

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN**  
...keeping the memories alive  
Phan Rang AB News No. 172 **“Stories worth telling”**

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Photo by William Arvo

## **352nd Yellow Jackets Deploy To South Vietnam - Unit Stationed at Phan Rang**

(Century Sentinel, Myrtle Beach, S.C., Friday, August 12, 1966)

Officials of the 354<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing at Myrtle Beach AFB today announced the arrival of one of its fighter squadrons in South Vietnam.

Equipped with the F-100 Super Sabre, the unit has been reassigned from Tactical Air Command to the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and will be based at Phan Rang AB, 130 miles northeast of Saigon. The unit will augment existing tactical air forces already in the area.

Commanded by Lt. Col. Richard G. Newell, the unit consists of 210 officers and enlisted personnel.

The administrative, maintenance and supply airmen along with support equipment, were transported to Phan Rang via C-130 and C-141 transport aircraft. Pilots made the flight in their F-100 Super Sabres, and were refueled along the route by Strategic Air Command aerial tankers.

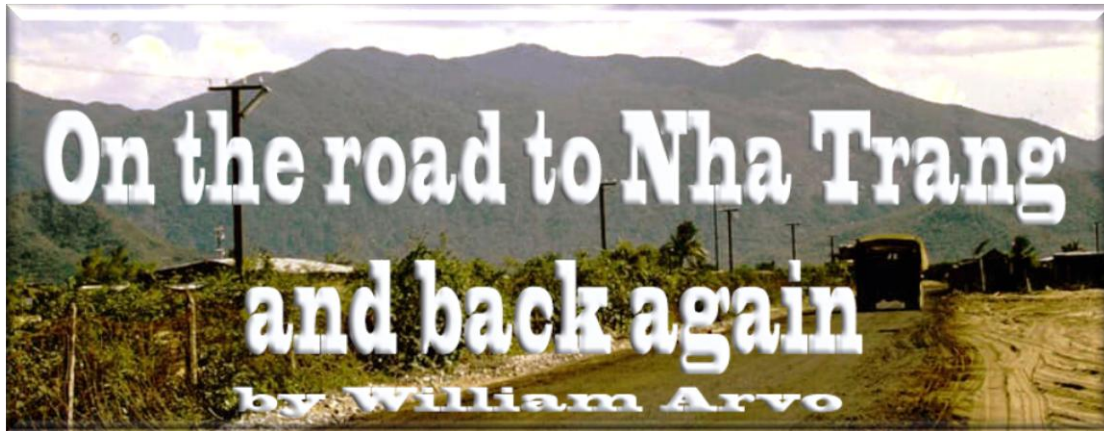
Colonel Newell, prior to the overseas move, said that he expected “our boys to make a real mark for themselves in South Vietnam. This is the first time the squadron has ever been in combat and I know each man will give an excellent account of himself.”

The 352<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron deployment marked the third time since last fall that the 354<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing has lost a tactical squadron to an overseas area.

In November, 1965, the 356<sup>th</sup> TFS deployed to a permanent duty station at Misawa AB, Japan. The 353<sup>rd</sup> TFS deployed to a permanent assignment to Spain to fulfill NATO rotation requirements to Turkey.

The 352<sup>nd</sup> TFS has been located at Myrtle Beach since 1956, following activation of the 354<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Day Wing here.

**On the road to Nha Trang and back again**  
**- Highway 1**



On Highway 1, on a convoy back to our home base of Phan Rang, after constructing some living quarters at Nha Trang AB. For those who had not a chance to get off base at Phan Rang, you will enjoy seeing some of rural Vietnam. This occurred during the summer of 1969.



Leaving Nha Trang



Palm trees along the cost of Vietnam.

**RED HORSE squadrons provide the Air Force with a highly mobile civil engineering response force to support contingency and special operations worldwide.**

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Local villagers always came out to meet us when we stopped as they became used to the handouts, usually C-rations that they received from the GI's. They just seemed to pop out of nowhere Sgt. Arvo remembers.



