

NOTICE: This is the Fifteenth Edition if you have missed any of the editions please advise and I will email or mail them to you.

Barbara Sheehan Withers	54- 62	2006 REUNION SCHEDULED FOR TALLAHASSEE & ALIGATOR POINT
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“The dates we selected were May 26-29, the same Memorial Day Weekend (Friday to Monday) as last year.” { Well, Biddies and Buddies start making some plans. The time for your salvation is near....jmm }

Raphael & Diana Lecuona	52-56	Raphael's response to a request from the <i>Houston (Texas) Chronicle</i> for his viewpoint
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“In reference to Cuba's participation in the first World Baseball Classic, as reported in the Chronicle by José de Jesús Ortíz and the Associated Press, among others, I would like to offer my viewpoint on the subject, in the hope of clarifying what I believe to be a gross misconception about Cuba's "nonprofessional" athletes.

..... First of all, I am not a Cuban refugee. However, I did represent Cuba as a gymnast in three Olympic Games (London, (1948), Helsinki, Finland (1952), and Melbourne, Australia (1956).also at the First Pan American Games, Argentina (1951) and at the 1955 PA Games held in Mexico. In fact I am Pan American Side horse Champion (1951).not to say much about Central American Games (1946 and 1950).

.....The point is that I know what a nonprofessional athlete used to be in Cuba BC (Before Castro). In addition to workout (gymnastics) three or more hours a day, I worked during all of those years, and studied enough to be able to attend Florida State University later on (1953) when I was offered a scholarship to compete (1953-57) for FSU.

.....None of my Cuban athlete colleagues, from 1948 to 1956, was ever subsidized (life supported) by the government (Cuba), except during the couple of weeks that all these international competitions lasted. However, ever since the so-called "Socialist" system of Fidel took over, one of its goals, as is the case with all totalitarian and/or dictatorships, is to produce great athletes for ideological propaganda reasons, as did Germany in 1936, the Soviet Union while it lasted, China today, and of course, Cuba now.

.....At this point, I am not judging Cuba's political system. But, I do want to point out that all the great athletes of Cuba, from boxers to gymnasts to baseball players -and for that matter, all those worth of being used as an example of what "socialism" can do for a nation, are maintained, supported and taking care of totally by the State. They have the best equipment, the best coaching, the best facilities, the best education, the best food, the best way-of-life (materially speaking), and all the honors and awards that can be bestowed on them. In other words, these are the apparent non-political "elite" of the system. The rest of the population must survive the best it can, which under the present conditions in Cuba, is to live under a rationed -like during WWII, for instance-economic system: food, clothing, medicine, health, and life itself are all limited and totally controlled by the State.

.....Therefore, the great athletes of Cuba "earn" their privileged life, in a sense, no differently than our "professional" athletes: they have to work for it and produce results, such as winning events, competitions, and so on. In addition --whether they like it or not- and unlike our "professionals," they must politically and unconditionally support the system that maintains them.

.....The big difference lies in the fact that our professionals are not called "amateurs," while the Cubans (and those producing for other totalitarian systems or dictatorships), are being characterized as humble "amateurs," who sacrifice their life freely for the love of their country, and the sport in which they excel. The Cuban baseball team is a great team. But they are far, far from being amateurs. The majority of the players probably have been playing for years, like true "professionals" that they are.

.....Next time we send our "college" athletes to compete with Cuban teams, check the age difference: Cuban athletes tend to be five to ten years older than our "college kids." It is their "way-of-life." Their "profession."

.....In my opinion none of these Cubans --or other Cuban athletes for that matter--could not, should not be considered as amateurs. I would admire their professionalism, were it not for the fact that they are simply performing, not only for their livelihood but most likely, for their lives! They better produce or else! Most respectfully yours, Rafael A. Lecuona, Ph.D. Former Olympic gymnast and Pan American champion.

