



## President's Message

**2014 Reunion in Italy! APRIL 2014!** It's almost here and we hope you are getting as excited as Lynn and I. The final details are made, everyone is paid in full and have airline and hotel reservations and we're ready to go. Zane & Roberto are checking their lists and double-checking everything. Are you packed yet? More info in this issue.

**Business Meeting in Italy!** We conduct a business meeting each year at our annual reunion. It will be held in the hotel after the first day of touring. One of the items on the agenda is a discussion and vote for the reunion host and location for 2015. We're always looking for volunteer reunion hosts. Are you interested in hosting a future reunion?

**Busses & Other Details!** Once we get checked-in at the Canalgrande Hotel in Modena, we will post a bus list in the lobby. It will show which bus folks are assigned to for the week. In that same area, we will post the full week's schedule of activities, times to meet, dining, etc. Notes and updates will be posted as needed.

**Delayed Issue!** This issue was delayed on purpose to get you the latest info on our Italy reunion. You will notice that it is also shorter than normal as most of the contents is devoted to the Italy reunion. We hope you enjoy it. And...if you are not attending this year's reunion, please put attendance on your future TO DO list. Life is too short to not attend and have fun with friends, old and new.

**In this Issue...** 2014 Italy Reunion Final Update, Member News, Reunion Attendees, Cruise Participants, Pre-Trip Reminders, and...more. Attendees, remember these two symbols:



[www.avianoreunion.com](http://www.avianoreunion.com)

### Reunion Trip Reminders

- Passports\* found and validity dates reconfirmed?  
*Valid for at least six months after scheduled return to USA?*
- Flight schedule printed?\*
- Trip itinerary provided to neighbor and/or relative?
- Calendar circled to check-in for flight 24 hours in advance?
- Pre- and Post-Reunion hotel reservations confirmations printed?\*
- Cruise boarding pass printed?\* Cruise luggage tags printed?\*
- Mail & newspapers stopped?
- Credit card provider (bank) notified that you will be traveling in Europe?
- Pack your Lanyards if you have them! See page 2 if you do not!

\* Please hand carry these items

#### ARA Officers

Ben Catalina - President  
Rodger Gracey - Vice President  
Sally Ann Eaves - Secretary/Treasurer  
Elaine Horton - Editor  
Lisa Ringler - Webmaster

#### FUTURE REUNIONS

2014 Modena, Italy - Hosts: Zane & Margaret Hoit  
April 5-12, 2014

2015 To Be Determined  
Host To Be Determined

## WELCOME New Members

### Bill & Beth Dean

551 Capote Oaks Drive  
Sequin, TX 78155-9612  
830-303-2825  
Bill: [KSTK@att.net](mailto:KSTK@att.net)  
Beth: [bethdean96@att.net](mailto:bethdean96@att.net)  
Friends of Catalina and Kunz

### Scott & Patricia McCarley

6311 Davies Avenue, NW  
Huntsville, AL 35806  
256-652-3123 (Cell)  
[scott.mccarley@knology.net](mailto:scott.mccarley@knology.net)  
Friends of Franca & Joe Rutter

### Mark and Chrystina Rutter

(returning member)  
267 Pintail Court  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
703-628-4021  
[Msrutter1@me.com](mailto:Msrutter1@me.com)  
Son and daughter-in-law of  
Joe and Franca Rutter



## Report from the Secretary/Treasurer

### Sally Ann Eaves

Email: [saeaves@comcast.net](mailto:saeaves@comcast.net)  
8708 Independence Way • Arvada, CO 80005  
Phone: 303-421-2163

### ARA May Roster Changes

Al and Lou Currie – Delete Al's email; Lou's is still  
[dolcevita@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dolcevita@tampabay.rr.com)

Nick and Margaret Leone – 115 Robin Lane, Huntsville, AL  
35802; all else is the same

Reg Shalaski and Lisa Metzger - [regshalaski@yahoo.com](mailto:regshalaski@yahoo.com)

