# Station Ship News

The quarterly newsletter of the USS Midway Reunion Group

DING DING . . . DING DING . . . ALL CREW ARRIVING . . . ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS . . . IN THE AIR, AT SEA AND IN PORT . . . DING DING . . . DING DING . . .



USS Midway completes UNREP with DD outboard

# 2010 San Diego Reunion - The Day Before

On the day before the reunion, the reunion group's advanced forces, the setup crew and the planning committee members, arrived at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in San Diego. They brought the supplies for the Hospitality Room, aka "HR," packing in everything from a white board to master crew lists to stat sheets to rosters to boxes of Midway memorabilia to registration packets and all of the other necessary stuff, such as banners, Plans of the Day (PODs), name tags and dinner and tour chits, to "stuff" into the reunion packets. They made food and beverage runs to local groceries to stock the HR, because they knew a Navy sails on its stomachs, and much is the same with a Navy reunion. So before the first-ever reunion of the USS Midway Reunion Group got underway, these advance forces were here setting up. This included VP Bill "Kroop" Kruper's memorabilia table with hats, pins, ship's patches and key rings as well as special-order jackets with monogrammed patches. All proceeds from the memorabilia and jacket sales go to the reunion group's operating budget, by the way.



Mina Jo-Queen of the Hospitality Room

The keg-o-rater, a machine to be proud of, sat in place in the room, built solidly like a brick you-knowwhat. Iced and ready to go, a keg loaded in from below, its tap and spigot were primed. This machine would serve them well over the next three days, to the tune of three kegs, approximately 165 12-oz. schooners of draft beer/keg, consumed. As it turned out, 5,940 oz of beer on the wall was just enough to get them through.

## **ISSUE 3, NOVEMBER 2010**



The keg-o-rater on left. Ready to serve

The day before the reunion, the HR, the nerve center of the reunion and aptly named, took shape, complete with a large poster listing food and beverages available as well as the rules and regulations to be observed in the place (one example: No passing out in the middle of the room. We will walk on you.)

We were ready to go.

#### Day 1 - The Tour

The next morning the reunion attendees flooded into the HR, like carrier jets touching down on the flight deck of Midway. There were many new faces, now that the reunion group was ship-wide, all ranks and ratings welcome, thank you, from all across the country. It was great! The scheduled activities for the day were the Old Town Trolley Tour of San Diego and lunch at Anthony's Sea Food Grotto, a prime seafood restaurant on the waterfront, down the street from Midway.

It was a perfect morning under a cobalt blue sky. No one seemed too shy as they loaded onto the San Diego trolley buses in front of the hotel. We filled two and a half trollies, and for the next two hours our tour drivers wheeled us around the historical city of San Diego. We were in high spirits, invigorated by the city, the tour, the weather, and the fact the reunion was finally underway.

One of the tour guides, "Hatch," had apparently learned how to entertain and drive a trolley without spending too much time watching the road. He had perfected the technique of missing other vehicles and objects by micro-inches. As he wheeled his trolley around the city, he never stopped talking, providing us with an incredible amount of detail along the route in a most entertaining fashion, passing around newspaper articles, cartoons, etc. to help illustrate his points. "Hatch" was entertaining, knowledgeable, and he obviously loved his job and the city of San Diego, from Coronado Island to Little Italy, and everything in between.



All aboard the Old Town Trolley

Finally, the tour nearly over, "Hatch" and the other trolley drivers dropped us off at Anthony's Seafood Grotto, winner of San Diego's best seafood award thirteen years running, the perfect spot for a bunch of hungry sailors and their mates to have lunch. Next to the Fantail Cafe, that is. We enjoyed seafood that lived up to its billing and excellent company for the next couple of hours. Again, the sea stories flowed.



#### Old Town Trolley tour guides. That's "Hatch" on the right

After the trolley tour and the lunch at Anthony's concluded, most of the attendees ended up back at Crowne Plaza Hotel. Many of these found their way back to the Hospitality Room, which provided just the right environment for the members to be hospitable in. First and foremost after all, the USS Midway Reunion Group is a social group, and the HR is a likely place to be sociable. Not only do you have a captive audience for your sea stories there, but you have a good variety of gee-dunks along with that frosty beer dispensed from the keg-o-rater. Registrants were still showing up late into day 1, and we were getting them logged in. Amazing! Nighttime had fallen upon San Diego on the first day of the reunion. There was still a surprising number of people hanging around the HR, looking forward to tomorrow when we would be going to the ship!

