

June 2011-May 2012
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Estrella Warbird Museum

The EAGLE

VOL

XXIII-06

Honoring the Past—Inspiring the Future

NEWSLETTER Vol. 17, Number 6, Paso Robles, California

June 2012

The Prez Sez...

By Estrella Warbird President
 Rob Kinnear



The May Dinner meeting was a first for the museum. Bob Chute lead Dick Woodland, Dan Verstuyft, Darrell Drum and Mike Van Blargen through a discussion of the local area car racing history from the 1940's through 1960's. This is the first time we had a presentation of a non-military nature. But given the racecar display and the forth coming Warbirds Wings and Wheels show; we felt it was very appropriate. Everyone at this well attended dinner enjoyed the stories of the race-tracks and their experiences. We hope to have more racecar speakers in the future. The dinner was tinged with a little sadness. One of our speakers, Kenny Van Blargen, passed away the weekend before the meeting. His son, Mike, graciously stepped in and told us his childhood memories of that period and stories his father had told him. Kenny will be missed. Of course, Larry Eastwood and his crew again served up a delicious enchilada meal.

Betty Miller resigned as Curator in May due to her need to spend more time at home with her husband, Chuck. Betty has done an incredible job of assembling our displays in Freedom Hall, besides being a past president and all of the thousands of hours she has spent on other projects. John Gramentine is stepping into the Curators position. He was the Assistant Curator and is well qualified to continue Betty's work.

May 19th was the Warbirds Wings and Wheels IV car show. It was a lot of hard work, but an incredible amount of fun. I want to thank the planning team headed up by Carol and Dan Verstuyft, with Dick and Claudia Woodland, Howard Love, Jim Stainbrook, and Toni Moore. I also want to thank the Museum staff and all of the volunteers who worked at the event. This could not have happened without you. I wish we had room to name the dozens of people who made this happen.

Thank you to all of the people who have contributed to the Hind Pavilion Building Fund. Money is coming in and it is allowing us to move forward with the project. Again, any amount you can give helps us complete the building. If you did not get a letter and would like to donate, please call us at (805) 227-0440 and leave a message.

In other building news, Dick Woodland is contributing all of the money for the addition housing his racecar display. Construction will commence soon.

The primary painting of the T-34B is complete. Insignia and labels are going on and we should be mounting the wings to the fuselage and re-installing the engine this month.

If you did not see the press releases, the F-16B is here. The restoration crew is piecing this well labeled puzzle together, and hope to have it complete by the time this newsletter gets to you.

(continued on Page 3)

**Wednesday
June 6, 2012
MENU**



**BBQ Pork
Baked Beans
Seasonal Salad
Larry's Dessert
Ice Tea & Coffee**

**\$17.00 pp
(Includes Tax & Gratuity)**

Reservations Please

By Monday June 4 th

**805-227-0440 press *2 when
asked & follow instructions**

or

Use Our Website Link :



www.ewarbirds.org/dinnersvp.html

Social Hour 6:00 PM

Dinner 7:00PM



JUNE PROGRAM

Harald P. Bauer

Harald Bauer, 84, was born in Berlin, Germany with German-Irish-American heritage. His father, a German surgeon, married Lottka Hughes, who was born in New Rochelle, NY, the daughter of an American diplomat who had served in Germany.

After his father's death in 1941, as an infantry officer on the Russian front, he attended a military academy in Potsdam. At age 15 cadets were assigned to anti-aircraft batteries outside Berlin and later Stettin on the Baltic.

At age 16 he entered training to become a Luftwaffe pilot following years of flying gliders. In the waning days of WWII, he was transferred to the Heinkel Aircraft works, flight-testing newly produced He-162 Volksjager jets. On a transfer flight, he was shot down by an American P-51 Mustang fighter, at age 17, and ended the war in an American military field hospital.

After the war, he studied at the Universities of Munich and Hamburg, and was hired by the German newspaper, DIE WELT. As a young editor, he won a coveted Fulbright Fellowship to study at the University of Kentucky.

