



# CRASH DIVE BASE Lake Bluff, IL



"To Honor Those Who Serve, Past, Present & Future"

June 2012 Volume 13, Issue 6

# Lest We Forget — "The USSVI Submariner's Creed"

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

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## **News Brief**

- 1. **Next Meeting**: At 1200, third Saturday of each month at the Knollwood Sportsman's Club. Mark your calendars for these upcoming dates:
  - a. June 16
  - b. July 21
  - c. AUGUST 18 PICNIC SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 3
- 2. Duty Cook Roster:
  - a. June Greg Miller
  - b. July John Moody
  - c. August Picnic
- 3. **June Birthdays:** Scott Clippert 2<sup>nd</sup>; Bret Zacher 9<sup>th</sup>; Frank Voznak, Jr. 9<sup>th</sup>; Martin Salvador 11<sup>th</sup>; Bob Benn 17<sup>th</sup>; Teddy Wilkison 28<sup>th</sup>, and Paul Watkins 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 4. Crash Dive supports USS Chicago Base's annual **picnic** for the IL WWII subvets again this year. August 18, Hines VA Hospital, Hines, IL; dish-to-pass, white elephant gift wrapped in newspaper; USS Chicago Base assumes duty cook responsibilities, Crash Dive provides beer and water.
- 5. Make your reservations now for the **USSVI National Convention**, Norfolk, VA September 2-9. See http://http://ussvi-2012convention.com/ for details.

CRASH DIVE BASE WEBSITE: WWW.CRASHDIVEBASE.COM

# Crash Dive Meeting Minutes May 19, 2012

### A. Attendees

- 1. Clay Hill
- 2. Chris Gaines
- 3. Glenn Barts, Sr.
- 4. Herman Mueller
- 5. Pete Almeroth
- 6. Kep Preble
- 7. Larry Warnke
- 8. Greg Miller
- 9. John Moody
- 10. Terry Elmeier
- B. The meeting was called to order at 1205 by Clay Hill followed by the invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and a round of introductions.
- C. Secretary's report given by Chris Gaines. Minutes of the April meeting were published in the newsletter. Herman Mueller moved to accept; Larry Warnke seconded; vote was unanimous
- D. Treasurer's report given by Glenn Barts. Savings \$1173.6; checking \$3849.35. We now have an official receipt letter for charitable donations. We received a letter of appreciation from Fisher House. Terry Elmeier moved to accept, Larry Warnke seconded; vote was unanimous.
- E. Committee Reports:
  - 1. Newsletter no report
  - 2. Membership no report
  - 3. Charitable Service batch of items ready for the Thrift Store;
  - 4. Hospitality no report
  - 5. Webmaster no report
  - 6. Storekeeper no report
  - 7. Bylaws no report
- 8. Memorial Committee no report
- F. Old Business

- Ball 2013 Likely will include a CD2 convention with our Ball; Larry Warnke and Frank Walter volunteer for the committee; estimate 150 people including a convention;
- Cobia Working Party need specifications for paint from Wisconsin Maritime Museum staff. Joint meeting revealed that some members from other bases do work at the Cobia; consider coordinating work.

### G. New Business

- 1. 50-50 won by Herman Mueller.
- 2. Chicago Memorial Day Parade to include Herman Mueller and Pete Almeroth.
- 3. Review of USS Chicago Base May events in which members may participate.
- 4. Manitowoc Boat reunion May 25 & 26
- H. Good of the Order
  - 1. Duty Cook
  - a. June Greg Miller
  - b. July John Moody
  - c. August USS Chicago Base/WWII picnic coincides with our August 18 meeting.
  - d. November Frank Walter fish fry.
  - 2. Corn Roast August 25; \$10 tickets from Larry Warnke; includes raffle and other activities.
  - 3. Navy Week in Chicago August 13-20; see

## www.navyweek.org/chicago2012

- 4. WWII is holding a North Central Regional meeting in Manitowoc June 2.
- I. Benediction.
- J. Adjourn 1306. Larry Warnke moved to adjourn; Terry Elmeier seconded.

## **Lost Boats**

USS	O-9	SS	70		6/20/41
USS	S-27	SS	132		6/19/42
USS	R-12	SS	89		6/12/43
USS	<b>HERRIN</b>	1G S	SS 2	33	6/1/44
USS	S-28	SS	133		6/4/44
USS	<b>GOLET</b>	SS	361		6/24/44
USS	<b>BONEF</b>	ISH	1 88	323	6/18/45

# **Chaplain's Corner**

June has arrived and so has the Hot Weather. Be careful when going out in the sun.

