

The Gum Dippers

Winter Newsletter 2023

**GOODWILL...IS IN THE SOULS OF ALL MEN
AND MOVES US TO GIVE CHEERFULLY**



**MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR, AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO
GUM DIPPERS OF ALL AGES!!!**

Your Gum Dipper Committee is pleased to announce that **John Johnsen** is **our NEW GUM DIPPER CHAIRMAN**. John has been the special events chairman arranging all the trips and extra activities. **Richard Mucciolo** has stepped down after 15 years at the helm. Congratulations John and many thanks to Rich for his GumDipped dedication and efforts.



NEXT YEARS "2024" REUNION IS October 24^h – 28th @- \$224.00, PER NIGHT.....

YOU KNOW A YEAR AHEAD OF TIME...MAKE PLANS. The new room rate is based on an increase due to the brand-new renovated rooms next year. Some of us got them this year.

OUR 2023 REUNION

Our Hospitality Suite, as usual was always busy with members interacting, enjoying free snacks, beer, nonalcoholic and alcoholic beverages, plus coffee, donuts and Danish in the mornings. Sue and Bob Meyer and beverage chairperson Russ Burr, set us up with the finest wines, alcoholic beverages, beers, soft drinks, and snacks. We had a sandwich buffet available on Friday & Saturday afternoons. Bob and Sue were assisted by members of the Committee, **Russ & Holly**

Burr, Ritch & Chris Mucciolo, Dave & Mabel Wonsetler, Sue & Tom Markferding, John & Glenna Johnsen, Nancy Spencer, Sandra & Richard White, Ann & Vin Donovan, and Rhonda Ferestad. In addition, we had volunteers that made this an easy reunion freeing committee member up to do other things and get a break. We thank those volunteers for giving their time to help us and make this a truly fun reunion. Among them were repeaters, Ted & Sue Welsh, Jacky & Tim Childress, Jackie & Gary Webb, Bob & Dawn Amman, Tim & Elaine Wilbourn, Judy & Robbie Abigando, & Jean Sanders and our every year duet, **Betty & Eli Neidert.** They were of valuable and much needed assistance. Volunteers give the committee a break filling in for them at the registration desk. They also get the benefit of meeting everyone that checks in during their shift.



THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

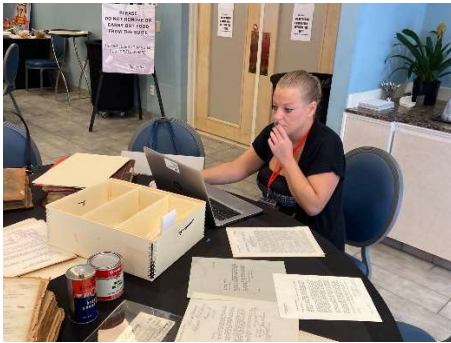
Clearwater Country Club, established in 1921, was the site of a nice round of golf on early Friday morning where members **John Johnsen, Bill Headley, Robbie Abigando and William Cavendish** teed it up. Thanks to our sponsor Bridgestone Americas, the members received a dozen Bridgestone golf balls that helped to offset the cost of the round. Next year, we'll probably tee it up again on Friday morning either at Clearwater CC or Dunedin Country Club which was the former home of the PGA.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, **Jennifer Andreola of the History Factory** interviewed many members and showed them their histories with BFS. The archives team did a comprehensive

search of all members on the roster, and they were able to find information on many. The interviewed many members including photographing and recording them for the archives.

On Friday afternoon, we had our opening ceremony at 4:00pm, hosted by Dave Wonsetler who introduced **Jennifer Andreola** who provided us with opening remarks and information on her display in the Hospitality Suite of some of the archive collection dating back 100 years.

Jennifer and Tom Markferding also helped **Dave Wonsetler and Ritch Mucciolo**, Draw prizes as many were given out including: a two-night stay at the Sheraton Sand key, (10) \$100 Visa gift cards, many \$50 bills, golf balls, Grand Prix Race prizes, Legends golf prizes including winning golfer autographed Pin flags from Firestone Country Club, 2 Autographed by the drivers of race cars and many more gifts. So many that it took 30 minutes to hand them all out.



On Friday evening, we enjoyed our now famous Barbecue, with a roasted pig and a great variety of food and treats. Unfortunately, the Sheraton did not set us up with sufficient tables and seating for all who attended and for those few that sat nearby we are very sorry, and it'll be something that will not happen again. Besides that, inconvenience, it was a wonderful evening.

On Saturday, 39 members boarded trolleys in the morning in front of our hotel to be transported to Johns Pass where they had lunch and toured the boardwalk, shops and restaurants.

On Saturday night our Banquet was held in the Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton Sand Key Hotel with a one-hour cocktail reception starting at six, and a fabulous dinner starting with a butternut squash soup, followed by a chopped salad, filet mignon & shrimp, fingerling potatoes, carrots, and ice cream with a special pumpkin-caramel sauce, with entertainment and dance music by Johnny Monzillo the Brooklyn Balladeer, starting at seven. Of course, wine and drinks until nine.

The Cocktail Party was followed by our banquet. **Richard Mucciolo** opened the event welcoming all and introduced **Vincent Donovan** who did the invocation. Vincent also had a nice tribute to Richard as he is “retiring” as Gum Dipper Chairman. John Johnsen was also recognized as the next Gum Dipper Chairman. We thank our sponsor and benefactor, Bridgestone Americas, who gave us so much throughout the years with gifts, dinners and prizes supplied by them to help make our reunion a great success.



The Invocation, the Gum Dipper Hospitality Suite patio, the opening meeting and members at the cocktail party.

