
December 2015

USS JOHN W WEEKS DD-701 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Dear Fellow shipmates,

As your new Association President, let me take a minute to introduce myself. My name is Alan Cutcher and I sailed aboard the *USS John W. Weeks* during 1963-1965 as a YN2 under the Command of Captain Jean Fitzgerald. I have attended most of the Reunions held in the last 20 years and most recently served on the Board of Directors. At the 2015 Reunion, held in Port Huron, Michigan, I had the honor of being elected as your new Association President replacing Len Budzynski who retired from his position. Len did a great job as President and

deserves a well-earned break so he can relax and just enjoy the future reunions.

I am looking forward to the challenge of being President. I know I have a Board of Directors who are dedicated to the Association and are all willing to take an active role in helping direct the future of our Association. The Board will next meet at our Mini-reunion in May in Virginia to discuss our future.

In May of 2015, the Board attended the dedication of the *USS John W. Weeks DD-701* Ship's Museum located in Lancaster, NH. The museum is located inside the John W. Weeks summer home located on top of a mountain located in the Weeks State Park. The Staff gave us a great reception there at the official opening. We presented them with a number of artifacts from the Ship. Each year we plan on presenting more items from the Ship. If any of you have items you would like to donate to them please contact me (at any time other than December through March when I will be unavailable by phone). We will ensure that each item donated will be labeled with your name, rate and years of service on the *Weeks*. For those of you who made a cash donation in 2015 to help build the wall for the museum to separate our display area, a plaque will be presented to the Museum listing you as a donor. If you want to make a donation, please send your donation to our Treasurer, Jerry Wester.

As you know, our Association is getting older and smaller. We need to find ways to keep our costs down for our future reunions as we continue to face smaller attendance at each reunion. For a number of years we have used professional reunion planners. However, the number of people attending the reunion has now fallen below the number of hotel rooms required by them. This year's reunion was planned without using the planners which helped to reduce the individual costs to those attending. We will keep this in mind as we plan future reunions. Our 2016 Reunion will be held in the fall of 2016 in Buffalo, New York. The dates and hotel location will be released in the spring. I will be scouting Savannah, Georgia this winter about the possibility of holding our 2017 there. I will be reporting the results of my visit to the Board of Directors at our May Board meeting. The only thing I can promise you is that your officers and the Board of Directors will do everything they can to maintain our Association as long as possible and make sure our reunions are fun filled and rewarding for all our members.



Now Hear This!

A REMINDER TO ALL
SHIPMATES RECEIVING THIS
NEWSLETTER...THE
DEADLINE FOR ANNUAL
DUES FOR YEAR 2016 IS
MARCH 31, 2016.

Please pay to continue
receiving your newsletter.
Thank you!

Shipmates!

Please make sure that we
have both your correct
Email and mailing address.

On behalf of your Officers and your Board of Directors let me take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope to see you in Buffalo!

Alan

USS JOHN W WEEKS 2015 ANNUAL REUNION

PORT HURON, MICHIGAN

Ray and Harriett Goodmuth

This year's annual reunion took place in Port Huron, MI. It was orchestrated by our new President Alan Cutcher with the assistance of Pauline Perron Daugharty. Both managed to put on a very successful event and it's easy to tell that Alan is very proud of his hometown. The reunion ran from September 30 to October 3. Some shipmates arrived early and got to meet some of Alan's longtime friends at Port Huron's original Coney Island Hotdog Shop. Those hotdogs were so good it was hard to stop eating.

Wednesday evening we gathered in the hospitality room for a welcome address by Alan and Mayor Pauline Repp. Also present was Mark Kelly who served aboard the Weeks in the early 50's and authored several books including *The Warriors* in which he talks about his experiences aboard the *Weeks*. Following the reception we enjoyed an ice cream social.



Thursday morning we again gathered in the hospitality room for a conversation with Freighter Frank, a colorful authority on everything and anything that has to do with Great Lakes shipping, ships and Port Huron. Following Frank's talk we boarded the bus for a short drive to the United States Coast Guard Lightship *Huron* (LV-103) which was launched in 1920. When retired from active service in 1970 she was acquired by the



City of Port Huron. The ship was enshrined at Pine Grove Park in 1972 as a tribute to her vigilance and in fond memory of a by-gone era. In 1989 the *Huron* was designated a National Historic Landmark. She is the only Coast Guard Lightship on the Great Lakes to be so honored.

Our knowledgeable tour guides aboard the *Huron* gave us an informed talk on life aboard an active lightship and the history of this particular ship. A good deal of time was spent relating to us what it takes to live aboard and operate a lightship.

After lunch at Rix's on the Rocks restaurant we boarded the bus for the International Flag Plaza. The plaza was constructed as a memorial to all those who served aboard the *USS John W Weeks (DD-701)*. Its conception was greatly influenced by the events of 9/11. The Plaza is located in the park area adjacent to Lake Huron, north of the Blue Water Bridges. The brick patio encircling the American and Canadian Flag was financed entirely through donations and the purchase of engraved "Tribute Bricks." These "Bricks" are a great way to honor and memorialize those who served aboard the *Weeks*. The ceremony included a Sea Cadet Color Guard and a rifle salute by the Allied Veterans Association. A dedication wreath was placed by Len Budzynski and Dave Kurtz honoring all shipmates of the *Weeks* during her active service from 1944 to 1970.



From the Flag Plaza it was off to the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse, the first lighthouse constructed in this area, built in 1825. It is located approximately where the first Blue Water Bridge stands. Along with bad design and construction, it was also built in a poor location. During a storm in 1828 it collapsed into the river. In 1829 a new lighthouse was built north of the military fort by Lucius Lyon who later became one of Michigan's first U.S. Senators. The new location made it easier for ships to spot as they entered the rapids at the head of the St. Clair River. Originally sixty-five feet high, the white painted brick tower was extended to its present height of eighty-two feet in the early 1860s. Our tour guide did a great job of explaining its significant history to the area.

On Friday Morning, time was allotted to visit the Edison Train Depot before departing for the Knowlton's Ice Museum. This museum is a unique display of ice tools for the cutting and processing of lake ice before the era of refrigeration. Mickey Knowlton, whose

career graduated from the manufacturing of ice to a milk delivery business, founded the Museum. He dedicated much of his life in an effort to keep the history of the natural ice industry alive. Mickey enjoyed collecting 1800's ice artifacts for over 40 years. Since the 1970's until their passing in 2014, he and his wife Agnes traveled the nation collecting old ice tools, ice machinery, ice boxes, ice wagons, and other memorabilia from yard sales, flea markets, auctions and in recent years on the Internet.

Much of his collection came from the northeastern areas of the US where big business ice harvesting originated in the early 1800's. He stored his ice artifacts and other items in pole barns next to his ice manufacturing business. In 1987, he opened the collection up for small school visits and friends. In 2000, the collection became a non-profit charitable foundation.

In 2008, the collection was moved from Port Huron Twp. to its current location at 317 Grand River Avenue in downtown Port Huron. These amazing displays are set-up complete with hands-on activities and real video footage of early 1900's ice harvests for all to enjoy. The museum now boasts over 10,000 sq. ft. and houses over 5,000 items.



Our Museum visit was followed by a delicious lunch at the Atrium Café and Ice Cream Parlor. True to its name, lunch included a dessert dish of delicious ice cream.

After lunch it was a short drive to the Black River where we boarded the *Huron Lady* for a three hour cruise of the St. Clair River. The river is quite scenic with a variety of sights from shipyards to oil refineries to million dollar river front homes, and of course, the famous Blue Water Bridge, gateway to Ontario Canada.

Friday night, we were off to an enjoyable evening at the Port Huron American Legion. This Legion was the 8th one established in the United States. The food fare was all you could eat fish and chips and it lived up to all we heard about it from Alan. Freighter Frank even joined us for a while and had his green and white Michigan State sweatshirt on. We were then honored with a personal tour of a military weapons and uniforms on display in an adjoining room. Some of the artifacts date back to World War I. This completed a wonderful evening where we met many of the hospitable Legionnaires who made us feel very welcome.

Saturday was a free day with no scheduled tours so many of us were able to revisit points of interest from the previous days.

Saturday evening we attended the gala dinner and dance which brought to conclusion a very successful reunion. Prior to dinner being served, Len was awarded a plaque of appreciation and received a hearty round of applause for his 12 years of leadership. A special thanks to him for his many hours of work to keep our association active and vibrant. Dinner was followed by tearful farewells... until next year when we all meet again in Buffalo NY.

USS JOHN W WEEKS SPRING MINI-REUNION AND BOARD MEETING

The John W Weeks Association will hold a mini-reunion and executive board meeting in Yorktown, Virginia from May 18-22 2016. All members and prospective members are invited to attend. Attendees can reserve rooms at the below website or by calling the Hampton Inn direct and using Group Code JWW. Costs are \$101.00 per night plus tax which includes free Wi-Fi and breakfast.

Web page address is:

http://hamptoninn.hilton.com/en/hp/groups/personalized/P/PHFHHX-JWW-20160518/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Group Name: JW Weeks Association

Group Code: JWW

Check-in: MAY 18 2016

Check-out: MAY 22 2016

Hotel Name: Hampton Inn Newport News-Yorktown
Hotel Address: 151 Ottis Street
Newport News, Virginia 23602

Phone Number: 757 989 8977

Local site visits are still in the planning stages. Prospective sites will include: Williamsburg, Yorktown, Jamestown, Army Transportation Museum, Mariner's Museum and Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum.

For additional information call Bob Michaels at 757-898-1650 or cell 757-879-5180.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Anyone having information on the Commanding Officers of the Weeks after Jean Fitzgerald, please contact Dave Kurtz. The CO's are Charles Hanus, 9/66-11/68; Frank Etchison Jr., 11/68-12/69; and Leland Mensch, 12/68-8/70. Thank you.