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Reunion crew chowing down at Anthony's

# Day 2 - The Ship

It's not at all hard to imagine the slap-slap of hundreds of feet hitting the deck on the fifth floor of the Crowne Plaza Hotel early on the morning of Friday, September 24. This was day the members of the USS Midway Reunion Group had orders to arrive at the ship early, at 0900, an hour before the "civilians" are allowed to board. We were coming to participate in a special "meet and greet" reunion event in Hangar Bay 1, complete with continental breakfast, hosted by the Midway Museum. Offer a Midway sailor a free breakfast on his old ship and lots of black coffee, and he will follow you anywhere.



Chowing down again-this time on the ship!

Our bus rolled into the parking lot below the Midway right on time. We were higher than the highest mast on the ship as we unloaded, our eyes riveted on her, in awe, taken back in our mind's eye to the days we sailed on her as young men. For some of the men, this was their first time aboard since they left the ship as young men, 30 or 40, or even 50 or more years ago. We filed up the gangplank, were greeted by our Midway Museum hosts, and led into Hanger Bay One, where breakfast was awaiting us. We were like kids on our first field trip.



Scott McGaugh-Living "Midway Magic"

After breakfast, Scott McGaugh, the Museum's Marketing Director and head of PR and author of the book *Midway Magic*, gave an inspiring talk about the role of our reunion group, representing the men who kept the ship at sea for 47 years, and who now were her ambassadors in helping to keep her legacy alive. Jim Eckel, of the Museum's Planned Giving Program, described the Museum's endowment program, and Jill Hammons, Director of Membership, took the mic and and described the Museum's many membership options, which fit in nicely with what we are trying to accomplish as a ship-wide reunion group.



Reunion officers present the group's banner to Scott McGaugh

Next, the reunion group's officers came forward and unfurled the reunion group's banner and presented it to Scott with the hope that it be hung in a prominent place on the ship for all present and future reunion group members and museum visitors to see.

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**Reunion group officers in Hangar Bay 1** 

Perhaps the most memorable moment of the hangar bay ceremony came when we honored the three plankowners in attendance. It was an inspiring moment. Nor would it be the last time we honored them during the reunion. This acknowledgment on their ship, by their shipmates, family members, and friends had to be a profound experience for these men, and the tears on both sides of the handshakes were genuine.



#### The plankowners from left – Bob Butler, Gene Slingerland, and George Fowler

All good things must come to an end, and such was the case for the "meet and greet" ceremony in the hangar bay of Midway, hosted by the Midway Museum to honor and recognize us. We couldn't ask for more, really. We were now free to move about the ship (within the safety zones, of course) to enjoy the audio tour and displays. Many of us hung around, savoring the moment. But eventually we commenced our exploration of the ship from bow to fantail, exploring below decks, topside to the flight deck, to see the awesome aircraft up there, and on up to the bridge. We were free to co-mingle with the civilians and enjoy the audio tours and docent presentations. From time to time, we experienced the special thrill of being singled out by tourists and asked if we really served on this ship. Yes, we would tell them, yes we

did. "I was on her in . . . " There were many such proud moments on this day. Some of the men even volunteered to work with the Midway docents for an hour or so, and for these men, docents and reunion members alike, it was an emotional experience.

For the next several hours we toured the ship, and even though many of us had been here before on previous reunions, walking these same gritty spaces was still a thrill. "Midway Magic" was in the air.

Okay, so maybe we weren't exactly running up ladders and bounding through hatches like we did when we were young seamen and ensigns on this ship, but we still felt like we could do all that . . . until the next morning.

There were new spaces open since many of us had last been here in 2007, such as the Pilot's Ready Rooms, where the ship's Top Guns got their mission assignments before being catapulted off the flight deck into the Wild Blue Yonder. Some of the engine room spaces were open, and a docent was standing by to talk about how Boiler Room 3 drove just one of the ship's four screws.

On the flight deck, we took in the fighter jets, the Huey gunships and other assorted aircraft up there. On the bridge, after a climb up seemingly vertical ladders, we toured the Admiral's Quarters and the Captain's Cabin. Also up there were the Pilot House and Flight Deck Control.



