

The BEXAR BROWN

Volume 7, Issue 1

October 2001

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS BEXAR APA-237



Items of Special Interest

- Read all about the Reno reunion in the cover story. It was a special time to be together. A list of attendees is on page three.
- WELCOME MAT on pages three and four has twenty newly located shipmates' addresses.
- For shipmates not yet logged-on to the e-mail directory, see note on page four.
- A financial report appears on page four. Thanks for your generous contributions.
- Who do you remember most from the Bexar? See if your most memorable character is one of the entries on pages five, six, and seven.

RENO REUNION REVISITED

The September 20-23, 2001 BEXAR reunion is history now, but the memories will last for a long time. With all the horrible events of the week before, there were only 3 or 4 cancellations. Fifty-one men and forty-seven guests made the trip despite the frightening circumstances. Everyone wanted to be together, no matter what the problems were. What a brave group! Besides the timing of the reunion, there were other things that made it memorable—some at the time may have seemed annoying, but will be the stuff of which stories are told. For instance, who

knew it was bikers' week in Reno? Sixty-thousand Harley-Davidson riders had invaded the town, making even walking space a premium. But according to some sources, (Pat) the men really enjoyed seeing all the biker ladies in their leather pants! And how about those tattoos!

The reunion began with the Welcome Reception on Thursday at 5:00 PM. This gave everyone a chance to meet and get acquainted with the others.

After Friday's breakfast, the Reno City tour departed. The tour showcased Reno's history in railroading, mining and gambling, and included stops at "Divorce Bridge" and the

National Automobile Museum. The Lake Tahoe dinner cruise was on an off-season schedule, and there was a considerable delay in the plans. Although nothing could take away from the beauty of the cruise, it did make for a late arrival back at the hotel.

The Virginia City tour was where so many of the bikers were encountered, making for some frustrating times, but interesting sites. However, since the tour was so interrupted, ML&RS is still in negotiations with the tour company for a partial refund of both days' tours. As discussed at the

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

reunion, refunds will be entered into the Bexar Growl Newsletter account. You will be kept posted on the progress of the refund request.

The most anticipated part of the reunion came Saturday evening with the banquet. Everyone turned out in their finest to have their "images captured" for the *Sentimental Journal*, and to enjoy the food and fellowship with old and new friends. One special hit at the banquet was the door prizes. Everyone who won one of the dolls, handmade by Fannie Gomez, was thrilled to claim their prize. Thanks so much, Fannie, for your generous contribution!

Sunday morning came too soon, as all felt a sadness at having to leave the sanctuary of friends and return to the world of uncertainty and fear that had gripped the nation. It had been good to be together, maybe even a time of healing for some. The Memorial Service had an even more special meaning as the names of those known to have passed away since the last reunion were read aloud. The bell tolled for them and for all who had died in our nation's tragedy a week earlier. Good-byes were said, hugs were given, and the group disbursed to return to their homes, looking forward to next year in Charleston, SC. It was truly a reunion to remember!

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"Our reunions work so you don't have to."



TAPS

The GROWL was notified of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. The deaths in the newsletter are not necessarily recent but were just learned of. Our deepest sympathy goes to the family and friends of the deceased.

Sam Skochenko
Died May 2001

Fred Stilson
Died October 13, 2001

Anyone learning of the death of someone who served on the USS BEXAR, please advise the Bexar Growl so their passing can be acknowledged.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Funds available after 07/01 issue
\$132.38

Funds received since 07/01
\$437.00 + \$455.00 (from reunion) = \$892.00

Total available for 10/01 issue
\$1024.38

Funds expended for 10/01 issue
\$292.46

Balance remaining for 01/02 issue
\$731.92

Thank you for your loyal support. Your contributions keep the Bexar Growl going. Send contributions to ML&RS at the address on this page, and be sure to indicate that it is for the Bexar Growl newsletter.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The BEXAR GROWL is the official publication of the USS BEXAR Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the BEXAR. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

GOD BLESS OUR NATION AND OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN.

