

SQUADRONS & SHIPMATES NEWSLETTER

April 16, 2010

Hi Everyone,

This will be a very lengthy newsletter as there is a lot to discuss.

President Pro Tempore

Raleigh Plesko has accepted the position of President Pro Tempore until the annual reunion in Atlanta in August. He will be running for President for the next four months and it is up to the entire membership as to whether you want him as our president. No other candidates have come forward to fill any of the officer's positions even on a temporary basis. Ladies and gentlemen, this corporation and organization cannot survive if we do not have at least 5 of the key officer's positions filled by the end of the first annual meeting on August 14, 2010. Our By-Laws state officers cannot hold more than one position at a time. This organization has been built to ensure the shortcomings of other U.S. Naval Reunions, that are failing or have failed, will not happen here. Raleigh is still working and has a job that permits him to travel the entire country. He would like to visit with other members who may be within a reasonable driving distance on his fixed route of travel. Raleigh has shown a strong interest in the organization and has sponsored the most members. He will need a team to help Squadrons & Shipmates continue to grow and become stronger. I would appreciate it if you would all give Raleigh a warm welcome into his new position. He has taken on a vital role in our organization so please give him your support and cooperation. By the way, he has also accepted the State Representative position for Indiana.

We must learn from the disbandment of the original Midway Reunion and not make the same mistakes. Rodger Warren and Bill Cox, who were the founder and second member of the original Midway Reunion, had very good intentions. They are both Lifetime Members of Squadrons & Shipmates. Rodger Warren, the founder, had his house flooded out about a year after the organization was up and running. He lost all the paperwork for the organization, which had a significant impact on the operation of the Midway Reunion. The reunion organization had three reunions, 1991, 1993 and 1995. I do not have any concrete facts or evidence as to what exactly happened that led to the disbandment, only stories from men who were members at the time. It is my understanding that the personnel who were in charge after Rodger Warren and Bill Cox, wanted to profit personally from the reunion association. This type of mind set will lead any non-profit organization down the road of destruction. This cannot happen again.

Raleigh's and my intention is to continue to make the organization squeaky clean so that there is no suspicion in anyone's mind as to how the member's dues are being spent. I will be sending you past newsletters from the original Midway Reunion organization so each of you will be more familiar with the operation of that reunion association.

Monetary Donations/50% Dues Program

I have seen comments in the newsletters of the original Midway Reunion Association whereby officers were requesting donations for some type of memorial fund. This is a big turn off to me and, as mentioned on the web site, this organization will never ask for donations as long as I have a say. We are doing fine thanks to all the members who have joined as Lifetime Members during our initial year. That, in itself, makes a great statement and I really appreciate the confidence you have shown in Squadrons & Shipmates. Last week I received four checks from four different members who sent in donations to help with the mailings, postage, etc. These generous members did not want their names mentioned and they are not all Lifetime Members. We want to thank them for their donations. I plan to open a separate bank account to be sure these funds are handled appropriately. We have decided to use the funds for a 50% dues program, which is available to any member who feels he may need assistance with membership dues. Here is an example of how the program works. If someone cannot afford the \$4.10 or \$4.20 annual dues, they can now join for \$2.05 and \$2.10 for as long as the funds last. When the membership dues change to the regular membership price on July 1, 2010 then the potential member can join for \$4.55 for Midway members and \$5.14 for Roosevelt members. I have already offered the 50% dues program to more than 40 potential members who have not yet sent in their formal application and dues.

Organization Expenses

As you all know this is a very transparent corporation whereby all the members see the bank statements whenever they desire and the two auditors can review all the transactions everyday. If, in the future, I no longer have control over the bank accounts and you see checks written to officers for expense accounts, you should request a full explanation. I have seen these notations on financial reports many times with no explanation. Also, expenses for telephone or Internet fees should never be seen on the bank statements. Those fees are going to be incurred anyhow by the officers and the corporation should not be paying their telephone bill or Internet charges. The corporation does pay \$9.95 per month for the web site and \$39.95 per month for our search engine. We are doing fine with our income compared to expenses. Our Accounts Payable to Office Depot has dropped fro \$2,000.00 to about \$650.00. We have more than \$2,000.00 on hand right now in our operating budget, which includes a \$500.00 deposit for our hats. To give you some comparison we have taken in more in dues in 7 months than other reunions did all last year and which have been in existence for over 20 years.

Hats

Our hats are in production and the first sample should be ready for us to see next week. I will be leaving Thursday afternoon to drive to our home in Kentucky and will be returning the following week so I won't be here if the sample arrives after Thursday afternoon. Hopefully, the sample will be waiting for me when I get back to Atlanta. We are going to Grayslake, Illinois to have lunch with and visit with our most senior member, Mr. Gilbert Thiel. I sent everyone, who lives within driving distance of the meeting location, an e-mail invitation but have not received many replies.

