



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

Web Site: <http://www.usseawol.com>

We still give a hoot!

June 2005 Issue



Shipmates & 1st Mates

President's message:

As I prepare to write this, we are getting set for another Groton Picnic. One that I'm certain will be another great time for shipmates getting together, renewing old friendships that have lived for years. Often I hear from other veterans that they wish they knew where their service buddies were, or what has happened to them. We are fortunate to have a Sea Owl Association where we can keep everyone informed and up to date on his shipmates.



Thinking of our shipmates, you will find another article in this newsletter that USSVI has been collecting funds for our Shipmate Tom Gilbert. Tom is, as of this writing, on the national transplant waiting list for a heart transplant. Plus during last year's hurricane Ivan, Tom & Suzy were wiped out, losing everything while evacuated to their daughter's home in Jacksonville. We know that they can never replace what was lost, but hope that the effort by USSVI and his shipmates can help in some small way. Tom: Our thoughts and prayers are with you always.

Keeping with shipmates, I can report that Shipmate Mike Polhemus SO 56-57 is out of the hospital and staying with his sister in Rhode Island. He tells me that his blood count continues to rise and it is only a matter of time before we will see Mike again at various Sea Owl gatherings. Shipmate Ed Welch CS 66-69 has also had a past month that I'm sure he would rather not repeat. Ed has stents implanted in arteries leading to his heart; the doctors weren't sure if these implants were doing their job. Only after they went into Ed with cameras were the doctors satisfied that he didn't need open-heart surgery. It was a tough month for both Ed & Paulette, but glad to report that he's doing fine. Ed is doing a superb job as our storekeeper and he is a very good friend and shipmate. Good news indeed.

Shipmates that have surfaced:

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Shipmates on final Patrol: Don Hewett EM 45-47

We had the pleasure of meeting Don & Mary at our Mobile Reunion in 2003.

Shipmate, Rest your oar. You will be missed.

Branson Reunion:

I have included with this Newsletter a registration form for attending the Branson Reunion. As with any reunion, what makes them a success is you; please try to attend. I'm hoping to see many of you that live on the west coast attend in Branson. I don't see our reunions going much farther west than Branson in the near future. I have tried to cover most questions pertaining to Branson. If you have any questions, please contact me, so that we can get them answered. This is the web page that has all the reunion information on it. See this page:

<http://usseawol.com/Text/BransonReunion2005.html>

Groton Picnic

Everyone enjoys these Groton Picnics. I get many e-mails from shipmates thanking me for these great picnics. But the real Thanks goes directly to shipmate Ed Welch and his whole family.

Leading up to this year's picnic was really a tough one for them. 3 weeks prior to the picnic Ed was having tests to see if he needed open heart surgery. If the surgery was needed, it was to be performed on that same day.

As we could see the surgery was not necessary and Ed was sent home, to continue working on your picnic.

To Ed I say "Thanks Very Much" for a great job.

Below is a photo of those shipmates who attended this year's picnic.



Back row, 1 to r: John Evans EN 53-56/ Rufus Weaver CS 47-59/John Bergren ST 52-56/Frank Payeur CS 51-53/Jack Empie EN 62-64 66-69/Herb Hawes IC 66-67/Clyde Turner EN 64-66/Bob Kreeger TM 50-54/Frank Limpert QM 47-51/Ed Bess EM 64-69/Harry Siska EN 68-69/Walt Deal TM 62-65/Ed Welch CS 66-69/Jim Madigan FT68-69/

Front row, sitting or kneeling, 1 to r: John Barnes MM63-67/Ken Johnson LTJG 62-65/Roy Purtell TM 66-69/Frank Maguire EN 51-57/Bob D'Amico SN 68-69/Greg Hankin SN 67-68/Ken Nichols TM 66-68/Jon Warn LT 63-64/John Souza YN 51-53/Jon Zimmerman IC 69

Missing from this picture is: John Salerno SO 52-54

This year's Groton picnic was a great success as was the Friday night dinner at the Groton Motor Inn. We were particularly honored



on Friday by the presence of "Plankowner" Stan Ainley. In fact with his son, Ken and grandson, Steve we actually had three generations of Ainleys in attendance.

