

The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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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

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

The Front Room restaurant, Vallejo
First Wednesday of odd months 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

Nuclear Engineering Luncheon

Locations vary each month
Each Friday at 11:30am
POC: Allen Green; aalgreen@napanet.net

Saturday, October 10, 2009, from 12:00noon until 4:00pm, in the Mare Island Museum (Building 46) on Mare Island. In addition to frosty cold drinks (non-alcoholic, of course), the tasty fare we'll offer includes Antipasto, Caesar Salad, Spaghetti and Garlic Bread—catered by our very own Sonya Domingo and Veronica Laird! Sound good? We promise it will be!

Cost: \$ 5 per person (Members)
\$10 per person (Non-members)

Advance tickets are required. Please mail your check or money order (made payable to the NYA) to P.O. Box 849, Vallejo, CA 94590-0084. Tickets will be available for pick up "Will Call" style on the day of the event.

What makes this year's reunion/annual membership event special? **Raffle prizes!** Raffle tickets will be sold for \$1 each or an arm's length for \$10 (so, bring that friend with a long arm!). The grand prize will be a 42-inch flat panel HDTV!!

We couldn't have these events without the hard work, assistance, and participation of our NYA Officers, Directors, and members. During last year's event, so many caring members donated their time and equipment (thanks for the barbeque, Charlie!) to make the day special. So that this year's event can be bigger, better, and more enjoyable than last year, we need your help. Spread the word to your friends and any ex-employee groups with which you are involved. Tickets are very affordable for both members and non-members (and, don't forget those cool raffle prizes!). And, we can always use help setting up. If you would like to volunteer

President's Corner

Ralph McComb

Reunion Plans Underway!

Planning continues for this year's NYA reunion/annual membership event to be held on

some time or resources, please contact one of your NYA Officers or Directors.

While we're (sort of) on the subject of the Building 46 Museum, the Mare Island Historical Park Foundation (MIHPF) could really use your help—now more than ever. Whether you share to share your valuable time or your generous financial support, the MIHPF needs you. Keeping up the various historic properties, as well as improving the Building 46 Historic Museum, is a tremendous task for MIHPF Chairman Ken Zadwick, his wife, and a declining number of volunteers. They have done and continue to do so much, but your help would be so very greatly appreciated.

On a more somber note, a good friend, great person, and the last remaining Mare Island employee, Robert “Bob” Palmer passed away. Bob had done so much to not only to monitor and facilitate the transition of the once great Shipyard to the City of Vallejo, but also to help the many people who showed up on his doorstep to try and find a building or a location when no one else was around. Bob was a civil engineer recruited by Doug Ghiselin for the Mare Island Public Works Department, and he remained on board to represent the Navy's interests until his final day. He is and will be truly missed.

Around Mare Island...

Bruce Christensen

Long Time Mare Islanders Celebrate 70th Wedding Anniversary

Next month, Navy Yard Association Past President Lou Burgelin and his wife Betty will celebrate 70 wonderful years of marriage. To celebrate this occasion, Lou and Betty's children and grandchildren have put together a luncheon for family and close friends. One ‘unnamed’ close friend remarked that the most incredible aspect of this historical anniversary is that Betty was able to put up with Lou's traveling, politicking, job relocations, etc., for 70 years; and that a lesser woman could not have done it!

Congratulations to Lou—and especially Betty—on the past 70 years, and we wish you many more years of married bliss.

South End of Mare Island – Repairs and Painting

In June, a work party of about 175 “volunteers” from Weston Solutions, Inc., converged on the south end of Mare Island to make necessary repairs and give a fresh coat of paint to benches, picnic tables, the Navy Cemetery fence, etc. Weston is one of the contractors performing environmental clean-up work at Mare Island and this contribution of labor and materials was their way of giving back to the community. This work was performed in cooperation with the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and significantly improved the appearance of many of the areas that are made accessible to the public from time to time. In addition to the repairs and painting, 15 new trail sign posts were installed along public access roads and trails. Signs containing historic information about Mare Island and the surrounding areas will be affixed to these sign posts.

The volunteers also performed gravestone “rubbings” in the cemetery for use in the creation of an historic record of gravestone engravings, many of which are no longer visible to the naked eye. These ‘rubbings’ revealed some previously unknown information, such as identifying a sailor who died in 1899 in the Spanish American War (for whom there had been two gravestones installed).

WE NEED YOU!

In order to raffle off fabulous prizes at this year's reunion, we need your donations (bottles of wine, event tickets, handicrafts, t-shirts – you name it, we can use it!).

If you would like to donate an item for our raffle, please contact NYA President Ralph McComb at (707) 987-3850 or via e-mail to rmccomb@aol.com.

Mare Island Historic Park Foundation

Bruce Christensen

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation (MIHPF) is the major force in the maintenance and preservation of historic properties and promotion of Mare Island's past.

If you would like to help support the continuation operations of the MIHPF, you can join those of us who have already become Plank Members. The membership donation levels are as follows:

Local	- \$25
Out-of-state	- \$20
Family	- \$50
Supporting	- \$100
Patron	- \$250
Sponsor	- \$500
Benefactor	- \$1,000
Life Member	- \$5,000

Membership benefits include reduced admission to the Mare Island Museum, discounts at the Museum gift shop, and many more. For further information, contact the Foundation President, Ken Zadwick, at 707-557-0662; email him at kenzad01@yahoo.com; or send your membership donation to: 328 Seawind Drive
Vallejo, CA 94590

Membership update

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 598, while our dental plan membership stands at 331 members.

