



Firebird Flyer



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The Firebird Association

November 5, 2007

Firebirds to Gather in Galveston

By Nolan Bailey
Firebird Association Historian

It's difficult for one to believe that, at the next reunion, ten years will have passed since the Firebirds first flocked to Biloxi in 1998. Counting the first Firebird Association reunions held in Abilene during 1982, 1983, and 1984, there will have been a total of nine reunions including the upcoming 2008 gathering.

Those that attended the Branson reunion during 2006 will recall that the reunion sites proposed at the general membership meeting were Wright-Patterson, Nashville, and Abilene. So, how did Galveston become the site for the next Firebird gath-

ering? "It's elementary, my dear Watson." Well, perhaps not too elementary after all.

According to the minutes from the Branson reunion members interested in these particular sites were to research each location and send the results to the planning committee. Months passed and no information was presented.

As the decision date grew near, Firebird Chuck Lavoie traveled to the Biloxi area and visited twenty-six different hotel properties. And, he contacted several caterers and collected their menus. Only one hotel he found would meet the Firebird requirements.

A week or two later, the

reunion planning committee met in Bossier City to discuss the next reunion and to determine the suitability of Shreveport/Bossier as a reunion site. No hotel met the Association's hospitality room requirement.

Firebird President Bruce Huff and his wife, Betty,

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Firebird Association

Officers

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Bruce Huff

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Bob Mattingly

Secretary:

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Past Presidents — 3

Jerry Livingston

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Galveston (continued)

left Bossier and drove directly to Biloxi to visit the one motel that Chuck recommended. After the visit they decided that Biloxi would not be ready for at least two years.

This left no site on the table until someone suggested Galveston. The newly formed Troop Carrier-Airlifters Association recommended the site and had held their reunions there for the last two years.

Bruce and Betty spent a few days in Galveston, were impressed, and asked John Parker and Nolan Bailey to make a visitation to Galveston, and to present a report upon their return home. Both members of the visitation team recommended the new site after staying at the suggested reunion hotel, and touring the area with Mrs. Sheri Teller, the Galveston CVB representative.

The next reunion will be held at the LaQuinta Inn and Suites, 8710 Seawall Boulevard, Galveston,

Texas 77554, Phone: (409) 740-9100 Fax: (409) 744-0782. For more information on the reunion and the reunion hotel please visit the Firebird Association Website using <http://www.firebirds.org/reunion/reunion.htm>

Bylaws Revision

As required by Association bylaws, the following proposed revisions will be considered and voted upon at the Galveston general membership meeting.

Section 1: ORGANIZATION

The Board of Directors shall consist of fifteen members. In addition to the Officers of the Firebird Association, which include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Newsletter Editor, the Board of Directors shall include the last three Immediate Past Presidents, and six (6) Directors at Large. All members of the Board should reflect the general make-up of the

active membership, and each shall have one vote. The Executive Board shall include, but not be limited to, the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Newsletter Editor.

Section 4: ELECTION AND TERM.

Terms of office for Firebird Association Officers end and begin on the first (1st) day of the month following the biennial meeting: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Newsletter Editor. Association officers shall be elected by the membership at the biennial general meeting of the Association, according to procedures determined by the Board of Directors, for a term of two years. The Vice President shall succeed the President when the President's term of office expires--a limit of two terms--unless otherwise specified by a quorum vote of the Board of Di-

rectors. The Board Members at Large shall be elected for a term of four (4) years on a rotating basis. Three (3) At Large Board Members are to be elected each election year.

Section 7: SPECIAL/EMERGENCY MEETINGS.

Special/emergency meetings may be called by the President provided written notice is sent to each member of the Board of Directors at least seven days in advance. If necessary to secure a quorum at such meetings, absent members of the Board of Directors may fully participate by telephone conference call. **Such participation shall constitute attendance in person.**

NEW

The Lonestar Flight Museum offers prearranged Airplane rides. The rides must be prearranged so that a flight crew will be available.

B-17 \$425 per person
(min 5 max 7)

B-25 \$375 per person
(min 4 max 5)

Smaller airplanes \$225 per person.

