

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 38, No. 1

March, 2026



Officers:

Al Gustafson, Chairman Board of Directors and President;

Arnold Hoel, Vice Chairman and Vice President;

Gary Baker, Secretary-Treasurer;

Staff:

Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor and Photographer;

Gary Baker, Web Master;

Pat Baker, Ships Store

From Our President

Greetings Shipmates

I hope that this finds everyone safe and well. Cathy and I are doing fine and enjoying a good old fashion Western New York winter. Only one day in January without snow! Looking forward to New Orleans and some warmer weather.

This is a friendly reminder that the deadlines to register and reserve your hotel room for the 2026 reunion are approaching fast. The hotel must be reserved by April 9, and the reunion registration must be to Gary by April 16. I know that this is earlier than normal but hopefully we will be rewarded with a great weather week in NOLA! Dan Moore will be our host and has some great tours planned like the WW2 Museum, which is among the best anywhere in the world. Dan has hosted several reunions and does a great job so don't miss this one! Thanks, Dan, for all your hard work.

I was curious about some New Orleans trivia so here are some interesting NOLA facts:

It is a law that all Mardi Gras float participants wear masks.

St. Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square is the oldest Catholic Cathedral in the US.

The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway is the world's longest Bridge (should be visible from our hotel).

The first recorded US Mafia activity occurred in New Orleans.

Last newsletters riddle- This house attracts travelers with its brightness, yet it is often the loneliest home on the coast. What kind of house is this? Answer -A lighthouse.

This newsletter riddle- What is Bourbon Street named after?

As always, special thanks to Kathy Spatz, Pat and Gary Baker and of course our host Dan Moore for all their hard work on behalf of the association and this year's reunion.

Anyone with questions please feel free to give me a call. If you get my machine, be sure to leave a message, I will get right back to you.

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy and Happy New Year. See you all in New Orleans and Laissez les bon temps rouler "may the good times roll" (official NOLA slogan).

Fair Winds and Following Seas

Gus

New Members (Since November 2025)

None

Taps

Gerald Tanner MR2 63-66
Rober Garloch MM3 64-65
Roy Winningham MR3 67-68

Reunion Dates:

Monday, May 11, 2026, through Friday, May 15, 2026

Dan Moore will be hosting our New Orleans Reunion. He hosted a very successful reunion in Indianapolis several years ago, and there's no doubt that this one will be a great one!

Our hotel for the reunion will be Marriott Metairie at Lakeway very close to Lake Ponchartrain and its well-known causeway.

Just eight miles from the heart of downtown New Orleans, the Metairie hotel blends the tranquil serenity of Lake Pontchartrain with views of the Greater New Orleans Area. It's located just minutes from the French Quarter and the International Airport.

Address of the hotel is 3838 N. Causeway Boulevard, Metairie, LA

Accommodation is one King Bed or two Double Beds. Rates for both are \$159.50 inclusive of all taxes and fees.

Room reservation **MUST** be made by Thursday April 9, 2026. After that date the room block is released, and you may not be able to make a reservation.

Room price also includes complimentary breakfast buffet and complimentary parking. Armstrong International Airport (MSY) is about 20 minutes (10 Miles) from Marriott Metairie hotel. It is served by all major airlines.

All major car rental companies are represented at the airport, as well as Lyft and Uber pick up

locations. There is no courtesy shuttle service to or from the hotel.



Tour "B"

Wednesday, May 13th

Pontoon Boat Swamp Tour

Set out on a 20,000-acre (8,095- hectare) tract of tidewater cypress swamp close to the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Your flat-bottom boat is leisurely guided through the shallow marshes.

Discover bayous lined with mossy cypress and tupelo-gum trees as your captain points out a stunning variety of wildlife. Enjoy a fully narrated tour by a local guide. Prepare to see plenty of alligators in the warmer months (and warmer days in winter), some of which may be sunning themselves on logs!

Your guide may even feed the gators, affording you amazing photo opportunities. Also, keep your eyes open for turtles, snakes, egrets, herons, and ibis. You may even catch sight of a hawk, owl, or bald eagle. In the cooler months, look for whitetail deer, raccoons, and the large rodents known as nutria.



Some interesting facts about NOLA

It's illegal to ride in a Mardi Gras parade without a mask.

New Orleans is the first home of the American Mafia.

Most of the city is built on a swamp, making it important that the dead in the city be interred in above-ground tombs.

Buffet Lunch at Des Familles

Bayou des Familles, a lazy waterway home to many alligators, turtles, egrets and other wildlife, takes center stage as our restaurant's design provides its diners with a natural picture show. It's in this unique setting where friends and family unite to experience southern Louisiana charm and culture in its finest form. It's an experience not to be soon forgotten.

Tour "D"

National World War II Museum

Thursday May 14th

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in *the war that changed the world*—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.



Pay By Zelle

If your bank uses Zelle to transfer money you can now use it to pay dues, reunion fees, and ship's store orders directly to the association checking account. Activate Zelle on-line at your bank's website and designate the recipient to be gbaker@usstopekaclg.org. For dues send an e-mail to the same address with dues information. For ship's store orders e-mail the order form. For reunion fees e-mail the registration sheet.

YTD Financial Report

A brief summary of our finances Year-To-Date. As we will no longer be collecting dues after 2028 the operating fund will decline over the next few years. For a more detailed report e-mail Gary Baker at gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org

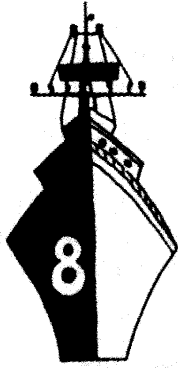
<u>Account</u>	<u>1/1/2026</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Operating Fund	\$12,902.94	\$13,142.94
Reunion Fund	\$5,546.11	\$8,136.11
Ship's Store	\$3,472.87	\$3,562.97
Total	\$21,921.92	\$24,842.02

Address Changes

Please notify Gary Baker of address changes. There are always a few newsletters returned as 'unable to forward', or with a corrected address. In both cases, re-mailing is an unneeded extra expense. Going forward, newsletters returned with a corrected address will not be re-mailed, but will receive the next newsletter at the new address. For 'unable to forward' returns, the address will be removed from our data base, and no attempt will be made to determine the new address.

USS Topeka CLG-8 Association
c/o Gary Baker
20 Heather Drive
Billings, MT 59105

TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Names and Telephone Numbers

Chairman, Board of Directors: Al Gustafson
Vice Chairman, Board of Directors: Arnold Hoel
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Ship's Store

The ship's store inventory includes ballcaps, lapel pins, jacket patches, and Navy Veteran and 6th and 7th Fleet bumper stickers. Order forms, and images of items, are on the Ship's Store page of our website. The store is managed by Pat Baker. She can be contacted by e-mail at pbaker@usstopekaclg8.org, or call her at 406-252-4546. Orders can be sent to her at 20 Heather Dr, Billings, MT 59105.

Membership and Due

The Association will cease collecting dues after 2028. Members that have already paid dues through 2028 are considered Lifetime Members. When other members pay dues through 2028, they also will become Lifetime Members. Dues are \$20.00 per year. Dues can be sent to Gary Baker, 20 Heather Dr, Billings, MT 59105.