

FSU Gymnasts, Gymkana, and Friends Newsletter January 2006 (Eleventh Edition) 2/19/06

Within reason the Newsletter follows this word content per single entry (Times New Roman, 10 font sizes)

New entry: Resumes/history since FSU = Twenty-two (22) words per line, Twenty two (22) lines

Second, third etc. entry..... = Twenty-two (22) words per line, Eleven (11) lines

Each Edition of the Newsletter = Four - five pages, 6.5 KB

Barbara Sheehan Withers | 54-62 | 2006 REUNION SCHEDULED FOR TALLAHASSEE & ALIGATOR POINT

“Jack, the dates we selected were **May 26-29, the same Memorial Day Weekend (Friday to Monday) as last year.** I think most everyone said they could make it those dates and we felt it was a good weekend to be at the beach - however, it can be changed to any date to accommodate the most people so if you know of some who could come on a different weekend, just change it, as it will be o.k. with me any time. Also, for those who want to play golf, the Wildwood Course in Medart is supposed to be very challenging and they now have a brand new Inn at Wildwood, right on US Highway 98. I'll try to get a reasonable rate for those who want to stay there and play golf. More later, Love Barbara”

Received 2/18. The dates for the summer reunion are May 26-29 unless y'all think we should change it to April 6-10 when the class of 1956 is having its 50th reunion and some of our gymnasts will be here in Tallahassee anyway.

Barbara Sheehan Withers | 54-62 | Mini-reunion March 5th

“Jack, great newsletter. I was out of town for 2 weeks (France & Spain) Just got back last night from Paris - had a great trip -. Please let everyone know that Mirek Ceska is planning to be in Tallahassee for 1 week beginning March 5th and I would like to have a mini-reunion with as many as possible since Mirek missed the last one. let me know if anyone can come March- his daughter lives and works here; I haven't seen him in over 50 years! I really do get tickled when people confuse B&B and still remember the week at the John Newcomb Tennis Ranch (when I was a little thinner and looked a little more like Bev) the tennis pros and coaches were so confused because we also dressed alike and they could not tell us apart. Love and kisses, Barbara”

Received 2/18 “Don't forget to let everyone know Mirek Ceska is arriving in Tallahassee on Sunday March 5 we can make plans Anyone who come to a "mini" reunion please call me (Barbara) at 850-893-4080 or e-mail me at Witherscpa@aol.com”

Jack {1929-1997} and Almira Sharp | (51-56)

“Another great newsletter. thank you so much. Thank you especially for the write-up on Jack and me, I greatly appreciated it. Grandson, Stuart, is in Iraq again as an aircraft commander of a C130. They are stationed at Balad, just 45 miles north of Baghdad, so he is in the thick of things. Keep him in your prayers. Love, peace and joy” {Let's all collectively keep him in our prayers....jmm} {As a footnote I forgot to mention that Jack took part in the famous Dr. Martin Luther King "I have a dream" March in Washington. Almira didn't go, but she housed Unitarian ministers who had come to DC from other cities. I didn't learn of this until many years later. Like so many of you, the more I learn about you the more I am proud that you are my friends....jmm}

Benny & Carolyn Wallace | 51-55 | To all recipients of the Newsletter:

“I have insisted that Jack put this in the Newsletter. I know that he has not only spent many hours preparing the documents but also is out of pocket for miscellaneous expenditures and it occurs to me that we should reimburse him; fair is fair. I invite your ideas and comments on this matter. I am thinking of some sort of sponsor setup like PBS has but without any of the paperwork. Each person or couple could send in an amount annually on a strictly volunteer basis and in no specific amount; no names or amounts to be published, but I don't mind saying that I consider, say, \$25 annually a bargain. As with my donations to PBS, I believe in supporting good service. This is something that has been on my mind for some time. What do you think? Benny Wallace “

