

# USS TOPEKA CLG-8 Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 5-1

February, 1994

**Committee:**

*Jack Connery, President; Dudley E. Cass, Secretary/Treasurer;  
Dick Jolliffe, Ass't Secretary/Treasurer; Dudley Cass, Reunion '94 Chairman;  
Jack Connery, Newsletter Editor*



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the sounds of reunion information contained herein, it looks like Dudley and Ruth Cass have this well in hand. They are to be commended for their efforts. Lets show them our appreciation by attending.

If you haven't been to a reunion yet, you've missed four good ones. Ask someone who has attended to tell you about it. Look at the letters to the editor in this newsletter to see what folks have to say about Nashville.

There is a problem with these reunions: They can become habit-forming. Once you've gone, you'll want to go again.

And thanks to Dudley and Ernie Villamil for all their efforts in locating more shipmates. See article inside.

Let's think San Diego.

Jack Connery



## MEMBERS IN THE EARTHQUAKE

Some of our members were involved in the Northridge, Cal., earthquake January 17. Parky Parkhurst stated that everything that could break did. (See his account elsewhere in this newsletter). Bill Noel of Canoga Park received damage to his chimney and to block walls of his home. His house is still "livable" and he has a "roof over my head." Fortunately, neither Parky, Bill nor families were injured. Robert Feely of Panorama City reported no damage.

## LAUGHLIN GETAWAY (MARCH 4-6)

Here's the scoop on the Laughlin, Nev. weekend March 4-6. Meet at the Flamingo Hilton Friday af-

ternoon (Call Cass's room). Bring beverage and snacks as desired. Reservations are as low as \$49 Friday and \$59 Saturday. Ask for the 25 percent Friday discount for check-in before 6 p.m. Call 800-FLAMINGO for reservations. Itinerary suggestions: Eat at the Edgewater buffet Friday night, and the William Fisk restaurant at Harrah's Saturday night. Eddie Arnold, with special guests The Mills Brothers, is at the Riverside Friday and Saturday. The Cass's are going to the 10 p.m. show Saturday. For ticket information, call 800-227-3849, ext. 616.



## FOR PLANKOWNERS

Norman W. Cary, Jr., Head, Curator Branch, Naval Historical Center, has informed us that their records indicate that Topeka deck planking is available. At the present time, its location is uncertain and they have to locate it. It should take "three to four months to locate it." This was in December.

Plankowner requests for planking should be addressed to Mr. Cary at the Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., 20374-0571. Include with your request a copy of your plankowner's certificate or some other form of proof that you were part of ship's crew at the time of commissioning.



## TAPS

Bernie Pulido, SDCS, 63-66, Long Beach, Ca., Died in January.

## FROM THE REUNION COORDINATOR

Make plans now for San Diego in August. Reunion 94, our fifth, returns to the site of the first reunion: The Holiday Inn on the Bay in San Diego. Many of the members at that first reunion claim it was the best. Our aim this year is to make it better. Highlights of the reunion include the Mixer, a stand-up party for meeting everybody, and the Banquet, a sit-down dinner with entertainment and a program. The Hospitality Room is a place where we relax, swap sea stories, and visit over a beer or cup of coffee.

## PROPOSED REUNION SPONSORED EVENTS

### Thursday, August 18:

Hospitality Room opens 10 a.m. daily  
Registration/Name Tags  
Sign up for tours  
Sign up for golf  
Reunion Schedule  
Afternoon tours

### Friday, August 19:

Golf (a.m.)  
Tours (dependent on member response)  
San Diego trolley tour  
Balboa Zoo/museums  
Rueben Fleet Air/Space Museum  
Tijuana tour  
Sea World  
Harbor Cruise & Seaport Village  
Birch Aquarium-Museum & La Jolla  
Wild Animal Park  
Mixer 6-9 p.m.  
Hospitality Room reopens at 9 p.m.

### Saturday, August 20:

Business Meeting (Membership), 9 a.m.,  
Election, '95 reunion site, etc.  
Tours (as above)  
Business Meeting (Advisory Board, Officers, Reunion Coordinator) '95 planning meeting.  
Banquet 6-9 p.m.  
Hospitality Room reopens 9 p.m.