NEXT YEARS REUNION

We had a good turnout this year and hope next year will be even bigger as new retirees join and newbies from this year help recruit former Bridgestone/Firestone colleagues to join the fun and comradery. Bridgestone will include a Gum Dipper application with the packet they send to new retirees in January as they have done in the past. This is a three- or four-day mini vacation where your meals and cocktails, a full-scale pig roast barbecue, a banquet and just about everything else you might want on Friday and Saturday. The Hospitality Suite is a great gathering place and stocked with wine, beer, alcoholic beverages, sodas, water, mixers and lots of snacks all provided by the Gum Dipper committee free for your pleasure and its open for most of the days. Coffee, donuts and pastries are served on Friday and Saturday mornings. A buffet lunch is served on Friday and Saturday. If you want to make it a longer vacation the Sheraton provides rooms at the same discount rate, three days prior and three days after the reunion.

Event Summary:

Start Date: Thursday, October 24, 2024

End Date: Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Last Day to Book: Thursday, October 3, 2024

Sheraton Sand Key Resort, special group rate \$224 USD per night.

NEXT YEARS “2024” REUNION IS OCTOBER 26th – 29th @- \$224.00, PER NIGHT...YOU KNOW A YEAR AHEAD OF TIME...MAKE PLANS.

WHY DO WE KEEP COMING BACK TO CLEARWATER???

The Sheraton Sand Key has been our choice to hold the Gum Dipper Reunion for the last 17 years because it offers the Reunion members many pluses. They provide discounted room rates that are difficult to get at a beach resort in Florida. The Rates are extended for those that come early or want to stay late. The location is excellent for sightseeing, shopping, recreation, restaurants for dining and in addition, other hotels will not provide us with a hospitality room and allow us to bring in without a charge, our own wine, beer, liquor, snacks, etc. With the help of BFS we have been able to establish a great relationship. They look forward to our coming every October. In addition to what the wonderful facilities offer the Tampa Bay area is a magnificent resort area and destination point. The Sheraton Sand key is part of all the activity in the Clearwater beach area. Just to the north is the main Clearwater beach strip with its boat rides restaurants and souvenir shops. The Beach Jolly Trolley Ride is a stop at the hotel that will take you on a great tour on a complimentary ride paid for by the Sheraton, including a stop at the now famous,

Clearwater Aquarium, the home of the now famous dolphin “Winter” where two major films were made. The Sheraton is also very close to St Petersburg where you can visit the new Dali Museum, the historic Vinoy Hotel and now the racing site for the Firestone Grand Prix. To the south is Sarasota another fine resort and shopping dining area. WE COULD GO ON AND ON AS TO WHY WE CONTINUE TO RETURN TO THE SAND KEY, WHY NOT COME ON DOWN AND SEE FOR YOUR SELF.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

Your committee members are aging and have been doing the same jobs for many years and are now looking for replacements. If any of you are interested in joining the committee, please contact John Johnsen (727)-365-1151 jjohnsen1@live.com). This is very much appreciated. Time for younger and fresher members

WHY ARE WE CALLED THE GUM DIPPERS?

We are called the Gum Dippers. Do we all know where this name came from? Gum Dipping was a process that Firestone used in the manufacture of tires. Much of the credit for Firestones technological base goes to **Chemist John W. Thomas**. Thomas was hired as the company’s first research director in 1908. His work was so respected that Thomas eventually led the corporation as its president and later as chairman of the board. One key development under Thomas’s leadership was the process of GUM-DIPPING cord fabric. In 1915, the search for increased tire strength led to the first experiments using cord fabric for tire plies instead of the square-woven cloth previously used. More flexible and resilient, cords proved a great improvement, doubling a tire’s life. However, internal friction created intense heat buildup, which caused the tire to separate. This could be a major disaster. We found this out again in later years with steel cord. In 1920, Firestone’s engineers finally perfected a method of “GUM-DIPPING” cords to completely impregnate them with rubber, insulating them against heat build-up and ply separation and increasing the life of the tire. One good turn deserved another and along with dramatically improving tire wear and resiliency. “GUM-DIPPING” allowed for another major Firestone first, the balloon, or low-pressure tire. Softer balloon tires made the hard tire casing a thing of the past. Within a few years Firestone’s balloon tire was the standard tire for the world. All Firestone tires were branded “GUM DIPPED” for years and years. Are they still branded “GUM DIPPED”?

Take a look!

Our group was originally called the “Twenty Year Club” when first organized in 1980, as you had to have been a Firestone employee that long. They began to refer to themselves as the Gum Dippers in some of the literature starting with a post reunion newsletter on November 1, 1984. In 1992 they started to call themselves the Gum Dippers.” The name “Gum Dippers” first appeared on our letterhead in 1995.

Bridgestone announces strategic acquisition of Tyrata Drive-over System

Bridgestone is pleased to announce the strategic acquisition of assets of Tyrata, a tire sensor and data management company that monitors and tracks tire tread wear through drive-over sensors. The transaction was closed as of Oct. 31.

This strategic acquisition accelerates Bridgestone's efforts to deploy advanced mobility solutions that improve fleet safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

The Details: Based in Durham, N.C., Tyrata is a tire sensor and data management company that monitors and tracks tire tread wear through drive-over sensors. The drive-over system (DOS) collects tire wear data and provides actionable, cloud-based analytics. DOS teammates will join Bridgestone and continue to work out of their Durham, N.C. headquarters, reporting up through the Advanced Tire Solutions team, led by **Jon Kimpel**, as part of Bridgestone Mobility Solutions.



New Potenza Sport AS with ENLITEN technology debuts at high-speed Potenza

A need for speed was unleashed in late August at Atlanta Motorsports Park in celebration of the newest member of Bridgestone's ultra-high performance (UHP) tire line.

The headline of the week was the launch of the Potenza Sport AS – our first-ever UHP all-season tire to feature ENLITEN technology.

The breakthrough performance of the Potenza Sport AS is powered in part by Bridgestone's proprietary, next-generation PeakLife polymer, which helps extend tire life by enhancing tread resistance to wear.