The weather on Saturday for the picnic cooperated beautifully and the lobsters and clams were delicious.



Many items were raffled off and your newsletter editor was having a particularly lucky day with three of his raffle numbers coming up. The big winner on Saturday though was John Souza who went home with the Panasonic TV that we raffled off.

Some new faces attended this year's picnic. James "Skip" Weingartner was one (see the '50s page for more on him) and Jon

Warn was another. Jon was an officer who served briefly aboard the Owl in late 1963 and early 1964 while awaiting assignment to Nuclear Power School. He later went on to make the Navy a career, including command of the USS Tinosa (SSN 606) and retired as a Captain. A third was John Salerno, SO 52-54 with his wife, Jane.

From the Editor

As always a newsletter would not be complete if we were not to remind everyone to pay their dues. Adding the two digits or letters following your name on the mailing label to indicate your dues status according to our records proved to be a great success and resulted in many shipmates catching up on their dues. I will continue this. To review, if there is a "LM" on your mailing label, you are a Life Member and you never have to pay dues again. A "06" would mean you are paid up through October 2006, etc. If you are overdue or "dink", but still within a year of being paid up, you will continue to get a note in your newsletter reminding you to pay your dues before October 31st or you will no longer receive the newsletter by mail.

By now you are probably aware that the acronym BRAC stands for the Base Realignment and Closure commission. Among the bases recommended for closure are the Submarine Base in Groton and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Loss of either of these assets would be a great one to our submarine force. For either of them, this is not the first time they have been targeted for closure, but this is probably the

most serious threat that either has faced. It is hard to conceive of the New London/Groton area without the Submarine School and I am sure we all hope that the recommendation to move it to King's Bay, Georgia is reconsidered. I remember King's Bay from our 2002 reunion there as a reclaimed swamp. I mean no offense to our Sea Owl shipmates who live in the nearby area, but rumor has it that the Army once rejected King's Bay as unfit for a base. Certainly there is more land there than in Groton, but with the rate that ice is melting at the poles and the predicted rise that it would cause in sea level, much of that area may well be under water in the not so distant future. Meanwhile, a strong case is being made to keep the Groton Submarine Base and Submarine School open by the Connecticut Congressional delegation as well as at the State and local level and there is considerable concern as to what impact the loss of the base and Submarine School training facilities would have on Electric Boat. Public hearings are scheduled for Boston on July 6th, the next step in the BRAC process, before the list goes to the Congress and the President. I wish our representatives at this hearing success.

The loss of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard would be a tragedy for the New England area as well. Since the last serious attempt to close the shipyard in the late '60s, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard achieved a very dramatic turn around in efficiency and today is the single most efficient overhaul yard for the Los Angeles class attack submarines. The problem is that our submarine force is shrinking as post-Cold War priorities change. The greatest threat is perceived to be in the Pacific and this may well be the case. Portsmouth's contribution to the Cold War cannot be denied. As I mention later on, Portsmouth evaluated the design of the German Type XXI submarine in the late '40s and used the lessons learned to develop the Tang class of fast attack diesel-electric submarines. They built three of these, USS Tang (SS 563), USS Wahoo (SS 565) and USS Gudgeon (SS 567). During this same time period, they also designed and built the revolutionary USS Albacore (AGSS 569) whose body of revolution hull form became the basis for all of our modern nuclear submarines. The contribution of the Albacore has, in fact, been recognized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers as a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark and by the American Welding Society as a Historic Welded Structure. The latter award was based on the fact that Albacore was the first submarine to utilize HY-80 high strength steel as its pressure hull material.

