

WEBSITE: <http://www.navymusicians.org>

LEGER LINES

SUMMER 2010

VOL 3 ISSUE 3

The President's Message

I've just about recovered from the 2010 Navy Musicians Association reunion where we had a marvelous time in the beautiful, friendly city of San Antonio. It is always a pleasure to see old friends and shipmates, particularly when some of the west coast dudes and 'dudettes' show up. Also, some of our Texas members added to the success of the event. Everyone make plans to come to Virginia Beach next June and let us all once again celebrate our friendship and goodwill in the most unique of military organizations, the Navy Musicians Association.

There are so many people to thank for setting up and running the reunion that I really do not know where to start. I am afraid if I mention individual names, I will leave someone out, so I will just say thank you to each of you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do. I don't think we have had a smoother reunion or have been in a better hotel, to the best of my recollection. I see volunteers who throughout the year, give their time, talent, equipment, and even money to bring this party together every June. I mentioned all of you at the members' meeting and at the banquet.

We gave the 2010 Earl Benge award to member Bill Sterck who has worked tirelessly for us in locating and purchasing insurance for the equipment we own. He also filled in as equipment manager at the 2009 reunion as well as provide legal help. Bill will join our Board of Directors this year and BZ to you, Bill. Bob Leek donated a piano to us and drove to Virginia Beach from Annapolis in order to deliver it in time for the drive to San Antonio.

Leon Harris has also signed up to replace Ambrose O'Donnell as our Equipment Manager after the 2011 reunion. He will keep the inventory, help purchase supplies, transport the gear and be in charge of the band set ups and tear downs. It is a tough job and he is filling big shoes when Ambrose retires from the position next year after ten excellent hard-working years. Leon will also join the Board of Directors.

During the 2010 reunion, two McMillan Scholarships were awarded—one in the amount of \$1250 and the other for \$750. Well done to members who submitted these fine candidates and to the adjudicators—Bob Leketa, Scott Friend, and Wilbur Smith—for their work in identifying the award winners. Our scholarship fund is healthy and active and we will continue to award deserving student musicians who are furthering their education in music. It is probably not too early to start thinking of candidates for Reunion 2011 submission.

There is a new feature in Leger Lines beginning in this issue. "I Gotta Be Frank" written quarterly by our own Frank Mullen in his inimitable, humorous style. We look forward to your column, Frank. While mentioning the new feature, I urge all of you to contribute photos, stories, and anecdotes to Bill Allen, LL editor, for inclusion in future issues. I promise, veracity will NOT be checked on any sea stories. I just heard another week of them and ask you to share them with all of us.

Remember, the NMA is open to all former or present MUs. If you wore the lyre and served as a Navy Musician, whether for four years or thirty years, whether as an MUSN or a Commander, you are welcome to join and partake of membership in the NMA. At the reunion I asked every member present to recruit one member this year and I extend this invitation to all of you. It will not feel like the day you signed the dotted line, enlisted, and were shipped off to boot camp for the unknown. I guarantee it!

Terry Chesson

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2010 NMA Reunion Attendees

From the Desk of Frank Aurillo

Howard Agster-Las Vegas, NV
 Karl Alexander-Annapolis, MD
 Servando Aleman-Rio Grande City, TX
 Bill Allen-Rock Hill, SC
 Ralph Aurillo-Georgetown, TX

Bob Balch-Round Rock, TX
 Elwin "Bud" Bentley-Hoosick Falls, NY
 David Blakeley-Villa Rica, GA
 Don Blossfield-San Diego, CA
 Dick Bonenfant-Eustis, FL
 Bob Bowman-San Diego, CA
 John Branam-Ft Wayne, IN
 Ron Brandvik-Las Vegas, NV
 Paul Brennan-Boston, MA
 Dick Brodfuehrer-San Antonio, TX

Sam Calio-Exton, PA
 Terry Chesson-Virginia Beach, VA
 Leonard W Childs-San Antonio, TX
 Doyle Church-Charleston, SC
 Everett C Crouse-San Diego, CA

Kyle Dameron-Tulsa, OK
 Pat DeGregorio-Corpus Christi, TX
 George A Dietzler-Taunton, MA
 John Derby-Springfield, MO
 Jack Dye-Rancho Bernardo, CA

Gar Foreman-Ellicott City, MD
 Randy Fendrick-Bakersfield, CA
 Scott Friend-Southbury, CT

Paul Geitzenauer-Hertford, NC
 Carl Grove-Las Vegas, NV

Chuck Harris-Barron, WI
 Leon Harris-Virginia Beach, VA
 Otto Harry-Tyler, TX
 Ralph Hasty-Springfield, MO
 Norman Hedges-Derby, KS
 Ed Henson-San Diego, CA
 Kim Holl-Virginia Beach, VA
 Edwin V Hord-Woodbury, CT
 Lee Hudson-Athens, TX