### Sunday, August 21:

Hospitality Room open until noon.

## REUNION COSTS

**Room rates** at the Holiday Inn are \$87 for bay view, and \$77 for City view. For reservations, call (619) 232-3861. Be sure you mention you are with the TOPEKA Reunion. (The Holiday Inn 800 number does not know about our reunion).

**The reunion fee** pays for the sit-down banquet (planned entrees include choice of prime rib or fresh salmon), hospitality room snacks, beverages (alcoholic, non-alcoholic, and coffee); heavy (you won't need dinner) hors d'oeuvres at the Friday night mixer, entertainment and audio set-up for the banquet, and the association meeting expenses. The reunion fee is set to accommodate those who can't make all three days of the reunion, with special rates for children under 17 attending the mixer and/or banquet. For members and adult guests, it is \$70 for all three days of the reunion; or \$10 Thursday, \$20 Friday, and \$40 Saturday. There is no charge for children unless they attend the mixer (\$10) and/or banquet (\$20).

## SAN DIEGO

San Diego is a great place to bring the family. The ocean beaches, Mission Bay Park beaches and recreation areas, Balboa Park, museums, and the famous San Diego Zoo, wild animal park and Sea World offer plenty to youngsters and adults alike. For the wives there are San Diego and Tijuana shopping tours. Horton Plaza is a large, unusual shopping mall only a few blocks from the Reunion hotel.

August weather in San Diego is great. While the rest of the country is sweltering, the normal temperature in San Diego on the Bay is in the 70-80° range during the day, and 60-70° at night. The humidity is low and the air is clean.

Our hospitality suite overlooks the bay. You will see the Navy "grays" coming and going Thursday and Friday, and the local sail boats and yachts on Saturday and Sunday. About one-third of the Navy Fleet is homeported in San Diego. The USS TOPEKA (SSN 754) is homeported there. A tour of one of the new Aegis cruisers is planned for those interested in seeing the new Navy.

Military and municipal golf courses are available for the golfers. If you are interested in playing golf, let Dudley know ahead of time so appropriate plans can be made.

A big turnout is expected for this reunion. Over 50 shipmates live in the San Diego area, and there was good representation from all over the country at the first reunion in San Diego. The city is a major airline hub, so if there are air fare discounts in effect, they will probably include flights to San Diego from other major airports. If you are interested in available RV parks, reservations should be made now. Call Dudley for additional information on RV parks.

## MEET YOUR SHIPMATE

Dick Ramsey, GMCM, joined the Navy in 1940 and was assigned to the USS Yorktown (CV10). He then went to Ships Repair Unit 1 in San Diego, and was assigned to Pearl Harbor two weeks after the bombing. Later, he was a member of the commissioning crew of the USS Houston (CL 81).

After the "Big War," Ramsey served in a number of ships, including the USS North Carolina and Oklahoma City, and shore commands in Argentina, Newfoundland and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was assigned to TOPEKA in 1962 and transferred to the Fleet Reserve in 1964.

Ramsey retired to a small spread in Lutz, Fla., a small community north of Tampa. He became active in several civic and fraternal organizations, including the Masonic Lodge, Elks, Fleet Reserve, American Legion, and the Latin American Fiesta Association. He has been very active in the latter, first as a member, then on the Board of Directors, and now, President.

The Latin American Fiesta Association was founded by several prominent citizens of Tampa to increase the dialogue between the "Anglos" and the various Latin communities. For 67 years, the association has followed the dictates of its founders.

Each year, young ladies of Latin heritage between the ages of 15 and 25 vie for Court positions of Queen and four Princess slots. The organization is funded by the sale of tickets by would-be Court members.



Ready for big game, Dick stands in front of the hunting tractors they will use in Colorado and Wyoming to hunt elk and deer. Dick left on this hunting trip from the reunion in Nashville.

