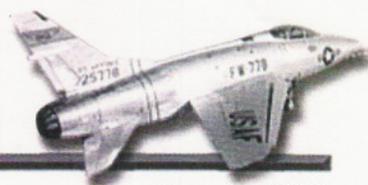


# AVIANO AFTERBURNER

NEWSLETTER OF AVIANO REUNION ASSOCIATION



Volume 18, Number 4

November 2005

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## From The President

Tours by Roberto, Roberto and Patti Bechi, pulled off another great Italian reunion experience for us all. Can't thank them enough for the wonderful times (and food) we had there.

We did have some last minute cancellations due to health reasons. First, Earl Fairchild broke his ankle and was still recuperating, so they had to cancel. Then, we got word that Dottie Erhart was in the hospital fighting an infection. I hope all is well there by now. And just before the trip, Rodger Gracey went to get a physical and was taken directly into the hospital and had triple bypass surgery. Last I spoke to him, he is doing well. Once I got home, I got a call from Kathie Oldis, who was still bedridden after her hip surgery. She is very upbeat and looking forward to the twenty plus years use she is supposed to get out of her new joints. She then reported to me that Marilyn Walbridge had been in the hospital again due to problems with her stomach digesting food. They have implanted some new gizmo that is similar to a pace maker that is helping. I think that covers all the news I have received. Please pass along anything you hear to either me or Emily and we will share it with the membership.

At the meeting we voted on the 2007 REUNION. Martha Novikoff is our host and it will be in Williamsburg, VA. She is already looking into hotels and as soon as she gets it set up, she will give us the dates. The reunion will include Jamestown (celebrating its 400 birthday), Yorktown and Newport News. Martha can

be reached at mhelen31@cox.net or (757) 596-0834.

We also voted to increase the dues to \$15. That gives me a reason to remind you that the 2006 dues will be due in January. So, why don't you check your label and if it has 2005 still on it, go ahead and mail your check made payable to Aviano Reunion Association to Emily Povey, 626 East Davis Blvd., Tampa, FL 33606.

By the time you get this newsletter, you will have probably already received your new roster. Please check your listing and let us know if there need to be any corrections or additions. We can't get it right unless you tell us.

And lastly, for those that attended the reunion and/or cruise, if you have any pictures or comments you are willing to share, please mail them Nick Leone, 2623 Hickory Flats Trail, Huntsville, AL 35801.

Now it is time to look forward to next year's cruise in Hawaii. Look at the information in this issue and SIGN UP NOW!

### Inside This Issue

Correspondence .....	page 2
Travels With Tama .....	page 3
Reunion 2006 Hawaii .....	page 7
Reunion Photos .....	pages 8-9



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## CORRESPONDENCE



**From Charles Fortenberry:** I was at Aviano from Oct '60 to Oct '62. The only man that I am sure of on the membership list is John Palmer. My wife and I stayed at their house and took care of his little boys while he and his wife took a vacation. I worked on the T-33 flight line and worked in hanger #1. I also attended the protestant church service and sang in the choir. I was only 18 when I went to Aviano and I was the only enlisted person to be in the choir. All of the other members were officers and they treated me like I was one of theirs. One of the pilots that flew the T-33 was a Capt. Ives. I don't remember his first name but he let me fly in the rear cockpit if he was flying alone. Several pilots let me fly with them. If anyone remembers me, you can call me at 601-684-1773. I wish that I could find some of the ones that I worked with but I don't see any of them on the list. Thank you so much.

**From Dee Davis:** Want to thank ya'll again for the great reunion! We had a really good time & there just is no tour guide as good as ROBERTO!

**From Franca Rutter:** The reunion was great and we are looking forward to the next one.

**From Judy Laurnen:** 'Tis fun reliving the reunion – great week in Italy!

**From Emily Povey:**...Italy 2005 such a fun & educational experience. We loved every minute of the entire week.

**From John Fells:** The tours and "meals" were out of this world. I'm sure it would be impossible for anyone to visit the places we did with any other tour. We were very fortunate. Making "A" and "B" groups was a brilliant idea and I appreciate it very much. We visited Marianna's family and were subjected to much wining and dining for the five days we were there. Every night we ate at a different home. By the end of the stay I was ready to come home. I'm back to eating peanut butter sandwiches.

**From Carolyn Watters:** Haven't been home long enough to go thru all our pics, yet. Will try to get some off to Nick -- and others, as appropriate, ASAP. I am anxiously awaiting the first installment of "Travels by Tama". I just e-mailed Patti & Roberto to thank them for everything: taking such good care of us, great outings, wonderful food, super guides, etc. They really do a wonderful job and are really special.

