
USS THOMAS JEFFERSON 618 ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the Desk of the Commander

Hello Shipmates,
This will be the first newsletter since the reunion and my first as the commander (Wow, how did that happen?). Those who did not attend the TJ Reunion 12 in Mt. Pleasant, SC, in September 2014, missed a great time and a well-planned and executed event. I cannot express my appreciation enough to Jim and Joan Beauchamp who, with the assistance of Danny Leonhardt, Ron Bekech, and all the others who made it all come together. Great job shipmates!

On Sunday, September 21st, the reunion committee had the hospitality room set up for arriving shipmates with lots of snacks and an excellently stocked bar. The Quality Inn in Mt. Pleasant provided us with a great spot to meet and reunite with former shipmates. The evening went into the wee hours and stories were told, discussed and revised and retold as shipmates reunited, sometimes after more than fifty years.

The morning of September 22nd, we traveled across town for a tour of the restoration process of CSS Hunley, a submarine of the Confederate States of America and the first combat submarine to sink a warship, the USS Housatonic. A quick web search for Submarine H. L. Hunley will provide data on the history and current status of the submarine. Actually seeing the recovered submarine, tomb for eight brave men, and witnessing the meticulous attention being paid to documenting every facet of the restoration and conservation is truly fascinating. If you have a chance in the future, don't miss this piece of submarine history.

After a free time lunch in the immediate area of the Quality Inn, the biennial Association Business Meeting was held at 1500. The major decision from the meeting was that association dues would be suspended until the next reunion and all outstanding back payments would be eliminated. Shipmates attending the next reunion that are not life members will only be required to pay the \$15.00 annual dues. Following

the meeting a cocktail hour, a fancy name for sea stories and BS sessions continued in the hospitality room. A number of pizzas of all kinds were bought in for our enjoyment around dinnertime. Several shipmates noted that this was some of the best pizza they had ever experienced, probably forgetting about Pizza Night on patrol and possibly a result of the cocktails mentioned above. It should be noted it was really good pizza and a BZ to Jim Beauchamp for thinking of it.

Tuesday, September 22nd, arrived to constant light rain which required us to move the memorial service from the planned Cold War Submarine Memorial at the nearby Patriot's Point to the hospitality room. Although we were a little crowded, the tolling for lost shipmates was a solemn and quietly received moment for all of us. In the afternoon a number of us braved the elements, as Charleston continued to receive light to moderate rain and boarded the Spiritline Harbor Tour from Patriots Point for a well received and informative 90 minute tour of Charleston harbor including a pass by Fort Sumter. We finished the evening with our reunion dinner at the nearby Harbor Breeze Restaurant where the food and fun was enjoyed by all. That last sentence almost sounds canned and does not adequately reflect the quality of the food and service of the staff of the restaurant.

On September 24th, a farewell breakfast was held with calm winds and following seas wished until the next reunion. Jim Beauchamp has already laid the ground work for our next reunion in Jacksonville in

September of 2016. I look forward to seeing each of you next year.

From Desk of Secretary:

Shipmates:

I hope this newsletter finds all of you in good health and spirits. In case you are not aware, I have taken over the secretarial duties from Ron Bekech. There is no way I will ever be able to perform the task to the level that he brought to this office. I have also taken on the responsibility to update the website, www.ssb618.org, to the best of my ability. I am sure there will be some bumps along the road during the process of learning the ins and outs of the format of the site and learning how to make changes it. Bob Perritt has provided me with access so I can make these changes a little more quickly than in the past. We'll see how it goes.

I have posted the latest sailing list along with the announcement of our next reunion to be held in Jacksonville. Please check your information on the sailing list and send any corrections to me. I have also posted the listing of the newly elected officers of our organization along with their e-mail address. Any issues now should be able to be brought directly to our attention. Please exercise patience, courtesy and understanding as we are pedaling as fast as we can. There is a link at the top of the page for those who would like to see some of pictures I captured during the reunion. If anyone has any other pictures they would like to see posted please send them to me at tjssbn618@yahoo.com.

