

# The Navy Yard Association Newsletter

## President's Corner

Ralph McComb

Let me start by wishing everyone the happiest of Holiday seasons, along with a healthy and trouble-free New Year!

As you can see, our newsletter is changing. This is due to new postal service rules for mailing newsletters and ever increasing postage costs. I hope you enjoy this new version and encourage you to sign up to receive the newsletter by e-mail. In upcoming issues, the web version of the newsletter will have more in-depth information detail.

Looking back over 2013, we updated our website, organized a group event at an Oakland A's game in July (and saw our name in lights!), and held a reunion attended by more than 150 friends and former co-workers in October. What a great year!

In 2014, we're planning another Oakland A's event, and our annual all-hands meeting in October 2014. We won't plan to hold another big reunion until the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Shipyard closure—you can bet that will be a gala to remember. Read your newsletters and check out our website for details in the coming months! Also in 2014, look for more content on our website, including links to other organizations and information, more past event details and photos, even hometown recipes for tasty dishes to share with friends and family.

Speaking of making the NYA better (and, in case I don't say it enough), we simply wouldn't exist without the dedicated volunteers who generously give their time to keep the NYA going strong—your NYA Officers and Directors. My heartfelt thanks to Bruce Christensen, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Jim Porter, Vice President; Lloyd Mahan, Treasurer; Robin Leong, Benefits Officer; Veronica Laird, Executive Secretary; Sonya Domingo, Recording Secretary; and NYA Directors Rudy Balli, Howard Fitzpatrick, Doug Ghiselin, Carmen Merriman, Mary Rutland, Rich Wright, and Bob Yeasted. Each of them brings some unique to the table, and just saying "thank you" seems so little in return for all they do.

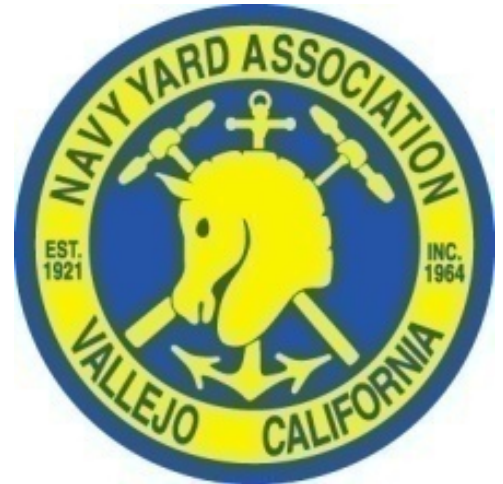
In closing, I wanted to note the loss of some former mates from my Shop 38 days: Ralph Beebe and Ed Knight—both pioneers from Shop 38's transition to nuclear and refueling work—and Richard "Dick" Hooker, my first boss on Mare Island. They had a real impact on my life and so many others on Mare Island. They will be missed but never forgotten.

If there's someone from the Shipyard who touched your life and you'd like them mentioned in our newsletter,

## Around Mare Island...

Bruce Christensen

**Causeway Bridge Mare's Head Logo to be Re-painted.** Tom Watson, a former Mare Island employee, recently petitioned and received approval from the Board of



Directors of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation to set up a fund to receive donations to remove, restore, and reinstall the Mare's Head logo on the eastern approach to the causeway lift bridge. The project is entitled "Restore the Logo" and has a target date to be painted during the 2014 City of Vallejo's Public Works project to repair and repaint the western approach to the causeway. Watson is presenting the project to the City of Vallejo with a goal to save this tangible memorabilia of a very important shipyard.

Watson, and other former employees and members of the blue collar workers and white collar unions of Mare Island will solicit donations and gifts from labor organizations throughout California and nationally. Individual donations may be made payable to the "MIPHF (Logo Fund)" and sent 1100 Nimitz Avenue, Vallejo, 94592. For further information, please contact Tom Watson at (707) 507-5249 or [portlandtx@gmail.com](mailto:portlandtx@gmail.com).

**Mare Island's Blu Homes Offer a Variety of "Green."** Blu Homes' "green prefab homes" are now being manufactured, with high-tech features

such as motion-sensor water saving faucets, zone heating and cooling systems, WiFi-enabled thermostats, and optional features such as electric car plug-ins. Homes can now be ordered in non-standard custom sizes to fit smaller urban and suburban lots. In addition to primary family homes, Blu Homes is offering a variety of structures that may be used for out-buildings, second (or vacation) homes, as well as custom retirement residences. These steel framed green homes, built at Mare Island, can be shipped by truck to virtually anywhere. Two and three bedroom homes with floor areas of just under 2,000 square feet are priced starting in the mid-300,000 dollar range. For details on the types of home available visit the Blu Homes website at: <http://www.bluhomes.com/homes/balance/>

**Mare Island's Proposed Ferry Operations and Maintenance Facility Update.** Phase I (preparation of facilities) is underway with remediation/upgrading of Building 165 and preparation for demolition of an adjacent building. Phase II construction (fuel storage tanks and docks) will commence in early 2014 with the goal of completing the \$22 million project by the end of 2014 or early 2015.