It is with much sadness to report that Linda Voznak's (Frank Voznak's wife's) mother passed away this past month. Remember to keep her in your prayers.

Flag Day is upon us and if you can, get the Stars And Stripes out and Fly them.

I haven't received any other "Bad News" from our members so that is great.

Remember to let a member of the board know if there are any sickness' or deaths in your family.

For those of you who go on the USSVI Website, to find a listing of things one may use in the event of a veteran's passing follow the following:

- 1. Open documents
- 2. Open Manuals
- 3. On Page 4 of Manuals go to Chaplains Manual and open.
- 4. In the Chaplains manual go to pages 48-52 of the Manual for a listing of what everyone should look at finding and keeping in the event of a veterans passing.

This is only a guide, everyone will have to determine what they will and should keep.

With that, like always, I will keep his short and wish everyone a Good and Safe Summer.

Glenn C. Barts, Sr. Chaplain

## **Memorial Project Update**

Submitted by: Frank Voznak Jr.

Frank III has received the information from the architectural Company, MRSA Architects & Planners, located in Chicago IL., and has reviewed it. They are recommending that we consider using "CORE 10" as the material of choice.

I contacted Collins
Engineering, Inc., located on Wacker
Drive, downtown Chicago and sent
them the presentation we used
during our meeting with the
Alderman of the ward the Memorial
ultimately will be located. As of this
date, I'm still waiting for a reply.
Collins Engineering is affiliated with
the 721 Club.

## **Picnic**

Submitted by: Chris Gaines

USS Chicago Base is continuing its tradition in hosting a picnic for IL WWII subvets. Crash Dive supports the picnic by donating beer and bottled water, and by attending the picnic.

The picnic is scheduled for August 18. That is Crash Dive's normal meeting date. Shipmates are encouraged to participate in the picnic as a show of appreciation for our WWII brethren.

Details to follow in next month's newsletter.

## The Sculpin's Lost Mission: A Nuclear Submarine in the Vietnam War

By Admiral Charles R. Larson, U.S. Navy (Retired), with Captain Clinton Wright, U.S. Navy (Retired), and Paul Stillwell

Continued from last month......

#### How Invisible?

During this time we half-jokingly talked about "the hump" We were trying to visualize what the Sculpin looked like on the surface, running at 20 knots, with maybe only 40 feet from the top of the sail to the surface. We visualized a hump—the water displaced above the boat's hull—roaring through the South China Sea like a mini tidal wave, with observers wondering what it was. We assumed the ship left some sort of trail but were certain one would have to be very close to be able to see it.

An incident when I had command duty got my attention. I brought the Sculpin up to periscope depth and saw what I thought was a periscope going by. My first reaction was, "Holy smoke, there's another submarine up here." Then I realized it was a small water-saturated log that was floating vertically. Just for a moment I thought there were two submarines staring at each other and wondered which one was going to blink first.

As the trawler moved farther south, she made a distinct turn to the west and then to the northwest. We were absolutely sure she was a gunrunner, going in to land and off-load her ammunition. Then, two things happened. We were ordered by MACV to photograph our target and alerted to prepare to execute a provision in our operation order for us to sink our target with torpedoes.

The photographic mission meant leaving our trail position and speeding

up ahead of the target to take pictures as the trawler cruised by. The risk of detection was great because of the flat calm sea and our hump as we repositioned at high speed. To avoid this, we had to go as deep as possible. Commander Mathis selected 90 feet keel depth, leaving 20 feet between the keel and the bottom. We limited periscope exposure to 6 inches for less than ten seconds. We did get good pictures and apparently were not detected, although one photograph revealed three men on deck looking in our general direction. The depth control skill of our diving officer chiefs was extraordinary.

#### Where'd She Go?

Immediately after the trawler made the northwest turn, and just before we communicated with higher authorities, we lost contact for about two hours. Up to that point, our target had been somewhat predictable, cruising on a straight course to the northwest near the center of the Gulf of Thailand about 100 miles off the coast of South Vietnam, with the familiar shaft rub being tracked by sonar. It was night with a full moon, and we saw her lights through the periscope. The horizon was indistinguishable. Suddenly, sonar reported she had stopped, and while the CO watched, the trawler turned off her lights. Blind and deaf, we then lit off the radar and made several sweeps that revealed nothing.

This was not too surprising. When a radar hasn't been used in months and is not tuned, taking it out and rotating it a couple of times doesn't guarantee a high probability of picking up a small target. We were not sure whether she had stopped for the night or was moving away in a new direction at slow speed.