*Continued on page 7*

## TRAVELS WITH TAMA

I am only going to cover the reunion itself. You will get another article from Ben and Lynn Catalina about the cruise in the next issue.



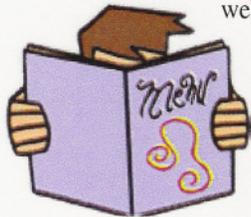
**SUNDAY:** People arrived at the Roma airport on different flights and some on different days. To allow for this, Patti Bechi had arranged for two buses to meet us all. The airport was hot and crowded and it took about three hours before we collected all of the first bus group. At least it gave us some time to do a little catching up. Even with a couple of accidents on the road delaying traffic, we made pretty good time and arrived at the hotel with plenty of time to unpack and unwind.

The hotel was a four star and everyone said they had nice rooms. The only common complaint was the bathing facilities. Gary and I had this really large whirlpool tub with a hand held shower head that was on this bar, but no shower curtain or door. It was almost impossible to take a shower without getting water all over the place. Others that did have showers, said theirs were very small. Italians just have a different view of how bathrooms should be and that was not enough to mess up the enjoyment of the very nice hotel and the staff that worked there.



And for those that just had to have a computer set up, they had an in house computer in the lobby for use, which one of the staff assisted with when necessary. And in our case, since we brought our laptops, one of the staff came to our room and set up a local phone connection so we wouldn't have overly large connection charges.

The second bus arrived in the afternoon with the rest of the reunion group in plenty of time for dinner. Roberto hosted a welcoming dinner in a private dining room of the hotel. We even had music by the hotel's entertainer. I will list the menus of the various meals that were included in a separate piece. Let's just say, the name of the reunion should have been



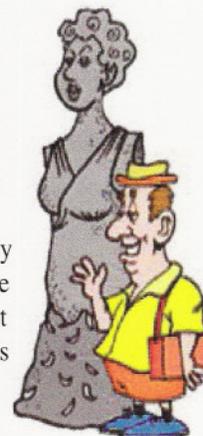
"Eating Your Way through Tuscany and

Umbria." Roberto and Patti did an amazing job of arranging wonderful meals.

**MONDAY:** All the days at the hotel started with their continental breakfast. It was much larger than the old fashion type and

included scrambled eggs and cold cuts and cheeses, as well as fruit. Quite a nice start of the day.

Gary and I were in Group B for the tours, which was for the less active people. Gary could handle the faster pace of the other group, but he stayed with me. We got on the bus and headed to our first stop, a local archaeological museum in town. Normally they are closed on Mondays, but we got in because Roberto is part of the archaeological club that found and takes care of most of the museum's treasures.



Roberto is mainly interested in the Etruscan period and people. This museum was full of artifacts from that era. It was very fascinating to hear him discuss the various items and impart a view of the people that they belonged to.

We followed the museum with a visit to an organic farm that belongs to friends of his. Everything on the farm is organically grown and processed. They even have students come to learn the technique and work on the farm. We were allowed to go into the cheese making building. They do everything the natural way. He showed us the various stages of the cheese making and some of the cheese aging there.

Roberto had also arranged for us to have lunch there. Everything on the table from wine to food was a product of the farm.

We finished the tour with a stop at an Etruscan tomb that Roberto had been involved with working on. Unfortunately, this was one that had been robbed many, many years ago.

We got back to the hotel mid-afternoon and spent the rest of the day just relaxing. And that night, we were still so full from lunch we walked down the street to a gelato shop and just got a small pizza to share. Of course we had to have some gelato too and lucked out that they had just made some banana, one of our favorite flavors. Some of the other attendees ended up at the same place.



**TUESDAY:** Today was our tour of Cortona. Our guide this time was Roberta Piccinetti, one of Roberto's employees. She is very nice and everyone enjoyed her company. The bus took about an hour to get to Cortona and she told all sorts of interesting stories

*Continued on page 4*

(Travels with Tama continued from page 3)

and facts along the way. Once we were there, we also had another guide, Adina Persano, who happens to live in Cortona.

If you have ever read "Under the Tuscan Sun", the author Frances Mayes was writing about her experiences there. She still owns a house



there that she lives in about fifty per cent of her time. The movie was based on the book, but also using stuff from another book, so it isn't completely the same as the book. Anyway, the town itself is very old and has a lot more historical interest than just being the focus of her book.

We started the tour with a visit to the Basilic Shrine of Saint Margaret of Cortona. It is a very nice looking church and her body is on display in the altar and the wooden crucifix that spoke to her is hung to the right of the altar. Both are in amazingly good shape since she died in 1297.

