



# ™ S.O.S. Carefree Times

*Give me your bald, your gray, your masses of former beach bums yearning to be free!*

Official newsletter of the S.O.S. ... Gene Laughter - Editor, Publisher, Stamp Licker and Go-fer

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## S.O.S. SPRING SAFARI '86 ... THE BIG CHILL

B-r-r-r , it was cold, but this didn't seem to chill the party spirits of the some 2,500 S.O.S.ers who converged on O.D. for the long grueling weekend! Fat Harold's and Crazy Zack's seemed to be more crowded than usual due to the fact that it was too cold to utilize the outside party space! The S.O.S. has endured a record snow at the beach, a hurricane and now bone-chilling weather on the first week end of Spring. Hey, we're about due for a break! *P.S. we had beautiful S.O.S. Spring Safari T-shirts for the event. We should have had sweaters! Anyway, there are some left and they'll be available at Golden Oldies.*

**BUSHES AT THE BEACH AND THE PAD ...** Happy days are almost here again as Bill Griffin, owner of the Bushes in Greensboro, will re-open the **Pad and Bushes at the Beach** in the old Harold's Across the Street location. Opening date: May 15 (providing Bill doesn't run into typical beach licensing red tape and problems). The Pad will operate as a college age hang-out except for S.O.S. functions, when it will be an Oldies joint for S.O.S.ers! **Bushes at the Beach** will be a beach music club once again! Bill plans his Grand Opening for B.A.T.B. the same week end as Golden Oldies!

## COMING EVENTS ...

S.O.S. **GOLDEN OLDIES** at Fat Harolds ... May 14-18.  
(More info in this issue).

SHAGGERS LTD. "**SHAG EXPLOSION**"... June 13 -15TH at Holiday Inn Airport, Greensboro NC! For more info, contact Shaggers, Ltd. P.O. Box 6482. High Point NC 27262

J.B.B.A. **SHAGGING ON THE BOARDWALK IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA!** JUNE 12-14 (More info in this issue).

*The Grand Daddy of them All ...*  
**S.O.S. MIGRATION VII ... September 10-14**

**SEA MERCHANTS RESTAURANT JOINS S.O.S. 10% YEAR 'ROUND DISCOUNT PROGRAM!** Fine food and great atmosphere. Give it a try! Show your S.O.S. card when placing your order, please!

**Thanks for your notes, calls, thoughts and prayers**  
I had no idea, when I announced the unexpected, untimely death of our son-in-law, Phil Summers, in the last newsletter, what an outpouring of response it would bring. We received literally hundreds of calls and notes from S.O.S. members alone. I wish we could acknowledge each one of them individually. We hope that those of you that contacted us will understand and accept this message as our heart felt thanks.

You know, S.O.S. is a fun organization and we tend to forget that we all have a serious side. You just never realize how much people really care ... until you need them. Thanks again on behalf of Kim, Matthew, Nadine and myself. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

## CAREFREE TIMES ... THE NEW LOOK!

*Over the past several years, S.O.S. has plowed lots of big bucks into computer equipment. This was an absolute necessity in order to manage the membership mailing list. Now we have an Apple Laserwriter Printer which will change and improve the looks and quality of our newsletter, CAREFREE TIMES, making it a more professional looking publication. We hope you'll like it!*

## THE S.O.S. COMPUTER EXPERIENCE ...

*Skip over this column unless you're into computers!*  
For those computer buffs among the membership, here's a brief history of the S.O.S. computer experience.

Prior to starting the S.O.S. I had never touched a computer and was an extreme radical, anti-computer zealot! After a year, or so, of hand addressing all newsletters and mailings, and maintaining the mailing list on 3x5" cards, I gave in ... learning that a personal computer was an absolute necessity if S.O.S. was to survive!

We started out with an Osborne computer and an Epson printer (which S.O.S. still owns) and used DBase II (which I never learned to operate past a beginners level) as a data base. The Osborne Corp. went into Charter 11 and there was virtually no software support.