WWW.lonestarflight.org
flight@lonestarflight.org

Call Larry Gregory
(409) 740-7722
Fax (409)740-7612



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Firebirds,

As your president, I have attempted, with the help and support of the dedicated and ever present Board of Directors, to put together a reunion that you will enjoy and remember for years to come. There is something at this location for everybody and that's the way it should be.

It has been said that "The Island" is a tour by it's self with it's old stately homes, it's unique seawall, art, museums, international sea port, a ferry crossing, lighthouse, it's down town Strand shopping area, many historic statues, it's own tall ship, "Elissa" and on and on. Galveston was selected because of it's diverse and long influence on history plus it's many attractions. The island is owner of some of the best preserved Victorian architecture in North America and it is open for tours. With it's 32 miles of sandy beaches and coastline, it's usually mild temperatures, it's almost constant sea breezes and relatively level terrain, walking or just relaxing comes very easy.

Wonderful seafood restaurants are a gracious plenty, it has regular restaurants and fast food corners, a Randall's Super Market, Wal-Mart, a major hospital and burn center all within a 5 mile radius. If they just had a commercial airline..... O' well....guess you can't have everything, but we tried.

One of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history occurred on this island in 1900 when a hurricane came ashore and took over 6000 lives, mostly residents. Many of the old homes and buildings survived and are open for public viewing today.

With so many places to go and things to see, making tour arrangements very difficult, we decided to put together a package of "Things to do in Galveston" and send it to each family registered for the reunion. This give you an opportunity to look over and decide at your leisure what you would like to do and see while visiting the island.

Most group-tours have to be pre-paid and this would be very expensive for our organization with no guarantee of return if the tour falls apart. We are still looking and should an arrangement be worked out, you will be inform of it in the January newsletter.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

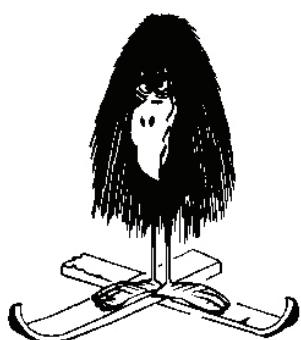
There has been a great amount of interest in a NASA Space Center tour, but here again, the \$600 up front transportation fee that's required with no guarantee of return, makes your board just a little nervous. The space center is about 25 miles north of Galveston, easy to get to and directions will be included in your package. The tour take about 5 hours and you should plan to have a snack or meal at their snack bar.

One thing that we do have signed and sealed is the banquet. The Garden Restaurant is one of the most beautiful spots on the island. It's wall of windows overlooks the veranda and Offats Bayou. The story goes, that when early Texans took the ferry across to the island to fish or just spend the day on a picnic at the beach, they would tell the pilot to just let them off at the bayou, and that's how Offat Bayou got it's name.

The city has a million stories and that is just one of them. I sincerely hope that each of you has a memorable reunion, because really, YOU are what it's all about!!!

Enjoy,

Bruce P. Huff



The Raven Gang at Galveston?

Rumor has it that the 109th is sending a LC-130 to Galveston for a static display for the Firebird reunion. So why doesn't a large crowd of Ravens come down to Galveston and join the party. It seems silly to send a empty airplane from New York all the way to Galveston Texas. How many Ravens can you put in a Herky Bird?

Hope to see you in Galveston.

Please contact:

Thomas Noel Lt.Col. USAF (Ret)

Phone: (518) 399-5146

E-mail: tfnoel@aol.com

Historian's Homily

In less than six months the ninth Firebird Association reunion to be held in the last twenty-six years will become a reality. At the first Biloxi reunion the Firebird Association Board of Directors voted to hold a reunion every even year. The intent is for this to become a tradition, but the continuation of any reunion depends upon the active participation of current and prospective members.

For the last several reunions the slogan has been “If you build it, they will come.” In 1998, 270 members attended, and this year the *mission* is to fill all 120 rooms at the Galveston LaQuinta Inn and Suites with a Firebird Association member. Another excellent reunion is being built. Standard rooms at the LaQuinta have been reserved at a special rate of \$70.00 per night plus tax. If you’ve been thinking of attending, please make your room reservations soon. Around the first of March, all unreserved rooms must be returned to the hotel for rent at their regular rates, which are usually over \$100.00 per night.