“Inspired by our rich history and expertise in motorsports, the Bridgestone Potenza Sport AS tire was created to provide the same ultra-high performance that enthusiast drivers expect from a spirited driving experience. Through ENLITEN technology, the Bridgestone Potenza Sport AS tire offsets typical tradeoffs drivers might expect



from an ultra-high-performance tire so they can enjoy a confident vehicle performance no matter the season,” said Dale Harrigle, Chief Engineer, Replacement Tires, Bridgestone Americas.

As title sponsor, we are looking forward to helping young and diverse engineering minds from all over the world create breakthrough technologies in the BWSC that can play a role in a more sustainable mobility society of the future.”

The E8 Connection: The BWSC showcases the “Energy” and “Emotion” values of the Bridgestone E8 Commitment, which outline Bridgestone’s corporate commitment to the realization of a carbon neutral mobility society (Energy) and to inspiring excitement and spreading joy to the world of mobility (Emotion).

2023 Bridgestone World Solar Challenge’s top teams drive to victory on E

The competitive debut of Bridgestone’s ENLITEN technology proved successful as teams driving on custom-built ENLITEN tires won both classes at the 2023 Bridgestone World Solar Challenge (BWSC) in Australia.

A total of 38 teams competed across two classes in the world’s longest and most demanding solar car race. This year Bridgestone provided ENLITEN tires for 35 of teams – our highest number since becoming title sponsor in 2013.

“This is a tough event, and the Bridgestone ENLITEN tires were phenomenal. We didn’t change the tires until 1,500km into the event, and it was only because it seemed sensible to change them. They still don’t look like they have any wear on them at all,” said Andrea Holden, team manager of Cruiser Class champion Sunswift Racing.



Bridgestone ENLITEN tires were purpose built for the 2023 event using 63% renewable and recyclable materials.

Support of the Bridgestone World Solar Challenge extends Bridgestone’s 60-year legacy in motorsports and highlights its evolution to put sustainability at the core of our racing activities.

The BWSC is an important innovation event that offers a “mobile lab” to challenge our sustainable tire technology. It also demonstrates the **Energy** (helping realize a carbon neutral mobility society) and **Emotion** (spread the joy of mobility) values of our Bridgestone E8 Commitment.

THE CHANGING FACE OF OUR STORES



NORWALK, CT 1961
NORWALK 1961



Norwalk, CT closed 1962.



Oakland, NJ dealer



A one-stop service station in Omaha, Nebraska, 1936.

ARE YOUR DUES PAST DUE FOR 2022

If your 2023 dues have not been paid, please send your \$20 check immediately, along with your \$20, 2024 dues, payable to: Gum Dippers. Your 2024 dues are also due now. Or choose a lifetime membership for \$100.

GUM DIPPERS: C/o Russell Burr, P.O. Box 189 Tarpon Springs, Florida 34688

Any changes to the roster: Address, phone, e-mail address, should also be sent to Russ (Changes only): toplinetire@mindspring.com 727-943-8825

PLEASE DO IT PROMPTLY

URGENT MESSAGE

OUR MEMBERSHIP IS INCREASING, HELP US GET MORE MEMBERS!

THE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO MAKE THE FIRST YEAR'S DUES FREE SO ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO JUST FILL OUT THE APPLICATION AND SEND IT IN. No First-year dues required.

Thanks to members who share the interests of communicating with old friends and days gone by, we have a strong membership. However, WE NEED TO KEEP growing. We had a significant increase this year as a result of having a Facebook Group which has brought in many new members. For us to remain healthy and continue to grow or even exist, we need YOU to find new members. Please review your roster, which is published once a year in April and look for the people who are not on it that you think you should contact and call them yourselves and tell them how to join...we need new members now and all the time or we disappear! Tell them to go to www.gumdippers.net to download an application or copy the one at the end of this newsletter.

YOUR 2024 DUES ARE NOW DUE! \$20.00. a lifetime membership is only \$100.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU –LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We like hearing from our members. If you have anything you would like to tell your fellow Gum Dippers, drop us a line and we will get it in our newsletter. Let us know in addition to obituaries, about moves, weddings, trips, graduations, children, grandchildren, major anniversaries, new careers or suggestions for the reunion mail or e-mail to:

John Johnsen, editor: jjohnsen1@live.com

Since we started producing this expanded Newsletter in its' current form seventeen years ago and began asking for members to write us, we have had thousands of letters to the Editor. It is the most popular and important section of the newsletter. Your Editor is dismayed and must report that the letters are slowing down, especially for the winter issue so let's get back to work with those pens and paper. Your fellow members look forward to them. We get them all year...it seems we don't get them for the fall newsletter. You should have a lot to write about if you were at the reunion.

WE GET LETTERS

Hi all, I wanted to touch base before heading over on Thursday. The archives team did a comprehensive search of all members on the roster, and we were able to find information on 37 of the 66 names we searched which is a 56% return rate. Most of the materials I will be showing relating to members will be digital but from that, I can also send along copies to people's emails.

As I said, I will be there with a display as well as the ability to search and display several databases so I may be able to pull up additional information. Very excited to see everyone and safe travels! **Jennifer Andreola**, CA, Lead Archivist, Description and Metadata Services

These are from our Facebook page.

The 42nd Gum Dipper Reunion was so much fun!! Thank you to the committee members that made it such a success! Much appreciated! Carol Long

We had a good time and met great people thanks for a good weekend **Diana Caetta**

Thank you, Richie and the entire committee, for putting on a wonderful reunion. **Fred Gralinski**

Great time. Can't believe it was only a week ago, **Thomas Dippert**

Thank you SO much to the committee and volunteers for a great reunion! I had a great time and wish I had joined the Gum Dippers 5 years ago when I retired. Great to see old friends and meet some new ones! Let's do this again! Thanks again to ALL who made this happen

Bob Kirkpatrick

Great job everyone who participated in planning the event

And thanks Bridgestone **John Deschane**

Good times! Nice weekend, thanks to all who made it possible! **Dave Stewart**

Great reunion! See you next year! **Barb Culbertson Gray**

Awesome **Suzanne Stemple Mourton**

Thanks, **Richard**, and all your helpers, for all you do to make the weekend interesting, fun, and smooth! **Robert Weber**

IN MEMORIAM

Happy to say that for the first time in 17 years we do not have one.

