

By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

Evening at the Speedway

In the past, the black-tie formal called “Evening in Fort Worth” took place at a hotel. This year, the **Fort Worth Chapter** revved things up by hosting the gala at the Speedway Club.

Nine stories high, with upscale amenities, it overlooks Turn 1 at the Texas Motor Speedway, billed as one of the largest sports and entertainment complexes in the US.

Gen. Bruce Carlson, commander of Air Force Materiel Command, was keynote speaker for the annual fundraiser. He arrived early so he could tour the OV-10 Bronco Association-Forward Air Controller Museum and the Vintage Flying Museum, both located at Meacham Field.

He was accompanied by AFA Chairman of the Board Robert E. “Bob” Largent and M.N. Dan Heth, a former AFA national director.

That evening, nearly 200 guests gathered for the black-tie-and-mess-dress banquet at the Speedway Club. Clayton A. Church, chapter secretary, noted the novelty of the venue: “The muffled sounds of race cars practicing around the track could be heard in the background.”

Intro to NAS JRB Fort Worth

Activities for “Evening in Fort Worth” actually began the day before, when AFA Board Chairman Largent received an orientation to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth.

Through arrangements made by Heth, briefings were presented by Maj. Gen. Richard C. Collins, 10th Air Force commander; Col. David McMinn, commander of the 136th Airlift Wing (ANG); and Col. Kevin E. Pottinger, commander of the 301st Fighter Wing (AFRC).

Collins and Pottinger then escorted Largent and Heth on a flight line tour of the 301st FW’s F-16s. The two commanders also described their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Largent that evening hosted a casual dinner with local AFA leaders, including those from the **Dallas Chapter**. He spoke to them about “The State of AFA.” Association officials at the gathering included former National Secretary Thomas J. Kemp and David Dietsch, state executive vice president.

At Air Force Magazine’s foreign air attache reception, Maj. Gen. Robert Smolen (left), commander of Air Force District Washington, exchanges business cards with Senior Col. Jiang Chao Hu, assistant military attache from China.

This year, the reception took place in an AFA hospitality tent during the Joint Service Open House on May 18 at Andrews AFB, Md. (Note the USAF Thunderbirds aircraft on the flight line in the background.)

Attaches from some 17 countries signed up to attend the reception. Air Commodore Graham Bentley of the Royal Australian Air Force headed the group, as dean of the foreign air attaches.



Staff photo by Mary Ellen Dobrowski

Shuttle Mock-Up—Real Excitement

The **Hawaii Chapter** brought a full-scale mock-up of a space shuttle flight deck to the state science fair and attracted some VIP visitors to the display.

Among the more than 5,000 attendees at the 50th annual Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair was Republican Gov. Linda Lingle. She stopped by for a flight deck tour from Col. Timothy L. Saffold, chapter president, and David P. Lohmann, aerospace education VP. Another special visitor was Alfrieda Nagata, escorted through the shuttle by AFROTC cadets from the University of Hawaii. Lohmann reported that Nagata is the aunt of the Hawaii-born astronaut, USAF Lt. Col. Ellison S. Onizuka. The shuttle display included an etched-glass panel that pays tribute to Onizuka, who died in the 1986 *Challenger* accident.

The chapter provided the science fair’s Aerospace Excellence award, presented at a ceremony by Lt. Col. Dake Vahovich, chapter VP. Ayla R. Bicoy, a 16-year-old junior at Molokai High School, received the honor for her project, “Signals From the Sun: The Effect of Solar Radio Emissions on GPS.” Chapter members who helped select Bicoy as the award winner included Cheryl Meyers-Saffold and Albert S. Nakano.

The AFA chapter contributed funds to bring to Honolulu astronaut Ellen S. Baker from the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Baker graduated from the Air Force Aerospace Medicine Course and is the lead astronaut for medical issues and education programs. She went into space in 1989, 1992, and 1995. While in Hawaii, Baker spoke to schoolchildren at Hickam Air Force Base

and made other appearances as part of the science fair activities.

Preparing the flight deck mock-up for display was a complicated project, headed by Lohmann. The model originally had been at the Honolulu Airport but five years ago was moved to unprotected storage at the former NAS Barbers Point. The chapter received permission to renovate it for display. Lohmann supervised volunteers from Hickam, the Civil Air Patrol, Honolulu Community College, and a local flight school, as they repaired the frame, electrical wiring, lighting, and cockpit switches. The team installed a ventilation fan and a computer for audio and visual effects and created artwork and display stands for etched-glass panels. After the science fair, the chapter returned the shuttle flight deck mock-up to protected storage, Lohmann said.