**Mare Island Resident Captures Island History in Photographs.** Recently, the Vallejo Times Herald ran a feature article about Lou Bordisso who is participating in Generation Snaps, sponsored by Recology Vallejo. While participating in this project, Bordisso has taken photographs of numerous structures and landscapes from the south end of the Island to the northern

boundary of the former naval shipyard. Bordisso has captured the beauty of St. Peters Chapel, the wooden eagle statue at the old administration building (Building 521), and the grounds of the historic hospital grounds. In addition, his photographs have included vacant and decaying buildings, many of which are located at the north end of Mare Island. He told the Times Herald that he thinks some of these unused and deteriorating structures might offer an opportunity to house folks who are homeless. *(As an aside, members of the NYA have observed the continuing deterioration of many heretofore useable buildings since the closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard in 1996. Buildings that once supported the Navy's mission are now little more than dilapidated eyesores, with little chance of ever being restored for any useful purpose.)*

**Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet.** In November, the ex-USS WILLAMETTE—named for the Willamette River in Oregon—was towed from Suisun Bay, past Mare Island, to San Francisco to have the underbody cleaned by BAE Ship Repair prior to making the 3,000 mile trip through the Panama Canal to Brownsville, TX for dismantling. There are now eleven remaining ships awaiting disposal in the Suisun Bay ghost fleet.

The WILLAMETTE, AO-180, was a fleet replenishment oiler that operated from 1981 until 1999, during which time she conducted more than 1,300 underway replenishments and delivered more than 300 million gallons of fuel to the fleet. The WILLAMETTE was turned over to the Maritime Administration in 2001, at which time she was moored in Suisun Bay.

## Membership Update

Jim Porter

NYA Membership stands at 567 members. Currently, our dental plan membership stands at 245 members.

Welcome new members Eugene, Judy, and Michael Duquette (recruited by Veronica Duquette); Orvey Hunter and Ray Quaglia (recruited by Jim Davis); Louis W. F. Freitas Jr. (recruited by Robert Smith); Jim Milholland (recruited by Tom Cosso); Ernest DeLaura Jr. (recruited by Sharon Odell); and JoAnne Strickland.

Welcome back to returning members Vic George (2011); Mark Hutchings (2011); Peter Lucero (2011; recruited by Bob Yeasted); Rodney Pieper (2011); Frank Rhoades (2008); Tom Watson (1995; recruited by Mark Hutchings).

We offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends of Joseph Pappadakis, Richard Lowdon, and Dorothy Thacker for their loss.

## Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

Hope you all had a stress free Thanksgiving—perhaps with a Turkey and all of the trimmings with your family and friends.

**Good News for Dental Plan Members.** On December 5, your NAONE Dental Plan Trustees met with our dental plan administrators. The good news is there are NO planned increases for either plan. The last time the fees were increased for the Pre-Paid Dental Plan was 2007; Blue Shield rates increased in 2009. That's an incredible value in today's reality of ever-increasing insurance costs. Compare our plans with those available during open season, and you'll see the long term savings with our plans.

Who to call if you lose your DOD Identification card: Travis AFB at (707) 424-5604.

Although this is highly irregular, I am so passionate about my retirement benefits that I feel I must share my views with our membership. So, I'm putting on my NARFE Vallejo Chapter 16 presidential hat and stepping up on the soapbox.

While making membership updates to the NARFE and NYA databases, I was astonished at how many NYA members in Vallejo are not members of NARFE. It could be that NARFE membership is a little heftier than our NYA membership (\$56 per year for NARFE and only \$15 per year for NYA). But, I believe our pension and health benefits are well worth the investment. NARFE (National Association of Retired Federal Employees) has been the "squeaky wheel" in successfully lobbying for many retiree rights.

NARFE dues are a little different, depending on where you live. For example, membership in Vallejo is \$56 per year (\$45 to National and \$11 for Vallejo Chapter dues). Napa, Fairfield, Vacaville, Petaluma, etc., all have different chapter dues rates. Right now, the national membership rate has dropped to \$40 (making it an even better bargain!). If you sign up for automatic dues withholding, you can save another 15% off the national rate and never again worry about writing a check or missing out on your NARFE benefits.

