

## U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of '53 Newsletter June 2011

**About this Newsletter:** The Class of '53 Newsletter is published "as soon and as often as we can get around to it". Its purpose is to keep members of our class informed about our classmates' lives and activities, and to occasionally provide some tid-bits of trivia and information.

Because not all of our classmates are members of the Alumni Association, and not all of our classmates have e-mail, and the deadline for articles for our class notes section in **The Bulletin** is almost two months before it's published, there will be, from time-to-time, duplications and gaps in what is included here, what is sent by e-mail or "snail-mail", and what appears in **The Bulletin**.

Send items for **The Bulletin** and this **Newsletter** to: Wee Smith, 19 Coachman Pike, Ledyard, CT 06339 - Tel./FAX 860-464-8425 or e-mail to [jdsbridge@aol.com](mailto:jdsbridge@aol.com).

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### "Our" Leadership 44, *SHEARWATER*, is in commission!

On June 2nd, a beautiful sunny day, "our" *SHEARWATER* was christened with **Bob and Beverly Benson, Rick and Beth Cueroni, Hank and Gloria Fisher, Hal Olson, Bill and Mickey Reilly, Wee and Jane Smith, and Bob West** able to attend her launching and christening. **Rick Cueroni**, as co-chairman of our fund-raising campaign accepted the naming plaque.

The June issue of the Alumni Association *Bulletin* will include an article with pictures of the event and **Kirk Greiner**, when he gets a chance, is going to post pictures on his Class of '53 web site, ([www.cga53.org](http://www.cga53.org)) of *SHEARWATER's* christening in the News and the History sections.

But, **Ken Barrett, Bill Kohl and Roger Madson** were our first classmates to go aboard *SHEARWATER*.

On May 11th, **Ken** and his son, Pete drove up to the Morris Yacht facility in Northeast Harbor, Maine and went aboard her. **Ken** reported, "She was complete, in the water and undergoing her sea trials. She sleeps nine, has a very complete galley and a full array of modern integrated electronics. The workmanship is, as you would expect from Morris Yachts, superb." And then on May 24th, **Bill** and **Roger** were in New London to play in the "Hooligan Invitational Golf Tournament", and got some of the Academy waterfront personnel "all shook up" when **Bill** told them, "We're from the Class of '53 and are here to take 'our' boat, *SHEARWATER*, out for a trial run". Of

course they didn't get to take her out, but they did get to go aboard and had their pictures taken aboard her.

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**Next '53 Mini-Reunion? San Diego, CA (April 23-27, 2012)**

Paul and **Donna Arnold** (8932 Amadore Circle #1309C, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, Tel. 714-374-6352, e-mail: [dba1043@yahoo.com](mailto:dba1043@yahoo.com)) and **Bill and Romy Bruinsma** (2882 Dartmouth Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056, Tel. 760-966-0376, e-mail: [2go4it@cox.net](mailto:2go4it@cox.net)) are working on plans for a mini-reunion next year in San Diego. More info and details to follow -- In the meantime, put the dates on your calendars!

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**"Newsbits" about some of our classmates (in alphabetical order)**

Although his chest is still sore, **Dick Bowers** (P.O. Box 244, Harwich, MA 02645, e-mail: [bayview181@yahoo.com](mailto:bayview181@yahoo.com)) is doing well after having quadruple by-pass surgery in May. Before his surgery, **Dick** said his doctor told him that they had found "two blockages", but after the surgery, his doctor said they had found "four blockages", Dick facetiously told his doctor that he should only have to pay for the two blockages they originally found and not the other two.

**Dick and Meris Donnelly** (17818 SE 57th Place, Bellevue, WA 98006, Tel. 425-401-8508, e-mail: [radcesi@aol.com](mailto:radcesi@aol.com)) returned to Bellevue, WA on May 19th after wintering in southern California where **Dick** received his extensive series of radiation treatments at UCLA Medical Center for his battle with mesothelioma. **Dick** said his morale and spirits are good, but he said he is "beat up" from the radiation treatments. He's able to drive and he's starting some physical training, but he has some weight issues ("my stomach has shrunk"), he's still coughing, and his recovery is not going as fast as he would like it to. Thoughts and prayers for **Dick** will be most welcome!!

**Kirk and Jackie Greiner** returned home on June 2nd after an 8,600+ mile trip in their RV motor home that included attending the Sarasota, FL mini-reunion and seeing a lot more of the United States. **Kirk** said, "I haven't figured out the fuel costs yet -- maybe I don't want to."

On June 1st **Ralph Hill** joined '53's *Octogerman Club* and on June 11th, **Diane** held a great surprise birthday celebration for him with his five children (including Debra who came all the way from Amsterdam in the Netherlands), and five grandchildren all

able to attend.