What's for Dinner?

Corned beef and cabbage. That's what the **Lufbery-Campbell Chapter** of Ramstein AB, Germany, served to guests of the Fisher Houses at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

SMSGt. Kenneth E. Gammons, chapter president, brought in the dish because it was St. Patrick's Day. Other chapter members brought in a variety of home-cooked food for three families who were staying at the facilities on March 17. First Lt. Crystal Schneider cooked tortellini with chicken marinara. Lt. Col. Margaret H. Beaty brought a casserole and, with Lt. Col. Connie J. Lutz and Capt. Amy E. Russo, provided the sides. Apple pie from Lt. Col. Edward E. Jezisek II topped the dessert menu.

Gammons said this was the second time chapter members had sponsored a dinner at the facilities.

Landstuhl has two Fisher Houses. They enable family members to stay near a military person who is hospitalized. Built by the Fisher House Foundation, the first Fisher House opened in 1991 at Bethesda's National Naval Medical Center.

Mae-sie the Riveter

The **Olmsted Chapter (Pa.)** billed her as "Mae-sie the Riveter," after the iconic World War II factory worker Rosie the Riveter.

Rosie was a bandana-clad, no-nonsense female in overalls. Westinghouse artist J. Howard Miller created her for the "We Can Do It" poster used to recruit women to work in defense jobs during the war.

The Olmsted Chapter's guest speaker was the real thing, though. As an 18-year-old, fresh out of high school in Pennsylvania, Mae Eckley Graybill moved to Baltimore in 1942 to become



USAF Photo by SMSgt. Bill L. Gobben

AFA Board Chairman Bob Largent greets MSgt. Ross Wood, president of the Fort Worth Chapter, at the chapter's black-tie gala in March. See "Evening at the Speedway" and "Intro to NAS JRB Fort Worth," p. 72.

a metal riveter for the Glenn L. Martin aircraft company.

She helped build B-26 Marauders. "She and her female construction partners assembled the portion of the fuselage immediately in front of the tail section, hoisted in place by a large crane," wrote Chapter President E. Thomas Kuhn Jr. in his invitation to the dinner that featured Graybill. She also had a hand in building the Martin Mars Flying Boat that came out of the factory.

Graybill brought to the chapter meeting some memorabilia from those days: four-inch sections of sheet metal containing rivets, a rivet gun similar to the one she wielded, a poster of Rosie the Riveter, and a cloth-doll version of Rosie as portrayed by Norman Rockwell on the cover of a *Saturday Evening Post*. Graybill even played a CD for the chapter members, with the swing-style 1943 song "Rosie the Riveter."

In the audience that evening was Raymond Hamman, president of the **Liberty Bell Chapter**, and Robert R. Bender, chapter VP. Kuhn noted that they drove more than 100 miles from Philadelphia to hear Graybill's presentation.

Awards in South Carolina

At the South Carolina State Convention, hosted by the **Columbia Palmetto Chapter** in May, US Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) was taken back to his high school days.

Today a member of both the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees and an Air Force Reserve colonel, Graham graduated from D.W. Daniel High School in Central, S.C. The school garnered two awards at the South Carolina convention.

Graham presented the state Teacher

of the Year award to Larry Jones, a physical science instructor at the school. Jones has a role model in fellow faculty member Patrick A. Welsh, who received the Christa McAuliffe Memorial Award in 2005, as AFA's national Teacher of the Year. (See "The 'Doctor' Is In," March 2006, p. 72.)

Graham also presented the JROTC Unit of the Year award to D.W. Daniel High School. **Clemson Chapter** member retired Col. Alton C. Whitley Jr., the senior aerospace science instructor, accepted the award, with several of his cadets.

The convention's awards luncheon included a second distinguished guest speaker, US Rep. Joe Wilson (R). Both Graham and Wilson, who is on the House Armed Services Committee, talked about challenges of military service.