If you’ve never attended a Firebird Association reunion, let this be your first. It promises to be “an affair to remember.” If you came to the last gathering, consider visiting with old friends once again. I’m sure that there will be many new faces in attendance this year. Your “being there” will make the reunion complete for someone else. This kind of “networking” will make this reunion a success, and insure that there will be many future reunions to attend.

In one of the best baseball films ever made, a *Field of Dreams*, an Iowa farmer played by Kevin Costner, hears a voice one day that says, “If you build it he will come.” Then, Costner builds a baseball field in his corn patch, so he can watch his heroes return from the grave and play. In fact, this motion picture is not just for baseball fans and soft touches. It’s also for those who have experienced loss and want, just for a few minutes, to dream of regaining that which has been lost—of having the chance to say what one has always wanted to say to someone but didn’t. In that respect, Firebird reunions are the same. Our reunions allow one to step back in time and regain and share with friends, just for a few hours, those special memories that formed so many years ago. At the end of the movie, Kevin Costner’s character asks his father, “Is there a heaven?” and his father answers, “Oh yeah. It’s the place dreams come true.” All of the Firebirds should gather in Galveston and help build a little bit of “heaven.”

For the most part, the long hours, and out-of-pocket dollars spent in planning a reunion are not very rewarding. Planning a reunion is hard work and, not to mention, time consuming. The payoff comes for a reunion planner on reunion day, when dozens of Firebird Association members show up in the hospitality room, and make it all worthwhile. It is more than enough "payment." Please let Galveston planners know how successful they have been, whether or not there should be any future reunion, and how well their work is valued, by doing your very best to attend this reunion.

If one has never visited the area, Galveston is a small romantic island tucked deep within the heart of south Texas possessing all the charm of a small town. The island has 32 miles of relaxing shoreline and is surround with incredible history and unique tranquil beauty. So, come to Galveston and enjoy the sights, sound, succulent seafood, soothing sea breezes, sandy seashore, splendiferous palm trees, and seductive serenity of "Biloxi West."

A registration form and tentative schedule of events for April 6-9, 2008, has already been posted on the Firebird Association Internet site (WWW.firebirds.org). If you plan to attend, and just haven't committed yourself to date, please sign up soon. The planning committee can make better plans as soon as they have a good count of attendees. With warmest regards....

Nolan Bailey, Firebird Historian

TAPS

Donald Thompson, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)
Navigator, Died, Feb. 11, 2007
Cause of death, Cancer.

John K. Wright, Msgt USAF (Ret)

Died, March 31, 2007
Cause of death, Pulmonary Fibrosis.

Randal Lattin (son of Gary Lattin)
Died April 17, 2007.

Robert Ragan
C.D. Melin
Charles A. Walters

Lee Walker
Richard H. Schmidt

FIREBIRD ASSOCIATION REUNION

**The La Quinta Inn and Suites
Galveston, Texas**

April 6-9, 2008

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Revised 10/24/2007 -

Sunday, April 6th – Travel Day	1200-1900: Registration in Firebird Command Post – La Quinta Inn and Suites Board Room 1200-2400: Hospitality Suite opens** -- Location(s) to Be Announced 1730-1900: Hors d'oeurves and deli trays in afternoon and early evening for the "Early Birds"
Monday, April 7th	0630-1030: Free Continental Breakfast -- Main Lobby 0700-1400: Golf Tournament 0600-1800: Fishing Trip 0800-1400: Tour – To Be Arranged 1000-1400: Registration continues in hospitality room 1700-2000: Hospitality Suite open -- Free <i>Surprise Food & Beverages</i> event
Tuesday, April 8th	0630-1030: Free Continental breakfast -- Main Lobby 0930-1730: Hospitality room available** 1000-1200: Firebird Association business meeting and programs. Location TBA 1800-1930: Buffet at the Moody Gardens Garden Restaurant*** 1900-2100: Banquet Program - TBA 1800-2200: Music for your dancing and listening pleasure – Moody Gardens 2200-2400: Hospitality Suite open**
Wednesday, April 9th - Travel Day	0630-0930: Free Continental breakfast for hotel guests -- Main Lobby 0700-1200: Hospitality room open for visitation purposes
* Schedule subject to revision. Check in at Firebird Command Post (Board Room) upon arrival for latest changes.	
** Hours of Hospitality Suite dependant upon the number of volunteers available to provide supervision.	
*** Saturday night buffet is informal (coat and tie optional). Due to limited seating in the banquet room, the buffet tickets will be offered on a first come & first served, basis.	

