

# BERING SEA PATROL / ALASKA VETERANS



## Reunion Association



United States Coast Guard

November 2007

### The Alaska Coastguardian Newsletter Organized 1975

#### Officers

Chairman 2008 – Dick Juge  
Vice Chairman – Randy Fitschen  
Chairman 2009 – Randy Fitschen  
Treasurer – Clair Upton  
Newsletter Editor – (Open)  
Charitable Chairman – Ray Nicholson  
Past Chairman – Ed McLees  
Web Masters – Fred McLees & Dick Juge

#### OUTGOING CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Wow! What a great time we had in Seattle. The Lock and Lake Cruise was very nice, especially as we passed the old CG Base. The tours of the CG Museum, the CG base at Pier 36 and the CG ships reminded us that our proud tradition of protecting our nation continues. Thank you to Randy Fitschen for arranging the tour of the CG ships.

I am honored to have served as the chairman for the BSP-AV these past two years. The kind words of encouragement I received were much appreciated. Our members have a lot to be proud of and I look forward to future reunions. The BSPAV plaque presented to me in Seattle was a very thoughtful gift. It hangs next to my Coast Guard certificate of retirement.

A special thank you goes to past Chairmen Dick Juge, Marty Kimmel, Bill 'Scoop' Felkner, Dan Baumbaugh and Tom Bliss for their assistance. Clair Upton has been the Treasurer since 2001 and I am very appreciative for his help and advice. He is a great asset to our organization. I also want to thank "Reunion Brat" President Linda Irvine for her help with the reunions in Kansas City and Seattle.

I hope the newsletters were entertaining and informative. They were meant to keep members up to date and to encourage friends, old and new, to remain in contact. Thank you to all the members who presented information for the newsletter. The newsletter would not have been successful without your input.

A final thank you goes to my wife, Annie. She provided much support during my term as the

chairman and I could not have done my job without her. Hope to see you in Grand Haven Michigan at our next reunion.

**Semper Paratus,  
Ed McLees**

#### INCOMING CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

First I'd like to extend hearty thanks to Ed McLees and his wife, Anne, for all their work during the past two years and especially our terrific reunion enjoyed in Seattle/Renton. The tours of the CG Museum, the locks, the visits we enjoyed aboard the CGC POLAR STAR and MAPLE, our meetings and final banquet were just incredible. Visiting these new ships made me feel as if my years in the CG were spent aboard covered wagons.

Before we departed for Seattle, Nancy, my wife of forty-seven years said, "Dick, you need to volunteer to be the BSP-AV Chairman next year."

Many of you know I spent much of my time, since December of 2006, deeply immersed in my Coast Guard four-year history. I wrote my first (and last) book. It is called *The CGC STORIS and the Northwest Passage; the story of a young man growing up in the Coast Guard in the 1950's*.

Originally I only wanted to create a special DVD for our upcoming 50th Northwest Passage celebration that former BSP-AV Chairman Jim Loback was assembling. That voyage involved the CG Cutters STORIS, BRAMBLE and SPAR which, in 1957, were sent to find a deep-water route across the Arctic. Jim is dedicated to saving the recently decommissioned STORIS as a maritime museum.

Personally, I had over 300 35mm slides I was in the process of digitizing for this show. I was learning new DVD software so I could make one revolving around a two-hour interview that I and others on that voyage made for the Coast Guard. We were at the 2006 BSP-AV reunion in Kansas City when Dr. Bill Thiesen, a CG Historian, did this interview. My cousin, John Varela, had just begun

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creating DVDs and he was helping me learn this skill. The more I got into this process and the more I reviewed my 50 year old archives of letters which I had sent home and my mother had saved. Also were many black and white photos and newspaper clippings. I decided, "What the devil, I'd just as soon put a book together." Also my brother, Peter, had self-published books in recent years, so he, too, could help me learn these ropes. In addition to my personal archives several former shipmates had photos and other items that helped give depth. This show ended having over 750 photos we shipmates took in 1957 plus home movies taken from the BRAMBLE by Ensign John Stewart. BSP-AV has this DVD and others available for any interested – just visit our web site.

So here I am, your 2008 Chairman reporting for duty as ordered. I'm thrilled to be here and will dedicate as much time as possible toward making this a good year for us all. Please join me by participating the best you can too.