Our next stop was the Chiesa Di San Domenico or Church of St. Dominic's. It was part of the monastery of the Dominicans. The rest is pretty much destroyed. Fra Angelico lived there and over the doorway is a fresco he painted.

From there we went to the town square where Adina pointed out the various buildings of interest and continued to do so down a hill until she took everyone into the Museo Diocesano or Diocese Museum which houses mostly art work that has been removed from various local churches to be better preserved and displayed.

At one o'clock we went to an outside restaurant located one story above the town square. It was covered by a roof, but open on three sides. There we spent over two hours eating an extensive dinner.



We then had a little over an hour to shop and make it back to the bus.

Gary went down to a little grocery when we got back and picked up some salami, cheese, rolls and such and we had dinner on our balcony.

**WEDNESDAY:** Our luck with the weather ended today. It rained off and on. Luckily, we at least missed the worst of the rains and only got sprinkled on a little when we were out walking. But on the way there, the bus got rained on quite a lot and it slowed down the driving so we had to skip part of the tour because of the delays.

The beginning of the tour was a stop in a town called Orvieto to see their Cathedral. From the distance, it looked quite a bit like the one in Sienna with its black and white stripes. However, it wasn't as ornate. It dates from the 1300's and the reason Roberto wanted us to see it is because it is a very good example of the way the church used art, mostly frescos and sculpture to teach the stories of the Bible. You must remember that very few people were able to read back then and they were able to understand through these visual aids. Roberto also explained how the frescos are produced. My admiration for the artists that did frescos has increased tremendously.



We were supposed to drive around a lake in the area, but because of the traffic and rain, we ended up just heading to this restaurant he had planned for us to eat a very gourmet type lunch. It was yummy.

The restaurant was located in a town called Toscania, which is a walled city on top of a mountain. Roberto said that PBS filmed their Christmas pageant there and it will be shown as a special with Rick Steves.

After eating, we walked a little down to this overlook that has a beautiful panoramic view of the old church. Then we

got back on the bus and went on then to actually see the old abandoned church. It is being used as a depository for old Etruscan tombs that have been gathered from the local countryside. Roberto also wanted to show what was left of the very old church as well. There were some nice frescos on a few of the walls.

By the time we got done there, we had to rush back to the hotel. We were very far away. As it was, we barely had time to make it to the membership meeting. We managed to get it done within a half hour. We had the bus waiting to drive us to the Museo Civico Archeologico, the museum that Roberto is involved with that we had toured earlier in the week. Seems that we were served a dinner that was made entirely with items that Etruscans ate. Our servers were very cute young men that are part of the museum's society, dressed in toga type clothes. (I won't even get into the comments that some of the ladies of our group made.)



Roberto then gave us an option of either taking turns riding back to the hotel in his large van or walking. A few did the walk, but I think that most took the van.

**THURSDAY:** Today part of our group did our first optional tour to Assisi. There were only eight of us, so we were taken there in a small bus or a large van depending on how you wanted to look at it. The driver delivered us to our tour guide, Marco, in Assisi. The guide we had lives in Assisi and is very knowledgeable about the town.

Since we are the not-so-fit group and we were in the small bus, they were able to drive us up to the church and we didn't have to deal with the steep hill and steps... thank goodness.

First we saw the church of St. Francis. There are actually two churches built on

*Continued on page 5*

(Travels with Tama continued from page 4)

top of each other. The first one was built to honor St. Francis and his grave. Many years later on, they wanted another church, but realized that it would be much easier to build the second on top of the first than to try to cut into the mountain again to make a place for another one, if they could even find the space.



They also excavated around his grave and made another chapel with the tomb in the middle of it underneath the lower church. The frescos in these churches are extremely famous and are the reason that art students as well as tourists come to see them.

We then returned to the bus and were taken up to another church that is located near the town square. This one is more for the female orders, but is noted for containing the cross that St. Francis is associated with.

We did another visit to a third small church that was built on the site of St. Francis' family home. Unfortunately, they tore down the house, but they did keep the small closet like room that his father locked him into to try to force him into giving up his religious ideas. His mother intervened and he did manage to go to the church with her blessings.

We were shown a few other things of note and then released for a short while before meeting back with Marco for lunch. Again, another large meal.

We had about 45 minutes before we had to catch our bus back, so we walked slowly and looked through a few shops on the way back. Then we had our drive back.

It rained off and on all day in the area although we only had a few sprinkles in Assisi, so we decided to have a light dinner in the restaurant downstairs. HA! First we just had to have the anti pasto buffet. Should have stopped there, but were curious about their vodka pasta. And wouldn't

you know they had crême Brule, so I had to have that. So much for light.



