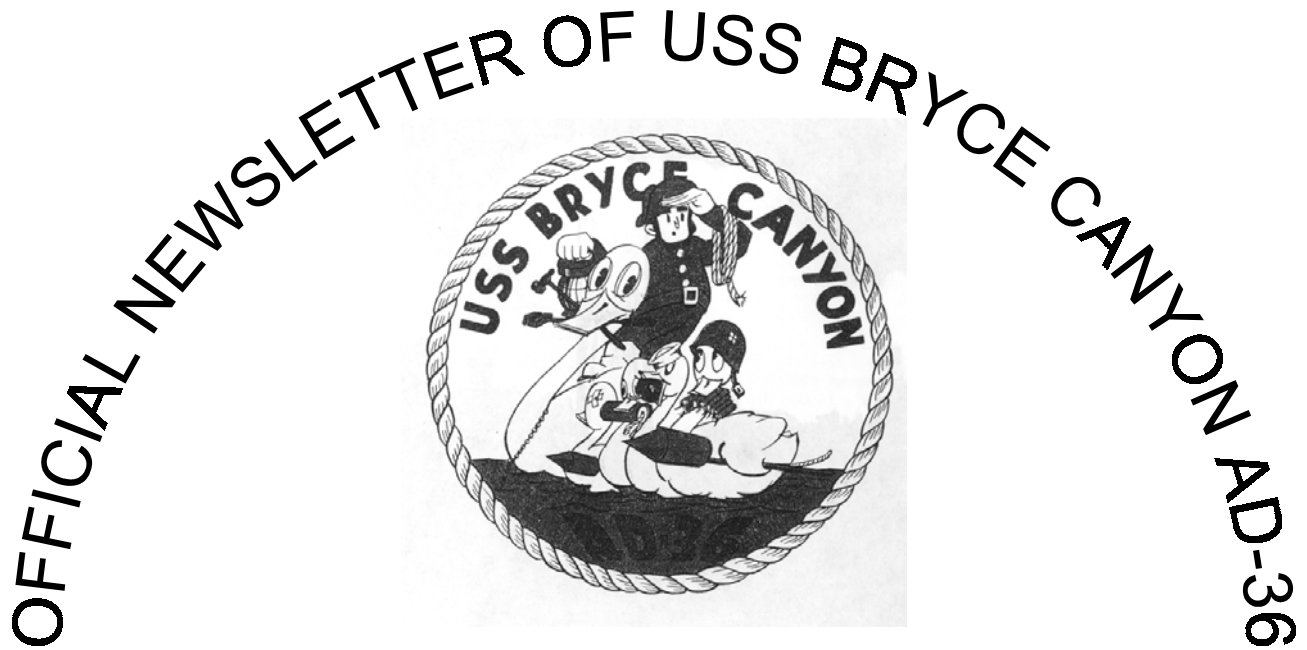


# BRYCE CANYON UPDATE

Volume 8, Issue 3

July 2003



## *Points of Special Interest*

- *Captain Ward's stories of the BC should spark the memories of those aboard at that time. See his story in the cover article.*
- *Reunion dates are announced on page three. Registration forms will be sent in August.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page two has fifty-two new names! Everyone should recognize at least one name.*
- *MAIL CALL begins on page three. We have some great stories from many of you.*

## BRYCE CANYON, PEARL HARBOR & MOBILITY

**By:** R.E. Ward,  
Capt. USN (Ret)  
CO July 1970-Aug. 1972

In the summer of 1970, I was fortunate enough to take command of the USS Bryce Canyon in Pearl Harbor. The ship had been securely moored at Pier Bravo since arrival months before and except for tug assisted movement to and from Ford Island, had not been underway. The outstanding talents found in the Repair Department, the impressive weapons handling and repair teams, the wealth of

talent found throughout the ship, plus the overall excellent appearance of the ship and crew made a very favorable impression on me. However, mobility did not appear to be either a high priority or a major readiness goal.

From a number of Atlantic and Med deployments in destroyers, I was keenly aware of the important roll tenders play. This forward deployment roll was stressed by several of the CRUDESPEC staff members that I visited in San Diego enroute to Hawaii. I was amazed to

learn that Bryce Canyon was not on the WESTPAC deployment schedule and was slated to remain in Pearl Harbor for the indefinite future. Flying the pennant of Destroyer Flotilla Five, Bryce Canyon appeared to be a Bravo Pier fixture.