Before returning to Germany, he was hired by the Associated Press and assigned to its German bureau in Frankfurt. After being recalled to New York he was assigned to AP's world services desk.

During the Korean War (not getting an assignment as a war correspondent) he entered military service and after basic training was accepted in the Navy's E-8 program. He finished military service flying long-range reconnaissance out of Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

He returned to AP and later joined United Press International, serving in US and foreign assignments, eventually advancing to Vice-President—News.

In a career change, he joined Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC) as Executive Vice President. At age 80, he was elected director for life at MPLC.

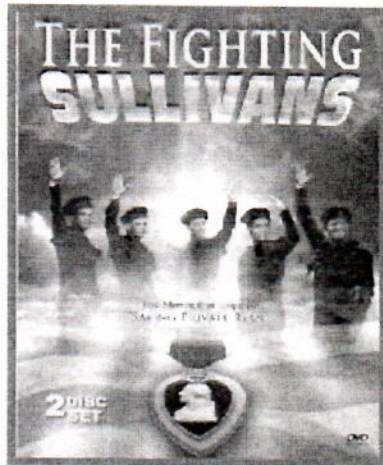
Hal, and his wife, Margi, have been very active members of the Museum. Both have been docents for many years and Margi is presently the Treasurer on the Board of Directors.

THE PREZ SEZ.....(Continued from Page 1)

At the May Dinner meeting we announced we are planning to do our first air show at the Museum on September 29th this year. This is a joint venture with the Chino Planes of Fame. They will be providing the aircraft and perform the show. We will do all of the ground support and advertising. This is our first air show in 11 years, and we can make it spectacular.

One last "Thank You" to all you who have joined the Museum or volunteered your time during the two years of my presidency. Again, come out and have some fun with us, we have an air show to put on.

Rob



Movie Nite !

Wednesday, June 13th

6:00pm - Pizza & Popcorn

6:30pm - Movie Time

THE FIGHTING SULLIVANS

STARRING: Ann Baxter, Selena Royle, Ward Bond - DIRECTED BY: LLOYD BACON

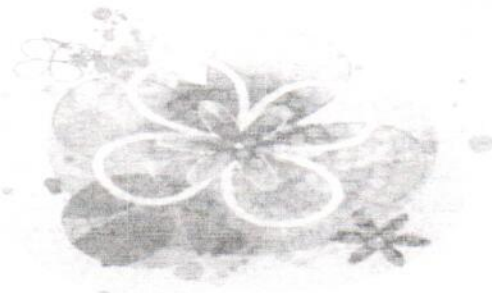
Patriotic drama from true story of five brothers growing up in Iowa during the days of the Great Depression and of World War II. Their devotion to our country led to their deaths in action in the Pacific Theater. It is a well-acted, sad but great story which reminds us of why the United States is great!



★ ★ ★ Maltin (1944 - 111 min.)

ILLNESS AND CONCERN:

Shirley Blomquist's husband is asking for your prayers for Shirley. She underwent a 2nd brain surgery and had a pacemaker installed. There have been complications. Your prayers would be greatly appreciated.



EDITOR'S NOTE: The rest of this newsletter will be dedicated to the memory of Kenny Van Blargen. Following is the complete eulogy given by Dick Woodland.

Like all of you, I've come here today to say goodbye to Kenny. I was asked by family members if I would give a eulogy. I said that while I was honored to be asked, I would probably be too emotional and would prefer to have my words read by another. I have asked a mutual friend, Paul Luiz, to read what I have prepared.



Kenneth Leroy Van Blargen was born on 6/24/1931 to Calvin and Elizabeth Van Blargen in Santa Maria, CA. This was in the midst of the Great Depression which had started in late 1929. His early years were migratory as his father, a carpenter by trade, moved wherever he felt he might find enough work to support his family of 4. (Kenny had an older sister named Francis)

After numerous moves around the state, Kenny's father heard of work at a place called Camp Roberts which was just outside of Paso Robles. They moved here in 1939 and this area became Kenny's home.

