

## USS Sunfish Reunion 2016

"It's a dry heat!" was a common retort at the 2016 USS Sunfish Reunion in Scottsdale, AZ. Record breaking heat was not a problem for those who gathered. It was simply great to see each other.

The reunion hotel, Hotel Valley Ho, was a classic 1950's restoration in a nice location near the free trolley and Old Town Scottsdale. The trolleys provided lots of rides for our crew and families. Shopping and dining were easily accessible. Great fun!

Reunion days were Wednesday to Sunday, but many folks came early and stayed longer with several adding trips to the Grand Canyon and beyond on their way home. During the reunion, there were tours/trips to Sedona's Red Rocks, the Grand Canyon, the Superstition Mountains and more. As you can see Arizona provided lots of wonderful scenery and things to do.

At our Cook Out (that was indoors) we enjoyed visiting, connecting and introductions. The highlight came when we reintroduced a grown up Jason Whigham. He was 2 years old when he started coming to reunions and this year he graduated from high school. The excitement really peaked when it was announced that Jason needed to leave the reunion on Saturday so he could report for Navy Boot Camp on Sunday. Jason has volunteered for submarine duty to become a Machinist Mate! He was the only person in his graduating class to volunteer for military service. Congratulations Jason! We are extremely proud of you!

The Memorial Service was solemn and beautiful. Caroline Moreau, a Sunfish daughter, played Taps and other music on her flute. A bell was tolled when the names of Sunfish crew on "Eternal Patrol" were read. It was hard to hear how many of our crew are no longer with us. It's the reason we all want to get together while we are able to do so.

Davy Jones of the Perch Base spoke at our Business Meeting and Sunfish voted to contribute funds to purchase a paving stone for the future Submarine Memorial to be built on the grounds of the Arizona State Capitol. There was discussion to determine the next location of our Sunfish reunion. Several locations were nominated with Norfolk as first choice and Jacksonville as second. Joe and Susan Martin, who have organized the 10 previous reunions, passed the duties on to volunteers Steve and Penny Moreau.

On Saturday evening, we held our final event, the Banquet. Mike Johnson, XO of the Sunfish, gave a talk about the amazing things the Sunfish crew did while he was "on board" and included special tasks performed by other crews. Several of these involved direct communications from the President of the United States.

While enjoying the fun and fellowship, Kurt Johnson proposed to Fran Worley and she said "Yes"! (With a big hug!) Congratulations to both of them! Kurt, thanks for sharing that wonderful moment with us.

The Sunfish Fund Raising Raffle had numerous items this time. ALL items were donated by attendees. From framed posters to a Sunfish Corvette (model) . . . jewelry . . . Navy themed sheets, towels, bags . . . ceramic snowmen . . . nice glasses etched with the Sunfish patch . . . signed Rick Campbell books and much, much more. Special thanks to all who made donations!

Steve and Jean Houston have been circulating 2 books for crew to sign and presented the books to Joe and Susan Martin. One was for Jeff and Lynn Cox who were unable to attend due to health issues. These books were a personal thank you from the reunion attendees in Chicago and Scottsdale. A "Thank You" for all the reunions Joe, Susan, Jeff and Lynn have organized and for all the ways in which they have worked to keep the Sunfish crew and families together.

A special note . . . Steve and Jean Houston volunteered and stepped up to help with this reunion since Jeff and Lynn were unable to do so. They were a huge help. In fact, Steve was the most integral part of designing the great submarine T-shirt that was given out to the crew for a memorabilia gift.

We want to thank the MANY folks who volunteered and helped make this a very successful reunion. It truly is a "family affair" as there are just too many volunteer names to list. A huge hug and thank you go all to all of you who helped. THANK YOU!

Around 90 persons attended this reunion. All of you former Sunfish crew now have 3 years to plan and save for the next one. It will be in Norfolk, VA in 2019. Dates and hotel location will be determined and posted. Remember 2019 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commissioning of the USS Sunfish SSN 649. Let's all be there to celebrate! ***Stay Sunfish Strong!***