



Comments from our Officers

Dear IAA members,
I sincerely hope that you are enjoying the holidays and are happy and healthy.
I will try to post in IDS on FB when a newsletter or newsflash is sent out.. If you do not receive one please contact myself or another board member.
Please note though : If you have elected to only use USPS and get your newsletter in hard copy form, then you will not be sent email flashes.
Merry Christmas & Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu

Repectfully,

Dave Gibson IAA President

Merry Christmas ..Jan Bloomer, VP
Happy Holidays....Mary Baker, ,Secretary
Remember the Spirit of Christmas..Teresa Green, Treasurer

Digital registration and payment will be accepted. Please email registration form for Registration melodyvenable@gmail.com. For those paying for Registration /Shirts with PayPal/Zelle please check with your Lending Institution to ensure there will be no additional charge passed on to IAA. Again funds for registration fees and/or T-shirts can be transferred via PayPal or Zelle, please send notification to our IAA email :: itazukealumni@gmail.com. Please ensure to identify yourself so we can credit your payment properly.

Melody Venable
Co-Chair
Reunion

No Deaths
Reported



IAA Officers 2022-2024

President: Dave Gibson -
just2toonice@aol.com

Vice President: Jan
Bloomer –
jbuzzy45@gmail.com

Secretary: Mary Baker -
chapperb1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Teresa Green
– teresajgreen@me.com

Newsletter Committee

Jan Arbuckle Bloomer
Pam Shupe Lyden
Mary Anderson Baker

PhotoScan by Google Photos

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST

- Reunion
- Reports
- Remembrances
- Members Highlighted



Jody Stevison Abigando

Jody lives in Pensacola with Bobby, her husband, of 51 years. She and her siblings Vicki, Gail and Wayne grew up as Air Force BRATS. They lived in Fairbanks, Alaska, Brunswick, Maine, New York, Altus Oklahoma, Taiwan and Japan. Their dad was a mechanic/electrician for the AF. The family was at Itazuke when Jody was in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Graduation was at Escambia High School, Pensacola, Florida in 1973.

Itazuke memories that are etched in her mind are similar to most people who lived there; the Youth Center, ice skating and the heater rooms, ramen noodles, being able to walk everywhere, Greenware French fries, snow sledding down the hill, school fire and the Globetrotters. She learned to play the Alto Sax in the band and played throughout high school in the States. The family really enjoyed their time in Japan. A final memory was on the airplane coming back to the States, when the pilot announced that Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. What a great memory!

After high school, Jody and Bobby got married and moved to Panama City, FL. When her youngest went to kindergarten, she went to Nursing School. With incredible support from her husband, and sister, Vicki she was able to finish. She was self supporting during school and enjoyed a nursing career of 30 years. To keep her brain busy, she currently does on-line chart reviews. She also sews blankets for Nursing Homes and Teddy Bears for emergency room kids for the church.

They have 4 children and 7 grandchildren. They love spending time with them and live in Pensacola, Atlanta and Nashville. Their family loves to travel with them. Jody likes to go to places she has never been before. In 2023 they traveled to Dallas, Waco, Alamo, Fort Worth (Cotton Bowl), Las Vegas (Hoover Dam), Antelope Canyon, Grand Canyon, Winslow AZ, Petrified Forest, Monument Valley, Arches National Park, Greek Island Cruise, Houston, and Galveston.

Jody has a grandson who is in the Million Dollar Band at the University of Alabama so they are loyal fans. With UA, they had the opportunity to go to New York to see the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Her daughters were in the color guard in High School so they traveled to the Fiesta and Rose Bowls.

Growing old gracefully, staying healthy, and walking to the end are her goals in retirement. Being surrounded by her kids and grandkids are very important and she tries to always have them close by.

What do you get when you cross beer with a chocolate bar?

A Choco-Light.



Hi From Taiwan

Jim Dwyer wanted to share a recent event:

I just completed A 2 Week Reunion Tour Of Taiwan for 33 Former Military Veterans And Spouses That Were Stationed At CCK "Ching Chung Kang" Air Base Taichung Taiwan TW 50+ Years Ago! During The Vietnam War We Flew C-130E's Support Missions Throughout Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, And Thailand.

