

The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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Volume V, Issue 3

September 2005

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

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 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

Nuclear Inspectors' Luncheon

Sardine Can Restaurant, Vallejo Waterfront (South of Mare
Island Causeway)
1st Wednesday each month at 11:30am. POC: Dick
Barlow; (707) 642-6022

President's Corner

Ralph McComb

With the challenges to our country's foundations brought about by recent devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and the continued deployment of American military troops in Iraq—as well as the simple challenges of everyday living—it is all too easy to become discouraged by the media's representation of the American people and their spirit.

Recently, I received what I thought would be another funny or boring forwarded e-mail, one

of dozens I—and you, too, I'm sure!—receive every day. When I started to read it, however, I quickly realized it was different than my usual run-of-the-mill forwarded e-mails. It was an excerpt of a memoir recalling an interview with Lee Marvin, famous movie star, on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." In the interview, Johnny brought up the fact that Lee Marvin had won the Navy Cross for heroism during the initial landing at Iwo Jima. Lee downplayed his own actions and highlighted the actions of his sergeant, Bob Keeshan. It seems Bob Keeshan stood up on Red Beach, making himself a primary target, and directed his men to safety. Lee Marvin called Bob Keeshan the "bravest man I ever knew." We all know Bob Keeshan as Captain Kangaroo, a gentle soul who entertained and educated adults and children alike with his innovative television series.

Another part of that inspiring forwarded e-mail contained the reminder that gentle, quiet Mr. Rogers—who charmed and educated generations of children during his long-running television series—was a U.S. Navy Seal, combat-proven in Vietnam with over 25 confirmed kills to his name. He wore his trademark long-sleeved cardigan to cover the many tattoos on his forearm and biceps.

I found myself feeling more optimistic after reading that e-mail. The American spirit is strong and enduring. We have only to look around to see the everyday heroes who deserve our respect and admiration. As the last line of that e-mail said, "Take the time to thank anyone who has fought for our freedom. With

encouragement, they could be the next Captain Kangaroo or Mr. Rogers.”

2006 Mare Island Reunion - Update

Plans are progressing for the upcoming 2006 Mare Island Employee Reunion, commemorating the 10 years since Mare Island Naval Shipyard closed.

We still need individuals or groups who would be interested in serving on one of the reunion subcommittees. We need your help to ensure this reunion is the best it can be and that it's widely advertised. Please feel welcome to contact NYA President Ralph McComb or one of the committee chairs listed below with your ideas, suggestion or available times.

April 2006 Reunion - Subcommittees

Facilities Set-up

Ken Zadwick

Program Development

Rudy Bali & Sue Lemmon

Clean-up

Bob Yeasted

Memorabilia Sales

Bruce Christensen & Gordon Triemert

Food

Ken Zadwick

Entertainment

Rudy Bali & Sue Lemmon

Tickets (sales, collection, access)

Sonya Domingo & Mary/Jack Rutland

Advertisement/Publicity

Doug Ghiselin

Security

Mary Ann Fitzpatrick

Parking

Howard Fitzpatrick

Corporate Sponsors

Ralph McComb

Tours

Zen Zadwick

DRUM Display

Bruce Christensen

Mare Island Historic Park Foundation

Bruce Christensen

ex-USS DRUM - The ex-USS DRUM is still moored at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) awaiting reactor compartment removal, after which it will hopefully be bound for Dry Dock 1 at Mare Island. After arrival, she will become a museum ship as part of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation. However, another job is being thrown onto PSNS' already full workload with the arrival of the USS SAN FRANCISCO this fall. The SAN FRANCISCO completed the journey from Guam to Pearl Harbor last month, after being patched up from her collision with an undersea mountain earlier this year. Currently, this 688 Class submarine can sail only on the surface and made the trip from Guam to PHNS in just over 30 days.

ex-USS IOWA - As you may have read, the battleship ex-USS IOWA was just turned down by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors as a candidate for display on the San Francisco waterfront. That makes her available for display in other California cities, since she is presently moored with the reserve fleet in Suisun Bay. It appears that the City of Stockton has the inside track to tow the ship to their fair city, resulting in an estimated increase in their tourism of about a half million people per year.