I was four years in the CG, but thirty-five as a State Farm Insurance agent here in New Orleans. A fellow Coastie and current State Farm agent, Mike Leak, from Grand Haven, Michigan had been inviting me for years to come for the annual Coast Guard Festival. The festival works around Mike Leak, from Grand Haven, Michigan had been inviting me for years to come for the annual Coast Guard Festival. The Festival works around Coast Guard Day, August 4th. Each year there's an annual National United States Coast Guard Memorial Service at Escanaba Park to honor all the brave men and women who have given their lives to protect and serve the United States of America. "This is an event not to be missed," says Mike.

I contacted Mike to see if he could help secure rooms for BSP-AV group for our 2008 reunion. He obtained us a total room block of 47 in two hotels. The town quadruples in size that week each year. We are lucky to get this room block.

I was surprised at our BSP-AV meeting in Seattle, as it seemed everyone loved this Grand Haven idea. This event is well known by our members and all in attendance were quite excited about BSP-AV going there in 2008. It seems Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. usually sends a dignified contingency to this affair.

I have many members wanting to know how to book their rooms. Many I've never met before nor seen at any of our reunions. I'm afraid we won't be able to accommodate all who want to participate this year. Nice problem!

By now you should have received a membership survey and a registration form and information on Grand Haven. If you don't yet have this, please contact me ASAP and I'll send you a set. You can also go to our web site [www.bspav.org](http://www.bspav.org) and obtain the reunion info.

### **BOOK YOUR ROOMS NOW!**

Looking forward to a great year and hope to see you in Grand Haven!

**DICK JUGE,  
Chairman 2008**

### **BSP-AV HISTORY AS I KNOW IT**

I am told a few men who had sailed on the CGC BEAR originally organized the Bering Sea Patrol – Alaska Veterans Reunion Association, I am told. Their first year was 1975, says Ralph Hackerson, who was with us in Seattle in September as a reunion attendee. He joined in 1976 when those fellows decided to open their membership to any Coastie who had participated in Bering Sea Patrols, which then were usually summer events. As others have told me, the regular membership was later expanded to include any Coastguardsman who had been in the Coast Guard and served 21 days in Alaska. A few years back that was expanded to include active duty personnel as well as veterans and retirees.

Of course if you have a friend who'd like to participate with BSP-AV and doesn't qualify by the above definitions, they are invited to join as associate members.

A regular member has voting privileges. As Chairman this year I'd love to gather as much personal history as I can find time to deal with for our archives. If you have some good 'sea stories' you'd like preserved for our association's future, kindly let me know by sending me an email.

**DickJuge@aviosk.com**

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### BSPAV DVDS

Among my many extracurricular activities this past year has been making DVDs. I now have quite an assortment available for our members and we're building this library every day. Member Ray Nicholson sells specialty items for organizations such as ours and is a loyal member and attendee at our reunions. He is actually responsible for locating historical data I've been able to bring into some of these DVDs because of his activities. As many know, he speaks with many Coast Guard veterans and as such has his 'ear to the rail' and is able to clue me in on lots of good info.

Ray, at my asking, has volunteered to distribute these DVDs to any and all who are interested. Believe me, the distribution of DVDs is almost more painful than the developmental phase. I've given hundreds away without even a 'thank you' from those I've given them to. Perhaps they just don't understand the value of what they have.

I just created a beautiful DVD made from pictures Ken Fisher took at our 50th Northwest Passage reunion in Reno. His photos are terrific and he even has caught the rifles flying in the air as the CG Drill team performed. I've also added music from the Coast Guard Band's archives of their 1990 Bicentennial Celebration. One of the songs towards the end is an arrangement where a narrator explains the history of our Coast Guard in great depth and clarity. It is a beautiful presentation.

Ray will package and ship this (and many other DVDs) to you at a cost of \$12.50 donation which part of the proceeds will flow back into BSP-AV's treasury to help us create more of this for the future. Believe me, even if you weren't there you'll love this DVD. Contact Ray at (949) 443-9103 or email him at [ray@spclevts.com](mailto:ray@spclevts.com).

As I mentioned in the History section above, if you have any videos and/or pictures that relate to our Alaskan Coast Guard history, please let me know. Perhaps we can create a special DVD for you and your family as well as our organization. I will try to do what I can.

### NEWS SHARED BY MEMBERS

Our Chairman for 2009, Randy Fitschen has forwarded the following items that might be of interest to you.