**Midway topside** 

Finally, dog tired, we made it down to the Fantail Cafe, which now serves chipped beef on toast–SOS – and plenty of other decent chow, and browsed through the Jet Shop just like regular tourists

Another group of reunion attendees took an optional harbor tour arranged as part of this special day. They saw Midway and three other modern-day aircraft carriers now home-ported in San Diego – the Ronald Reagan, the Nimitz, and the Carl Vinson – from a whole different perspective–looking up! By 1500, we were ready for R&R back at the hotel to recharge our batteries. It had been a long day on the ship, and the keg-o-rater, sea stories, and maybe a quick nap in our room awaited us.



Midway - seen from the park, framed by trees

That evening, many of us were out there again, on an optional tour. At Old Town, we dined at a Mexican restaurant, enjoying complimentary margaritas and a serenade by a Mariachi band. Then it was on to NTC-Naval Training Center-where many of us went to Boot Camp back in the Stone Age. At the USS Recruit, aka the USS Neversail, we posed for pictures with the "ship" where we had our first taste of shipboard life, albeit on dry land. After NTC, we charged across the sweeping Coronado Bridge and admired the San Diego skyline at night. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, we were surrounded by scofflaw bicyclists, pedaling like crazy and weaving in and out of traffic, in a demonstration known as "Critical Mass." To add to this craziness, our tour guide announced that we had accidentally left his partner behind at NTC. Only in California!

When we got back to the hotel, we were so tired we practically fell into our racks, er, beds.

Day 2 was in the books.



USS Neversail - looking "ghostly" in the night

# Day 3 - Business Meeting, Banquet, Farewell

### The Business Meeting

By the third and final day of the reunion, the reunion attendees showed no signs of slowing down. In fact, they seemed more energized than ever. They were fully engaged in this thing.

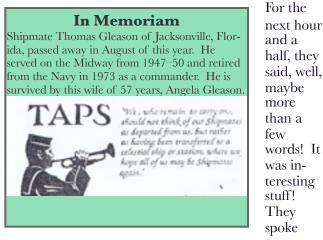
And as "Hatch" promised, it was another beautiful day in San Diego..

First up on this day was the business meeting, at 1000, in the Lahaina Room. Business meetings at ship's reunions seem to bring out the best in navy veterans, transforms them into sea-going lawyers who can cite Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, verse and line. Parliamentary Procedure becomes their second language. There's no explaining it.



The men-taking care of business

In retrospect, this first business meeting at the first-ever reunion of the men of the USS Midway Reunion Group was exceptional. President Oscar Granger called the meeting to order and asked the members to stand tall and each say a few words about themselves. And so they did.



eloquently, intelligently, earnestly, and passionately about their Navy days on the ship and equally so about their civilian careers.

When each of the three plankowners took their turns speaking, the rest of the men stood up in unison to honor them, still one more time.



Plankowner Bob Butler speaking his mind

With introductions over, business was commenced. Oscar turned the meeting over to Vice President-Administration Bill Kruper who took the men through the proposed Articles of Confederation and Bylaws, an impressive document, that had been updated extensively from the 2009 reunion in Orlando. Most of this work done by Bill.

Bill covered the salient points, such as alternating reunion sites every two years but always returning to San Diego on the fourth year. Bill explained that the plan was to form a sub-group of members who lived in southern California and who could represent us at special Museum functions.

In other business, the membership voted to table a proposal to open up the group beyond Midway veterans, to Midway-class ships' veterans. A new position was established, Vice President-Reunion, and Jim Hayter was approved by the membership.

Dave Payson, Secretary-Treasurer and newsletter editor of the *Station Ship News*, called for members to volunteer to help with the newsletter. He is looking for a Sea Story Editor. He plans to go more electronic with the newsletter to save printing and mailing costs. Then, Jim Hayter, in his first official duty as the Vice President-Reunions, led the site selection process for 2012, and the members, in a very lively session with members lobbying for their cities, whittled the choices down to a primary site (Washington, D.C.) and a secondary site (a cruise ship).

Finally, President Oscar Granger adjourned the meeting. A good thing, too, for the hotel staff was already setting up for the banquet all around us. Before our eyes, the Lahaina Room was being converted into the Lahaina Bay Room.

