

USS Benjamin Stoddert (DDG-22) Association



The Stoddert News

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Concord, CA 2007—September 19th-23rd

The third reunion of the Benjamin Stoddert is now in the books and judged a success. It did not come off without a hitch, however, as miscommunication left the Friday tour group feeling a little...well, less than satisfied.

The Wednesday reception was well attended as those arriving early gathered in the hospitality room to enjoy snacks, beverages, and renewed acquaintanceships. A few of the early arrivals (including me) chose to ride the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) train to San Francisco for sight-seeing, shopping and supper. The shuttle drove us to the BART station where we figured out the fare/ticketing system. It took about an hour to get from the hotel to downtown SF, and cost less than \$5 per ticket. The BART trains were clean, fast, and friendly.

Thursday morning was grey and threatening, which seemed appropriate for our first stop on the tour: the USS Hornet CV-12. Our group was split into two—one that wanted to climb lots of ladders and one that wanted a more level tour. Bum knee and all, I went on the multi-leveled, ladder-climbing tour. We toured from stem to stern, engine room to the bridge. The Hornet's ward room was about three times the size of the Stoddert's mess deck. It was an interesting and informative tour—even though my wife and I got left behind when we stopped to look at something or other. We proceeded downward toward the main deck, but must have taken a wrong turn somewhere and were separated from the group. After

climbing back up a deck or two, we finally ran into another gal (who was a long way from Story City, Iowa) who was as lost as we were. Starting to feel like a right-side-up Poseidon Adventure, we found the escalator (added during a 1970's retro-fit to get the gear-laden pilots up to the flight deck), that the tour group had taken up, but we went down the now shut-off escalator to get back to the main deck. From there we found the entrance and exit.

After all the stragglers were collected, we boarded the bus for a short ride over to Pier 39 in San Francisco. Adjacent to the famed Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 is a popular tourist attraction and home to a variety of restaurants, arcades, and shops. There we had a chance to view the sea lions on K Pier and eat from a number of sit-down restaurants and walk-up diners. The crab cakes were excellent! After a stop that was just enough to whet the appetite, we got on the bus again for a tour of San Francisco.

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The Seven Painted Ladies in San Francisco

Our bus driver, Gene—not in the least young, but nonetheless daring—took that bus on streets which I’m sure have not seen a bus before. We saw the seven painted ladies (Victorian houses), Nob Hill, Chinatown, that twisty street Lombard (No, we did not take the bus down that street), and any number of other interesting sites. Our tour guide was well informed and friendly and the tour was fascinating.

When the bus went back to Pier 39 to drop off the tour guide, many of the group who had not seen enough of Pier 39 and Fisherman’s Wharf got off there as well. Then, after an evening of site-seeing, shopping, and dining, we took BART back to the Concord station where the hotel shuttle picked us up. Of course Janie and I were in this adventurous group. We visited a wonderful Museum of Arcade & Amusement Games, had supper in a great little restaurant, and shopped in quite a number of the stores.

When we got back to the hotel, the fellowship in the hospitality room was in full swing. Stories of heroic deeds and dangerous seas were being tossed about like...well, like stories. A few stayed up until the wee hours.

The Friday tour started out on a bright and cool morning. The first indication of things to come was that the tour bus was late—which put us behind at our first stop, the V. Sattui Winery, in St. Helena, where we had a chance to shop and stroll around. This was not where we were scheduled for our tour and the tasting—although they did have wine tasting in the sales room. This was about the time that somebody noticed that our itinerary and the bus driver’s schedule did not match. Nonetheless, we forged on into the town of Napa, and the Copia Wine & Food Center. While we expected a tour here, or at a subsequent stop—what we got was access to the museum and the gardens for self-guided tours, which were interesting, but it was not a tour of a working winery. It is an old Navy axiom that a sailor isn’t

happy if he isn’t &!#*@ (griping)—so there certainly were a lot of happy sailors on that bus going back to the hotel.

That evening the buffet dinner was excellent and followed by the open microphone session which afforded many sailors an opportunity to express their appreciation for the Stoddert and her crews.



Admiral Peter M. Hekman, Jr.

Admiral Peter Hekman (7th Skipper of the Stoddert) spoke of his time aboard, including the rescuing of more than 100 Vietnamese refugees as well as some now-declassified operations in which we were involved on the 1975 WestPac.

Jon Malay, former ASW officer, and author of [Seraphim Sky](http://www.seraphimsky.com) (see www.seraphimsky.com), spoke up to say that he intends to write a historical account of the Stoddert’s final days in Vietnam, including the rescue operations.

Following the buffet, the evening (or morning?) was completed by more time in the hospitality room.