THE "GUMDIPPERS" ON FACEBOOK

The Gum Dippers is a social network of retirees and friends of Bridgestone Americas and its subsidiaries including the former Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, Total Car Care and various manufacturing and distribution operations in addition to all Bridgestone operations.

WE NOW HAVE OUR OWN GROUP ON FACEBOOK,

log in to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Gumdippers>

Sign up now to be up to date daily on Gum Dipper and Bridgestone/Firestone activities....remember, we welcome all former BFS employees to this group in hopes they will join THE GUM DIPPERS Many on Facebook are now full Gum Dippers.

Open a Facebook account—if you don't already have one—is easy and free. You just need to go to Facebook.com and follow instructions. (Naturally, you have to first have a Facebook account before you can join the Gum Dippers group on Facebook.)

www.gumdippers.net the web site contains links to all recent newsletters from which you may view or print, information about the Gum Dippers, a membership application, and contact information, an e-mail link to the GumDippers, and photos from our reunions. You can also get an application for membership at this site for friends and potential members.

We DO NOT post our membership roster on-line for obvious privacy concerns. Our roster is furnished to active members in print form only and is attached to OUR APRIL newsletter. It is not intended to be used for commercial use or soliciting.

We now have a method to e-mail all GumDippers. E-mails will be sent, and it is o.k. to open them in your browser. Some of you may hesitate if you don't know the sender, which will be Gum Dippers. Do we have your current email address? Our address: gumdipper@gmail.com

The Gum Dippers

Our 42nd Reunion Newsletter Oct. 2023

WELCOME

Welcome to our **42nd Gum Dipper Reunion** (our 43rd year). We have many events planned for you and hope that you will be participating in them. We leave plenty of free time for shopping, sightseeing, sunbathing, and relaxing in general. Pick up information in the Hotel Lobby near the elevators for local activities, sightseeing, points of interest, discount coupons, brochures, etc.

Spend some of your free time in our Hospitality Suite. From the lobby walk DOWN THE HALL to the **COASTAL ROOM**, **hosted by Sue and Bob Meyer**, your committee members and **many Gum Dippers that volunteer to help out.** You will find complimentary snacks purchased by **Sue and Bob** and beverages, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, purchased by our beverage chair **Russ Burr**. **Coffee, Tea, donuts, and pastry are served 9:00 to 10:00, Friday and Saturday. Sandwiches 12:00 to 1:00 Friday and Saturday, all self-service.** This is where you will have plenty of time to talk about the good old days while having a light collation. The more drinks the better the stories.

SPECIAL NOTE: Hotel Management has asked that food served in the Hospitality Suite (breakfast and lunch) not be removed from the suite as they have their own facilities that serve and sell these items. Breakfast and lunch are served for your convenience and enjoyment and it was never intended that it be picked up and taken to rooms, the pool or the beach. Our intentions were that attendees enjoy an additional perk while remaining in the suite and socializing with other members. Food and drinks can be brought out to our adjoining patio.

You may have received an agenda when checking in which details all of our activities. Additional copies and much more information is provided in this Newsletter. Check at the Gum Dipper registration desk for any changes as this newsletter was finalized on 10/5/23 to get it printed in time. Have a great time and be sure to tell your friends that did not come, what a great time they missed! In 2022 the committee had many volunteers to help our Hospitality Chairs **SUE AND BOB MEYER** and their helpers **Rhonda Ferestad, the Wonsetler's, the Mucciolo's, the Johnsen's, the Burrs', Jean Sanders, Nancy Spencer, the Markferding's, the White's** plus volunteers who we always appreciate and are now so proficient that a large load is taken off us and the committee can concentrate on other chores. In 2022 we had **Ted & Sue Welsh, and Betty & Eli Neidert** (who have been doing it for years). So far, we have more in 2023, including **Dawn**

and Bob Amman, Jody and Rob Abigando, Jackie and Tim Childres and Jackie and Gary Webb.

2023 GUM DIPPER REUNION AGENDA

CHECK THE HOTEL LOBBY FOR SHUTTLE SERVICES & LOCAL TROLLEY SERVICE. CHECK IN ANYTIME THURSDAY/ FRIDAY/ SATURDAY REGISTER ANYTIME, AFTER 2pm THURSDAY IN THE GUMDIPPER HOSPITALITY SUITE. (COASTAL ROOM).

Registration hours Thurs. 2-6, 7:30-9, Fri. 9-4, Sat. 9-4

Please do not come earlier than 2pm on Thursday as we are very busy setting it up for your enjoyment.

*Fri & Sat night receptions are for member and significant others...there is a \$100 fee per person for additional guests!

On Thursday and thereafter, pick up Reunion News with all the information about the reunion PLUS pick up your gifts and meet members checking in.

HOSPITALITY SUITE Hours (in COASTAL ROOM)

THURSDAY	2pm to 6pm	7:30pm to closing
FRIDAY	9am to 3:30pm	9:00pm to closing
SATURDAY	9am to 5pm	9:00pm to closing

SPECIAL HOSPITALITY SUITE EVENT

Jennifer Andreola, *Lead Archivist, Description and Metadata Services of the History Factory* will once again be in attendance with 100 years of Firestone/BFS history. She will be here Thursday, Fri & Sat. She will also have access to all materials that have been converted to digital format which are in excess of 200,000 assets/captures so she will also be able to use that while she is here. This will make this reunion very exciting for all in attendance.