We reported the lost contact, which threw the operational command

authority in Saigon into a panic. They had been moving South Vietnamese naval forces along the coast to maintain a blocking position based on our updates, so the whole operation threatened to unravel. Commander Mathis and I huddled and decided: "Well, we've got to assume that she's making a run toward the border up there. Let's just go down and run as fast as we can and get about 30 miles ahead of her predicted track and set up a barrier."

So we moved up and waited for her farther up into the Gulf of Thailand. We made that sprint at 20 knots with 20 feet under the keel. At first daylight, we contacted our on station P-3 aircraft and described our quarry, particularly her white color. We requested that the Orion's crew search the area from where we lost contact to the Vietnamese coast. They reported several widely separated contacts; only one of them was white. The CO authorized a lowaltitude identification pass, and the P-3 made a positive ID. They reported to Saigon, and we closed the target. As we neared, we regained that familiar shaft rub and when we took another periscope look, it was her—positive identification, both sonar and visual.

Originally, MACV requested authorization for us to sink the target with our torpedoes, but this was not approved. For years I assumed that the National Command Authority in Washington, D.C., disapproved the request. However, several years later, Harry Mathis, who by then was a captain, was commanding officer of the Submarine Base Pearl Harbor. He regularly played tennis with retired Admiral Bernard "Chick" Clarey, who had been commander-in-chief Pacific Fleet at the time of our operation. Admiral Clarey remembered the operation very well because he and

Admiral John McCain, commander-inchief Pacific, had followed our progress closely in daily briefings. Admiral Clarey told Mathis that he had argued vehemently in favor of having us shoot, but Admiral McCain was not convinced it would work. Instead, South Vietnamese naval forces were called in to do the job on 24 April.

## **High-Seas Drama**

The surface forces—led by a South Vietnamese destroyer escort challenged the trawler, which hoisted a Chinese flag and an international flag signal designating they were fishing. The South Vietnamese commander was hesitant to take action because he was concerned about creating an international incident. Fortunately, we established communications with the U.S. liaison officer on board the destroyer with the UQC underwater telephone. His first question was whether we could verify this ship as our trawler. We told him, "Absolutely, this is the one without a doubt." We then went to periscope depth to observe.

The trawler tried to convince the South Vietnamese destroyer that she was an innocent fishing vessel. We spoke once again with the liaison officer and with higher authorities and said: "We are absolutely sure that this ship came out of Hainan flying a PRC [People's Republic of China] flag. We have tracked her 2,500 miles to this position, and in our opinion she is a gunrunner making a run toward the border and certainly is not a fisherman. We can verify who she is, which should allow us to take whatever action is appropriate."

As we later learned from the intercepted communication, the trawler at one point said, "I think there is a submarine out there." This was the first indication that the trawler crew was

aware of us as we coordinated with the destroyer. Based on our identification, the destroyer escort ordered the trawler to stop, and when she failed to comply, began making intimidating runs at her, finally opening fire from a standoff position with her 3-inch guns. The trawler was hit and began burning, running in a circle as if the rudder was jammed hard over.

We watched through the periscope, and our crew gathered in their mess to watch on the TV monitor. Suddenly, with a thunderous roar, clearly audible through the Sculpin's hull, the trawler exploded and disintegrated as its cargo detonated. Flames leaped hundreds of feet in the air, accompanied by the cheers of our crew. At this moment, Commander Mathis asked the crew over the 1MC for a moment of silence. Enemy or not, they had perished doing their mission.

Later, we were pleased to learn that 16 of the trawler crew had been rescued and they spoke Vietnamese, not Chinese. The captain and the navigator were among them and able to provide valuable intelligence about their operations. One of the few casualties was the political officer.

Our communication with command headquarters, through the loitering Orion during the urgent final search, was vital. Only later did we learn that, because of atmospheric conditions, the communications link with Saigon consisted of the P-3 aircraft on station relaying to another P-3 revving up its engines on the ground at its airbase while parked next to a phone booth. A flight crew member would run out to the phone and relay the messages between Saigon and us.

One other significant factor made the mission possible. It could only have been done by a nuclear-powered submarine. That experience gave me

great admiration for the diesel-boat crews and skippers of World War II. We had more margin for error than they did because of their speed limitations owing to low battery capacity. If we made a mistake on the Sculpin, we could make it up through speed and repositioning. which couldn't be done with a diesel boat. Certainly our speed came in handy, not only in the basic trail, trying to stay up with a ship doing 11 knots and do all the things we had to do, but also during that period when we lost them. We were able to run quickly forward, reposition up the track, and get a chance to pick them up again. But that blackout period was a low point. We had trailed the ship 2,300 miles and thought we'd lost her.

