

ELAINE WEISMANTIL

Don C. Thomson

Dear Don,

What a very pleasant surprise to hear from you! I know full well what it's like to have to speak in front of a large group, having run and "MC'd" three of my own high school class reunions! No apology is needed.....!

I am hoping that I can get to go to San Diego, but, since I don't have the cost figures yet, I don't know, even though I would love to be there.... and, since I've never been to California in all my 53years (promise not to tell!) if I'm to spend the money to go out there I would like to be able to have the time to see some of California. Unfortunately, my working for a school system and having only two "personal" days left for this school year which ends on June 21st, I would have to get back to New Jersey to fulfill the commitment according to my contract.

I have been extremely busy since I last saw you at the Pensacola reunion. My dad's condition began deteriorating (I had lost my mother in Nov. '88) and after being married to each other for over 53 years, he was completely lost without her.....he would cry for her and for Ed. He had cirrhosis of the liver and in the last few months of his life went into kidney and liver failure. He would stand, at times, paralyzed by the imbalance in his blood chemistry, he fell many times both with and without serious injuries, but he had no strength to get up when he would fall. He passed away peacefully in the hospital on September 29, 1990. I had him buried next to my mom, with Ed on her left & Dad on her right, she was between the two men she loved most in this world.

Then came the massive project of cleaning out the house where we grew up...since Ed was 6 years old, and I was 12. Ed's room was left intact....the way he left it when he went to Viet Nam....except for the removal of his clothes, although there were two dress uniforms still hanging in his closet. (What does one do with things like this?) His "covers" were in a box in the attic along with along with flight manuals from various training fields, old love letters from his high school sweetheart....his box of returned personal effects...etc.

It took me months, along with my husband's and childrens help to clean the house out from the second floor (2 rooms), Every room on the first floor ....five in all, and the basement! My father was a great advocate of recycling.. his philosophy was that if he couldn't recycle it then he saved it. There were boxes full of papers, cancelled checks...back to the 40's..and it seemed that there were numerous boxes to go along with all the succeeding years. The trash we threw out....the Beam Bourbon Collector bottles are still sitting there (35+) ..all the brewery memorabilia was sold...old appliances and furniture sorted & discarded....Oriental rugs sold....Dust Vacuumed...Clothes from the 50's ..out! The better furniture from upstairs was portioned out to any of my kids who could put the pieces to good use....and the rest discarded...Dishes and crystal packed and brought to my house for my use, etc.

So, as you can see....it's been rather hectic! Now, I am anticipating the arrival of a second grandchild in late March or early April. My daughter, Barbara and her husband Anthony will be moving into Dad's house, which is now mine...and are just about finished redecorating. We expect new carpeting to be installed next week, and then they'll move in and await the arrival of their baby.....So, you see.... Life goes on (slightly altered) ....New life will be in the house that holds so many wonderfully happy memories for me....and I think that Ed, Mom and Dad would approve.

I am hoping that things will work out so that I can get to San Diego in June as I look forward to seeing you and I will remember you and all those always..in my prayers.....

I didn't think I would get so long-winded in replying to your letter, so I guess it's time to close....with hopes of seeing you in San Diego, and not on active duty.. with prayers for peace in the Persian Gulf ....and our world!.....with best wishes for good health and everything that's good in life.....God knows we've had enough of the bad times.

Most sincerely,

*Clare Keenmontel.*

A Seawolf Sister

February 13, 1991

*SENT REPLY ON MARCH 9TH, 1991*

*ENCLOSED A PHOTO OF COLBY AND OFFERED TO  
FIND OUT INFO. ABOUT HER BROTHER ED'S FINAL MISSION  
FROM THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE FIRE TEAM. ALSO  
TOLD HER ABOUT VIDEOS THAT ARE AVAILABLE, & PATCHES  
& CUPS ETC. TALKED ABOUT HER FATHER & FACING INTO  
MOVING MY FATHER FROM HIS HOUSE. ENCOURAGED HER TO  
TRY TO MAKE IT TO THE REUNION*