Sgt Tyrus Gil jumps off the back of the truck with his camera to take a picture.

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**Vietnamese workers working in green lush rice paddies.**



**A view of the Gulf of Tonkin as Highway 1 winds its way along the coast to Nha Trang.**

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Passing through a small village.



ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) parachuting on a training exercise with the American Army.

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**ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) on a training exercise with the American Army being picked up by helicopter at the drop zone and returned to base camp.**



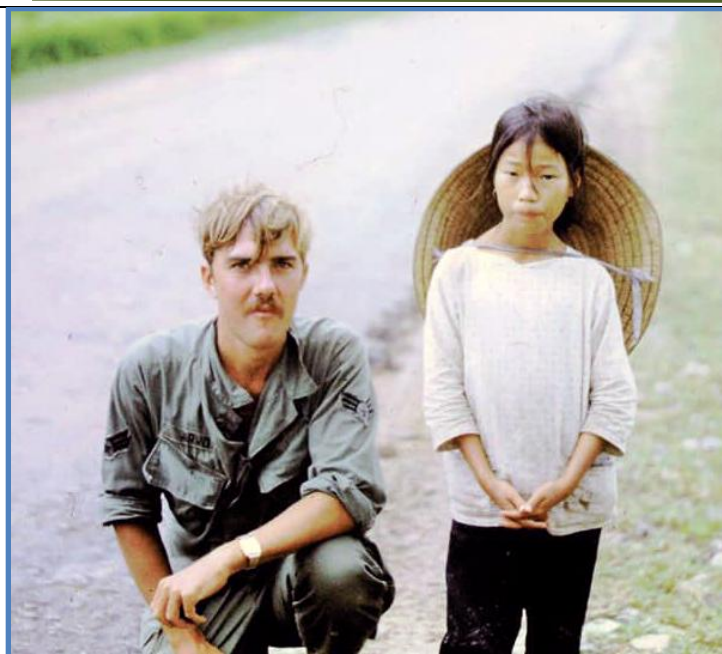
**Nearing the gate to Phan Rang AB.**

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**William Arvo, 554th Red Horse Squadron, poses with a Vietnamese worker along Highway 1 on the way back to Phan Rang AB. Sgt Arvo was part of a 404-person mobile squadron, capable of rapid response and independent operations in remote, high-threat environments worldwide. They provide heavy-repair capability and construction support when requirements exceed normal base civil engineer.**

**We also were on Hon Tre Island just off the coast of Nha Trang and installed a radio transmission site there.**

## **Facility Named for Hero, Widow Given His Medals**

(The News, Frederick, Maryland, Thursday, April 30, 1970)

The late husband and son-in-law of former Jefferson residents has been honored posthumously and had a facility in Vietnam named in his memory.

Captain George Andrews, husband of the former Miss Dorothy Hicks, and son-in-law of Mrs. Margaret Hicks, recently of Jefferson and now of Big Spring, Texas, was a hero of the Vietnam war.

The following account describes the recent ceremony at Webb Air Force Base, Texas: The Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart and Air Force Commendation Medal, posthumously awarded to Capt. George R. Andrews, were presented to his widow, Mrs.



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Dorothy H. Andrews, during a ceremony held at Webb AFB recently.

The awards were presented to Mrs. Andrews by Col. Anderson W. Atkinson, Webb wing commander.

The alert facility at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, was recently dedicated in memory of Capt. Andrews, a Phan Rang-based pilot at the time of his death. Making the dedication address was Walter T. Galligan, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander.

Capt. Andrews, then a member of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, scrambled from the alert facility for a mission while on night alert duty in Vietnam Oct 15, 1969. During the mission, his wing men reported the captain's F-100 Super Sabre appeared to pull up from a pass over the target and then rolled into the ground. The flight was called to provide assistance for a river boat patrol experiencing small arms fire from the shoreline area.