2001 REUNION ATTENDEES

Michael & Mazie Arthofer
 Robert & Helen Askren
 Delmer & Florine Ayre
 Vernon & Andrea Bear
 Richard & Grace Beckley
 John & Sandi Beeler
 Virgil Bell
 Robert & Chris Benson
 James & Margie Bigbie
 Roland & Patricia Bispo
 Art & Arline Blaine
 Celedonio & Clariza Blancaflor
 Alvin & Eva Lou Bray
 Carsel Butcher, Jr. & Sherri Hill
 Arthur & Mary Canfield
 Frank & Mary Caruso
 Robert & Katherine Cunningham
 Gary & Jackie Eide
 John & Gloria Enderby
 James Engelken
 James & Barbara Fiorello
 Jay & Wanda Garrett
 Manuel & Fannie Gomez
 Donald & Josephine Grant
 Jay & Diana Greenspan
 Larry Griggs & Jane McAtee
 Robert & Johna Grimm
 Carlos & Tomi Guerra
 Ronald Harris & Wanda Sparks
 Arthur & Valerie Henderson
 Edward & Marianne Lefebvre
 Frank & Mildred Lucanegro
 Walter & Julie Malloy
 Frank & Rosalie Matthews
 Berhl & Ramona (Mickey) McLendon
 Richard & Ellie Miles
 Maurice & Judith Moeser
 Urshal & Pat Moore
 Paul & Josephine Nichols
 William & Sally Patton
 Joe Popejoy
 Clifford & Marilyn Prater
 James & Mary Catherine Redding
 Cary & Beverly Shore
 Robert & Louise Steger
 Michael & Juanita Steinbach
 Eric Timat
 Charlie & Dorothy Uhls
 Jed & Karen Weidell
 Robert & Fumiko Weiss
 John & Shirley Wysocki

TOTAL- 98 (51 members, 47 guests)



WELCOME MAT

The following shipmates were located since the last newsletter was published. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion in Charleston. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

Donald Webb (1945-46)
 8665 SW 55th Ct
 Ocala, FL 34476
 vidon73@aol.com

Richard Beckley (1958-60)
 1104 East Clearbrook Dr
 Bellingham, WA 98226
 360-734-8856
 rsbeckley@aol.com

Robert Woodbury
 PO Box 780
 Keno, OR 97627
 woode@internetcds.com

Donald Wells
 123 S Royal St
 Alexandria, VA 22314

Louie Calaway (1959-62)
 747 Hickory Ave
 Rockport, TX 78382
 361-729-9874
 afton@pyramid3.net

Forrest Buttry (1959-63)
 PO Box 69
 White Pine, TN 37821
 865-674-8676

Clarence Wells (1959-63)
 108 South Summit
 Dumas, AR 71639
 870-382-5998

Joseph DePietro (1959-60)
 PO Box 1298
 Templeton, CA 93465
 805-239-3788

Waynard Bowling
 4947 Ironwood
 Sierra Vista, AZ 85650
 520-378-2925

Hubert Smart
 1939 South J St
 Oxnard, CA 93030

Glenn Dean (1957-63)
 1232 Secret Lake Loop
 Lincoln, CA 95648
 916-645-7723
 fbgd2@starstream.net

Daryl Eliff (1960-61)
 2914 Fernan Hill Rd
 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
 208-765-5730
 delliff@dmi.net

Herb Wright, Jr.
 4154 Burgess Hill Dr
 St. Charles, MO 63304-6950

Thomas Bohley (1966-69)
 11520 Lloyd St
 Canal Fulton, OH 44614-9605
 330-882-9792
 conch69@msn.com

Robert Lehman (1960-61)
 4N048 Wood Dale Rd
 Addison, IL 60101
 630-833-2576

Russell Webster (1965-66)
 2250 North Rock Rd Suite 118-26
 Wichita, KS 67226
 316-619-5419
 w_russell@ohmc-systems.com

Eric Timat (1964-69)
 352 E Foster Ave
 Wood Dale, IL 60191
 630-595-2162

Robert Figlio
 324 Franklin Ave
 Ridgewood, NJ 07450

James Register (1958-60)
 PO Box 510
 Exeter, NH 03833-0510
 603-778-9478
 jamesregister@mediaone.net

(Continued on page 4)

Welcome Mat

(Continued from page 3)

Samuel Lewis (1963-64)
704 Seagull Dr
Suisun City, CA 94585-2322
samlewis@netzero.net

ADDRESS CHANGES

Clifford Prater
463 Hill Rd
Bandera, TX 78003-3534
830-796-4307

Wayne A Seybert
Wseybert@cs.com

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR E-MAIL USERS

If you are on the mailing list and are "on-line" and have an e-mail address, but have never been logged on to our e-mail directory, this message is for you. Simply send an e-mail to me at doctorhugo@juno.com indicating the e-mail address you wish to use and I will list you and explain the specifics of the directory to you. Thank you.