Other recipients honored during the convention's award ceremonies included MSgt. Michael J. Landry, of the 609th Air Support Operations Squadron at Shaw Air Force Base, who received top honors as Outstanding Air Force Person; Ronald Powell of the **Charleston Chapter**, named the state's AFA Member of the Year; and the **Swamp Fox Chapter**, selected as Chapter of the Year.

Rodgers K. Greenawalt, South Carolina state president, mentioned that it took a tremendous amount of work to coordinate the convention schedule with Graham's and Wilson's calendars, but having two award recipients from Graham's alma mater? "It just worked out that way," he said.

"Flyboy to Grunt"

The guest speaker for the **Cochise Chapter's** May meeting at Ft. Hua-

chuca, Ariz., billed his talk as “Flyboy to Grunt”—a reference to his transformation from Air Force blue to Army green during his half-year of Army duty in Southwest Asia.

The Cochise Chapter presented awards at this meeting to MSgt. David Bagwell and TSgt. Dwight Bechel, as Senior NCO and NCO of the Year, respectively. They are both assigned to the 314th Flying Training Squadron. Bechel, an intel specialist who had just returned from Baqouba, Iraq, was the evening’s guest speaker.

He described his crash-course training at the Army’s Camp Shelby, Miss., and the Spartan conditions he found on arriving at his Army assignment in Iraq. Bechel’s unit was involved in document exploitation. An Arizona newspaper that reported on this AFA chapter meeting noted that the airman processed detainees and went through thousands of documents to glean information.

The chapter selected Bagwell for the senior NCO award because of several suggestions that he came up with, to save on training time and per diem costs.

State Champs

When AFA in Virginia sponsored a statewide AFJROTC drill championship for the first time last year, it was a “fairly small” event, said Thomas O. Moran of the co-host **Richmond Chapter**.

This year, the numbers “exploded,” he said. Twenty-six AFJROTC programs sent more than 400 cadets to the April drill meet, held at Atlee High School, north of Richmond.

Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Va., was the repeat overall state champion. Great Bridge High School, also from Chesapeake, took home second place honors; Gordon Strong is Great Bridge’s senior aerospace science instructor and also president of the drill meet’s co-host **Tidewater Chapter**. Third place went to a Northern Virginia school, Chantilly Academy, whose JROTC unit is supported by the **Gen. Charles A. Gabriel Chapter**.

Virginia State President Scott van Cleef presented the trophies, donated by the Gabriel, **Langley**, and **Donald W. Steele Sr. Memorial Chapters**. Judges for the meet came from Virginia Military Institute and included recruiters representing the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Army National Guard, and the Coast Guard. Along with event coordinator Moran, AFA volunteers at the meet included Tidewater members Allan Berg, William M. Cuthriell, and Robert Hudson and Richmond Chapter members Harper S. Alford, Barry Drossner, and Elizabeth Hart Jones.

More AFA News

■ The **Danville Chapter (Va.)** in April presented two eighth-grade physical science teachers with AFA Chapter Matching Grants. Chapter President Gerald L. Hovatter and John Wilt, chapter aerospace education VP, presented the funds to Donna Fitzgerald of Westwood Middle School and Lisa Fain from E.A. Gibson Middle School.

Fitzgerald’s grant bought GPS units and geographic information system (GIS) software. Fain’s grant went to probeware to teach concepts such as velocity, momentum, and Newton’s second law of motion. Probeware refers to sensors hooked up to computers that display the information gathered in real time. AFA’s Chapter Matching Grants double the amount—through

a matching donation—that a chapter puts up to fund a local educator's or organization's activities.

■ Hyperspectral imagery was the topic of two consecutive meetings of the **Gen. Joseph W. Ralston Chapter** in Ohio. John A. Glaser, an Environmental Protection Agency scientist in Cincinnati, presented information on a NASA-EPA project that uses a hyperspectral camera about the size of a loaf of bread mounted on a Cessna 210. Hyperspectral imagery—consisting of hundreds of measurements of reflected or emitted energy—is used in this case for crop management. Glaser's PowerPoint presentation particularly interested the University of Cincinnati ROTC cadets at the meeting and prompted chapter members to suggest inviting a follow-up guest speaker: In April, former USAF Maj. Russell Finney took to the chapter podium to talk about hyperspectral imagery he gathered as an RF-4C reconnaissance pilot in the 1990s.