6:00 to 7:00pm RECEPTION POOLSIDE– (open bar)

7:00 to 9:00pm GRAND POOLSIDE PARTY AND Barbecue

Dress attire: Pure casual: ***Time to wear your sand in the sandals clothing***

FRIDAY Oct. 27th

Please do not remove food from the Hospitality Suite

9:00 to 10:00am Coffee, Donuts, Tea & Pastry served in Hospitality Suite
12:00 to 1:00pm *Self-serve sandwich platters, help yourself. Hospitality Suite.*
4:00pm **Official opening ceremonies Bay Room lobby hall
& ALL prize drawings.**

FRIDAY GOLF, October 27th, Clearwater, FL

7:15 Players need to make their own arrangements to get to the Clearwater Country Club located at 525 N. Betty Lane Clearwater, FL 33755 (727-446-9501) by 7:45 Friday morning. There is no transportation scheduled. **If you have any questions or need a ride, please call John Johnsen at: (727)-365-1151.** At the present time no one has reserved a slot. If there is no interest or response John may have to cancel the tee times a week in advance as a courtesy to CCC.

FRIDAY, OPENING CEREMONY 4 P.M. ---ISLAND 1 BALLROOM

At present we do not know who our guest speaker from Bridgestone one will be as he had not been selected when this newsletter went to press. Whoever it is we can be assured the presentation will be interesting and rewarding. **Keith Cawley, BSA Director of Communications, and Steve Kincade, BSA VP Communications** will attend. In addition, we will provide you with information about the reunion.

YOU DEFINITELY SHOULD ATTEND THE OPENING CEREMONY hosted by Dave Wonsetler and we hope that all attending the reunion make it their business to be at the opening ceremonies. Come and **WIN ALL of our opening day PRIZES including sets of tires, gift cards, golf balls, cash\$\$\$ and a 2-night stay at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort** plus a review of our reunion events. This event is about an hour, and you have plenty of time to run up to your room and return for cocktails at the pool area at six. Without the generous help and support of Bridgestone we could not have a reunion that is as great as it is. Without the participation of the executives our event would not be what it is! **PRIZES ARE AWARDED at FRIDAY OPENING MEETING ONLY. (You must be present when your name is drawn)**

SATURDAY REUNION TRIP

You should have signed up for this when you registered for the reunion. The cost is \$20.00 per person and includes transportation to and return. **We will meet in the lobby at 10AM** to board trolleys and be transported to Johns Pass Boardwalk and village. **Attendees will receive \$20 cash to be used to purchase lunch at the many restaurants on the boardwalk and adjoining areas.** Our two busses are not yet full so we can accept a few additional reservations on Friday. Check with our registration desk for availability.

SATURDAY – Oct. 28th

Please do not remove food from the Hospitality Suite

9:00 to 10:00am Coffee, Tea, donuts & Pastry served in Hospitality Suite

10:30am Meet in hotel lobby to board trolleys for today's trip.

12:00 to 1:00pm *Self-serve sandwich platters, help yourself.*

6:00 to 7:00pm PALM/BAY ROOM RECEPTION-(open bar)-

7:00pm ISLAND BALLROOM – Greeting, RP Mucciolo

7:02pm INVOCATION, Vincent Donovan

8:00pm DINNER, DANCING TO MUSIC OF
JOHNNY MONDELLO

**MEN ARE REQUESTED TO WEAR DRESSY COLLARED SHIRTS AND
SLACKS. (no shorts OR jeans)**

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NIGHT...YOU KNOW A YEAR AHEAD OF TIME...MAKE PLANS.**

Room rate is based on an increase due to brand new renovated room fees.

JOLLEY TROLLEY....A GREAT TRIP IN YOUR FREE TIME

The JOLLEY TROLLEY, has a route which operates daily on Clearwater Beach and south for many miles down to the famous turn of the 20th. Century pink DON CESAR hotel. The service also operates to the north stopping at the following locations: Clearwater, Old downtown Dunedin, Old Palm Harbor and the historical sponging and fishing village of Tarpon Springs. This is about a twelve-mile ride. You will be able to **board this shuttle right outside the hotel lobby** (show your room key for a free ride) and go north with a great view through Clearwater, home of the Scientologists (watch for them with black slacks and white tops) and then along the water with great water views to **Dunedin, a big tourist stop** for many visitors...with its restored downtown

full of **shops and fine restaurants** (you many want to visit Dunedin on another day via ferry). From Dunedin, you will then proceed through Old Palm Harbor (not worth getting off). You may want to **stop in Dunedin, on your way back (or on another day on the free trolley)** from Tarpon Springs, if time allows as it is **a place worth visiting**, or for lunch if it is still early. **You can get on and off the trolley wherever you desire and catch the next one.** You head north from Palm Harbor to the **antique district of Tarpon Springs**, a turn of the century village, where you may want to get off to visit the shops, re-board another trolley and then **on to the waterfront with its sponge docks**, shrimp and sponge boats, boat tours, **shops, great restaurants...**and magnificent history. The TROLLEY tour will take you past many old and historical landmarks. You may want to get off here, especially at the **sponge docks** to visit the shops and restaurants, **dine on the water** or just stay on for the tour through **this Greek Village in Florida**. This is a true ethnic Greek community as they exist in Greece. Of course, you can take the trolley to one place only and return to the hotel.

For **those of you that are adventurers** you may want to take the ferry from Clearwater Beach Marina to the Dunedin Waterfront stop in **Downtown Dunedin** and enjoy the views as you ride along Saint Joseph's Sound, Dolphins often swim around the boat. You can then go into the shops or have lunch in one of the many restaurants....We recommend Cafe Alfresco for lunch.

JUST A REMINDER - ANNUAL DUES – 2023

Most of our Gum Dippers are members for the sole purpose of receiving our newsletters and rosters so that they can “stay in touch” with friends and co-workers. We appreciate all letters to the editor which makes it your newsletter. The primary purpose of our organization is to generate this information and pass it on.

2023 Dues were due in January 2023

SPECIAL NOTE** SEND \$100 FOR A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP!**

PLEASE remit \$20, payable to **the Gum Dippers** and mail to:

Mr. Russell Burr Treasurer P.O. Box 189

We now have a method to e-mail all GumDippers. E-mails will be sent, and it is o.k. to open them in your browser. Some of you may hesitate if you don't know the sender, which will be Gum Dippers. Do we have your current email address?