Court members make public appearances throughout their year-long term. They travel throughout Florida, the country and several foreign countries. They have visited Central and South America, Europe, Russia, Japan, Hong Kong, the

Philippines, Taiwan, North Africa and Australia. More than 100 appearances are made each year.

The association has its own float, which Dick keeps in his barn, and they participate in several parades each year.

As an officer of the organization, Dick accompanies the girls on these tours. "Dorothy sure keeps a close eye on me to make sure I stay on the straight and narrow. Everyone thinks it's the young girls that attract me, but this sly, crafty old chief is eying the mothers and grandmothers."

Another of Dick's hobbies is hunting. For almost 30 years, he has made an annual trip to Colorado and Wyoming to hunt elk and deer. This past year, his hunting buddies picked him up on Sunday at the Reunion hotel in Nashville. It wasn't a good hunting year for him, as he learned after his first day of hunting that Dorothy had gone into the hospital, and he had to fly home. His friends bagged six elk and three deer without him.

## IT AIN'T LIKE IT USE TO BE

From Shenkman and Rieger's "One-Night Stands with American History" (Quill, 1982): Navy Punishments in the mid 19th Century:

- For bad cooking - - 12 strokes of a whip.
- For stealing leader's wig - - 12 strokes
- For stealing liquor - - 12 strokes
- For dirty clothes - - 12 strokes
- For being naked on deck - - 9 strokes.

## NEWS OF ILLNESS, INJURY, DEATH?

We now have Get Well and Sympathy cards which we send on behalf of the Association, in case of illness, injury or death. Please call Jack Connery, (918) 366-4581 or Dudley Cass at (619) 267-3123 if you have such information.

## ZIP CODE LISTING

Would you like to know what members live near you, or any given area of the country? We now have a membership list sorted by zip code, which will answer that question. This list has proven very helpful in contacting members when travelling. It is available on request. Write or call Dudley Cass. Phone number and address are given elsewhere in this newsletter.

# THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS OF AN EARTHQUAKE VICTIM

by **Irak (Parky) Parkhurst**

At 0431, 17 January, 1994, Betty and I were awakened from a sound sleep by being tossed around like corks on a rough sea. I'm sure we bounced off the ceiling at least once. There was nothing to do but cling to each other and ride it out. When the movement subsided enough to do anything, we knew we had to find a flashlight, and some shoes to protect our feet from the broken glass which was everywhere. Eventually, under the rubble we dug out both shoes and flashlight, and could begin to assess our situation. One dresser with a large mirror had fallen across our bed, but fortunately, it did not injure us.

With dawn, we were able to make our way out and around the house through the few doors that were not blocked with rubble.



## **If it would break, it broke**

To get an idea of what we faced, look around your home and picture everything in cabinets, cupboards, on shelves, or hanging on the walls, thrown to the floor and broken. Picture every dresser, standing cabinet, buffet or hutch thrown face down, drawers and doors broken, contents spilled out. Picture the refrigerator open with all the contents spilled and broken, the odor of pickle juice, soy sauce, mustard, etc mixed with the coffee, sugar, and flour on the floor. Speaking of odors, try bottles of Shalimar and Joy perfumes soaked into your bedroom carpet. (Some of this I had brought back from France in the '50s. Betty never wanted to open them because they were so expensive.)

That's the way we found our lovely home that morning, and it all happened in a matter of seconds.

We have big cracks in the plaster in every room, big cracks in the stucco on the outside, and a brick chimney in danger of falling. The TV and stereo were laying on their faces in the center of the living room. Then I went to the garage.

Both the new Camry and our Plymouth van were covered with stuff that had been thrown from the shelves and overhead storage. The cars were both badly dented and scratched all over, and the van had literally been picked up and thrown against the side of the garage, making its left side look like it had been sideswiped by a garbage truck.

We were without electricity for 3 days. Strangely enough, the gas and water were not interrupted, so we were very lucky. The water was not fit to drink, but then it wasn't much better before the quake.

The aftershocks continued, making things unpleasant, to say the least. They still continue at this writing, two weeks later. Betty and I slept in the van the first night (I was able to get the cars out of the garage), and have been sleeping in the living room near the front door since.