Mike Mann & Fran Millian	57-67	Re: The restaurant where we held our last reunion – Hurricane damaged
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“Posey's has a realtor's "For Sale" sign on it. The little concrete block building across the street that Posey's unsuccessfully tried to operate from for a few weeks also has a sign on it. This one say's that the Riverside Cafe will be opening an Oyster Bar there soon. It appears Posey's will not return after all.” {Mike sent some great info relating to eateries for those planning to go to the reunion. He sent that info top the advanced team - Fadigan, Holder, Withers, and others. The team has been working very hard to make it a fin-filled relaxing time 05/20 from Mike:... F. Y. I. - I was down that way again this week. Picked up some fresh off the boat Shrimp and crab meat from Angelo's seafood next door to the old restaurant for Fran to take as a gift to hosts in Atlanta. That portion of the building shoved up next to the road is still there but the restaurant site is completely clean, even the old pilings are gone..jmm }

Jim & Arlene Fadigan | **Response to the above to Mike and Miles**

“Jack & Mike: What memories - this is where I did some dolphin research with my favorite professors, Dr. Kellogg. It was the first research ever done on Bottle-nosed Dolphins under a huge Navy grant. We put out the seminal book "Porpoises and Sonar". No one was using the Dolphin name at that time. We had very little former research to guide us on the behavior of Dolphins. Jack, it was - much like the lack of Decompression Tables before CIBA published them....Jim

Bill & Carole Beavers | **57-58/60-61**

“Jack, I don't know if you ever met Erich. He was a doctoral student in physics and a friend of Mirislav's at FSU. He and Merik are still good friends. He used to come into the gym when I worked out in the evenings sometime in the 60's. I introduced him to diving and the wonders of Wakulla, now he is an ardent diver and comes from Germany each year to dive for a month in Baja. Like Merik, he has children in the U.S. Eric and Renate have hosted me and Carol several time when traveling in Europe. I probably gave him your article shortly after it was written. ps, just returned from a 13 mile race through the swamps and rivers of S. Ga. I capsized on logs and rocks 4 times & still won the kayak division (was beat overall by two tandem canoes) This helped take the sting out of the last place finish on the Wakulla.”

From Erich to Bill: “Recently, you were on my mind when I made copies of the article by Jack M. Miles, "Swim into your grave" about your rescue diving at Little Dismal water cave. That article is extremely well written and reading it gives you a nightmarish and spine-chilling feeling. I made copies for my diving partners. None of us would ever dare to dive into a cave, even with our modern equipment! Love Erich and Renate”

From Bill to Racing friend: Good luck in the race in Georgetown this weekend. Thought about coming but am still kind of creaky & sore after the Canoochee River race last weekend. Much deadfall and four portages! They said it was 11 miles, but my gps said 12.5. Worse than the Blackwater race a couple of years ago. May come down for the Tybee Island race. Hope to see you there.

Jimmy & Peggy Tanaka | **51-56** | **Re: Letter to Connie & Don Holder from Jim**

Subject: Pat Signorelli/USAF Academy Gymnastics reunion

“I was glad that you forwarded Pat Signorelli's phone number before my departure to attend the 50th Gymnastics Reunion at the United States Air Force Academy. It was great to see him so healthy and successful. He is so proud, and rightly so, of his son's accomplishments in gymnastics at Michigan. I informed him that, unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the FSU reunion because of our trip to South America o/a the same date.

Since I was the second Gymnastics Head Coach assigned to the USAFA, it was a command performance on my part. Several of my former gymnasts made it to General Officer rank, astronauts, surgeons, engineers (nuclear, aeronautical, chemical, astronomical, mechanical, etc), commercial pilots, professors at prestigious Universities, etc. I had not seen some of my former gymnasts since 1961. My assistant coach stayed on at the USAFA for 28 years and made B/General. We were their guest in Colorado Springs.

Unfortunately, one of my top gymnast, who was the first **All American** ever produced at the USAFA during my tenure, was killed in an aircraft accident last year. I attended his grave site at the Academy Cemetery to pay my respects.

The USAFA recently completed a new building called the "**Hall of Excellence**" (comparable to the **Hall of Fame**). The building is dedicated to athletes/coaches contributing to excellence. To my surprise, the names of the Gymnastics Head Coaches, including my name, was inscribed in the show case. In the 50 year history, there has been only 8 Head Gymnastics Coaches. (See attached picture.)

