



WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY!

by **Woody Baldwin, Founder, Primetimers World Wide**

Reprinted from Prime Times: January, February, March, 2002, Volume 7, Issue 1.

We've come a long way, Baby. Unless you're at least 50 (and that's assuming you knew you were gay at age 15), you can't remember the "bad old days." Before Stonewall just being gay was one of the worst of crimes. And it took several years after Stonewall for any semblance of gay freedom to reach beyond the big cities.

To be arrested and severely punished, you did not have to be caught in a sexual act; you had merely to be at a gathering of gays to be prosecuted. In Los Angeles in the early 50's, my college roommate was attending a very proper cocktail party (no sex was taking place) when the police entered through a second floor window, and arrested every man there. The next day, on the front page of the Los Angeles Times, was a list of all the persons, along with their home addresses and their places of employment. Joe was a dedicated teacher in the Los Angeles school system, but that was forever his last day of teaching. Not only was his job jeopardized, his whole career was down the drain. His family now knew he was gay. Joe committed suicide.

This scenario with slight modifications took place all over the United States. If these attitudes prevailed today, we would not dare to join Prime Timers; we could not afford to have our names on a gay roster or mailing list. Our Prime Timers meetings, no matter how sedate, could be raided and all present would be jailed with far-reaching consequences. Advertising a meeting of gay people, for whatever reasons, would be unthinkable.

Those of us over 50 can truly appreciate the freedoms we enjoy today as gay men. We must never take for granted our open way of life.

Are you taking full advantage of these freedoms? Prime Timers offers many opportunities to enjoy being gay. The next time you're tempted to become annoyed by some inconsequential action of someone in the club, focus on how far we have come, and count your blessings. The act will seem trivial. If you're in a chapter, support it and Prime Timers Worldwide. If you're an independent member, use your roster to make acquaintances and make every effort to attend some of our worldwide and regional gatherings.

We waited too long getting these freedoms; let's make the most of them. Whatever your age, there is fun to be had without the stresses of pre-Stonewall.

Yes, we've come a long way, Baby, even though it sometimes appears we have a long way to go. Enjoy yourself and enjoy being gay.

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**LIKE UNCLE SAM,
WE WANT YOU!**

Michael Stone, President

That's right; if you're reading this and you haven't enhanced your life by becoming a member of Prime Timers, you need to do so right now. Go to our website at www.primetimersww.org and check out our chapters list! If you don't see a chapter near you then download and send in our Independent Membership application.

This is my seventh year having the privilege to serve on our Prime Timers Worldwide board. When I joined in 2003 we had 52 chapters. Now we're approaching 80. I still run into way too many guys who attend our conventions and regional events but still haven't taken that last important step. They've yet to join! Just do it!

Lots has happened since our last issue and I'm proud to share the news that new chapters continue to join our organization. Last issue I spoke about our 'secret' chapter. I'm keeping it a secret for one more issue. It is now up and running and having meetings twice each week. By next issue I promise to name it. One more hint: it's in the Middle East, far, far away.

Our new Titusville/Melbourne Florida chapter continues to grow. Our new Northern New Jersey chapter is up and running and listed on our website. Our latest chapter in Mobile, Alabama has just had their second event and had 37 new members sign on. By the time you read this they should be



up and listed. I have some men down in the 'Cajun Country' of southern Louisiana working to put together a new chapter that will reach from Baton Rouge south! I'm also awaiting word on our Liverpool/Manchester chapter so that we can list them on our website.

We're hoping before the end of this year to be able to tell you about chapters in Lubbock, TX, Cedar Rapids, IA, Rochester, NY, San Luis Obispo, CA, Salt Lake City, UT, Orange County, CA (c'mon guys out there we need to get this up and rolling), Santa Cruz, CA, Jacksonville, FL, West Palm Beach, FL and Vienna, Austria. Contact me or Don McVay and together let's make this happen! We'll do everything possible to support and work with you. If you didn't see your city listed here then contact me!

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FOUNDER FILOSOFY

BY WOODY BALDWIN, PRIME TIMERS FOUNDER

Do something utterly ridiculous. I can empathize with the person who is stuck in a highly emotional and physically challenging job/family/community-responsible position wanting to go to a quiet, secluded island for vacation where they can read a good book and get away from all the pressure. I can also empathize with the person who day-to-day has to maintain a frustrating dignity who wants to go to a wild thickly-populated place where they can shed their dignity and be completely anonymous and live on the wild side for their vacation.