In addition to the above, Portsmouth built the USS Salmon (SS 573) and USS Sailfish (SS 572), diesel-electric radar picket submarines, the USS Growler (SSG 577) a diesel-electric cruise missile submarine, and the USS Barbel (SS 580) which was among the first to use the hull form developed for the Albacore. Portsmouth then shifted over to nuclear submarine construction with the USS Seadragon (SSN 584) with a Tang class like hull form followed by USS Thresher (SSN 593), USS Tinosa (SSN 606) and USS Jack (SSN 605) of the Thresher (later renamed Permit) class. They also built the USS Abraham Lincoln (SSBN 602), USS John Adams (SSBN 620) and USS Nathaniel Greene (SSBN 636) ballistic missile submarines followed by the USS Grayling (SSN 646) and USS Sand Lance (SSN 670) of the Sturgeon or SSN 637 class. One more diesel-electric submarine was built, the USS Dolphin (AGSS 555), an experimental, deep diving sub.

In 1959, USS NAUTILUS, the first nuclear-powered submarine, entered PNS for her first complete overhaul, the first of any nuclear-powered ship. In the late 1960's Portsmouth Naval Shipyard formed a group known as PERA (SS), the acronym PERA standing for Planning and Engineering for Repairs and Alterations. This

group later evolved and acquired another acronym, SUBMEPP. This stands for Submarine Maintenance Engineering Planning and Procurement. SUBMEPP is an independent tenant Command located at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. They provide staff for field offices at COMSUBLANT, COMSUBPAC, and U.S. based Intermediate level submarine repair facilities. They provide engineering, planning and material procurement services that directly support the safe and reliable operation of the United States submarine force. They are NAVSEA's agent for the definition of technical requirements, and they act for the Submarine Type Commanders to define authorized work for submarine depot overhaul and maintenance availabilities.

In addition to the above, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is the Cradle of American Shipbuilding, located in the Piscataqua River Estuary between New Hampshire and Maine where in 1690 the first naval warship in North America was built, is the oldest naval shipyard continuously operated by the United States Government since its establishment in June 1800. At that time, President Thomas Jefferson approved the purchase of an island in the Piscataqua River as a site for a naval shipyard. Its rich history was also recognized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers who recognized it in 1975 and made it an ASME National Mechanical Engineering Historical Landmark as the "Site of the Pioneering 18th - 19th Century Fully Integrated Shipbuilding Operation for Building United States Warships Since 1774". (Details on this recognition may be found at <http://www.asme.org/history/brochures/h004.pdf>) The shipyard also serves as the primary maintenance support activity for the USS Constitution.

As an additional historical fact, Portsmouth will this year celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Portsmouth which was signed at the shipyard in 1905 to end the Russo-Japanese War. This room has been preserved within Building 86 on the shipyard grounds.

Unfortunately historical significance carries little weight with the process of determining the closure of military bases as recommended by the BRAC Commission. If it did, preservation of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard would be a "no brainer". The final decision will be made on the basis of its contribution to the nation's defense now and for the foreseeable future. I just happen to think it is a mistake to close it and hope that you share my opinion about this. One way you can show your support is to join the Seacoast Shipyard Association as I did recently. If interested, you can check out their Internet web site at <http://www.saveourshipyard.org/>. Membership is just \$25. Again, the July 6th public hearing in Boston is the next step in the BRAC process where the local communities can have an opportunity to present their case.

If I seem prejudiced with respect to the current base closure issue, you are right. I can't even imagine the New London/Groton area without the Submarine School and Submarine Base there. To me this is "sacred ground". I feel the same about Portsmouth as well. I know from my experience with NAVSHIPS Code 425 in the early '70s of the hard work and dedication that kept this yard alive back then. Much of the success they have demonstrated since is due to the leadership of some outstanding naval officers, particularly Capt William McDonough, USN (Ret) a former shipyard commander who now heads the Seacoast Shipyard Association. Good luck, Capt!