Those On The Tour Came From Across The United States us So the First Few Days Jet Lag Was experienced By Everyone. This Two Week Bus Tour Went Clockwise Around The Island, about 1,300 Miles, Sharing Memories From Years Ago. Great Weather, Great Food, And Great Times Enjoyed By All!!

Thanks
Jim

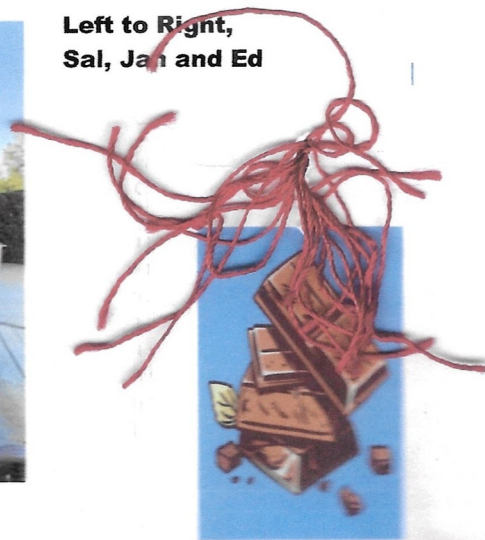


**MEMORIES,
MEMORIES,
SHARED**

Melanie Dell Young, Class of 68 and her sister Donna Dell, of Arizona decided to take a trip to California and meet up with friends in Palm Springs, Sal and Valerie Valtri and Nancy and Ed Grosse, Now to make the weekend even more fun, Mary Anderson Baker Class of 68 Washington, Jan Arbuckle Bloomer, Class of 67, Florida and Linda Weingarten Cannaliato, Texas. Decided to meet up for the weekend, to spend some time with Two Airmen that had made a difference in all of our lives. For Melanie and her family these guys became additional family members. For Mary they were mentors, For Linda they from good friends, For me (Jan) Sal gave me my first motorcycle ride which lead to me purchasing a motorcycle when I returned to the USA, and Ed, he was my Senior Prom date. It was a great weekend, great friends and pictures galore and memories, and memories. Thank you ladies, goes out to the guys wife's for allowing them to share some of their youth with us. It was great to see friends and make new friends.



**Left to Right,
Sal, Jan and Ed**



**Left to Right, Mary, Sal Jan. Ed Melanie
and Linda**

WHO IS GARFIELD (GAR) BENSEN?

Gar Bensen arrived at Itazuke Air Base in November of 1955 at the age of 14, a newly minted Freshman. He was soon registered at Itazuke Dependents School (IDS).

Prior to coming to Itazuke he and his family were living in a small town north of Seattle, WA called Bothell. His dad had just completed 4 years teaching ROTC at the University of Washington when he received orders to relocate to Itazuke Air Base, Japan.

Gar states what he remembers the most about IDS was how small it was. He remembers eating lunch off of stainless steel divided trays brought from the "Mess Hall." As we all can attest the milk we drank in Japan was unlike any milk we drank in the States and was something to get used to. He also remembers how the school tried to make the school environment as much like home as possible. As many of us who were students during our time at Itazuke can attest to the friendliness of all of the students and how we were accepted as part of the group.

School sports were key to keeping the students active participants. Gar was a Cobra basketball player and was the team captain. Some of his teammates were Tim Biddle, Jim Martin, Dick Mathis and Dick Boorum.

When Gar and his family rotated back stateside in 1958 their next duty station was to Whiteman AFB, Missouri. Gar graduated from high school in 1959.

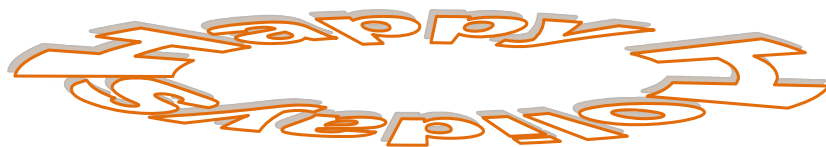
Upon graduation from college he joined the US Navy and successfully went through Flight Training. During his five year Navy commitment he had two duty stations and 9 months in Vietnam. After his five year military commitment was completed he relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1969 to fly for Northwest Airlines (NWA) for 33 years. He retired from NWA July 2, 2001, after flying Captain on the 747- 400 the last 3 years of his career.