*Our address **Gum Dippers, PO Box 189, Tarpon Springs, Fl. 34688***

Any **changes** to the roster: address, phone, e-mail address, should be shown with your payment...**REMEMBER---CHANGES ONLY!** or email changes to Russ: **toplinetire@mindspring.com**

SOMETHING ELSE TO DO AT THE REUNION

We have an extraordinary and interesting sight at the enlarged and newly renovated Clearwater Marine Aquarium, which is only a short distance from our reunion hotel site and can be reached on the Jolley Trolley, if you are not part of the Saturday trip. Coming off the successful launch of the Scholastic book, Winter's Tail, Warner Brothers and Alcon Entertainment produced two full-length major motion pictures, the first in 2011 based on the true story of Winter the dolphin prosthetic tail, who was rescued by the aquarium and her life at the aquarium. The first film, titled "A Winter Tale" featured Winter's true-life story, with a fictional story written around it. The cast included Ashley Judd, Morgan Freeman, and Harry Connick. The films have made the aquarium a huge tourist attraction with all the movie memorabilia.

WHY DO WE KEEP COMING BACK TO CLEARWATER???

The Sheraton Sand Key has been our choice to hold the Gum Dipper Reunion for the last 19 years because it offers the Reunion members many pluses. We now consider it our home base. They provide discounted room rates that are difficult to get at a beach resort in Florida. The rates are extended for those that come early or want to stay a few days longer. The location is excellent for sightseeing, shopping, recreation, and restaurants for dining allowing you to come early and leave later and enjoy a vacation with a lot to do. In addition, **we cannot find another hotel in any city that will provide us with a hospitality room and allow us to bring in our own wine, beer, liquor, snacks, etc.** The other hotels want our hospitality food, drink and supplies purchased from them, which is prohibitive. With the help of BFS we have been able to establish a great relationship. They look forward to our coming in the fall. In addition, the wonderful facilities offer a magnificent resort area and destination point, with a beautiful beach, pool area and gym. The Sheraton Sand Key is part of all the activity in the Clearwater beach area. Just to the north is the main Clearwater Beach strip with its boat rides, restaurants, souvenir shops and tourist accommodations. The Beach Jolly Trolley Ride is a stop at the hotel that will take you on a great tour and is free if you show your hotel key, compliments of hotel. The Sheraton is also very close to St Petersburg where you can visit the **Dali Museum**, the historic **Vinoy Hotel** and now the racing site for the Firestone Grand Prix every March. To the south is Sarasota, another fine resort and shopping dining area. WE COULD GO ON AND ON AS TO WHY WE CONTINUE TO RETURN TO SAND KEY. SIGN UP FOR THE GUM DIPPER REUNION AND SEE FOR YOURSELF. Rated one of the five best in Tampa Bay. In reality, most of our committee is Clearwater local and it would be impossible to do all that we do outside of this hotel.

WHY ARE WE CALLED THE GUM DIPPERS?

We are called the Firestone Gum Dippers. Do we all know where this name came from? Gum Dipping was a process that Firestone used in the manufacture of tires. Much of the credit for

Firestones technological base goes to Chemist John W. Thomas. Thomas was hired as the company's first research director in 1908. His work was so respected that Thomas eventually led the corporation as its president and later as chairman of the board. One key development under Thomas's leadership was the process of **GUM-DIPPING** cord fabric.

In 1915, the search for increased tire strength led to the first experiments using cord fabric for tire plies instead of square-woven cloth previously used. More flexible and resilient, cords proved a great improvement, doubling a tire's life. However, internal friction created intense heat buildup, which caused the tire to separate. This could be a major disaster. We found this out again in later years with steel cord. In 1920, Firestone's engineers finally perfected a method of "**GUM-DIPPING**" cords to completely impregnate them with rubber, insulating them against heat build-up and ply separation and increasing the life of the tire.

One good turn deserved another and along with dramatically improving tire wear and resiliency. "**GUM-DIPPING**" allowed for another major Firestone first, the balloon, or low-pressure tire. Softer balloon tires made the hard tire casing a thing of the past. Within a few years Firestone's balloon tire was the standard tire for the world. All Firestone tires were branded "**GUM DIPPED**" for years and years. Are they still branded "**GUM DIPPED**"? *Take a look!*

Our group was originally called the "Twenty Year Club" when first organized in 1980, as you had to have been a Firestone employee that long. They began to refer to themselves as the Gum Dippers in some of the literature starting with a post reunion newsletter on November 1, 1984. In 1992 they started to call themselves the Gum Dippers." The name "Gum Dippers" first appeared on our letterhead in 1995.

The GumDippers, at one time a small local Jacksonville District organization, is now a national organization. Now you come from the far reaches of our nation to participate in our reunion. Do you know of any other company that has an association like ours? As you know the main purpose of the Gum Dippers is not the reunion, but our roster and the communication system it creates for members to contact one another and keep in touch. Our newsletter tries to keep you up to date and informed. The Icing on the Cake is our reunion and the following members traveled the farthest to be with us.

WHO CAME THE FURTHEST TO BE WITH US

Arizona	Bob & Bonnie Crowder
Arizona	John & Penny Krasnan
Rhode Island	Fred & Theresa Gralinski

WHERE WE CAME FROM TO GET HERE

Alabama, Tennessee, New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Wisconsin, Ohio, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Carolina, Michigan, Connecticut, Mississippi, New York, Virginia, South Carolina, & Georgia

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR LOCAL (NEARBY) RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS.

The Columbia (famous Cuban-Spanish with great food and ambience) across the street just south of the Sheraton “**Great**”. Next to Marriot.

Backwaters near the Marriot also across the street from the Sheraton south of Columbia.

Villa Gallace (Italian) 109 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach. 4.0 miles on the left, an Excellent restaurant. You may even run into Mario Andretti here.

Guppy’s (seafood) 1701 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach 4.5 miles on left

Johns Pass (many restaurants, ESPECIALLY SEAFOOD, a quaint boardwalk & boutique/souvenir shopping) 11.6 miles on the left just before the bridge to Madeira Beach.