Finally, an update on my radio controlled submarine experience. Here is my USS Albacore model underway on the surface in my backyard swimming pool. After struggling with some problems with the sealing gasket on the "pressure hull", I have finally managed to keep the water away from the electronics. With the optional X-tail

modification, this is a very maneuverable boat and fun to operate.



As they say, the only difference between men and little boys is the cost of their toys. My plans to build a "fleet" of R/C subs has had to go on hold for a while though, but I do plan to build another Juliett to the same 1/72 scale as the USS Saratoga model that the Saratoga Museum Foundation displays in parades and other functions. The Saratoga folks achieved a major milestone recently, by the way, when Rhode Island's Governor and the Quonset Area Economic Development Commission agreed to hold pier space at Davisville for the next two years. Now the challenge begins, to raise \$10 million over the next two years and actually acquire the USS Saratoga. At a combat operating displacement of some 82,000 tons, she will be the largest museum warship in the world as well as a unique museum with ships that actually opposed each other during the Cold War.

Sailors Rest Your Oars

One of the saddest parts of doing the newsletter is always the listing of those shipmates who have departed on "eternal patrol" since the last issue. Since the last newsletter we have lost one shipmate:

Don Hewett, EM – 45-47 – March 29, 2005



This is Don and First Mate, Mary at our Mobile reunion banquet in 2003. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mary and the family and friends of our departed shipmate.
*There is a port of no return, where ships
 May ride at anchor for a little space
 And then, some starless night, the cable slips,
 Leaving an eddy at the mooring place . . .
 Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor, rest your oar.
 No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.*

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The 40's

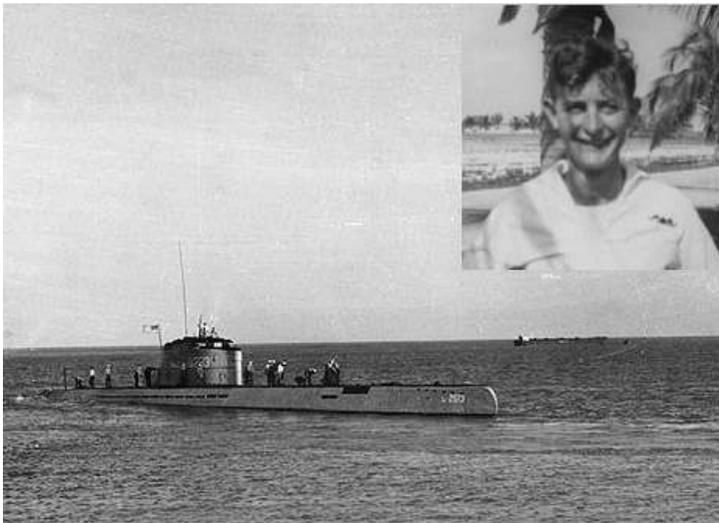
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Bill Tebo and the USS ex-U2513

By Ken Johnson

As an electrician apprentice during the summer of 1944 at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, shipmate Bill Tebo worked on many submarines, including the Sea Owl. In August 1944 Bill enlisted in the Navy and was assigned briefly to the Sea Owl before going on to a later assignment as a crew member of a German type XXI submarine, the U-2513. I recently met with Bill, who now serves as Executive Director of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Historical Foundation, at the museum in the shipyard to talk about his unique experience as a crew member of this submarine and he gave me a copy of an interview he had given to the shipyard in 2004, some of which I have summarized for this article. I also recently purchased a copy of a book titled "The Type XXI U-Boat", which was first published in German, but later translated to English and currently available through the Naval Institute Press in Annapolis, MD.



The U-2513 was one of several German Type XXI submarines that were surrendered at the end of World War II and turned over to the Allied navies for evaluation. The U-3008 was the other that was ultimately brought to the U. S. The Type XXI was for its time the most technically advanced submarine in the world. U-2513 and its sister, U-3008, were both recommissioned into the U. S. Navy and conducted extensive operations out of Key West with Navy ASW forces. Lessons learned from the design and operation of these two submarines formed the basis for the development of post-war Tang class attack submarines and fleet submarine GUPPY conversions. Their advanced sonar was also the basis for development of the BQR-4 sonar by the EDO Corporation, the sonar installed aboard Sea Owl in the mid-50's.