**FRIDAY:** It rained.

We were forced to cut back on some of the sight seeing, but still saw a lot and had fun. The first stop was Sorano. We were told it was a good place to shop, but then we were limited to just a few shops. The place itself is set up on the top of a hill and dates back to the Bronze Age. The actual wall and a lot of the buildings there now are from the medieval period. Roberto gave us a little lesson in history and then pretty much let us go shop.

Gary and I went to this pottery shop where we bought this interesting bowl with a plate under it. The bowl has multiple holes in the bottom and stand slightly above the plate which has a raised edge so that air can circulate and any moisture can be caught by the plate below. It is to hold fruit. We saw other things we liked too, but decided on this because not only is it pretty, but we plan to actually use it.



We made another stop but about that time, the heavens opened and it poured. When there was a slight let up, we headed for the bus.

We drove on to another town that was also on top of a hill, Pitigliano. It was very impressive too. That one, I stayed on the bus with Carolyn and John while the group went on a walking tour. So I can't tell you anything about it.

We had lunch next at La Vecchia Fonte, another friend of Roberto's. We had a smaller lunch than we had been having, which was good, and it was one of the best. I know I have the menus elsewhere,

but I have to point out that the ravioli is freshly made just before serving. Roberto actually called ahead just before we arrived. I cannot describe how wonderful the dish tasted.

Gary's description of dessert was it was "to die for". In fact, he had his hand out for mine before I was ready to give it up. (I had been behaving and only eating half my desserts and he had been enjoying the leftovers.)



We were all full and happy after that and most napped on the way back to the hotel. Later, I socialized a little while Gary went to a local store and got more goodies and we had another picnic on our balcony.

**SATURDAY:** The tour we went on was the other optional tour to Arezzo. Like most of the towns that Roberto chose for us to visit, Arezzo has Etruscan origins. However, the two main points of interest that our guide, Adina from Cortona, took us to see were churches and the town square.

The first church was the Basilica di San Francesco on which construction was started in the second half of the 8th century. Inside is a series of frescos called the Legend of the True Cross by Piero della Francesca. The second church was the biggest church in the town on which the construction started in the second half of the 7th century, but has had many restorations over the centuries. We were unable to enter it at first because they were in the middle of a wedding. Later on, after a brief break, most of the group (minus Pete and me) returned to the church and watched the end of the wedding and looked at the church.

Where we took our break was the Piazza Vasari (once known as the Piazza Grande) which is the biggest square in the town.

*Continued on page 6*

(Travels with Tama continued from page 5)

During half the year, the buildings of the square have coat of arms displayed on their walls. This is because on the third Sunday of June and the first Sunday of September, they have the Giostra del Saracino (Joust of the Saracen) which re-enacts a medieval jousting tournament. The four town quarters challenge the Buratto, an effigy of a Saracen warrior, with lances targeting its shield. During this time people dress in costume and there are parades and flag-juggling and such.

Unfortunately, this was the only day where we didn't have a wonderful lunch. The cafe that we were taken to did not live up to its reviews. To make matters worse,



Adina prepaid our lunch since she was leaving us to do another tour and the waiter took advantage of her leaving to give us very poor service. Gary and I got

so disgusted that we didn't even stay for the dessert and lucked out and found a wonderful gelato shop on the way back to the bus.

Since it was our last night, we had the big farewell dinner in the hotel. Everyone dresses up somewhat for the final dinner and that is the night that I take the official reunion photos of the individual couples. We also managed to get a group shot on the stairs which the hotel's entertainer was nice enough to take with our various cameras.

Patti had come with their two adorable children, who were very energetic. I have to feel a little amazed that Patti manages to run the business and manage the children (the little ones AND Roberto) at the same time.

Ben and Lynn gave out some door prizes for those that had signed up for the cruise to Hawaii. And per my request, as the hosts from last year, gave the host gift this year to Emily. It is the tradition of ARA

for the previous host to collect the money from the attendees and then purchase the gift. She got this cute ceramic church and multiple friars. They didn't want to leave me out completely, so I got one little friar holding a very large bell. I also received a lovely spa package of lotions and such from Roberto and Patti.

Since the dinner was in a large room with a dance floor in the middle, there was some dancing during and following the dinner.



There was a little sadness since this was the last we would see Roberto and Patti this trip. We have tentative plans to have

them arrange another reunion in Italy in the not too distant future.

That just left the packing and we took the bus to the port near Rome for our cruise. Everyone from the reunion except two couples did the cruise and we also had many more join us for the cruise itself. You will have more to read about that in the next issue.

I do want to also mention our bus drivers, who were all very friendly and extremely competent, Giorgio Deli' Artino, Claudio Deli' Artino, Francesco Caloni and Michelangelo Carlino. And let's not forget Patti's able assistant and who helped at the Roma airport, Rhonda Priest.

