

FSU Gymnasts, Gymkana, and Friends Newsletter October 2005 (Second Edition)

09/02 From Barbara Murray Withers (FSU 54-62)

“The newsletter is fabulous. I get a kick out of people getting Beverly (*Cude Beaton*, jmm) and I mixed up - Bev and I went to tennis camp out in Texas one year, back in 1989, and the tennis pros could not tell us apart...Thanks for a great start - I still plan to get out a mailing to everyone who came to the reunion, hopefully in the next week or so. Love Barbara” (Oops! I intermixed Barbara and Beverly’s name in the last Newsletter jmm) (Hey, they play a mean game of tennis like the Williams sisters, jmm)

09/02 From Chick and Ginnie Cicio

“Hope all is well. Needless to say the "Newsletter" is great, the idea is great. It is nice to read about old friends and competitors. I'm so sorry we could not make it as it was the closing weekend of our show. It seems Barbara is really a giving person, we need more people like her in this crazy world we live. Auditioned for "Beauty and the Beast" I wanted the part of Belle's father Maurice: however, I didn't get it (there were a few GOOD actors), apparently I wasn't one of them. Oh well...can't win em all.” “God Bless.....Chick” (Their loss. Chick would make a great Beast, jmm)

09/05 From Almira Sharp (FSU 51-53)

“The newsletter was wonderful. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about everyone. Unfortunately, there was one error in the write-up about Jack pinning Stuart's second lieutenant bars on him. What you printed was Jack's dream. What actually happened was that Stuart graduated a year to the day from Jack's death, so our good friend and Stuart's sponsor, pinned on the bars. He made mention of the fact that he was a fill-in for Jack. Can't wait to see the next newsletter. Thanks so much for your work on this. Love, peace and joy”

09/02 From Fernando Lecuona (FSU 56-67)

“Thank you very much for sending me "The Letter." It brought back so many memories! For your pleasure, as well as for my other friends and readers, I am please to refresh you'all's memories with the following: When I arrived in Tallahassee, I saw FSU, and the Gymnasium, the first person I met was Dr. Hartley Price and his wife. Dr. Price showed me the List of Records of F.S.U. Gymnasts since 1950 (51 Team Championships, and 323 Individual Championships-too extensive to record them here.) I was amazed! That same day he took me to me the Tallahassee Tumbling Tots where Bob May was coaching them (Twinkle Freeman,10; Vicky Freeman, 12; Laurie Becker,9; Joan Peacock, 9; Kitty Grubbs,13; Linda Hartsfield, 14; and Roby and Billy May, the coaches sons). I wonder what happened to all of them. I have thought of all the students (boys and girls) that we have trained in gymnastics. What happened to them? But most of all, I have thought about Ronnie Amster, Dick Gutting, Larry Malmlin, Jack Sharp, Gene Rabbit, Jack Ryder, and Bill Roetzhein. (Sharp, Amster, and Ryder are deceased jmm) With your letter I know about yourself, Don Holder, Jamile Ashmore, and Chic Cicio. All of them including my brother Rafael and myself who were all members of FSU Gymnastic Teams and that either had been Olympic Team Members or National Champions, and given to FSU so many glories and great records that FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY now ignoresWhy? Love, Fernando” (God only knows, I don't. jmm)

09/02 From Don & Connie Holder (FSU 51-57)

“Thanks for the FSU update. What a great idea. I know it must take much of your time, but it is a wonderful way for all of us to keep in touch. I must correct you in one aspect. I don't have too many titles and the one Connie and I have seems to be lost. It concerns the number of years married. I do think we hold the record for years together, 55 this past August. In your letter you have Carmine & Daneen at 56 years. I know this is a mistake since they were hitched after we arrived at FSU, sometime in the mid fifties. Thanks again for a great job, Don” (Don is right, alright you guys and gals let me know how many years you've been married - Ill stay out of this one, let me know, jmm)

09/02 From Benny & Carolyn Wallace (FSU 51-55)

“Good to hear from you. Send the newsletter to this address and it will reach me (his sons computer jmm) <Waldopepper9@aol.com>” “We are well and have lived in Tucson since I retired in 1975.(From the USAF jmm) The children are in their 50's and the grand kids are in their 20's (Carolyn was a grandma at 41 because we married when she was 18).” (Read more in Benny's great follow up letter, page 3. jmm)

09/02 From Carrie Englert Zimmerman (51-57)

“This is AWESOME. Please add my MOM, as she would LOVE this, (Newsletter jmm) to your email list: also add Andy Andersen (Long) my old coach: I hope all is well, Carrie” (Read about Carrie’s great post university successes below. Jmm)

09/02 From Vince D’Autorio (1942 on and on and on, jmm)

