

## Ran-i's first Ouija Board experience.

By E, Kitson Southward

It was early on a cool, blustery Saturday morning in mid-December 1974, just the kind of day most of us hearty seagoing types appreciate for an exhilarating day of sailing. Barbara will bring her girlfriend Beverly to the marina to meet my friend Glenn. We plan to spend a glorious day sailing on the Gulf of Mexico on Glenn's magnificent 28-foot Choy Lee.

My name is Kitson, and I was a Teck Sergeant stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, as an inertial navigation systems instructor.

Glenn was a debonair ladies-man and worked for the Biloxi phone company. I arrived at the marina at about nine o'clock when Glenn was aboard his boat. I approached his boat and hailed, "Permission to come aboard, Sir."

A voice came from below deck, "Permission granted, mister, come aboard."

I stepped quickly but lightly onto the teakwood deck as Glenn came topside. I handed him the box of provisions I had brought for the day's outing. He thanked me and asked, "What can you tell me about this girl Barbara's bringing today?"

"I only met her once this week. All I know is that her name is Beverly, and she's an Airman going to secretarial school."

He persisted, "What's she look like?"

That was a fair question because, within the 1970s, 80 percent of Air Force women were good-looking; however, the other 20 percent were stationed where I was.

I told him she was in uniform the other day, and I couldn't tell much about her, but I doubt you'll be disappointed."

Having just told him that, we heard Barbara's booming voice calling out, "Ahoy the Choy Lee."

We both turned and stood agog as the two girls strode toward us along the breakwater. Barbara was a Staff Sergeant and worked in an orderly room of one of the Student Squadrons.

As they got closer, it became apparent that Beverly was an exquisite 'Jane Seymour' look-alike. She was tall and slender with long reddish-blond hair that fell well between her shoulder blades. I immediately wondered where she hid that crop of hair when in uniform."

Barbara was an old hand around the boats because we had spent the past year sailing on my 24-foot Irwin, so she sprang aboard with ease and agility as Glenn and I jockeyed for position to assist Beverly aboard.

Once aboard and preliminary introductions made, Glenn started the inboard diesel and eased the boat into Biloxi Bay. After Barbara and I hoisted and trimmed the sails, he secured the engine and set a course for Ship Island eleven miles offshore.

During the cruise to the island, Glenn asked me, Is it true you may be leaving Biloxi."

"Yes, I think 22 years is enough to give Uncle Sam."

"How soon?"

"Oh, not until March next year."

"What are you going to do ... got a job lined up?"

"No, I'm going back to school. I have already been accepted into the Oceanic Marine Technology program at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Texas."

"When will you start?"

"The class of 75 begins in September."

"What's Barbara think of that?"

"I think it's great," she interjected, "I've already been to the college twice with Kit, and the campus is beautiful. I've considered enrolling there myself at the end of this enlistment."

We continued sailing, coming about as needed to maintain our course to the island. After we reached the island and secured the craft to the dock, we spent about two hours exploring the old Biloxi Fort before re-setting sail for home. With a steady, robust offshore wind at our back, we set the spinnaker and let the boat run free all the way back to the marina.

After securing the vessel, we reclined in its spacious lounge in idle conversation when the subject somehow turned to Ouija boards.

Beverly asked, "Has anyone ever worked with a Ouija board?"

Barbara said, "I have, but it was years ago."

I added, "Me too, several times, but nothing ever worked."

Glenn warned, "I've heard they're the Devil's tool, and bad things can happen."

Beverly chuckled and clarified, "Ouija boards are not the Devil's tool, and it's true there are entities out there you don't want to mess with, but it's easy to protect yourself from them."

Barbara asked, "How'd you do that?"

"Oh, it's simple; before you start, just surround yourself with a positive White Light and state that you will not allow negative spirits through the board. Your spirit guardian will assist in providing that protection."

Barbara asked, "What do you mean spirit guardians?"

"Your guardian angel, of course; everyone has one or two."

Glenn stated, "I don't believe in them, and besides, I've heard of monstrous things happening; I don't think anything can keep them out if they want to raise hell."

Barbara said, "I've never had any trouble except for those that make nuisances of themselves and waste time, but if you are serious, the board works."

Beverly concurred, "That's right, don't you see? The Ouija board is a legitimate tool to communicate with entities on the other side of the veil. It is not a parlor game for children, so if anyone you don't want to talk with arrives, just tell them 'be-gone,' and they will leave."

Now they've got my interest, so I asked Beverly, "Just who are these entities you talk to?"

"Spirit guardians, guides, and teachers and beings who bring messages from beyond."

Glenn asked. "Can they tell what's going to happen in the future?"

"Sometimes ... if you contact the right spirit and pay close attention, you can learn of things to come."

Impetuous me always wants to know where, when, and how soon we can try it, so I ask, "Does anyone have a board? Where can we set it up, and how soon?"

No one said anything at first, but then Glenn hesitantly spoke, "We can use my house; I live just up the street from here," then added, "Anytime is fine with me... how about now?"

Barbara stated, "We still don't have a board."

"We don't need a store-bought board," Beverly commented, "we can make one out of any flat cardboard and use a shot glass as a pointer."

"I've got a shot glass," Glenn interjected, "and I think I can find a sheet of cardboard – is an eighteen-inch square big enough?"

"She concurred, that's big enough."