## Menus At the Reunion

### Welcoming Dinner

Antipasto buffet  
Tuscan vegetable stew  
Pasta with tomato and garlic  
Thin cut med rare beef  
Spinach Tuscan style  
Oven roasted potatoes  
Semifreddo

### Cortona Tour Lunch

Pecorino cheese and caramelized figs  
Risotto type dish made with spelt and cheeses  
Ravioli with porcini mushrooms and fresh tomato  
Filet of beef in crust  
Vegetable mousse  
Amaretto dessert

### Chianciano Tour Lunch

Salad with fresh herbs  
Omelette with herbs  
Seasonal vegetables  
Sliced cured meats and seasoned cheeses  
Homemade bread  
Risotto with saffron  
Cake

### Meseo Etrusco Dinner

Bruschetta with olives, parsley, nuts  
Bruschetta with bean and hazelnut spreads  
Soup with barley and peas with hot spelt focaccia  
Etruscan-type pasta with game-meat sauce  
Trout in almond crust wrapped in fig leaf  
Salad with wheat sprouts  
Pecorino cheese and honey

### Siena Tour Lunch

Antipasto bar  
Lasagna Tuscan style  
Dessert

### Assisi Tour Lunch

Umbrian style appetizer  
Truffle pasta  
Roast meat and side  
Ice cream



### Sorano Tour Lunch

Truffle ravioli  
Pork with green peppercorns  
Dessert

### Arezzo Tour Lunch

Brushetta  
Tomato mush  
Beef Stew  
Dessert

### Farewell Dinner

Antipasto buffet  
Pasta and beans farmer's wife style  
Thick egg noodles with wild boar ragu  
Steak on the grill  
Tomatoes au gratin  
Potatoes  
Creampuffs in chocolate sauce

If you want a copy of the menus in Italian, contact me, Tama, and I will either e-mail or snail mail it to you.

# AVIANO HAWAIIAN CRUISE REUNION 2006



The word is out, and our Hawaiian cruise reunion registrations are increasing nearly every day! We will sail for seven nights on Norwegian Cruise Line's Pride of Aloha, from September 24 to October 1, 2006. Our itinerary includes calls on four of the Hawaiian Islands with overnight stays in Maui and Kauai. Reunion prices are set at \$926 per person for an inside cabin, \$1187 per person for an ocean view cabin, and \$1603 per person for a private balcony cabin. The deposit is

\$250 per person, payable by May 20, 2006, with final payment due July 1. Cancellations prior to the final payment date are fully refundable.

In order to cover any pre-existing conditions that may cause cancellation, we recommend that you also pay the insurance premiums with your deposit. The price is based on the cost of your cruise package. If you would like for us to book cruise line air arrangements for you, please call us for details.

We are also offering a pre-cruise hotel package at the Hilton Hawaiian Village for those wanting to arrive in Honolulu early and spend some time exploring Oahu. This beautiful resort hotel is located on Waikiki Beach near the Hale Kola and rooms begin at \$175 per night at our special group rates. If you qualify for the Hale Koa (active and retired military, etc.), you are certainly welcome to make your arrangements there. As part of the pre-cruise activities, we will be offering an optional island tour. It will include the USS Arizona Memorial, as well as other key sights on Oahu.

As of this writing, 57 people have confirmed their reservations, but we certainly have room for more! Ben & Lynn Catalina are our reunion hosts. For information or to book your cabin, please call them at 1-888-522-7447, or email them at: Bcatalina@satx.rr.com

## 2006 ARA REUNION REGISTRANTS

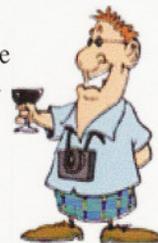
Ben & Lynn Catalina	Bill & Tisa Murphy
Jack & Marilyn Curtis	Bill & Emily Povey
Rodger & Betty Gracey	Bert & Maurine Prudhomme
James & Nelda Hall	Delbert & Cheryl Roop
Erica Hall & Kristin Johnson	Abbee Roop & Ladessa Forrest
Mike Hansen & Linda Kazarian	Pete Ross & Bea Jernigan
Butch & Betty Harris	Joe & Franca Rutter
Marvin & Adella Hill	Jason & Debra Schuber
Tom & Elaine Horton	Gary & Tama Tillman
Dick & Lee Hudgins	Gary & Leah Turner
Tom & Beverly Johnson	Bill & Gloria Walker
Lynn & Barbara Moyer	Bob & Carolyn Watters