Bob Weiss

OCTOBER FACTS

- People born in October claim as their special flower the calendula. Their birthstone is the opal.
- Columbus first landed at Watling Island in the Bahamas.
- The October full moon is the Hunter's Moon.
- Halloween is the second largest commercial holiday in the U.S., with Americans spending \$2.5 billion on this holiday.

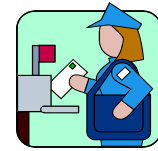
ON-LINE SHIPMATES COME THROUGH

In August I submitted monies, in the form of individual checks that were the result of an appeal I made to all shipmates in the E-mail directory, to MLRS. I had noticed that the financial statement in the July 2001 newsletter indicated that we were in dire straits regarding the publishing of the next issue. I sent a blanket e-mail to all shipmates in the directory and they responded. This is a list of the contributions simply to acknowledge their unquestioning and immediate response.

Beckley, Richard & Grace
Campbell, Richard & Juidith
Dobson, Johnny
Engelken, James & DeEtta
Fiorello, James & Barbara
Greene, Robert
Henderson Jr., Art & Valerie
Landau, Rex
LeFebvre, Edward & Marianne
Lemmo, Joseph & Sharon
McLain, Jim
Miles, Richard & Eleanor
Mothershead, Bill & Betty
Odegaard, Linus & Hilda
Patton, Bill & Sally
Reuben, Ben & Sophie
Schilling, Ron & Jean
Stepnar, Michael
Thompson, Walter
Uhls, Charlie & Dorothy
Van Dyke, George & Mary
Weiss, Bob & Fumi

Contributions totalled \$360 and assured that the October and next year's January issue are taken care of with some extra towards the April 2002 issue. It's worth noting that many of the contributions are newly logged on-board shipmates who haven't even met any other shipmates, nor attended a reunion yet and they came through. You guys are the greatest! Thanks a lot.

Bob Weiss
E-Mail Directory Secretary



MAIL CALL

Karen,

I am not a former shipmate of USS BEXAR, but I receive the newsletter and I am a friend of Jeff Shenkman (USS BEXAR 67-68). Jeff, as some of the readers already know, was injured while on duty aboard the Bexar. He has been a patient at the Veteran's Hospital in Northampton, MA, since shortly after the accident. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have responded regarding Jeff in the past and to ask anyone else out there who may remember him, and that have time, to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jerry Tierney, (USN 63-67)
46 Division St
Easthampton, MA 01027
jerr@javanet.com

The following is a letter sent to James Redding and forwarded to the newsletter.

Dear Mr. Redding,

Here are the pictures that my father, William G. Coulter, took aboard your ship in 1951. I hope you and your crewmates enjoy them! My father joined the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1940 and served with distinction in the Battles of Hurtgen Forest, The Bulge and the Colmar pocket. He was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross for his efforts in stopping a German tank advance during the opening of the Battle of the Bulge. Instead, he received the Bronze Star which he was honored to have. After WWII he worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad and when Korea broke out, he joined the Air Force, as he felt he had training and could do his part. He

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

mustered out of the Air Force in 1953 and went to work for the Atlantic Refining Company. He got married to his childhood sweetheart and had me. He worked until his death at the age of 51 in 1968. He was very quiet about his life in the service and would answer his son's questions patiently, but otherwise would not say much else other than he was happy to have filled his duty.

I hope these pictures bring back some memories for you and your crewmates. I still remember him talking about having sailed to England on the Queen Mary and to Japan on the Bexar!

My best wishes and prayers to all of you in this time of trouble. Thank you for letting me tell his story.