Frank Kemp-Shoreline, WA
 Sam Knepley-Lakeway, TX
 Anthony Kurdilla-Frackville, PA

C J Landry-Lillian, AL

Gene Lane-California, MD
 Richard Layman-Ingram, TX
 Bob Leek-Annapolis, MD
 Bob Leketa-Virginia Beach, VA
 Melanie Leketa-Virginia Beach, VA
 Gary Lowry-Kansas City, MO
 Dave Lowry-Corpus Christi, TX

Randy Martell-Annapolis, MD
 James McElroy-New Lenox, IL
 Benjamin McHorney-Carolina Beach, NC
 Bob Montgomery-Ft Washington, MD
 Lucien Montminy-Newport, RI
 Stanley Moore-Colorado Springs, CO
 Gary Mosse-San Antonio, TX
 Frank Mullen-Aledo, IL
 Bill Myers-Vestal, NY

William H Namack III-Sarasota, FL
 Charlie Niehoff-Louisville, KY

Ambrose O'Donnell, Jr-Egg Harbor Twp, NJ

John Pastin-Glassboro, NJ
 Don Phillips-Hot Springs Village, AR

George Ricci-Van Nuys, CA

Larry Sage-Peculiar, MO
 Bob "Rabbit" Simmons-Satellite Beach, FL
 Ken Skipper-Charleston, SC
 Wilbur Smith-Winter Park, FL
 Joe Schnetzka-Dover, PA
 William Sterck-Berthoud, CO
 Cal Stewart-Pensacola, FL
 Cecil Strange-Plant City, FL

Richard Thurman-San Jose, CA

Joe Venardi-Nashville, TN
 Juan E Villalpando-Corpus Christi, TX
 Luis Villegas-El Paso, TX

William R Walker-Houston, TX
 David Whitaker-Orlando, FL
 Milo D Wood-Sarasota, FL

Connie Younger-Madrid, IA

Chet Zientek-Milwaukee, WI

Over the years, most Navy Musicians have played for the Navy-Marine Relief Society. I've played for about 12 concerts, the last time was at Little Creek, Virginia, in 1966. (I directed the Navy Faculty Stage Band from 1962 when W O Huddleston was transferred to Treasure Island, California, until I retired in 1967).

The Navy Marine Relief Concert came to Little Creek in 1966 and was held at the Sports Arena on the base. The arena was huge and could seat 2000 people. The guest singer for the concert was Joi Lansing, a singer/actress who appeared on the Robert Cummings TV show quite often. Joi was a beautiful blond with a BIG bust. The TV show also featured Ann Davis as Bob's office secretary.

Our CO was LT Joe Adcock and he told me he would direct the Faculty Stage Band for the Navy Relief Show. The first rehearsal was a week later and a lot of staff members were sitting at a table watching. LT Adcock kicked off the first tune and it sounded good. Joi started singing and when they came to the first end, she yelled, "No, No, No—that's not right, something is wrong!" LT Adcock started from the top again and when they came to the first ending, Joi yelled even louder, "NO, NO, NO—something is wrong!" Lt Adcock looked over at us and motioned with his finger "come here". I pointed a finger at myself and he nodded his head "yes". I went over to the bandstand and LT Adcock came down the steps and said "See if you can find out what's wrong here" I asked Joi, "what seems to be the problem?" She said "I'm not hearing four notes that bring me back in."

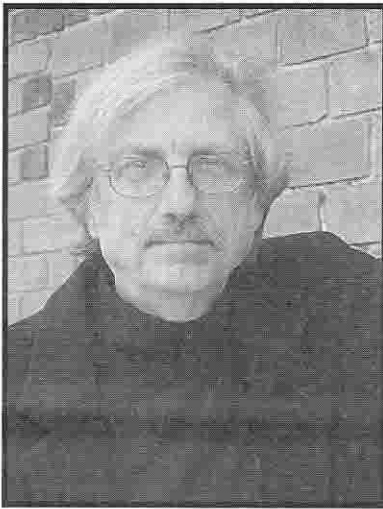
I looked at the first alto part, first trombone part, first trumpet part and found nothing. Then I looked at the piano part and there it was. I played the four notes

and Joi yelled, "Yes, that's it!" I told the piano player to be sure to play those four notes from the first ending. I said "here we go from the top." We came to the first ending, the four notes were there and Joi came in and finished the song with a big ending. I started to walk down the steps and LT Adcock motioned with both hands "stay there". I walked back up the steps, rehearsed four more tunes and everyone applauded. Joi had some great arrangements and the band sounded terrific.

The next night was the concert and everything went great. Joi was all dolled up with a long gown and looked beautiful. After the last tune, she received a 5-minute ovation. We walked down the steps and Joi gave me a two-minute hug. She thanked me for everything and later my wife said "Boy, that was a big hug!"

The following Monday morning, I arrived at the Faculty Lounge and everyone was waiting for me. They said, "Alright, Ralph, were they real?"

