



Silver Eagles Newsletter

April 2018

Silver Eagles,

We have no new members this month. I have had troubles getting last month's newsletter to **Sandy Daugherty, Barbara Bush, Al Dickinson, Dwight Foster** and **Butch Wilson**. The odd thing is that I emailed **Dwight** and **Al** directly and had no problem. The other three – nothing... Any ideas? NEWS - NEWS NEWS! **Ted** provided some info on the TSP withdrawals that I discussed earlier, **Sandy** with the King of Siam (Thailand) and being shot at by Chinese?, **Jeff** provided stories of his great adventures (jealous!), and **Ron** talks “fiestas!” Oh, that this would happen every month!

New Members: None

Board News: The Annual Awards Ceremony on April 2018, starting at 1 pm.

Member News:

From **Joe Epperson:** Jim thanks for doing this and mentioning the tsp thing.

For the news letter and web.

Lets see its been only 3 months since I retired. Been going fast. I think I have found my ultimate job finally. I get paid for doing what I want to do. Too bad it took 39 years of work to get here. It is taking a while to get used to this life of ease. I think I hibernated for the for month with only one trip to Florida for some warmth. But its warming up and racing motorcycle racing season has started so I'm more active. So far I've finished three races this year without breaking anything. I'm having fun but no trophies yet either.

Yes I miss the people and interesting work but not the stress. Near the end of my life at the Board I was honored by being named a fellow of my technical society ASM International. I didn't really think I deserved it but others did and I thank them. It also started me volunteering with them more. Not sure what or where Kiki and I are going this year but will attempt to at least touch Vermont

Ted Lopatkiewicz got back to me on the TSP withdrawals required at 70 ½ years. He said, “the next time you address the TSP, pass along this nugget. If a retiree should die before beginning

withdrawals, his/her beneficiary must take it all out in a lump sum, with the resultant huge tax bite. Anyone who hasn't started taking it out might wish to begin withdrawing the minimum amount, at least (you can always adjust amounts during open season), to avoid that unpleasant circumstance." [I note that I didn't see this on the TSP site. You definitely need to identify your spouse as a beneficiary (Form TSP-3) to avoid problems.]

[This from the TSP site - **Spouse Beneficiary**. In the event of your death, if your spouse is entitled to a share of your account, a beneficiary participant account will be established for your spouse in his or her own name. If your spouse's share is \$200 or more, the TSP will maintain this beneficiary participant account, and the entire share will be invested in the Lifecycle (L) Fund targeted most closely to the year your spouse turns 62 unless he or she makes a different investment choice or chooses to withdraw the money as a single payment, monthly payments, annuity, or a combination of these options.... **Non-spouse Beneficiary**. A beneficiary who is not a surviving spouse cannot retain a TSP account. The death benefit payment will be made directly to the beneficiary or to an "inherited" IRA.]

[I mentioned this to Ted and he said that he was told by a friend who used to head a budget office of an agency, and that he got the same impression on the phone with TSP when he discussed plans to begin withdrawals. Oh well, Ted, his wife and I are secure having begun withdrawals. Is anyone excited to research this and tell us the correct information?]

This from **Sandy Browne** – “OK. Left the agency in 1990 and started my own consulting company. Six years later I was approached by an old boss some of you might know, Prof. Harry Hurt at USC. He had been asked by Honda to create an accident investigation team for Thailand. The principal objective was to discover why they had such a huge increase in motorcycle fatalities in a country that had no accident investigation or reporting system. He asked me to be the Principal Investigator. Ever adventurous, I said sure...then I stood on a pedestrian overpass and watched Thai vehicle traffic and suffered a minor stroke (not really, just felt that way). This was to be paid for by Honda and supported by the king. A six year adventure, 26 round trips, lovely apartment near Phat Phong, wound up winning the all Asia research awards. Oddly the real reason for the increase was a social problem. They closed the teak forests and all the lie wage workers migrated to the cities. They lived in boring, cramped quarters. Spent their nights imbibing in too much Singh's beer, rode bikes around and crashed a lot. There were a lot of other reasons, but that one intrigued me the most. Still working at my company at 73 and rather unwilling to quit. Live high in the mountains, at 6,300', halfway between Edwards AFB and Vandenberg, as the crow flies. It's about 90 miles north of LA and wonderful...just too far from my beautiful grand baby girl. Big decisions needed soon. Best thing about the Thai project was it allowed me to meander around one third of this world and was great fun...maybe except for nearly being shot by the Chinese as I snuck over the border from Nepal. Good thing I could still run fast then.”