“Hi, it was nice to hear from you. It was a long time. I hear from Don Holder occasionally. That is a nice job you are doing. Good luck Vince D’Autorio” (Now 90 years young, 1952 Olympian & International Judge jmm)

09/02 From Nancy Hightower Trautman (FSU 52-56)

“I enjoyed the newsletter very much. Thanks for sending it to me. How do you like your hearing aid? My mother wears one in each ear. How did you make out in the storm? I feel sorry for the people of New Orleans and all the other places along there that got hit. What a mess. I was in Tallahassee a couple of weeks ago and my mother had saved an article from the newspaper about your reunion. She gave it to me and I will get it to you if you want it. There was a photo of the “Women’s gymnastic Team” and she thought I was one of the girls. I really don’t know. I will try and scan it and then e-mail it to you soon.” (She sent the scan and the article was submitted by our own superwoman Barbara Withers” jmm)

09/02 From Dr. Jon & Boots Culbertson (FSU 64-66)

“We missed the reunion because Boots is so tied up with the new house which my daughter, Carla designed. And is the architect thereof. But when I saw Jim Hisey not long ago in Miami (gym function) he said he was there and many wanted to know why we were not. New house situation! You will all be invited to the opening; but first our daughter has to have a “showing” whereas she plans to win an award with it. It is that unique. BTW – Saw Rick Miller at the Olympic trials in Anaheim a year ago. He called me up from the lobby of the hotel I was staying at, and we chatted and had a picture of ourselves taken with Mako Sacamoto. Jon”

Carrie Englert Zimmerman (51-57) (From Tallahassee Tumbling Tots to the top ten in two successes)

“In 2003, Microsoft named Carrie ‘One of America’s Top Ten Savviest Businesswomen”

“The Zimmerman Agency, an advertising, public relations and interactive firm, is the largest independent hospitality pr agency in the Unites States and one of the largest women-owned companies in Florida according to Florida Trend. Curtis Zimmerman is Carrie’s partner and husband. The agency touts billings of \$70 million and boasts clients from Moscow, New York and Beijing to Hamburg, Hong Kong and Dubai”

“Carrie has conceived and nurtured the re-introduction of the world’s favorite soft drink (Coca-Cola) the launch of numerous brands and initiatives of the most revered hotel companies in America (Marriott and Intercontinental). The formation of co-brand partnership commitments between America’s top companies and national icons (Ford Motor Company, American Airlines, Continental Tires and Citicorp Diners Club). The resurgence of the country’s largest Pizza delivery company (Domino’s Pizza), the image re-engineering of a legendary boat maker (Bertram Yacht) and the validation celebration of Man’s First Moon Walk (NASA)”

“...As a member of the United States Olympic Team in Montreal for the 1976 Summer Games. In her sport of Gymnastics, she was the first American woman to ever score a perfect “10” in floor exercise and also was the first to hold the double title of national champion in both floor and balance beam.”

“Captain and member of competition and exhibition teams in China, Japan, West Germany, England, Ireland, Canada, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, Captain and member of exhibition teams touring U.S. with Russia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, East German and Canada”

“On a personal level, Carrie celebrated her 25th year of marriage – to the same man – this past July. Her three sons range in age from 8 to 21 years old, meaning one began kindergarten as another entered college. All the children share her passion for athletics and excel in a wide range of sports. She considers talking classes in a gym or club environment, a true sports sin, even though her home touts a complete gym (in case she ever changes her mind).” (Carrie, you just flat out blow my mind, you are the best. jmm)

09/08 From Dr. Wayne Thompson (FSU 58-62)

“The newsletter makes me feel like I’m back at FSU. Great work, WCT”

12/2004 From Dr. Miroslav Ceska (FSU 55-57)

“Unbelievable that after 50 years you were able to put all the information into such a nice review (referring to the article I sent to FSU last fall on the Gymnastics Team’s history, jmm) I am very sorry that I did not know about the “fifty year reunion”. Please next time let me know in advance (I would like to see you all). My daughter lives in Tallahassee and last March I spent the whole month with her. I do not know whether you know that in 1967, 68, and 1969 I was the official coach of the Swedish National Team (men’s gymnastics) and prepared Swedish gymnasts to compete in the European Championships in gymnastics (held in Tampere, Finland); and to compete against Norway and Polish national teams. In 1967-68 I was preparing the Swedish gymnasts for the Olympics (Mexico) In Feb.68 I took the “All Stars Scandinavian Team” (each Scandinavian country represented by two gymnasts) to the USA where we competed at 10 different places (except Penn State - we won all of the competitions). Then in 1980 and 1981 I judged in New York the “Mini World Championships in Gymnastics (each country was represented by two gymnasts). These are some of my past FSU gymnastics activities. As I am sure you know, in those days all this was done, besides my profession (Chemistry) and without any pay. (I am forever grateful to Merik for helping to train me the summer before the Melbourne Australia games in Montgomery Gym jmm)