Sincerely,

Anthony Sullivan Coulter



Sgt. William G. Coulter, Jr. He was an armorer with the 36th Fighter SQD at Kimpo, S. Korea, 1951-52.

The following letter is from County Judge Nelson W. Wolff, Bexar County Courthouse, San Antonio, TX to James Redding, USS Bexar Reunion Chairman.

Dear James:

Joe Krier, President & CEO, The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, forwarded a copy of your letter to my office regarding the plaque that was on the bridge of the USS Bexar. What a wonderful opportunity to bring a little bit of history back to Bexar County.

I would be honored to work with you and the past crew of the Bexar to find a place of honor for the plaque here on the grounds of the Bexar County Courthouse. Currently, we have the bell from the USS San Jacinto on display on the Courthouse lawn for all who enter the Courthouse to view.

Bexar County is currently developing a plan to restore the north entrance of the Courthouse in which we could incorporate a "home" for the plaque. This process should occur over the next few months. I will assign the Bexar County Historical Commission to oversee this process. If you would like to send us the plaque in the meantime, we could store it in a secure location until the plaque can be put on display. To make the plaque more meaningful, do you have any suggestions on how Bexar County might also obtain a photograph of the USS Bexar to put on display with the plaque?

I look forward to working with you as we find a good home for this very important piece of Bexar County history.

Sincerely yours,
Nelson W. Wolff

MOST MEMORABLE CHARACTERS FROM THE USS BEXAR

In order to have some good input for the Bexar Growl, we asked all our e-mail readers to respond to the question, "Who was the most memorable character you knew while on board the USS BEXAR?" Here are the responses we received.

The most memorable person that I can recall from my days on the Bexar was Bob Contrera. We shared a lot of laughs together. He owned a 55 Mercury convertible and one time we were driving down I-5 near National City and it started to rain. We could not get the top up, and we found out the windshield wipers did

not work. I found myself leaning over the windshield and manually moving the wipers up and down so he could see to drive. In addition to getting soaked, he was yelling, "Faster, faster!"

Steve Malloy

Maybe like a lot of men we served on more than one ship and the faces and names begin after all these years to mix, but I do remember a First Classman in the Personnel Department named Wayne Brown. We and our families became friends on and off the ship. This really shows us how far back we go. Remember T.V. was just coming of age and one night Wayne's wife said after one funny commercial, "Well, they can advertise everything but they will never have anything to say good about toilet paper." We all laughed and agreed. What's the expression? We've come a long way Baby...or have we?

Another incident I remember was this one fellow who was promoted from "deck force" to "cook striker" and his job on Sunday was to fry the eggs. That was quite a job to try to feed the whole ships' company one egg at a time. They tried to teach him to crack two eggs at once. The poor fellow did good with one, but give him two and he would crush both of them trying to use two hands. This gave us two scrambled eggs with shells a LOT!! A real funny thing to watch, not too nice to partake of.

Jay Grubb

My most memorable character aboard BEXAR—Captain Madison Hall, Jr.

"Welcome aboard, Mr. Wells, you have the next watch," the OOD greeted me the moment I finished saluting the colors and received permission to come aboard and report for duty on a sunny afternoon in July, 1954 when BEXAR was moored to Buoy 51 in San Diego Harbor.

(Continued from page 5)

I said nothing, but I recall thinking something like, "Whatthehell have I got myself into?" In the following days and weeks and months, I adjusted to life aboard BEXAR and quickly got to the point where I enjoyed serving in the Deck Department as 3rd Division Officer. I served with many memorable people—my boss Joel Painter, Bos'n Joe Dieter, Tom Wooten, Pete Sabin, my roommate Bill Delaney, and many, many others whose faces I see, but names I'm now hard pressed to recall almost a half-century later. I love you all, and visions of the happy and even serious moments of life aboard BEXAR often come and go at night like vapors in my dreams.

But the most memorable of all—taking nothing from the others—has to be Captain Madison "Maddy" Hall, Jr., whose description by anyone who ever sailed with him would surely be, "He was one helluva steaming sonuvabitch."

