

CANCELLED



Dear Shipmates,

6/14/20

It is with regret and disappointment that the leadership team of the USS Okanogan Organization has cancelled our 2020 Annual Ship's Reunion in Colorado Springs this September. With new cases of COVID 19 arising each day, spikes in the number of cases in states which seemed to have had the virus under control, and predictions of a resurgence of the pandemic in the future, our team took a hard look at the facts, debated among themselves, and made phone calls to several regular reunion attendees asking their opinion as to what should be done. The ultimate decision was to cancel, and it was a difficult decision, indeed.

The main factor in our decision was the AGE of our membership. We are ALL, unquestionably, "in the zone" that the CDC identifies as the most highly affected by the virus : **"Although COVID 19 could effect any group, the older you get, the higher the risk. 8 of 10 deaths reported in the US have been adults of 65 or older."** That is us, shipmates; and add to this number the fact that many of us have other medical problems that make it harder to fight off infections—Asthma, Diabetes, Kidney Problems, Emphysema, Low white blood cell count, etc. We all remember being BULLET PROOF when we were in our late teens and early 20s, but those days, my friends, are over.

Our committee also considered other factors and asked other questions: 1.) Would we have to wear masks (and would the laughter coming from behind a mask be as loud as it usually is)? 2.) Would "social distancing be a requirement (and, if so, would it be possible to do this on a tour bus)? 3.) Would we rather come to Colorado Springs when some of the venues that MIGHT be open this year will be open FOR SURE next year? 4.) How safe would our travel to and from Colorado Springs be (on an airplane or if it included a stay in a motel while driving)? All of us on the committee and those whom we contacted via telephone agreed that although our annual reunions are among our favorite activities, the "risks" far out weigh the "rewards." (Please feel free to contact any committee member with your complaints, approval, comments and/or suggestions.)

What About Next Year?

According to our by-laws (which you can check out by clicking on "Constitution" on our webpage), "Reunions are to occur yearly between Labor Day and October 15..... according to the following sequence: Midwest (Central Time zone), East Coast (Eastern time), and West Coast (Mountain and Pacific Time)." **This sequence was designed to insure that a reunion would occur at a relatively short travel distance from every member at least once every three years.** Our cancelling of this year's reunion in Colorado Springs (Mountain Time), leaves us with a decision to make pertaining to next year's reunion site. Here are the choices:

1. Keep the Reunion Sequence in tact and reschedule the 2021 Reunion in Colorado Springs with Nashville being the site for 2022 and a 2023 East Coast site to be decided at next year's reunion.
2. Forget about the "West Coast" portion of the sequence this time and hold the 2021 Reunion in Nashville and, while there, select an East Coast site for 2022, and a West Coast for 2023.

Please give these two proposals some thought and let us know what you think is the right thing to do. You can "vote" on these choices by contacting any committee member. Please let us know your thoughts by **August 1, 2020**. The committee will then up-date you on everything in our next newsletter in late August. Whichever choice we make, **A Complete Reunion** will continue to be our Reunion Planner. We cannot say enough about how wonderful, efficient, understanding, and professional these planners are and what a pleasure it is to work with them. We look forward to hearing from you by August 1, and we can hardly wait to see you at the 2021 USS Okanogan Organization Reunion, which we promise will be the biggest and best reunion ever.

Sincerely,

Dave Meierhoff (1483 Road 180 Emporia KS 66801 (620) 340-7406 damcsm@gmail.com)
Bill Greer (3685 Peachtree Road NorthEast#4 Atlanta, GA 30319 (404) 216-4288 martyandbilly@gmail.com)
Dick Palazzolo (29752 Tracey's Way Easton, MD 21601 (410) 924-2526 dpalaz@gmail.com)
Colin Carney (223 Grant St. Geneva, OH 44041 (440) 487-1559 220gmg@roadrunner.com)
Richard Keel (40 Jeffery Way Fort Smith, AR 72903 (479) 462-8813 rj1mj@yahoo.com)
Tom Schaefer (2501 Wycliffe Road Baltimore, MD 21234 (410) 661-7815 schae2k@comcast.net)