The U-2513 was so superior to any submarine that our ASW forces had worked with and so difficult to find, that they could sneak back to Key West at noontime and be drinking beer on the beach while the surface ships and blimps were still out there searching for them. Eventually they were required to tow a buoy so that the

ASW forces knew where they were. The crew had a solution to that though. Submariners, after all, are smarter and sneakier than average. Since the buoy cable ran through a shear valve, they simply cut the cable by closing the valve and headed for the beach while the blimps and surface ASW ships searched for them in vain.

What was life like for a U. S. Navy submariner aboard a German submarine? Well, according to Bill, accommodations for enlisted crew members were at first poor by comparison. While officers and chiefs had bunks, enlisted crew members had to sling a hammock where they could or sleep on the deck. Eventually, since they carried few if any torpedoes, bunks were installed in the torpedo room. The Type XXI had only a forward torpedo room, but it was larger and could accommodate up to 30 bunks.

Several new technologies were incorporated into the Type XXI such as the snorkel. This was crude by comparison to the design eventually installed aboard U. S. submarines, including Sea Owl. It operated with a ball float mechanism not unlike that in a toilet tank. This did not always react fast enough to prevent significant flooding. It was also covered with an irregular rubber coating, a form of early "stealth" technology, to diffuse radar rather than returning a strong echo.

Much equipment was also shock mounted with springs, something previously not seen on U. S. submarines. The main advantage of the Type XXI was its superior underwater speed. This was the result of the greater battery capacity installed, a feature later incorporated into our GUPPY conversions. They also had two, silent running motors which drove the shafts by means of V-belts. Using these, they were able to sneak away from an attacker very quietly at up to six knots for an extended period.

As mentioned earlier, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard used many of the design characteristics of the U-2513 and U-3008 to develop the Tang class. Most noticeable was the shape and size of the external hull with, again, certain improvements adding to the streamlining of the hull such as retractable deck fittings. One feature not copied from the Type XXI that proved not to be an improvement, however, was the use of General Motors pancake diesels. These were a disaster and were eventually replaced by a version of the good old Fairbanks Morse opposed piston diesels like those installed on Sea Owl.

Naming a Bridge Update

With the recent approval of the Connecticut House and Senate, the naming of the southbound span of the route 95 bridge spanning the Thames River between Groton and New London in honor of the Submarine Veterans of World War II will soon be a reality. The Groton Base of USSVI is, in fact, already planning a ceremony on August 14th at the National Submarine Memorial (East) in Groton. This is the 60th anniversary of the end of war with Japan in 1945 and this year is also the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Submarine Veterans of World War II. We hope to have a great turnout for this long overdue recognition, particularly from those remaining submarine veterans who served in this war.



The 50's

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(The following information is from the on-line encyclopedia known as Wikipedia. Full text of the Sea Owl entry may be found on line at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Sea_Owl_\(SS-405\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Sea_Owl_(SS-405)). The full Sea Owl's entry there is extensive and may be of interest to shipmates.)

Sea Owl was converted to a Fleet Snorkel submarine in the Philadelphia Navy Yard from April to August 1951 and, for the next year, she participated in Atlantic Fleet exercises in the Caribbean area. Early in 1953, the submarine entered Charleston Naval Shipyard in South Carolina for overhaul and, upon completion, sailed to New London and then to the Caribbean as part of operation "Springboard." After returning to New London in March, she departed for her first tour of duty with the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean, participating in fleet exercises and in operation "Keystone" and visiting France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey in a three-month tour.

Returning to New London in August 1954, *Sea Owl* spent the next two years in Atlantic and Caribbean waters training submarine school students and reserve personnel. After engaging in special operations in the late fall of 1956 and early 1957, the submarine resumed normal duties in the New London area until 1 September when she departed to engage in NATO exercises "Fishplay" and "Strikeback" in the northern Atlantic, returning to New London in October.