Mary Charlotte Small – 8815 Winston Ranch Parkway,  
Richmond, TX 77406  
Cell: 821-443-7501; Phone: 832-232-3339  
(leave voice mail only)

Imogene and Jim Willis – delete this email:  
[jwillis@spec-1.com](mailto:jwillis@spec-1.com)

Dean and Dana Wilsey – 13116 Muir Drive, NW,  
Gig Harbor, WA 98329

Randy and Peggy Witt – 1056 Island Drive,  
Memphis, TN 38103

**IT'S OFFICIAL!** We are on a countdown to the 2014 Aviano Reunion Association Reunion in Modena, Italy!! If you are attending the reunion, **PLEASE** don't forget to pack your ARA lanyards and nametags. For our new members attending their first reunion, we will be providing them to you. If you need a new one, please let me know before we leave, and I will bring you one you can pay me for in Italy. Thanks so much. Sally



## Remembering Lew Erhart

As most of you know by now, we lost a dear friend in January. After a short but courageous battle with cancer, lifetime member Lew Erhart died peacefully in his home town of Anchorage, Alaska. While the passing of any member of the ARA is a sad occasion, the death of Lew had a significant impact on all of us who came to know him at the many reunions he attended. Lew was the shining example of a true gentleman with a positive, helpful attitude in all he did. Even at age 94, nothing slowed him down or dampened his spirit at enjoying life. We all knew that when we saw Lew, he would have an ear-to-ear smile on his face...always! He would greet all the men with a firm handshake, leaving the hugs and kisses for all the ladies.

He now joins his beloved wife Dottie and both will be looking down and smiling on us as we meet in Italy in April. God speed Lew Erhart.

Kate Erhart responded to Elaine's earlier email: I'm so looking forward to meeting you and everyone associated with the Aviano reunion group. I'm currently in Anchorage for a memorial service for Lew at the Air Museum here. I'm hoping to read at least part of your email to the group here. There will be many folks who will recognize Lew and laugh. Thank you for your thoughts. I'll see you in Modena.

Correspondence from the Erhart family: Thanks to all the members of the Aviano Reunion Association who sent cards, emails, and even posted remembrances on the funeral home website. Lew mentioned so many of you very often and he considered you his loving extended family. He always had your Aviano Reunion as his "must do" event of every year! Thank you all so much.

## Aviano Reunion Italy 2014 FINAL NOTES

### PICKUP AT MILAN AIRPORT:

Thank you all for making your flight arrangements to coincide with the trip start and end dates, and for providing the flight info to us. ALL of you are arriving Milan a day or more earlier than our reunion start date, and some are staying in Italy for a few days after the reunion, with some going on the cruises. Since nearly 50 people elected to stay at the Sheraton Malpensa Airport, that will be our bus pickup point on Saturday, April 5. Those of you staying at other hotels will need to get transportation to the airport and then proceed to the Sheraton lobby which is in Terminal One. Please plan to be in the Sheraton lobby by 9:30 a.m.

We will all meet in the lobby of the Sheraton on April 5 at 9:30 a.m. with luggage. Roberto and the drivers will be there, load the busses and depart by 10 a.m. Please remember that due to security requirements at the airport, we cannot delay a bus departure for late arrivals. Plan ahead and please be on time. If for any reason you miss the bus, you will need to take a train to Modena.

After the reunion, our busses will be dropping folks off at the Venice port for the Mediterranean cruise and at Milan's Malpensa airport. For those of you going to Zurich, our Milan airport bus will continue to Zurich after the drop off at Malpensa airport.

### PASSPORTS:

Remember, they are mandatory and they MUST be valid for at least six months after your scheduled return to the USA. Visas are not required for our reunion or for the optional cruises. We suggest you make a photocopy of your passports and keep them separate from your passports.

### SHOTS:

No special ones required for the reunion or cruises. However, we always recommend you check with your doctor to see if your normal immunizations are current.



