

# Buddy Line



Newsletter of Fraternal Order of Underwater Swim School, Key West, Florida

May 2006

## President's Corner by Don Stone

Reunion 2006, May 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, was a huge success as FO/UWSS went back to Key West where it all started. We had 117 attendees including 68 FO/UWSS members, their spouses, and guests. Many new members came to the reunion, and members came from as far away as British Columbia and Hawaii. The food and ambience at the ice breaker, muster, and banquet were all very different, and very good. Everyone had a fine time renewing old friendships and making new ones.

Newly retired CMC, Mike Driscoll, was largely responsible for much of the success of the reunion with his knowledge of NASKW and many friendships on base. He gave us plenty of good advice and opened many doors for us. His good friend, Mike Hartley, MWR club manager, treated us royally and gave us great prices. Another of Mike's old friends, Capt. James Scholl, Commanding Officer NASKW, smoothed our way on and off the base and in general gave us great support. We enjoyed a visit from Capt. Scholl and his wife at the Icebreaker on Thursday evening.. And lastly, Mike's friend, Clell Breining, Force Master Chief of Navy Special Warfare, flew in from California for our reunion and a very informative presentation at the banquet,



At the business meeting, Don Stone was reelected president, Bob Holmes was elected vice president and Roger Lynch continued his term as secretary/treasurer. A recurring issue, the conflict between UWSS reunions and EOD reunions, both held biannually in even numbered years, was brought up for discussion. It was



decided that we change our reunions to odd number years and that rather than waiting 3 years for the next UWSS reunion we hold a reunion in 2007. The members unanimously chose to return to Key West in 2007. Panama City was selected for the location of Reunion 2009. A Reunion 2007 committee was formed with members John Bartleson, Bob Holmes and Bernie Campoli, headed by Roger Lynch. John will be sending information to the many publications that publish reunion notices. We have received many new members from these notices – two in the past week!

We had a great tour at the Special Forces Underwater Operations School on Fleming Key, thanks to the efforts of Bernie Campoli, Andy Anderson, Gary Betterton and Earle Petty. We made new friends there and were invited back. In fact, the commanding officer of the school, Maj. William Herbert, asked if some of our members would speak at their graduation ceremonies. So far three of our members have volunteered: Bob Shouse, Earle Petty and Don Stone. We would like to have more, so please give this some consideration.

The photos appearing in this issue were shared by John Bartleson, A Dee Clark, Erasmo Riojas, Chris Seger and Bernie Campoli. If you have photos to share, please email them or send a disc (address on page 2). A CD will be made with many of the shared photos and will be available at cost of materials and postage.

**UWSS LOGO ITEMS**



The following logo items are available, so send in your orders and they will be shipped pronto. Prices include shipping. Availability is subject to change. We can obtain other items if there are enough requests.

White Beefy-T shirt..... 13.00 ea, 2 for 24.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on pocket  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL

Ash gray Beefy-T shirt..... 14.00 ea, 2 for 26.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on pocket  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL

White long sleeved T shirt ..... 16.00 ea, 2 for 30.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on front (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL

Ash gray long sleeved T shirt ..... 17.00 ea, 2 for 32.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on front (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL

White polo shirt, 50/50 cotton/poly.. 18.00 ea, 2 for 34.00  
Small logo on pocket. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Ash polo shirt, 50/50 cotton/poly..... 18.00 ea, 2 for 34.00  
Small logo on pocket. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Coffee mug with logo ..... 12.00 ea  
Cap – natural with logo 12.00 ea  
8.00 ea if ordered with shirt

UWSS logo decal  
Transparent background 2.00 ea  
White background 2.00 ea  
UWSS logo lapel/tie pin 4.00 ea  
UWSS plaque - Bright brass logo on blue 40.00 ea

**Send payment with order to Don Stone,  
1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Boca Raton, FL 33432**

Photos of all logo gear items  
are on the web site!  
[www.uwss.org](http://www.uwss.org)

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

Membership- May 2006 204 members

Account Balance February 2006	\$5,170.00
Dues	+2,000.00
Reunion Fees	+6,480.00
Logo item sales	+1,706.00
Buddy Line printing & postage	-202.51
Logo purchases	-343.25
Reunion expense	-6,227.29
Account Balance May 31, 2006	\$8,582.95

**FO/UWSS Mission**

The Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School was formed in order to keep lines of communication open between personnel of the armed forces who were staff or students at the Navy Underwater Swimmers School Key West, Florida. Associate membership is open to family, friends, and others who share an interest in the goals and activities of FO/UWSS. Associate members do not have voting privileges, but are encouraged to participate in all other activities.. One of the most important reasons for our existence as an organized group is to plan for and participate in biannual reunions, which will be held at various locations to be selected by members' votes.