So the first business meeting of the USS Midway Reunion Group was in the books, very smartly and professionally done by the men. They had taken care of business. The meeting minutes can be found on the website under the Membership link.

## The Banquet

Make no mistake about it, this was a reunion banquet for the ages. We had an Admiral and his lovely wife as guests of honor, a bunch of lovely ladies, a program that was second to none, three plankowners among us, and a banquet room full of people the likes of which we'd never seen before.

After the reunion pictures were taken, the attendees found tables in the banquet room. Business at the cash bar was brisk. The reunion officers were seated at the head table along with the distinguished guests of honor: Rear Admiral (USN, ret.) Mac McLaughlin and his lovely wife Norah. Mac is the President and CEO of the USS Midway Museum.



President Oscar Granger delivers opening remarks at banquet

After some opening fanfare, Oscar Granger welcomed and thanked everyone for attending and then turned the mic over to Dave Payson, who had the honor of introducing the three plankowners – Bob Butler, George Fowler, and Gene Slingerland – all members of Midway's 1945 commissioning crew.

Once gain these men rose to a standing ovation and remained standing as Dave asked them to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. It was nicely done by these men of the Greatest Generation. But we weren't through yet. The Admiral was then invited to the podium to present Bob, George and Gene with World War II Victory Medals.



Plankowners display their WWII medals

Ben Gaines was there, in his dress blues, making those of us who might have more than a little trouble "squeezing" into ours, feel bad. As is his tradition, Ben brought his 40mm saluting shell casing, retrieved from the 08 level of Midway, following a salute to President John Kennedy, who had recently been assassinated in Dallas. Ben led us in several of the ceremonies, including the medal ceremony. Ben in uniform was the perfect touch for this night, for he conducted his "official" duties with great military bearing. The Admiral had to be impressed.



Petty officer Ben Gaines (ret.) stands tall with the colors

Next, it was the Admiral's turn to be on the receiving end of a couple of gifts from the membership, a custom-made Midway jacket presented by Oscar and a handmade Midway quilt and pillow made by Helen Kruper. Mac confessed that he had a compartment onboard where he would occasionally sneak off to get some shut-eye after working a 12-hour shift and the quilt and pillow would be just perfect for such occasions. Many of the veterans in the room could relate to that desire to find a quiet control room in which to crash, especially during the graveyard watch. Mac had a way of taking us back.



Helen Kruper presents the Admiral with a handmade Midway quilt

Then it was dinnertime, and it was several cuts above your usual "rubber chicken" fare. The Crowne Plaza served us a delicious dinner, and for the next hour or so we consumed it and enjoyed each others company.

After coffee and the tables were cleared, it was Mac's turn to address us. He was introduced by Andy Perez, Captain, USN, ret.

For the next half hour, Rear Admiral Mac McLaughlin, USN, ret., President and CEO of the USS Midway Museum, brought us up to speed on our ship, what the Midway Museum has been doing to preserve her for us, both physically and metaphorically speaking, about her legacy. As we listened, transfixed, it grew so quiet you could've heard a barnacle grow. He talked about our "gritty ship," as he called it, and what it means to the city of San Diego, the country and the US Navy - and, of course, what it means to us - her veterans. He told us about the extensive and expensive hull preservation program the Museum has underway to protect Midway's hull from the eroding effects of saltwater, and described all of the great educational programs the Museum is conducting for the school children of San Diego and beyond. The Midway Museum, he explained, is much more than its artifacts, its planes and all the rest. All of that is important, he conceded, holding up Ben Gaines' 40mm shell casing for us to see, but it doesn't add up to his vision. For Mac's vision goes far beyond that. He's looking forty years down the road, after we're gone; in his mind's eye, the Midway Museum will one day be the West Coast's Statue of Liberty, a

symbol of this nation's freedom. Then he concluded his speech by inviting us to return to San Diego in 2014. "Let's hold the banquet on the flight deck of Midway," he said. For several seconds after he was done we sat there at our tables, speechless, taking in what he had said. *Let's hold the banquet on the flight deck of Midway*.

#### Right, the Admiral speaks to his vision and the legacy of the Midway Museum

Then we stood as one and cheered the man, the guardian of our legacy. For all practical purposes, the first reunion of the USS Midway Reunion Group had come to an end.