## Aviano Reunion Italy 2014 Itinerary Summary

**Tours by Roberto**, Roberto Bechi's company that we have used for the past four Italy reunions, has prepared a wonderful itinerary. Full itinerary details are listed on our [ARA Website](http://www.ara.com), and in each of our past three Afterburners. But here's a quick summary of where we will be each day.

April 5: Pickup at Milan's Malpensa airport (MXP) Sheraton Hotel at 10 a.m. Depart for Modena and the Canalgrande Hotel, our home for seven nights.

<http://www.canalgrandehotel.it/4/>

April 6: Touring around Modena, followed by ARA business meeting.

April 7: Day trip to Ravenna

April 8: Day trip to Bologna.

April 9: Day trip to Parma.

April 10: Day trip to Ferrara.

April 11: Day trip to Montova, followed by Gala Farewell Banquet.

April 12: Depart for Venice or Milan.

Questions? Email or call Zane or Margaret at 602 791-2988 or 602 791-2989 or [zhoit@q.com](mailto:zhoit@q.com)

### Breast Feeding in Public Causing Traffic Jam

*NOTE: Possibly future Parma hams! I sometimes worry about the way you think!  
Life is short. Smile while you still have your teeth.*



## QUESTION OF THE QUARTER

Responses from last issue

### WHERE DID YOU EAT YOUR FIRST MEAL AFTER ARRIVING IN AVIANO? DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS?

**Ben Catalina:** Gorgazzo's Restaurant. Mussels & clams and risotto con scampi and lots of vino.

**Bill Povey has a great story about his family's first meal:**

OK Elaine, here goes! We were scheduled to leave for Italy in June, 1966 via commercial airlines. I was a 1/Lt. stationed at Griffiss AFB, NY and Emily & I took leave to visit our families in NC. While in NC, the airlines decided to strike. We got a telegram from the Air Force telling us to take a train from Charlotte to McGuire AFB. Leah, our daughter, was 11 months old. The train was overnight and was very nice. We arrived in New Jersey and got a taxi to McGuire. We waited at McGuire for another 11 hours and finally got a hop to Wiesbaden AB, Germany. Overnight at Wiesbaden (well deserved) and then a flight to Milan and another flight to Venice. We arrived in Venice about 9 PM and got a train

to Pordenone arriving there about 1 AM. Got a taxi and asked for a hotel. He brought us to the Moderno. It was late and we immediately went to sleep. I remember the bathroom was down the hall. Before going to sleep, I wondered "What have I done to put my family in such a situation??"

The next morning was Saturday and we heard a lot of noise outside our window. We opened the persianas and viewed the greatest sight. The market was right below our window and in the distance was the view of the mountains ... beautiful. We got dressed and went to have breakfast. As my Italian was limited, we ended up with spinach, bread, milk and coffee.

I called my sponsor and was taken to Aviano after visiting my new boss, Capt. Epps., who lived in Dardago. As an aside, Emily & I just got back from Texas where we stayed with retired Col. Epps and his wife Connie. Our sponsor had a room reserved for us at the Alpine Hotel in Aviano.

**Elaine Horton:** The Royal Hotel. Breakfast. Because of my non-existent Italian, I ended up with hot (not cold) milk, espresso (not Cappuccino) and some terrible, dry toasted things in plastic wrappers. Fortunately, that was quickly trumped by delicious dinners at Orsini AND at the Royal Hotel and (as Ben said) lots of vino!!

### HOW MUCH CASH TO TAKE TO ITALY?

That's a personal question but from past reunion experience, we recommend you not take a lot as you will be able to use credit cards nearly everywhere in Italy and elsewhere you travel. We always recommend using an ATM to get euros as needed as they will provide the best exchange rates and the lowest fees. But to use an ATM, you must have a debit card or credit card authorized for ATM use. If you can use an ATM in the USA, you can use one in Europe. You will find ATMs in the Milan airport and at some of the hotels at the airport. They will also be available in Modena near our hotel as well as in the cities/towns we will visit.

