

# USS Benjamin Stoddert (DDG-22) Association



## *The Stoddert* **SITREP**

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Next Reunion: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON  
October 2-6, 2013



***Details in future newsletters.***

*We will be staying in the Crowne Plaza Downtown (Seattle). Thursday's tour will include the Boeing Museum, and the evening will conclude with a buffet dinner. Friday's tour will include Bremerton, Puget Sound through Tacoma to a huge auto museum. On Saturday, we will have a charter bus making a 30 minute loop with stops at various Seattle landmarks like Pike's Market, Underground Seattle, and the Space Needle, or people can go off on their own tours.*

*Look for future issues of the SITREP for information about Seattle, the locale, reunion information, and other miscellany.*

### **REUNION 2012: Albuquerque, NM**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Benjamin Stoddert reunion, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was a great success. While this was the 8<sup>th</sup> reunion for Stoddert sailors, it was the first joint reunion with member of the Jupiter (AK7). The Jupiter, a veteran of WWII & the Korean War, has seen her Association numbers shrinking because of age. Combining our reunions enabled both associations to get better deals on hotel rooms, banquets, tour prices, everything. It also added to the mutual enjoyment of both groups as we met together and shared stories and memories in the hospitality suite (aka, Ron Zorn's room). With more tours available than ever before, we had plenty to keep us busy, besides enjoying camaraderie in the hospitality room.

Thursday's tour was well attended. Our tour guide on both days was Tam Chavez, a New Jersey transplant who loves New Mexico and Albuquerque every bit as much as the natives. She regaled us with factoids and fascinating tales of the area as we rode the bus from site to site. We began Thursday's tour with a visit to Old Town Albuquerque and a stop at the Turquoise Museum. Joe Dan, the proprietor

gave us a very informative talk on this gemstone, about how and where turquoise is mined and what to look for when buying turquoise. For example, because turquoise is a color, almost anything can be labeled “real,” “genuine,” or “authentic” and be accurate and legal. The real test is, is it “natural.” The only way to be sure you are getting “natural, Indian-made”



turquoise jewelry is to ask for written documentation. If it is the real (that is, natural) thing, dealers will gladly provide this. Next was a visit to the Old Town Plaza where we ate in any number of restaurants and were free to visit any of several museums (we opted for the Rattlesnake Museum) and/or shop for souvenirs before boarding the bus for a ride to the National



Museum of Nuclear Science and History. This museum is part of the Smithsonian and had a wealth of information on

all the uses of atomic energy from bombs to jewelry and dishes.

Thursday night was capped off with an excellent buffet dinner and more fellowship in the hospitality room.

The Friday tours started at 5:45 AM with the adventurous types heading out for a hot air balloon ride, which was as educational as it was exhilarating. For example, one of the three men on the first free flight hot air balloon was a French scientist named **Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier**, which is where we get our word “pilot.” He later died in a balloon crash and he, and his companion, became the first casualties of manned flight. Four flights lifted gently into the air with no sensation of movement. We floated just above tree top level—our pilot even picked a “bouquet” from the top of a tall cottonwood, and dipped the bottom of the basket into the Rio Grande River and “kissed” another

balloon (see picture below) before ascending to



a height of 2500 feet for a panoramic view of the valley and the lava flows from extinct volcanoes. Then we descended to tree-top level again, where we waved at and talked to people on the ground in the residential areas. After a one-hour flight filled with fun and facts about the topography and area in general, we shared a breakfast snack of muffins, fruit, mimosas and orange juice.

The second tour of the day took an enthusiastic group to the historical town of Santé Fe. Here we saw the famed miracle spiral staircase said to have been built by St. Joseph, in the Loretto Chapel. We also had three hours of free time on the Plaza where we dined in a variety of fine restaurants, visited museums and shopped at hundreds of shops and street vendors.



The evening tours ran simultaneously, so we had to choose: gambling or dangling at great heights from a gondola on the Sandia Peak Tram. Your editor team chose to eat at the High Finance Restaurant on Sandia Peak, so can't report directly on the gambling squad, but my understanding is that both tours contributed to the local economy.

The business meeting on Saturday morning was almost kept to the one-hour promised by Mr. President, Ron Zorn. (Minutes of the meeting will be in a subsequent edition.)

Between the business meeting and the evening banquet, we had ample time to see what Albuquerque offered for those who chose to not stay at the hotel. A couple of hot



spots were the Petroglyph National Monument and the Anderson Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum.