#### **Hidden Valor**

The trawler's crew verified that their ship was a gunrunner. They had on board enough arms and ammunition to supply the Vietcong in IV Corps for at least 60 days. Her destruction thus made a significant contribution to the safety of U.S. and South Vietnamese troops in the area and set back the enemy's military operations there.

The surviving crew were North Vietnamese. They were split up, with U.S. and South Vietnamese intelligence each interrogating half and their stories compared. It was determined that the navigator's responses were credible because he provided interrogators with exactly the same track we plotted. The United States learned much about the North Vietnamese at-sea resupply strategy.

It also learned that the trawler crews were not elite forces that would resist until death. One engineer told of being at his station when the political officer came to the engine room hatch, told him the enemy had arrived, and ordered him to stay at his post. The

engineer, no doubt considering the nature of the cargo, said, "I immediately went on deck and jumped into the water."

It was an unusual operation. We spent more time submerged inside the 100-fathom curve than any U.S. submarine since World War II. Crew training, equipment reliability, ship control, navigation, sonar, communications, propulsion plant—everything and everyone performed superbly. We could not have asked for anything more. For that operation the Sculpin earned the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the only U.S. submarine during the entire Vietnam War to receive that award.

The Sculpin was also nominated for the submarine combat patrol pin, and our individual awards for the combat "V." If that had been approved, she would have been the first submarine since World War II to get the combat patrol pin. Instead, the nomination was disapproved somewhere up the chain of command. I assume it was probably rejected by a World War II submariner who thought the operation wasn't nearly as hazardous as what he did during his war, and it didn't measure up. I can't argue with that, but the crew had great hope that they could proudly wear the pin for their contribution, particularly to the safety of our troops.

Another consideration, however, might have been that those pins would have raised questions and possibly compromised an operation that was still classified. We covered a huge distance in trail during that operation. Someone asked me later how I slept at night. I said, "With a pillow under my head, up against the bulkhead in case we hit something."

Admiral Larson went on to serve on active duty for 40 years. His senior position was as commander-in-chief of

all United States military forces in the Pacific. Captain Wright served 26 years on active duty. He was commanding officer of USS Puffer (SSN-652) and operations officer for Commander Submarine Group Seven. Mr. Stillwell, the former editor of Naval History and the U.S. Naval Institute Oral History Program, has written the "Looking Back" column since 1993.

#### **Cold War Records**

This article is the result of merging my notes and recollections with those of Clint Wright, who stood a good many watches as Sculpin's officer of the deck during the pursuit of the trawler. Clint also gained access to the unclassified versions of the submarine's deck logs. Other OODs during the operation included Lieutenants Dick Snaider, Jim Gabala, Alan Beam, and Charlie Krupnick.

Getting our joint account through security review was an interesting challenge. Clint's original motive was to publish an article, because he wanted the Sculpin Sailors to get credit for what they did. My motive was to try and get it cleared for my oral history, so at least part of our special operations could be made public to my family and to other interested people. We jointly pursued this effort, dealing with the director of Naval Intelligence and several people who used to work for me. The first thing we discovered was that there were absolutely no records of the Sculpin's operations. They had all been destroyed. This highlights weaknesses in the Naval Intelligence Command's record keeping.

As far as we can determine, the Navy had its standard Cold War intelligence gathering, what we called "special operations," which were classified and compartmentalized. Those reports appear to have been

preserved. But because the Sculpin's Vietnam operation was not in that category—it was a more conventional, although extremely unusual, operation and didn't have the protection of that system—the reports were purged at some point when the government discarded old records. There is just no official record of this operation.

In putting this story together and sending it forward for clearance by the Navy Department, I think we did a double service. We not only got it cleared so those who served in the Sculpin during this time can receive credit, but we made this operation public and prevented it from being lost forever. At some point, an old Sculpin Sailor would have wanted to talk about it, and there would have been no way to find the records. So I'm very pleased that we were able to do that for our fine crew.

—Admiral Charles R. Larson

Footnote: I was on board and typed all the reports and award recommendations at the time, so I was aware of the entire operation as it unfolded, more so than most including Radio, Sonar, Navigation, Diving Stand; just about everyone except the CO, XO, & OPS.