In April and May 1958, *Sea Owl* participated in NATO exercise "New Broom" and, upon returning to New London, engaged in local operations for the remainder of the year. After a five-month overhaul early in 1959, she participated in NATO exercise "Fishplay" and spent the latter months of 1960 in her second deployment to the Mediterranean.

(Editor's note: I hope that this helps bring back memories for those who served aboard during the '50s and that you send me some good material for future Hooter Hilites articles. Not specifically included above is just when and where the BQR-4 sonar array was installed. I assume it was during the overhaul at Charlestown Naval Shipyard in 1953.)

"Skip" Weingartner

By Ken Johnson

One of the more colorful shipmates at this year's Groton picnic, after having ridden his three-wheeler all the way from Ishpeming, MI, was James "Skip" Weingartner. At age 78 I am sure that was no small accomplishment. Those of us who are considerably younger can only hope that we can enjoy life as much as "Skip" obviously does if and when we reach that age.

Skip offered rides on his three wheeler to anyone willing to take him up on it though it was obvious that he seemed to prefer the ladies. He also had all the ladies present autograph his fenders. No male autographs were allowed, just females. It is quite a machine and decorated in such a way that one could have no doubt that he was a Sea Owl sailor.

"Skip" served aboard the Sea Owl as an Auxiliaryman from 1950 to 1952. The insert in the above is Skip as he looked in 1951 at the



air manifold on the Owl. I am sure he has many stories of experiences aboard the Owl and I look forward to having him as a contributor for future issues. How about it, Skip? (Actually, he did give me some information about Capt Cook, his Commanding Officer on the Sea Owl that I can use in a future issue.) Skip brought many gifts which he generously distributed to several shipmates. One of the gifts presented by Skip to Roy was this beautiful carved dolphin. It was carved by a Native American. (No, he didn't bring it on his three wheeler. Skip's daughter



brought it by car.) I am sure it will become a "fixture" at future Sea Owl reunions. What Skip had for me was a six pack of Leinenkugel "Big Butt", brewed in the north woods of Wisconsin. I am not sure how I should take this, but graciously accepted and have enjoyed it very much. I decided to send him some good Buzzards Bay Brewery

"Olde Buzzard" in return, a most appropriate gift, don't you think? We hope to see Skip at Branson and have an opportunity to swap some more sea stories with him.

One thing that makes the Sea Owl Association great is the fact that we get together twice a year, once for a reunion and once at Groton every June for a picnic. Many boats have a reunion every two years. By having the Groton picnic in addition, it brings us closer and provides the opportunity to share our common bond and experiences. We are able to do this largely because of the efforts of Ed Welch and I just want to second Roy's comments about how much we really appreciate all the work that he does each year in putting this together. Thanks, Ed! We realize how difficult it can be to do this, especially if you have health issues to contend with.



The 60's

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Shipmate Ken Florey's Gift from the Heart

(From the St. Charles Medical Center publication "Focus" Spring 2005 issue.)

Ken Florey (FT 64-66) was head over heels in love with Debi, his wife of 21 years. He wanted to give her the moon. But what he gave her instead was a 1971 Volkswagen convertible Super Beetle flat window with a custom interior.

"She was raised in Hawaii, and she had a couple Volkswagen convertibles when she was young," Ken recalled. "She'd been after me forever, saying 'why don't you buy an old Volkswagen and fix it up for me?'"

So that's what Ken did. After months of sweat and toil—not to mention \$28,000 in parts and repairs—Debi had her dream car. She also had cancer. It started with a large tumor in her breast in April 2001 when Debi was just 48. Months of chemotherapy,



radiation and surgery ended in October 2001 when Debi thought she'd beaten the cancer. But a year later, her back pain proved to be tumors along her spine. Then her abdominal pain turned out to be liver tumors.