After the first day, cleanup began, scooping up shovels full of broken glass, up-righting downed furniture, sweeping and scrubbing, sorting and vacuuming (when the electricity came on), and all of that still continues. The stores around us are all closed, and getting to any others that are open is a night mare. Recovery will take a long time.

There is a bright side to all of this. We are unhurt, as are all the children and grandchildren in the area. We are most thankful for that.

Friends and neighbors have come together to help each other as never before. The stories you saw on TV about people helping people became a way of life. We were one of the lucky 20 percent that had earthquake insurance, and Farmers has been most cooperative, as has Colonial Penn Auto Insurance. After setting them up-right and in their proper places, all of our major appliances and most of the small ones work. And let's give thanks to the beautiful weather we have had through it all. It could have been cold and wet to add to our misery, especially before we had electricity. Instead, it has been warm and sunny, and only rained once, and that was during the night.

Another thing that softened the blow so much was the concern of our friends and relatives who live away from the area, who called when they could get through. Especially our TOPEKA shipmates.

Eventually, the aftershocks will stop, the house will be restored, the personal things replaced, the pictures re-hanged, but the memories will remain, especially the nice memories I mentioned.

Have we thought about moving away? Not on your life? It's 40° below in the Northeast; hurricanes in the Southeast; tornadoes in the Mid and Southwest, floods along the Mississippi, and it rains a lot in the Northwest, and so on. Earthquakes are not the worst things that can happen - - if you survive them.

*Ed Note: Thanks Parky, for sharing this with us. Parky is one TOPEKA sailor we could find who had significant earthquake damage. If there are others, please let us know.*

## LET'S MAKE IT A SUCCESS

We need information from you to help make this reunion a success. Most importantly, are you coming? Everyone wants to know, "who is coming?" In the next newsletter (May) we will publish a list. So get your name on the list now so your buddies will be encouraged to come to see you.

We need to know your desires about tours so we can make advance arrangements. We will arrange tours for groups of 20 or more. We will assist individuals and smaller groups in making tour arrangements through local tour vendors.

We need to know how many to cook for. And the size of the hospitality and banquet rooms will depend on the number coming. If you are (definitely, or even maybe) coming to the reunion, make it better by taking the time **NOW** to complete the enclosed form and mail it to Dudley.

## RETURN OF THE FANTAIL FROLICS!!

Remember the famous all-star Fantail Frolics? John Reynolds needs volunteer talent to stage an authentic return of the Fantail Frolics at the San Diego Reunion. Musical, comedy, lip-sync, slapstick - - if you can do it, here's your chance to star again in the revival of the Frolics. Contact John Reynolds at (310) 540-7817.

## ADDRESSES FOR ASSOCIATION MATTERS

### Newsletter inputs:

Jack Connery, 16334 South Lewis, Bixby, Ok., 74008.

### Dues, Member information, reunion information:

Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, Cal., 91902.

### Death or illness: Either Dudley or Jack.

### TOPEKA Caps, Shirts, etc.

Dick Jolliffe, 7453 Golfcrest Dr., San Diego, Cal., 92119

## WELCOME ABOARD (SINCE NOV. 1, 1993)

Mike Hefe, FTM2, Fenton, MO.

Ted Edwards, GMM3, Puyallup, WA.

Francis "Ski" Townsend, EM2, 67-69, Ocala, FL.

Claude Kinder, RD2, 59-64, Shipshewana, IN.

Paul Gass, ETCS, 65-67, Sparta, MO.

Moultrie Vierra, HTCS, 64-66, Hunnington Beach, CA.

James Willis, HM1, 61-63, Chula Vista, CA.