It's a shame that out of more than 5 million active and retired members, NARFE only has approximately 250,000 members. Naturally, the more members we have, the more likely we can retain our pension and health benefits—intact—into the future.

Okay, I'm off the soap box. Thanks for listening.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

## Bringing Home the USS OLYMPIA (C-6)

Dennis Kelly

The OLYMPIA Project Committee continues our work to acquire this great ship, but first a little more about the uniqueness of the OLYMPIA.

### First Naval Ship in the World to have a Mechanical Refrigeration System Onboard

Little known, yet historic, is the fact that the Olympia was the first naval ship in the world to have a mechanical refrigeration system aboard. The addition of that capability likely was significant in contributing the overwhelming success of the U.S. Navy in the far Pacific. The addition of mechanical refrigeration systems aboard warships would forever change the diet of the U.S. sailor because it was now possible to preserve shipboard stores of fresh meat and vegetables. A U.S. Navy report, issued in 1898, showed the refrigeration aboard naval ship lowered the sick rate from a normal 15,000 to 20,000 man-days per year to an amazing 2,000 to 2,900 a year. The report concluded that improved diet was a major factor in lowering the rate. The installation of a refrigeration system necessitated a complete redesign of the Olympia's galley from conventional warships of her time. The ship's designers derived their plans from the banquet kitchen in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, California. This layout became the prototype for all future naval vessels.



### Dense air machine

The U.S. Navy handbook for the "Care and Operation of Naval Machinery," published in 1908, identifies that Olympia's refrigerating system as the Allen Dense Air Ice Machine, manufactured by the H.B. Roelker Co. of New York. The dense air ice machine produces cold air by expanding compressed air. Low pressure return air, at about 65 psig, is compressed, to about 235 psig. The hot compressed air is then cooled by passing it through an air-to-water heat exchanger. Now cool, the 235 psig is drawn into a cylinder where it expands. The manual states, "An expanding engine brings the air back to 65 pounds." The cold air is piped first to an "ice making box" where it chills calcium chloride brine. Brine is used, according to the manual, "to keep the ice cans from freezing fast in the pockets of the ice making box." From the ice room, the cold air is piped to the refrigerated meat storage room. From there, it is piped to the scuttlebutt (drinking water container). By now, the air has regained its original heat and is returned to the suction side of the compressor to be recycled. The primary maintenance problems, which accounted for much downtime, were leaking seals and lubrication of the stuffing boxes (sounds like nothing has changed in 100 years). The benefits of refrigeration greatly outweighed these problems and refrigeration in Naval Ships would become common place.

For more information on the status of the efforts to acquire the OLYMPIA, please visit our website.

## NYA Bulletin Board

If you wish to reach more than 500 of your fellow NYA members, this bulletin board is available for your use to post information. **Send an e-mail to Veronica Laird at [vcullum@hotmail.com](mailto:vcullum@hotmail.com) (use the subject line "NYA Bulletin Board").**

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.mareislandnya.com](http://www.mareislandnya.com)

<b>NYA Officers</b>
President.....Ralph McComb Vice President.....Jim Porter Treasurer.....Lloyd Mahan Benefits Officer.....Robin Leong Recording Secretary.....Sonya Domingo Executive Secretary.....Veronica Laird

<b>Shop 64 Breakfast Meeting</b> Rotating between Vallejo, Suisun, Fairfield, Vacaville, & Napa Third Friday each month at 9:00am POC: Jim Davis; (707) 226-1119	<b>Shop 38 Luncheon</b> Denny's, 4355 Sonoma Blvd (Hwy 29/37 intersection), Vallejo Second Wednesday of each month (except July/August) POC: To be determined...
<b>Vallejo Chapter of NARFE Meeting</b> Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador St., Vallejo Second Tuesday of each month at 1:15pm POC: Bill Lewis; (707) 643-6032	<b>Napa Chapter of NARFE Meeting</b> Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa Last Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm POC: Dotty Mufich; (707) 226-3642
<b>Mare Island Historic Park Foundation</b> Mare Island Quarters "A" Third Monday quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) at 10:00am POC: Ken Zadwick; (707) 557-1538	<b>Nuclear Inspectors' Luncheon</b> The Sardine Can, Vallejo First Wednesday of each month at 11:30am POC: Dick Barlow; (707) 642-6022
<b>Ocean Engineering Luncheon</b> Sports Bar inside the Marriott Hotel, Napa Last Wednesday of each month at 11:30am No POC at this time	<b>Nuclear Engineering Luncheon</b> Locations vary each month Each Friday at 11:30am POC: Allen Green; aalgreen@napanet.net



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