A long time believer in setting goals and objectives, I set out to prove the potential mobility capability of Bryce Canyon and to upgrade some critical repair capabilities such as boiler repair. The first major repair capability upgrade was to get the

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

boiler repair gang out of a cramped below decks shop into the fresh air of the underutilized topside DASH hanger and adjacent flight deck space. With some politicking of friends in the CRUDESPEC maintenance division this "Alteration equivalent to a repair" proved easy to accomplish. Accomplishing the goal of regaining credible mobility was not so straightforward.

As a beginning mobility step, a scheduled move to Ford Island for weapons handling turned out to be more exciting than expected. While required to take a pilot on the return to Bravo Pier, I had the conn for this routine (?) evolution. Afternoon trade winds, plus the characteristics of a single screw ship with lots of sail area, proved a character building experience for a twin-screw high powered destroyer driver. As we approached the Navy Yard and started the port turn to Bravo Pier, we were not coming around as quickly as I had anticipated. Instead we were rapidly being set down abeam onto two Navy Yard piers. The pilot suggested dropping the Starboard anchor under foot to hold the bow into the wind—I quickly took this good advice! An alert Navigator shouted, "Shift Colors," to which I replied, "Hell, no. We are just maneuvering!" With the help of at least one tug, we finally arrived alongside Bravo Pier—I had learned several lessons.

The next step was to get out of Pearl Harbor and back. We conducted engineering drills and other getting underway evolutions to enhance this step. With more enthusiasm than good judgment, we decided to combine this excursion with a dependents cruise off Oahu. This weekend, one-day event included a guest of the crew, an exotic dancer "Alexandra the Great 48." She added another dimension to the day, but so did word from the Chief Engineer that there were "problems down in the plant." Over an hour later than

scheduled, we did depart, cruised off Oahu, had a great cook out and successfully returned to harbor. Other mobility improvement steps were an over weekend trip to Maui and later to Hilo on the Big Island. We had successfully cleared the coffee grounds adjacent to pier Bravo and were now ready to undertake something more challenging. With an assist from the CRUDESPEC Operations Officer we received orders to sail to Long Beach to provide tender services there for a couple of months, plus make available some specialized schools and mainland liberty and leave for the crew. We were able to take a great circle route back to Pearl Harbor that included a weekend in San Francisco. After a limited shipyard availability at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, we thought we were ready for a WESTPAC deployment. Happily the scheduling officer at CRUDESPEC agreed with this and in mid 1972 we deployed.

The transit to Subic Bay in the Philippines was uneventful until early one morning when south of Guam there was a loud metal-to-metal "Bang," followed by considerable vibration. The ship was slowing as I raced to the bridge. We were transmitting one of the deepest parts of the Pacific, there were no radar or visual contacts, so we could not have hit anything. As we slowed, the vibrations ceased. One of our CWO Repair Department officers was making a visual inspection of the rudder and screw area. He held up three fingers! Our propeller was four bladed. This was not good news. We made the required incident reports to our operational commanders and developed a "how to get there strategy." We found that we could make a vibration-free twelve knots, so with a special shaft alley safety watch, preceded on our way. We proposed to complete our transit to Subic Bay and permission was granted. There were few, if any, viable alternatives. I must admit I felt relieved after we had transited the San Bernardino Straits and passed Manila. We arrived on schedule and after a screw change,

went about the important business of tending destroyers.

Footnotes:

During our Pearl Harbor Shipyard overhaul, we were dry docked and the shipyard experts inspected and found the screw sound. Looking at the screw when in the floating dry dock in Subic Bay, it appeared that the break, near the hub, was due to a casting fault.

While in Subic I was relieved and proceeded back to Pearl Harbor where I took command of Destroyer Squadron Eleven. The Squadron deployed to WESTPAC in early October in what turned out to be a seven month deployment. We were in and out of Subic between ten day tours of conducting "Line Backer" strikes against North Viet Nam. I did not have a chance to see or be alongside Bryce Canyon as they moved to Koshun, Taiping, where their services were urgently required. I heard a lot of glowing reports from a number of destroyer skippers regarding Bryce Canyon's outstanding repair services.

Destroyer Tenders, in my view, should still be a vital part of deployed forces. Moving repair facilities ashore or relying on foreign facilities, when they can be found, is not an optimum solution. Tenders are missed in the current Middle Eastern operations and will be missed in future areas of deployment as well.