Peggy and I will be flying to Hawaii on Thursday, April 6th, during Spring Break, for some R & R. Still have family there so it should be a great reunion. I know it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it On Tuesday, May 29th we'll be heading for **South America** (Machu Picchu, Galapagos, Cuzco, Quito, Ecuador, Lima, Peru, etc.) Should be home by Friday, June 16th. This will be a new experience for me since I have never been to South America during my USAF career. We have no plans to be climbing any mountains as high as **Kilimanjaro (19, 500')** on this trip. We understand that the mountains we'll be hiking in Peru are only 7,000'-11,000'. Warmest regards.”

Jack Miles | **50-58** | **Newsletter Sponsorship**

“I just received one "subscription" from a Newsletter recipient with these kind words.”Sending this for my subscription to your wonderful Newsletter”.

Benny & Carolyn Wallace | **51-55**

“I've got a long missive from Harmer {Weichel...jmm} about his last 50 years. Far out, to say the least! There must have been a "deep end" somewhere near Tallahassee -- maybe Wakulla -- that he stepped off of all of those years ago!
BCW+1

“We went on a cruise in late March and early April. Oddly, not everyone likes to spend a lot of days at sea on cruises; we do, and found a good way to do it. We left Los Angeles on a Princess Cruise, spent four days at sea, made five stops in the Hawaiian Islands and spent four days on the return for a total of 15 days.

While there, we had a magnificent helicopter ride of two hours around the big island of Hawaii, among many other excursions. Carolyn and I were the lightest people so she sat between me and the pilot; we could look between our feet! We zoomed over the beaches, cattle ranches and an active volcano and hovered in the valleys in front of the many waterfalls; magnificent! And much more relaxing than jet fighters. From our balcony, we saw a variety of seabirds, dolphins, flying fish and numerous whales at various times, mostly near the islands. The only really clear day was the day that we took the chopper ride. How's that for luck? We

made a stop in Ensenada, Mexico on the way back and had only a one hour flight home from Los Angeles. I gained five pounds and celebrated my 75th birthday; my kind of trip!"

Jimmy & Sanjuanita Janie Hanks | 52-56 | **Re: email to Charlie Christian cc:Jack**

"By the way, Charlie asked if I had any pictures of the team and I remembered I had found a few in a box that I had eventually scanned into an old computer a long time ago. They were taken while on a road trip to some competition. I don't remember where and my name recognition was so bad at the time, I just left the scan numbers as names. I think I paid a lot for that Brownie (about \$9.95). This meet was early in my career as a rope climber because it was just after I married and I was one broke student. The \$25 scholarship would buy my books. I was offered the money if I could make the team. (Coach didn't think I could) Well heck, I couldn't even get up the rope when I started, so the coach had a safe bet. I became the only rope climber, at that time, working out by myself at the end of the gym, while marveling at you talented gymnast doing your thing on the other end.

We all did good though! Didn't we Jack? I ate my first pizza ever in North Carolina. I even got approached by a gay man there in the cafe. (I didn't even know there was such a thing as a gay.) You guys saved little dumb country boy me. I got my first ever train ride to New York. I was scared to death because I got separated from the team on the too crowded subway and had to take another by myself. You guys were waiting for me when I finally got to the right stop! Yep, you were laughing!! Right there on the platform. I flew on my very first aircraft all the way to California. In Rochester, New York I roomed with Jim Tanaka and while in bed, two ladies of the night actually unlocked our door and, came into the room. We didn't know what they were there for and asked them to leave. They said "are you sure you don't want something?" Us dummies had no idea what they meant and said no!

Who can complain that I never got paid the \$25 scholarship or even an FSU sweater with the cherished big "F" on it. Disappointed at the time but I got by just fine anyway. These experiences might have even given me my career. I became a Navy pilot and have had a wonderful life experience right up to this very moment.

Thanks Jack, for contacting me and just being my friend. You've brought back memories and contacts that were long forgotten. I just wanted you to know my heart felt feelings. "

{email - April 24th} "My ear drum operation has now been scheduled for Thursday. The out patient surgery should take anywhere from 1-3 hours and Janie will bring me home after I awaken. The hole they found is too large to heal of its own so, a skin graft over the eardrum has now become necessary. Why the rush?.... I don't know. We're not all concerned so don't you be... Everything will be ok. I've been through much worse. What.....??? I said, "I've been through much worse!" ...TEE HEE Just thought you'd like to know."