Later, many of the attendees found their way back to the Hospitality



Room to say their good-byes. They were tired and had early morning flights to catch, but soon the HR was again abuzz with sea stories, and the keg was drained down to the foam, bringing the total number of kegs consumed over the three days of the reunion to 3, just as planned. Though who was that guy who predicted we'd need 9? Eventually on this last night of the reunion, the HR emptied and the lights dimmed. We didn't sing "Turn Out the Lights the Party's Over," which is just as well because this party, which was a roaring success, isn't over. This party, shipmates, is just beginning.

Ladies and Gentlemen, family and friends of the USS Midway Reunion Group, it was a spectacular reunion. Thank you for making it that way!



#### **More Banquet Pictures**



#### From the President...

#### Shipmates:

As the last person in the Hospitality Room on Sunday Morning, I had some time to reflect on the 2010 reunion-who are we and where do we want to be. At the banquet Saturday evening, Admiral McLaughlin gave us an inspiring message about the ship and the many facets of the Museum. From my perspective, and in my opinion, of the greatest importance to the sustainability of the Reunion Group, were his comments regarding what the Midway Museum is and the plans for "growing the business." He held up the saluting battery casing that Ben Gaines brings to at each reunion, identifying it as a important artifact that helps distinguish Midway's history. Then he took the next giant step, identifying each person in the room as an element critical to distinguishing Midway's living history. We all lived during historically important times and it's the memories we created while serving aboard during those times, and that we're now sharing, that will distinguish Midway as long as she continues in her community service capacity.

Stop and consider-it's the memory of the lives we lived then that bring us back to the ship and to our shipmates-and it's those same memories that will keep the momentum of the Reunion Group moving forward and will provide the essence of the living history being showcased on Midway.

Karen Granger and Jim Hayter have committed to continuing the interviews of each of our shipmates in an effort to provide the membership and the Museum with the living history, the memories, of the lives we lived aboard Midway– the good, the bad, and the– 'rest of the story'! As the Admiral indicated in his talk, without the memories, there is no living history. And it's our living history that sets Midway apart from the other aircraft carrier museums around the Country. Without our memories, Midway is just another museum. With our stories being told, over and over, to the millions of visitors to Midway, there is a whole new set of memories and stories that will manifest in the imaginations of young and old alike.

In the wake of the 2010 Reunion, I challenge every member, new and old alike, to reach out to shipmates that you may have contact with or that you may know where they are, and invite them to join their shipmates in the most dynamic, best organized, most energetic reunion group on the planet! The more members we can identify, the more memories we can create for the Museum. We're moving on to Washington, D.C., in 2012 and we'd like to see double or triple the numbers of shipmates and family members and friends join us for the camaraderie and brotherhood that can only exist with such an organization.

In the words of Admiral McLaughlin, "Onward and Upward!"

**Oscar Granger**, President USS Midway Reunion Group

## **More Banquet Pictures**







Mac and Norah McLaughlin - our special guests

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#### From the office VP-Administration...

The San Diego 2010 reunion is now history and will definitely remain forever in our memories. It's almost impossible to list any specific thing that made it so great, but one cannot forget the events, camaraderie, fellowship and just plain good times we all shared together. As your officers and hosts the reward for our efforts is seeing everyone having a great time.

Recalling what I said at the business meeting concerning our group membership has found a place in my heart and I hope in yours, too; "When the USS Midway went to sea no single division on that ship made it happen. It took everyone; officers, enlisted, air groups and Marines to accomplish the missions we were given. Our reunion group functions the same way, it takes all Midway and Midway-class carrier veterans to make us great. With that thought in mind our future reunions can only get better."

As we begin to plan ahead for Washington D.C. in 2012 I encourage you to make your commitment to be there. Your officers will need help with the planning and organizing, so if you're interested please make yourself available.

By the time you read this I will have replenished our supply of USS Midway CVA-41 and CV-41 hats. If you still want one please contact me via email at: <u>uncabil@msn.com</u> or call 218-262-0009 and I will advise.

In closing I thank everyone for re-electing me to another two year term as your VP-Admin, and I will continue to serve you to the best of my ability.