**NOTE:** that travelers checks are not freely accepted as in the past and no longer recommended as the general rule in European travel. VISA and MasterCard are the preferred and most widely accepted credit cards in Italy and Europe.



### NEW QUESTION OF THE QUARTER:

DID YOU HAVE A FUNNY HOUSE-HUNTING STORY? OURS WAS A GREAT ADVENTURE IN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS WITH THE LANDLORDS, CAR TROUBLE AND CONFUSING DIRECTIONS TO THE VARIOUS HOUSES. How about you?



## 10 Rules For Eating in Italy Without Scaring the Italians

Acquired from Tours by Roberto (Yes, our very own Roberto!!)

Posted originally by:

Whitney Richelle on *Studentsville Florence Blog*

Italian food culture is probably very different from what you're used to at home. And, since Italians have been perfecting it for over 1,000 years, try going with the wine and olive oil flow instead of fighting against the current when you're in Italy.

### 1. Don't ask for "fettuccine alfredo" or "spaghetti with meatballs"

They don't exist here. Alfredo is an Italian name, and when I asked my Florentine friends if they really had never heard of "fettuccine alfredo," they responded: "Chi?" (Who?) To get pasta with cream sauce, try any one with panna (cream) listed in the ingredients – just know that you'll never find pollo (chicken), on that same list. Explaining the idea of putting chicken in pasta provokes confused looks and expressions like, "Che schifo!" (How disgusting!) Likewise, spaghetti is not served with meatballs. In Naples, you'll find miniature ones on other types of pasta. Everywhere else, pasta al ragù (with meat sauce) is a common first course, and "polpette" (meatballs), are a typical – separate – second course. If you're way ahead of me and already thinking, "I'll just ask for both those things and mix them together," you can certainly do that. But...reread the title of this article first.

### 2. Only drink wine or water with a meal

*Wine and Water Italian Beverages and Drinks*

Water & Wine: The approved beverages for any Italian meal. In America, my mom used to open up the fridge come dinnertime and list every drinkable thing inside: "Ok, we've got ginger ale, milk, coke, lemonade, bacardi breezers...what do you want?"



This would never happen in Italy.

The table is usually set with a bottle of sparkling or still water, and a bottle of wine.

Cocktails and liquors are reserved for: aperitivi (before-dinner drinks) and digestivi (after dinner drinks).

Italians take enjoying the flavor of food very seriously; and you have to

admit, drinking peach ice tea with rosemary lamb chops has to mess with your taste buds. One exception is pizza, to which Coke and beer are acceptable compliments – but a single glass; no refills.

### 3. Don't eat eggs in the morning

The quintessential Italian breakfast is a strong espresso and a sweet pastry. Mix up some scrambled eggs to start your day, and your Italian roommates will watch as if you're building a spaceship on their stovetop. In Italy, eggs are usually eaten hard-boiled on a lunchtime salad or sandwich, or as a frittata (open-faced omelet) for dinner. If you're dying for a salty breakfast, try a ham and cheese toast (you guessed it, a toasted sandwich) at a local bar (in Italy, a café is called a "caffè" or "bar"), or escape to {an American style restaurant, where you can find sausages, omelets and bacon on the menu}.

### 4. Do drink cappuccino in the morning

...with your (non-egg) breakfast, and not as an accompaniment or finish to other meals. A sure-fire way to be immediately labeled "foreign" is ordering up a pizza and a cappuccino. If you want to fit in, wean yourself off frothy milk and get used to black espresso, which Italians drink after eating, all day long

### 5. Know what a "peperoni pizza" is

Duh! Little red meat circles on a pizza! ...Right? In some countries, yes. But in Italy, "peperoni" (one "p") is Italian for the plural of bell pepper. So if it's "pepperoni" (double "p") you want and not strips of red or yellow vegetables, check the menu for "pizza al salamino," "pizza diavola," or "pizza calabrese" – just be prepared for some spiciness.