The business meeting on Saturday morning went very well. (Notes from the meeting follow in this newsletter; however, they will not be voted for approval until our next reunion.) We had a couple of fellows interested in following Herm’s leadership as the re-union chairman, with Lou Turilli being elected.

The Saturday evening banquet began with a local high school JROTC unit which provided a posting of the colors. Lloyd Hoffmeister acted as Chaplain and offered grace before the meal and the reading of the "missing buddy" table at the dinner. Hugh Fleet gave an inspirational, patriotic presentation about the various flags that have flown over our nation in the course of her history.

Hugh and Madelaine Fleet



**Benjamin Stoddert Association
Business Meeting Minutes
Concord, California 09/22/07
(unofficial pending approval)**

Meeting called to order by Reunion Chairman Herm Chambers.

Old Business:

Minutes of 2006 meeting read and approved as read

Financial statement read and approved as read – insert finances here

Motion made and approved to publish the newsletter online except in those cases where the member has no email address

Association Committee reported out

Bylaws approved as received

New Business:

Election of Officers

Lou Turilli – Chairman

Frank Chesla – Cochairman

Dave Saunders – Secretary

Herm Chambers – Treasurer

John Bassolino – member-at-large

John Dishaw – member-at-large

Art Hansen – Newsletter Editor

Dave Behrends – Association Historian

Carole Bryan – Association Webmaster

Slate approved unanimously

Chairman opened discussion of the Associations relationship with Military Reunions to Remember (MRTR) and the 2008 reunion.

Motion to continue with MRTR for one more year approved

Chairman established a splinter group to take a message of concerns to MRTR some problems encountered at this year's reunion with Mac McCandless as point man.

Motion to establish annual dues at \$20.00 due on 01/01/08 unanimously approved

Member proposals for sites for the 2008 reunion were: Orlando, FL; Pearl Harbor, HI; San Antonio, TX; Washington, D.C.; Rapid City, SD; Colorado Springs, CO; Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Memphis, TN; Las Vegas, NV. The top three vote getters were Rapid City, SD – 20, Washington, D.C. – 17, San Antonio, TX – 15 and will be researched by the Reunion Committee.

A letter sent to the Association by Tom O'Donnell was discussed regarding the possible link between his cancer and the possibility of exposure to Agent Orange while onboard the Stoddert in Da Nang Harbor.

The need for a list to be kept of crew members who have passed away was discussed. It was noted that the Association Secretary is tasked with maintaining such a list. The Secretary asked that all members assist in the establishment a deceased list by submitting names of crew members known to them to be deceased.

A suggestion from the floor concerning publishing the dates and place of reunions in newspapers and magazines was accepted as a goal of the Reunion Committee.

Another suggestion from the floor regarding reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and having a moment of silence for our fallen comrades at the beginning of each gathering of the Association has been made part of the Chairman's agenda.

A motion was made and approved to give Herm appreciation.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Dave Saunders, Secretary

Approved by Lou Turilli, Chairman

(Unofficial)

**Benjamin Stoddert Association
Executive Committee Meeting
22 September 2007**

Members Present

Lou Turilli	Chairman
Frank Chesla	Co-Chairman
Dave Saunders	Secretary
Herm Chambers	Treasurer
John Bassolino	Member-at-large
John Dishaw	Member-at-large
Art Hansen	Newsletter Editor
Carole Bryan	Webmaster

Discussion of the Duties of the Secretary

- Secretary may delegate duties but maintains responsibility
- Lou Turilli will take the lead on the lost sailors issue.
- John Bassolino will check in the Washington, D.C. area to get a listing of those who served aboard the Stoddert.
- All hands will be encouraged to contact their old friends and shipmates.
- Secretary will coordinate efforts to better recognize 1st time attendees. The possibility of a Welcome Committee and sponsorships was also addressed.

Finances

- Herm Chambers to provide Lou with the current books so Lou can set them up on Quickbooks for Herm's use.
- John Bassolino will provide Lou a copy of Quickbooks.
- Lou and Herm will coordinate to get Lou on the bank account as a signatory.
- The Committee determined that being able to pay dues online would be a good idea. Carole will work on setting up PayPal on the site.
- Lou, Herm, and Frank are to work on setting up the Association as a non-profit organization. Frank is to take the lead and report within two months.

- Lou and Carole will work with Terry McManuels to get control of the ship's store and run it through the website.