We then purchased the first 126K Apple Macintosh delivered in Richmond, along with an external disk drive and an Imagewriter printer and shelved the Osborne. I had to hand enter the membership list from DBase II to Main Street, the 1st primitive (and buggy) data base program for the Mac. The Macintosh was upgraded to 512K the first week this upgrade was available and we then bought a Bernoulli Box hard disk, and imported the membership list to Overvue, a faster, more powerful data base.

We also purchased a Thunderscan digitizer and a wide assortment of software. Now we have the Apple Laserwriter (a 6 grand item!) and plan to upgrade the 512K Mac to a Mac Plus, with a megabyte of internal memory, and purchase the Apple Hard Disc 20. Next will come Aldus Software's Pagemaker, a \$500 floppy disc!

We've outgrown Overvue and I hate the thought of learning a new data base program, but must find one that will handle our needs soon. When I find the better data base, hopefully, this will round out our computer needs for the next couple of years!

But, you know, something new and better will come out, and, off we'll go again! We've paid top dollar on all computer purchases and have naturally then watched the prices drastically drop on hardware and upgrades, but that's the price one pays for staying on "the leading edge!"

## SNOOPY SAVED THE DAY

by Gene Laughter

We were dog-tired on that Saturday afternoon back in the early part of the summer of '80. It had been a long, fruitless day of hunting party space - a headquarters for the first S.O.S., and Tom Lilly and I were quietly depressed as we stood at the Alpine Deli bar up in the Surfwood Shopping Center. We had been put down at every call. No one was interested in providing party space for that first S.O.S. The beach community wanted golfers, not old jitterbugs. We had talked with the Chamber of Commerce, hotels, motels. Let's face it, we had zero credibility!

Our day, and trip, had been completely wasted. A burn-out. Forget it! Time for a few beers. The Alpine Deli just happened to be the closest bar at hand.

They were definitely standouts, those flashy pants Tom was wearing! They were white and embellished with little embroidered red and blue Snoopies piloting their open-cockpit airplanes. Snoopy was diving and flying all over Tom's pants; goggles gleaming, scarves trailing, firing bursts of tiny machine guns at invisible Red Barons that lurked behind non-existent clouds. I was embarrassed!

We finished up the first beer in short order and called for a second round. Our mood had changed. Forget the S.O.S. problems. Suddenly we were laughing, kidding and joking.

A stranger walked up and stood next to us at the bar quietly listening to our conversation. "I really like those pants," he said to both of us in general. He was only making polite bar conversation.

"You and I are about the same size," Tom bellowed, "you can have them. My friend makes fun of them. They're yours! C'mon to the men's room. We'll exchange pants." Tom's generous offer stunned the stranger. It was obvious ... the stranger's mind was reeling! What had he gotten into? Reluctantly he followed the insistent Tom Lilly into the men's rest room.

I was amused and ordered another round of beer while they exchanged their pants in the men's room.

Soon the two of them returned to the bar laughing and admiring the fit of the stranger's new Snoopy pants. He had his own plane, the stranger confessed, and thus had a keen interest in objets d' aero.

We made happy talk over several more rounds with our new-found friend.

"You guys are just great! What are you doing here ... golfers?" he inquired.

"No, we're here trying to plan a party for a bunch of old beach bums," I explained, recounting the problems that we were having in finding a headquarters location for the upcoming first S.O.S.

"Come with me," he exclaimed, "I own a large ocean front hotel ... it is on its knees, about belly up ... and it's yours! Use it as you wish! Let's go down to my hotel right now for drinks and dinner!"

The stranger's name was Gordon McMean. Gordon's hotel was the Oak Tree Inn. The rest is history!

The old Oak Tree Inn became the headquarters and the site of that infamous first S.O.S. Migration, perhaps one of the best beach parties ever thrown, and remained S.O.S. headquarters until it was sold and became the Maritime Beach Club and changed to a time sharing concept which froze us out.