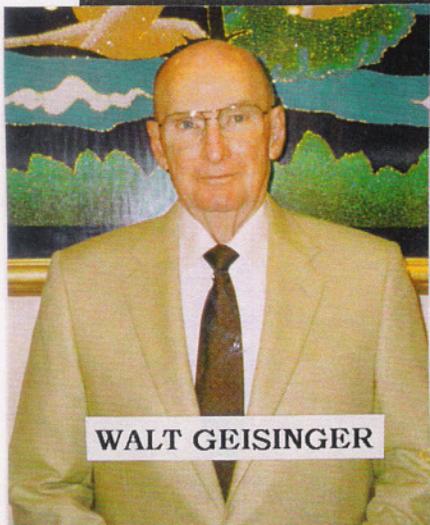
(Correspondence continued from page 2)

**From Gloria Walker:** We got back last Mon night and guess we were hit by lightning while we were gone. All electric circuits to appliances are burned out - everyone we call says they'll be here maybe by the end of the month!! We're still trying - fridge is working fine, but the oven won't work, computer won't boot up - but, first things first, it's already fixed! We had a great time, but because of Bill's mishap in Rome[pocket was picked], it sort of put a damper on things. We couldn't rent a car in Sacile as planned and did OK, but it would have been better if we were on our own. Our friend took us to Aviano and Bill got a new ID card, but we weren't able to just pick up and go when we wanted. But, hey, it could have been worse, so we want to thank you for all your work on your part and the Aviano Reunion couldn't have been better! Don't know when we've had such good food!! Yes, I do - 3 yrs' ago in Italy.

### THANKS from Ben & Lynn Catalina

We just wanted to say GRAZIA to all the folks who cruised with us following the wonderful reunion in Umbria! What a great time we had sailing, touring, relaxing, watching the shows, sampling vino, and of course, eating. And what beautiful weather we had for our week in the Mediterranean. We're happy to report that so many first-time ARA event attendees have already booked for the Hawaii reunion, and are inviting their friends and relatives. People learn quickly that the ARA is a great group of people who always have fun together. Thanks again for the friendship and fun. See you in Hawaii...

