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Greetings, Helpmates,

Well, the day is almost at hand when we will meet in our annual reunion. I have high hopes that more of us will gather than expected, but some of our buddies have genuine problems, of a health-connected nature, which absolutely precludes their attendance. Others have made unalterable plans, which also prevents their coming. To those who do make the effort, and make the reunion, my heartfelt thanks for your support.

I received a letter from Les Lenker the first part of the month with news that his wife, Alzene, has suffered a medical oddity without doing a thing to produce it. He tells me that she had decreased height by about 3 inches, or so according to her doctors measuring device. She had no bones broken (by x-ray), did suffer a considerable amount of pain, and became unable to walk any distance comfortably. I suspect that she had several of the vertebral discs degenerate, and thus produce this phenomena. She is improving, pain wise, but still is a bit shorter than before.

Les tells me that he received his Normandy Invasion medal from his local congressman, and all of our group is entitled to this decoration. This is the medal I referred to earlier when I had heard from John Wasilewski, and put the info in the newsletter. More on this as more becomes available.

Les added some kitty fodder, and this is much appreciated. Thanks for the letter, and for the donation.

Bud and Jean DeFeo have a conflicting trip to Italy, just about at reunion time, and they are going there instead of Branson. Bud sends me lots of stuff by E-mail, and I hear from him regularly by this means. Thanks for the message, Bud. Later.

I have been unable to find out just who is go-

ing to be in Branson. The person with whom I made the commitment has left the hotel, and I am trying to re-establish this connection so that I can relay to you those who will be coming. I know that several of the Chicago group will be coming down by bus, but will not be staying at the Howard Johnson's Hotel, but will be visiting us frequently. That group will include Jerri Polson, Clair Schneider and guest, among others. Clair did not know exactly whom to expect, and when I last talked to him (on the 24th) he still did not know for sure. He is looking forward to meeting with us, and knows that he will enjoy the trip.

I got a nice note from Eunice Tibbott who had read in the paper of the award sent to Les, and mentioned above. Les' niece had put a small article in the local paper about the medal, and she included it in her note. Most of the substance of the article is common knowledge to all of us, and Eunice hoped that it would be of some use to those in the Bn. who may want to secure the medal for themselves.

She also included a check for Miss Kitty, and a calendar reminding everyone that Penn. State Football is in the near future. I will place the article she sent later in this issue.

Received one bulletin back as returned mail. Edna Forcade is not in her home, and has been listed "temporarily away". I will send the next bulletin and hope that she has returned. Later received the address change on Iris Crone, who now resides:

1802 LAGUNA AVE

SCHOFIELD, WI. 54476-3933

I would appreciate your new phone #, Iris. Best wishes on your move.

I received a call from George Ralcewich recently. He has been around the country in the last few months, and visited relatives on the

west coast. He and Dorothy are doing well, and will be seeing us at the reunion. He is going to reach the Crismonds and see how they plan going to the reunion, or if they will be able to make it this year. They are fine, medically, and hope to remain thusly.

Clair Schneider called me the other day with news of a disbursement from the GI Insurance people to holders of their policies. I had not heard about this, so we broke off, and he was going to track down the facts, and have it published in the newsletter. Well, on his return call he had found out that this rumor was a hoax, and the refund was in fact the usual dividend made to the current owners of active policies. I had gotten the same report on my call to the local office here, and they assured me that this was a hoax, and had no truth in fact.

Clair will be joined by Jerri Polson and several others on the bus tour from the Chicago area to Branson. They will be in Branson on the 2nd day of the reunion, and will be staying in a different hotel, but they will be over to see us for sure. He believes that others in the group will also come by bus, hopefully to stay with us at Howard Johnson's.

Not much else from Clair. He just returned from a trip to the Atlantic seaboard, with a long visit with his son's family under his belt.

Clara Dammarell wrote that Robert died 3/16/99 after a 2 week hospitalization. Bob had had many tests, and died of Cardiac Myoatrophy and kidney failure. I sent Clara our regrets, and sent the usual memorial, and invited her to keep in touch with us. Clara's new address is:

1708 Tower St.

Chesterton, In 46304-9425

I have invited her to remain on our rolls as Bob's representative, until notified otherwise.