{email - April 29th} The operation is over and all seems to be well. My ear is packed inside and out, so you'll have to email real loud. Tee Hee!! They have glued the ear lobe back on to my head with super glue after obtaining skin for the graft. They found another hole in addition to the large one they had originally found and grafted it as well. The first night was a little rough but I improved greatly throughout the next day and feel good enough today to do most anything as long as I don't turn to fast. Janie has been a jewel through out this whole ordeal. What a lady!! I'm so fortunate to have a wife like her. We had some difficulty getting me home and in bed. I had trouble with my inner ear making the world spin, so standing, sickness and getting up the stairs etc. proved a real trip! Thank you for your cards, thoughts and prayers. I'm home and on the mend. Overall it was a piece of cake."

Charlie Christians | 55-57 | **Re: Charlie's response**

"Jimmy, Thanks for sharing this. It reminds me of similar firsts. I can imagine your feeling with the 'ladies of the night'. You probably missed a good time but could also probably develop a contagious disease you would have a hard time living down. Glad you were naive. You are right..... these contacts with old friends are **priceless!!! the pics too**. My electric power went off last night and when it returned I had 13 emails from you guys. What would I give to relive a few weeks at FSU!!!"

Ken Brock | **Reaction to above**

"Guess I had to chuckle when I read some of the stuff {you guys are sending ...jmm}. Someday, IF we ever get together, I'll tell you about the night my dive buddy friends sent a "woman of the night" to my room. It backfired on them. I challenge you all to do what I've been doing for the past 6 years. I have been writing my memoirs and at present could fill a fairly thick paper back novel. It starts with my birth and goes right up to the present. It gives one a pretty good idea of what our values are and how we arrive at where we are in life. Best wishes to each of you."

Jack Miles | 50-58 | **Response to Mike after receiving several emails when readers noted that a girl was killed in my city by the news**

"Yes, Mike. The girl killed was a very pretty young lady who was depressed and was sitting at the canal edge dangling her feet in the water talking to her folks on a cell phone – which cut off abruptly.. This is very near our house. There are always gators...MANY gators. We bike along this I-595 road side trail and count them as we move along. There are many BIG fish in that canal....Snook....Tarpon...some over 200 lbs... and there are always gators. Fishing along the banks in our area and in the glades you really have to be very cautious and wary. Those suckers can really move in a short sprint on land. Actually, we worry more about the Moccasins than the gators. We don't take our canoe in the glades. Some of those guys are too dam big for our tipsy 14 footer. We have many funny gator stories. i.e., When fishing with Chad I cast a lure badly to the other side of the canal and it went into a high lob. Perfectly timed and unknown to us there was an eight footer (at least) under the water at the same exact spot where the lure was going to land. The gator came up for a look-see as the good-sized lure was coming down from the heavens. Just as he broke the surface the lure smacked him squarely between the eyes. My God, you should have seen the explosion of water and gator as he thrashed and slapped that big tail as he took off, trying to get under water fast as...but never making it under for quite a long stretch.

Can't you just imagine that the gator was probably thinking, " Holy Shit...Ouch! What to hell was that?" It was really quite a spectacle.

The name of the game is when you hook a fish...land it soon. or sure as hell you'll lose it to one of those guys. Without exaggeration, one day Chad threw out his lure and immediately a half circle of about eight gators surfaced about fifteen feet away...all facing us... waiting for Chad to catch their dinner for them. Chad hummed the theme song from Captain Hook and the crocodile. Makes you feel a little insecure, if you know what I mean. No way in hell would I dangle my feet in those canals. It was a very sad fate for the girl...very sad...and very rare...but due to the long dry spell the water level is very low....who knows?" (Since that day two more women have tragically lost their lives to gators. More in one week than in the last seventeen years total... Officials and trappers have been harvesting the overpopulation and they caught one the other day that weighed 700 lbs. – went to a gator farm....Had to use a car wrecker to load it in the truck....Yikes)