***Snoopy, and a chance meeting of a total stranger at a bar, saved the day ... and, perhaps, the S.O.S.!***

The history of the S.O.S. is penned in ink of happenstance. Our book is filled with bolts from the blue rather than genius of grand plan or design.

When people ask me what is the S.O.S. going to do two or three years from now, I shudder. Long range planning just doesn't fit our "on-the-edge" philosophy. We won't even buy green bananas!

Fate will certainly help shape the future of the S.O.S., as it has so deftly molded our past.

*Perhaps next week, or next month, or next year, at some quaint, secluded bar, up will walk a stranger!*



*The Jacksonville Beach Bop Association*  
**Invites ALL S.O.S.ers to**  
**SHAG ON THE BOARDWALK**  
in Jacksonville, Florida ... **JUNE 12, 13 & 14th**  
**BOOGIE on Down to the JAX RIVER WALK ...**  
*Wear an S.O.S. T-Shirt to identify yourself as an S.O.S.er!*

**Sponsors:** Jacksonville Beach Bop Association, Sheraton at St. John's Place and the City of Jacksonville.  
**Official Hqs. Hotel - Sheraton at St. John's Place .**  
For reservations, call (904) 396-5100.

**Special Rates:** \$50 per room per night for 1 to 4 people ... includes Welcome cocktail, reception on Friday afternoon and a continental breakfast each day. Live band Saturday night.

**HOLD ON, JAX, HERE COMES THE S.O.S.!**  
Many of the 300 members of the Jacksonville Beach Bop Association are also members of the S.O.S. and these Jax S.O.S.ers have traveled to O.D. for the past couple years ... now they want all S.O.S. members to join them for a 3-Day Florida-style outdoor waterside party weekend!

**FLORIDA MIGRATION!** It's the Jacksonville Beach Bop Association's own S.O.S. type weekend at the all new RIVER WALK boardwalk ... combining outdoor waterside shaggin' and partying! It will be a day and night party with beach music, booze and shaggin' on the boardwalk ... and in the clubs located along the boardwalk ... all within walking distance from your luxury hotel! **There will be special dance floors for J.B.B.A. members only ... and memberships will be available on the spot for \$10 per person ...** good for the entire weekend and the balance of 1986! Park your car, stroll the boardwalk, sip at outdoor bars, bask in the Florida sun and shag to beach music on one of the many dance floors! D.J.'s will be playing your beach music favorites all weekend along the River Walk!

**FOR YOU EARLY BIRDS ...** the weekend beach party and dancing begins on Thursday night!

**THE DRINK SAVINGS WILL PAY FOR YOUR J.B.B.A. MEMBERSHIP IN A MATTER OF HOURS!** The Friday party starts at 2pm with beach music and beverages. J.B.B.A. members drink prices at the Sheraton for the entire weekend are: **beer, wine and house brand drinks for only a BUCK ...** hey, that's right ... only a \$1.00 bill! (Note to the Sheraton Food and Beverage Manager: Better stock up those bars, baby, this crowd doesn't mess around!) Plenty of special food prices, too!

The Sheraton will host a reception on Friday from 4pm 'til 7pm (including **free drinks 'n' hors d'oeuvres**) to welcome J.B.B.A. members. Be there at 4:00 wearing an S.O.S T-Shirt! Friday night will feature beach music up and down the River Walk played by D.J.'s ! Rock on!

Lots of party events are planned for Saturday including a noon-time shag and bop beginners clinic. Dancing and partying starts at 2pm. A band will play for your entertainment on Saturday night at the Sheraton.

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**Participating bars and restaurants,  
all on the JAX waterfront River Walk:**

**Sheraton River Rally**  
**Crawdaddy's**  
**Harbour Master/Diamond Head**  
**Hilton**

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**MIGRATE!** For room reservations, call Nan Coyle (an S.O.S. member) at the Sheraton at St. John's Place ... (904) 396-5100. For additional *Shag on the Boardwalk* info, call J.B.B.A. Hot Line ... (904) 778-3238.