### 6. Peel your fruits and vegetables

*Peel Fruits and Vegetables in Italy.*

Italians peel most fruits and vegetables. Italians peel fruits and vegetables normally enjoyed with the skin on in other countries: apples, pears, sometimes peaches, carrots, cucumbers, potatoes; and even they don't know exactly why.

I've heard, "It's healthier," "The pesticides will make you sick if you don't," and "It tastes better," but I think it's mostly tradition. And why peelers are sold in Italy, Italians prefer good old-fashioned knives. If you eat unpeeled produce in front of them, they might just take it out of your hand, remove the skin in one perfect spiral, and slice it into uniform wedges with the speed and dexterity of a sushi chef. In fact, one of my most embarrassing moments (and I have a lot to choose from) was trying to peel a pear at the dinner table while my Italian friend's parents watched.



Ten Rules for Eating in Italy (Continued from page 5)

### 7. Don't ask for salad dressing

...reach for the olive oil and vinegar. If you want to be pointed in the direction of the salad dressing aisle at the grocery store, you'll get blank looks (because there isn't one). Some tourist restaurants have "ranch" and "french dressing," which taste like anything but ranch and french dressing. It's best to begin an amateur mixologist career, finding the perfect balance of oil and vinegar for your palette. Sound a little boring? You probably haven't tasted authentic Italian olio e aceto (oil and vinegar); the varieties are endless and the flavors intense. Opt for a cloudy, green oil and pay a little extra for an aged, balsamic vinegar, and you might just write off other (less healthy) dressings for life. The #1 condiment, the #1 salad dressing: Olive Oil

### 8. Use condiments sparingly

Olive oil is the only real Italian condiment. All the rest came from some other place and show up at grocery stores on the same shelf as exotic food. But "exotic" will not be the word Italians use to describe you putting ranch dressing on your pizza, ketchup on your potatoes, and mayonnaise on your sandwich, to their friends. People in Italy like to enjoy the exceptional flavor of what they're eating (which is usually handmade, or picked that day), and not mask it with other toppings. If they're eating chicken, they want to taste chicken, not barbecue sauce. A condiment (read: olive oil) should enhance flavors, never cover them up.



### 9. Take time to enjoy your food

Eating is not a race, and a bowl of cereal in front of late-night TV is not a dinner. It's not uncommon for Italians to spend an hour preparing a meal and even more time savoring every

bite. And when eating out: service is slow, courses are many, and it's highly unlikely that a waiter will ever tell you they "need your table." Block off large chunks of time in your agenda for eating. Italian food is unbelievably good and so worthy of "wasting" a few hours; sitting at a table is so much nicer than running around town with a sandwich in your hand. Relax! You're in Italy! You can mail that letter and drop off your laundry...tomorrow :)

### 10. Wait to eat plain bread with your meal

*Dipping bread in sauce in Italy*

"Fa la scarpetta!" (Do the little shoe!) Italian for: using bread to mop up food

Can't wait to show Italy how Italian you are by sitting down at your first ristorante, pouring some olive oil and vinegar on your plate, sprinkling it with Parmesan cheese and dipping your bread inside? Save it for the Olive Garden, because, like that restaurant, it's actually not Italian at all. Visitors to Florence often complain about the flavor of plain Tuscan bread, as it's made without salt. But that's just because they don't know that in Italy, table bread is more of a utensil than an eat-alone food. It's often used as the main tool to fare la scarpetta (do the little shoe): the action of mopping up any delicious-ness left on your plate after a meal, or whatever your fork can't pick up during one.

\*Interesting fact: Fare la scarpetta (do the little shoe)'s origin came from one of three things:

- 1) An old word similar to "scarpetta" that was used to describe someone who didn't have enough food
- 2) That bread picking up food off a plate is similar to the way the sole of a shoe picks up things off the ground
- 3) That using bread to scrape up food off a plate smashes it into a shape that somewhat resembles a shoe. (I choose to believe #3 because of this video).