R.E.Ward, Capt USN (Ret)  
CO July 1970 to August 1972

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828-256-6008 (voice)  
828-256-6559 (fax)  
Dinamr@aol.com (e-mail)  
mlrsnewsletters@aol.com (newsletter)  
www.mlrsinc.com

*"Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To"*



## WELCOME MAT

The USS BRYCE CANYON Association announces the following former crewmen have recently been located. Welcome aboard and we hope to see you at the next reunion.

Due to the amount of letters for this issue, we do not have space for all the addresses. However, if you see a familiar name and would like the address, please drop ML&RS a note, call or e-mail and we will provide it to you. Our addresses are on page two.

Ron Fox (1967-68) EM1  
 Stanley Gancarz (1970-73) RMC  
 Kenny Gildow (1975-77) MM3  
 William Golder (1968-69) MR3  
 Paul Lewandowski (1950-51)  
 (Plankowner) DCW2  
 Richard McGill (1971-75) TM1  
 Reece Morris (1964-66) CS3  
 William Perkins (1970) RM1  
 John Reddy (1966-69) BT2  
 Sammy Swanson (1965-67) GMG2  
 James Wimmer (1963-65) SFM2  
 Roger Woods (1971) MMFN  
 David Wright (1969-70) BT3  
 Vernon McCollam  
 Marty Finnerty  
 Don Germano  
 Larry Zoubek  
 Stephen Karchefshy  
 Arthur Taft (1963-65) RN R-2 Div  
 Rich Delgado  
 Roberto Jordan  
 Thomas Spies  
 Erich von-Salzen  
 Kelly Disher  
 Kirk Shugars  
 John Tobin  
 James Taylor  
 Richard Docherty, Sr.  
 Johnny Hood  
 Charles Nunneley SN-DK3 Supply  
 Robert Williams  
 Shannon Ferguson  
 Joe Luchansky  
 Clifford Crosby  
 Rick Shepardonson

Charles Greco  
 F. T. Shelton  
 Dennis Abrams  
 Bert Poi  
 Rick Presaton  
 Gary Epperson  
 Edward Mills, Jr.  
 Severo Ochoa, Jr.  
 Dale Atchison, (1966-67) BMSA  
 Leland Bartholonew (1950-52)OPT 2/c  
 Eugene Andreosky FT 1/c  
 John Shepherd (1971-73) QM2  
 Earl Roth (1971-73)  
 Theodore Jones  
 Domingo Nazareno  
 Cecil Peterson  
 William Kluth



## TAPS

The Bryce Canyon Update learned of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. Every member of the Association sends his heartfelt sympathy to the widows, families and friends of the deceased.

Anyone knowing of, or learning of, the death of a shipmate, please inform ML&RS so his name can be added to the Honor Roll and included in TAPS.

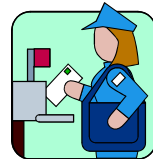
Brian Strode  
 Date of death not known

## USS BRYCE CANYON 2003 REUNION

### OCTOBER 23-26

### NEW ORLEANS, LA

### BEST WESTERN LANDMARK HOTEL



## MAIL CALL

*Editor's note: An e-mail request was sent out for stories for this issue. We got a great response! Thanks so much to all of you who responded.*

ML&RS,

I had another (I had many other) friend who I have lost track of through the years. His name was Wesley Dale Newton. While stationed aboard the Bryce Canyon he was the ship's photographer. I wonder what ever happened to him?

Maybe you have heard from:  
 Johnny Blankenship, WV  
 Larry Baxter, WA  
 Joseph A. Rozniak, PA  
 Dwight B. Nacua, HI

Anyway, thanks for trying to get some of the shipmates together. What is the current disposition of the Bryce Canyon?

Tom Spies  
 tgoodboy@aol.com

*If you have information on any of these men, please let us know.*

USS Bryce Canyon Association,  
 I have just names of former shipmates which might "ring a bell."

C.H. Buehler, LCDR SC '69  
 R. L. Williams, PNCM '69

I was a steward aboard ship, so I didn't know much of the crew except in supply. Today I am a disabled veteran due to an accident aboard the USS Tolovana after departure of the Bryce Canyon.

Sincerely yours,  
 Walter Stubbs  
 14 West River St  
 Ilion, NY 13357

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

Shipmates,

We had a SM2 by the name of Stewart who liked to feed us young seamen all types of folk stories, which he truly believed. One watch he had a group of us together when he solemnly declared that "bellybuttons don't burn." He assured us that nothing can destroy a bellybutton. As a genuine (lifetime) smart aleck, I immediately said something like, "I can picture these anthropologists digging in the middle of the Egyptian desert. Suddenly one finds a hard little round thing and then another, and another. 'Team, we've discovered the lost civilization' he shouts," Small wonder I never advanced beyond SMSN.