Daniel Knight, BM3, 60-62, Chesapeake, VA.  
Roger, Persell, QM3, 59-62, Portland, OR.  
Josh Johnston, LT, 64-66, Subic, Zamboles, R.P.  
Jerry Farmer, Hesperia, CA.  
Larry Baity, PFC, 60-62, Greenville, SC.  
Jack Ahart, BT3, 60-63, Parkersburg, WV.  
Dennis Nagel, ETR3, 65-67, Delray Beach, FL.  
William Hoffman, LT, 66-67, Alexandria, VA.  
William Kavanaugh, BT3, 63-67, Jefferson, LA.  
Keith Kamp, BT3, 60-64, Placerville, CA.  
Kisko Bronaugh, MM3, 62-66, Disney, OK.

## 1994 DUES ARE DUE

1994 dues of \$15.00 are due, and should be submitted. Make checks payable to USS TOPEKA Reunion Association and mail to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Drive, Bonita, CA., 91902.

This is the only time dues will be mentioned in this newsletter. Bringing news of the Association to you is more important. However, there will be a change in procedure to provide a subtle reminder.

In the past, the newsletter address label indicated that dues had been paid. In 1994, address labels will indicate both paid and non-paid. This is being done based on the assumption that some people need occasional reminders.

Each year, generous members send contributions in addition to their dues. This year, we will keep all contributions separate in a "worthwhile charity" fund. At our next reunion business meeting, we will decide how to apply this fund. Possibilities include Navy Relief or a scholarship fund administered by a Navy-related organization.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

At the Nashville reunion, Ernie Villamil, DKCM, (63-65) agreed to attack the Navy archives in Washington, D.C. and obtain copies of the ship's diaries, since they are a matter of public record. The ship's diary is an official record of who is on board, and is provided to the Bureau of Naval Personnel. With each sailing, the last piece of mail to leave the ship is a diary update, accounting for new people, people on leave, etc.

As of this writing, he has been able to get four quarters worth, effective in the mid-sixties. This amounts to volumes of paper containing over 800 full names, service numbers and other information. Postage to mail it to Dudley was over \$7.00.

Using his nationwide electronic phone directory, Dudley Cass has mailed post cards to more than 600

names on the list. Some of the people listed in the "Welcome Aboard" column were found in this manner. According to Dudley, over 30 more have been found and will be listed in the next newsletter. "Not a day goes by now but what we don't find new shipmates," says Dudley.

*Ed Note; Congratulations Ernie and Dudley. Now, watch us grow. And Ernie: send Dudley a bill for your expenses.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed.

The last newsletter was great and so were all the pictures. What a fantastic time we had in Nashville. Here are some extras. Sorry I didn't get them to you sooner.

In your "Welcome Aboard" section, Ron found a shipmate he hasn't seen in over 30 years. He can't wait to call Dudley to get his phone number and address. They were the best of pals on the ship.

Looking forward to the next newsletter. They are so much fun to read.

Ron and Clare Smart

*Ed Note: Thanks Ron and Clare. I would bet there is another old shipmate in the column this newsletter.*

Dear Ed:

I can't tell you what a thrill it was to see and be with people I haven't seen in 30 years. It brought back some great memories. The time and work the board put into the reunion was truly appreciated.

We hope to see you in San Diego.

Steve and Sandra Archbold

Dear Ed.

Sorry I missed the 93 reunion. From the newsletter, it looks like all hands enjoyed themselves.

I plan to attend the '94 reunion in San Diego, with my wife, Susan. Enclosed are my '94 dues.

Many thanks for the time and effort you guys are putting into the association. I know it's appreciated by a lot of shipmates.

Buck Ashford

**USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)  
REUNION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER  
c/o JACK CONNERY  
16334 SOUTH LEWIS  
BIXBY, OK 74008**



# 1994 REUNION, AUGUST 18-20, SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I am planning to attend the San Diego Reunion

How many attendees in addition to yourself \_\_\_\_\_

Will you stay at the Reunion Hotel? Yes/No

Do you plan on playing golf? Yes/No

My banquet menu choice is (circle one) fresh salmon or prime rib

I am interested in the following tours:

San Diego trolley tour

Balboa Zoo/museums

Tia Juana tour

Sea World

Harbor Cruise

Navy Cruiser (ship tour)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this Now and Mail to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Drive, Bonita, Cal 91902