Glenn secured his boat, and we followed him to his house, where he found the cardboard and a magic marker. Beverly placed the cardboard in the center of the living room floor and cleverly constructed the Ouija board facsimile. She printed the alphabet in an arch across the top of the board and the numbers from zero through nine in a straight line along the bottom. She scribed a 'YES' in the upper right corner and 'NO' in the upper left. Meanwhile, Glenn located and washed out a shot glass. Barbara and I collected several candles and couch cushions and placed them on the floor around the new board.

By the time everything was ready, night had fallen, so we gathered around the board in the light from a single candle. Beverly placed the shot glass upside down in

the center of the board. All was quiet as we each placed an index finger on the bottom of the glass.

We sat anxiously waiting for a moment when Beverly asked, "Is there anyone here... who wishes to speak to us?"

We sat for another breath-holding moment when the glass suddenly moved. Glenn recoiled with a gasp and exclaimed, "The damn thing moved."

We all laughed as Barbara explained, "It's got to move to point out the letters."

"But I didn't move it."

I added, "I didn't move it either."

Beverly pointed at Barbara and added, "Neither did we."

With eyes as large as saucers and transfixed on the shot glass, Glenn asks, "Then who the hell did?"

Beverly said, "There is a spirit here with us. It moved the glass,"

That was more than Glenn could take; he jumped up, ran to the light switch, and flipped it on. With eyes now resembling that of an iguana, he looked around the room and questioned, "Where is it ... I don't see anything."

The three of us are now convulsing on the floor in laughter. After Beverly regained her composure, she said, "That's OK, Glenn, neither can we. Come back and sit down; spirits can't hurt you. And please turn off the light."

He surveyed the room again, slowly reached for the switch, and turned off the light. In the flickering candlelight, he returned, took his position beside the board, and mumbled, "I don't think I like this."

Beverly expounded, "There's nothing to fear because no one here can harm us. And if we want to find out who is here, we have to talk with them; the board is the only way to do that right now. So please relax, OK?"

"OK, but I'm just going to watch. You three can do it."

"All right, just sit quietly and relax; you can join in later after seeing what's happening."

The three of us placed our index fingers on the bottom of the glass and quietly sat until we began breathing normally. Then Beverly again asked, "Is there anyone here with us?"

Shortly, the glass began moving in a circular motion. It moved slowly around the board at first and then more quickly. It slackened speed and slowly eased across each alphabet letter, then the numbers and words.

Beverly explained, "This often happens if the spirit is inexperienced with this mode of contact, or most likely because of our unconventional setup."

The glass suddenly stopped in the center of the board, and we waited.

"Are you still there?" Beverly asked.

The glass moved back and forth slightly before slowly sliding to the YES.

She continued, "Do you wish to speak with us?"

I thought, That's obvious, or else the glass wouldn't have moved in the first place, as it slowly went to YES.

"What is your name?"

The glass moved to R, then O and G, and eventually, we deciphered the word ROGER.

Beverly confided, "Roger is my spirit guardian, and we have spoken often," then she said, "Hi, Roger, we have spoken before."

"YES."

"Do you have a message for us?"

"YES."

There are sometimes nuisance spirit entities who do not contribute anything of value, so I will not describe each move or message except for the two that proved to be accurate.

As the evening proceeded, Roger became more familiar with the board and began answering trivial questions.

Once the glass began moving smoothly and responded to questions, Glenn asked if he could pose a question.

When Roger responded with YES, Glenn said, "Rumors are floating around the office that a big shakeup is coming in the company." Then asked, "Are the rumors true, and if so, how will it affect me?"

Roger replied, in essence, that Glenn would receive a promotion, get a sizable raise, and transfer to Alabama.

Roger's other important message was for Barbara and me. He told her, "You will make one more trip to Texas; you will not like it and want to come home before the weekend ends."

He continued, "You will marry a Staff Sergeant before Kit retires from active duty."

Barbara stammered, "That's crazy; I've already gone to Texas -- twice, and I love it there," then asked, "Who's the Staff Sergeant?"

"You haven't met him yet."

We all sat stunned until I eventually asked, "Will I go to Brazosport College after I retire?"

"YES"

"Will I get my Captain's license?"

"YES"

The sun was breaking the horizon when the séance ended, and we all went our separate ways. Beverly graduated from school and received assignment orders to a base in California.

Barbara and I took that last weekend's excursion to Texas. She was restive, irritable, and antagonistic during the trip and after we arrived. By noon Saturday, we

were on the road heading back to Biloxi. Before I retired, Barbara married an Air Police Staff Sergeant whom she met three days before that final trip.

After I retired, I sold my sailboat before departing for college. During a mid-semester break, I returned to Biloxi to visit old friends. I went to the marina and the slip where Glenn moored his Choy Lee, but his boat was not there. I checked with the Harbor Master, who told me that Glenn's company had transferred him to Mobile, Alabama, and he had moved his boat to a marina in Mobile Bay.

I attended Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Texas, and graduated first in my class. Two weeks before graduation, I obtained a job as an unlicensed captain of a thirty-five-foot crew boat in Freeport and had to take a day off work to attend graduation. Within a year and two months, I sat for and passed the Coast Guard exam for a 100-ton passenger-carrying license.

I returned to college with my Coast Guard certification, where I applied for a teaching position within the Oceanic Marine Technology department. I was the first graduate student to return to teach. I taught basic seamanship in the classroom, live boat handling upon training vessels, and scuba diving in a swimming pool at the University of Corpus Christi.

I taught for two years before returning to sea to upgrade my license to a 500-ton Master.

I have used the Ouija Board several times since, and it proved to be a useful tool.