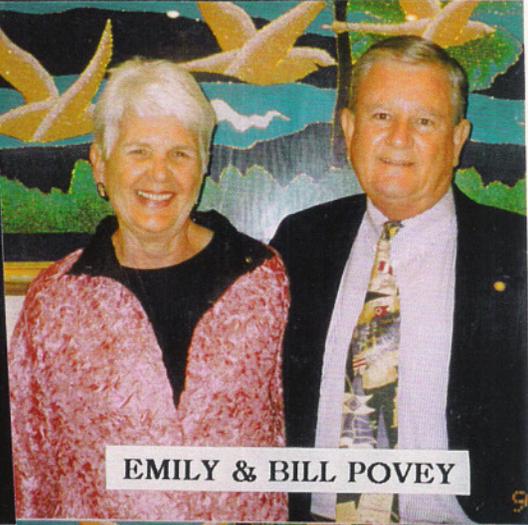




WALT GEISINGER



TAMA & GARY TILLMAN



EMILY & BILL POVEY



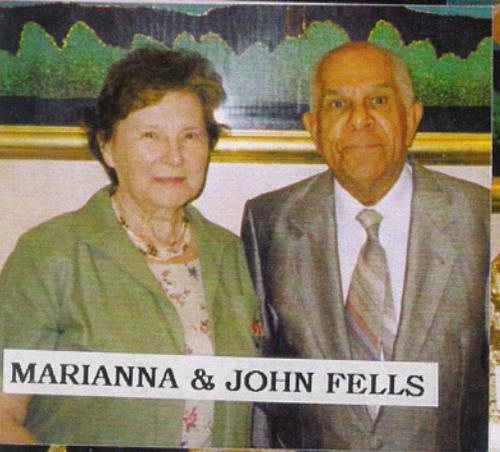
LYNN & BEN CATALINA



BILL & DEE DAVIS



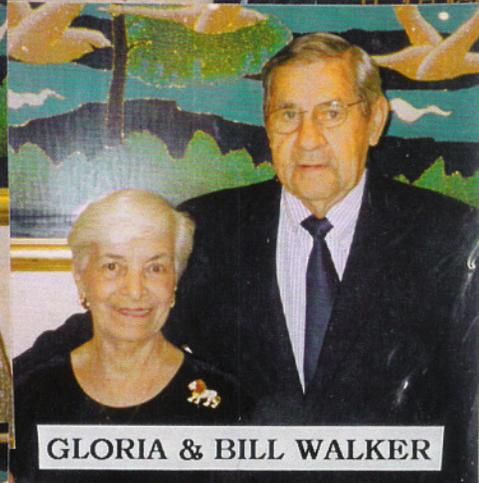
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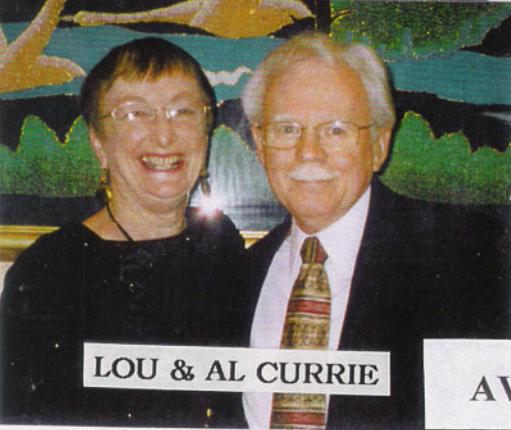
MARIANNA & JOHN FELLS