The mission was being supported by a forward air control aircraft and a search light operation. After a dry run at the target, the aircraft made a pass, and the search light operation reported that the number two aircraft, piloted by Capt. Andrews, had apparently crashed.

Capt Andrews graduated from the University of Maryland in 1966 with a degree in electrical engineering. He entered the Air Force in July, 1966, and received his pilot's wings at Webb AFB a year later.

Immediately upon graduation he was sent to Vietnam for a year. He spent a short time at Luke AFB, Phoenix, Ariz., before being sent back to Vietnam in August, 1969.

Capt. Andrews is survived by his wife and two children. Lori Sue, 5, and George Robert Andrews Jr., 3, Big Spring, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Don D. Andrews, Washington, D.C.

### **1st Air Guard Unit Arrives in Vietnam**

*(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, May 17, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG.**, Vietnam (01)—The first Air National Guard unit to deploy to a war zone as a unit since World War II has become a part of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

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The 120th Tactical Fighter Sq., formerly part of the Colorado Air National Guard, arrived at Phan Rang Air Base recently, complete with men, equipment and aircraft.

The first of the F100 Supersabres to land at Phan Rang touched down at noon and was piloted by the commander of the 120th TFS, Lt. Col. Robert C. Cherry, 43, of Denver. He led the first of three flights from Buckley Air National Guard Base, Colo., where the 120th TFS was a part of the 140th Tactical Fighter Group (ANG).

"We've been combat ready and wanting to get over here for a long time," Cherry said. "Now we have a chance to accomplish what we've been training for."

Greeting the pilots of the new unit was Gen. William W. Momyer, 7th Air Force commander and Col. Herndon F. Williams, 35th TFW commander.

Almost all of the 120th TFS pilots have had prior active duty and nearly 25 per cent have combat experience. Almost all of the noncommissioned officers and nearly one-third of the airmen served in the regular Air Force before joining the Air National Guard.

**(Note:** Other stories about the Colorado National Guards deployment to Phan Rang can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 17 “Some Photos of the Air Guard F-100s at Phan Rang (a picture gallery)”; Phan Rang Newsletter 47 “Move Completed by Guard Unit”; Phan Rang Newsletter 70 “Move Completed By Guard Unit” and Phan Rang newsletter 98 “National Guard Unit Welcomed in Vietnam”)

## **Shadow Foils Enemy**

*(Seventh Air Force News)*

TUY HOA-An AC-119 Shadow gunship crew of the 14<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing here recently provided fire support and flare illumination helping the Bu Prang Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp in Quang Due Province break an enemy attack.

Arriving over the area earlier, the gunship crew found poor weather conditions and Maj. William R. Casey, aircraft commander, decided to return to base.

The gunship had just left the area when an urgent call for aid came from camp. Turning around

immediately, the AC-119 crew returned to the area. At Bu Prang the weather seemed to clear just when visibility was needed most.

Major Casey and his copilot, Capt. Harman E. Fawcett, could see heavy firing on both sides. The gunship crew then began firing at the muzzle flashes of the enemy weapons.

