

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 34, No. 1

March 2023



Officers:

Al Gustafson, Chairman, Board of Directors;  
Al Gustafson, President; Gary Baker, Secretary-Treasurer;  
Reunion Chairman; Pat Baker;  
Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor; Gary Baker, Web Master;  
Pat Baker, Ships Store

Greetings Shipmates

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope that you are all safe and well. This winter has been full of severe weather events in most of the country so I hope everyone got through the blizzards, floods, hurricanes and tornados safely. Here in Buffalo, we had our worst snow storm ever over the Christmas Holidays. Severe cold and over 49 inches of snow in 3 days which is a record even for Buffalo!

Just to make things more interesting, last week we had an earthquake (3.8 on the Richter scale). I know you folks who live in California are used to this but it caused real excitement here in Western New York. Fortunately, there was no damage or injury reported. I wonder what Spring will bring?

Our reunion will be in Spokane Washington this year, hosted by Pat Baker. All the info is on the website and included in this newsletter. Please note that the fixed costs for this year's reunion will be paid by the association. See the registration form for details. Pat has found a great hotel and has lots of fun activities arranged. I strongly urge everyone who is able to plan on attending this year. Try to contact old shipmates and encourage their attendance as well (or bring a friend). We had a great turnout last year and I hope we can do even better this year. Make your plans and reservations as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please E-mail or give me a call. If you get my machine leave a message, I will call back soon.

I enjoy riddles so here is one to think about (answer in the next newsletter):

A man leaves home and makes three left turns. He comes home again and sees two masked men waiting for him, but he jogs straight toward them with a smile as others cheer. Why is this man so unafraid?

In closing a special thanks to Pat Baker for hosting this year's reunion together and as always to Gary Baker and Kathy Spatz for all the work they do for the organization.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Spokane.

Fair Winds and Following Seas

Gus

**A Grandmothers View**

"Believe me, dear granddaughter, there may be only one great love in the life of a woman...," said the grandmother. "And who was your great love, granny?" asked the granddaughter. The grandmother whispered: "Sailors, only sailors!"

## New Members (Since November 2022)

None

## Taps

W. Lamar Johnson FTM2 64-68  
Harold W. (Bill) Thompson SK2 64-67

## Reunion Dates:

**September 18<sup>th</sup> – September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

## **2023 Spokane Reunion**

The hotel contract for the 2023 Spokane reunion has been finalized and signed. We'll be staying at the Mirabeau Park Hotel and Convention Center in Spokane Valley, Washington.

Hotel reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 509-924-9000. Be sure to ask for USS Topeka CLG-8 Reunion group rate.

Pat Baker is our host for the 2023 reunion, and she is busy lining up tours for the reunion. Tours under consideration are a dinner cruise on beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene, a trip to the silver-mining town of Wallace, Idaho which includes a trolley ride and an underground tour of the Sierra Silver Mine, and a visit to a bordello museum in Wallace. A tour of some of the wineries around Spokane, including the most beautiful one, Arbor Crest Winery, which overlooks the Spokane Valley. Even people who don't drink wine will love the great scenery.

More reunion information will be put on the website and on our Facebook Group as it becomes available.



## Transportation

Spokane International Airport (GEG is about 20 minutes from the hotel. It is served by six major airlines: Alaska, Allegiant, American, Delta, Southwest, and United. There is no hotel shuttle to or from the airport, but Lyft and Uber as well as curbside taxis are available at the airport. All major rental car companies are represented at the airport.

The Mirabeau Park Hotel does provide local shuttle service.

## **Tour "A" Silver Valley and Historic Wallace Idaho**

Tuesday September 19

Get a realistic glimpse of the old mining days on the way to the world's richest Silver Mining District. Stop at Cataldo Mission, the oldest building in the State of Idaho, built by the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe and Jesuit Missionaries in 1853. Then to Wallace, the Silver Capital of the World. Ride the trolley up to the Sierra Silver Mine where you'll put on your hard hat, go into the mine, see the veins of ore and learn how the miners worked. Lunch is in a historic downtown restaurant. After lunch, tour the Oasis Rooms Bordello Museum, an actual old bordello that closed its doors in 1987. Everything was left intact for you to see. There will time to look through the silver shops before returning to Spokane.



