

Another "golden" resident

A goodbye to Jim Hornick

My husband and I recently attended a memorial service for Jim Hornick, our former neighbor and forever friend. Sitting in the mortuary, amongst his family and friends, I realized that Jim was one of those golden Cottage Grove residents that I spoke of in my last column. This is his story.

To all appearances, neighbor Jim was a good old boy just like all the guys. He wore jeans, tended his garden and told tall tales. But he was so much more. He had a unique success story that began in the hills of West Virginia where he was born in 1931. The cabin that he and his brothers grew up in had neither electricity, indoor plumbing nor water. His family was truly destitute.

The town of West Milford, WV, had a population of about 630. Jim was one of 15 graduates from his school. (One of the student's favorite pranks involved tipping outhouses!) Post graduation, his future was uncertain. The only certainty was that all young men between the ages of 18 and 26 were required to register for Military Training and Service. I.e. the draft.

Jim may have been a hillbilly (his words) but he was smart and he didn't have many choices. Since the draft was imminent, he enlisted in the Navy in 1950 at the age of 19. Why the Navy? His answer: "I didn't want to roll around in the mud with the Army. Bed sheets on board every night were much better."

His Navy career began on the flight deck as a "white hat" enlistee or "mustang" meaning that he started out as an enlistee but advanced to an officer—30 years later he retired as a full Commander.

At the memorial, his wife Charlene shared how Jim's life was a lesson in how to attain success. He had minimal education but a great desire to be more than he was. His life as a sailor was governed by goals, determination and self-education. If he didn't know how to do something he went to the library and read up on it. That included books on etiquette and manners he hadn't been taught.

Simply knowing how to type opened the doors to administrative positions. After that, the sky was the limit. He skipped the rank of Chief and Ensign and started climbing the ladder: Warrant Officer, LJG, LT, LTC and finally, a full Commander with the rank of CD-R (as high as he could go under his designation).

The boy who had never left West Virginia quickly became a world traveler. He sailed the world's oceans including around the African Horn in a harrowing, ship-rolling storm. He served in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. His shore duties included coast-to-coast tours from California to Florida.

His last duty station was at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. He supervised hundreds of office workers. How did he get along? With respect. He said, "If you want respect you give respect."

He met Charlene while serving in California. After a whirlwind courtship they married in San Diego in 1973. Jim retired after 30 years of service in 1980 and they moved to Cottage Grove Lake where he quietly set aside the ever-changing military

lifestyle, his medals, ribbons and other awards and settled down into civilian life.

In retirement, this officer who bled red, white and blue, loved to golf, fish and hunt. Occasionally we could get him to tell us a story about cruising the world. He would always end it by saying, "Even a hillbilly from West Virginia can do okay in the United States Navy." In his last years he valiantly fought Alzheimer's disease. Sadly, he lost that battle in December 2016.

We will never forget you Jim. We are grateful to you and all those who choose to serve in the military. You are role models for all generations on how to live disciplined, honorable and patriotic lives. And thank you Jim, for reminding us that anything is possible if you dream big and work hard enough. Rest in peace.



The "Wright" Place

A RESTAURANT REVIEW BY SAM WRIGHT

Among a variety of great places to eat along Main Street is Cottage Grove's Buster's Main Street Café. The restaurant is known for its hearty breakfasts and good old-fashioned American grub.

The first thing to notice at Buster's is the ambience. It has the feel of a classic American diner mixed with the warm and cozy feeling of a café. The kitchen sits in plain view of the seating area behind a counter, perfecting for dining solo.

Buster's is an employer to some of the friendliest staff, and customers and employees tend to know each other well, giving a family-run business feel to the restaurant.

I stopped in at around 11:30 for an early lunch, and I was immediately welcomed by the empowering aroma of breakfast foods being prepared or already being consumed.

The menu features a wide selection of classic breakfasts, omelets, meals from the griddle and even special features such as the chicken fried steak or the Loco Moco, a Hawaiian favorite which includes a beef patty, white rice, two eggs and brown gravy. The menu also features an entire separate eggs benedict section, where you can choose traditional, Florentine or even

eggs benedict with crab cakes or smoked salmon.

I decided to pick something from the lunch menu, as Buster's is already renowned around town for its great breakfast.

One specific item from the lunch features caught my eye: the pesto chicken sandwich. It's nothing particularly complex, but a pesto aioli can definitely make or break a dish. The chicken breast itself was tender and not dry, but even if it had been, the dryness would have been masked by the flavorful aioli and provolone cheese. The aioli was spread appropriately across the sandwich: not too light, not too heavy. The choice of bread was also well-chosen. A ciabatta roll provides enough weight to soak up the pesto aioli and juices from the chicken. So often is a great-tasting sandwich ruined because the bread turns soggy, flat and collapses from the contents of the sandwich.

It was an enjoyable visit to Buster's and I shall definitely be returning soon. Next time, I may be seduced by the myriad of breakfast items. The charming atmosphere is extremely inviting and should I need another hearty meal that sticks to my ribs, I will be heading down Main Street once again.

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