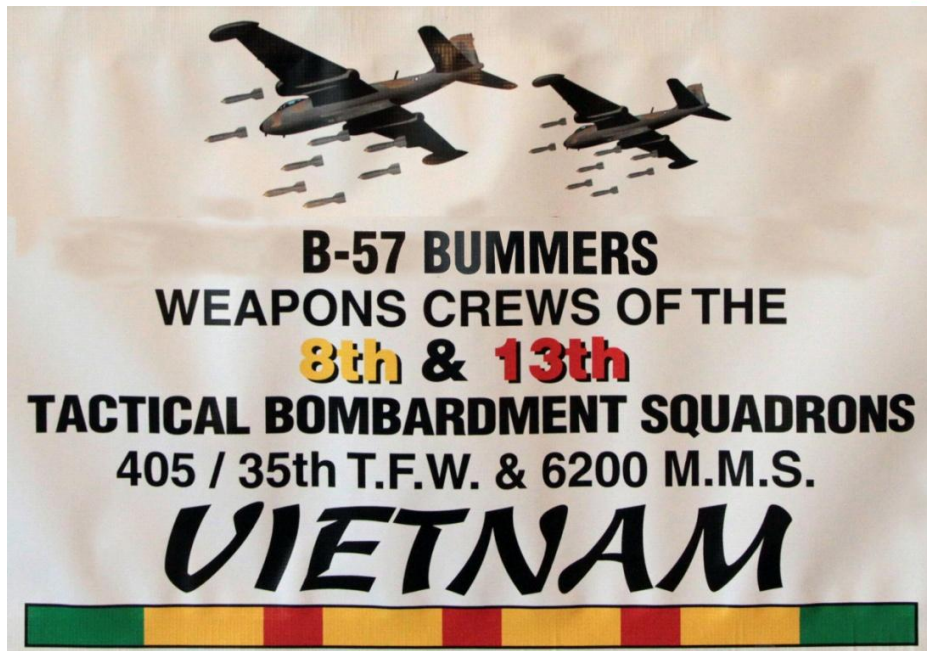
Firing its miniguns and dropping flares, the Shadow crew helped the CIDG forces break the enemy attack.

Other members of the Shadow crew were: Captains Paul J. Cherenzia, navigator instructor, and Thomas W. Wood, navigator; MSgt. John P.W. Schwartz and Sgt. John Temoney Jr., both aerial gunners.

### The “Bummers” Saga Continues



# The “Bummers” Saga



## Thanksgiving Day

*By Rond Bodine*



**A1C Bodine**

On Thanksgiving Day in 1967 our new chow hall had just opened. Our Barracks was right across the street from the chow hall which made it pretty convenient for us.

Myself and Franks got of work from the midnight shift and woke up about 1100 A.M. to go get that big meal

we thought we were going to get.

Arriving at the chow hall we saw a table set up to the left of the serving line with a large turkey and a ham and some decorations spread across it. As we went through the line we got a little bit of ham and a little turkey on our tray and some mashed potatoes and gravy. We sat eating and looking at the table with all of the good stuff on it.

We finished eating and talked about how good that ham looked. Franks said cover for me and I'll get that ham on my way out. I took his tray and as we walked by the table he took the ham and we walked to the side door where I covered for him and dumped our trays. We just walked out and crossed the street to our barracks. No one noticed a thing.

We were on the second floor so we took it to our sleeping area and started cutting it up. We woke up a bunch of guys and shared until it was gone. Afterwards we went out on the steps to let the ham settle. As we were sitting there we saw someone come out that same door of the chow hall that we used and he had a turkey under his arm carrying it like a football. He was being chased by several of the cooks and the whole thing looked like a Keystone cops movie.

Our barracks sat on a hill and our sitting on the steps gave us a great view of the chase. We could see them running between the barracks and then through the hooches close to the Annex. Finally they lost him and were just milling around before going back to the chow hall.

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A few hours later as we walked to the flight line to go to work we passed an aid station and there was a line trying to get in. I asked one of the guys what was going on and he said an SP had stolen the turkey and shared it with all his friends and they ended up getting food poisoning. We went to work feeling sorry for those guys, but glad that we didn't steal the turkey.

### **Gorilla Warfare**

*By Bill (Willy) Wise*

One fine night in the village of Phan Rang while we were sitting at the end of the runway, arming and de-arming, my partner and I were without a vehicle, when ‘Bomber 1’ with the line supervisor came out to tell us that there was a gorilla in the area.



Being that we are in the middle of a gorilla war my buddy and I decided we should put on our helmets and flack vest. It was only about 100 degrees that night so we sat there armed with our 14 inch screwdrivers waiting for anything that might come through. A little later that evening as we sweated, the shop truck came out to check on us. They asked us why we were wearing our flack vest. We informed them we had been notified that there was a gorilla in the area therefore we thought it prudent to put on our flack vest. They laughed at us and told us that it was a long arm hairy type critter that was in the area.