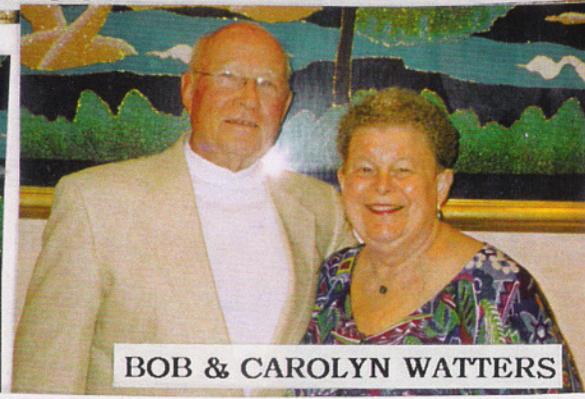
MEG JOHNSON & MEGAN DECKER



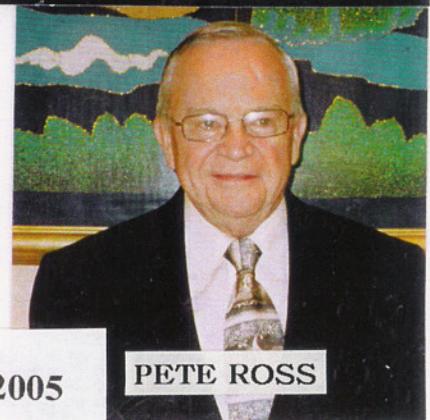
GLORIA & BILL WALKER



LOU & AL CURRIE



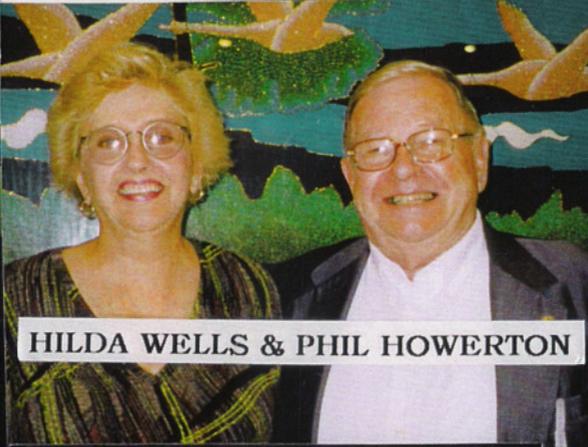
BOB & CAROLYN WATTERS



PETE ROSS



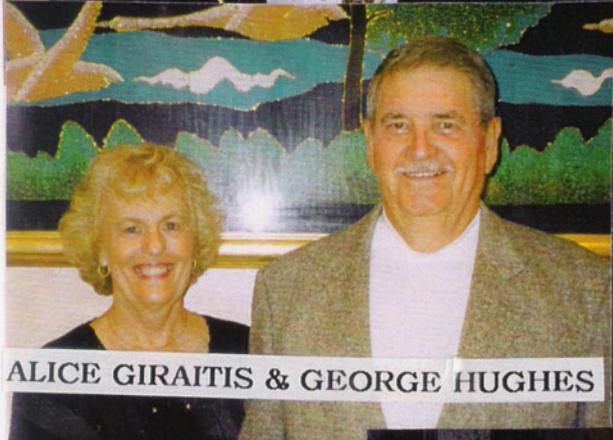
JUDY & ED LAURNEN



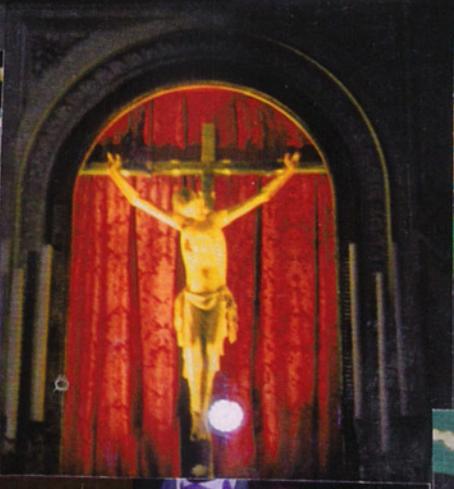
HILDA WELLS & PHIL HOWERTON



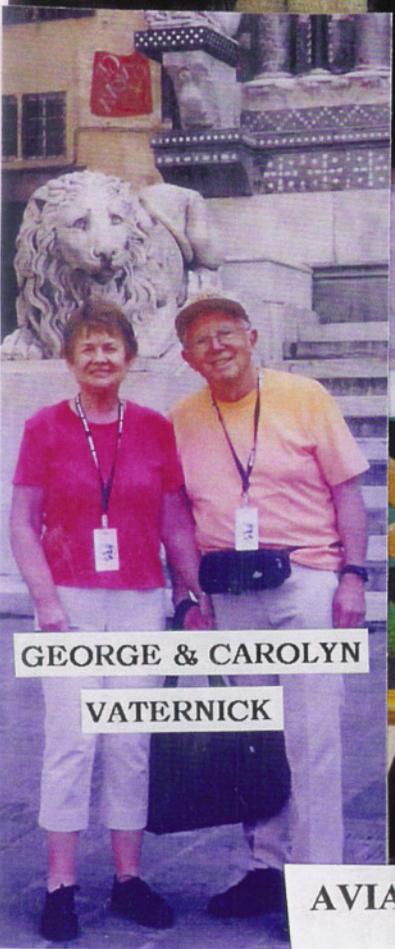
MARTHA & GENE NOVIKOFF



ALICE GIRAITIS & GEORGE HUGHES



JAY & JANE MAUST



GEORGE & CAROLYN

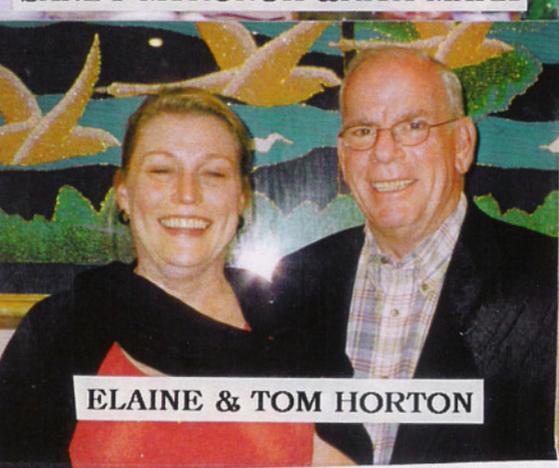
VATERNICK



SANDY MYRONUK & RITA MARX



LINDA KAZARIAN & MIKE HANSE



ELAINE & TOM HORTON



ROBERTO & PATTI BECHI



BONNIE COLLIER & BETTY FARMER



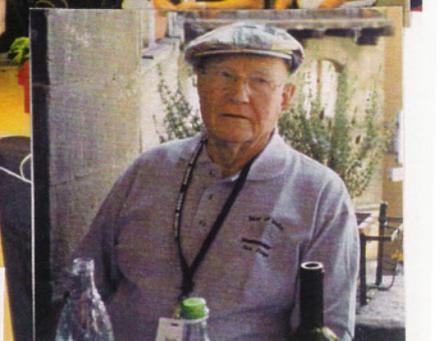
JANE POL & ANNE COLLINS



ELEANOR & RICHARD SCALZITTI



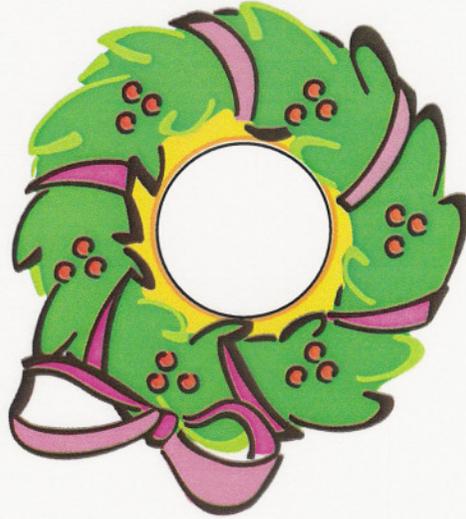
MUSICIAN





AVIANO REUNION 4-11 SEPTEMBER 2005

*Happy Holidays*



**AVIANO**  
**AFTERBURNER**  
NEWSLETTER OF AVIANO REUNION ASSOCIATION



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