Maddy drank. That being said, let me instantly add that nobody could ever say it got in his way of being either a commanding officer or a sailor, and I know of nobody who ever claimed he took an illegal drink aboard the ship. But ashore and while on liberty, the man had an unquenchable thirst for rye whiskey. Maddy's reason for drinking was shell-shockingly simple: He had been a destroyer man in WWII in the Pacific. He commanded JENKINS and fought many engagements in the Solomon Islands campaign, and he was C.O. of LITTLE at Okinawa, where he was sunk by Japanese kamikazes on the night of May 3, 1945, losing 30 men killed and 52 wounded. Living with memories of such experiences, perhaps many of us would do the same thing.

The stories about Cap'n Maddy's life aboard BEXAR are too many to write in a single column—it'd take a book to do him justice—so I'll just give one example and hope those of our shipmates who remember him can fill in a few of

the missing pages for themselves. If you ever sailed under his command for a single voyage, you'll understand what I'm saying, and if you didn't, you missed one helluva fine experience.

While onboard, Maddy's life revolved around several men with whom he interacted daily; Luke Wilson, his loyal steward who ran his mess; BM 1/c Arnke, coxswain of the captain's gig; and several officers who played bridge with him each night in the captain's quarters—the exec, the navigator, and the disbursing officer Jack Brand, who'd paid for much of his way through college by playing bridge at 1/4 center point. Very few ever enjoyed being a member of Maddy's "inner circle", but he was approachable by every man on board.

As Maddy was a drinking man, he was also a gambling man. I enjoyed a unique relationship with him—it came from winning a few bets from him I think. In fact, I never lost a bet to him, and for most of the 1954 football season, every Monday morning Luke Wilson would deliver a ten dollar bill from Maddy to me at breakfast—until the captain absolutely refused to bet with me anymore. He once sold Luke half-ownership in a race horse he kept stabled in Agua Caliente Racetrack in Tijuana, Mexico; and once Maddy took Luke and Delaney and me with him to the track when the horse was entered in a race. I don't recall the horse winning, and I know for sure I lost money that day. I could go on and on about Maddy Hall. Such was life aboard BEXAR for Ensign Johnny Wells.

Johnny Wells

Karen,

This is really a tough one because I was fortunate enough to have a great bunch of shipmates during my tour on Bexar, including the guy and his wife who were our witnesses when we married. (Urshal and Pat Moore). But, after some consideration, I'm going to pick the captain of the ship, Draper L. Kauffman. As a young radioman I delivered the message board to him on the mornings I had duty and during the times I had watch

when we were underway. He was also the skipper when I went on my first overseas cruise.

I'm sure much has been written about Draper Kauffman, and he had a distinguished career even before his tour on Bexar. His accomplishments are too numerous to mention here, but he organized and commanded the Navy's first bomb disposal school and he was awarded a Navy Cross for disposing of unexploded bombs at Pearl Harbor. He then organized and commanded the Navy's first underwater demolition teams and operated with them at Tinian, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa for which he was awarded a Navy Cross and Legion of Merit. This was pretty impressive stuff for anybody, let alone an 18 year-old radioman seaman from a hick town in Missouri. When I took the message board to him he was always pleasant and usually asked how I was doing. He was a CO who really cared for his crew.

Before I left the Bexar, Captain Kauffman advanced me to Radioman Second Class and talked with me about a career in the Navy. Ten years later I met him again. He had since been superintendent of the Naval Academy among other duties and was currently the Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in the Philippines. I had indeed made the Navy a career and had gone through the Navy Enlisted Scientific Education Program and was commissioned an officer. I was assigned to his staff in the Philippines. Draper Kauffman, now Admiral Kauffman, promoted me to Lieutenant. He brought in the Stars and Stripes folks and we got pictures and articles in the paper about two promotions ten years apart. He was a fine man and a great leader.

James K. Engelken
LCDR USN(Ret)
USS BEXAR (4/56 to 7/58)

Well, Karen, remember, **you asked for it!!!**

One of my most memorable incidents of any “**memorable character**” during my time aboard the Bexar was in 1960 and involved one W.D. Coss, BM3 of 2nd Division. Coss held, as I recall, the distinction of having been busted down **twice**, back to BMSN, in his somewhat less than illustrious career.