Clearwater Beach Many, many restaurants, beach shopping, hotels everything you would find at a Beach Resort. Try **Frenchy’s** (the one on the beach, there are three of them) or the **Palm Pavilion** (It was Don Olson’s and is our favorite one on the beach) for lunch. Try **Jimmy’s Iguana** in the Holiday Inn just over the bridge on your left and **order a Bloody Mary**, you have not seen one like it. Just make a left turn out of hotel and go north over the bridge. Go a little further to the **Hotel Pier 60** on the right going north just before the marina and have cocktails on the roof with a great view. **Rusty’s** (continental) **right here at the hotel** and it is **great food and service!** Voted one of the best restaurants in Tampa Bay... We agree and know from experience.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE GUM DIPPERS

Thanks to the research of our late historian, **Charlie Wilbourn**, we know the original founding fathers and mothers of the “Gum Dippers” were: **Richard (Dick) Holland**, **Paul Caudill**, **Bill Strickland** and **Clydie Riles** of Jacksonville, FL, **Allen Huff** of Melbourne, FL., **Ray Murphy** and **Frank Dow** of Savannah, GA. They originally called themselves the “Firestone-Twenty Year Club”. They continued to call themselves “The Twenty-Year Club, until 1992, however referring to themselves as the “Gum Dippers” in much of the literature starting with a post reunion newsletter on November 1, 1984. The name “Gum Dippers” appeared on the letterhead in 1995. The group was organized in 1980 and was made up of the former employees of the old Jacksonville Florida District, which covered all of Florida, parts of Georgia and some of South Carolina. When the group was started the old Jacksonville District became part of the Tampa District. Membership was limited to Jacksonville District employees who were retired or had 20 years of service in the district. Eligibility was eventually changed to include any former Firestone employees who had knowledge of the Gum Dipping Process. Mrs. Riles, who was the District Managers (Homer Scott) Secretary, wrote the original letter announcing the first reunion, which took place on December 12, 1981, and was attended by 43 members.

THE “GUMDIPPERS” ON FACEBOOK

The GumDippers is a social network of retirees and friends of Bridgestone Americas and its subsidiaries including the former Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, Firestone Complete Auto Care, Tires Plus, Total Car Care and various manufacturing and distribution operations. We now have our own closed group on FACEBOOK, log in to “Gum Dippers”. Sign up now to be up to date daily on Gum Dipper and Bridgestone/Firestone activities To sign up go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Gumdippers>

Signing up for a Facebook account—if you don’t already have one—is easy and free. You just need to go to Facebook.com and follow instructions. (Naturally, you have to first have a Facebook account before you can join the Gum Dippers group on Facebook.

Any questions, email Ritch Mucciolo, Administrator, rpmucciolo@gmail.com

We Get Letters

I am an old retiree, but a new GumDippers member; Need some info to share with my wife, who is a little reluctant to attend the 2023 reunion. What is the price for a couple per day & could you please send information on what is included? Received the Spring newsletter but did not find any names I remember. I want to bring my wife to this event but need a little help!

Thank You. Steve DeJacimo

Editor’s note: I sent a lot of info to Steve and advised him the summer newsletter would fill him in.

Dear Russell, the recent issue of Gum Dipper newsletter arrived a few days ago and reminded me that I should let you know of Luther’s death a few months ago. He died on September 20 at the age of 94 after a long life well lived. His two daughters and I will miss him forever and will always think of him with great love and admiration. His 30-year career with Firestone International played a big part in our family experiences. The years we spent in France, Italy, Spain, Costa Rica and most of all the Philippine’s were very important to our family. In particular the years spent in the international school in Manila were very important to our girls. They went off to college in America very well prepared and secure in life long friendships they formed in those school years. In December I made the decision to sell our long-term home in Bonita Springs and move to Boca Raton near our older daughter, Susan Taylor. I am living independently in a continuing care community. It is an adjustment but for the most part is going well. I hope that our many friends from around the world will have an opportunity to pay me a visit. My new telephone number is 561-409-2445 (could be 408 not clear). Thank you for all you do.

Very truly yours, Nancy McElhaney

Dear Russ, Please find enclosed check #2175 for \$20 to cover dues for 2023. Unfortunately, both Norma and myself will not be attending the Gum Dipper meeting scheduled for October 28-29, 2023. We have had quite a few appointments with medical personnel and hospital visits that while results were positive, have reduced our capability to travel this year. We send regards to our Gum Dipper friends and wish all of you another great time as we have enjoyed over the past several years. ***Best regards till next time! Jerry and Norma Eigenfeld***

IN MEMORIAM

We have lost the following members since our last reunion. We ask that you take the time during the reunion to remember them in your prayers as well as in your thoughts.

Ed Warner, Donald Krumich, Howard Andrews, James DeTorres, Rebecca Morse, Joseph DePaolis, Donzaleigh Dowell-McCord, Anthony Vetter, Barbara Chapman Carpenter, Ruth Caler, Richard Hagen, Anita Carmanico, Jack Picton, James Nelson Spencer, James Grady, Michael “Mike” Walker, and Gary Ferested.

HASTINGS, WARREN, passed away in 2022. Member of the Firestone Credit Card Division. When the first Firestone Credit Cards were established and sent out, Warren had something to do with it. He set up the Firestone call center in Arizona. He later moved on to Nissan and set up their national call center and ran the operation until he retired at 75.

MCELHANEY, LUTHER 94, passed away on September 20, 2022. He had a 30-year career with Firestone International. He is survived by two daughters and his wife Nancy.