Jim & Arlene Fadigan | Reunion team - Repeat of his epistle

"Hi All: Well, the reunion weekend begins one week from today, Friday 25-26th. We have between 32 and 36 Yeas at this point and still counting. Just a reminder to all that an advance team we will arrive to do the shopping on Thurs. May 25th. So, we need payments to arrive by Wed. in order to have the \$\$ for the shopping. In case you haven't received our past Emails, we have attached a breakdown of the costs per person for food, drink and for some accommodations. For those that are just dropping by for the day, just see one of the advance team upon your arrival and we can adjust accordingly. (Anyone in need of a loan, Raphael can advance you Pecos at 23% interest per day). Please make checks payable to: **Barbara Withers, 3035 North Meridian Rd. Tallahassee, Florida 32312** Really looking forward to seeing all of you. Jim Fadigan" {The reunion coordinating team has really gotten together to make this a great time.....I know you have been receiving all the info directly, but it never hurts to repeat – especially to the hard of hearing... i.e. Conversation between Holder and Gusic, "What did he say?...He said he was thirsty.. No it's Friday ...Oh! OK" ...jmm }

Jack Miles | 50-58 | Reunion

{After seven and a half months, I'm still without tar paper and shingles on my roof and all my furniture etc. is in the middle of each room covered with plastic sheeting. When it rains, we start the bucket brigade. The commode handle even broke off in my hand...Geez....Give a guy a break. I'll even light a church candle. So you can be sure I am eager to get out of Dodge for a change and visit with you guys. For those who cannot make the trip many of the attendees have promised to take a bunch of pictures to share with you. We will miss you all...well some of you... As several of you know I am a handyman for several rich single business ladies homes...You know... floor tiling, painting, carpentry, stained glass, adding a room, etc. the trip will be a great respite from repairing the results of the last hurricane and getting ready for the next.... I am ready are you?}

{I'll Never forget Our FSU team was in a Chicago hotel. Eyes closed, I was soaking head down in the bath tub. Benny quietly stalked in and poured some Wintergreen Astringent Oil down the back of the tub. The Wintergreen oozed down under the water and found it's target. Yow!...I jumped up, suds and all, screaming and trying to find a towel to stop the stinging sensation. He, along with the guys, were laughing like hell. I jumped out of the tub and chased him out of the hotel room into the hallway. I was going to give him a bath. He circled - as part of his devious plot - back into an adjoining room and slammed the door. Then I heard the door I just ran through slam shut also. "You bastards", I shouted, "let me in". There I was locked out in the hallway....sans with suds. And then I heard the elevator coming up. "Oh Dam". Wedged into the crack of the door I watched the arrow mark off the floors as it rose. Yes, you are right. It stopped at our floor. The door slid open.... I have no idea who all was on the elevator because I had my face tightly shoved into the crack of the door while I softly said into the crack "Come on, open the dam door, the elevator just opened on this floor"....You should have heard the muffled laughter and screams coming from the other side of the door. I still owe you guys one, especially Benny, a Miles never forgets.... ..One day, watch out..}

Gene Abrahamson | 50-54 est. | Re: telephone conversation

{I called Gene in his, way to hell out there, small desert community of Minden, Nevada. He was in great spirits with a few dings and dents like some of us. He promised to send me a report soon of his goings on. He sent me some great pictures w/ Benny Wallace, Bob Martin, Scotty, Gutting, Holder, Roetzheim, Bollinger, Brett Prichard, Signorelli, Regnas, and some group Gymkana and TTT pictures. He also sent me a head shot where he was wearing a ten gallon western hat to hide his balding head..{I can relate} ...I told him that he looked like JR Ewing from the TV show "Dallas". I'll bring the pics with me to the reunion. He lives very close to several ski slopes and resorts instructing tots how to ski. From TTT to Skiing Tots...that figures. He was one of the first team of gymnasts to teach the tumbling tots. As he spoke, I could hear him smiling right over the phone....I pulled up his town on "Google Earth"... and the intro reluctantly read, "Do you REALLY want to find Minden? I convinced it I did". A bull wagged its tail and there it was...the bull was looking at it that is...puzzled....there was this old man in the pasture trying to kick up to a handstand....jmm }