The banquet was excellent and the entertainment at the banquet was unsurpassable. Not only did we have live entertainment at the banquet, but they invited two ladies to join them on a number. The rumor was the two women had been seen playing the marimba in the Olympics. Janie Bower-Hansen & Jan Lekwa never missed a beat, despite the fact they were giggling like school girls, much to the delight of the audience.



After dinner, we proceeded quickly to the raffle drawing as John Dishaw called out the winning number from tickets drawn by "Fat Man" (Alec Maldonado) and "Big Boy," (Ethan Christianson) grandsons of Hugh Fleet. Five or six of the ladies there assisted by delivering the prizes to the winners at their tables. The raffle table was loaded with fabulous prizes of all sorts, including homemade jams and preserves.



(I hope people had checked bags or were traveling by car to get those jelly jars, which were over three ounces, home. I had to go back to the ticket counter and have a rather ungracious agent pull my checked bag to get my Red Chile & Strawberry Jelly, which TSA found in one of our carry-on bags, home safely. It is delicious, by the way.) There were so many door prizes that winners of multiple prizes were common and despite the steady work of the crew, it took a bit of time to empty the tables.

When the raffle prizes ran out, we had three items to auction off. Two magnums of a quality California wine and a handmade crib quilt with



fabric sporting images of the USS Midway. Guest auctioneer

Art Hansen (I can scratch another thing off my bucket list!!) had a great time calling out the auction while trying to ignore his wife's (Janie's) hand waving in the air. All of the items sold for very good prices with proceeds going to the Stoddert Association.

After the auction, those with early morning flights toddled off to bed, while many others stayed to converse and maybe carouse a bit. Being in the early morning group, your newsletter editors said their good-byes and exchanged promises with friends, old and new, to see one another in Seattle next year.



**Standing watch at the Registration Table**  
(John Dishaw, Joy Patz, Mike Rigdon, Judy Martinez)

### The F & G Mini

#### Reunion: By Jay Jansson

Four members of the F & G Division, Walter Zylowski FTG2, John Stevens FTM2, Wayne Fass FTG3 and Jay Jansson FTG2 along with their significant others, Yvonne, Jan, Susie and Peggy had the times of their lives attending the Albuquerque Reunion. Our hats are off to the organizers and officers of the DDG22 Association for bringing us together.



It had been some 41 years since we last saw each other and it seemed just like yesterday since we had been together. We went through the '70-'71 and the '72 West Pacs together where we fired some 2000-3000 rounds a week when we were on the gun line. We also pulled our duty on Yankee Station plane guarding the flat tops and their planes.

When we got back to Pearl Harbor many of us shared the rental of a house up in Pearl City. It brought us that much closer together as living together on a ship and then in a house cemented our friendships forever.

"Ski" was the FTG LPO and John Stevens lead the FTM's. Of course you had to have a cut up like me that gave everyone their own nicknames. Wayne Fass quickly became Sgt. Rock for the favorite comic books he read. He still goes by "Rock" today. Ski was nick named the "Animal" because of the way he threw live ammo over the side when we had battle damage. John's nick name came easy to me - "John John" is the handle that landed on him. They couldn't do much with Jay so they called me "Hey You" or some other derogatory things that they could come up with.

For four of us it was much more than that, as we were able to talk about the gun mount explosion that

killed four of our shipmates and finally come to peace with it. We said our good bye to them and it surely brought some closure to us with PTSD.

So, we invite all our shipmates especially the F&G Division to make the next reunion in Seattle. Hawaii in 2014 will surely be a blast too. My recommendation is that everyone makes their best efforts to attend the reunions. You will have a flood of memories as well as friendships that will be a highlight in your lives.

## The Benny Sweat Albuquerque Reunion

By: Jay Jansson

Simply put, the Benjamin Stoddert (DDG22) Albuquerque reunion was one of the highlights of many of our lives. It was the first time that my wife, Peggy, and I attended a Benny Sweat reunion, and we now plan on making all future ones. It was a blast.

During the reunion I was given the opportunity to show my first children's book, "Junior, the Cat that Loves to Surf". During the reunion seven of Junior's adventures were sold of which \$2 from each book was donated to the DDG22 Association. Two other dollars from the sale of each book for \$10 was donated to Disabled American Veterans Memorial Post 45 in San Luis Obispo, CA, where we live.