**Joe Kelly** and **Bill Lehr** each sent me a copy of a heart-warming newspaper article from the May 8th edition of *The Virginian-Pilot* telling about **Jimmy Hiteshew's** grandson, Michael Davis and his graduation from Old Dominion University. At his graduation, Michael wore a POW memorial bracelet which a 53 year old woman (Diana Jo Faucheux) from Panama City, FL had bought when she was a 14 year old living at Johnson AFB in Goldsboro, NC. The bracelet was engraved "**Lt. Col. James Hiteshew, 3-11-67**" (which was the date that **Jimmy's** fighter jet was shot down over North Vietnam). This spring she and her husband did an internet search and found **Jimmy's** obituary and ultimately Michael's address and sent him the bracelet. Michael said he was heart-broken by his grandfather's death four years ago. "He had been like a hero to me. I think he would have loved to see me walk across the stage". [Note: the last address that I had for Jimmy's daughter, Susan Davis (and Michael) was: 5296 Highway 117N, Pikesville, NC 27863. *Does anyone have a better address for them?*]

While **Jim and LaVerne Irwin** were visiting their daughter, Julie and her family in Wilmington, NC, in late May, **LaVerne** started having some severe headaches which turned out to be extremely serious. She was admitted to the hospital for a *subdural hematoma* (bleeding on the brain). Her doctors first performed a *craniostomy* (i.e., drilled a hole in her skull to try to drain the blood) and then performed a *crainiotomy* (i.e., removed part of the top of her skull to better drain the blood). Since her surgeries, **LaVerne** has been having therapy three to four hours/day and Jim said, "she is doing well, her morale is good, but she does get tired". **Jim and LaVerne** will be staying in North Carolina "for a while" and will eventually fly back home to Chandler, AZ. Send prayers "direct"; notes and cards can be sent to **LaVerne**, c/o Spicka, 7404 Norton Ct., Wilmington, NC 28411 or via e-mail: [jcilmg@cox.net](mailto:jcilmg@cox.net).

Sadly, I received a letter from **Fran Plummer** saying that **Bill** can no longer remember the past.

**Barbara Trainor** says she is having some trouble with her appetite and stamina but otherwise doing well in recovering from the radiation treatments she had for cancer in her lymph nodes. She sold her home in Scituate, MA and has moved to 303 Lyden Ponds Way #118, Hingham, MA 02043; Tel. 781-749-1104; e-mail [btrainor118@yahoo.com](mailto:btrainor118@yahoo.com).

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**Our Class of '53 legacy continues to grow at CGA!**

On May 18th **Bill and Marge Russell's** grandson, *Travis Russell* graduated with the Class of 2011. He is being assigned as a DWO on the buoy tender, CGC ALDER, in Duluth, MN.

Other children and grandchildren of our classmates who have graduated from the Academy are:

*CAPT E. Darrell Nelson '77 (Ed and Joyce's son);*  
*CAPT Edwin H. Daniels, Jr. '79 (Ed and Becky's son);*  
*CAPT Charles Alan Mathieu '82 (Bud and Betsy's son);*  
*Mitchell Russell '82 (Bill and Marge's son);*  
*CDR Donald P. Coffelt, Jr. '85 (Don and Shirley's son);*  
*Douglas B. Mathieu '88 (Bud and Betsy's son);*  
*ENS Michael Higbie '09 (Bill and Ann Clark's grandson).*

And, in the "pipeline" are:

Second Classman *Tyler Babkiewich '13 (Frank and Jan Frauenfelder's* grandson) and

*Natalie Spadafora (Nat and Dimpy Spadafora's granddaughter),* who will be sworn in as a "swab" on June 27th as a member of the Academy's Class of 2015.

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***The Jeopardy*** question no one could answer

**Ed Cope** sent the following educational piece on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with this note: "Hello All ..... Very interesting. If you already knew this, I am impressed. If it is new information, I suspect you are now impressed. If you get to Washington, D.C. it would be worth a visit. While there, also attend the "Retiring of the Colors" at the Marine Barracks at 8th & I Streets, D.C; each Friday night, May thru October. Reservations can be made on-line. BEST show in town! Hope this finds you in good health & Spirits"

On Jeopardy the other night, the final question was "How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns" ---- All three contestants missed it! --

This is really an awesome sight to watch if you've never had the chance. Very fascinating.

**Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.**

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

21 steps: It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?  
21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.

3. Why are his gloves wet?

His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and, if not, why not?  
He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

5. How often are the guards changed?

Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10' and 6' 2' tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30.

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in any way.

After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt.

There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington

National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe Lewis {the boxer}, Medal of Honor winner Audie L. Murphy, the most decorated soldier of WWII and of Hollywood fame.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty..

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC , our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening

news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

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### **Wal-Mart Greeters**

With all due respect to our Admirals **Rick Cueroni, Ed Daniels, Jim Irwin, Ed Nelson, and Ted Wojnar**, thanks to **Ilma Striker** for sending this story about Wal-Mart Greeters.

Charley, a new retiree-greeter at Wal-Mart, just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 5, 10, 15 minutes late. But he was a good worker, really tidy, clean-shaven, sharp-minded and a real credit to the company and obviously demonstrating their "Older Person Friendly" policies.

One day the boss called him into the office for a talk.

"Charley, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a bang-up job when you finally get here; but your being late so often is quite bothersome. You are a team player. That's what I like to hear".

"Yes sir, I understand your concern and I'll try harder.

Seeming puzzled, the manager went on to comment, "It's odd though your coming in late. I know you're retired from the Armed Forces. What did they say to you there if you showed up in the morning so late and so often?"

The old man looked down at the floor, then smiled. He chuckled quietly, then said with a grin, "They usually saluted and said, Good morning, Admiral, can I get your coffee, sir?"

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### **Finally, what is a calorie?**

Calories are the little bastards that get in your wardrobe at night and sew your clothes tighter. My closet is infested with the little shits!