We offer our sincere condolences to family and friends on the loss of William Engels (9/16/2008); Emma Lee Pitts (2/10/2009); Philmore (Old Fish) Fisher's wife, Bonita Fisher (3/2009); Wilma Cassity (3/4/2009); Russell E. Hann (3/11/2009); John "JR" Richards (April 2009); Stanley Hering (4/17/2009); and Robert "Bob" Palmer (5/13/2009).

Welcome to new member Welsh (recruited by Chuck Stephenson). Welcome back to returning members: Gerald Schiefferly (from 2007, recruited by Robin Leong); Oliver "Rocky" Sheridan (from 2001, recruited by Robin Leong); and Earl Todd (from 2007)

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

NYA Website Updated!

Many thanks to member Paul Wright, who introduced us to Bill Strong! Thanks to Bill's excellent work, our NYA website is better than ever. Check out the Benefits section, which is fully up to date. The updated Pre-Paid and Blue Shield dental plan brochures will soon be posted....stay tuned!

Dental Plan News

If you are having problems with your dentist, you should first talk to your dentist, but please remember to also discuss your problems with Premier Claims. Also, you should file a complaint form to document the issues with your dentist. You can get a copy of the complaint form directly from Premier Claims. Their address and phone numbers once again is:

Premier Claims Administrators, LLC
P O Box 19338
Reno, NV 89511

Office: 775-324-5644
Toll Free: 866-565-7557
Fax: 775-786-9637

I am working to get the dental complaint form posted on our website for easier access. Also, you may contact me, and I'll mail a copy to you. My street and e-mail addresses are:

Robin Leong,
336 Benson Avenue
Vallejo, CA 94590-3027
robin_leong@netzero.net

NOTE FOR ALL DENTAL PLAN

MEMBERS: If the NYA member who carries the dental plan passes away, the spouse and/or dependants are entitled to continue dental benefits. However, the spouse and/or dependent(s) must contact the plan administrators (Premier Claims) and the NYA Benefits Officer as soon as possible to notify them of the death and that dental benefits should be continued. Monthly dental premiums would likely decrease, so it is important that the plan administrators are kept aware of any change in circumstance. Contact information for Premier Claims is listed above; you can send notification to the NYA via the regular mail address or to my contact information above.

Take care and don't forget to send in your reservations for the October reunion!

And then there was yesterday

Sue Lemmon, Shipyard Historian

Watching Wisteria

After checking the garden to see if late generations of wisteria survived, it appears that another year can be added to the 120-year history of the little plant that came to Mare Island by way of Mission San Gabriel Arcangel near Pasadena.

No one knows just where the wisteria came from originally, but it still blooms at the mission founded in 1776. A hundred twenty years ago a Vallejo minister brought a slip from the Mission

and gave to RADM Benham, Mare Island Commandant. He arranged to have it planted outside the entrance to the south side of Bldg. 47, then the administration building. It grew rapidly and an overhead trellis was built to support the vine. The wooden porch rotted and was replaced by brick columns, but a half century later the plant was removed to widen the driveway.

A large root was transplanted to Alden Park but failed to survive, and even the brick supports were removed from building 47.

One slip from the wisteria was taken by Ernie Wichels, whose green thumbs coaxed the elderly plant to survive. Not only does it continue to bloom with those luxurious blossoms, but starters were subsequently given to several local gardeners. It is gratifying to know that *Wisteria sinensis* has endured locally for over three generations. It would be interesting to hear from others who have cherished this remnant from San Gabriel.

June is famous for being a popular month for weddings. A check on Mare Island launchings reveals that there were thirteen recorded June launchings over the years. The earliest one was Water Barge No. 16 on the 16th of 1906, and it was ten years before another June launching. The launching of the big tanker CUYAMA (AO 3) on June 17, 1916 was welcomed by Vallejo citizens, who were still joyfully celebrating the news that a really big ship, CALIFORNIA (BB 44) was scheduled to be built at Mare Island. Before that big launching however, WARD (DD 139) and KENNISON (DD 138) hit the water in June 1918.

Sometimes overlooked by bigger, more glamorous ships are smaller ones such as the two Seaplane Wrecking Derricks launched in June 1941, followed the following year by TUNNY (SS 282). Four DEs were launched in 1943: TISDALE (DE 33), SEDERSTROM (DE 31), FLEMING (DE 32) and EISELE (DE 34). The Armored Minesweeper (MSC 122) hit the water in 1953, but probably the most remembered June launching was DANIEL BOONE (SSBN 629) on the 22nd of 1963.

While statistics for launching dates at Mare Island are sometimes vague, they reveal that while months of June number thirteen, January appears to have been more popular with seventeen.

And when we get through counting, we still end up without including the schooner MC ARTHUR which was launched on April 1, 1876. But that is another story.

**Join the Members of the Vallejo
Chapter #16
National Active and Retired Federal
Employees
Serving the Federal Community
Since 1949
at the**



**60th Anniversary Celebration
of the Founding of
the Vallejo Chapter
on
July 11, 2009
11:00am - 3:00pm
at the
Mare Island Historic Park
Foundation Museum
Building 46**

**Barbequed Hamburgers and Hot Dogs:
Salads, Chips, Cake
Speakers and Entertainment
Soda, Beer and Wine (available for a
nominal fee)**

Cost: \$10 per person

**For Reservations Contact
Claudia Gardner at 707-747-6122
Not Later Than July 6, 2009**

**For more information, contact
Lea Zajac at 707-644-7565**