I know that he joined the navy when he was 17, which was prior to graduating high school. It was after his return from the navy that I first heard of him. I was only 6 or 7 when I first heard his name. Needless to say, it was probably in 1949, at the hard-top races, which were then held at the Paso Robles Fairgrounds horse track/rodeo grounds. My father owned hard-tops that raced there so my brother and I grew up sitting in the grandstands every Tuesday night, (I believe it was Tuesday) watching our heroes race around in circles. Kenny, at 19 years of age, was one of them.

I grew up idolizing Kenny. To me, he was a racer! He was special! I said goodbye to him the other day. He was still a racer! He was special! In addition, over the years, he had also become Kenny the family man and proud father, as well as, Kenny, my long time close friend.

During the 60 plus years between my first hearing his name and his passing on April 29th, there were probably several other Kenny's. There was also Kenny, the truck driver, who worked mostly in heavy construction the majority of his working life. There was his connection and friendships made through his and his families church. There were his friendships, he had made throughout the racing community and there were the many friendships he had made in the area.

Of course, early on, I thought of him as being all about racing and enjoying life. He was cool and he did some really cool things. Some so cool we won't go into them here. Not too long after that, he met the true love of his life, Miss Susan Esther Winn, who soon became known as Sue Van Blargen or even "Sweet Sue" to those of us who had the privilege of knowing her. Soon, their family grew as they had 2 daughters and 2 sons, Terry, Tracy, Nancy and Marty in that order. They wanted to instill the importance of having an education, so Kenny returned to night school where he obtained a GED and high school diploma.

It was easy to see that his Sue and his family were most important in his life. They truly came in first for the rest of his life. Sometimes, however, being second or third isn't all that bad. His racing probably came in second or possibly third and would forever be his passion. The fact is, he was damn good at that too. Kenny continued his racing and Sue continued to try to keep him under control and their family going in all the right directions, while never asking him to sacrifice his passion, or other love. Sue was very successful in fulfilling her part of the bargain but, unfortunately, he lost the love of his life in 2004.

Kenny had the talent and could have easily moved up in professional racing but it would have meant being on the road and away from the family for extended periods of time. So, even though driving racecars was his passion, as I said, his family came first. To him, that meant he should stay home, hold down a good steady job and race locally. He never once felt that he had sacrificed or passed on opportunities. He always felt that he had the best of both worlds. He was able to stay home and watch his family grow, he could hold down steady local employment which enabled him to comfortably provide for his family, plus, he could still fulfill his passion of driving race cars.

Regressing a bit, as I became old enough to get involved with racing, Kenny and I really became close. I was directly involved in the sport for over 50 years and during that time, I had raced against him, had other drivers drive my cars against him, had Kenny drive my cars, loaned and swapped cars, parts, etc. After his retirement, he helped me out by driving my tractor trailer stock car hauler all over the country when we had our Stock Car team headquartered in North Carolina. During those 60+ years I knew him, I don't think we ever had a cross word.

Also, during those years, we shared our good times and our fun times. We also shared in our down times, our personal losses and our times of crisis. Whatever the issue or problem was, good, bad or indifferent, we were always able to share.

I never really understood quite how strong he was or how much determination he had until after his accident at Havasu City in March of 2011. Most of the specialists thought he would be bed ridden and totally dependent on others for the rest of his life. Kenny wasn't buying into that theory. His goal was to progress as far as possible so he could get back to his home in Paso Robles. He did get back home last October. Not only that, even though he had lost the use of his legs, he was able to get out and about in his motorized wheel chair. With the aid of a special van, he was able to go places, participate in different functions and even oversee the restoration of his beloved race car with weekly visits to the shop. (The day before his downturn, Marty brought him out to see the finished product. He was really excited about it and it brought a bit of a tear to his eyes. And then, Kenny being Kenny, looked at it for a moment and turned and said, "You know, in the early days the lettering on the Firestone racing tires was white.") OK, you got us again. They are now painted white.