I received a letter from Cliff Cosler with news that both he and Pete Sawicki have had much trouble with their backs, and they will not be able to join us at Branson. He tells me that he has been in touch with Stenberg's and that they will be coming to the reunion via the Greyhound bus service. Good news. Take care of the medical problems, and plan for next year. Hi to Pete Sawicki and Rose.

John Wasilewski sent an E-mail and tells me that he will attend the reunion, and will bring his mother and her sister with them. They have relatives in the nearby area, so they will visit with them, as well as join us in our reunion. I was glad to hear from John, as his busy schedule keeps him from corresponding too much. We will get together at the reunion to see if we can plan another sheet or two of photos of his dad's collection. See you there, John.

Virgil Pugh sends his deep regrets at being unable to attend the reunion. He has contacted one of the pneumoconiosis ailments (asbestos or coal mediated), and will be on oxygen at the least activity. I was sorry to hear that Virgil is in the grips of this ailment, but I am sure that he will do well, and be careful. The last visit was much enjoyed by both John Wasilewski and myself.

Harv Smith sent a letter with a kitty donation and news that he has been thinking of moving to Oregon state. He looked at a location in McMinville, (about 1.5 hours from his daughter and family), and he suspects that they may move there in a year or so. The location is near Salem (Pat Maier's home), and he would visit that Helpmate, and be in close touch with his daughter's family.

He and Ann spent some time at Fenwick Island, Delaware visiting with Herb. Food was good, weather nice, and the company was the best. He will not be able to make the reunion in Branson, but wishes me to convey the best wishes to all the group.

Thanks for the news, Harvey. Best wished on your planned move.

Received a short note from Donald and Zema Rigney with news that they will not be at the reunion. They have a conflicting cruise in the works, and the two occur on the same dates. He wishes me to tell everyone "hi", and they will try to make the next one.

Donald sends some fodder for Miss Kitty, and this is much appreciated.

Speaking of the kitty, it looks as if I will get back the deposit which was made to the hotel. I had to put up \$500, which murdered the kitty, to make sure the group showed up for the reunion. Well, hey had a new person on the staff, and he hit me for the worst scenario view, and

it took all of the kitty's resources, and some more. So I think we can breathe easier. The cash in the kitty is now nearly \$340, and this will last us all this year, unless the copier gets a twist in it's tail.

I think I have this year's birthdays up to July, so I will put in several months more in this place. It is hard to remember these minor points as the numbers get higher. Wonder why???

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

01	LEVITON, LEONARD	84
01	RIGNEY, DONALD	76
16	STENSBERG, JERRY	82
22	BRENNAN, JERRY	82

### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

04	ROSEN, ROBERT	74
05	CARNEY, JAMES	74
08	MOLNAR, JOSEPH	87
09	DEARBORN, HOWARD	81
23	RAFELD, "JEEP"	78
25	PREPELKA, FRANK	80
31	MAIER, PATRICK	77

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

15	PLOTKIN, ABE	86
21	THURMAN, JAMES	76
30	KIESSLING, HENRY	77

### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

11	BENNETT, GLENN	79
25	PRINCE, HARRY	76
26	CODY, CHARLES	77
29	DONALDSON, MEL	79
30	COSLER, CLIFF	78

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

09	SCOVILL, ALBERT	84
12	SANDERS, H. L.	91

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

08	PUGH, VIRGIL	81
13	SHICK, WILLIAM	81
20	ZIMMER, CHARLES	77
23	SWEETGALL, MOSES	86

Happy birthdays to all, and the best of health for the future.

I can't forget them any more this year, can I? Our list is getting shorter. I am sending this bulletin to over 70 widows. Nearly 50% of our membership have gone on to their rewards.

