

By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

XBox: How To Appeal to a Younger Audience

"The older guys would never have thought of this," said Mel Johnson, communications VP of the **Whiteman Chapter** in Missouri. He was referring to an Xbox video game tournament, hosted by the chapter in April for the airmen of Whiteman Air Force Base.

Some 30 people turned out for the contest, held at the Spirit Cafe at Whiteman's Community Center. The cafe offers airmen a place to read or play games ranging from the computer-based kind to pool or ping-pong. A Friday night tradition calls for serving a free meal. So on tournament night, a half-dozen Whiteman Chapter members—Fred and Ann Niblock and event coordinator MSgt. John De La Rosa, among them—provided Italian food entrees like lasagna, ravioli, and pizza to feed the players.

Although many volunteer groups provide a Friday feed, "what was different was that we actually organized a tournament" on top of the dinner, Johnson said.

Besides state-of-the-art video games, competitors faced off against a 1970s-era electronic ping-pong game, Atari's Pong. Johnson guessed that one of those "older guys" unearthed the relic and brought it in. The young airmen found Pong hard to play, he said, chuckling.

Tournament winner SrA. Brian Hannah, with the 509th Medical Support Squadron, received a trophy-plaque from the chapter and a gift card for a new video game.

Creative ideas such as this contest come from new members. Johnson said the chapter recently realized that as its members aged, they had become less able to connect with the young airmen at Whiteman. The chapter took action, placing articles in the base newspaper, setting up Air Force Association tables at the base exchange, and nudging younger inactive members into taking a more visible role.



Whiteman Chapter's Xbox champion, SrA. Brian Hannah (second from right), accepts congratulations from (l-r) MSgt. John De La Rosa, SSgt. Joshua Riffe, MSgt. Lafoundra Thompson, and SMSgt. Mark Cruz. Whiteman's base newspaper published this photo, along with a description of AFA.

Some 10 members resulted from this push for new blood, Johnson recalled. He thinks the key to involving more young airmen in AFA lies in recruiting senior NCOs. "That bumps it up real quick," he said. "The older members like me—we are satisfied with that we have." What drives the chapter now, he said, what pulls in a younger crowd, is "the excitement [generated by] the senior NCOs."

Not long after the Xbox contest, Fred Niblock came across the winner, a medic at the base hospital. Hannah was still talking about the AFA tournament. "So word spreads around," Johnson pointed out.

New in New York

AFA's newest chapter received its charter from the top. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III handed the document to George Baker, officially establishing the **Finger Lakes Chapter**, in May. The Chief was in New York City at the time, as part of an AFA Mitchell Institute of Aerospace Studies and **Iron Gate Chapter** symposium at the Union League Club of New York.

The Finger Lakes Chapter is centered in Upstate New York, where Baker is first sergeant for the 313th Recruiting Squadron based in North Syracuse. He said he was inspired to start the chapter for two reasons: Although the ANG's Hancock Field is nearby, and the Army's Fort Drum is an hour away, he has constantly been mistaken for a soldier. "I'm always asked what I do in the Army," he said. "I wanted to get the word out about the Air Force."

As first shirt, he rides herd on some 90 squadron personnel, but he began his career 16 years ago as a weapons loader, with a first assignment at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

Then came stints at Kunsan AB, South Korea, six years at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, and Holloman AFB, N.M.

At Holloman, he joined AFA for the first time and was impressed by the professional development opportunities available through the chapter. That's the second reason he started the Finger Lakes Chapter: to help his fellow airmen learn about Air Force issues and airpower. Education, he said, "is part of my job as a first sergeant."

The chapter was scheduled to hold its first meeting in mid-June, with Aaron Garber as chapter VP, Thomas F. Daugherty, treasurer, and MSgt. Kelly Lomber as chapter secretary.

Although the chapter has barely gotten started, Baker is working hard on continuity of leadership because he has received orders for a new assignment in Texas. He said getting Active Duty airmen involved in the chapter would ensure that it thrives.

Finger Lakes is the second chapter that Region President Maxine Rauch has helped charter this year. The first was **Pride of the Adirondacks**.



USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh (left) presented MSgt. George Baker (right) with the charter for New York's Finger Lakes Chapter.

US Rep. Ralph Hall, who served 17 terms in Congress, shows the Northeast Texas Chapter audience the AFA coin he received from Chapter President Trey Johnson (left).

It's a Spring Thing

The **Northeast Texas Chapter**, based in Greenville, held its annual spring awards banquet, with US Rep. Ralph M. Hall (R-Texas) as special guest.