Other Business:

- The Annual Herm Chambers Award was discussed. It would honor non-crewmembers with honorary membership. Its purpose would be to encourage more participation by spouses, children and others in the Association's activities.
- Lou will coordinate with Terry McManuels on next year's reunion.
- Art will provide Lou and Carole a copy of his master mailing list. Art will continue to be responsible for the mailing list.
- Changing the by-laws to allow lifetime memberships was discussed and no decision was made on the matter.

David Saunders

Benjamin Stoddert Association Secretary

David Saunders, dallr@earthlink.net



CHANGE OF COMMAND (A note from Herm Chambers)

To all, we hope the event was entertaining and worthwhile for you. Come back next year; it will be bigger and better--guaranteed. We were honored this year to meet two of the Stoddert's former Commanding Officers and their ladies, Captain and Mrs. Edward Siegrist (4/73 - 3/75) and Vice Admiral and Mrs. Peter Hekman, (3/75 - 9/76), skippers #6 and 7, respectively. Our thanks go to you to have had the opportunity to meet you and learn some history of Stoddert during your times aboard. Hope to see you at future reunions.

And Now! For every season...there is a time. The season, the autumn of my life; the time, the third reunion of crewmembers and their families of the good ship USS BENJAMIN STODDERT (DDG-22), Concord, CA, 19 - 23 September 2007. The time is here, also, to turn the helm over to a new watch, the duly elected officers of the newly formed USS Benjamin Stoddert Association, led by Chairman Lou Turilli. A ton of thanks to all who have made these events click--not only to the attendees but also to those good souls who, unable to attend, yet provided financial support by participating in the 50/50 drawings and enclosing a bit extra in their envelopes--straight-out monetary donations. Likewise to those who volunteered time, effort, and donated personal finances in the organization process--our Wardroom Coordinator, Bert Cassels, the ship's plank owner ASW officer, who not only brought the commissioning wardroom on board but became the point of contact for subsequent wardroom members. None of these events would have been as successful without the strong representation by our ship's former officers--we were/are family. And to our website duo (Mr. & Mrs.) Carole Bryan and Lou Turilli (Lou says he wants to remain in the background so I'm acceding to his wishes here) who have donated time and also borne the expense of our ddg22.com website. To Art and Janie

Hansen, our dynamic duo responsible for the newsletter, also sharing time and personal expense. And, not to be forgotten, Historian Dave Behrend. To three-time attendees and photographers par excellence, Maureen Moore and Frank Chesla who have recorded these events on film/digital and shared their results with the rest of us by making CD's available. This year, thanks also to our own Linda and Wayne Ellington who manned the registration table. Linda, hope you recovered your voice. Also, many, many thanks to Hugh Fleet for sharing his United States Flag Program with us during our banquet dinner. Fantastico, Hugh. To Caroline Prescott and ALL the staff at Holiday Inn Concord for the hospitality and accommodation shown us, our thanks. And to Mr. Military Reunions To Remember, ETCM Terry McManuels, USN, Ret. and his very able staff, who helped us get Operation DDG-22 Reunion under way--St. Louis, MO - 2005; King of Prussia, PA - 2006; and Concord, CA, this year. Each has been memorable--in its own way, but each one, truly, a Military Reunion to Remember. Thanks, Terry! And lastly, to my wife, Carmen, who has tolerated me during the past five or so years that I've spent on this project, my thanks and gratitude. She wasn't a part of my Navy life and came into this with strictly a landlubber viewpoint but during and after our first reunion, she quickly perceived what it was all about and enthusiastically looked forward to our subsequent reunions.

With that, I'll double up the mooring lines, set the cold iron watch, grab a cuppa coffee, and stand down. Thank you all for coming along for the ride; it's been a blast.

Yours, Aye--Herm

Herm sent a P.S. to remember to thank Lloyd Hoffmeister, an MMC and plank owner, for his services as Chaplain at the dinner and for orating the "missing buddy" table.

2007 50-50 TICKET DRAWING

Once again, we had the 50-50 ticket drawing at the 2007 reunion. John Lekwa (left) won \$350.00 and graciously donated \$100 back to the Association.



Remember, the 50-50 drawing is always open to everyone, regardless of whether or not you attend the reunion. **You do not have to be present to win, and we'll do it again for the 2008 reunion!** Winners who are not at the reunion will have checks mailed to them as soon as we return from our next reunion. Here is a chance to cash in on some big bucks. Ticket sales for the 50-50

will continue until just before the drawing.

Help support a growing Benjamin Stoddert Association. If you want to purchase 50/50 tickets, simply mail \$10.00 for each 12 tickets to Herm Chambers at the address below, and if possible, include 12 address labels so we can place them on the tickets for you. Make your checks payable to USS Benjamin Stoddert Association.

Herm Chambers
220 Meister Way
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