The Association Officers are:
Ron Whitener-Commander
Jim Beauchamp-Vice Commander
Sam (Sandy) Cook-Secretary
Dan Higgins-Treasurer.

Another thing worth noting is that there is a facebook page for the USS Thomas Jefferson SSBN 618. This is not administered by our association but, I have found it to be a great way to dispense information and for shipmates to keep up to date.

Lastly, I want to say that I am honored to be trusted and elected by my shipmates to perform this task. I will try my best not to let you down.

Meeting Minutes:

USS Thomas Jefferson 618 Association

- September 22, 2014
- Business Meeting
- Quality Inn Patriots Point

1500 Cdr John sweat opened the business meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to Old Glory.

Cdr Sweat paid tribute to:

- Commissioning Crew
- Danny Leonhardt (holder of the commissioning plaque)
- All COBs

Minutes of the Norfolk Business Meeting were read by Secretary Ron Bekech. Motion to accept minutes as read from Ron Whitener; seconded by Dan Higgins.

Scholarship Chair Bob Keller announced that there were two \$500 scholarships award in 2014.

- Caroline Womack, granddaughter to Bob Leach

- Lyndsay Pratt, granddaughter to John Sweat

The treasurer's report was given by Ron Bekech. As of the start of the reunion, there was \$20914.86 in the treasury. Ron Bekech noted that the money was not invested in any CD because the interest rate was low, adding, it was better to keep the funds liquid for events. The Norfolk Reunion Statement showed an income of \$2415.58 with expenses of \$2580.30. The net loss was \$ 164.72.

A discussion on treasury and dues was held by the crew. Pisle made a motion to suspend dues until the next meeting. Whitener added that shipmates who are currently dink on dues should pay \$15 at next reunion and be relieved of any outstanding back payments. In addition, the sailing list DINK column should be stricken to show no shipmate owing past dues. Cook motioned to accept Pisle/Whitener motion. Higgins seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

A discussion on the floor was opened on the website. There was a section-label which addressed Current Events. Although the newsletter was posted to the website detailing the reunion, this section of the website showed NO NEW Events posted in it. After minutes of discussion, Sam Cook volunteered to take over the website. He will interface with Ed Rabbitt and Bob Perritt on current website and his options to reconstruct it.

Cdr Sweat opened the floor for nomination to relieve current officer of their responsibilities.

- Commander John Sweat
- Vice Commander Jim Beauchamp
- Secretary Ron Bekech
- Treasurer Ron Bekech
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Volunteers (Nominees) for offices were:

- Commander Ron Whitener
- Vice Commander Jim Beauchamp
- Secretary Sam Cook
- Treasurer Dan Higgin

Motions were carried for each office and votes were unanimous. Newly elected officers would relieve current officers after the business meeting.

Cdr Sweat opened the floor for site recommendations for Reunion #13 scheduled to be held in the September/October timeframe of 2016.

Recommendations made:

- King's Bay , GA
- Jacksonville, FL
- Branson , MO
- New London, CT

During discussion on the reunion sites, it was unanimously decided to postpone the selection until the Reunion Banquet. This would allow time for spouses to add their inputs on the recommended site.

NOTE: After the Memorial Services a show of hands produced a majority voting for JACKSONVILLE,

Fl as the site of the next reunion.

1613 A motion was made by Jim Beauchamp to adjourn the meeting; This motion was seconded by Ron Whitener.

From Desk of Treasurer:

I received a check from the outgoing treasurer for \$16630.02 and it was deposited in a Navy Federal Credit Union checking account. We have received a gift check for \$100 from a member for the bench. Any other donations for the bench or the scholarship program would be greatly appreciated. Our balance to date is \$16733.12.

While we have suspended dues until the next reunion in hopes of gaining shipmates coming to the next one, I will accept them if you want to pay them. We donate \$1000.00 a year to the scholarship program (a great investment in our offspring) it won't go forever.