When your plate has too much on it to cope with, making you depressed and irritable, get out of your rut and do something ridiculous (completely out of character with your usual persona and behavior) and go back to your usual routine with a smile on your face and ready to face those challenges that two weeks ago seemed insurmountable.

I am convinced that either alternative more often than not will solve your problems and make you a happier, saner, more responsible person until time to repeat the phenomenon.

People who know me are aware that this has been my approach to keeping a stable life since I first became a member of a profession where I was, in the eyes of the public, expected to be a dignified, "morally" responsible person. I am inclined to believe I was successful because I reached every goal I could possibly have hoped to achieve professionally and then some.

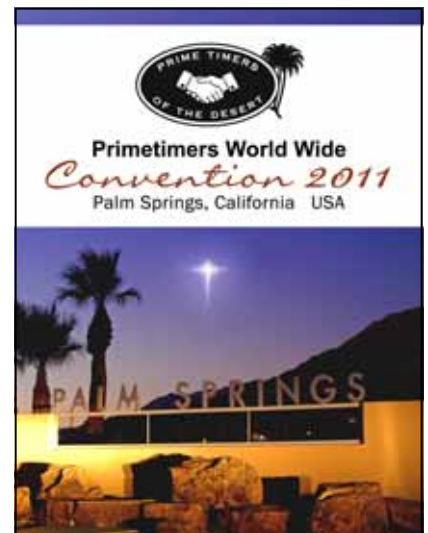
But while I know it would not work for everyone, I followed the latter course. My idea of "getting away from it all" was to go to New York or Mardi Gras where no one knew me or cared how I behaved. Relaxing with a good book in a quiet place was at the bottom on my priority list of vacation choices. People with a different set of expectations should behave differently. But, whatever, do something ridiculous.

PRIME TIMERS OF THE DESERT SET 2011 CONVENTION HOTEL AND SCHEDULE

The Prime Timers of the Desert, Palm Springs, CA, is very excited to be hosting the World Wide Convention 2011. The Host Hotel is the beautiful Riviera Resort and Spa. The price for the room is \$129.00 plus tax with up to four people per room. The dates are November 2nd through the 6th, 2011. All of the activities have not been determined at this time, so the total cost of the convention isn't yet available. However, PTOD is planning for the following:

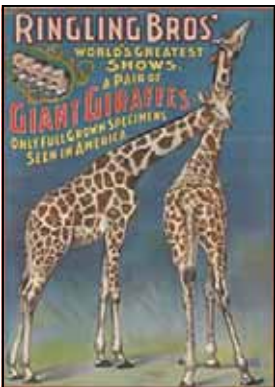
Wednesday, November 2	Registration for Convention
Thursday, November 3	Registration continued Mixer with a D J for dancing pleasure
Friday, November 4	Dinner with Entertainment
Saturday, November 5	Banquet with Entertainment
Sunday, November 6	Brunch

The convention coincides with Palm Springs' Pride Weekend. We had our first meeting to discuss what type of Entertainment and activities we need to plan for the Convention. We appreciate any ideas and suggestions you want to make. Please send your e-mail to Wayne Patterson, Awayne1940@aol.com, or telephone him, 1-760-904-5361. More detailed information will be in the next Newsletter, and in information sent to each chapter. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend the World Wide Convention 2011.



SARASOTA PLANNING GREAT HALLOWEEN GATHERING

October 28-31, 2010



Sarasota Primetimers announced details of their Halloween Regional Gathering to be held Thursday, October 28 through Sunday, October 31 at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota on Sarasota Bay. The weekend is packed with opportunities for fun. It kicks-off with a reception on Thursday evening, including casual food and plenty of it, as well as a

cash bar. The pool will be open, and bathing suits are welcome.

Friday includes a number of reasonably priced optional trips, including transportation. Most of the trips are all day. They include visits to the Ringling Circus Museums (\$19); the Mote Marine Aquarium and an Eco-Boat tour of Sarasota Bay (\$32); or the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (\$15). Free excursions include transportation to the world famous St. Armand's Circle shopping area, and sunbathing on the snow-white sands of Lido Beach.

Friday evening features a Gay Halloween Gala, included in the package for gathering attendees, with attendance from the Sarasota/Bradenton gay community.



(Appropriate) costumes are permitted, and encouraged. There will be

lots of food, and a one hour open bar, with cash bar the balance of the evening.

Saturday features the Sarasota Pride Fest, which is free. The Pride Fest is a short walking distance from the hotel, although shuttle service will be offered to those with difficulty walking. Saturday

See great aquatic species at Mote Marine Aquarium

evening features an optional trip to The Flamingo Club in St. Petersburg; \$25

buys you transportation, a buffet dinner, and a free drink coupon.



An optional Goodbye Brunch is offered on Sunday morning for \$30.

The package deal is \$129 until June 30, \$139 from July 1 to September 1, and \$149 thereafter. The gathering is hosted at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota where rooms are available for \$129 a night (1-888-421-1442, Group Code G-TTA1; on line www.sarasotahyatt.com).

There are also rooms at the Hotel Indigo, a boutique hotel across from the Hyatt, for \$119 (1-941-487-3800, ask for the Prime-Timer Rate); and the Hyatt Place Sarasota/Bradenton Airport for \$99 (1-888-492-8847, online

www.hyattplacesarasotabradenton.com, ask for Convention Code G-LPT1. Transportation to and from the Host Hotel will be provided as available.)

Travel is easy to Sarasota, with several major airlines providing service. The airport code is SRQ for those of you who like to book your own travel online. For forms and additional detailed information, go to www.primetimerssarasota.org.



Some of the great flowers at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

PRIME TIMERS OF FT. LAUDERDALE CHAPTER GETS COVERED IN SOUTH FLORIDA GAY NEWS

A. Sebastian Fortino, South Florida Gay News

In 1987 Prime Timer's Founder Woody Baldwin decided—or realized—that there were few social outlets for older gay men. He wanted something more substantial than mere nightlife, and more socially fulfilling than Sage, whose mission, while still relevant, is LGBT elder advocacy.

His first meeting in Boston has—over the past 23 years—spawned an international organization dedicated to gay seniors.

“At the Fort Lauderdale chapter, organized in June of 2003, we now have about 240 members. Worldwide,” boasts current Fort Lauderdale chapter president Henry Penas, “there are thousands of us.”

He is proud to say of those 240 local members, 106 attended the last general meeting to discuss upcoming events and enjoy a potluck supper. Penas relocated to Florida from Brooklyn in 2000 with his partner of 41 years whom he met on a subway in NYC.

As discussed in [Joey Amato's article last week](#) about aging in the gay community, many older individuals face challenges. Prime Timers ensures members that they have a social organization where they can make friends with like-minded peers.

“We offer bowling, tennis, golf, pool at Sidelines, and fishing once a month,” Penas said. These get-togethers are in addition to mixers, theater outings, and a monthly lunch and dinner. President Emeritus Garland Warren served from 2007-08. Warren joined when he and his partner relocated here from Baltimore, MD. He became president after only being a member for 6 months.

“I met a Prime Timers Board Member online when we were getting ready to leave Baltimore, and he agreed to help us out by introducing us to people in Florida,” Warren said. “After half a year I was elected president.”

He denies this quick rise to power has anything to do with his southern charm. Warren likes the camaraderie, the interesting mix of individuals, backgrounds, and talents available with the Prime Timers. As president he was always amazed at the willingness of members to donate time and energy to the group.

“Our activities have expanded over the past 3 or 4 years as has our membership. We'd have 5 or 6 guys show up at the mixers then, now 60 guests are not uncommon. It's good for members to meet the others so they can build good friendships.”



Warren is proud to add that several members have forged lasting partnerships.

Their founder, who at 90 is still active in the organization, seems to have forged an association that still exceeds his expectations.

In their February newsletter Baldwin stated, “One member said to me once, “I no longer hate growing old.” Wow, what a powerful thing that is, when you realize that our organization has had such a significance.”

For more information on the Prime Timers please go to Primetimersww.org/ftlauderdale.

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DOWN UNDER



Prime Timers Western Australia (Perth) at a recent meeting (Photo courtesy Prime Timers Western Australia newsletter)

HERE AND THERE

BY CONTRIBUTING EDITOR ZACH MULLANEY, CENTRAL OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

AUSTIN: Many of our chapters are within a few short hours drive from Austin. Two of their socials are on-going. Tuesday's, 6pm, is Steak Night at Charlie's, 1301 Lavaca St. Then, stick around, and have lunch with them the next day. Every Wednesday, 11am, a bunch of the guys meet at the Central Market Café, 4001 N. Lamar Blvd. If you can, plan your trip to include these social outings and join them.

PALM SPRINGS: For those of you that have never been to either a Worldwide convention, or Palm Springs, the next convention in 2011 will be your year. The convention will be held Nov. 2-6. The added bonus is that Palm Springs Gay Pride weekend is Nov. 6. Plan now for a week not to be missed.

CHARLOTTE: The chapter had their 17th anniversary picnic bash out at Latta Plantation Park in May. A lot of music, fun, camaraderie, and tons of food were enjoyed by the many attending. Congrats to your chapter, guys!

TALLAHASSEE – (167 members): Here are some ongoing socials if you'll be in their area. Friday Happy Hour is at Rayn from 5-10pm. Rayn is in the Northwood Station Shopping Center. The First Friday of the month, the city's galleries are open with wind and snacks. Usually a group of the chapter meet at Railroad Square.

HOUSTON: Houston is also celebrating an anniversary, their 19th. Good for you guys! Anyone visiting Houston, try Michael's Outpost on Wednesdays from 9-11pm. You'll probably find some Primetimers enjoying the fun.

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA: JOY94.9 is a gay radio station involving some of the Vintage Men. The rest of the world can enjoy it by honing in on the web from www.joy.org.au. Tune in sometime.

CENTRAL VIRGINIA-RICHMOND: One of their favorite speakers, Dr. Donnie Conner, a gay psychologist, will be their June speaker. Dr. Donnie has done a lot of work with the LGBT community in the area, and is well respected by all who know him. The meeting is Sunday, June 6.

BOSTON (301members): Their monthly meetings are at the United South End Settlements - 506 Columbus Ave, 1:30pm. As other organizations also

meet there, don't arrive early. The actual meeting starts at 3:30, with a social time ahead of it. This is our mother chapter, so we're always interested in their happenings.

VANCOUVER, BC: This chapter's monthly meeting is at 2pm, the second Sunday of the month. Talk about a busy chapter! There is something happening every day of the month: walks in Stanley Park (do they still have Lee's Trail?), bowling, bridge, golf, photography, stitch and bitch, theatre group, to mention a few. Check 'em out.

PITTSBURGH: Congratulations to members Samuel G. and Thomas P. On May 23rd, they celebrated their 41st anniversary of being together. Wow! Plus, the chapter is asking all members that do traveling this summer, to share their experiences in the newsletter. Great idea!

WASHINGTON DC: DC is noted for its large gay community. The most well known neighborhood is Dupont Circle where Prime Timers of DC meet Wednesdays at the Dupont Italian Kitchen Restau-



DuPont Circle in Washington DC.

rant, a favorite among older locals and tourist alike, for happy hour socializing followed by dinner with old and new friends. So, if you happen to be in the DC Metro area on a Wednesday, and in the mood for some good company and Italian food, moderately priced, please feel free to join us. Reservations are not required. For additional information please contact Gentilbill@aol.com.

If you want to make contact with a particular chapter, here's what to do. Ask your chapter secretary, or Go to www.primetimersww.org. Then click on chapters. Now click on city, state, country. Scroll down to the desired chapter. Easy! No computer? Ask your chapter secretary for contact numbers. If you'll be traveling, make contact to see if there is a chapter where you're going, and if they will be having a social while visiting. Join 'em. You might be surprised at how many guys you recognize or know from various scandals (oops! socials) across the world.

Las Vegas' 2010 Western Regional Gathering a Success

by Donald Edgecomb - San Antonio Chapter



The Las Vegas opening reception at the Imperial Palace Auto Collection (pictures by Robert Rosenthal)

The Las Vegas Prime Timers really seem to have it together. I'm referring, of course, to their Western Regional Gathering held the first week of May 2010. It appeared to me that everything went smoothly, like a well run clock, with events planned and/or scheduled for each day of the Gathering. Free time was still available for each of us to do our own "thing."

The host hotel was the Imperial Palace located on the STRIP and in my opinion just about in the right location on Las Vegas Blvd. Sadly, this old girl (the Imperial Palace, not me) has seen better days and was badly in need of major restoration. For example: none of the ice machines on any of the hotel floors worked - you had to take your room's bucket and head downstairs to the casino floor, stopping at one of the bars and ask them to fill your bucket (with ice)! Although I had hot water in the sink, the water in the shower never, never, never got past the point of being lukewarm..... Everything from the casino floor to the elevators to the hallways to the rooms themselves had that tired worn look.

Now, giving credit when credit is due, I must say that all the catering provided by the Imperial Palace to the PTer's was super! The appetizers at both mixers were plentiful (in other words we never ran out of food/goodies), fresh, and great going down... Our final night's banquet again was better than most I have been to -both for the quality of food and service provided, which was above reproach. Lacking, however, was the pay-as-you-go bar....they did NOT offer

any name brand booze. I did feel that was a draw back - what, NO GRAY GOOSE!!!!!! I tried the new in-house Hash House A Go Go for breakfast, and boy, I must say the presentation of the food was superior without being over priced. Try it, you will like it. The Las Vegas Prime Timers also arranged for us to see two top shelf shows that were playing in the Imperial Palace. First we saw DIVAS (LAS VEGAS) with Frank Marino (as Joan Rivers) along with a cast of superstar female impersonators! The gowns, the songs, the feathers, and all that color was breathtaking. The six back-up male dancers weren't too bad on the eyes either. (editor's note - "Tina Turner" (aka Larry Edwards) is a member of the Las Vegas Prime Timers).

The second show was the Australia's Human Nature, four young men with "the Ultimate Celebration of the Motown Sound." These guys were good! And they had the place rockin'! (editor's note - the show "Human Nature" is sponsored by Smokey Robinson and was voted the best singing group in Las Vegas this year).

Great Shows! Both worth seeing again-n-again!

CHARLOTTE 17TH ANNIVERSARY

The Charlotte North Carolina Prime Timers celebrated their 17th Anniversary with their Annual Picnic. We had several members of the Myrtle Beach Chapter join us for the fun. I have attached some photos of the members enjoying the beautiful warm weather.



FOCUS ON MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

Congratulations to the Minneapolis-St. Paul chapter, on their new electronic newsletter and their packed calendar. They are going through a board transition, with outgoing President David Schliep commenting "Our board has now reorganized following the March election. We have a fabulous slate of new officers. The future looks bright as we push toward 250 members. We're at 213 now and still growing."

Incoming Pres Glenn Bottomly continues the positive vibe with "The Prime Timers is such an important social, educational and cultural organization in the GLBT community. With more than 70 chapters worldwide in four countries, taking the reins of our local chapter is an exciting prospect! Our local Prime Timers chapter plays an important role in the lives of gay and bisexual mature men and their admirers not only in Minnesota, but also with our members who live in Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, Louisiana, and Florida too. We have a vibrant and committed new Board settling in and we are committed to staying close to each of you to learn how you would like our chapter to develop. Over the next several weeks and months, we plan to ask you questions and to listen to your ideas on how we can improve."

Their newsletter for May featured a fund-raising garage sale, sign-up for the local AIDS Walk to benefit the Minnesota AIDS Project, breakfast, lunches, a dining-out, a discussion group at a local coffee shop, and an excursion to Prescott, WI as well as getting ready for their annual participation in Twin Cities Pride in late June.

I moved from Minneapolis just about the time the Prime Timer chapter there was getting started. The Twin Cities, with 2 ½ Million people, is a great place to be gay, and it certainly looks like the MSP Prime Timers are working together to keep it that way. Keep up the good work, guys!

- Rob Howard – Prime Times Editor

PRIME TIMERS CELEBRATE WOODY'S 90TH IN AUSTIN

Robert Logan, Secretary, Prime Timers Austin



Woody Baldwin at his 90th Birthday Celebration in Austin, TX

They came from the east coast, they came from the west coast, they came from the desert, from the Midwest and from all across Texas. They came to Austin to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Woody Baldwin, founder of Prime Timers.

Many Prime Timers took advantage of their weekend visit to sample the capital of Texas's pleasures, from Charlie's bar to barbeque at County Line on the Hill, TexMex cooking in fashionable SoCo, a visit to the State Capitol, and a quiet dinner in trendy Hyde Park.

The climax of the weekend was Woody's birthday party at Austin's Chez Zee bistro on Sunday afternoon, where 70 Prime Timers gathered to greet Woody, and to reminisce about past adventures and plan future escapades, while enjoying drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

Austin chapter president Dallas Heenan welcomed the guests, PTWW president Michael Stone (who was unable to attend) telephoned his good wishes, and longtime Austin chapter member Jim Davis proposed the toast to Woody, whose reply had the company in stitches.

Champagne and birthday cake completed the occasion. Local member Charles Hill played selections on the piano, which was adorned by a beautiful flower arrangement in a fine crystal bowl, the gift of the Cross Timbers chapter. Austin slam poet Christopher Lee read two of his poems, one of which was written specially for the occasion. Prime Timers of the Desert president Wayne Patterson presented Woody with a plaque and conferred honorary life membership in the Desert chapter.

Truly an occasion to remember, and the happiest of birthday celebrations for the man whose inspiration has enriched all of our lives.

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TIDEWATER/SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA (NORFOLK) CHAPTER CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH A CLEANUP

Tidewater Prime Timers' Earth Day Project was a huge success. They managed to fill a dumpster full of trash out of the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River. Although they were met with clouds and a few sprinkles early in the morning the weather cleared around 9AM and they had a very productive day. Thanks George, Chuck Jimmy, Fred, Stanley and Bill. They look forward to doing more projects soon and putting some pics in the newsletter and online.



Tidewater PT'er Clean Up Crew in Portsmouth City Park
(picture from Tidewater Prime Timers newsletter)

**Prime Times
is now available
free online!**

PICNIC IN THE PARK

by Ed Grace
Columbus OH Primetimers member

Rising Park Lancaster Shelter House located in Lancaster, Ohio was the perfect venue for the Columbus Ohio Prime Timers monthly social meeting on Sunday, May 23rd. Members and guests were treated to sloppy joe and chicken sandwiches by hosts Paul and John.

President John Bell conducted a short informational meeting. Among his announcements were an update on the Capital City Capers events held during the Columbus Gay Pride Festival and Parade on June 18, 19, & 20th. A barbeque on Friday evening with a brunch and pub crawl on Saturday are scheduled. Also members will attend the Columbus Gay Pride parade which starts at the state capitol moving north on High Street to Goodale Park, the new home of the gay festival. Bat-N-Rouge will be on Sunday afternoon. All information can be found on the chapter's website, www.columbusohioprimetimers.com.
(Picture by Ed Grace, Columbus Ohio Prime Timers)



Columbus OH PT'ers relax during an excursion and picnic in Lancaster OH

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

To submit a story, tell other Prime Timers about your chapter events, write a letter to the editor, or to reprint a story from Prime Times, contact Rob Howard at the address above, or at robhowar@aol.com. Prime Timer chapters are welcome to copy editorial content from Prime Times without further permission. Please give credit to Prime Times, and to the original author and chapter if it is noted. Articles can be sent to you electronically to clip into your newsletter by emailing Rob Howard at robhowar@aol.com.

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HAVING DREAMS COME TRUE

Michael Stone, President

Ni hao, ma? That is the Chinese (Mandarin language) greeting for "Good Day; how are you?". It's only one of many, many things I've brought back from China with me. Who ever thought that having visited China in 1986 I could have loved my return journey even more? Good things have happened in those 24 years to both China and to myself!

In 1986 there were few cars in China; bicycles ruled. Everything was written in Chinese. There was no freedom to break from our group; we were tightly controlled by our Chinese government guide, even though we had an American guide with us. Shanghai was half its current size with few tall buildings. We saw little of internal China. People were starving and construction was slow and done by manual labor.

It seems China has taken its cue from western countries and has modernized in its climb to being a world example of success. Recently I read an article in Conde Nast magazine entitled 'ShangKong'. The article best describes the phenomenal growth taking place in Shanghai and how it's quickly replacing Hong Kong as the world financial center.

Our Chinese guide, Jimmy Mao, made each day rewarding. He taught us Chinese history, a few Chinese words (most of which we soon forgot) took us to places not always on the tourist route, and took care of our every possible need, while always having a



Great Wall

friendly word and a good joke to go along with it. We miss his laugh! We tasted some of the most exotic and fantastic foods we've ever had.

Some days started at 7:30 AM and ended at

9:30 PM and though we were both tired Jimmy kept the pace for us, always with a smile and a pat on the shoulders.

We began our journey in Beijing where we spent 3 very long and full days seeing much of what there was to see; we even rode a rickshaw into the old section and had a wonderful luncheon prepared by a gracious lady in her modest home. Robert helped her roll out and fill the dumplings! We climbed as much of the

Great Wall as our legs were able to. We then flew to Yichang where we boarded the wonderful river ship, the Century Sky.

For 4 days we sailed the Yangtze River through the 3 gorges and saw the miracle that has happened there: entire cities were razed in order for the dam to bring the river level hundreds of feet higher (producing much needed clean electricity) and where mountain tops once existed new, shining cities of skyscrapers were built for the people. Jimmy told us they were willing to give up their old homes for the trade off of new homes with indoor toilets and Internet. They even moved top soil there! What could be better?

We disembarked in Chong Qing (Chung King), the world's largest city (33 million) and loved everything we saw; mostly we fell in love with the Giant Panda's and the tall, modern skyscrapers, efficient transportation, gorgeous landscaping and, being true Prime Timers, the glorious food! After all, this city is located in Szechwan province.

Hong Kong was crowded and rushed but we enjoyed venturing out on our own finding meals in little places where no one spoke English. The crowds and neon lights dazzled us. Everyone was in a great hurry.



Three Gorges Dam

From there we flew to Guilin (our southernmost point). We spent much of one day climbing steep steps and paths way up into the hills to visit an ancient minority group still living there and to view Long Sheng's Dragon Spine Rice Terraces (sizzling, spicy and great food).

From here we flew to Xi' An for 2 full days including the Terra Cotta Warriors; one of the great creations of China's first Qing Dynasty. Our visit concluded with the wonderful Tang Dynasty show and the graceful Ribbon Dance.

We jumped right into activities as soon as we flew into Shanghai. We spent a night in Suchow, seeing how silk is made and then an afternoon in old Tongli on a gondola. Shanghai was a shock; it had doubled in size since 1986 and now had gorgeous skyscrapers where farmer's fields use to be.

Our last day in China was spent with our new

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

friend, Fu. We had posted travel information on a gay website on the internet and Fu offered to meet us. He



Michael and Fu

is a 32 year old Gay Chinese man. We learned that there are Gay bars in the larger cities but they are frequented only by the very young. Most Chinese Gay men, like Fu, must adhere to old customs and live in arranged marriages. Any talk of being Gay would cost them their jobs and their families. Tradition is strong! Things are slowly getting better. Fu gave each of us beautiful going away presents: beautiful fans on Mahogany stands. We remain in touch.

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So, what's our take on China? We're not going to have a chapter there in the near future but we are going back. Because of the ease and low prices of getting around on your own we plan to return to concentrate on 2 or 3 cities, in 3 years. We'll probably return to Chong Qing and Shanghai. We expect even more progress by that time.

While the Chinese have managed to feed their people and to bring up the standard of living by housing and sewage treatment and cars (all based on one's values) their cities are clogged with air pollution. They are working on moving away from coal but it will be a while. Cities are clogged with terrible traffic and noise.

China gave us the most wonderful Olympic Games in 2008 in Beijing. On May 1 of this year the World's Fair opened in Shanghai. China is proud to show the world what it can do and how far it has come. We all know it still has a very long way to go. This trip was indeed beyond a dream come true. The memories both Robert and I hold will last forever.

PITTSBURGH PRIME TIMERS RIDE THE RAILS

With the return of the warmer weather to the Pittsburgh Area, most of our usual activities have resumed. Our potluck/social venue has finished its renovation, and we have a beautifully remodeled facility for our use.

The April social was very well attended, in fact, we had a visitor from the Vancouver Prime Timers who was in town seeing friends, and was very pleased to meet all of us, as we were to meet him.

A group of Pittsburgh PT members will be going in June to help the Cleveland Chapter celebrate its tenth anniversary, and we're all anticipating our fifth anniversary celebration in July, which will be attended by some of the Cleveland members.

The Rail Fan Group just had a weekender to Cleveland, Ohio, to ride its light rail system, and take a train tour through Cuyahoga National Park. The Rail Fan group is a very active collection of railroad enthusiasts. Bob and Joe, the Rail Fan coordinators report: "On Friday May 14th and Saturday May 15th rail fans from the Pittsburgh Prime Timers travelled to Cleveland to ride the light and heavy rail of the Regional Transit Authority of Cleveland, on the 14th. On the 15th, we rode the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic RR through the Cuyahoga National Park, a 52 mile round trip with non stop scenery.

"In August we'll ride the Titusville and Oil City RR. Which travels through the Drake Oil Well area which is a state park round trip from Titusville, Pa. to

Oil City, Pa.

"In September we'll go to Cass West Virginia and ride the Cass Scenic RR. What is unique about Cass is they use steam locomotives of the Shay type to pull all of their excursions. (This trip is booked up by members already.)

"These events are a great way to share experiences, and provide a relaxing time together as well."

If you'd like to join the Pittsburgh Primetimers group on a Rail Fan outing, contact Bob and Joe at rodpocket@yahoo.com



Cleveland Light Rail

CRUISING WITH PRIME TIMERS BENEFITS OUR ORGANIZATION

Michael Stone and Robert Rosenthal

In our past articles we forgot to point out something new appearing on flyers for our future cruises, the statement: "Proceeds to benefit Prime Timers". Yes, that's right. For nearly 6 years we have booked our Prime Timers Gay Group Cruises through Courtyard Travel, mainly because of 2 things: the great discounted prices they get us and their wonderful penalty-free cancellation policy. Now there's even a better reason: starting in 2011 proceeds from each cruise will benefit our treasury; just one more reason to book!

Western Caribbean

We are very, very excited about our January 8, 2011 7-day Western Caribbean cruise aboard NCL's EPIC! The ship will be brand new; its first sailing is June 21! The Epic offers a whole new experience at sea: entertainment like Blue Man Group and Second City. Sing-alongs with musicians at Howl; the largest spa at sea; entertainment with a spectacular acrobats show at Cirque Dreams along with dinner; drinks at the 17 degree Ice Bar (chilling out); bowling at sea (I plan to keep up my practice); and the largest

water slide at sea. There are 21 restaurants from which to choose (more than half are included with your booking) and, best of all, there are singles cabins. Prices begin at only \$589 for insides, plus port charges and taxes.

Our second cruise for next year will be the Baltic Capitals Cruise in May. If you're ready for 9 fabulous days starting in Copenhagen and visiting Berlin, Tallinn, St. Petersburg (2 days), Helsinki, Stockholm and returning to Copenhagen then this is the cruise for you. Inside prices are still starting at only \$849 plus

port charges and taxes. All it takes right now to book either one of these cruises is a deposit of only \$250 per cabin; that's right! \$250 holds the cabin!



NCL's Norwegian Sun 9 day Baltic Capitals Cruise May 17-26, 2011



NCL's Epic 7 day Western Caribbean Cruise Jan 8-15

We also want to give you an early heads up! We will be booking our April 2012 Amazon River cruise as soon as its available. It is aboard Princess Cruises. Why such an early heads up? This is the only cruise of this kind and it sells out very quickly. The cruise will start in Manaus, Brazil and end in Ft. Lauderdale; air prices one-way to Manaus are currently very, very low.

Once the Amazon cruise becomes available, it is important to make a reservation quickly; some of you have been disappointed not being able to book our Repositioning cruise any longer. Nearly 200 of you did so before the cabins were 'pulled' from Courtyard's inventory. That's why we want you to be aware of the Amazon cruise. As soon as it's available Marc at Courtyard will be in touch with all of our past passengers and we'll include the information in our next Prime Times newsletter. Happy sailing!

FOR MORE INFORMATION on these cruises

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1-800 437-9685 and ask for Bobette