I had returned from liberty one night to find him, stretched out prone on his back, on a mess-deck table, ...face to the heavens.. unconscious, breathing and intermittently regurgitating. I recall marveling at the fact that the Lord must watch over drunken sailors in their times of distress as he showed no signs of **choking to death**... as any normal human being would. The only thing missing from this scene was the sight of Bristol and Sansouci, his liberty buddies—the Gruesome Three—trying to revive him whilst, simultaneously calling him a “pissass pansy” for not being able to hold his booze. In retrospect, and somewhat more wizened by the years, I now realize that, in general, career Boatswains Mates have never been culled from the stock of “normal human beings”. Only slightly incapacitated at the time myself, and only in the primary stages of a misspent youth and still in control of all basic faculties, I still recall staring down in disbelief and failing to understand why he was not choking. In the type of great concern that can only be manifested in one brother “deck ape’s” concern for another, I grasped with both my hands, two clumps of his curly, black locks and jerked his head off to one side, perhaps perceiving that to be the extent of the first aid I was want to administer as alas—the Arms of Morpheus were beckoning me. Sorry, Karen, but as they said in that old TV show.. “You asked for it.”

Bob Weiss

I can’t recall any one particular character, since we had so many in a gang. We had a lot of fun. The names I recall are Flores, Skinner, Jarvis, Graff, Barnett, Martin, Marden, Hansen, Kreider, Chief Atwell, Golden. I’m sure I’ll think of others. We saw a lot of places while we were on the Bexar in the Far East. I made a lot of friends. I hope I get to see some of them again someday. Serving on the Bexar was the best tour of duty I had. I think of it every day. I served from 1967-68. Thanks.

Rex Landau

The FOUR most memorable to me are (and have always been) Capt. Forrest Peterson, as a COM-MANDING commanding officer and DK1 Luquias, CSCS Worthy and SDC Padascil for their unsurpassed professional competence, leadership and loyalty. “Ironmen” all!

Joe Lemmo

USS Bexar 10/67—5/69

Editor’s note: Thank you to all who replied to the question. Now for those who do not have e-mail, you can respond to the same question by sending your letter to ML&RS at our address on page two. Please mark your letters :Attention Newsletter Editor. Those letters will be printed in the next issue of the Bexar Growl.

ATTENTION ON-LINE SHIPMATES

Using the Internet to Locate Former Shipmates by Bob Weiss

For those of us who are fortunate enough to have personal computers, one thing which should be of great interest is how to go about locating a former buddy. For myself, it was a coincidence of timing between the purchase of my first computer and

one of my grown sons finding out that the USS Bexar held annual reunions. I attended my first reunion and realized what an extremely rewarding experience it was. I met fellows whom I hadn’t had contact with in some 40+ years and, possibly even more significant, met guys whom I’d never known, but with whom I had that singular common bond of having served on the same ship and found a rapport of relaxed friendship that is difficult to put into words. Oft times, I’d describe it as stepping back through a portal in time. This then, became the fuel that motivated me and I became almost a man possessed with the mission of finding as many former shipmates as I could. Being a pro-active guy, I wrote an article for the Growl about this and guaranteed to find at least three (3) more shipmates before the sun rises on the 2001 Reno reunion. I’ve got to double-check my records, but I think the total I’ve located since then is 25 more, so let’s get to it and hope I can inspire somebody else to get their feet wet, because...friends, we are involved in an experience, these reunions, that is a self-sustaining one. For should we fail to bring new folks in, who enjoy and participate in these reunions, then we are doomed. We, the collective crew of The Bexar, are a fixed number and Father Time is working on dwindling our numbers day by day as we all know.

