

WINGS



News

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Guy and the Nymphs of the Nile

I arrived at the Lamplighter for lunch a few minutes before 12:30. This is one of Elmo's favorite joints. It's also Guy's. Guy and his son arrived at the appointed time - 12:30.

After we ordered our lunch, Guy began sharing the highlights of his life.

Guy's mother wanted him to be a doctor. His father insisted he study to be an electrical engineer. Guy always wanted to be in show biz. As a child he would entertain family and friends by singing, acting, and performing for others as best he could. In high school in Fresno he became the student body president. This position allowed him to guide all school wide assemblies and other school productions. His physics class suffered because every week he would attend Rotary meetings where he joined other student body presidents. Guy enjoyed participating with businessmen and community leaders.

In 1936 the family moved to Fresno. In 1942 he was attending Fresno State taking classes that would steer him into medicine. December 7th changed the direction his life would take.

He, like his buddies, joined the service. In the Army he would go to school to become a medical corpsman, but Guy Chookoorian enlisted in the Air Corps.

Soon he was in Sioux Falls, South Dakota learning Morse Code to become a radio operator. Next he was in Kingman, Arizona in Gunnery School. After graduation, he and his buddy were on their way to England in a Dutch Luxury Liner. Listening to the singing of the black soldiers housed in the hole of the liner, re-ignited his interest in show biz. He spent all his free time listening to the black soldiers singing. One day over the ship's P.A. Churchill was announcing to the world that allied forces had landed at Normandy.

By November of 1944, this future show biz personality had flown 32 combat missions including seven missions over France dropping food, weapons, and whatever the French Freedom fighters needed.

He and his best buddy had been assigned to different groups. Many years after he was discharged, Guy learned that his buddy had been killed during his 14th mission. Guy's

claim to fame was when he shot down a Messerschmitt. Even though members of his crew verified that he had indeed shot down the fighter, the Air Corps did not have sufficient evidence to award Guy his due.

At the premier of the film "Unbroken", Guy was approached by an elderly French lady who thanked Guy and all Americans for what they had done for the French people. Many of the supplies dropped by his missions over France were where her father was located and she was a little girl with him.

By October 1945 Guy was discharged and doing odd jobs in and around Fresno. He realized that he had to be in Los Angeles if he wanted to be in show biz. Soon he was busy with little theatre productions and other theatrical jobs. In the late 1940's Guy began to record. He sang and played the Fender base guitar and the Armenian oud guitar. First, he recorded "Open the Door Richard" in Armenian. Then he recorded in Armenian "Smoke, Smoke that Cigarette". "Mule Train " was next. He recorded another 15 songs in Armenian for his growing audience. Guy was known as the Armenian Mickey Katz. Concurrently, he was the choir director for his church and his wife was the organist. He served as choir director for 50 years.

All his performances and experiences led him to Las Vegas. In January of 1963 he was contracted to perform at the Flamingo in a show of belly dancers called "Cleopatra and the Nymphs of the Nile." Guy sang and told jokes while the performers were changing their costumes. In a short time he was performing at the Aladdin, the Nevada Club, the Golden Nugget with Roy Clark, and at Harvey's Lake Tahoe.

Guy was busy performing in many TV series like I Love Lucy, Ironsides, McMillan and Wife, Columbo, and Sonny and Cher. He was always busy as master of ceremonies or performing in over 50 church functions.

It was three-thirty in the afternoon and the waitress placed the bill on the table with two take home boxes in front of his son. By the way, his son is an entertainer also. He plays guitar in his band at Disneyland and Magic Mountain Guy's daughter is a talented singer like

Kathryn Grayson. Guy is still the joker laureate for WOW.

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A freak of navigation

The night was warm and inviting and the stars shone in all their brilliance. Captain John D.S. Phillips was in a dark corner of the bridge, quietly puffing on a cigar with all the contentment that comes to a sailor when he knows the voyage is half over.

His ship, the passenger steamer *Warrimoo*, was quietly knifing her way through the waters of mid-Pacific on her way from Vancouver to Australia. The navigator had just finished working out a star fix and brought Captain Phillips the result. The *Warrimoo's* position was spotted at about 0 degrees, 30 min N, 179 degrees 30 min W. The date was December 30, 1899.

First mate Dayldon broke in, "Captain do you know what this means? We're only a few miles from the intersection of the equator and the International Dateline."

Captain Phillips knew full well what it meant, and he was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime. An ordinary crossing of the dateline is confusing enough to passengers, but the possibilities he had before him were sure to confound them for the rest of their lives.

The Captain immediately called four more navigators to the bridge to check and double check the ship's position every few minutes. He changed course slightly so as to bear directly on his mark. Then he carefully adjusted engine speed so that he would strike it at just the right moment. The calm weather, the clear night and eager cooperation of his entire crew worked successfully in his favor. At exactly midnight, local time, the *Warrimoo* lay exactly on the Equator at exactly the point where it crosses the International Dateline.

The consequences of this bizarre behavior were many and varied. The forward part of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere, and therefore in the middle of summer. The stern was in the Northern Hemisphere, and in the middle of winter. The date on the after part of the ship was December 30, 1899. Forward it was January 1, 1900. The ship was therefore not only in two different days, two different months, two different seasons and two different years, but in *two different centuries*- all at the same time.

