

and Bill Perry, both secretaries of defense in the Clinton administration. And during the early Bush years, he crossed paths but not swords with (sound the ominous kettle drum here) Donald Rumsfeld. Of this mercurial man, Frame will only say, "Whew. Not very nice."

By this point, a house right on the water at Lake of the Woods had caught Lee and Sandy Frame's eye. The three kids were well out of the nest, and "I was thinking of retiring." But they wanted him to hang in there until Bush's political appointee came on board. "I said, Okay. I'll stay." But I wanted to take one day a week off because I had moved down here." The very first day he took off was September 11, 2001.

Frame's office was not directly affected; it was across the courtyard from where the jet hit. Still, the next morning, when he showed up, "I could see flames shooting out from the other side of the building." And because his was one of the few offices that had done some emergency planning, "by the end of that second day, we were all over in another building and we were up and operating full speed."

Once the dust cleared and the political appointee came in, Lee Frame retired to Lake of the Woods to "golf and fish." He flashes an embarrassed grin and adds, "I golf three or four times every year. I've been fishing twice in the 10 years I've been down here." Instead he became a captain in the Lake of the Woods Rescue Squad and found he has some talent for treading the boards with the LOW Players. His first play was a musical; he had to sing in an Irish accent. "I had never done that before."

Lee Frame leans back in his armchair and goes back 35 years or so to Rota, Spain. They were about to deploy on patrol aboard the *USS Kamehameha*, and he was down a yeoman. At the officer's club, everybody's having a pretty good time and a female

reserve lieutenant drops that "she had never been on a submarine before." XO Frame is going to do something about that.

In secret league with the captain, they arrange for this woman to show up the next morning, dressed in a yeoman's blouse, toting a sea bag, and bearing orders that she is to join the crew on this patrol. "And everybody's all atwitter. This very attractive young woman has orders to go on patrol with us." (This is the 1970s; women are only serving aboard tugs and tenders; and never on submarines; still can't).

And so she has lunch with the crew and is given the grand tour and at the last minute, under some pretext, Frame and the Captain have her escorted off the boat. "The skipper and I are sitting in his stateroom and just sort of chuckling how we've scammed the whole crew with this little joke, and then a messenger comes in and says, 'Captain, XO, any last-minute mail to go ashore?' They looked at each other in horror. "How many of our crew has written home that we've taken this beautiful young lady on patrol with us?" they ask themselves. "The captain looks at me and says, 'Lee, it's your fault; you fix it.'"

Frame quickly wrote a note home to Sandy who, in true Navy tradition, was helping with the wives' support group. "I had not one question from one wife about this," reports Sandy, "but there were a lot of questions that went into the command." Lee somberly adds, "Actually in today's environment, that might have destroyed our career."

How true. Actually, the crew had the last laugh; they stole the door to Frame's stateroom, and hid it under two tons of food in the freezer. He only got it back after he disabled the ice cream machine and threatened to do the same with the coffee maker.

All fun and games until you hear something going thump-thump-thump down the hull.



Lee and Sandy Frame have lived at Lake of the Woods for the past 10 years. Prior to his election to the board of supervisors, Frame served on the Orange County Planning Commission and on the board of the Lake of the Woods Association.



The ship's cook, right, and XO, left, present Captain Lee Frame with a cake marking the midpoint of a patrol aboard the *USS Casimir Pulaski*.

SUBS & SUPERS

The submarine captain

"Occasionally, all of a sudden, you hear this thump thump-thump-thump coming down the side of the ship. You say 'what the hell was that?'"

Orange County Supervisors Chairman, Lee Frame, is not sitting in his armchair at Lake of the Woods any more; he's in the control room of a submerged submarine 40 years ago. And something's banging along the hull.



Lee Frame has been a submarine captain, a department of defense deputy director, a rescue squad captain, an actor, and now chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

"Ooookay, nobody move. Everybody put on the phones; go to emergency," says Captain Frame.

"Alright, move your planes a little bit." Pause.

"Yeah, they're moving fine. Move the rudder." Pause. "It's moving fine."

Everyone exhales pent up breath. "Whew!" But, what WAS that?

Captain Frame returns from the bottom of the ocean to his armchair at Lake of the Woods and says matter-of-factly, "I had that happen two or three times." Once they thought they were scraping past a submerged cable. On another occasion they may have bumped into a log suspended between thermal layers. They'll never know for sure. Still, when something bangs on the hull of a submerged submarine, you pay attention.

Frame describes going on underwater patrol as "months of boredom punctuated by moments of stark fear." There was the time when "we couldn't pump any water out of the ship. We were running around at an up-angle to carry all the weight." As an engineer, he figured it out, "but that was scary and I had a lot of crew really nervous."

Another time they had to shut down the sub's reactor to repair a steam generator leak. Frame was the XO (executive officer) at the time. While the skipper supervised the repair, Frame drove the boat. To save battery power, they went up to periscope depth, turned off everything but minimal lighting and snorkeled. The auxiliary diesel engine could muster two knots max. "All of a sudden we sight this ship bearing down on us....Now, he's probably doing 20 knots; we're doing two. So, he's pretty much heading straight for us."

What do you do? Flood the tanks and sink and maybe have to blow



Weapons officer, Lee Frame is facing the camera in this photo taken just before the submarine submerged.

to get back up or speed up and run the battery down? Frame chose the latter. "Go ahead full," he ordered, coaxing, at best, another two knots out of the batteries. The oncoming ship "comes behind us maybe a thousand yards. Still," Frame breathes a figurative sigh of relief, "that's pretty close."

All this stuff happened during the height of the Cold War. So, in addition to the run-of-the-mill "moments of stark fear," they had to deal with the reality that they could start...or end a nuclear war. It is reminiscent of that nightmarish late 1950s novel, "On the Beach," when the Australians are the last to die of radiation sickness and the sub surfaces to a barren world.

"We were supposed to stay away from Soviet submarines or anybody who could detect us because we were the survivable leg of the strategic defense triad," says Frame somberly. "You couldn't take us out because nobody knew where we were. Nobody ashore knew where we were."

Was it like "Hunt for Red October"? Frame says the movie is a little "hokey," but the book; now that's a different matter. "At the time it came out, it was frighteningly accurate. We thought we kept far better secrets in the submarine force than that.

"Our job was basically to be ready to launch," he continues. Frame would repeatedly put that fail-safe procedure to the test. "I, as Captain, could not launch. I had to have three or four other officers agree, and they all

knew the rules; they were very well-defined...I would try to get them to break the rules...and when they would finally succumb, after I brow beat 'em, then I would really cloud up and rain all over them."

Like the time Admiral Rickover rained all over Frame.

But first some background: Born in Chicago, raised in the little Michigan town of Buchanan, Lee Frame chose to go through the University of Michigan on a ROTC scholarship, rather than attend the Naval Academy. "No, I got an education," he takes a sly dig at Annapolis.

Well, he didn't get that much of an education because he partied hardy and flunked out. "I had a lot of fun," he says sheepishly. "The summer I flunked out, I took two courses, dropped one and got an incomplete in the other. Then I met my wife and settled down and I got pretty good grades."

Sandy, his wife of 50 years, just rolls her eyes.

Anyway, Frame had already served aboard a destroyer and was all set "to be the youngest destroyer engineer in the Pacific fleet." And he was urged to go through the interview process that would make him a part of Rickover's budding nuclear navy. "Not interested," he responded. "I'm a young ensign, that sort of a smartass and pretty flippant with these guys, and in a couple of

cases, I knew more about the topic than they did. And I would Lord it over them with it."

Then he was thrust into Admiral Hyman Rickover's office. Rickover was a small man with a turkey-like neck poking out of a shirt collar three sizes too big. "And he stood up and he pointed at me and he said, 'God you're fat.'

Talk about knocking the chip off my shoulder." What followed is almost verbatim.

Rickover: "Why did you do so poorly in college?"

Frame: "'Cause I didn't study, Admiral."

Rickover: "Why didn't you study?"

Frame: "Was running around having a good time...sir."

Rickover: "Didn't you go to college to study?"

Frame: "Yes sir!"

Rickover: "Well why didn't you?"

Frame: "At the time, running around seemed like the better thing to do...sir."

Rickover: "Get outta here."

Savannah in 1779. But to everyone else, the boat was called the 'Crazy Polack.' "I've got more jokes about how do you sink a Polish submarine than you can imagine," chuckles Frame.

But wait, there's more. In early 1980, Frame joined the Operational Test and Evaluation Force, and was put "in charge of under seas testing there." Just about then, the whole issue of military testing was coming under scrutiny, and as a result of a military reform bill, Frame wound up in the office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation. His job: "to rewrite all the regulations for the Department of Defense on testing, and the only guy in the



When he worked in the Pentagon for the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Lee Frame was sent on various assignments, from checking out fighter aircraft to testing under-ice sonar in the arctic.

And just as Lee walks out the door the Admiral adds, "Can you lose 20 pounds in 20 weeks?" And I said, 'Yes Admiral.' He turned to his secretary and said, 'Get that in writing.' I ended signing an agreement. I walked out thinking 'what the hell happened?' And that started my nuclear engineering career and then off into submarines."

He was sent to reactor school, then to the New London, CT sub base, then to Hawaii as a submarine weapons officer; then he became a navigator aboard a missile submarine; then XO, then his own command aboard the *USS Casimir Pulaski*. Casimir Pulaski, by the way, was a Polish officer in the Continental Army who gave his life for our country in the Siege of

office who had any testing experience was me." Lee Frame, our mild-mannered chairman of the board of supervisors, even worked for the Reagan White House for a year; actually attended meetings in the Situation Room.

And he loved it! All in all, Frame worked 17 years in the Pentagon, rising to deputy director to political appointees who were assistant secretaries of defense. And it is heartening to hear him say, "All the political appointees who came into that job, they really had the well-being of the soldier and sailor and airmen who had to work with that equipment. That was their focus; no political games, no nothing. I mean it was just the best place in the world to work."