**Item 1:** For retired members, there is now a CG retiree help desk at HQ for anything you can't get resolved in your retirement affairs. You can phone the Retiree Program (202) 267-1727 or Email: [NRHD@COMDT.uscg.mil](mailto:NRHD@COMDT.uscg.mil)

**Item 2:** If you go to the following website [www.coastguardchannel.com/index.shtml](http://www.coastguardchannel.com/index.shtml) and then click on to reunions, we can list our reunion there for all to see. Look there as a lot of info is listed.

**Item 3:** Many retirees live in areas of an AIR FORCE BASE. You might be interested in knowing that if you go to the commissary/exchange at an AIR FORCE BASE you may no longer need the decal on your vehicle's window. Since they check ID's when you drive through the gate they have decided to phase out the sticker to save the expenses of these stickers.

### BSPAV IS A DEMOCRACY

It is important that you recognize our organization is a truly democratic one. Our Chairman is elected by the membership at our annual meeting.

Our chairman has total responsibility of the organization for his/her year. It is his/her right to determine where the next reunion will be held and who are to be appointed to help him in his activities for the year.

Many members volunteer their help to assist the Chairman. Clair Upton who has acted as our Treasurer since 2001 is typical of this. His son is a CPA and he's been doing books for years, thus doing our books is no big deal for him.

Fortunately in recent years we've acquired the help and friendship of a reunion manager, "The Reunion Brat." who has helped us immeasurably by pointing us to hotels with good rates and other service organizations that offer the extra activities, and again at discounted rates.

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You might recognize by this newsletter that I want BSP-AV to be one that is run by many and not just me. The more to help, the easier it is for all and the better an organization we have.

I'm hoping to develop a group of retirees to help me spread our word to others through the publications with which they are familiar. Please call me and say you will do this for us.

### **BSP-AV DUES**

Membership dues are \$20 a year with our year running from January to December. Any dues paid after October are credited to the next year.

Many have contributed much more and some prefer to send a \$100 check for five years. Clair Upton, our Treasurer, simply credits these members their dues years in advance when they send in larger checks. Currently we have one member paid up until 2016. At one time there was a rivalry to see who paid up the longest.

You will note that your newsletter comes to you with a status code. If you see a code that reads 04-111 that means you haven't contributed since 2004. We carry delinquents for a few years, and then we have to deactivate them and no longer send newsletters, etc. I'm looking at a member with a code that reads 08-072 which means he has paid through to next year. I'd guess that more than 50% of our membership have paid dues beyond this year. We have some mighty generous folks as members.

■ A code that reads HL, is an Honorary Lifetime Member who was appointed by a Chairman or elected by the membership as such. Usually this individual has given much of his/her time in the past to BSP-AV.

■ A code of W-M in the directory represents a Widow or Widower Member, the spouse of a former member who was in good standing upon his/her death. Our By Laws state that if a regular member dies that the spouse will continue to receive our newsletters and be invited to participate in our annual reunions. We recently enjoyed the company of Marielle Kimmel, Marty's widow; Elsie Parkin, Bill's widow; Dorothy McCracken widow of John and Jane Doherty widow of Henry, at our Seattle September reunion.

■ A code of SP is a special person or organization we've included in our database, as we definitely want them to know of our reunion dates and any other activities we might talk about. Many of these are associate organizations that help let their members know of other CG activities.

### **IT'S TIME TO PAY 2008 DUES NOW!!**

Over the years I've heard arguments that the dues are not due until April of the year and I don't find a due date clearly defined in our By-Laws. Most organizations expect the next year's dues to be paid the first of each year. For goodness sakes, it's only \$20.

I encourage you to send your \$\$\$ in now for several reasons: First, our roster goes out in April of each year so if you are way in arrears you just might not appear in the next roster. Secondly, it makes the treasurer's job easier if you get you \$\$\$ in now; so that he doesn't have to bug you. Thirdly, if you are like most people I know around our age we just like to get our bills out of the way. And lastly, if you are like most of us, you pay these small bills as soon as possible so you won't forget.

Please send your \$20 payable to BSP-AV % Clair Upton; 1865 Springcreek Dr.; Bountiful UT 84010 5327

### **EMAIL NEWSLETTERS**

I am actually using the template of my Kiwanis Club of Algiers electronic newsletter here. We receive our newsletter via our email address weekly. If you've ever been the newsletter editor for an organization who has had to send out newsletters, you know how painful and time consuming this project is. Add to that having to have it printed, folded and carried to the Post Office! We are so fortunate to be in the 21st Century where the 'Communications Age' has finally arrived.