Just talked to Ray Crismond, and Marge has had more hospital work. She had some cardiac catheterization exams, and had a complication from the tests, and is now recovering from the same type clot problem which I had in January. She is getting around somewhat better at this time, but is in no condition to make the trip to Branson. She is on new medication, has been ordered to decrease her activity, and is at this time being a good patient. That shoots down another of our regulars. But she was in a cheerful mood, and I am sure that she will do fine. Ray does well, does not even consider coming to Branson without his better half. I am in full agreement, Ray.

I called Jeep Rafeld, as Ray told me that he was looking for info about flying to the reunion, but I got no answer. May try later. I was going to see whether or not I would be able to get him from St. Louis to Branson, but it is getting too late to make plans of that sort.

In the mail today I received a kitty donation from our Atlantic City Helpmate, Leonard Leviton, and many thanks, Leonard. We need to get you to another reunion, maybe you could get a band going.

And Bob Rosen also sent a letter, with a some kitty litter, also. Bob hesitates going to Branson by himself in a rented car. Understand, Bob, I would also not like that risk. He will use that time for Caribbean entertainment, and will tennis and kayak his bones to his heart's content. By the way, Bob, Branson is nearly 250 miles from St. Louis.

Sumiko has been feeling well recently, and is going to spend some time at home until her next trip to Japan. She went in April, with their daughter and friend, and will try to go again later this year.

It was good hearing from you, Bob. I will tell Lage that he will have to find another bar buddy this trip.

That's it for this trip. See some of you at the reunion. Stay healthy, and take care of those health problems  
Azever, JBS

sent me regarding the medal which Les Lenker received via congressman. Give us more details, Les. John Wasilewski referred to this, I believe, several issues ago, but did not know if it were automatic, or if any expense is involved. I will place any info you give me in the next newsletter. Thanks. (JBS)

I am not placing a registration form in this issue because one has been earlier placed in the bulletin. The phone number of the Howard Johnson Hotel in Branson is: (417)336-5151.



The rate for the rooms is \$49.99, plus the inevitable tax charge.

The address of the hotel is:  
3027 A West Highway 76  
Branson, Mo 65616

I hope there are a few late deciders. I have had many of the regulars cancel because of various reasons.

I just had the last bulletin sent to Jack Carr sent back, marked "addressee deceased". Another one of our members gone. I had thought that he had expired earlier, and when I looked it up, couldn't find it, so I assumed that I was in error. In any event, another of our comrades are gone, and those of us left must safeguard the memories our group developed. If anyone is in touch with the Carr family, I would appreciate knowing details of his death. He was one of the Illinois veterans.

I am anxious to get the reunion started. I am going to expect a small turnout, but should be a good active reunion. There are lots of places to go, lots to do, and all in a small area. I have already made some early plans to do the research on our next reunion, and I hope it is one big one. The millennium reunion should be special, so more planning will be needed for that time.

I am trying to get this issue out before the reunion, so I will take it down to the Lake of the Ozarks, where all of the family is getting together for the Labor Day holiday. I will get them to help me put it together, and that will save me about 5 hours of my worthless time, and will give them a chance to help Grampa.

BELLEFONTE — Lester Lenker of Bellefonte is one happy man.

Fifty-five years after the fact, the World War II veteran finally has his D-Day medal.

The Liberation of France Invasion Medal arrived recently at Lenker's Zion Road home, sent courtesy of U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum.

On Saturday, the retired West Penn lineman said he has both Santorum and Centre County Veterans' Affairs director Stan Adams to thank for getting the medal to him.

"My outfit didn't go in right on D-Day, so I didn't know I was even entitled to it until recently," said Lenker, now 74. "But I'm really glad to have it."

Lenker, then a 19-year-old Army private, and his outfit, the 284th Field Artillery, landed on Utah Beach Aug. 16, 1944 — more than two months after the initial June 6th invasion. But once there, they spent 260 days in continuous combat, battling their way to the German/Austrian border.

"The 284th gave infantry support," said Lenker, who remains in touch with his old unit by attending reunions. "According to the records, we shot 98,500 rounds at the enemy."

To Lenker's knowledge, he is the 284th's last remaining Centre County member.

"Tom Dubbs of Bush Hollow and James F. Kessinger of State College were both in my outfit, but they've both passed away," Lenker said. "I don't know of any others."