***This looks like a big one, gang, and a great party for S.O.S.ers in a new and different locale and setting! Make your room reservations TODAY!!***

**SPECIAL 35% S.O.S. GROUP DISCOUNT AIRLINE FARES TO JACKSONVILLE** and the "Shag on the Boardwalk Party" ... Even though you fly individually! Just say you want to go to the Jax Shag on the Boardwalk Party and Eastern will do the rest! As the S.O.S. "Official Airline," Eastern will handle your flight arrangements, even if you're flying out of a city not serviced by Eastern. Just call the toll-free number and we'll book you on Eastern or the airline of your choice! Call and make your flight reservations early for best availability!

Toll free **1-800-468-7022**

You must refer to easy access number: **EZ 6BP23**





"Give me your bald, your gray, your masses of former beach bums yearning to be free ..."

## S.O.S. "Golden Oldies"

at the mecca ... Fat Harold's ... May 14-18

Fat Harold Honors those S.O.S.ers Who are at Least 39 Years Young ... and Older, with a Beach Party Weekend of Our Very Own! All WILL BE CARDED!

O.K., you over-the-hill gang, this Bud's for YOU!

**Some of you may have forgotten!** The S.O.S. started in 1980 as a reunion of the beach cats from the 40's, 50's and 60's ... and now, it's back to the basics for this S.O.S. "Golden Oldies" weekend! To get in Fat Harold's for this one, you'll need two things ... your '86 **S.O.S. card** and your **I.D.** showing you were **born in 1947 or earlier.**

*(Hell, 1947 seems like only yesterday to me. Many of you S.O.S.ers were already working on the beach by '47! I'm just a youngster ... didn't start life guarding down at O.D. until 1951)*

There's only one way to enter Harold's doors without these credentials for Golden Oldies weekend: *If you're an S.O.S.er younger than 39, but married to a Golden Oldie and are with your spouse, or escorted by an oldster of 39 or older, we'll let you in, but only if you're in the company of the Golden Oldie!*

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*In case you're interested in how we came up with the minimum age of 39 ... we have a space on this year's S.O.S. application for "age".*

*We've been astounded at just how many members we have that are 39 years old. 1947 must have been some year, huh? Especially for female births! Since we have such an abundance of 39 year old gals, we decided that 39 should naturally be the cut off!*

### PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOLDEN OLDIES PARTY:

A "Spring Break" for the bald, the gray, the bad and the beautiful, the old and the restless. An adult party for you oldsters with beer, booze, beach music, shaggin', jitterbuggin', fun and friendship.

### HEADQUARTERS ... FAT HAROLD'S OVERFLOW BACK-UP ... THE PAD

*Both of these clubs will strictly enforce the 39 (and over) rule for the Golden Oldies weekend and not allow any teenie boppers of 38 (and under) in the clubs!*

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT ... MAY 14

Early Bird's Party for old buzzards at Fat Harold's ... S.O.S. membership renewals available.

### THURSDAY ... MAY 15

Happy hour at fat Harold's from 1-6pm! Free draft beer and nibbling goodies available at Fat Harold's from 3 'til 5pm. S.O.S. membership cards available at Fat Harold's and the Pad. Stiff cover charge for Non-S.O.S.ers at both Fat Harold's and the Pad. Beach music D.J.'s day and night at both clubs. Fat Harold's and the Pad will stay open as long as the over-the-hillers can keep going!

### FRIDAY ... MAY 16

Free draft beer and nibbling goodies available at Fat Harold's from 3 'til 5pm. S.O.S. membership cards available at Fat Harold's and the Pad. Heavy cover charge for Non-S.O.S.ers at both Fat Harold's and the Pad. Beach music D.J.'s all day and night at both clubs. Fat Harold's and the Pad will stay open as long as the senile shaggers can keep it shakin'!