09/04 From Benny & Carolyn Wallace (FSU 51-55)

“I enjoyed the newsletter very much. I have drifted away from athletics of any sort but never forgotten those days. In the Air Force we used to wander so much that most of us kept a sort of biography going and sent it around to keep each other informed, so here’s a condensed version of mine: After FSU I went into the Air force and became a jet fighter pilot. I flew interceptors and reconnaissance jets also and even had a tour in northern Ontario where I flew a ski plane on rescue missions with the Canadian Air Force and the Mounties. When the Vietnam War came along I flew the F-4 Phantom on 102 combat missions into North Vietnam in 1966. At that time you either got shot down and captured or killed, or you didn’t and they gave you the Distinguished Flying Cross and \$ 65 per month combat pay. Happily, I got the latter. After that I spent several years as an instructor in the F-4 and a total of seven consecutive years without setting foot in the U.S.A. Those years were in Thailand, Korea and Japan. The family was with me in Japan for four years and we traveled to many countries in the Orient. I retired in 1975 to Tucson, AZ at age 42 and never worked again.

We travel extensively, mostly in Europe and South America, and now have seen 53 countries, some several times, but we no longer take the furniture! We’ve been to less than half of the states and were saving them for when we got old; we are now old! I’m 74 and Carolyn is 70 and we have two children and four grown grand kids; the oldest is 30. So there it is. Best wishes to all, Benny”

(The Distinguished Flying Cross – What an unbelievable honor. We are so very proud of you Benny, jmm)

09/03 From Dr. Charlie Christian (FSU 55-57)

Thanks so much for the update on former FSU folks. It seems as if most Gymnasts become a fantastic success in all walks of life. I suppose my claim to fame is being a retired Dentist as well as a retired Lt. Col. from the Army Reserve program. I served 26 years, two years during Viet Nam and nine months of Desert Shield/Storm. Not as exciting as the rest of your guys. Glad to be retired? Heck yes! I would like to be 25 again but go through the last 45 another time, I don’t think so. I’ll be 70 Sept. 12 and proud to still be around. Every day is a fun day for me.”...“Every time I walk into a room I wonder what I came in here after. Memory you know. It has nothing to do with age. The technological age is so surprising. Have you ever tried to “cut and paste” a picture off the TV screen or turned on the computer to check emails before breakfast? (How about trying to change TV channels or open the house door with your car beeper? jmm) “It’s so good to hear from you. Since I left FSU in ‘57 the only ones I have accidentally heard from are Benny Wallace, Don Holder and Sam Bailie who has kept me up to date with the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame and the BOD members. I had four by-passes in Dec. of 2003 and am hanging in there. I would love to be able to do hand stands again. The 50’s were the very best years! I think we are reaching the age we may all be considered an endangered species. The attachment (picture received, jmm) is of Sam Bailie and I at a dedication last October for our weight-lifting/gymnastics Coach at G.M.A., (Georgia Military Academy, jmm) prior to coming to FSU. Its ironic Benny came to FSU after he left G.M.A. in ‘53 and left before I came ‘55. I had no idea he attended FSU until a year ago. It’s so nice to renew old friendships with former team mates. Thanks goodness for a computer, huh? My best to you and all the other FSU gymnasts in South Florida and wherever they may be.” (He’s a Dentist. Open wide, jmm)

09/ 05 From Barbara Withers (FSU 54-62)

(When asked by me when she attended FSU she responded jmm) “ I arrived 51 years ago, in August 1954, age 17, having just graduated from high school that June and having worked all summer in a clothing store in downtown Boston, saving money to come...got my first job at Wyatt's Business Machines, in September of 1954 through Ann Tucker, the unicyclist, she was my boss. Started taking classes one at a time in 1955 when I got a job at the FSU payroll office, worked there and in the FSU comptroller's office until 1957 when I divorced Bob, took a semester at Northeastern in Boston (that's when Jim Fadigan and I put on the half time show at FSU vs. Boston College - fall of 1957) and returned here for full time school Jan. 1958 - lived in Florida Hall at first, but then rented an apartment because I was working full time and could not meet the demands of the curfew for lights out etc. and still get my homework done. Finally got my degree in 1962 although I took the CPA exam in November 1960 and passed all parts first sitting - so the short answer to your question: I arrived in August 1954 and graduated in June 1962. Love, Barbara”

(09/06) Sam & Topsy Bailie (Iowa 54+)