■ **Central Oklahoma (Gerrity) Chapter** members and guests listened to an update on the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center from its executive director, Robert J. Connor, in April. Connor, who retired in May, reported on how the ALC is reducing the number of days it takes to maintain or repair aircraft. Jack T. Snoddy, chapter corresponding secretary, reported that Connor's presentation was part of a series of mission briefings that the chapter began holding a year ago to educate the public about airpower and the Air Force. The most recent briefings have covered contracting at the ALC and RC-135 operations.

■ In Iowa in April, the **Richard D. Kisling Chapter** meeting featured one of their own as guest speaker—chapter member Harry Johnson. A retired USAF major, Johnson spoke to the dinner guests at the South Sioux City Eagles Club about his life: his roots in Iowa, college years in Sioux City, basic training at Lackland AFB, Tex., in 1951, commissioning, and Korean War assignment as a B-29 pilot. Donald Persinger, chapter membership VP, arranged for Johnson to speak because "we knew he would have a good story."

■ The **Dallas Chapter** awarded \$600 scholarships in May to Civil Air Patrol cadets Paul Blahut, Travis Lame, Brandon Maso, Garrett Nalls, Matthew Patrick, Derek Prucha, Edward Schrodler, James Schulgen, Andrew Smith, and Grayson Strakele. The 2007 AFA Flight Scholarships will allow the CAP cadets to attend flight academies. "AFA's monetary help demonstrates a high civic consciousness and goes a long way towards helping young persons achieve a life-changing personal dream," CAP said in its news release.

■ In Columbus, Ind., the legendary "Peacemaker" was the topic at the **Columbus-Bakalar Chapter's** May meeting. Retired MSgt. James S. Peters, a chapter member, had hands-on experience with the B-36: He was an RB-36 and GRB-36 maintainer, assigned to the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, in the early 1950s. The GRB-36 was a modified version, designed to retrieve and launch an F-84, to extend its range. James R. Alvis, the chapter secretary, commented that Peters brought to the speaker's podium facts, figures, and enough knowledge about the bomber to be considered a B-36 historian.

■ The **Genesee Valley Chapter (N.Y.)** sponsored a color guard that marched in Rochester's signature springtime Lilac Festival. The group of students from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow School was sponsored by the chapter and a local state senator, trained under a JROTC instructor, and was directed by Chapter President Alfred E. Smith. Festival organizers said that, with 125 entries, the parade was its largest so far and was part of a record-breaking attendance figure—more than 200,000 visitors viewing lilacs in Rochester's Highland Park.

■ Putting the Air Force on page 1. That's what **Southern Indiana Chapter**

President Marcus R. Oliphant did when he tipped off the local newspaper about a hometown boy now flying the Air Force's newest fighter aircraft. Oliphant prompted the *Bloomfield Free Press* to headline a March edition with the story of Lt. Col. Kevin Fesler, who took command that month of the 94th Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB, Va. The 94th is the legendary Eddie Rickenbacker's "Hat in the Ring" unit from World War I. Today it is equipped with F-22s. The chapter also marked the milestone for the 94th's new commander by signing up Fesler as a chapter member.

■ The **Southern Indiana Chapter** tipped its hat to World War II veterans at its dinner meeting held on V-E Day—May 8—where guest speaker Van T. Wright, a chapter member, related his experiences in the Army Air Corps. He described training as a B-17 gunner, missions over Germany, and being shot down and held as a POW until the war's end. Chapter President Oliphant noted that more than 60 years had passed since the events Wright described, but the 86-year-old guest speaker nevertheless "remembered many details amazingly well." Among the audience at this chapter gathering were nine other World War II veterans.

■ In May, a local NBC TV newscast reported on the theft of an American



In Florida, Michael Emig (center), the Red Tail Memorial Chapter president, attended the awards program in April for AFROTC Det. 150 at the University of Florida in Gainesville. He presented AFA's W. Randolph Lovelace Memorial ROTC Award to Maureen Hartney (right). At left is cadet Kathleen Pihana.

flag from the front yard of **Fort Worth Chapter (Tex.)** member Marvin Adams. The reporter said that Adams had been flying the flag, specially lighted for visibility night and day, and had vowed to do so until the war in South-west Asia was over. Two AFA chapters responded to the story. Fort Worth Chapter Treasurer Richard Walker suggested the chapter replace the flag for Adams, a 32-year veteran whose service spanned World War II through Vietnam. The **Northeast Texas Chapter**—led by Marsha D. Krotky—obtained a World War II medallion and certificate. Former Fort Worth Chapter President Bill Lawson presented the flag and medallion to Adams.