Doug Williams '57-'58

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Shipmates,

The B.C. or Hotel 36, as I think I remember it being called, was great duty. Some of the great things about being stationed aboard the BC were mostly being in port. If my memory serves me right, I believe we only went out once every 3 months or so to get our sea pay. The old boat was quite old, not too many modern conveniences compared to some of the newer boats stationed in Pearl. If you were lucky enough to be a crewmember, you could count on having a car or a bike and actually using it enough to justify the money. One person I remember most was EMC Frasier. He was a great Chief to work for. Also my closest friend I think was EM3 Carl W. Graber. (Where are you now?) We had some great liberty. Pearl Harbor was some great duty. Waikiki Beach, Hotel Street. Even the shopping was fun. Now that I think back, you could not ask for better duty. Well, I hope someone else can write about their experiences too. I hope also that some of my shipmates are still out there and can write too.

Best regards,

EM3 Joseph R. Peone  
jazzyjoe1410@yahoo.com

ML&RS,

The only other story I can think of after so many years is that one evening a bunch of us were playing poker when all of a sudden something hit me in the eye, hard. When I recovered my senses, I discovered that the local geek had made a beanie flip with some large rubber bands and a coat hanger and with a hard wad of masking tape, had tried to shoot the cards out of my hand, but missed and hit me in the eye. The blow caused a hemorrhage on the retina and I spent six weeks in the Naval Hospital wearing pinhole goggles (to avoid moving the eye) until it healed. Since then I've had a couple of very bothersome floaters in that eye, but I forgive the miscreant, whoever and wherever he is.

Doug Williams

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Karen,

I went aboard the BC just shortly after she came back from the West Pac tour and spend about 6 months in Long Beach. We went back to Hawaii for the next availability and while we were there they were in the process of removing the super structure from the Arizona. We were tied at Ford Island and got to watch quite a bit of the work that was done. The next cruise back to Hawaii, they were in the process of building a memorial and was also very interesting to watch that. I am not sure which cruise it was, but the Canyon's woodworking shop built the stand that holds the bell from the Arizona and stands at the entrance of the memorial.

I was back in Hawaii a few years ago and took the tour out to the memorial. The oil is still seeping out of her and was a very emotional time to get to see all the names of those who lost their lives on her that day and for our country. Looked around and the launch that I had taken out there was on its way back, and I was still there. Took a picture of it leaving with my brother-in-law, sister-in-law and wife on board. Caught up with

them at the submarine that they were touring. I don't know who the guys were that made the frame work for the bell, but they did a very good job. They are to be commended for their work, but then that was what we were taught to do aboard her.

My first class, Andy Anderson, said to me one time, 'If it's been done once, we can do it again.' That has stayed with me, and I try to make that a part of my life and work. Sometimes it is a real challenge to make something when you don't have all the tools you need, but usually it can be done. Have gotten several customers back up and running with equipment that they can't find parts for. Have made some sprockets that couldn't be found and recently made a centrifugal weight for a clutch on a fan on a spray rig. All of this has been accomplished because of the Canyon's attitude. My time in the light machine shop was an education, but never realized that until several years after I got out. I look back on that time in my life and am thankful for all of it.

Sincerely,  
Larry McKelvy

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Shipmates,

One of my best memories was when in Hawaii. I used to love it when we had the softball teams from all the different divisions. I remember the 1st class team had some really bad guys that played at 3rd and short. It was hard to get it over their heads on a line drive. The fast pitching was just fun. They had that old '53 or so Chevy panel and sold the sodas and beer. It's funny to remember such a thing, but I will remember it for the rest of my life. Being in the repair division was good. They sent a guy down to the rewind shop to get new wire for a wire brush. Also 50 foot of chow line.

Ron Gathers

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Shipmates,

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

My name is Tom Spies. I was stationed on the USS Bryce Canyon until February 1966 when I left as an SFM2. I started on the Bryce Canyon right out of the Basic in San Diego as an E2 Fireman apprentice.

One of my fondest memories was the time SFM 2 Bernie Phillips convinced me I could never get sea sick if I just kept telling myself I would not get sea sick. As I found out, the last thing I should have done was to keep sea sickness on my mind in any form. I got sick as a dog and Bernie just laughed.