Gar has two children, a son and a daughter, from a previous marriage. Gar remarried in 1980 to a woman who had 3 daughters, the same ages as his children. They flourished as a family of seven! Today Gar and his wife are the proud grandparents of 10 grandchildren and continue to be a close and loving family.

Gar and his wife live in Minneapolis, MN during the warmer seasons. During the winter months they are "Snowbirds" in Jacksonville, Florida, where their home is on the 17th hole at Hidden Hills Golf Club and play golf several days a week.

Thank you, Gar, for providing your fellow Itazuke Dependents School members a peek into your life after leaving Itazuke Air Base, Japan.

Mary Anderson Baker '68



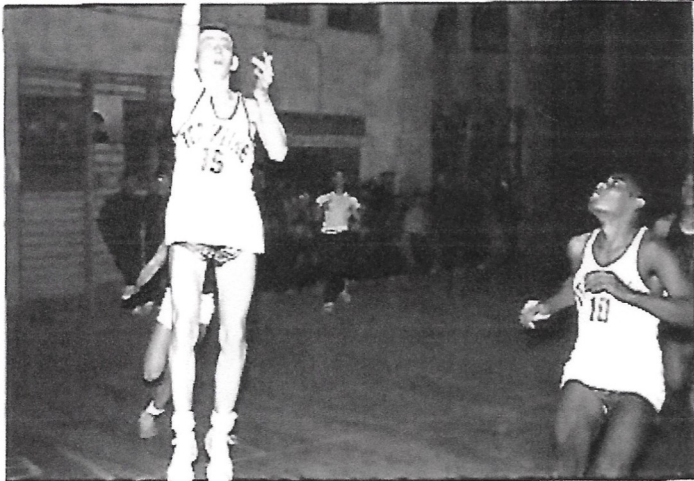
Cobra Hoopsters Avenge Previous Loss, 59 to 40

"Revenge is sweet" was the byword of the Itazuke High School Basketball team last week. The Cobras traveled to Fukuoka Night School, Thursday the 7th of November, for the second encounter on Fukuoka's home court. Recently, the Night School cagers squeezed the Cobras 44-40 for the latter's first loss of the six game season.

The determined but cautious starters, Gar Bensen, Jim Martin, Tim Biddle, Dick Mathis and Dick Boorum, trailed the Night School by 10 points at the termination of the first quarter. Early in the second quarter an Itazuke rally took place and at half-time the Cobras were only "down under" 27-24.

With a small revision of tactics against the driving Japanese, the Cobras began to pull out of their slump in the third quarter. The final whistle saw the Cobras comfortably leading the Night School 59-40. Gar Bensen, team captain, led the Cobras to a sweet revenge with 25 points.

EAT,
DRINK
& BE
MERRY



Merry Christmas

Itazuke Alumni Association Members,

It is with a sad heart that I must announce the Itazuke Band we all know and love is unable to play at the 2024 Itazuke Alumni Association Reunion. It simply came down to affordability. When the band and I reviewed the cost and logistics, we found the fiscal requirements to be beyond our budget.

I know we will all miss dancing and singing with the band and I have my work cut out for me in finding a suitable replacement. Please keep me in your thoughts and prayers as I work to secure our alternate entertainment for the 2024 Reunion.

On behalf of all of us who love Itazuke Alumni Association Reunions and the Itazuke Band, a big heartfelt thank you to Gary Krueger (Denver, CO), Mike Lozito (San Antonio, TX), Stewart Nakabayashi (Los Angeles, CA), Alan Saville and Sharon Meyer (Denver, CO --friends of Gary who did not attend Itazuke but volunteered their time and paid their own way), Rhonda Lebron (Loudon, TN), David Southerland (South Carolina), Robbie (Monty) Robinson (Florida), Mike Perez (Amarillo, TX) and Rod Thornton (Alabama). Gary, Mike, Alan, Sharon and Stewart have played at all the reunions that have had a band since 2008. The others listed have played with the band when they were able to attend.