SNIPPETS OF INTEREST

There is a footbridge over the Charles River on the campus of Harvard University named the John W Weeks Bridge. It was opened in 1927.

At the Port Huron Reunion, a measure was voted and approved that grants lifetime membership to shipmates who served aboard the Weeks during the time period 1944-1949 and who are active in our association. Those members are: Fran Bruno, Ray Casper, Jack Coughlin, Vine DeMatteo, Ron DePass, Fred Fels, Morris Gillett, Norm Hatfill, Ted Hooven, James Howdysshell, Robert Kemp, Jack Maready, Billy Pinyan, George Shinbrot, Norman Strauss, John Theiss and Earl Thomas. These members are exempted from paying dues starting with the 2016 year. If we missed anyone, please contact Ray Goodmuth or Dave Kurtz.

Some members have been paying dues for future years. While this is not a requirement it is OK to do this.

If members want information pertaining to another member or shipmate, please contact Director Bob Michaels. Bob is the clearing house contact for any information in our data base. We do not list, for example, mailing addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. on the website in order to protect the privacy of shipmates and members.

Also, since we now have made contact with members of the Weeks Family, Rachel Bruce will serve as the contact for any information regarding the Weeks Family. Rachel is the Manager of the John W Weeks State Museum in Lancaster, NH.

The USS John W Weeks was sunk off the Virginia Capes on the 107th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address.

Members are encouraged to join the Tin Can Sailors if you are currently not a member. In addition to putting out a good newspaper, they are an invaluable source of information for all things pertaining to destroyers and destroyer history. In the future if reunion attendees hits a low point we will have the option of going together in conjunction with the Tin Can Sailors conventions or doing a "buddy system" with a ship or two of the Sumner Class. The TCS organization could help us with the latter. They have also started a line where they can personalize the hats and clothing to include adding the ship's name to them. It makes sense that they be our

contact for John W Week's clothing and hat sales. Members could order individually from Tin Can Sailors. This will be another way to limit expenses paid out of our treasury.

Reminder of the new schedule for the Weeks Newsletter. November/December will be the post-reunion newsletter; the May newsletter will provide initial notice of the fall reunion; and the July newsletter will have particulars on the reunion including registration, hotel information, etc.

Last but not least, Dave has been working with Ted Dey, Founder of the Armed Forces Reunions on the 2016 reunion in Buffalo. Ted and his staff are currently working on a hotel contract for a hotel close to the airport. More information will be included in the next newsletter.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Our long-time and faithful Chaplain Bob Miller has informed us that he would like to step down from this position as soon as another shipmate can be found to replace him. We are an equal opportunity employer so the position is open to males and females. This is a very important job for our association especially considering the aging population of our membership. Interested persons should contact Bob or any of the officers listed on the back page.

TAPS

Andrew Ashcroft, eldest grandson of **John Robert Beuler**, informed us that Robert passed away on October 18, 2015 in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was a plank owner of the *Weeks* and served aboard the *Weeks* through the Korean War. He is survived by his beloved wife Helen, four children, twelve grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren. The family said that they were truly proud of his service aboard the *Weeks* and were lucky enough to hear many stories of his service aboard the *Weeks*.

We received notice from **Vernon Zane Smith's** son that Vernon passed away on July 19, 2015 in Los Angeles. He is survived by his wife Betty, four children, nine grandchildren, four great grandchildren and others. He served aboard the *Weeks* from 1946 to 1947.

We also received sad news from Jack and Elaine Coughlin that their son John passed away on August 31, 2015. Condolences can be sent to Jack and Elaine at 2453 Park Place, Bellmore, NY 11710.

If you know of any shipmate who is ill or has passed away, please contact one of the officers listed on the back page.



Buffalo 2016

WATCH FOR THE DATE!



PORT HURON 2015



NOW ACCEPTING 2016 DUES

\$25 FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016

DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2016

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No's _____

Email _____

Amount Enclosed _____

**REMIT CHECK MADE OUT TO THE JOHN W WEEKS
ASSOCIATION TO:**

**JERRY WESTER
2590 N. SYLVAN STREET
LITTLE CANADA, MN 55117**

USS John W Weeks Association
1118 Lincoln Ave.
Port Huron, MI 48060

We are on the WEB!
www.ussjweeks701.org

Directors:

Bob Michaels - (757) 898-1650 remichaels@cox.net Director Emeritus - Earl Thomas (301) 987-6347 ewtperal@aol.com
Phil Varner - (856) 464-1727 tobosopv@yahoo.com
Ray Goodmuth - (410) 758-6596 raygoo@live.com

President:

Alan Cutcher - (810) 984-4670 wc1996@aol.com

Vice President:

Dave Kurtz - (717) 366-4610 davejudy55@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Jerry Wester - (651) 483-4252 shirjer99@juno.com
[2590 N. Sylvan Street](#)
[Little Canada, MN 55117](#)

Chaplain:

Bob Miller - (304) 897-5892 uncleskip@hardynet.com

Newsletter Editors:

Dave Kurtz & Ray Goodmuth

Web Master:

Len Budzynski