**FO/UWSS Officers**

President ..... Don Stone  
Vice President.....Bob Holmes  
Secretary/Treasurer ..... Roger Lynch

The Buddy Line newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. Buddy Line editors are Don and Art Stone.  
e-mail: [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org) or [stonefish7@cs.com](mailto:stonefish7@cs.com)  
snail mail: 1440 S.W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33432  
phone: (561) 391-6727 fax: (509) 472-6492  
WEBSITE: [www.uwss.org](http://www.uwss.org)

**Buddy Line by email**

If you use email you may prefer receiving the email version of the Buddy Line newsletter. It is delivered to your inbox as a .pdf file for Adobe Acrobat Reader.

The benefits to you are faster delivery and **color** photos (when originals are color).

The benefits to the FO/UWSS are the savings on printing and postage for the Buddy Line mailout.

To receive the Buddy Line by email, send your request to [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org).



# Faces at the Reunion



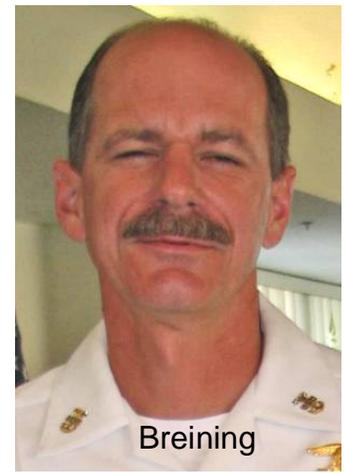
The Icebreaker featured food, friends, memorabilia, logo gear, and a visit from NASKW Commanding Officer, Capt. James Scholl, and his wife.





**Muster at Sunset Lounge  
featured..... the sunset, of course!**



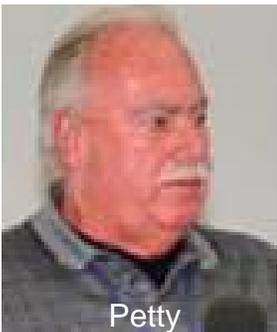


Breining

At the banquet, MC Bob (Doc) Clark did a great job, as usual. Featured speaker was Clell Breining, Force Master Chief of Navy Special Warfare with a SpecWar update and information on the new rating system. We also heard from Army Special Forces M/Sgt Earle Petty; Air Force PJ, M/Sgt Aaron Farrior; and Canadian Gerry Flowers, a US Force Recon Marine, who told how their UWSS experience benefited their military careers. Dr. Charlie Aquadro reminisced about some of his interesting life experiences.



Aquadro



Petty

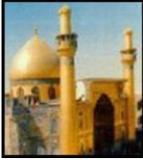


Farrior



Flowers





## *Najaf Chronicles*

*By Rick LaRoche*

*UWSS member, Rick LaRoche, who works for the US State Department spent a year in Iraq as Provincial Action Officer for Najaf. While there, he shared short narratives of his life and feelings as he carried out his sometimes dangerous duties*

October 8, 2004 Greetings to all from downtown sunny Najaf. A tropical paradise in the making (just add water). Much has happened here since the last edition of the Chronicles. We have received mortar rounds as a gentle reminder that the bad guys are still out there, as well as several threats of an imminent attack on the camp (apparently imminent means something different in Arabic since they did not attack). I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to write a "brief" for the President, the National Security Advisor, the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State prior to their meeting with the Iraqi Prime Minister. Guess if I was nervous. I didn't hear anything back, so I guess they were happy with it. It was quite an experience for me.

Otherwise, the big news here was what we lovingly refer to as a "Dog & Pony Show." The Ambassador and a high-ranking Minister from the Iraqi government and a "cast of thousands" descended on us a few days ago to visit some reconstruction sites. As control officer and Senior State Department Official in the Province of Najaf (I kind of like that title☺), I was tasked with planning and executing the mission. What was supposed to be a "low-key" (for security reasons) trip got really out-of-hand quickly. By the time we rolled out of camp, we had a convoy of 27 (count 'em) vehicles that left a footprint bigger than that of King Kong smashing his way through New York City.

To complicate the situation further, it was decided (I advised against this detour, but was overruled) to drive through the areas of recent fighting and heavy destruction close to the Holy Shrine, where al-Sadr and his "boogar-eaters" held up until we let them off the hook. Needless to say, the people living and working in that area are not really happy about everything that happened and were not at all pleased to see us. We stopped, took a few photos and continued on our way. We were escorted by the local Iraqi police, who possess the tracking and navigational skills of a deaf, dumb and blind paraplegic. Shortly after leaving the city limits, we were hopelessly lost, thanks to the well-honed local knowledge of our hosts. Thank God for GPS! A quick readout and we were on the right trail again.

The following day, the Governor had invited me to visit the Holy Shrine in a somewhat smaller group. The Holy Shrine (Imam Ali) is one of the holiest sites in the world for Shiites and was the site of the recent fighting in

Najaf. It stands in front of the largest cemetery in the world. Folks, you can drop about 50 Arlington Cemeteries in this place and still have room for a small city. It's enormous! Shiites believe that if you are buried here, you will not have to be judged by the prerequisite "two angles" before entering paradise. These guys are looking for ways to beat the system even after they've died. Anyway, we followed the same route that we had taken the day before (but a few hours earlier in case there were any bad guys around). As we rounded a corner, we saw a "roadblock" (debris piled in the road) that had not been there less than 24 hours ago. Immediately, the "pucker-factor" soared off the scale as we thought: "ambush!" The roadblock was placed right in front of three multistory buildings heavily damaged from artillery fire (great for snipers). We had to stop dead, make a 3-point U-turn and head back the way we came.

By now, we were really spooked and so was the Deputy Governor. Finally, rather than abort the mission we found another small street right through the heart of the Old City to get to the Shrine. I got out and took some photographs, was photographed myself as the "first American to visit the Shrine since early August" and left again in a hurry. Although things have been calm by Najaf standards recently, Ramadan is approaching and that always brings on more attacks here. Moreover, this Ramadan is special, as it coincides for the first time in many years with the anniversary of the Battle of Badr. The Battle of Badr took place in 624 and is believed to have been the first major battle between the newly established religion of Islam and "non-believers" (that's us, folks). The Prophet Mohammed himself commanded the troops! Religious extremists looking for that "something extra" to spur the boys on may well take advantage of this!

I believe that the insurgents will "throw everything at us but the kitchen sink" between now and the elections in January. This is their last window of opportunity to try to destabilize the country before Iraqis get their own "democratically elected" government. It will be interesting to see how we respond to their challenge. Locals I have spoken with cannot comprehend why we don't do anything about Falluja and other areas where insurgents have control. I am constantly asked: "Why don't you go in and wipe them out? This is what we want the US to do." Of course, these are Shiites speaking, and they are not particularly fond of the Sunnis, so I guess we should take this with the "proverbial grain of salt. Seriously, our actions in these areas will have a tremendous impact on achieving the level of security needed to have safe and peaceful elections in Iraq. We need to be tough. In a culture of violence, this is what people understand best.

Until the next edition, enjoy life and don't forget the wise words of the Dali Lama: "Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it."

*The material in the Najaf Chronicles is not for public use and may not be re-printed or used in any other context.*

## Membership Application

## Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates & Class # at UWSS: \_\_\_\_\_ or Associate Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Send copy of class picture if you have one. 2 Year Membership \$25.00

Make check to Roger Lynch, Treasurer and mail to FO/UWSS, 1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Boca Raton, FL 33432

Major Herbert gave us an interesting presentation and tour at Special Forces Underwater Operations School. Here he is describing the closed circuit apparatus they use.

FO/UWSS member, Earle Petty, a member of the first group of instructors at SF Underwater Operations School, was invited to sign the "old timers wall".



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School  
Buddy Line Newsletter  
1440 S. W. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Boca Raton, FL 33432