Saturday Morning Meetings

On March 17th I sent out a newsletter and asked everyone to respond to 3 questions at the bottom of the e-mail. Less than half the membership responded. We need better participation than that mates if we are going to succeed. We are only as strong as our weakest link. One of the questions that were asked was, "Do you have free long distance and 3-way calling on your home telephone or any telephone?" The purpose of this question was to have Saturday morning meetings with as many members as possible on the same call to discuss ideas and hear concerns from the membership. If you would like to participate in a conference call with other members, please let me know. The call would have to be made during a time that is convenient for everyone, taking into consideration the 6 different time zones in which members live. The time and day is flexible, during the first call we can vote on a time and day that may be better for everyone. I suggested Saturday as many members only use cell phones and weekend rates are often less expensive or free. As always, the membership will decide what is best for them. Our first topic for discussion will be the reunion in 2011 in San Diego. We already have a coordinator who has submitted many proposals or contracts from many hotels but I cannot give them a date until the membership gives me one and we get input from the members in San Diego. I would like to have not more than 10 to 12 members on the first call as it could become unmanageable. As we become more familiar with this process we should be able to handle more members on the calls. The first 10 to 12 members to respond will be on the call, so please e-mail me ASAP. Remember, you must have 3-way calling to be on the call. I know there are other ways to have a conference call but I am not aware of how to set them up. The 3-way calling is free if you also have free long distance.

Photographs and Newspaper Clippings

I have received beautiful pictures from Ren Boyd, which I know took a lot of time to put together. I will be sending them out one at a time, as I don't think the Internet will be able to handle them all at once. I am learning how to use this new iMac computer so that all the pictures will look good and they will be compatible with all computers. I am going to class once a week to learn all these applications. Joel Husebo also sent me many newspaper clippings in a restored format that is just wonderful. Most of them are about Navy Day in New York City on October 27, 1945. I didn't realize how many ships were in the Hudson River that day. I can only imagine the scene as I could see the Hudson River from the top of my apartment building in Washington Heights when growing up in New York City. I am sure I was there that day but I was only a month old. I know many of our 1945 plank owners will remember that day on the Hudson.

Potential New Members

We plan on conducting another blitz for new members over this weekend. We will continue to contact all the members from the 1959 deployment of USS Franklin D. Roosevelt. The original members of the Midway will also be contacted. We will send you an updated roster for the original Midway Reunion over the weekend.

Reunion 2010

The sign-in sheets for the reunion are still coming in. Although we are 4 months away, we must reserve our block of rooms or they will be returned to the hotel inventory. We have enough people for a decent reunion but I was hoping for more. The participation is good for our first reunion. To give you some comparison, the Original Midway Reunion had their first reunion after they had been in existence for 2 years. They were founded in 1989 and had their first reunion in 1991 with 53 members in attendance. Please make your hotel reservations before the end of the month because the 90-day window is fast approaching. Once we give back any of the rooms that are being held for us, we will lose them. If we sell out, then we can ask for more. The members, friends and families who are attending this year will always be able to brag that they were at the first reunion. I still have many of the checks you sent in and I will notify you a week before we deposit your check. Some of you requested that your check be deposited immediately and they were. These funds are not placed in our operating account; they are completely separate.

Lifetime Membership

Some members are slowly upgrading their membership to a Lifetime Membership. We had three more last week. I think it is about time I announced this to the entire membership and by no means is it a ploy to have everyone become Lifetime Members as our By-Laws do not permit that. We have never dropped below 55% and crossed the 70% threshold at one time. That is when I became concerned because I was going to have to tell some members they could not become Lifetime Members. To be very clear and fair to all the members, here are the facts. Once, or if, we reach 75% of the membership in Lifetime Members we will not be able to accept any more Lifetime Memberships. Once it is closed, the members with the lower membership numbers will have the first opportunity to become Lifetime Members. After June 30, 2010 the dues for a Lifetime Membership will increase to \$91.00 for the Midway and \$102.70 for the Roosevelt if you are not a charter member. Right now the Lifetime Memberships are open to all members, new and current.

VERY IMPORTANT. The By-Laws state the Charter Membership annual dues will be the same for all future years unless the membership votes to increase it and the Charter Members will always pay \$5.00 less than the regular members. Caution, the By-Laws also state if any charter member does not have his dues post-marked by July 31st of any year, he or she will lose the discount of the Charter Membership and the dues will increase to the amount of the regular membership for that year. Some members have already paid in advance for up to five years. Also, some members have overpaid their dues and I will issue a credit balance list for those members so they can apply their credit as they wish. These members paid the regular dues in the charter membership period.

I hope that is enough for now. Thanks,

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