The dinner, nicknamed "Spring Thing," took place at Texas A&M University-Commerce, with what Chapter Communications VP Vance Clarke described as a "crowd full of AFA, military, students, and family and friends of the award winners."

The more than 50 banquet guests honored Teachers of the Year Jennifer Simpson and Billy Walker, both from Greenville Christian School, and the chapter's Earle North Parker Essay contest winners: Caitlin Nance, Alicia Guthrie, and Cody Redus.

As the chapter's first place essayist, Nance received \$1,000. Chapter Community Partners VP Terry Thomas presented the award; he represented the family of Lt. Col. John Murray, sponsors of the chapter's top prize.

Chapter officials then surprised Nance by announcing her second place finish at the state level of the essay competition. So she earned another \$1,000 and—since this year's assigned topic was the F-35—a model of the strike aircraft donated by Lockheed Martin. Nance read her essay to "rousing applause at the end," Clarke said.

The AFA Texas essay contest, open to all high school seniors in the "Lone Star State," is named for a Fort Worth businessman who served in the Army Air Forces in World War II and later founded AFA's Fort Worth Chapter. Parker died in 1993.

During the awards banquet, Civil Air Patrol cadet Patrick J. Pearce received an AFA CAP Outstanding Cadet of the Year award and citation. He had earlier been admitted to the Air Force Academy, in part on a recommendation from Hall. Clarke reported that the congressman "was thrilled to be there to compliment [Pearce] yet again on his acceptance."

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- John & Hazel Sutton
- Virginia & Lawrence Hutchison
- Loren & Randy Spencer



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Gayle White (left), the Rocky Mountain Region president, applauds Maj. Gen. Sandra Finan, guest speaker for the Northern Utah Chapter's Scowcroft Awards banquet.



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Hall presented each essay contest winner with a flag that had flown over the US Capitol.

MSgt. Matthew Murdick served as master of ceremonies for the evening. Clarke delivered the keynote address.

Scowcroft Awards

For the 25th year, the **Northern Utah Chapter** singled out the best of the best by presenting Brent Scowcroft Awards to selected members of the ICBM and space and C3I communities.

A banquet to honor the award winners took place in March at the Eccles Conference Center in Ogden, where the nominees, too, received recognition.

Guest speaker was Maj. Gen. Sandra E. Finan, commander of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland AFB, N.M. In her remarks, she listed "specific examples of how individuals and teams, through hard work and dedication, have made great improvements in Air Force hardware, processes, policies, and procedures," according to a press release from the 75th Air Base Wing public affairs office.

Finan joined Gayle C. White, the Rocky Mountain Region president, in presenting awards to: Maj. Matthew Franchetti, SMSgt. James Spino, Maren Dykster, SMSgt. Jason Salonis, and Capt. Shaun Phillipps.

Team awards went to the ICBM Integration Support Contract Team from Hill AFB, Utah, and the AEHF-3 Launch and Test Team from Los Angeles AFB, Calif.

Retired Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, for whom the awards are named, served as national security advisor to Presidents George H.W. Bush and Gerald Ford and, under President Reagan, led the 1983 commission that examined the future of the US ICBM force. An Ogden native, Scowcroft today heads an international business advisory firm in Washington, D.C.

The Aircraft Carrier Convention

Hosted by the **Charleston Chapter** in April, the South Carolina State Convention held its awards presentations at an unusual venue: a decommissioned aircraft carrier.

Built for World War II and mothballed in 1970, USS *Yorktown* now forms the centerpiece of a military museum complex called Patriots Point. It was one of three locations where convention-goers gathered for events.

Activities began with a Friday afternoon golf tournament. Saturday morning's business session took place at a Hyatt hotel, then guests headed across Charleston Harbor to the aircraft carrier.

Awardees came from the Total Force, AFROTC, AFJROTC, and CAP units.

Melissa Yarbrough received the Teacher of the Year award. She teaches third-graders at St. Andrew's School of Math and Science in Charleston.

Retired Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, dean of AFA's Mitchell Institute of Aerospace Studies, addressed the gathering.

Actually, this isn't the first time AFA has hosted an event on *Yorktown*: Last fall, a group of CyberPatriot students from the Military Magnet Academy competed in a qualification round aboard the carrier. (See February's "AFA National Report" at <http://bit.ly/1nA8AUT>.)

Making History

AFJROTC cadets from Pennsylvania made school history when they earned the Overall Champion trophy at a drill meet sponsored by West Virginia's **Chuck Yeager Chapter**.