Moreover, the passengers were cheated out of a New Year's Eve celebration and one entire day- December 31, 1899-disappeared from their lives for all time.

There were compensations, however, for the people aboard *Warrimoo* were undoubtedly the first to greet the new century. And Captain Phillips, speaking of the event many years later, said, "I never heard of it

happening before, and I guess it won't happen again until the year 2000."

Here Comes The Judge

Don Foster is fondly known as The Judge because that's what he was for 19 years, presiding judge in Norwalk in the workers comp department.

Foster, who will be 95 December 24, got his wings in 1944 in the Army Air Force in Nashville, having obtained his pilot's license two months before Pearl Harbor was bombed and entered the service.

He was born in Peoria, Ill. and learned to fly with inspiration from Charles Lindbergh, before Lindy went on his round the world flight.

"Lindbergh used to fly over Peoria regularly, and all the kids in the neighborhood used to idolize him," says Foster. "My dad was a doctor, but there was nothing more inspirational than Lindbergh sailing above our heads when we were kids."

After the service, Foster married his sweetheart, Elayne, in Grand Rapids, Mich. They had been introduced by a mutual friend. She died just two years ago, long after they had settled in Los Angeles. Together they raised four children, first a girl, then twin identical girls and a boy. Don was an investigator for 10 years; Elayne was a clerk and a telephone operator, which kept the family going until he graduated from law school in 1955.

"I also wanted to become a lawyer, aside from my yearning to become a pilot." He recalls. He had learned to fly at Virginia Military Institute and Bradley University. Aside from being called the Judge, Foster could have become known as the Old Settler even when he was young on the bench. That's because he settled a full 95 percent of the cases that came before him.

"That was my sole goal, to get everyone out, feeling they had won something," he recalls.

Retired now since he was 72, Foster, still in excellent health, has plenty of friends, in addition to the ones from Wings over Wendy's. He knew Fred Blechman before the group was officially organized. They were in a computer club together.

Computers still fascinate him, as does anything electronic. He's into solar energy, drives an electric Volt automobile and even has his front door connected to a device that sets off a barking dog if there's an intruder. So, don't come around unannounced.

Foster has a big personality, always smiling and always

active. He's a Mason, 32rd degree, and presides at his special corner at Wendy's every Monday morning.

He feels being a judge was the best job in the world. He likes Judge Judy on television and keeps busy reading and writing.

Incidentally, our Ed Reynolds, a worldwide traveler, remembers that Don's grandfather and Ed's grandfather served on the same city council in Boseman, Mont. It's a

August Birthdays

Leon Waldman-August 16, 1924

Ray Rosenbaum-August 17, 1930

Ed Phillips-August 21, 1926

Harlis Brend-August 22, 1941

Dick Edwards-August 31, 1930

Neil Baliber-August 22, 1941

Reed T. King-August 26, 1924

Ed Reynolds-August 5, 1935

Stan Stater-August 18, 1937

Bob Donovan-August 1, 1948

Harold Arkoff-August 20, 1925

Boots La Vere-August 17, 1925

Jim Gill Um-August 14, 1942

Our trip to Point Mugu



The Summer Party

The morning sky was overcast and gray, lightning struck brightly from the east as we drove in a rare July downpour courtesy of tropical storm Dolores.

Bill Blair's home was atop a long uphill road in Pasadena. With good friends and endless snacks Bill showed us one by one how each music box played, starting with Rhapsody in Blue on a baby grand piano in the living room.

The out of place summer rain let up as soon as we walked through the front door way. By the time everybody showed up and had a cookie or two, we

were listening to “Camp Town Races” on a banjo in a restored oak nickelodeon.

Downstairs, in back the BBQ and picnic area had dried out and was ready to serve bratwurst, chicken, burgers and dogs hot off the grill with everything you could want, plus entertainment.

Oh! Those three young ladies in short red polkadot dresses, “The Beverly Bells” sounded like the Andrews Sisters. “Don’t sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me”.

They sang and danced with a well rehearsed routine and because we were sitting in front, the

Continued on next page

blond lass invited me to dance with her, while the other two sang with the music.

With our warm affection for Bill and his annual summer wing-ding, there were honored guests, 1960 actress Joey Heatherton, family and over half the members of “Wings over Wendy’s” in attendance.

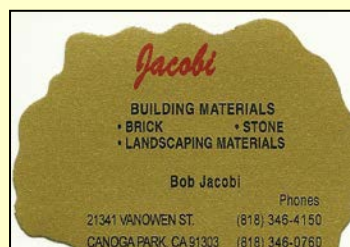
Yes a rare day in July, a dramatic thunderstorm giving way to a fine time with our veterans and Alice at Bill’s music box home.

The only place that I have seen and heard floor standing, turn of the century, large automated music boxes was at the Nethercutt Museum and he had about eight that came alive at his fascinating hilltop in Pasadena.

Thank you 1st LT Bill Blair and family for a marvelous day.

A rare day indeed!!

Fred R. Kaplan: Editor
Alice K. Stone: Proof Reader





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