I found out some 35 or so vears after this op, thru Adm Larson, that the munitions discussed in article were being sent from Hanoi thru South Vietnam for North Vietnamese Communist soldiers on the Cambodian/Vietnam border. A superior force (by something like 10 or 12 to 1) of NVC had surrounded an American unit (don't remember if Marines or Army); however, the NVC were unable to take advantage of their superiority due to a scarcity of munitions. The NVC force were virtually out of munitions. This trawler was re-supplying the force to attack the American unit. After the destruction of the trawler, the U.S. force was able to extract with practically no causalities. Even though all boat sailors did their part and most never get recognized - It is satisfying to know, even decades later, that we helped save U.S. lives. jim hunnicutt

## **Correction to National Ballot**

There is a "typo" in the National Ballot published in the American submariner. The Candidate's names and the Proposed Amendments were supposed to have check boxes next to them. In the conversion of formats for publishing, the boxes did not "cross over."

When you make your selection of candidate mark an "X" next to the candidate's name or circle the name. When voting for the PAs, mark your choice under the "YES" or "NO" column

Thanks, Tom Conlon, National Secretary

## Well Said

Submitted by: Glenn Barts, Sr., original source unknown

Occasionally, I venture back to one or another military post, where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, Sir!"

Every time I go back to any Military Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.

The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced -- a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their uniforms, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the singsong answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business -- especially in times of war. But, I miss the salutes I'd throw at senior officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed with a "by-your-leave" sir.

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds.

I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

Face it guys - we all miss it.....Whether you had one tour or a career, it shaped your life.

## **Crash Dive Base Contact Information**

**Commander** – Clayton Hill, 195 Clover Lane, Cedarburg, WI 53012; 262-377-5332 (work number) or bisi@ameritech.net

**Vice-Commander** – Frank Voznak, Jr. 9 South 255 Madison, Burr Ridge, IL. 60527 630 986-0175 franklin2@comcast.net

**Secretary (POC)** – Chris Gaines, 513 West Downer Place, Aurora, IL 60506; 630-892-5718 or <a href="mailto:ccgaines@mindspring.com">ccgaines@mindspring.com</a>

**Treasurer** – Glenn C. Barts, Sr., 2000 Jamestown Drive, Palatine, IL 60074; 847-934-7418; gcbarts@msn.com

COB - Larry Warnke, I warnke@msn.com

Chaplain - Glenn Barts, Sr.

**Storekeeper** – Herman Mueller, 503 Lynn Terrace, Waukegan, IL 60085; 847-445-5034; hermanandlorimueller@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor - Chris Gaines

Base Historian - Frank Voznak, Jr.



## **APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

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Regular	П	Lite 🗆	<ol> <li>Associate</li> </ol>	П

OUR CREED: "To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America & its Constitution."

With my signature below I affirm that I subscribe to the Creed of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., and agree to abide by the Constitution, all Bylaws, Regulations and Procedures governing the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., so long as they do not conflict with my military or civil obligations. I will furnish proof of my eligibility for Regular membership, including my discharge under honorable conditions, and proof of my U.S. Navy (SS) Designation, if required by the Base or the national Membership Chairman. If I am not discharged, the discharge requirement is waived. If I am not U.S. N. submarine qualified, I am applying as an Associate and my sponsor is indicated below.

☐ I certify that I was designated qu	alified in USN Submarines aboar	rd in (Yr)				
(Honorary designations regardless of source do not apply under any circumstances.)  □ I certify that I received a discharge under Honorable Conditions (if not currently in military service) in (Yr						
Name: (Print /Type)	Address:					
City:	State: Zip Code:	Tel: ()				
Signature:		/				
Your E-Mail Address	Base/Chapter Desired:					
The Member Dues year runs from Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> thru Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> . Please indicate your term preference:						
		Other (specify)				
YOUR U.S. NAVY BIOGRAPHICAL DATA  Date Of Birth (MM/DD/YY)/   If other military service, What Branch?  Highest Rate & Rank Attained:   Mil Retired (Y/N):   On Active Duty? (Y/N):  YR entered Mil Service:   YR left Mil Service   (Active/Inactive reserve time also counts.)						
		ny (Use back if you need more space.)				
1.	Hull#	From Yr to Yr				
2	Hull#	From Yr to Yr				
3	Hull#	From Yr to Yr				
4	Hull#	From Yr to Yr				
5.	Hull#	From Yr to Yr				
Next of Kin: Name:	Relationship: _	(Spouse, Partner, Son, Dau, Parent, Other)				
-	y: State: e this address line blank if the same a	Zip: Tel:				
Applicants on active duty are requested to provide a permanent home address.						

Upon completion, give this form, including your National and Base membership dues to the appropriate base officer, or mail to: Crash Dive Secretary, Chris Gaines, 513 W. Downer Place, Aurora, IL 60506: 630-892-5718