We removed our flack vest and had a lovely night.

### **Gorilla Story**

*By Charles Amberg*

While working the arm end of the runway late at night we heard on the radio an Air Policeman hollering for help. He said he had a gorilla in the tower with him. We thought it was a V.C., but it turned out to be a real gorilla.

Flash forward 48 years later, playing pool in my basement I found out one of the guys I was playing with was an Air Policeman at Phan Rang at the same time I was there. I told him the gorilla story and he said, “you mean Cecil”. I said the guys name was Cecil? He said “no, the gorilla’s name was Cecil”. He told me that they would put the new guy in that tower knowing

Cecil would show up looking for a hand out.

They got a big laugh out of scaring the hell out of the new guy. The gorilla was pretty tame from all the guys feeding him.

### **Both Sides of the Waterfall**

*By Mike Chaney*

From load team member to load team chief is like being on both sides of the waterfall for me. I remember the rain and the rain and the rain.

I was first assigned to Red Rebels as we call ourselves as we were all southern. I was on Red Foster's team for my first six month, TDY tour in country as a jammer driver, and then came the torrential rains.

I would have to line up the bomb lugs with rivets or other marking on the side of the aircraft to get the bomb in the bomb bay as I could not see the screwdriver hanging down. Foster taught us all many things to stay safe and he was a major influence with me passing my five level and becoming a load crew chief. Then I was on the other side of the waterfall sitting under the bomb bay myself counting on DeCillo to bring bombs in safe to me. I will forever be grateful to Foster for teaching me what I need to know to be on both sides of the waterfall as a crew member and a crew chief. What a great beginning I had with Foster, Taylor and Williams.

### **Wet Bombs and Wet Trailers**

*By Randy Jones*

Our crew consisted of Rich Moody, Chuck Morris, John DeCillo and myself Randy Jones. Late one afternoon we were loading 750's off of one aircraft to another. There was kind of a light mist of rain, and we were all in a hurry as usual. As the last 750 lb. went on the rail trailer, I jumped on the tractor and away I went...too fast. I dumped four 750's on the ramp as the pilots shuttle drove by. Great!

The line chief TSgt Rowe told us to take it easy. A few minutes later Rich Moody our crew chief and I decided to download some MK-81's off the wings by hand. It is starting to rain now as we slide the 81's on the trailer. You guessed it, off the other side it went! We got it back on the trailer just as TSgt Rowe came driving by. We were both glad that the Sarge missed that!

## **Night Shift**

*By Randy Jones*

The crew of McDonald, Thomas, Moody and Jones were downloading 1,000 lb. bombs from the Bombay of a B-57. McDonald or Thomas, I don't remember who entered the cockpit to release one of the bombs on the MJ-1 bomb loader which Moody had positioned under the bomb.

When the bomb release button was actuated in the cockpit, both bombs fell at the same time. One on the bomb loader and the other fell on the ramp. Surprise, surprise, this was not good! Me being the foreman I had a firm grip on the bomb that landed on the MJ-1. The one that landed next to me on the ramp, I wasn't ready for to steady it, needless to say.

We proceeded to turn the floodlights on the light cart to the outward position and then we hooked a chain to the bomb and to the MJ-1. As we were dragging the bomb out from under the aircraft the aircraft crew chief came to see what was going on and as soon as he saw what was happening he took off running. Oh well, obviously everything worked out or I wouldn't be sharing this story.

## **Light Carts**

*By Randy Jones*

I don't think most people realize it sometimes gets cold and rainy at night in Vietnam. On nights like that while waiting to turn around another aircraft you could squeeze into a light cart where it was dry and warm. Then a letter came down urging personnel not to do that after someone was overcome from carbon monoxide poisoning. I didn't do that anymore.

## **Before Revetments**

*By Randy Jones*

On night duty on the flightline and before revetments McDonald's load crew was cutting across the flightline to load an aircraft and as Rich Moody cut under one of the aircraft the nose picker ("Nose Picker" aka aircraft crew chief) jettisoned the tip tank right beside Moody on the MJ-1 bomb loader. A few choice words were exchanged.