Mike Mann & Fran Millian | 57-67 | Beavers and his Kayak

“Bill Beavers just left. He came in around four thirty yesterday. We left almost immediately to go to Posey's in Panacea for seafood with my brother and his wife that have recently returned to Tallahassee. We were met there by Dan and Jan Barnett, some friend of Fran and I from Maine. We abandoned Bill and the Barnetts right after we ate to take my brother & wife, big country music fans, to a surprise night out at the Sopchoppy Opry. We had invited them to the Opry performance earlier before we knew Bill was coming down. Bill was already in bed asleep when we got in around eleven. This morning he raced in the Wakulla canoe and kayak race from the old fort where the St. Marks and Wakulla meet to the Wakulla Springs fence at the upper bridge and back. The bad news is that Bill finished dead last, however, the good news is that he also finished first and won for his class. Please note that he was the ONLY ONE in that class. Also please note; that he learned this winning technique from me back in the sixties when I used something similar to take my two Florida AAU gymnastic trophies. These are the only trophies I have to show for anything I have done in gymnastics or anything else. The Barnetts, another friend Leah Bowman from Iowa, and our neighbor Terri Johnson joined us at the finish line to watch Bill's magnificent finish. After the race we all went to the Riverside Cafe in St. Marks for Grouper sandwiches then Bill started on his drive back to Atlanta.”

Bill & Carole Beavers | 57-58/60-61 | RE: Our Son, Chad's, Scholarship & Headmaster mentioned in Newsletter (10th Edition)

“Jim Coolee...I remember him when he came to work at VR (where I was working with Joe Taylor.) Great Guy! Tell him Hi. PS saw the note from Mike. He & Fran were great hosts. Got to get in shape! The first race I've been in the last 10 years I've been racing that I came in last!!! Need more Metamucil I guess.” {What about the human race?...Ouch....couldn't resist... jmm}

Bill & Carole Beavers | 57-58/60-61 | Received 02/18 Harmer Weichel located

“May be too late for your newsletter tomorrow, but just talked about an hour with Harmer Weichel. He is in Whittier ,N.C. (828)497-2490. e-mail is weichel01@msn.com. We talked a lot about the old days at FSU & looking for artifacts & how we can't do handstands anymore. The funniest thing I remember about Harmer was when we were roommates & obviously socially restricted. One evening our entertainment was looking through the Tallahassee phone book laughing our asses off at the funny last names we came across until one of realized there was something strange here....Beavers and Weichel laughing at other peoples names?????- Hope all is well with you Jack.”

Benny & Carolyn Wallace | 51-55 | Re. Cirque du Soliel

“I have read with interest the comments on Cirque du Soliel. I have seen the one in Orlando and was very impressed. But, believe it or not, there is one that is even more astounding. We live only about three hundred miles from Las Vegas and often go to see the shows. A couple of years ago we saw Cirque d'Eau at The Bellagio and there is nothing like it! Do go if you get a chance; you will never forget it! The building was constructed especially for the show and it doesn't travel. There are huge pools many feet deep with hydraulic lifts that allow the performers to appear as if by magic and there are very high diving platforms far up in the ceiling where performers do stuff that even a gymnast wouldn't believe possible. It costs the proverbial arm and a leg but worth every -- ; well, "penny" is hardly the word!”

Part 2

“I just finished a long conversation with Don Holder, perhaps my oldest friend and best man at our wedding on 8 May 1953. After recounting many tales of yore with him I forgot this one: We were at the U. of Illinois defending our NCAA title (alas, without Roetzheim) and I was competing in Rope Climb, at that time, along with trampoline, included in the competition as an individual event. The world record for climbing 20 ft. of rope from a sitting position was just over 3 seconds and was held by a guy named Don Perry. That night he climbed the rope in 2.9 seconds and everything stopped while the photographers did their thing, etc. Yes, I was next and everybody, except me and one of the three judges, went for a drink; it was the longest 20 ft. of my life! I did manage to get a point or two for the team but we limped away with third place, as I recall. Ah, but we've all had such moments. Maybe Don will tell us about his triumph in the amusing, but long defunct, Indian Clubs Championship. There was a small parade, as I recall.”

