarding the Foundation's application for donation of the ex-DRUM. A revised application is being prepared, with Dennis Kelly taking the lead, and is due to be submitted to NAVSEA in a month. The Navy reported that, due to a heavy workload, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) is behind schedule for the cutting-up of decommissioned submarines. This will result in the ex-DRUM not being prepared by PSNS for towing to Mare Island until sometime in 2007. Current plans are to dry dock the ex-DRUM into historic Dry Dock 1 immediately upon arrival.

The Navy comments to the original application for ex-DRUM have been resolved by the MIHPF, and the main obstacle facing the Foundation in the plans for preparing the ship as a museum is raising sufficient funds to convert the ship for tours, once it arrives in Dry Dock 1. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charity, so all donations toward readying the ex-DRUM to become a museum are fully tax deductible. Checks (or Pledges) can be made to "MIHPF" and sent to the NYA at PO Box 2034, Vallejo, Ca 94592.

Mare Island 150th Anniversary Monument

If you have not yet seen the monument dedicated to the hundreds-of-thousands of past Mare Island Naval Shipyard civilian and military workers, it is now available in Alden Park. It was officially dedicated by the Mayor of Vallejo on November 18, 2004. The four-ton stone monument presents a brief history of Mare Island, recognizing each 50 year-segment of the Shipyard's 150-year history; from the 1850's when Mare Island built its first Navy ship, the USS SAGINAW, to the early 1900's when Mare Island

constructed the Navy's first aircraft carrier, and the late 1900's when the 513th (and last) ship, the nuclear submarine USS DRUM, was built. The monument is constructed from black granite and is about 10 feet in height.

NYA Mare Island 150th Anniversary Booklet

Utilizing the photographs taken during the two-day celebration of Mare Island's 150th Anniversary, the NYA is preparing a booklet to commemorate this memorable event and to update the history of the Association. Current plans are to have the booklet complete for the upcoming 10th Anniversary Reunion of the closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard, scheduled for April 2006. Details will be provided in the NYA newsletter as to how copies of the booklet may be obtained.

Mare Island 150th Anniversary Memorabilia

The NYA has Mare Island 150th Anniversary commemorative memorabilia available for purchase. Arrangements can be made to obtain items by writing to the NYA, P.O. Box 2034, Vallejo, CA 94590 or calling (707) 562-1812, and leaving a message.

Items/Prices are as follows:

Tee-shirts (M, L, XL, XXL): \$10

Coins:

Silver \$20

Bronze \$ 5

Copper \$ 5

Postmarked Envelopes: \$2.50

The memorabilia will also be on sale at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum and by the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation.

Membership update

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 684, which surpassed our 2004 membership goal

of 650! Dental membership stands at 399 members.

We are very pleased at this past year's successful efforts in renewing lapsed members, members recruiting members and recruiting members from the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

We offer a warm welcome to our new members: Hal Boex (recruited by Lou Burgelin), William G. Hughes and R. Joe Bleau.

We welcome back former members: John Bouldt (member in 1999, recruited by Jim Porter).

We offer our sincere condolences to Mary J Topolinski whose husband, Joseph, passed away in June; to the family of Edmund Galli, who passed away January 24, 2005; and to the family of Bill Owen (Shop 71 General Foreman) who passed away on January 27, 2005

This newsletter kicks off the 2005 Membership Drive. Your membership card strip is enclosed with this newsletter. There are two types of renewals. Please see below and follow the instructions that are applicable to you.

Membership Renewal Instructions:

Scenario #1: If you receive a long membership card strip and an envelope with your newsletter, our records show that you owe NYA dues for the coming year. Please (1) check the information on the left side of the card strip; (2) make any corrections (as necessary), and (3) include your e-mail address. Cut at the dotted line, and return the left side of the card strip and a check for \$15, made out to "NYA," in the enclosed envelope.

Scenario #2: If you received a membership card strip for the 2005-2006 season, but no envelope, our records show you have (1) a payroll deduction for your dues; or (2) you paid in advance for more than one year; or (3) you are a past NYA president with lifetime membership; or (5) you have dental insurance that includes \$1.25

per month for your dues; or (6) you send a check regularly to our Administrative offices that include that fee. If you recently quit the dental program, and we have not updated our files in time for this mailing, please send us a \$15 check for this year's membership dues.