"She was always a 'cup-is-half-full' kind of person, but I'm more of a realist," Ken said. "When we found out how far the cancer had spread, I knew we were in for a rough one."

Debi fought hard, but the cancer was fighting harder and Ken knew it. "When I first bought the car, I was going to take my time fixing it up for her, but when we found out the cancer was back, everything went at top speed," Ken said. "I knew she wasn't going to last long." With Debi supervising the project and Ken searching the globe for parts, the car was finally finished in December 2003. By then, it was a challenge for Debi to even drive.

Ken tracked down custom seats to ease her back pain, and the two of them entered "LuLu Bug" in a local competition and won. "Debi was getting awful sick by then," Ken said.

On October 17, 2004, Debi finally lost her battle with cancer. Shortly before she died, Ken talked with her about the idea of donating LuLu Bug to support the Sara Fisher Breast Cancer Project. Led by St. Charles Medical Center, Sara's Project helps fund clinical research, community education, breast cancer screening and outreach and support services for Central Oregon women. "We talked about it and I told her what I wanted to do and she said it was a good idea," Ken said.

So Ken called Pam DiDente, the breast cancer case manager for St. Charles Medical Center. Pam admits she was stunned at first.

"You could see his love for her, and his desire to support Sara's Project because it's the one project for breast cancer in Central Oregon where all the money stays in Central Oregon," Pam said. "Debi was a savvy business woman, and it was important to her to support a local cause."

So St. Charles began selling raffle tickets at \$25 apiece or five for \$100. Only 1,500 tickets will be sold, and one lucky winner will get the keys to Debi's LuLu Bug. The drawing is set for October 28th.

"I'm hoping some gal who's a breast cancer survivor will win it," Ken said. "Debi would have liked that."

The Tom Gilbert Fund

(The following is from a letter received recently at USSVI National Office.)

"My name is Charles (Marshall) Parker-Base Commander of the Drum Base in Pensacola, Florida. One of our members (Tom Gilbert) is in dire need of our assistance. Tom is suffering from congestive heart failure. Tom's health over the past five (5) years has declined and his heart capacity is down to less than 18%. Recently-Med-Evac'd to Jacksonville's MAYO Clinic where he was stabilized in ICU and endured a long course of treatment to reclaim a reasonable health standard and more importantly a possible candidate for a heart transplant (when available) or external heart pump. Tom is departing for again, for Jacksonville on the 22nd of May to undergo tests make him eligible to go on the "Heart Donor List". Without either-his condition will be foregone conclusion and the finality listed under "Shipmate, Rest Your Oars".

Tom is a Life member of USSVI (L-0868) since Aug. of 1993. He served on the USS Sea Owl (SS405) and USS Harder (SS568). He was the driving force in establishing the "Lifeguard League Monument", in Pensacola. He and spouse Suzie lost their semi-completed dream house and temporary mobile home in Hurricane IVAN that devastated Pensacola/ Milton. The Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) has provided a new mobile home at a low interest rate. Tom health forced him to retire early from the Federal Work-force and he only receives a partial retirement and is used to pay current "Blue Cross" payments. He collects Social Security Disability but at a reduced rate by not having secured enough credits. Tom is 63."

In response to the, USSVI has set up a special fund for Tom under the USSVI Brotherhood Fund and is accepting donations for 90 days. Donations to this fund may be sent to:



Fred Borgmann, USSVI National Office
ATTN, Tom Gilbert Fund
P.O. Box 3870
Silverdale, WA 98353

Tom is shown here in with wife Suzie and grandson Tommy at our 2003 Mobile reunion. Those who were at Mobile surely remember Tommy's unique version of

the National Anthem to open our meeting there.

Any one who may want to send him a card to let him know we are still thinking and praying for him can send it to:

Tom Gilbert
5141 E. Lake Road
Milton, FL 32583

Your Association has sent \$400 to this fund and I know that several shipmates have made personal contributions as well. I ask you to come to the aid of our shipmate and contribute what you can.