I slowly nodded my head "yes".



i GOTTA BE FRANK

By: Frank Mullen

I've always been a lousy salesman.

In high school, as the concert band's Christmas concert was approaching, the director handed us each eight tickets to sell to our neighbors. I took them home and burned them rather than go next door, stand on Mrs. DaVino's porch and try to convince her to pay two bucks to listen to me and 53 other teenagers crush the holiday spirit out of "Sleigh Ride."

I did no better in the Navy. During my tour on staff at the School of Music, Command Master Chief Jack Dye appointed me to a collateral position as Assistant Reenlistment Counselor. He fired me in three days, after overhearing me try to convince an MU3 to reenlist:

"So, Jimmy, are you going to re-up?"

"I don't know, Frank."

"Forget it, then. The Navy doesn't want indecisive people like you."

So, you can imagine how I felt this June at the annual Membership Meeting of the Navy Musicians Association in San Antonio, when President Terry Chesson challenged each of us to recruit one new member this year. While others were applauding the suggestion, I was eyeballing the room, looking for the nearest exit.

Since then, I've had time to reevaluate my talents as a promoter. What I lacked in my younger years was confidence in my product. My high school band's rendition of "Sleigh Ride" could have accurately been renamed "Train Wreck." My failure as a reenlistment counselor stemmed from my own uncertainties; I couldn't decide whether to leave the Navy and perform distasteful tasks because a boss said so, or re-up and perform distasteful tasks because a master chief said so.

The Navy Musicians Association, however, is easy for me to promote, because I believe in the product. Our reunions last only a few days, but the camaraderie and sense of belonging endure all year, reconnecting me with the most challenging years and rewarding friendships of my life.

In a sense, like many of you, I've already become an NMA recruiter. Four years ago, I launched a website, Navy Lyres (<http://navylyres.blogspot.com>), "The unofficial source of poop, skinny and bitching for present and former Navy musicians." It now attracts readers from around the world—during June, the site received over 2,000 visits. Though it's not an official NMA site, in between sea stories and rants, I plug our organization.

Every year, I hear from a few former MUs who have found the site and are curious about the Navy Musicians Association. I respond honestly and encourage them to join.

And every year, a few of them do.

Attracting new members doesn't take computers. Last summer, I discovered that a local trumpet player, highly regarded in my area as a performer and teacher, is a former Navy bandsman.

We began to correspond. Once he called to ask if I might know the whereabouts of an old shipmate (it had obviously been a while: the friend he was looking for was named Petty Officer John Fluck). He mentioned he'd thought about joining the Navy Musicians Association but never got around to it. I went to his band's next show and handed him a reminder, the NMA cocktail glass from my reunion gift bag.

I'm happy to say that my new friend's name is now on the NMA membership roster. Honestly, do you think I take credit for this?

You're darned right I do. Maybe his joining wasn't due entirely to Frank Mullen's School of Dynamic Salesmanship, but I did my part.

I'm taking Terry's recruitment challenge seriously, and hoping you will, too. Helping someone make the decision to join the Navy Musicians Association isn't selling a product to a customer; it's doing a favor for a shipmate.

If you have any NMA recruiting stories, tips or successes you'd like to share with readers of Navy Lyres, send them to me at frankmullen@frontiernet.net. I always love hearing new ideas.

Well, maybe except from Jack Dye. His ideas aren't always winners

In 1958 I was sent to Anacostia to pick up a new unit band going to COMNAVAIRPAC. Skip Poole, Charlie Weyant, Dave Oliver, John Schnick and 19-year old Bill Watrous were members of the band, among others. They were all recent basic course grads and I was a brand new E-6. We picked up our Chief in California. He had just made Chief in the DC band and asked for his own band. We were it. His name was Shaha. He was also an ex-LA cop.

When we got on board the USS Ranger, the Chief began to call himself the only Naval Aviation Bandmaster. He was well-liked in the CPO mess and the other Chiefs from the flight deck had a yellow director's sweat shirt made up for him with a lyre with wings on the front and Aviation Bandmaster printed on the back. He would wear that whenever we played for refuelings or replenishments at sea.

It came to pass that his crows got a little ragged, so he went to the tailor shop on board ship to have new crows and hashmarks put on. Once again the Ranger's chiefs went in behind him and gave the tailor a special crow for Chief Shaha. Once the Admiral saw it, he made Shaha keep it on. I've attached a picture of him with his special crow.

(Submitted by Jack Rodway)



Fill out the entire form (or write the requested information on paper) and mail to:
 Cecil Strange, Treasurer of NMA
 P O Box 2294
 Plant City, FL 33564-2294
(Dues are for 1 January-31 December 2010 and are \$30)
(Make checks payable to NMA. NO CASH PLEASE)

NMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Spouse _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone (_____) _____ E-Mail Address _____

Dates Served as MU _____ to _____ Instruments _____

Comments _____

Thank you