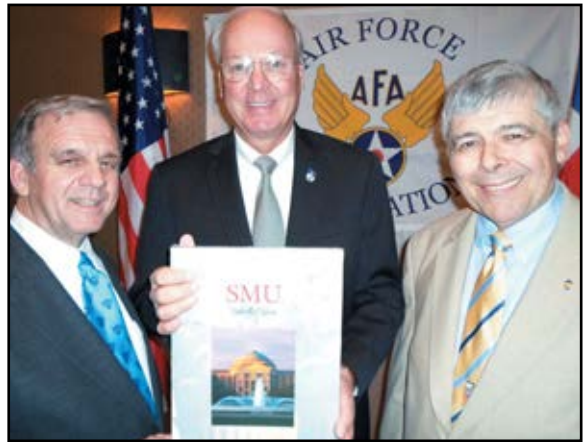
The victory marked the first time that cadets from Pine-Richland High School in Gibsonia, Pa., toted home the biggest prize, according to their school district. The unit is only four years old. It numbers 33 cadets.

The drill meet, sponsored for 18 years by the chapter, took place at Parkersburg South High School in West Virginia.

Cadets came from Pine-Richland, as well as Knox County Career Center in Mount Vernon, Ohio, and from West Virginia's Nitro, South Charleston, Woodrow Wilson, and Parkersburg South high schools.

The chapter provided two dozen trophies, seven of them now on display at Pine-Richland. ■

Seidel-AFA Dallas Chapter President John Tannehill (left) and National Director Dave Dietsch (right) present AFA President Craig McKinley, chapter guest speaker, with a Southern Methodist University photo album. More than 80 guests attended this meeting in April, including some from the Northeast Texas and Gen. Charles L. Donnelly Jr. chapters.



The Long Island Chapter unveiled this AFA monument at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow, N.Y., on Memorial Day weekend. Its inscription reads: "Dedicated to our veterans, members, and supporters." L-r: Chapter Secretary Cathy Ward, Northeast Region President Maxine Rauch, Chapter VP Al Parise, and Chapter President Fred Di Fabio.

Red Tail Memorial Chapter President Mike Emig (second from left) and Michael Hare (back row, far right), aerospace education VP, attended the University of Florida Det. 150 awards ceremony in April.



Reunions

reunions@afa.org

18th Military Airlift Sq. Sept. 6 at Charley's Other Brother, Mount Holly, NJ. **Contacts:** alumni@18thbluediamonds.org.

28th Wing Assn. Aug. 28-Sept. 1, Rapid City, SD. **Contact:** Lloyd Peterson (605-393-8545) (28thwingassociation.org).

29th Fighter-Interceptor Sq. Oct. 8-11, Branson, MO. **Contact:** Harold Phillips (405-341-0621) (rephil330@cox.net).

98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Assn. Aug. 24-28, Rapid City, SD. **Contact:** Bill Seals (281-395-3005) (colbillyseals@hotmail.com).

100th Bomb Wg, Pease AFB (1956-66). Sept. 18-21 at Crockett Hotel in San Antonio. **Contact:** Bill Obert (303-

520-7643) (billobert2@yahoo.com).

336th Tactical Fighter Sq, Ubon RTAB (1972-73). Oct. 10-12, Little Rock AFB, AR. **Contacts:** Tim Fisher (t.fisher13@comcast.net) or Fred McMurray (ferd7@frontier.com).

445th FIS, Wurtsmith AFB, MI. Oct. 28-31, San Antonio. **Contact:** Larry Flinn (210-695-1944) (lawrenceflinn@me.com).

509th BW. Sept. 8-11, Omaha, NE. **Contacts:** Don Schied (djs509@cox.net) or Homer Morgan (hmorgan1@wavecable.com).

526th FIS/TFS. Oct. 7-9, Savannah, GA. **Contact:** Monte Johnson (815-347-7353) (monte.j@att.net).

623rd Aircraft Control & Warning Assn, including 624th, 851st Sq, 529th Gp, 305th Fighter Cont. Sq, 313th ADIV, 51st FIW, 2152nd Comm Sq, 623rd ACFit. Sept. 28-Oct. 1, Charleston, SC. **Contact:** Stan Duro (843-650-4969) (sduro@att.net).

B-47 Stratojet Assn. Oct. 30-Nov. 1, Fort Walton Beach, FL. **Contact:** Dick Curran (865-940-1020).

F-4 Phantom II Society. Oct. 20-23, Tyndall AFB, FL. **Contact:** Bill Crean (856-461-6637) (williamcrean@comcast.net).

USAF Combat Camera AAVS/600 Photo Sq/601 Photo Flight. Sept. 18-21, Ontario, CA. **Contact:** Mario Condia (630-910-4765) (mariocandia@usafcombatcamera.org). ■