Once, standing on the main deck and looking outward, astonished at how much water I had seen the last few days (my first real trip at sea) Bernie said about the water, "This water is nothing." I asked where there could be more water than I was looking at and he told me, "Underneath."

Yes, Bernie Phillips was a super mentor for me. I wonder whatever happened to him? The last I heard, he was transferred to Scotland.

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Hi,

I was on the BC from Sept/Oct '51 thru Jan. '54 serving in A Div, taking care of ships along side as well as making water and doing refrigeration type stuff. I was a regular while most were reserves in those days.

Anyway, it turns out my stepson, Jan Bayless, YN3, also got to serve on the BC in the early '70s. He worked in personnel.

Patrick H. (Snatch) Franzen MM3  
2073 Dearwind Ct NW  
Salem, OR 97305  
503-365-7042  
rosemarie31@webtv.net

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Shipmates,

I just returned home to Ohio from a vacation in North Carolina. While there I visited the USS North Carolina BB55 tied up in Wilmington, NC. As I was a GMG3 on the

Bryce Canyon, being on a battleship was an awesome experience. It is a gunnersmate paradise. My wife and 13 year old granddaughter were with me. Taking the tour brought back a lot of Navy memories. While it is fair to say there is a vast difference between a Destroyer Tender and a Battleship, life on any ship has a lot of similarities.

I was able to show my wife and granddaughter how to swing up into the 4th high rack. I don't remember it being so hard to do. Of course it has been 35 years and I am 35 pounds heavier, but that shouldn't really have anything to do with it. And yes, I was at one time able to put everything I owned on earth into a locker about 2 foot square. Now I couldn't even get all my socks in one. In the forward crew's head on the BC, we had twelve toilets, sinks, and shower heads. No doors on the toilet. My granddaughter asked if I was embarrassed to use the bathroom? I guess we all just got used to it. Now days I shut the door to the bathroom even when I'm home alone. Times change.

Going down on the mess decks brought back many memories. I miss those stainless steel trays. I was one of those guys who really loved Navy chow. I always went back for seconds and even came back from liberty, put on dungarees and ate mid-rats. I miss SOS and four glasses of chocolate milk at each meal. That was a period of my life that I did not have to worry about cholesterol, blood pressure, or numerous other dietary rules of good health.

We visited the sickbay and dental offices on our tour. I remember being in sickbay of the BC on two occasions. The first time was Aug. 17, 1967. We had left Long Beach, CA, and were steaming up to NAS Alameda, in San Francisco. While we were out at sea, a fire occurred in the shaft alley. General Quarters was sounded and men were running in all directions. I was running through a hatch when I hit the top of the hatch with my head. I had eight stitches to close that up. Very embarrassing! Every time I shave, I see the scar in the mirror as there is now no hair to

hide it. My second trip to sick bay was Oct '67. We were in Subic Bay. I had a small disagreement with three guys in an upstairs bar in town. I left the bar by way of the back stairs as the Shore Patrol was coming up the front. I had food and beer and foot prints all over my uniform, and a broken hand. I had the hand x-rayed in sickbay and sent on up to the base hospital on the hill. I have yet to attend anger management classes.

I was able to squeeze up into the gun mount of a twin 5 inch 38's. I got to show my granddaughter where I used to sit and turn the gun. Of course our 5" 38 on the BC was a single and open, but it was still fun to be back on a mount. It was not so much fun back when I used to take off the tarps every morning and shine all the brass. I think we chipped down and repainted that gun mount at least two or three times while I was on board. That was from Feb '66 to Jan '68.

After finishing the tour, I saluted the stern, requested permission from my wife to go ashore and walked down the gang plank. Being back on a Navy ship, even a retired one, sure brought back the memories. If any of you get the chance, I think you will like it. Be prepared for the flood of memories.

P. S. Those stainless steel trays are now for sale in the gift shop.

Howard Ross GMG3  
Beverly, OH  
hdross711@peoplepc.com

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**THE BIG RIDE**  
(Pearl-Cali and back, 1979)

One of my most memorable experiences aboard the BC was the impending big voyage to California.

Being a 3rd Class, I figured I was pretty much exempt from working parties, but I was mistaken.

In preparation for the longest trip of the BC in years, the CO (I believe it was Cap't Stevens) decided that

*(Continued on page 6)*

we must lower the ship's profile in the water, ostensibly to make her more seaworthy. To accomplish this task, it was ordered that we take on 80 tons of blue stone (in 50 lb bags) as ballast down in the holds.