Most importantly, getting back home meant he was able to spend quality time with family and friends. Don't misunderstand me, he didn't accomplish this entirely by himself. He did it with the total and relentless care and support of his family.

I think that everyone who saw him, after he had returned home, came away somewhat amazed at this attitude. I never once heard him complain or feel sorry for himself nor was he upset with racing or life in general. His glass was always half full, never half empty. He was Kenny. He accepted what had happened to him, his physical situation, as just part of life. I'll never forget that he told me how glad he was that something like that hadn't happened when he was 25 or 28 years old and he had a family to raise.

In closing, there are a couple things I wish to bring up from a personal standpoint. The first is that I will always miss Kenny's "Howdy Mister" or "Howdy Bub". The other is that many people, from the doctors on down, have asked me, and some of Kenny's children, "How could you let him get in a race car at his age?" The answer is simple. "How could you keep him out of it?"

Think about it, here was a man who had a great marriage, raised a wonderful family, had a long, very full and exciting life, plus he was able to follow his passion of driving race cars in 8 different decades. What a wonderful life.

To the Van Blargen children, I was around your father enough to know how difficult it was for him to verbalize his feeling and emotions. I hope all of you truly realize just how proud he was of each of you and how much he loved you.

GOD SPEED KENNY—GO CATCH UP WITH YOUR "SWEET SUE"!

More Kenny info gleaned by this Editor:

Kenny was 9 when he stood with his friends watching the Paso Robles Inn burn in 1940. His father was a carpenter on the rebuild of the new one. "Sweet Sue" was his confidant and "lifesaver" according to him. Kenny was preceded in death by his wife, parents and older sister. His children: Terry Procknow lives in Salem, Ore. (2 children named Ryen Cheri and Ross Edward), Tracy lives in Camarillo (3 children named Whitney Clay, Lindsey Taylor and Evan Martin), Nancy Ambrosini lives in Saint Helena, CA (4 children named Trevor Nicolas, Mitchell Thomas, Landin Norman, and Chloe Sue), and Martin aka Marty lives in Paso Robles (1 child named Lauren Gene).

An article on Kenny forwarded to this Editor and published as written:

Several months ago I traveled to Paso Robles, CA to interview Kenny Van Blargen and Richard Woodland. The interview with Kenny was scheduled for the May 2012 issue of the WRA newsletter and included with it a Life Membership Plaque in the WRA for Kenny. Little did I know, at the time, that it would turn out to be Kenny's Obituary, as he passed away on April 29, 2012.

Paso Robles is a typical small California town located in the Central Coast of the state. Many who pass through would never realize that one of California's most famous drivers, Kenny Van Blargen, a long time Western Racing Association (WRA) member, lived there.

Kenny was born in Santa Maria, CA in 1931. In 1939 the family moved to Paso Robles to be close to his father's employment at the Army facility Camp Roberts, twelve miles north of town. That would be his home until his recent passing. From an early age he was fascinated with auto racing. In high school he had his share of clunker cars. He had not finished high school when he enlisted in the Navy and served as a Machinist mate. His service did not last long as his father came down with severe arthritis and Kenny got a dependency discharge from the Navy to help his family. Fortunately, he was classified as a combat Korean War Veteran, with all the benefits, which would help him immensely later on. Kenny returned home and married his girlfriend, Sue, and they settled into life in Paso Robles (Sue passed away in 2004).

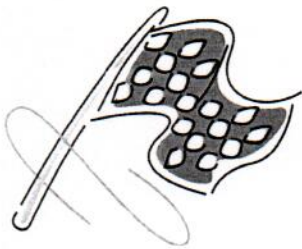
He started his racing career at the local Fair Grounds on the dirt track. His first race cars were hard tops and jalopies in a crowded field of drivers. It seemed to him that everyone in Paso Robles and the surrounding cities had a race car parked next to almost every service station. Some of his friends who raced with him were Red Staten, who later became an Indy car mechanic, Jack Frost, and Herman Huttan. Kenny branched out with his career by traveling to surrounding cities to run with modifieds and super modifieds at races sanctioned by NASCAR. He worked his way up class by class and would drive for anyone who offered him a ride. At the tracks Kenny had a loyal fan who admired him. He was a young boy whose father raced hard tops; Dick Woodland. Young Dick followed Kenny's career and they became lifelong friends.