That's it for this trip. See some of you at the reunion. Stay healthy, and take care of those health problems.

Azever,

JBS

## SEPTEMBER 1999

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	XX	XX	XX	XX	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

It wasn't so long ago that highway 76 was the best route to get from one end of Branson to the other. Sometimes that meant "smooth sailing," and sometimes that meant "traffic jam." Today, however, a web of new roads are in place (and more to come) to help keep a steady flow. Yes, you can still find a traffic jam from time to time, but these new and expanded roads help you get to your destination much faster—and they really work.

One thing we suggest you do before you leave home is turn to look at our map. Roads are marked and theaters are noted. A little familiarity with the location of your destinations, i.e. your hotel and the shows you plan to see, could save you hours during your stay.

Now, let's go ahead and take a look at the general traffic picture. We'll clue you in to the **Time-Saver Routes** and pass on **Time-Saver Tips**.

Even with the addition of alternate routes, Branson's main drag, highway 76 (a.k.a. Country Music Boulevard, the Musical Mile and the Strip), is still the area's most heavily traveled stretch of highway. It can accommodate about 29,000 cars a day.

The reason the Strip is so popular is because it's the 5-mile section of road running east and west where the entertainment began. And it's still "where to go" to see loads of entertainment, restaurants, hotels, attractions, shops and shopping centers.

This famous section of road is definitely an "attraction" you'll want to include in your plans; however, you need to pick the time for this adventure and learn what you can do when "cruising the Strip" turns into "crawling the Strip." The answer? You guessed it, alternate routes and access roads.

## Time-Saver Routes

These routes bypass highway 76 on the north and south and are marked on our map. The color-coded routes are called the **Blue Route**, **Yellow Route**, and **Red Route**. You'll see signs on the side of the road that correspond to these colors. In addition to the signs, new Blue, Yellow, and Red color blocks are painted directly on the road to help you as you go.

The Blue Route is still the one our staff uses most often. This route consists of **Roark Valley Road** going west, running mostly parallel to the Strip on the north side. Roark Valley becomes **Gretna Road** and finally intersects with the Strip again at **highway 165**. The key is to know the location of your final destination and use one of the many connecting roads leading back to highway 76.

You can use the **Yellow Route** and the **Red Route** the same as the **Blue Route**. The **Yellow Route** bypasses the Strip on the south side, and the **Red Route** bypasses it on the upper north. We use these often, too; it just depends on where we're going. These roads are where you'll find new outlet malls, theaters, hotels and restaurants.

## New Time-Saver Tips

At the point where **Gretna Road** and **Roark Valley Road** intersect (part of the **Blue Route**), you can now continue on **Gretna Road** to the northeast and connect with **highway 248** (the **Red Route**).

The new five-lane section of **Shepherd of the Hills Expressway** is complete. It runs east from highway 76 (at the Country Tonite Theatre) for 5 1/2 miles to the junction of highways 65 & 248 (the **Red Route**).

And **Green Mountain Dr.** (the **Yellow Route**) now connects **highways 165 and 376**, providing another east-west thoroughfare. It's a three-lane road with access to the back parking lots of several theaters. This route helps you avoid the most crowded, slow-going part of highway 76.

**The bottom line:** New and improved alternate routes and access roads are your alternatives to "crawling the Strip." Keep one eye on the road, one eye on the map (pages 32-33), and use the **Blue**, **Yellow**, and **Red Routes** to maneuver around the city.

## Driving into Branson

One of the most common ways to enter town is to come in on highway 65 and take highway 76 west. If you hit the 30-minute-to-an-hour timeframe before shows begin or after they end (in the afternoon most shows begin at 2 or 3 and last about 2 hours; in the evening most begin at 7 or 8, again about 2 hours), you might get tied up in the traffic. You can use this time to go sightseeing on the

Strip, or you can try one of these suggestions:

We, unofficially, call these our "back door" routes. We like them a lot for three reasons. One, you see much more of the beautiful Ozarks scenery. Two, these routes give you the "big picture" of the whole area by getting you to try new roads. And three, you can save time by avoiding the congestion of highway 76 (similar to using the "official" **Blue**, **Yellow**, and **Red Routes**).

door" suggestion is to continue past highway 76 to the south and take **highway 165** west. You'll end up on the western end of the Strip, and along the way you'll have avoided some traffic, taken in a great view of the Ozarks, and passed by **Table Rock Dam and Visitors Center**, the **Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery**, and the new **Branson USA Amusement Park** (go ahead and stop in, if you have the time).

