



Thoughts and Remembrances of Our “Captain” Heidi

By Jon Allen

Our fellow classmate and friend, Heidi (Lang) Henry, passed away from stage 4 uterine cancer on 9 Jan 2016.

As many of you know, Heidi and I were thesis partners and we ended up writing a 400+ page thesis (most of it was database code). While looking for thesis ideas, I shared a Coast Guard mission need and she was more than willing to support a Coast Guard-related thesis as it had real practical applications. In fact, our thesis ended up as a proof of concept for what later became a hosted mission critical software application used across the entire operational Coast Guard.

Heidi and I were also “neighbors” off of Sloat Ave in Monterey (she lived in an apartment on Fourth St and I lived on Seventh St). We were part of the “walking”, single, commuters to NPS. Early on during our tenure in PL63, we would meet many nights after dinner and go for a walk on campus (it was very quiet at night on campus) ending up walking around Del Monte Lake and trying not to get attacked by the killer geese who called the lake their home. Heidi would sometimes bring bread to feed the geese as sort of a “peace offering”, but I found that it didn’t really work. Since I had arrived in Monterey about 5 months before our class (I had transferred from LORAN Station Iwo Jima and was assigned at the Coast Guard Group in Monterey until PL63 actually began), I was familiar with the area and had made connections with the local Coast Guard including the Yacht Club (where I was skippering and sailing a number of sailboats). While Heidi was not a sailor, I did get her to go out once on one of the sail boats so she could see Monterey from the water and I could tell she really enjoyed being out there. Fortunately, it was a relatively calm day as Heidi had some issues with her knees (as we saw her wearing a brace when she played softball). Regarding softball, she was not only Captain of our championship PL63 software team, but also the NPS men’s team which played successfully in a number of tournaments locally and in the Bay area. She once told me that while I was a .750 hitter, I was also a .750 fielder. When she played, she was a stalwart at first base and could slug with the best of us.

Heidi had an affinity for electronics and had a general Class Amateur Radio license (note - she got me interested and I ultimately got my license). What I found was interesting is that in her spare time (and for “fun and relaxation” as she called it), she would buy HealthKit radio/antenna components and assemble them from scratch. In her apartment, Heidi always had a kit and soldering iron ready to go. While at NPS, I know she completed an antenna tuner and she probably did more. Even towards the end when I visited her in Manassas, she had always something that she was building.

Following her career in the Navy (and I think she left soon after her grad school service time obligation), she ended up in the Washington DC area working for a number of

software development companies. It was here that she met her spouse (Roger Henry) and they got married in January 2004. She also attended my wedding in 1992.

I will always remember Heidi as a very upbeat person, seemingly with a smile on her face or a twinkle in her eye at all times, and she remained jovial and upbeat to the very end. I never saw her get angry and she was always willing to help. In many ways, she was a cornerstone of PL63.

A short note on our classmate Jon Allen: He retired from the US Coast Guard in 1999, then from Xerox in 2018. He now lives in Rochester, New York, does lots of volunteer work, plays golf, swims, and does almost all the cooking, as his wife Terri is a veterinarian and still works part time.