Meanwhile, his family was growing; they had daughter Terry, son Tracy, daughter Nancy and youngest son Marty. Kenny decided to enroll in night school and got his GED and high school diploma. He wanted to instill in his children the need for an education. They have all done well. His son's Tracy and Marty, got into Go Karts and helped him work on his race car (Marty drove Kenny's sprint car at a 2010 WRA event at Santa Maria and won the main). Tracy was outstanding in TQ's and also drove sprint cars.

After his modified experience Kenny wanted to try sprint cars. He bought a sprint car with a Chevy V-8 and went racing. He was soon traveling to events around Central California and winning. He joined California Racing Association (CRA) and became close friends with Walt James. In the meantime, that young fan from the past, Dick Woodland, had become a successful businessman and race car driver/owner. He joined up with Kenny and Dick's teenage children who helped Kenny to run in the California Dirt Car division.

Dick Woodland also sponsored Kenny's sprint car. By now he had literally won hundreds of races and numerous championships. Tapering off a bit, Kenny joined WRA, (member 0-1940) the Vintage Race Car group started by Bruce Johnston, Joe Gemsa, and Dave Martin, and others in 1982. Years before, Kenny had sold his sprint car but years later found it abandoned in a field, took it home and completely restored it. He had a Chevy V-8 in it but WRA rules did not allow that kind of engine so he installed a Ford flat head V-8. He said about the flat head; "I had so much fun beating everyone with it." It was this car, number seven, that Kenny went upside down in at a WRA—WCVR event at Lake Havasu Speedway on March 20, 2010 resulting in a serious accident. He suffered a broken neck plus other injuries. He spent almost a year convalescing before returning home to Paso Robles to recover further. With Dick Woodland's help, Kenny's children were able to navigate the "Government Bureaucracy" and collect on his benefits from being in the Navy. Son Marty, a registered nurse, was extremely helpful in caring for Kenny. Needless to say, his medical bills were immense.

When this editor visited him a few months ago he was in good spirits and his recovery looked promising. He had a motorized wheel chair, a special van to ride in (he was contemplating coming to a WRA event at Santa Maria in August of this year), a full time caregiver, and his TV in his shop where he could watch the Speed Channel. He even had a race car under construction. He was delighted to do the interview and his good friend, Dick Woodland, was there. I presented the WRA Life Time member plaque to him not even thinking that it was just in time. Soon after, he took a turn for the worse, was hospitalized, and due to blood clotting, passed away on April 29, 2012. The racing fraternity has lost one of its best. He will be remembered fondly by all. The Woodland family has restored his number seven sprint car, which Kenny was able to see, and it will be displayed in the Estrella Warbirds and Woodland Auto Display at the museum in Paso Robles. You can visit Kenny there.



UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

*****Bad decisions make good stories.

*****We can't all be heroes because somebody has to sit on the curb and cheer as they go by.

*****I'm always slightly terrified when I exit out of Word and it asks me if I want to save any changes to my many page article that I swear I did not make any changes to.



Estrella Warbird Museum
4251 Dry Creek Road
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Non Profit Org.
PAID
Permit 163
Paso Robles, CA 93446

3*1*****3-DIGIT 934
BOB & JANET TULLOCK

5335 MONTEREY RD
PASO ROBLES CA 93446-8044

DATES TO REMEMBER!

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wednesday, June 6 | Dinner Meeting | 6:00pm Social/7:00pm Dinner |
| Wednesday, June 13 | MOVIE NIGHT | 6:00 pm |
| Wednesday, June 20 | EWM Board Meeting | 6pm to 8pm |