## **PHAN RANG FLASHES**

*(The Phan Rang Weekly, August 2, 1967)*

**Last week’s temperatures showed an extreme maximum of 102 degrees and extreme minimum of 76 degrees. Precipitation over a five day period was just .03 of an inch.**

### **No. 2 SQN 1970 Rugby Team**



**Back row left to right:** Dave Smith (FLGOFF, Canberra pilot), Tex Bausch, Ned Kelley (Airframe Fitter), Curly Pearce, John Rutland, Mike Herbert <sup>1</sup> (Canberra pilot), Alex Alexander (Coach and Armament officer), Terry Pratt, Rip Kirby, Tony Appleton, Ron Peacock

**Front row left to right:** Bill Bacon, Jim Mcleod, Shorty Walker, Bill Eather (Armorer Capt.), Bill Jacob, Kev Carter, Alan Burgers

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<sup>1</sup> See Phan Rang Newsletter 147 “MAGPIE DOWN” the story of Magpie 91, call sign, Canberra flown by Flying Officers Mike Herbert (pilot) and Bob Carver (navigator/bomb-aimer) which never returned from a mission on 3 November 1970 and the wreckage was not discovered until April 2009.



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**Richard Boyette Gets Viet Duty** Airman Richard B. Boyette, son of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. Donald Boyette of 828 Querida, Colorado Springs, has been graduated from a U.S. Air Force technical school at Sheppard AFB, Tex. He was trained as an aircraft mechanic and has been assigned to a unit of the Pacific Air Forces at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (Colorado Springs Gazette, December 6, 1967)

**Airman convalescing at home** Airman 1C **Paul H. Minert**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Minert, 334 Cornell Ave, is home on leave convalescing from injuries received in Vietnam March 24.

Airman Minert, a material facilities specialist, was enroute by truck for patrol duty to the perimeter of Phan Rang Air Base, south of Cam Rahn Bay, when a side of the truck gave way causing the vehicle to turn over.

Minert received a fractured upper arm and wrist and was hospitalized in Japan before being transferred to Wright Patterson AB, Dayton, for treatment.

Airman Minert enlisted in the Air Force after graduation from Elyria High School in 1966. His twin brother, **Kirk** is a jet mechanic in the Air Force and is also stationed at Phan Rang Air Base.

The brothers, who received most of their training at the same bases, have been together a large part of their time in the service. Their barracks in Vietnam were just 200 yards apart. (The Chronicle, Elyria Ohio, Saturday April 12, 1969.)

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**Notice to Reunion Attendees.** If you’ve made reservations at one of the reunion hotels, but did not make a commitment to the reunion by making any payments. There are several reasons it's important to send in your money as soon as possible. Two of them are we really need to know how many people are going to attend the “Savannah tour and riverboat dinner cruise” because we are limited in numbers and the other reason we need to know how many people to plan for the banquet. Another very important reason is we have to make incremental payments for the hotel and cruise, so we need money to do that. Even if you are RVing there still is a reunion fee and banquet fee if you wish to attend. Here are the costs.

**HERE ARE THE COSTS**

	Single	Double
Reunion Fee, Banquet and Tour	\$152.41	\$304.82
Reunion Fee and Banquet only	\$75.41	\$150.82

**PLEASE SEND CHECK TO:**

**Jack Anderson**  
**826 72<sup>nd</sup> St. SE**  
**Auburn, WA 98092**

Remember the funds are refundable up to a certain point. If you don't remember if you paid, look in your checkbook because the only way to pay is by check. Proof of payment by check sometimes could come in handy at registration if there are ever any questions because people sometimes make mistakes.

I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and if you have any comments, please let me know. This newsletter was composed by **Douglas Severt**. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, reply to mailto:[dougsevert@cox.net](mailto:dougsevert@cox.net) and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject line.