***Character's Saloon
Annual Mare Island Party!***

**Friday, April 1, 2005
3:00pm - ????**

315 Tennessee St., Vallejo, CA

**Food and Keg of Beer Provided
(donations appreciated)**

Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

Welcome to the 2005 Membership Drive! This month's column will be short. Remember, the NYA has dental benefits for all Federal employees (current or retired). The NYA is still actively seeking another dentist in Napa.

We once again have Notary Public service available at no cost. NYA Secretary Sonya Domingo has a Notary Public commission and will provide signature verification. You may now contact Sonya directly. Please see the benefits page for directions to obtain Notary Public service.

In recent months, I have sent out timely e-mail messages on a variety of subjects, including notification of potential changes in retirements benefit laws, decommissioning of the USS PARCHE (SSN 683), and other items of interest to our members. If you did not get these messages or we do NOT already have your e-mail address, please take the time to send me your e-mail address. If you have already sent in your e-mail address, please remember to unblock my address (e-mail from me will always be sent

“bulk” and by “bcc.”) We will never give out your address to others.

We have captured the attention of a lot of our retired NYA members with the announcements we’ve made on how to get a DOD Retiree card. Due to the retirement of staff located on Mare Island, we are providing REVISED instructions on obtaining the retiree card. (1) Send your SF Form 50 (Personnel Action) showing that you retired from Mare Island to: NYA; P.O. Box 2034, Mare Island Station; Vallejo, CA 94592; (2) Include a note with your birth date, height, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, and a passport-size photo (I get mine at CSAA—two for \$6); (3) We will enter the information onto the Form 55 and mount the photo. (4) We will then send the card to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and obtain an authorizing signature. (5) The NYA will mail you the authorized card. You must sign the card and have it laminated or plasticized. There are many great benefits available by using this card. Please refer to previous newsletters or e-mail me at robin_leong@netzero.net or call at 643-1287, if you’d like to learn about some of the benefits.

Best in life, naturally.

Fifth Annual Daffodil Tea

*(Part of the Campaign to Preserve and Restore
St. Peter’s Chapel)*

**Saturday and Sunday, April 9-10, 2005
Tea and Music at Historic Mansions on Mare Island
For information and seating times,
please call (707) 649-9464**

And then there was Yesterday

Sue Lemmon
Shipyards Historian

TIME MARCH(ES) ON

There is no prize offered for the month with the most significant Mare Island memories, but if there were, March would surely be a contender.

Auspiciously enough, the first ship built at Mare Island was launched on a clear day of March 3, 1859. The 155-ft wooden sidewheeler was christened by Miss Cunningham, whose father was the Commandant. According to the San Francisco HERALD, “Miss Cunningham performed the ceremony of Naval Baptism by breaking a bottle of wine, the generous fluid being of California vintage.” The ship was named “TOUCEY,” after the Secretary of the Navy. When word of this reached Washington, a letter was quickly dispatched indicating that Isaac Toucey declined the honor, thank you very much, and please change the name to SAGANAW. The spelling was soon changed, and the sidewheeler became the first of the long line of ships built here.

The CHICAGO was commissioned on 3/9/31. Is there anyone around who remembers that event? On 3/13/35 the Causeway was dedicated, and on 3/14/10 SOUTH DAKOTA became the first ship to be docked in dry dock #2. On 3/15/30 our first submarine, NAUTILUS was launched. On that same date eight years later STURGEON hit the water. Back in the 19th century on March 23, 1860, the Japanese ship KANRIN MARU (spellings vary) was being repaired here, On 3/24/1859, CAPT Cunningham wrote in the official Log, “Swallows made first appearance at Mare Island.”

There have been ten change of command ceremonies during the month of March. The first one was on March 15, 1861, when CAPT McDougal assumed duties as Commandant, temporarily replacing CAPT Cunningham. McDougal was relieved by CAPT Gardner in June, but returned to serve as C.O. again in 1864 for two more years. The last command change for the Shipyards was on March 30, 1962, when RADM E. J. Fahy relieved RADM L. V. Honsinger.

The most poignant March memory, of course, is March 31, 1996, when the Shipyards was closed.