(Received 2/17)

“If anyone is contemplating cataract surgery I may be able to provide some useful information since I have recently completed the procedure. I had a remarkable new lens, approved just this past March, implanted in each eye that has completely eliminated the need for glasses! The older lens usually corrected only for distance and reading glasses were still needed; not so with the new one. As of yesterday, 16 Feb. 2006, I have discarded all glasses! Contact me for details if you're interested. Benny Wallace waldopepper9@aol.com” {Great information Benny, Thank you...jmm}

Years (Continuously) Married Contest (Recorded as of this date)

Chick & Jennie Cicio	55 years, 56 in April, 06
Don & Connie Holder	55 years, 56 in August, 06
Benny & Carolyn Wallace	52 years, 53 in May, 06
Carmine & Daneen Regna	51 years,
Jim & Marlene Jackson	50 years, 51 in July, 06
Don & Patsy Rapp	50 years, 51 in November 06
Sam & Tpsi Bailie	49 years, 50 in June 06
Jon & Boots Culbertson	48 years, 49 in June, 06
Jay & Ellie Schwarzman	48 years, 49 in September
Jack & Almira Sharp	47 years
Beverley & Bill Beaton	45 years
Claire & Dick Traynor	44 years, 45 in February 07
Bill & Carole Beavers	37 years (for good behavior)
Dick & Susie Gutting	37 years, 38 in June, 06
Derek & Nancy Lawler	35 years
Jimmy & Janie Hanks	27 years
Fernando & Linda Lecuona	18 years

“**I’ll never forget.** Rafael Lecuona, in conversation with a companion, walked down the hallway in the then “new” FSU gym with a golf club in his hand as he walked unhindered straight through a huge glass wall – eight feet tall and equally as wide. Magically the club, an iron, swinging in his hand preceded his body, just enough to strike the glass, make the initial break allowing Rafael to continue right through to the other side. Afterwards we all stared in total disbelief and marveled at the pile of glass, the guillotine shaped pieces still hanging from the broken frame, and wondered why in God’s world did he not die right then and there, sliced into a bloody mess?” {He told me that he does go to mass much more regularly now than he did prior to that event....Frankly, I don’t think St. Peter would know what he would do with him if he arrived at the gates.....not being quite sure if being the world’s greatest loveable bull-shitter qualifies him for the continued trip up or down...jmm}

Jimmy & Sanjuanita Janie Hanks	52-56	Loss of a pet
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"We lost our Shasa Saturday. It was rather sudden. After a normal day, Shasa, about 5:30 PM while we were eating, we noticed Shasa was not at her normal spot to watch us eat. We located her in the dining area but looking bad and breathing fast and hard. By 6:30-7PM her heart had stopped. As you can imagine, it's been a sadful weekend for us. Shasa had been with us for over 15 years. She was always in bad health, allergic to just about everything the world has to offer. Janie and I always did everything we could to help her and she hung on for such a long time. We loved her dearly. I just thought you'd like to know."

{I asked, "What kind of animal was Sasha?". He replied (02/11) "Sasha was a Yorkie. It was time but oh, How I miss that dog. I now have one left. The smallest Yorkie of 2 lbs. He's eleven years old so I may have to go through this again in the not to distance future. If you're not a dog person, it's hard to explain. It's almost like loosing a child."

{Jim, we animal lovers share your heavy loss. Pets are so much a part of our family. As most of you know I have a small poodle and over fifty birds - mostly exotic finches. I'll never forget one bird I had ...an inexpensive parakeet. It greeted me chattering away with its large vocabulary, every morning and evening for eight years. I awoke one day to find him dead on the bottom of the cage. I was so devastated I couldn't even go to work that day. What could I tell my boss? My bird died? Oh yeah, that would have gone over great. He's buried in our yard in a padded jewelry box and whenever I pass that spot I reflex back on "Timmy" and smile.....