## Tour "B" Historic Spokane

Wednesday September 20

Enjoy a tour of the rich history, historic homes and attractions of Spokane. Learn about the Native Americans that first discovered this area and where the city began as we travel along the Spokane River, view the Spokane Falls and the grounds of the former Expo '74 site, now Riverfront Park. Discover Manito Park while strolling through the formal French Renaissance gardens, Perennial Gardens, Rose Gardens, authentic Japanese Gardens, and flower-filled Conservatory. See the historic area of Browne's Addition where many of the old mansions, built in the late 1800's, have been restored to their original splendor. Stop at Bing Crosby's childhood home to see the largest public collection of Crosby's memorabilia in the US.



## Tour "D" Spokane Winery Tour

Thursday September 21

Travel to Latah Creek Wine Cellars. Heralded by Wine Spectator as one of the "Top Merlot's in Washington State", taste their merlot, huckleberry and other award-winning wines. Tour the production area and learn the process of making wine. This family-owned winery also boasts a great gift shop, with something for every wine lover and great local products to take home. Then on to Barrister Winery at their tasting room in Downtown Spokane. Next, to Arbor Crest Wine Cellars, perched 450 feet above the Spokane River. Built by inventor Royal Newton Riblet in 1924, the grounds have some of Riblet's unique inventions, a 16' by 16' checkerboard a small vineyard, and the mansion. Taste their wines and tour the grounds learning some interesting stories about the inventor Royal Newton Riblet. This is one of the "must see" in Spokane.



Arbor Crest Wine Cellars

## Tour "C" Lake Coeur d'Alene Dinner Cruise

Wednesday September 20

Travel to North Idaho where you'll board the cruise boat for a 2-hour private dinner cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene. National Geographic reports this as one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. Along the way, pass by the now famous floating green at the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course.

## 2022 YTD Financial Report

### 2023 YTD Financial Report

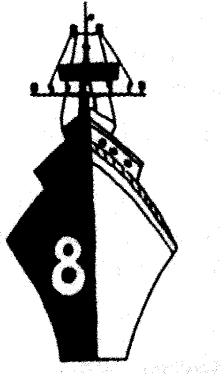
A brief summary of our finance's year to date. The association finances are looking good, no need to increase dues for the foreseeable future If you would like a more detailed report e-mail

Gary Baker at [gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org)

Account	12/31/2022	2023 YTD
Operating Fund	\$16,283.88	\$16,723.88
Reunion Fund	\$5,588.65	\$5,588.65
Ship's Store	\$2,266.37	
\$2,283.37		
Total	\$24,138.90	\$24,595.90

USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION  
C/O Gary Baker  
20 Heather Drive  
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TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUEST



### NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Chairman, Board of Directors; President, Al Gustafson  
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Dan Moore, Ray Spatz, Jay Davis and Dan Moore

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### Ship's Store

The store has USS Topeka ball caps, lapel pins, jacket patches, coffee cups, and license plate frames as well as 6th and 7th Fleet and Vietnam bumper stickers. A generic Navy ball cap "We Own The Seas" has been added to the inventory. Order forms and illustrations of items are on the Ship's Store page of the website. The store is managed by Pat Baker. Her contact information is on the ship's store page of the website and the Names and Telephone Numbers section of this newsletter.

### Membership and Dues

Dues fund the day-to-day operation of the association. This includes the costs of publishing and distributing the newsletter and members directory, maintaining the website, and office expenses. Dues are \$20.00 per year or \$80.00 for five years. Your dues status is indicated on the address page of the newsletter. If it doesn't say 'Dues Exempt' or '**Dues Paid Thu 2023**' (or higher) you'll be dropped from the mailing list and won't receive the annual directory or any further newsletters.