Word of this evolution became prominent aboard, especially once the trucks started rolling in to deposit their cargo in the parking lot. This caused some consternation with those of us who knew for a fact that the ship was anchored firmly in her berth atop a mountain of coffee grounds, ball caps, and Skillcraft pens. Lowering her several more inches in the water could possibly prove catastrophic when it came time for the tugs to pull her away from the pier.

Nonetheless, the trucks kept bringing us rocks.

I remember it was a sunny day, when my Chief (OMC Louis Spohnheimer) sauntered over to me and told me to muster on the boat deck for a working party. I did try to remind him of the shiny crow pinned to my ball cap, but alas, this working party was designed to encompass even 3rds.

So, at muster, I quickly found some buddies with which to group up. Hey, at least I'd have the perk of being with my friends while spending some quality time dumping sacks of rocks.

It had been decided that all hands, E-4 and below, were to work 24 hrs a day until all the stone had been loaded. This warranted there be 3 eight-hour shifts. I recall Steve Karchefsky (RM3), John Fabian (SK3), and I ended up taking the evening shift—much cooler, fewer interruptions, and the daytime was ours to squander as we pleased. Having no recourse but to get ready for lots of grunt work, we quickly got into character: bandanas, tee shirts, and dungaree pants were our uniform. I don't recall how long it actually took to complete this chore, but as we were constrained to using a stick broom to hoist sack-laden pallets from the parking lot to the stbd side forward boat deck, do a combination of hand

carry and hand truck the bags from stbd side to port side, then lower the bags down into the hold by block & tackle, and then hand carry the sacks to their final resting place, I'd say we were at it a good week and a half.

The end result of our toil was that the water line now rested one inch closer to the kreosote-slicked surface of the harbor's water.

Well, we set sail as scheduled, crossed the pond successfully (had some serious storms along the way), pulled into Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco for 4 days of R&R, then down to San Diego to pull a few months of tender duty while assigned tender was doing a WestPac. Then we headed back to homeport, and went back to work.

Mark M Michell

Hi,

My name is John Tobin, but everyone has always called me "Jack." I was an electrician (EMP2) and was assigned to both "E" and "R" divisions (at different times). I was attached to the Bryce Canyon from 1950 until 1952. I missed being a plankowner by a couple of months, and that has always disappointed me. We spent most of that two years in Yokosuka, with a trip to Korea via Sasebo every few months (maybe, six months). We would lob a few shells toward the mainland to qualify for hazardous pay. Two incidents stick out in my memory. One evening a couple of guys coming aboard from liberty decided to throw overboard two large shells joined by a chain that separated two OD's area from the officers' country. The OD went nuts, of course. And, the next day, every diver and piece of useful equipment was put to work finding the shells. They worked all day with no results. Finally, someone made some sort of deal with two Japanese fishermen who used what looked like a hand pump and a water hose to get to the bottom of Yokosuka Bay. One put the hose in

his mouth, while the other pumped on a little boat about a dozen feet long. When he came up from the first dive, guess what? He had the shells. I still laugh when I think about it.

Another time, the EM1 and I were in a dance hall in Tokyo (which was out of bounds) and the sandwich I ate had me a little woozy, or very woozy. If I remember, it was a sandwich made out of a half dozen bottles of beer. Anyway, I was feeling a little nuts, and I said to the EM1, (his name was Jack also) "Jack, let's clean this place out." He turned to me and answered, "Jack, I didn't know you were a janitor!" I guess for the little money I had to spend, I had a good time there. I was ready to go home.

John Tobin

*Editor's Note: I have several stories left to print, but due to the low funding, I will save them for the October issue. Thank you so much to all who wrote and please, if you didn't this time, do so for the next issue.*

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Balance from 04/03 issue  
**\$128.57**  
 Funds Received since 04/03  
**\$230.00**  
 Funds Available for 07/03 issue  
**\$358.57**  
 Funds Expended 07/03 issue  
**\$473.45**  
 Balance Remaining for 10/03  
**Minus \$114.88**

Thank you for your contributions for the Bryce Canyon Update. **Funds will be needed for the next issue.** Send contributions to ML&RS at the address on page two. Be sure to state it its for the Bryce Canyon Update.

**REGISTRATION PACKETS**

**Reunion registration packets will be mailed out in August. Be sure to read the packet in its entirety.**