Also, our Italian readers (Ciao, belli!) want me to warn you that while the scarpetta is 100% welcome at home, it's arguably not the most polite demonstration at nice restaurants or in front of people you care about impressing.

*NOTE FROM ELAINE: Years ago, on one of our tours in the Tuscany region, Roberto called ahead to have the chef start the fresh pasta for us... to be served as ravioli with truffles. As many people said that day, they "may never eat ravioli again!" As we sat down, Roberto went around all the tables and quietly warned us that we were NOT to dip our bread in olive oil. Perhaps he had "sold" us to the owners of this wonderful country ristorante as "people who knew better and had lived in Italy for extended periods of time, blah, blah, blah." So be warned: that really does upset the order of reality in Italy!!*

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

Did you know...that some European hotels do not provide washcloths? That hotels are 220 volt? That your cell phone may work but...? To receive an International Travel Tips guide, please contact Ben or Lynn and it will be emailed to you.

[bcatalina@satx.rr.com](mailto:bcatalina@satx.rr.com) or  
[lcatalina@satx.rr.com](mailto:lcatalina@satx.rr.com)

## Post-Reunion Cruisers

### Sailing on April 12, round trip Venice, to the Eastern Mediterranean on the MSC Preziosa

Ben & Lynn Catalina	Topper & Carole Long
George & Nancy Beckwith	Sharon Newman
Doris Burnett & Marshall Bishop	Pete Ross
Dale & MaryNell Doan	Dave & Maryellen Scherer
Sally Eaves	Jaime & Belinda Vazquez
Rodger & Betty Gracey	Jose Vazquez
Tom & Elaine Horton	Roger Wills
Dick & Leneile Hudgins	

### Sailing on April 13, Basel, Switzerland to Amsterdam on a Rhine River cruise on the Avalon Felicity

Taylor Bailey & Frieda Baker	Lash & Norma Lasher
Al & Lou Currie	Bill & Emily Povey
Bill & Dee Davis	Joe & Franca Rutter
Joe & Claire Dorris	
Mike Hansen & Linda Kazarian	

## Aviano Reunion 2014 Final Trip List

Zane & Margaret Hoit	Neil Lewis
Tom & Elaine Horton	Roger Wills
Ben & Lynn Catalina	Al & Lou Currie
Mike Hansen &	Tom & Jo Scannell
Linda Kazarian	Lash & Norma Lasher
Bill & Emily Povey	Doris Burnett &
Topper & Carole Long	Marshall Bishop
Bill & Gloria Walker	Ian & Geri McKinnon
Bill & Dee Davis	Jaime & Belinda Vazquez
Rodger & Betty Gracey	Dick & Lee Hudgins
Pete Ross	George Hughes & Gwen Exley
Dale & MaryNell Doan	Taylor Erhart & Frieda Baker
Joe & Claire Dorris	Randy & Peggy Witt
Joe & Franca Rutter	Ken & Kay Fryman
Dave & Maryellen Scherer	Kate Erhart & Dave Fahrner
Sally Ann Eaves	Tom & Carol Futrell
Craig & Mary Adams	Sharon Newman
George & Nancy Beckwith	Jose Vasquez
Tom & Cheryl McIlroy	Bill & Beth Dean

## How children perceive their Grandparents

1. She was in the bathroom, putting on her makeup, under the watchful eyes of her young granddaughter, as she'd done many times before. After she applied her lipstick and started to leave, the little one said, "But Grandma, you forgot to kiss the toilet paper good-bye!" I will probably never put lipstick on again without thinking about kissing the toilet paper good-bye.
2. My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, "80". My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"
3. After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. Finally, she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard the three-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"
4. A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking all this in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"
5. My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo and replied, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.
6. A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know", she replied. "I can't read."
7. I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me and was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"