Navy League - The Navy League, Vallejo Council #1 is planning a banquet this fall at the Farragut Club; YES; that's the old Mare Island Officer's Club! This is one of the rare occasions, since the Shipyard closed, where members of the public will be able to attend an event at this historic building. The dinner, to be held November 10, 2005, will be a fundraiser for the Vallejo Sea Cadets (future hopefuls for our United States Naval Service). A prime rib dinner with all the trimmings will be served for the very reasonable price of \$30 per person. There are tables available for groups of eight or ten

people—for those who wish to dine together—and reservations are required. In addition to the dinner, there will be a silent auction in which some items of historical significance will be made available. The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation and NYA will work with the Navy League to sell tickets and obtain donations for the silent auction. Tickets are available by contacting the Navy League President (and Past NYA President) Lou Burgelin at 707-552-3510.

Mare Island Private Homes – Lennar Mare Island reported in their summer 2005 Progress Report that over 150 new homes have been sold on Mare Island since January 2005. Several model homes are open for inspection in Alden Place, Gardner's Glen and Kirkland Isle. Homes range in size from 2,039 square feet to 2,878 square feet and prices start in the high \$600,000. These new housing communities are located just west of Azuar (old Cedar Avenue) near the Mare Island Grammar School.

Membership update

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands 659, which exceeds our 2005 membership goal of 650! Dental membership stands at 379 members. ***As a reminder***, Dental Plan members must renew their NYA membership annually. We are still awaiting dues from several dental plan members. If you have not already done so, please take the time to send in your membership dues now.

Welcome to our newest NYA Director, Carmen Merriman!

Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

This month's column will be short, as I have been traveling and have not had much time to write this. However, be assured that I am always on the lookout for opportunities to add new benefits for our membership.

We continue to enjoy success in obtaining DOD retiree cards to Mare Island retirees (although we've not had much luck obtaining them for non-Mare Island retirees).

NYA members have offered positive feedback on my bulk e-mails offering timely information on events, etc., (especially information important to our retired members). If you are not already on our mailing list or if your e-mail address has recently changed, please take this opportunity to update or share your e-mail address. Send your e-mail address to robin_leong@netzero.net. Your e-mail address will never be disclosed to any other party.

And then there was Yesterday

Sue Lemmon
Shipyards Historian

WORKING HOURS

For many members of the Navy Yard Association, the hours spent working outside the home are a bit academic. There may be "Honey-Do" lists at home, but the days of trudging to work for the U.S. Government are gone.

A look back reveals that the working hours at Mare Island Naval Shipyards changed quite a bit over the years. According to old newspapers, summer working hours were different from those in winter, although it was not called "Daylight Saving Time."

Between June 1 and October 1, employees worked from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and from 12:15 to 4:15 p.m. weekdays. Saturdays were half-holidays.

In 1929, five thousand employees voted on the question of keeping these hours through the winter. The majority opted for longer sleep in the dark of winter, and on September 30 the hours were changed.

The clerical force worked from 8:30 a.m. to noon and from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Mechanics worked from 8 a.m. until noon and 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Everyone worked six days a week.

The September 28, 1929, editorial in the Vallejo TIMES suggested that employees set their alarm clocks ahead in order to “guarantee arrival at the Georgia Street wharf or the causeway with the precision for which the Mare Island employee has become noted.” That is, if one stooped to tie a shoelace, he’d miss the gate.

According to the September 30 Vallejo NEWS, “The new winter hours do not appeal to the Vallejo restaurant men as only 30 men came over on the ferry to town at noon today for lunch. The fact that the employees are only allowed 30 minutes for lunch stops many of the men and women from coming to Vallejo during the noon hour. The Yard cafeteria in the meantime is preparing for increased business under the new schedule, and there is quite a race on between the clerks and mechanics as to who get in line first.”

Two months later it was determined that mechanics, with apparently heartier appetites, needed more than a half hour to consume the noon meal. Their hours were changed to 8 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 5 p.m. No reference was made to any increase in business at Vallejo restaurants.

Working hours were adjusted several times over the years. The most consequential occurred in May 1966 during the merger of Mare Island and Hunters Point. While the day shift began at 8 a.m. on Mare Island, the shift began at 7:30 a.m. at Hunters Point. It was determined that in the interest of consistency and economy both sites would work the same hours.

Mare Island employees changed to the earlier hour (7:30 a.m.) and retained these hours after the merger was disestablished in January 1970.

There is talk currently about extending Daylight Saving Time for another month. For many NYA members, it would merely provide a little more time to work on those “Honey Do” lists.

The NYA Contributes to the Future of Mare Island!

The Mare Island Elementary School, which will reopen soon, asked the Navy Yard Association for permission to use part of the logo designed for the Mare Island Sesquicentennial celebration as part of their masthead and logo. The NYA is honored to have part of our design as the school's masthead.