Re. Shasha, "There is no psychiatrist in the world like a puppy licking your face" Quote Ben Williams

On a lighter note, Do you know why men identify with dogs and women with cats? If its owner dies, dogs have been known to grieve to death over the grave site. If a cat owner dies, the cat simply moves next door....jmm...Oh boy, now I'm in trouble}

Leigh Heisinger	57-60/61-62	Gleaned from Information sent to me after twisting his arm...jmm
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"Leigh and Nancy (Harrison, a former Gymkana performer and Florida High graduate) eloped in 1961, then ran off to join the Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey Circus on a 14-week paid honeymoon to South America, starting in Rio de Janeiro, then on to Sao Paulo, and finally to Buenos Aires. Leigh had become the protégé of Clay Beckett, the inventor of what he called "The Giant Space Wheel". He had built a new duplicate, and wanted to sell the original, so in what seemed to be a heartbeat, Leigh bought the rigging, signed with the Ringling show, eloped with Nancy, quit school after the first semester of the 1960-61 year, and off to South America they went. Leigh performed that first year by himself, and Nancy performed in South America doing the aerial ballet and production numbers.

At the end of the tour, there were no more bookings, so Leigh returned to FSU, where he got his B.A. in P.E., graduating cum laude in August of 1961. He actually graduated "in absentia" as on the date of the graduation, Leigh began his U.S. career with a show in Salem, Virginia. Little did he (and Nancy) know that this was just the first stop on what proved to be a 25 year relationship in marriage and performing together, beginning in 1962 on what was eventually to become known as "The Giant Space Wheel", with all subsequent copy-cat acts all known as "Space-Wheel acts".

Nancy first joined Leigh as his partner in the act in late 1962, and together they became the first couple ever to perform on this (then) very unique aerial apparatus. It since has become what is probably the most imitated aerial act in "show biz" today, with many of the copy-cats claiming inventorship. Oh sure, some made minor changes, but ALL of them are based on this original "wheel" which Leigh and Nancy performed on. They say if it's true, it ain't bragging!!

In December of 1962, Leigh and Nancy made their second international appearance at a famous Christmas holiday show in what was then, West Berlin, Germany. "The Wall" was less than 6 months old then, and they got to see it in its formative stage. It was a sight that they will never forget..... {In a later Newsletter edition...jmm} "The Rest of the Story", as Paul Harvey says, will consist of some of the many countries and places they have performed at, some of the things they have seen. A few honors they have received, and the additional 15 years Leigh spent with Robin, their daughter, as his partner. Quote Leigh. "I really don't like 'blowing my own horn', but together Nancy & I were the BEST in the world at what we did, which with 50 cents will buy you a can of Coke!!! Okay, enough already!!!"

Don & Connie Holder	51-57	Olympian to Olympian
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"Jack, Had a chance to converse with Ed Scrobe (one of our great gentlemen Gymnasts) '48-'52 Olympic Team Member . Wished him a Happy 83rd Birthday. Living in Ct. and doing well. Don"

Bruce & Rita Davis	Gymnast, Coach, Judge, Writer/Historian
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Received 2/19 "I am now doing my articles in IBM format rather than Apple and can forward you the February 2006 article in *Neighborhood Magazine* called: **Don Holder... Fate and Friendship have Served Him Well!** You could offer it as an attachment with picture. I think the FSU gymnasts would be interested. I have finished March's article on Jamile Ashmore thus completing seven FSU Hall of Fame members. I cannot do Jack Sharp without some help or maybe you doing it?? Let me know." I will now concentrate on other FSU people and other Floridians! Sincerely, Bruce. {A shorter version of Jack & Almira's Sharp's story can be found in the 10th Newsletter Edition...jmm}

{Bruce has taken on the monumental task of documenting the lives of many of our FSU gymnastics buddies. Acting as an emailing distributor I will communicate and coordinate with Bruce an easy venue for you to access these great stories. As mentioned in the 10th Newsletter Bruce has completed stories on : Price, R. Lecuona, Cicio, Roetzheim, Gutting, Miles, Ashmore, and now Holder. I just finished reading Don & Connie Holders story which came as an attachment on Bruce's email to me today. With the help of your submissions to the Newsletter and the works of Bruce Davis I am learning more about you-all then I ever knew up until now. Immediately, you can get copies of the stories by emailing Bruce at brucedavis56@verizin.net or those of you without email can refer to the attached & updated 02/19/06 mailing list Thank you Bruce for the terrific work you have been doing....jmm}