If you monitor your email regularly, kindly send me your email address and a statement you'd be happy to let us send you this newsletter by email in lieu of regular mailings. PLEASE.

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### **NEW MEMBERS**

David Anderson–USLORSTA Sitkinak Island

Michael J. Appeal - CGC STORIS 53-56

Jim Carter - CGC NORTHWIND 58-59

William Christy - CGC SEDGE , Cordova 60-62

Fred Koontz - CG Reserves 86-94

Dave Olsen -

Charles Ropp - CGC BITTERSWEET 61-62

Dale R. Smith - Ketchikan 50-52

### **MEMBERS NOTES**

Dick Clarence Brown and Doris Fowler were in a car accident 8-22-07. Clarence had minor scrapes but Doris had a serious spine injury, which will take months to get over. She is in therapy. We wish them both a quick recovery. Mail address: P.O.Box 184; Rufus, OR 97050

Tom Bliss and Ed McLees spoke before the recent reunion and Ed says that Tom sounds very weak but was able to talk for quite awhile. Ed talked to Tom after the reunion and he was very pleased to get the get well card we all signed. Dick Juge also got an email from Tom giving BSP-AV his best. We are all praying for Tom and Karen, his wife. Mail address: 11128 Cedar Beach Dr. NW; Oronoco MN 55960

Eva Schmit, a WWII SPAR and regular reunion attendee, has also been involved in an unfortunate auto accident, which caused her to miss our annual reunion. Her sister tells us that this was a serious accident setting Eva back. Eva is being well cared for. All of us need to wish her the best. Mail address: 6294 101st St.; White Earth ND 58794 9660

Theresa Wright just called apologizing for not being able to sign on for the Grand Haven reunion next July. Unfortunately Cliff's condition doesn't permit them extensive travel. If you'd like to drop

them a note their mail address is: 594 Cottonwood Rd.; Sebastian, FL 32958

### **SAVE THE STORIS**

Jim Loback, a former BSP-AV Chairman and HL member, has spent a great deal of his time attempting to save the decommissioned CGC STORIS from becoming razor blades. The goal is to create a maritime museum in Juneau with STORIS being the star attraction.

On February 8, 2007, the USCG finally decommissioned our beloved STO after 66 years of honorable service. I was fortunate to have served about 18 months aboard her in 1956-1958 and also was aboard for the Historic Northwest Passage in 1957. I was then age 21 and now can truly appreciate those days and the great fellowship I developed ever since because of her.

Chuck Schmitzer invited me to join him for this important trip to Kodiak to participate in the decommissioning ceremony. Unfortunately I had a conflict, but he did succeed in persuading Jim Loback, who then convinced Jim Babarow into going. I've created a wonderful DVD of that event that is available through Ray. Incidentally, I also have copies of the official CG decommissioning ceremony that we can provide for you if you are interested. Copying, the time processing, packaging, shipping and handling all is expense. The \$12.50 donation request holds true for all these DVDs, regardless if they are 2 hours and 15 minutes or 9 minutes. Please contact Ray and visit [www.bspav.org](http://www.bspav.org) as to what DVDs are available.

The STORIS has a long and colorful history. Since writing my book I've had conversations with several who were aboard her in WWII. Imagine!

### **BUSINESS MEETING PROPOSALS**

In this newsletter I am including two new BSP-AV proposals for you to mull over during the year. They are both submitted by Dan Baumbaugh, Chairman 1995, and I agree 100% on both.



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## PROPOSAL #1

Name of organization - change: In order to make the name of our association more reflective of the group as a whole, we make a motion that our name be changed from "Bering Sea Patrol - Alaska Veterans Reunion Association of the U. S. Coast Guard" to "United States Coast Guard Alaska Veterans Reunion Association" (formerly known as the Bering Sea Patrol – Alaska Veterans Reunion Association)

We further move that By-Laws be amended to read as follows: PREAMBLE: The United States Coast Guard Alaska Veterans Reunion Association, formerly known as The Bering Sea Patrol - Alaska Veterans Reunion Association, is a voluntary, private, non-profit.....and cooperation with the Commandant of the U. S. Coast Guard as he may request." (AS AMENDED \_\_\_\_\_,2008) and we further move that the organization's title wherever it appears throughout the By-Laws be changed as indicated above.