JOYCE, ROBERT (BOB) CHARLES 80, of Mobile, AL passed away September 28, 2022. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Mary Sue Joyce. 2 brothers and spouses, a sister, 2 daughters, 5 grandchildren and one great grandchild. After high school in Orlando, FL and a stint in the Army, he joined Firestone in Orlando. He began his 47-year career at a store in Orlando, went on to become a store manager, then a district manager, and eventually a very effective Bridgestone OTR Corporate Accounts employee. He was instrumental in securing contracts with large OTR tire users like Martin Marietta, Vulcan Materials and Republic Services. After moving to Mobile early on, he became a staunch Alabama football fan along with his love for golf and NASCAR racing. He will be remembered for his dedication to his customers, whom he treated and valued like family. RIP Bob!

KEAVENEY, JAMES VINCENT 93, passed away on May 18, 2023 in Bedford, MA. Standing at 6’7”, he earned a basketball scholarship to St. Anselm College in Manchester, NH and served in the Korean conflict. He served as a substitute teacher in Manchester upon his return from Korea. His students thought he played for the Boston Celtics which he never did. He switched from basketball to tennis and became a presence in the sport. He was a larger-than-life personality who rarely entered a room quietly. He had a quick wit and penchant for storytelling. An avid traveler of Irish Heritage, he visited Ireland and Italy on multiple occasions. James spent the majority of his career with Firestone in many leadership positions eventually as District Manager in Boston. He was a regular attendee at the Gum Dipper Reunions in the past. He was predeceased by his wife of 47 years Jane Lyons in 2001, who he married in 1954. They had four children. He was preceded in death by his brother, sister and son in law. He is survived by his four children,

four grandchildren and five great grandchildren. He spent twenty years with his loving companion Joan Miller and her family. He was deeply rooted in his community and was active in his church serving as a Eucharistic Minister. He was and advisor to the Palace Theater in Manchester and the American Cancer Society.

WHITLEY, EDDY NEAL 85, passed away on Tuesday, June 27, 2023 in The Villages, FL. He was born Thursday, June 9, 1938 in Cookeville, Tennessee. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, a son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons. Eddy was preceded in death by his son Neal a brother and sister. He retired from Firestone Industrial Products Company in January, 2001, as Director of Operations, with 39 years of service. He was a graduate of Franklin – Simpson High School in KY. and attended Georgia Tech University. Ed's wife of 54 years, Marilyn (Coutts) Whitley lovingly took care of Ed during their many years journey with Alzheimer. Ed met Marilyn in Hamilton, Ontario, (Canada) where they both worked at Bridgestone/Firestone. They lived in Calgary, Alberta for 5 years, Rome, Italy for 1 1/2 years, Noblesville & Cicero, Indiana for 40 years, & The Villages, Florida. He was active in Neal and Ryan's years in The Boy Scouts, loved to play golf, camping, skiing, wood-working, gardening and dancing.

KING, ROBERT "DAVE" 74, passed away July 4, 2023, at his home in Clearwater, FL. He was a member of the Gum Dipper committee. Dave was born in Waynesburg, PA. and graduated from Waynesburg High School in 1966. He served in the U.S. Navy and was a veteran of the Vietnam War. Upon his discharge from the Navy, he moved to Clearwater and worked for Don Olson Firestone in 1972 at the Court & Missouri store. He worked for Morgan tire, and then Bridgestone after they purchased Tires Plus in 2004. He managed several stores for Olson and was warehouse manager for Tires Plus for many years in Clearwater. He is survived by son Shawn & his wife, his son Brian and his father Robert, five grandchildren, one great grandchild and two brothers. Dave fought his battle against cancer for 10 long years. Despite spending much of that time in and out of the hospital, he never lost his sense of humor. Throughout his entire journey, he cracked jokes.

SANDERS, SCOTT RICHARD, 75, of Palm Harbor, FL was born in Waterloo, Iowa on August 29th, 1947, and passed away on August 21st, 2023. Scott was predeceased by parents John Sanders, Christina Christenesen, and brother Steve Sanders. He served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War. He was a loving husband of Emma Jean Sanders and Stepfather of Donald E. Mack and Donna Davis. He was Grandfather to Bethany McRae and Cody Mack. He was Great Grandfather of Reese McRae and Liddy Mack. Scott was a manager for Don Olson Firestone and was an avid boater and lover of all things involving the water. Scott was a past Commodore, Rear Commodore and Fleet Captain of the Island Estates Yacht Club in Clearwater, FL. He was also in charge of their Christmas Boat Parade for several years.

YOUR GUM DIPPER COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: John & Glenna Johnsen (727)-365-[1151 jjohnsen1@live.com](mailto:jjohnsen1@live.com). Newsletter, Reunion hotel arrangements, banquets, prizes

TREASURER: Russ Burr, Dues, Finance & Roster (727) 943-8825 toplinetire@mindspring.com, please advise him on any roster changes.

SECRETARY: Dave Wonsetler, Newsletter Publication, Photographer (813) 324-8273 mabeandave@gmail.com, Reunion; planning, gifts and organization.

REUNION HOSPITALITY SET UP AND ARRANGEMENTS:

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Russ Burr: Beverages (727) 943-8825 toplinetire@mindspring.com

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Rhonda Ferestad (352) 326-9940 GRFERESTAD@gmail.com

CHAIRMAN EMERITIS: Richard Mucciolo (727) 773-9017 rpmucciolo@gmail.com

NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

You received the Roster in April, review it and send the following application to your friends that are not on that roster:

Attached is a copy of our REUNION Newsletter distributed at our reunion in October.

The GumDippers

Welcome to the GumDippers, an association formed to allow Firestone & Bridgestone employees, both retired and approaching retirement stay in touch with old friends.

Annual dues for new members are waived for first year.

Full Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

How did you hear about the GumDippers? _____

Background Information (Optional but encouraged)

Are you still working? _____ If not, when did you retire? _____

If presently working, where? _____

Bridgestone Anniversary date? _____ Years of service? _____

Last position held? _____ Where? _____

Membership dues are \$20 annually, \$100 lifetime.

New member dues are waived for the first year.

MAIL APPLICATION TO:

**The GumDippers c/o RUSSELL BURR
P.O. BOX 189
TARPON SPRINGS, FL. 34688**