### SATURDAY ... MAY 17

**Free cookout for S.O.S. GOLDEN OLDIES ONLY at Fat Harold's!** S.O.S. membership cards available at Fat Harold's and the Pad. Heavy cover charge for Non-S.O.S.ers at both Fat Harold's and the Pad. Beach music D.J.'s all day and night at both clubs. Fat Harold's and the Pad must lock the doors at 2am ... it's the silly law.

### SUNDAY ... MAY 18

Noon Bon Voyage surprise party at Fat Harold's!

S.O.S. membership applications **arriving** after May 8 will not be returned back in time for the Golden Oldies weekend!

# We Get Letters

"Here's our application. The last names are now the same. We met last March at S.O.S. and have been inseparable ever since. We were married February 7, 1986. Thanks for S.O.S. It has made a wonderful difference in our lives. We will be there every S.O.S."

**Bert & Brenda Sanford ... Simpsonville, S.C.**

## Shaggin' ...

*"The S.O.S. Migration meets at Ocean Drive ...*

*The shaggin' gets in your blood,  
and your feet come alive.*

*The sounds of Earl Bostic float over the beach ...  
while ya' keep a cold beer well within reach.*

*To listen to the memorable tunes of the Drifters ..  
I'll meet ya' at O.D. ... all you Brothers and Sisters."*

**Jim Phillips ... Spartanburg, S.C.**

## O.D.

After a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Army, my father retired in 1950 and took us back to the family home in Camden, S.C.

My mother had relatives scattered throughout the Carolinas. But her favorite sister lived in Florence, S.C. She and her husband had bought some beach front property on the coast in the late 30's and built a single family cottage on it. They named the cottage the "Fran-Ma-Ra." It was located on an obscure, little known beach called Ocean Drive. (As a historical note, the cottage stands today on the same lot where it was originally built - having survived Hurricane Hazel in 1954).

Vacation plans were discussed at length that summer of 1950. And at the suggestion of Mrs. Smith, my mother's sister, we decided to go to Ocean Drive and stay at the "Fran-Ma-Ra" for 2 weeks in August.

That was the first time I went to Ocean Drive. I was a late blooming teenager, interested in photography. And I thought I danced the jitterbug pretty good. I'd learned how on the west coast one summer. And, before that, I'd been enrolled in a ballroom dance class in Columbia, S.C. at age 12. So, I got to O.D. anticipating a fun summer vacation.

The cottage was located about one mile and a half south of Robert's Pavilion. And back then none of the streets were paved. So it took a while to walk the distance from the cottage to the pavilion's two open-air dance floors.

Well, it didn't take me long to find out my dance style didn't fit Ocean Drive's. So, morning, afternoon and night I hung out at the pavilion, watching the shag and taking pictures. Finally, towards the end of my vacation, a girl took pity on me and taught me the basic shag step and the pivot turn. From then on, there was no way to go but up! I discovered shaggin' was a lot more fun and more complicated than the jitterbug. Next summer didn't seem so far away.

That summer of 1950 was special. Ocean Drive introduced me to people living in a rustic, carefree environment I hadn't known before.

The dance art form it exposed me to has become grafted into my lifestyle. All through the 50's, and into the 60's, we went back to O.D. to enjoy the beach, renew old friendships, and start new ones.

Now, it's my turn. And, I'm helping the next generation discover a little different - but no less fun - Ocean Drive.

**Sumner Waite ... Atlanta, GA**

*(Editor's note: I remember Sumner well from those glory days of the early 50's at O.D. I was a life guard there then and befriended him. I'm so glad he had such a keen interest in photography for few of us have photos from those memorable years. Sumner made many of the great pictures from the 50's that ran in last year's S.O.S. yearbook, "Memories.")*



## CLASSIFIEDS ...

Send your reply to S.O.S., P.O. Box 8343, Richmond, VA 23226 addressed to proper ad number. If you wish to place an ad in a future newsletter, they're only \$5, space permitting. We reserve the right to edit all ads and to reject ads of poor taste.