8. When my grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to avoid attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use Grandpa. Now the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."
9. When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied, "I'm not sure." "Look in your underwear, Grandpa", he advised .. "Mine says I'm 4 to 6."
10. A second grader came home from school and said to her grandmother, "Grandma, guess what? We learned how to make babies today." The grandmother, more than a little surprised, tried to keep her cool. "That's interesting," she said . . . "How do you make babies?" "It's simple", replied the girl. "You just change 'y' to 'i' and add 'es'."
11. Children's Logic: "Give me a sentence about a public servant", said a teacher. The small boy wrote: "The fireman came down the ladder, pregnant." The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. "Don't you know what pregnant means?", she asked. "Sure", replied the young boy confidently. "It means carrying a child."
12. A grandfather was delivering his grandchildren to their home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties. "They use him to keep crowds back", said one child. "No", said another. "He's just for good luck." A third child brought the argument to a close. "You're both wrong . . . They use the dogs", she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrants."
13. A 6-year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and when we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."
14. Grandpa is the smartest man on earth! He teaches me good things, but I don't get to see him enough to get as smart as him!
15. My Grandparents are funny. When they bend over, you hear gas leaks and they blame their dog.

## Piccola Palla Rossa Reunion with John, Bernice and David Palmer

A 50th reunion of sorts occurred this past October 2013 for a resident of Lathrop Township and visitors from Macedonia. The reunion marked the anniversary of an event and its aftermath experienced by John Palmer, Master Sergeant, USAF Retired as well as Verka Jovanovska, and Elena Stojkovska of Skopje, Macedonia.

In October 1963 Macedonia was known as The Republic of Yugoslavia. Then Technical Sergeant John Palmer and many fellow Airmen from Aviano Air Base, Italy were ordered to conduct regular humanitarian aid convoys to Skopje following a massive earthquake there on 26 July 1963, killing over 1,000 people. Some 78 nations offered aid at the time and Sergeant Palmer's efforts known affectionately as the "Piccola Palla Rossa" (Small Red Ball) Express represented some of the aid offered by the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy in Operation HOME RUN. Sadly, President Kennedy would be assassinated on 23 November 1963, but the convoys led by Sergeant Palmer and others like him continued. Indeed on that fateful day Sergeant Palmer and his fellow Airmen were conducting a humanitarian convoy in Yugoslavia.



*TSGT. John H. Palmer Swings his 10 ton trailer hauling field refrigeration units past the shattered railroad station at Skopje, Yugoslavia, whose clock still marks the time of the devastating earthquake last July, to start the last July, to start the last run of the "piccola palla rossa" express. (Official US Air Force photo)*

Sergeant Palmer was ordered to continue the humanitarian effort following a short down period resulting from the U.S. Embassy recalling these Airmen to the sanctuary of a hotel in Zagreb until the details of the assassination could be determined.

Though he never met Verka or Elena during his time in Yugoslavia in 1963, their "reunion" this past October 2013 at the Palmer home was a scene one might expect of long separated family or friends. The two ladies were young women in 1963 and remembered passionately the U.S. aid brought to them in a city eighty percent destroyed. Sergeant Palmer's memories are of being proud to help fellow human beings in need of assistance and always thinking of his young wife and two sons left alone in far away Italy.

The reunion was a result of a friendship of Sergeant Palmer's son David (8 years old in 1963) who is employed as an instructor by the U.S. Air Force at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey. David Enriquez, one of David's fellow instructors is married to Verka Jovanovska's daughter- Biljana. During some discussion at work there was the realization that there was a connection for some Macedonian visitors at the Enriquez home in New Jersey to John Palmer of Hop Bottom. Fifty years later gifts and some tears were exchanged by these heretofore strangers, a testament to the human spirit.

Today Skopje, Macedonia is a vibrant modern city populated by a proud people looking to the future, but never forgetting their past; a future and past that will always have connections to a proud and vibrant Susquehanna County.

*Left to right: John Palmer, Bernice Palmer, Philip Enriquez, David Enriquez, Verka Jovanovska, David Palmer, Elena Stojkovska. Photographer- Biljana Enriquez*