He even reported to people like Les Aspin

The supervisor

So who is this guy who shows up for ribbon cuttings and signs the necessary papers and bangs the gavel at the board of supervisors' meetings?

A relative newcomer to the board, Leslie "Lee" Frame found himself propelled to the chairman's position just a year after taking office. But he does not come without experience. He served on the board of the Lake of the Woods Association; was its president for awhile. And he represented District 5 on the planning commission. Besides, this 72-year-old warrior commanded a submarine and worked for the secretary of defense. Yet, he claims he has not had trouble adapting to the civilian way of doing things, as some military people do.

Just the same, the learning curve has been steep. The Wal-Mart issue is, of course, the biggest thing to hit the board in years. It generated some 5,000 e-mails from people who don't even live here. It attracted the attention of movie actors and the governor, and it claimed the job of the county administrator.

All this outsider-meddling-in-our-affairs would rankle many, but it doesn't seem to bother him. "Let's say somebody wants to put moustaches on Mount Rushmore. I might write an e-mail about that," he shrugs. As it is, he claims the 300-400 e-mails he's received from Orange County citizens on the Wal-Mart issue "were generally reasonably split but probably a little more in favor."

One of the underlying issues in the Wal-Mart matter is land use, the age-old push and pull of "No Growth versus Pro Growth" that has split this county for decades. Lee Frame admits, "My view of rural and the farmer's view of rural is very very different. I had a lot of learning to do." It boils down to finding a comfortable place on a scale where one end reads "no property rights" and the other end reads "unlimited property rights." Outside the gates of Lake of the Woods, he's found a "very much stronger property rights view. People who live in a gated community like this or a community controlled by covenants and restrictions have come to accept a lot of limitations on what they can do. And they accept that because they know their next door neighbor has those same restrictions." And so, despite heavy opposition, he voted for the new subdivision ordinance. "I campaigned, and that was one of the specific things I said I wanted to limit: the by-right subdivision. And I won two to one. That's what I told people I was going to do."

But he also voted for Wal-Mart. Lee Frame once served on a planning committee in Fairfax County.



Lee Frame was elected as the District 5 Orange County Supervisor in 2007 with 67 percent of the vote. His fellow board members appointed him chairman in 2009. Frame's four-year term expires Dec. 31, 2012. Here, the chairman is pictured conferring with county administrator Julie Jordan at last summer's Wal-Mart public hearing. Fellow supervisors, from left, Zack Burkett and Teel Goodwin are pictured as well.

"One of the things I learned there is when a big developer comes in and wants to do things, you can squeeze him pretty damn hard...and they will pay attention....A small family business trying to start up here, you don't want to come down on them like you do a Wal-Mart or a Sheetz or something like that. But it's very hard to prescribe ordinances that give this guy a break and don't give the big guys a break." One tool: to enact a big box ordinance, as the county did just before Wal-Mart applied to put a super store right at the Rt. 3/20 intersection. "I think that's responsible management of growth. I want development, but I don't want the laissez-faire that you can get out at Central Park or along Route 1." As it is, because of a buffer and height restrictions, he says the Wal-Mart will not be visible from Route 3.

Lee Frame sees the next red flag issue in Orange County as being redistricting. And herein lie some interesting numbers. Although his district has one vote in five, (basically a 20 percent share in decisions) it is home to 28 percent of the county's residents. Neighboring District 4 has 26 percent. The other three each claim 15 percent or less. We'll know more when the 2010 census comes out, but the boundaries will move east, far east. He sees Lake of the Woods, Wilderness Shores and Somerset Farms making up the lion's share of both districts. And if redistricting claims the turf of one or more supervisors in the other three districts, essentially booting them out of office, political control of the county will shift.

For Orange, that shift is exacerbated by its geographical shape. It's long and skinny. It takes an hour to drive from Eheart to Flat Run, and quite frankly most folks in Barboursville could care less what goes on at Lake of the Woods and vice versa. But Lee Frame points to Lake of the Woods volunteers who help with the animal shelter, the homeless shelter, mentoring and tutoring programs. "We have a lot of younger retirees who are out doing things and are involved in different parts of the community outside Lake of the Woods. And I think that's good. That's what helps tie Lake of the Woods to the rest of the county."

As chairman of the board of supervisors for this diverse and fractious county, he has proven himself an even-handed pragmatist. But he does not see himself in a leadership position. "I see my job as chairman not so much to lead where we go but just to make sure that I can create consensus where it's possible, make sure things get done."

Having been in a position of leadership his whole life, he says "you need to be able to motivate people. You need to be able to provide a goal, provide objectives, provide motivation...Most people want to do a good job. And all you have to do is help them to do that and make sure they understand what it is they're supposed to do and make sure they've got the skills to do it. And some guys need more guidance; others need to be left alone, but understanding that leadership isn't a single formula for everybody you're working with."