**JUNIOR!**  
The Cat that Loves to Surf

by Jay Jansson

In other words I don't have any plans to make any money off my book but hope to raise more money for the DDG22 Association as well as the DAV.

If you are interested in one please contact me at [jayjansson@gmail.com](mailto:jayjansson@gmail.com) or [jjansson11@yahoo.com](mailto:jjansson11@yahoo.com). The book was written with the joy of surfing riding along with the ubiquitous "Junior" (our mischievous cat who passed away) which gave me the inspiration to write this Dr. Seuss type book.

If you're interested in a signed copy of "Junior" for yourselves or kids of any ages please contact me. I will be donating back 20% of all sales to the DDG22 Association. I can be reached at (805) 704-6977.

Fair Winds and Following Seas, Jay Jansson FTG2, proud member of DDG22 from 1970-1972.

*Call for articles:* Have a favorite Stoddert memory or something of Naval interest to share with everyone? Send it to us and we'll see if we can't fit it in the newsletter. *Ed.*



## SHIP'S STORE

Don't forget to visit the Ship's Store on-line at [www.DDG22.com](http://www.DDG22.com). The Stoddert challenge coins from the Albuquerque reunion are in stock and available for immediate shipping. Also find there many other things from coffee mugs to t-shirts.

## Get in on the Fifty-Fifty Drawing

**HELP SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION:** Remember, the **FIFTY-FIFTY** drawing is always open to everyone, and **You do not have to be present to win.** The winners who are not at the reunion will have a check mailed to him or her immediately after the reunion. **And you don't have**



**to give your winnings back to the Stoddert Association,** all though this is what happened this year and last. **This year's winners are: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, \$75—Judy Martinez; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, \$100—Dave Saunders; and 1<sup>st</sup> Place, \$150—Clem Clemmons.**

**Thanks guys for the generous donation of your winnings.**

Let's sell some of these tickets to people outside the organization—somebody who will actually take the cash.

Tickets are no longer mailed out with newsletters: instead you need only send your check in along with some of those pesky return address labels that regularly appear in your mailbox if you have ever given to a charity. Our treasurer will take care of the funds and will even stick the address labels on the tickets.

If you want to sell 50/50 tickets to your workplace buddies, we can send you a page of the tickets in email (when they are available—I just checked the website, and they are not up yet), you can print them off and sell all you want.....Just remember to send the money and the tickets with the address labels to John Dishaw. The drawing is open to anyone (over age 18, just to be legal). You can

also get a whole page of tickets at the website, under the reunion information. As always, we will be selling 50/50 drawing tickets right up to a few minutes before the drawing at the 2012 reunion banquet dinner.

Help support our Benjamin Stoddert Association. To purchase 50/50 tickets, mail \$10.00 for each 12 tickets to the address below and include 12 address labels. Make your checks payable to USS Benjamin Stoddert Association and mail to:

John Dishaw, 3035 Charlotte Street, Newbury Park, CA 91320

## FACEBOOK your Stoddert buddies

The member list is now 303—up over 10% from the last newsletter.

Chances are that you know at least one person on the USS Benjamin Stoddert Alumni DDG-22 Facebook page! You need to have a Facebook page yourself, and it's easy to do if you have an email address. Hundreds of pictures have been added...how many are you in? Go to FACEBOOK and find out. [USS Benjamin Stoddert Alumni, DDG-22](http://USS Benjamin Stoddert Alumni, DDG-22)

## Past Reunion Pic—San Diego 2010



**Don't know how you did it Herm, but you sure attracted the wahines.**

I want to extend a special *thank you* to Frank Chesla for providing me with a disk with all of his pictures. He took most of the pictures in this edition, including this one. (How'd he do that?) Note: resizing has affected quality somewhat—this is not Frank's doing, but it facilitates electronic distribution.



## From Humor in Uniform

On leave after a yearlong tour in Korea, my friend's first craving back home was a meal at McDonalds. Much to his surprise, the cashier took one look at his uniform and refused his money. "Thanks," he said. "Sure," she replied, "We never charge bus drivers." Leesa Braun. (*He must have been Air Force—ed.*)



Albuquerque was indeed a beautiful and restful city, full of picturesque buildings and quiet plazas. Be sure to join us in 2013 in Seattle, Washington, to renew old friendships and form many new ones.

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