“We did get the news letter ... It's great to be included with such good friends. I did enjoy Iowa as an athlete but now I'm thinking I would have loved FSU. Gymnastics has been great to my whole Family. We have a wonderful life. Our two younger children Steve & Sharon have just built a multi million dollar training facility in Salt Lake and our doing great (sure a lot better then when we used to rent warehouse space). Our older son Sam Jr. lives in Plano Texas and is doing great as an artist. For Topsy & I we are still involved in Gymnastics working with Paul Ziert, Bart & Nadia as well as the F.I.G. with the International Gymnastics Hall Of Fame. We look forward to seeing all our FSU friends in the future. Please stay in touch. And if any of you are into skiing come visit us in Park City. Our best to all of you. Sam & Topsy” (We at FSU always felt that Sam was a part of our team, anyway jmm)

Benny Wallace “Remember when, I had taken some clothes off the line for Carolyn and still had the pins in my coat pocket and we pinned them on the back of Hartley's overcoat as he went in the gym to meet the other coaches?” (Hart looked like a porcupine with his quills wagging all over his back, jmm)

Sam Bailie Skies around frozen cows near his house in Utah. “Yes, the cows do freeze, but the skiing is great. Now that I have reached the big 70 I can ski for free. Please come visit as we have plenty of room. Sam” (That's a long way from Florida...Ski it again Sam, jmm)

Jamile Ashmore, after confessing to a priest his youthful FSU sinful conquests was advised to say four Our Fathers and five Hail Mary's and drink a glass of freshly squeezed lemon juice. The priest added, “That's to take that self satisfied smirk off your face.”

Benny Wallace, Dr. Charlie Christian, and Sam Bailie all graduated from Georgia Military Academy (now Woodward Academy) before entering FSU & Iowa

Jack Miles ‘I had my big toe joints replaced years ago. Smashed doing punch backs in tumbling and forty takes from a second story window as a stuntman. One replacement is Celastic the other is from a Cadaver - Don't know where they got the bone but whenever soul music is played my right foot starts to tap”.

Quote Benny Wallace (After I mentioned my 13 year old son in the last Newsletter, jmm), Benny responded, “Jesus, I don't have grand kids that young. The guy that invented the zipper ruined your life!” (Bartender set me up with a glass of lemon juice like my friend Jamile ordered please. jmm)

Fernando Lecuona said, “I taught Gymnastics and coached a girls team for four years. One day, reading the local newspaper, I found out that Jesse Owens was coming to see his parents in Decatur. I met Jesse Owens in the 1948 Olympics in London, so I invited him to come to where I was teaching and he and I received the "City of Decatur Key" that day while the gymnastic girls did floor exercises.”

Raffles and Fernando Lecuona - Some of you might not know that Ernesto Lecuona, world known composer of “Malaguena, Tabo, Analucia (the Breeze and I), and Siboney is their uncle.

Personal Histories I have received a few personal histories which were too lengthy to place in their entirety in the Newsletter. So, I picked out highlights and select pieces. If you are interested I can email a complete individual one to you. I have them on disc. jmm

My people have spoken (Listen to the little people)

“The newsletter is fabulous, Newsletter is great, the idea is great, Thank you very much for sending me "The Letter.", This is AWESOME, Thanks for the FSU update, What a great idea, This is a nice job you are doing, I enjoyed the newsletter very much, This is a wonderful way for all of us to keep in touch, Thanks so much for the update on former FSU folks, Can't wait to see the next newsletter, Thanks so much for your work on this, Great work, The newsletter was wonderful (I think I'm going to cry, I want to thank the Academy, my agent, my mother who breast fed me for three years, and most of all my fans, thank you, thank you, jmm)

NOTE: What years were you at FSU? I'm trying to enter those years in the listing so that others can recall their friends. I try to put the years the writer was at FSU or connected as friends". Sometimes present day pictures of our "Ole" buddies and gals leave us wondering, "Who to hell is that?" Isn't it a bummer that furniture and cars made in the year you were born are called "Antiques"?

My response to your questions about my hearing aid

The hearing aid is OK. Honestly, it is nowhere as good as regular hearing. I like it a lot don't get me wrong. Actually I wear one more for others than myself. People get angry at you if they have to repeat themselves. Mostly, I wear it in a conversational setting or around all of my son Chad's young tennis buddies. You can hear so many things much louder. Things that you don't really need to hear louder. The hum of the AC, the car AC, the loud click of the turn signal, the crinkle of aluminum foil or wax paper, pee as it hits the water in the commode, the swish of your clothing, the clink of your house and car keys, your shoes crunching sand grains as you walk, and people talking across the street. Frankly, it's kind of a tinny sound while normal sound is much mellower. Like too much "treble" with the "bass" turned off. Nonetheless, I love the sounds of the many birds in Florida which I hear much better. That's pleasant. Nevertheless, when no one is around I crank up my \$3,000.00 TV, with surround sound, and let my normal \$19.95 ears enjoy.