The Starting Point

Identify and go to a good search engine database (directory). By experience, my favorite has become one called All Search Engines located at <http://www.allsearchengines.com>. On it’s opening page you will find a general category of search engines. A “search engine” is merely a database maintained for identifying information of a specific nature and their information is garnered from a wide variety of sources. You should scroll down to

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

"People Ses" and click on it. Then the "People Ses" page will open and reveal all those databases that they are affiliated with, which is quite varied and complete, and then you would click on one of your choice. My first choice is usually switchboard.com as I have had good consistent results with it and I've developed a good feel for how their database is set up and utilize that knowledge efficiently. Most of these directories, that are free, are based on telephone white and yellow pages, domestic and international. Unlisted numbers are not shown and are only available for somewhat pricey tags or on a per search basis. I confine ALL my searches to the free databases. The most important thing to learn is NOT to enter all the information you have for a search...in that search, most especially if you're dealing with a rather common surname (last name). In doing so, you severely restrict the criteria that the database will respond to. An example is probably the best way to understand this for you must remember the information returned to you will be based on precisely the information you enter. You have a name of John R. Smith Jr. and although you don't have his address, your cruise book from 1954 shows he called Hoboken, NJ his hometown. Not exactly a current address, **but have you done your homework regarding this search OR are you just having, what I like to call... a rush of sh__ to the brain?** This is where experience, trial and error, comes in. Think like a good detective, because that's just what you're going to need to be to increase your probability of success. When you and John were on board, were you both young kids on your first ship and first tour? If so, then Hoboken probably was where he went to high school and where his family

was rooted. How does this help you? Well, when you start the search, you're going to hold back the city name and just enter New Jersey as the state. When a young guy returns home, if discharged after one hitch (and he's not career Navy) it's better than an even money bet that he'll fall for some sweet thing in his immediate area, but not necessarily in his hometown, so why limit yourself to just Hoboken? Okay! So what's in a name? In this case, mucho pitfalls. He's shown a middle initial that he was tagged with, but as an adult may not like that name and just stopped using it...Oops! His last name. Hmm! Not to be rudely redundant, but it's like sh__...it's all over! And this guy is a Jr. no less. Can't catch a break, huh? **Any and all information you have is to your advantage...IF you understand how best to use it.** This information, of a specific and defining nature, you hold back. They are the facts that you use to cull through the results that the search provides. If you're willing to put in the time and get blurry-eyed more often than not, then you'll enter this information for the search. Smith, John New Jersey and that's it. If you had entered just J. you would have gotten every living person and some deceased, male and female, Jr. or Sr. the II, III, IV, etc., whose **first name starts with a J.** and when the first page listing 10 out of 397 popped open you would have said, "Enough of this. I'm outta here!" In this case, you want to use the full first name, because, *in this specific instance,* just entering the initial creates an impossible situation for you to deal with on a practical basis. For a **less common name,** you might consider just entering the first name initial so you won't **miss him.** You wouldn't enter Hoboken, because if he lived only one house across the city line, you'd miss him that way too! So now you just hope he's listed as John and not just J. So you run a search and find no Jr. comes up. Frustrating huh? You bet. I've been down this road at 2AM many times. **BUT, remember that search that**

came up with a first page of 10 out of 397? Well, now you're gonna use that and it'll be easy 'cause all you're looking for now is John R. Smith, Jr. or John Smith, Jr. to cull from that 397. Pretty easy to spot, huh? Takes patience though. Time for each page to load up on your screen, but if you're dedicated, you'll stick with it. Needless to say, there are many more possibilities that I could run through with this example, but my main focus is to help shine the light of experience just a wee bit for those really interested. Another handy thing to know is some search engines will do an "all states" search, which can be great for an uncommon name. Besides search engines you can check and make postings on various military bulletin boards. One of my favorite general, all-around search engines is google.com. Under search just enter "military bulletin boards" and you'll be busy all day long. The DOD (Department of Defense) and Navy have sites, but I'm ashamed to admit that they usually turn out to be bureaucratic dead ends. That'll do it for now. Hope I've gotten somebody interested in doing this. I'm not interested in doing searches for guys who have the tool, a PC, but don't care to use it, but I sure will spend as much time as you want helping smooth the bumps for you. For those who don't have a Pc and would like to find a former shipmate... just bring it on. Give me a landline or letter and we'll hookup, to be sure.

BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

At the business meeting held at the Reno reunion on Sept. 22, 2001, it was voted to have the 2002 reunion in **Charleston, SC.**, at approximately the same time of year. Jim Redding will continue as reunion coordinator. Details of the reunion plans will be in future newsletters. It was also voted that as of 01/02, dues of \$10 must be paid in order to receive the Bexar Growl Newsletter.