■ When TSgt. R.C. DeLano and SSgt. James Lorenzo from Fairchild AFB, Wash., received the Armed Forces Persons of the Year award from the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce in April, the head judge was a representative of AFA's **Inland Empire Chapter**. William P. Moore, chapter president, has for the past four years been one of five judges who comb through the nominations. Moore said he was chosen because he is the AFA chapter president, has an Air Force background, and can read quickly

through lengthy, wordy nomination packages. "It's the best hard job I've ever had," Moore said. All candidates, he added, are winners. ■

Have AFA News?

Contributions to "AFA National Report" should be sent to *Air Force Magazine*, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. Phone: (703) 247-5828. Fax: (703) 247-5855. E-mail: natrep@afa.org. Digital images submitted for consideration should have a minimum pixel count of 900 by 1,500 pixels.

Unit Reunions

reunions@afa.org

12th and 15th TFW, MacDill AFB, FL. Aug. 17-19 at the Phoenix Grand Hotel in Salem, OR. **Contact:** Denny Smith, 3541 El Dorado Loop S, Salem, OR 97302 (503-910-5100) (jedstrom2@comcast.net).

23rd TASS, Nov. 1940-present. Aug. 24-26 at Meacham Field, Fort Worth, TX. **Contact:** (nail21www@aol.com).

39th BG, Guam (1945). Aug. 1-5 at the Radisson Hotel Downtown Market Square in San Antonio. **Contacts:** Liz Van Kampen, 5418 Honeysuckle Ln., Oregon, WI 53575-1751 (608-835-0923) (liz.vankampen@sprintprint.com) or Bob Weiler, 2045 Hyde Park St. #3, Sarasota, FL 34239-3941 (941-365-8287) (bobweiler@39th.org).

93rd FS (WWII). Sept. 8-14 in Reno, NV. **Contact:** Bill Harvey, PO Box 1237, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240 (760-251-0965) (sixtfinvrabt@webtv.net).

301th FW. July 14 at the Green Oaks Hotel in Fort Worth, TX. **Contact:** Larry Patterson (817-732-8683 or 817-366-3067).

309th FS. Sept. 5-9 in Cincinnati, OH. **Contact:** Dalton Smith (201-244-5854) (daltonsmith@optonline.net).

315th BW Assn, Northwest Field, Guam. Sept. 6-10 in St. Louis. **Contact:** Bev Green (217-893-3197).

504th BG, 313th Wg, 20th AF. Sept. 5-9 in Albuquerque, NM. **Contact:** Tim Schoolcraft, 2000 Single Oak, Seguin, TX 78155 (830-303-5732) (pecanderos@aol.com).

804th Engineer Aviation Brigade and 804th Civil Engineer Sqs. Sept. 9-12 in Branson, MO. **Contact:** David Anderson (907-852-2418) (804eabces@gci.net).

FB-111 Reunion. July 20-22 in Plattsburgh, NY. **Contact:** Michael Stephenson (518-563-7973) (fb111reunion@cox.net).

Seeking graduates of **AFROTC Det. 850**, University of Utah, for a reunion on Sept. 8. **Contact:** Lt. Col. Kent Wong (801-581-6236) (kent.wong@afrotc.utah.edu). ■

E-mail unit reunion notices four months ahead of the event to reunions@afa.org, or mail notices to "Unit Reunions," *Air Force Magazine*, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. Please designate the unit holding the reunion, time, location, and a contact for more information. We reserve the right to condense notices.

AFA Conventions

July 14	Florida State Convention , Daytona Beach, Fla.
July 27-28	Colorado State Convention , Denver
July 27-29	Texas-Oklahoma State Convention , Wichita Falls, Tex.
Aug. 8	Michigan State Convention , Mount Pleasant, Mich.
Aug. 11	Georgia State Convention , Warner Robins, Ga.
Aug. 11	Massachusetts State Convention , Boston
Aug. 18	Indiana State Convention , Indianapolis
Aug. 25	North Carolina State Convention , Raleigh, N.C.
Sept. 22-23	AFA National Convention , Washington, D.C.
Sept. 24-26	Air and Space Conference , Washington, D.C.