This from **Jeff Rich** – “I have wanted to contribute to the newsletter for some time but other priorities and needs seemed to get in the way. It is funny, but I seem to be busier now with more on my calendar than I ever did when I was working! I don't know how “life stuff” got done during the years of my professional life! So for better or worse here is my contribution.

When I walked into the retirement horizon in January of 2013 I did so with mixed emotions. On one hand I was looking forward to all the wonderful and exciting plans I had for myself in retirement. But on the other hand I was turning my back on an exciting and challenging career with one of the world's finest organizations dedicated to saving lives and improving transportation

safety. Over 30 years of dedicated service seemed to go by in a flash of time — so many wonderful work associates and friends, so many good memories, the pride of accomplishing change in the system to make it safer for everyone. But in the end, retirement won the wrestling match and I realized it was time for me to move on to the next chapter in the volume of my life. Two days after I walked out the office door for the last time I was on a cruise ship in the Caribbean and I haven't looked back (well maybe a couple of times when I realize how much I miss the people and the challenge of solving the great puzzle of an aircraft accident).

There are three major axis in my retirement world; Learning new things, travel to new and exciting places, and my life-long interest in maritime history/nautical archeology/pre-19th Century naval architecture and building exact scale models of the ships studied. (See Photo) A most marvelous change in my world happened on an Alaska cruise in 2014 when I met a wonderful lady who loves to travel as much as I do and also shares my interest in things maritime and model building. We were married in 2016.



In retirement I was able to rekindle a life-long interest in astronomy by taking several on-line courses and re-reading several books on the subject that had gathered dust on one of the library shelves for much of my working life. I also began learning celestial navigation, not only as an adjunct to astronomy but also to better understand the maritime past. Computer courses round out the learning so that I might stay reasonable caught up with the advancing technology of modern life.

Jane and I love to experience the world in our travels and do 5 to 6 cruises a year in addition to other trips. The highlight of 2014 was a cruise down to South America where we spent a post cruise week in Peru's sacred valley exploring the Inca archeological ruins and even climbing to the top of Machu Picchu...what an experience! This past year we were in Europe for nearly 6 weeks on 2 cruises, with the crowning experience of spending a week driving around Ireland. Hawaii, the South Pacific, and Alaska beckon to us this year, along with a trip to Northern Europe with a cruise out of Southampton UK up the Norwegian coast to the Arctic Circle, and spending nearly 3 weeks exploring the UK. High on the bucket list is Antarctica, and we hope to do that in 2019.

With the models and maritime history, I pick an interesting subject and then research the ship and finally reconstruct it in 1/4 scale size. Particularly for naval vessels and especially British ones, the original plans are available as are the building and overhaul contracts, log books, letters to and from the ship from the Admiralty...you can literally reconstruct the ship's entire life day by day. Part of the interest is reconstructing an archaic wooden ship building technology that has been long dead and largely forgotten. I have attached a photograph of the last project completed. It is an English 74-gun warship called the "Warrior" that was built in 1781; the ship's historical significance is that it participated in every major engagement of the Napoleonic wars. The current project is a Dutch Statenjacht (translated State Yacht) from 1741 that I was able to research during a trip to Amsterdam in 2014; the Statenjacht was the limousine of its day and every large company or municipality had one to entertain important guests.

My life has been blessed in many ways, perhaps most significantly by having the honor and privilege of being part of the Safety Board and working with the finest group of people in the world."

This from **Ron Battocchi** - Good morning Jim, I have volunteered for several years at the local elementary school in a program called Lawns 2 Lettuce 4 Lunch. The school community and neighbors plant organic lettuce seeds in part of their lawn or garden. In the late spring and fall, the various varieties of lettuce are harvested for a fiesta salad celebration as a supplement to the school lunch. There are now about 700 participants in the fiesta, and I prepare the salad dressing. Before the fiesta, I conduct salad dressing demonstrations in some classrooms. The son of former NTSB General Counsel John Stuhldreher works for the county and produced a video of a demo, which has been recently posted online:"

[Ashlawn's Vinaigrette Volunteer](#)

"The Washington Post has also reported on the fiesta and published the family recipe:"

[Ashlawn Elementary grows its own lettuce for lunch](#)

Miscellaneous:

Keep the news coming! Hobbies, Workshops? Volunteer work? Little things – big adventures! Please! Please!

Don't forget the Silver Eagle Website: www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html

Happy Cinco de Mayo! My son (Randy) is back managing a Tex-Mex restaurant (Coyote Grill) in Fairfax, so I know where we will be!

Jim Henderson