Our second "back door" suggestion is to drive into Branson via **highway 13** on the far western end of town, Branson West, and turn onto highway 76 going east. This route will take you on some curves and hills, by **Silver Dollar City**, **Indian Point**, **Shepherd of the Hills** and finally straight into town on the Strip. Tip: Going straight into town is often congested. Look for the traffic congestion light on the side of the road just before reaching **highway 265**. If it's flashing, you may want to exit onto highway 265 and take it, a more scenic route, back to a point on highway 76.

**The bottom line:** Take the 65-165-76 route or the 13-76-265-76 route for a relaxing drive around the Ozarks. The change in scenery is a delight.

## Flying into Branson

The only way to fly directly into Branson is to arrive by charter or private craft and land at the **M. Graham Clark Airport**. It's located one mile south of town on highway 65 at the College of the Ozarks. Call 888-458-9696 for information on the airport and car or cab services.

For commercial flights, your closest option is the **Springfield-Branson Regional Airport** (417-869-0300) located 43 miles north of Branson in Springfield. With over 70 daily arrivals and departures, non-stop service is available by TWA and TWE to St. Louis, USAirways Express to Kansas City, American Eagle to Dallas, Northwest Airlin to Memphis, and United Express to both Chicago and Denver. The airport is also served by 8 car rental agencies as well as a variety of taxi, limousine and shuttle services.

**Big Sky Airlines** (800-237-7788) has flights from St. Louis and Dallas/Ft. Worth into the **Boone County Airport** in Harrison, Arkansas (501-741-6954). About a 45-minute ride to Branson, the airport has taxi, courtesy car, and rental cars available.

## When to go to Branson

There are five "seasons" of entertainment in Branson. **Hot Winter Fun** covers January through March. Each year more and more shows, restaurants, hotels and attractions stay open during the winter months. It's the town's newest season, designed to make Branson a year-round vacation destination. **Branson Country Spring** is March through May. It's a great time for outdoor-lovers. **Branson Summer Holiday**, Memorial Day through Labor Day, is the perfect time for fun in the water. **The Autumn Celebration** in September and October is popular for the seasonal feel and fall forest coloration. And finally, **Ozark Mountain Christmas** in November and December is favored by many for sparkling Christmas shows and the millions of lights and holiday decorations around the town.

Pick your favorite season (or two) and come see us!

## What to take

Dress for the season—our weather is typical of the Midwest. It's also a good idea to check the regional weather map a few days before your visit.

The dress code is casual—everywhere. You're welcome in every show, restaurant and business wearing casual, comfortable clothing. You can dress up if you like, but it's not necessary.

Here are some necessary items we can think of: comfortable walking shoes, a jacket or sweater in case of cool evenings, and an umbrella in case of a surprise shower. We're famous for quick weather changes, so be prepared for anything. Also, if you forget something, clothing of all kinds is available in Branson.

What else should you take? We suggest you take your camera, lots of film and binoculars. Most shows allow you to take photos during performances, and many stars will pose with you at intermission or after the show. Binoculars may not be necessary, but could afford a close-up view in case you don't get the coveted front row seat.

We also suggest you take this magazine with you. You'll find it helpful because you'll always have a map with you. You'll also be able to plan what shows you're going to see, what you're going to do between shows, approximately how much money you'll need, where to stay, and much more.

Now—pack your bags and get yourself to Branson.

Address Correction Requested

Dated Material, Request Prompt Delivery

JOHN A. WASILEWSKI  
7534 W. POTTAWATOMI DR.  
PALOS HEIGHTS IL 60463-2028

SEPT. 14-17

Branson, Mo.

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