Melody Venable and Terry Woods
Hosts of the Itazuke Alumni Association 2024 Reunion

Reunion Information

4.5 oz./yd², pre-shrunk 100% ringspun USA cotton
Back neck tape
Shoulder-to-shoulder taping
Double-needle stitching on sleeves and bottom hem
Tear away label
USMCA certified

Tultex - Unisex Fine Jersey T-Shirt Sizing

Finished Measurements

	XS	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X
Body Length	26	28	29	30	31	32	33
Body Length Tolerance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chest Tolerance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chest Width (Laid Flat)	16	18	20	22	24	26	28

**Itazuke Alumni Association Reunion
Columbus, Georgia – October 1 -2, 2024
Registration Form**

Questions about the reunion? Contact Melody Venable
Email (Preferred) at melodyvenable@gmail.com
Mail this form with check payable to: IAA or Itazuke Alumni Association
C/O Melody Venable, Reunion Coordinator, 2293 Piedmont Lake Rd. Pine Mountain, GA 31822

Full Registration includes Tuesday Night Welcome Cocktail Party, Wednesday Night Dance and Banquet Dinner. Hotel is booked separately and includes breakfast each day.

Itazuke attendee name _____ Name used at Itazuke _____

Graduation class year _____ Years at Itazuke from _____ to _____ Please include an old school photo, if you have one.

Spouse or adult guest's Name _____

Children (under 12 years of age) attending and ages _____ . *Food tickets for children (12 and under), please make a request.

Mailing address: Name _____ Email _____

Street address _____

City, State, ZIP _____ Phone _____

Registration Fees per Adult (Alum or Guest). PLEASE NOTE REGISTRATION DISCOUNT DATES. Each ticket includes, food, 2 alcoholic beverages.

\$165.00 before **July 01, 2024** _____ persons x \$165.00 = \$ _____ \$ 180.00 after **July 02,**

2024 -September 01, 2024 _____ persons x \$180.00 = \$ _____

\$190.00 from 1 September to 1 October 2024 _____ persons x \$190.00 = \$ _____

At the door: \$200

\$125.00 for a Single night of fun. _____ Tuesday Night or _____ Wednesday Night (EXTRA GUEST)

Total amount included with this registration \$ _____ (ALL OF THE ABOVE)

**All menu planning was made with special consideration; however, if you need to have special dietary meals, please make a request, and we will do our best to accommodate.

T-shirt Orders are appreciated and we will have your shirt waiting for you when you arrive. **NO AFTER REUNION ORDERS**

Please indicate size(s) and number desired (\$25 each for S, M, L, XL, \$30 each for XXL, XXXL)

_____ Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XL @ \$25 each

_____ XXL _____ XXXL @ \$30 each _____

Hold shirt under the name _____ T-shirt Total \$ _____

If you don't plan to attend the reunion but still want a T-shirt, you may order them to be mailed to you for a small shipping fee of \$ 10.00 each. Fill in the number and sizes desired and complete the address information below and send with a check made payable to IAA or Itazuke Alumni Association, C/O Melody Venable, Reunion Coordinator, 2293 Piedmont Lake Rd. Pine Mountain, GA 31822

If you are not attending the reunion and want us to ship you a shirt.

Please ship the number of T-shirts shown above to:

Name _____

Street address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

TOTAL COAST OF T-SHIRTS _____

T-SHIRT (POSTAGE IF NOT ATTENDING REUNION) _____

TOTAL AMOUNT OF REGISTRATION _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ (ALL OF THE ABOVE)

Please Note: Golf shirts are available at 45.00 each. Please contact melodyvenable@gmail.com directly for golf shirt sizes. Deadline for shirt orders is August 15, 2024.

HOTEL INFORMATION: Columbus Marriott, 800 Front Avenue, Columbus, GA 31901. (706) 324-1800 and ask for the Itazuke Alumni Association Reunion. Individual Room Rates \$202.73 including tax. Reservations for these rates must be made by 4 PM August 30, 2024. Free Breakfast and Parking.

Digital registration and payment will be accepted. Please email registration form for Registration melodyvenable@gmail.com. For those paying for registration/shirts with Paypal/Zelle, please designate payee as ITAZUKEALUMNI@GMAIL.COM. On all payments, please identify yourself by your full name.

Also please document if you are paying for the IAA Reunion Registration or Shirts. (**So that we can credit your payment properly**). If there is fee charged to the recipient please add that amount into your total payment due..

WE WISH YOU
Happy Holidays
AND A GREAT NEW YEAR



IAA Alumni Association
Jan Bloomer
215 Willow Avenue
Merritt Island Fl 32953

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE