

Bob's Corner

She's a big lady who's had a facelift, but she looks great despite her age.

She is the USS "Midway," a "City at Sea" for the crews of 4,500 she carried during a 47-year career: making "Midway" the longest-serving carrier in the U.S. Navy. Her service ranged from World War II to the liberation of Kuwait in Desert Storm. During her nearly five decades of service, some 225,000 U.S. military personnel served aboard.

We were in San Diego County a few weeks ago for the second birthday of granddaughter Natalie Kaplan, a sparkling jewel of a child. And as we had learned about "Midway" being turned into the floating San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum, we just had to go visit. She was decommissioned in 1992.

The museum website advises setting aside an hour to 90 minutes for a visit. It took me closer to four hours, but I am a curious guy (no nasty comments needed here). The ship is at Navy Pier, not far from the foot of Broadway in Downtown San Diego.

Upon boarding, visitors are issued headphones and a radio device. At various numbered stations, you push the appropriate number, and hear recordings by a narrator and former crewmen about the area you're viewing. Pretty neat.

My dear wife, Jan, spent a lot of time on the hangar deck, where it was fairly cool. Meanwhile, her maniacal husband roamed the vessel, hustling up and down stairways (ladders); through doorways (hatches); and into various rooms with metal walls (bulkheads). I somehow resisted the temptation to enter closed areas and face either keel-hauling or being launched from the flight deck without an airplane.

I thoroughly enjoyed the visit, including having some refreshment at the Fantail Café. That's where the business end of jet engines used to be directed during testing. The area where the engines were located is now a gift shop, (I bought a shirt).

Many parts of "Midway" are closed, but visitors are given access to enough of the ship to get a real feel for what it was like. The hangar deck is open; as is the flight deck with its 4 acres of landing space; and the island (that tall thingie that sticks up on one side of the flight deck). We also were able to visit a typical enlisted personnel berthing area, including shower stalls with a naked mannequin (except for a towel for modesty); the post office, galley and mess deck, and the machine and metal shops.

"Midway" is 1,001 feet long; she weighed 74,000 tons at decommissioning. There are more than 2,000 compartments (we saw a thimbleful).

At sea, some 13,000 meals were served daily, more than the kids at my high school could eat. "Midway" carried 1.24 million gallons of jet fuel, and produced 240,000 gallons of water daily.

Her top speed was 33 knots or about 49.5 mph. Twelve boilers produced 212,000 horsepower, and enough electricity was generated to support a city of a million residents. "Midway" has come a long way.

And she's still ship-shape.

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary expressed in letters to the editor are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

* * *

Typed, double-spaced letters are acceptable for consideration. Handwritten letters that are double-spaced and highly legible also can be considered for publication.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.)

* * *

New Selmac platform From Michael Rosenberg Grants Pass

About four years ago, there was a swimming platform on beautiful Lake Selmac. I swam all the time from that dock and so did a bunch of other kids including adults; it was a great dock.

Unfortunately the cables that held it in place broke after many years of use and wear, and Josephine County Parks Dept. did not find the time to replace the dock. It was not a good thing for anybody.

When they announced that they weren't going to put another one back out there in the lake, I instantly knew that I would rebuild a dock for my Eagle Scout project, and that day has come.

I am from Selma, but we moved, and I attend Grants Pass High School, and I am going to be a sophomore this coming year. I am a part of the Grants Pass Marching Band and Auxiliary and I am a respectable Boy Scout with Troop 80 out of Grants Pass.

I also represent my district, as well as the other four districts in the Crater Lake Council as Chief Al-lowat Sakima and ordeal master in the Order of the Arrow (the National Honor Society in the Boy Scouts of America).

I am also in a program called "College Dreams," which, if I keep good grades, will help me fund my way to college and get me scholarships, and I have already received three of them. This is just a summary of my accomplishments in my life so far.

I am not sure if you know what an Eagle Scout is, but I can tell you. It is a boy who has earned the highest rank in scouting. An Eagle Scout is someone who has lived up to the virtues of life and kept the fire of mankind lit at all times. An Eagle Scout is a person who will make something of himself one day and be an asset to this society. That's what an Eagle Scout is.

And that's what I want to become. I am well on my way down the Eagle trail. There is only one thing holding me back: \$3,000.

I don't mean it costs \$3,000 to become an Eagle, I mean that's what it will cost to build and reinstall that dock that was once an incredible feature at Lake Selmac.

I want to give that dock back to the people and I want to make it last, so I chose to build the whole project out of Trex decking, and stainless steel bolts and fasteners. Not regular wood that is going to rot after a couple years, and I am not going to let money hold me back from replacing that dock.

I need help publicizing and letting the people know about what I am doing for the community so that I can raise enough funds to give back to the

Letters to the Editor

people by replacing the swimming dock.

Anybody who gives money or helps me in any way, shape, or form, will be highly appreciated and I am going to try to help get their name on a plaque on the beach next to the dock.

Donations can be sent to 305 N.E. Sixth St., Grants Pass OR 97526.

Dislikes Bush From Sue Lily Cave Junction

It is important to remember following last week's Republican Convention, protested with more permitted demonstrations than any event in NYC history; that in 1968, demonstrators surrounded the Democratic Convention protesting America's war in Vietnam.

The Bush Administration's "compassionate conservatism" policies have killed more than 11,000 people since 9/11 with no end in sight, and weakened us socially, financially, academically and diplomatically.

Demonstrating neither compassion, education nor skill, these policies have resulted in torture, moral decay, weakness at home, increased poverty, job loss and depression -- the opposite of their claims. Actions speak louder than words.

In the Boston Tea Party American tradition, people again are taking unpaid time off work to protest those Bush administration policies because: we can do better.

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County pay From Dusty Ann Bouchard Selma

The Josephine County Commissioners have a Compensation Advisory Committee to advise them as to whether managers receive compensation comparable to public and private companies.

They have also hired a Medford resident for \$15,000 to collect these statistics. I have a better proposal.

All reading this should write the commissioners and advise them what salary and benefits you receive, and whether you feel the county managers are compensated fairly.

The average county manager salary alone is \$55,000 yearly, and there is only a 3:1 labor/management ratio. Nice work if you can get it. The Human Resources director makes \$94,000 a year.

We have three psychiatrists on the county payroll who each are paid \$150,000 per year. All managers have a very non-standard nine weeks of paid leave to enjoy that life. Pity the poor commissioners, they only make \$68,000 (but they don't have any job performance standards, so I guess that is OK).

Yet all the surveys of local wages show the average annual wage per worker in Josephine County is just above \$20,000 a year. It is their taxes which are going to pay for the county management's nine weeks of paid leave.

We should write our commissioners at Courthouse, 500 N.W. Sixth St., and let them know if this sounds fair. In the meantime, consider voting for

(Continued on page 3)

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