Respectfully submitted:  
Daniel E. Baumbaugh  
Ruby V. Rice

**Dick’s Special Note:** In coversation recently with Dan, I learned that he and his good friend, Floyd Rice, Chairman in 1996 (before my time) had wanted to make our name more reflective of what we are. Unfortunately Floyd, soon after their conversation, developed a brain tumor which took his life and shelved this motion until now. Dan asked Floyd’s widow, Ruby, to join him in this motion in Floyd’s honor and she readily agreed.

## PROPOSAL #2

Dick: Please consider this as my recommendation that the following individuals, all members - or former members - in good standing in the Bering Sea Patrol - Alaska Veterans Reunion Association of the Unites States Coast Guard, be awarded "honorary lifetime membership" in the Association. Several have served as chairmen of the association and Clair Upton has served as Treasurer for many years. All have performed outstanding work for the association, giving unselfishly of their time and effort and, on occasion, even money, toward developing our group to what it has become today.

I don't think that there is any doubt that all are well deserving of such an honor.

- Raplh Hackerson. Cochairman
- David A. Webb, Chairman
- R.D. "Tony" Anthony, Chairman
- Floyd A. Rice, Chairman (posthumously)
- Ross J. VanDuser, Cochairman
- Dick Juge, Chairman
- William Felkner, Chairman
- Marty Kimmel, Chairman (posthumously)
- Ed McLees, Chairman
- Clair Upton, Treasurer

As you know, Tom Bliss, Bill McIntire, Jim Loback and yours truly have already been awarded honorary lifetime membership.

In accordance with Article II of our By-Laws, I believe that you, as our chairman, may award this honorary membership immediately without the necessity of a vote at the next reunion, if you choose. You, of course, may consider me as a committee member for this purpose if you desire.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Baumbaugh  
October 1, 2007

**Dick’s Special Note:** on this Proposal: I definitely agree with Dan that our members who truly give of themselves should be so honored. For years we’ve only had a select few thusly honored, and I made the motions for Baumbaugh, Loback and McIntire. Once I became Chairman I was put in the middle of all sorts of ‘association ugly politics’ and as a result we felt lucky just to be able to keep our organization alive. I know the pain and misery that I had to deal with didn’t end with my term, but carried over to Tom Bliss’s, Scoop Felkner’s, Marty Kimmels’ and somewhat to Ed McLee’s terms as chairmen. Fortunately, that is all behind us and we have moved on. Clair Upton, serving as our treasurer, has given immense stability to BSPAV.org. I’m proud to present Dan’s request to our membership in Grand Haven. Believe me, these guys are just an incredible bunch.

**If you will  
accept this  
newsletter in the  
future by email  
please email  
[DickJuge  
@aviosk.com](mailto:DickJuge@aviosk.com) a  
note to confirm  
to this. He  
needs the email  
address you  
normally monitor  
and would  
appreciate your  
email reply  
~ Thanks**

**Annual Meeting Minutes  
September 11, 2007**

Meeting was convened at 9:15 AM.

Edward McLees presided and we conducted the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. A. Flag

Clair Upton gave a financial report of the BSP-AV accounting records. Dick Juge and Scoop Felkner conducted an audit of the accounting records prior to the meeting. The audit did not show any discrepancies. The Treasurer's report was accepted. There was no old business.

New Business: Dick Juge was approved for the 2008 Chairmanship. Randy Fitschen was approved for the 2009 Chairmanship.

The 2008 Reunion will be held in Grand Haven, Michigan, Wednesday July 30 to Saturday August 2, 2008 – Depart on Sunday August 3, 2008.

Fifteen members at the meeting indicated they would attend.

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m. Minutes presented by Clair Upton

Dick Juge, Chairman 2007 - 2008  
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**Bering Sea Patrol – Alaska Veterans  
Reunion Association  
United States Coast Guard  
818 Gravier Street #3A  
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## **OUR WEB SITE**

Our web site is <http://www.bspav.org> and there we have endless information and support for our members and prospective members.

What's great about this web site is we can record for posterity lots of our association's history. At this site I hope to also begin to list the various DVDs that are available.

Ed McLee's son, Fred, a highly skilled web creator, has offered to help manage our web site and has backed it up for posterity's sake. I'm now age 71 and moving along to 72. When Fred offered his help to me he intimated that he felt I'd definitely want this site to have a life beyond just mine. He's absolutely right. Now, how nice can one be?