Sail on shipmates..... Bill (Kroop) Kruper

## **More Banquet Pictures**













#### From the office VP-Reunions...

My first official act as your new VP- Reunions is to thank you for electing me to this newly created position. I have attended four reunions, and worked closely with your elected officers in planning the Orlando 09 and San Diego 10 events. I actually enjoy doing event planning, so in this case, I am the right kind of person for this job. The reunion group's officers have already held a conference call to discuss the good, the bad, and what needs to be changed, as we focus on our next reunion in Washington, D.C., in 2012. Here is an action item for all of our members: tell me what you liked, or did not like, at the recently concluded San Diego reunion. My e-mail address is

**jim.hayter@comcast.net**. Without your input, we'll continue to hold similarly structured reunions year after year. If we have it right, that is good, but there is always new and better ways to do things, and your input will be evaluated to see if we can do it better next time.

Fast Forward to 2012. The membership has already voted to hold our next reunion in Washington, D.C., so I have put together a tentative framework of what our reunion could look like two years down the road. This blueprint will probably change multiple times before we finalize our plans, but if this sounds good to you, plan to join us in our nation's capital in a little less than two years. Here is what I have so far: the reunion dates are targeted for one of three Thursday through Saturday date ranges starting in mid-September; Day 1 (Thursday) will be a guided tour of the military-themed memorials in Washington; Day 2 (Friday) will be a visit to Annapolis, Maryland, with a tour of the United States Naval Academy and other historic sites in the area; Day 3 (Saturday) will be our business meeting in the morning and our banquet dinner in the evening. A nice thing about our reunions is that attendees can partake in as many, or as few, events as they like. The most important thing is the fellowship-meeting with former and new shipmates who served on the USS Midway. I have also made it a priority to find a reunion hotel that will offer us reduced room rates three days before and three days after the reunion, so you can add a vacation to your trip.

Again, all of this is preliminary planning, and everything is subject to change. If anyone has suggestions about how this sounds, or how to make it better, email me with your ideas. Even better, if you would like to be involved in planning WDC 2012, send me a special-attention e-mail, so I can add you to our team. And if you live in the D.C. area, you could help us coordinate reunion activities in real time, be our "boots on the ground," which would be a big plus. Shipmates, forget what you learned about volunteering when you were in the Navy, this will be FUN!

Jim Hayter Reston, Virginia

#### **Photo Credits**

This reunion was covered, bow to fantail, by three very talented photographers:

Marv Dumond, PM, USS Midway, '58-'63
Katie Dumond, West Richland, Wa.
Rick Wyman, La Mirada, Ca.

We thank them for capturing so many memorable moments of the reunion. Visit our website to see more.

#### **Board Appoints Chaplains**

In a recent conference call, the board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Ray and Barbara Bettis as our USS Midway Reunion Group Chaplains. Ray, a Midway veteran, and Barb are the pastors of a church in Knoxville, Iowa, and can be reached on 515-249-4340 or via email at <u>ray\_barb@msn.com</u> Our Chaplains will share their plans with the board on our next conference call. We are excited to have Ray and Barb as our Chaplains and look forward to working with them.

We thank the staff and management of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, San Diego, for working so closely with us to put on this reunion. We couldn't have done it anywhere near as well without you!

- USS Midway Reunion Group



# **ISSUE 3, NOVEMBER 2010**

# The Masthead USS Midway Reunion Group

A newsletter covering former USN veterans who served aboard USS Midway or her sister carriers, and who are friends eternal.

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(To view a slideshow of 2010 reunion photos organized by days, go to **2010 Reunion Pictures** link on website)

#### Receive this newsletter electronically

To receive future issues of the Station Ship News electronically, you can download it from the reunion group's website (at web address above). Contact the newsletter editor, make sure he has your e-mail address. and he will notify you when a new newsletter has been posted.

Save Mailing Expenses!

## Jackets & Patches Vendor

http://www.shop.charityeventshirts.com/

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Remember to pay your annual dues by January 31, 2011. New members who joined the group after June 30, 2010, are also covered for 2011.

Mail your check for \$20 (payable to Midway Reunion Group) to:

> 410 Cottonwood Dr. Richland, WA 99352

**Notice:** The reunion group board wants to publish the roster of members on the website so that we can share this information with the full membership. This includes phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and mailing addresses. If you do not want this information published in the public domain, e-mail the Webmaster or the Secretary-Treasurer at the addresses on the <u>left</u>. It is also possible that this information can be password-protected for our members. We will keep you informed on this plan via our broadcast e-mail system.