**8+ Female** age 40. I.S.O. S.M. age 45-50 to be date at Fall S.O.S. I'm petite and blonde. Interested in all types of music. Movies. Fun. Fishing. Make your cast! (AD NO. 108)

**Wanted. 1980 S.O.S. T-Shirt.** Size Large. Will pay \$50 or trade mint condition, never worn Large 1981 T-Shirt. (AD NO. 101)

**Wanted. Size XL 1983 S.O.S. T-Shirt.** Send your asking price. Also seeking 1980 S.O.S. newsletter. (AD NO. 102)

**For sale. First S.O.S. yearbook, "The Long Road Back."** \$25 or best offer. (AD NO. 103)

**For sale or Trade. 1981 "I Survived S.O.S." T-Shirt,** size M. \$65. Never worn, never washed. (AD NO. 104)

**Wanted. '80, '81, '83 S.O.S. T-Shirts.** Any size. Must be in very good condition. (AD NO. 105)

**HELP! Need S.O.S. Yearbook, "Deja Vu."** (AD NO. 107)

**Charming Charlotte D.M. (44)** I.S.O. S.F. 25-40. Enjoys beach music. Jazz. Dancing. Beach weekends. Dream girl must enjoy travel, be a looker, non-smoker and have good sense of humor. (AD NO. 109)

**JANICE** - I met you at Spring Safari. Lost your last name and address. I'm the tall guy with black hair who bought you a drink on Sat afternoon at Fat Harold's. Help! Want to see you again before Sept.! Send name, address and phone number. Doug (AD NO. 111)

**FOR RENT ... 4 BR Ocean Front Condo**  
**Luxury! 1st floor Unit B-1, Island Dunes.**  
**3 full baths. All electric with color TV,**  
**dishwasher, washer / dryer, icemaker,**  
**telephone, etc. Swimming pool. Sheets**  
**furnished. Located 14th Ave. 1 mi. S. of**  
**Fat Harolds. Owned by Gene and Nadine**  
**Laughter. Available by wk during season.**  
**Wkends off season. Call Lewis Co.**





Thumbing to the beach ... '54  
George Hall and Gene Laughter



S.O.S. Carefree Times  
P.O. Box 8343  
Richmond, VA 23226

Coming up ... S.O.S. Golden Oldies Weekend in May!



SAWYER, PHIL & CHICK  
1709 ORIOLE RD  
COLUMBIA, SC 29204

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO 464  
Richmond VA

### 1986 S.O.S. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Memberships are for the calendar year and expire on December 31, 1986.  
MAIL TO S.O.S. / P.O. BOX 8343 / RICHMOND, VA 23226  
**NO MAIL APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED THAT ARRIVE AFTER AUGUST 15.**  
No S.O.S. cards to be mailed out between May 9 and May 20!  
S.O.S. reserves the right to cut off memberships at such time as the membership rolls reach capacity.

#### RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

If renewal, check here if address has changed since last mailing \_\_\_\_\_  
IF NEW MEMBER, NAME S.O.S. SPONSORING MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of S.O.S. membership cards @ \$15 per person: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed (Make check or money order payable to S.O.S.): \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

S.O.S. MEMBERSHIPS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE GOLDEN OLDIES AND FALL MIGRATION AT PARTICIPATING BEACH CLUBS DURING THE DAY UNTIL 6PM. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS RE S.O.S., CALL ME AT HOME (NOT OFFICE) AFTER 6PM. GENE LAUGHTER, (804) 741-1926.

**GOLDEN OLDIES ... MAY 14-18**  
**FALL MIGRATION ... SEPT. 10-14**  
S.O.S. / P.O. BOX 8343 / RICHMOND, VA 23226

You must have your card with you to enjoy the benefits. A new card must be purchased in the event you lose your S.O.S. membership card.



# TIME TO RENEW!