Schedule details

Monday April 7, 2008

Golf: A course has been selected and negotiations are underway! Approximately 35 miles from the hotel and north of Galveston Island, at League City TX, the course has easy access and a very strong reputation. Dress Code: Collared shirts and no shorts. Price \$38 for seniors over 55 and \$52 regular. Players will be car pooling with a T-time to be announced, but around 7:30 to 8 AM. Now we need some players to lock in the prices. Contact Alan Anderson (309) 944-6070.

Fishing: Jay Walker needs some in-put from you Firebirds who wish to fish in the Gulf of Mexico. He really needs at least 4 or 5 die hards to commit so that he can reserve a boat. Please get in touch before it gets to late and you literally "Miss the boat." Contact Jay Walker, <walker130@aol.com> or b.huff@att.net or call (713) 827-7975.

1/2 day (6 hrs) includes all bait and tackle. License required!!! Tips extra.

6 People \$92 + \$10 (lic) = \$102.00 TX residents.
\$92 + \$15 (lic) = \$107.00 non TX resident.

5 People \$110 + \$10 (lic) = \$120.00 TX residents.
\$110 + \$15 (lic) = \$125.00 non TX residents.

4 People \$137.50 + \$10 (lic) = \$147.50 TX residents.
\$137.50 + \$15 (lic) = \$152.50 non TX residents.

Tours: No formal group tours are being planned at this time. See the president's letter for an explanation. Those with Internet access learn more by visiting the Galveston Convention and Visitors Bureau site at <http://www.galveston.com/whattodo/> — and decide upon an itinerary before arriving in Galveston.

Hospitality rooms will remain open and registration and visitation will continue throughout the day.

Schedule details (cont.)

Monday April 7, 2008 (cont)

Hospitality Rooms: 6:00 PM You will be treated to finger licking cuisine, prepared and delivered to the hotel by several different local eatery's located right there on the island. This includes; boiled shrimp, barbecue, and tacos. Of course, if one prefers, there are several fabulous sea-food restaurants scattered over the island, but none more than two or three miles driving.

11:00 PM The hospitality rooms will be locked for the night to maintain safety for their contents.

Tuesday April 8, 2008

9:00 AM Hospitality rooms open.

9:30 AM LADIES ONLY SPECIAL SURPRISE!!!!

All ladies are invited to be the guest of Betty Huff and Sheri Teller at a special entertainment event in the breakfast/ hospitality room of the LaQuinta Inn. The only requirements are that you not eat a lot of breakfast (because refreshments will be served) and that you RSVP in time to have a place to sit. This event last about 1hr/15mins. and will coincide with the men's business meeting which will take place in the downstairs meeting room.

10:00 AM Members General Business Meeting in the downstairs meeting room.

1:00 PM There is a plan to be announced, it will include the Lone Star Flight Museum and Moody Gardens.

5:30 PM The hospitality rooms will be locked until the banquet is over.

6:00 PM Banquet: Moody Gardens Garden Restaurant. Seating limited to 200. Reserve early. This will be a Moody Gardens full buffet, prepared by their own chef, Richard, and staff. Weather permitting, the covered out-door veranda will be a seating option.

Entertainment is still being negotiated, price is \$21.00 per person Payable at the time of registration. There will be door prizes.

10:00 PM Hospitality room will reopen till?????????????????

Galveston Hotel Accommodations

All hotel reservations will be handled directly by the La Quinta Inn & Suites, 8710 Seawall Blvd, Galveston, TX 77554. Phone 409-740-9100 to make room reservations. Rooms may be reserved beginning September 28, 2007.

Normal room rates are over \$100 per night during April, but General Manager Willis Gandhi of the La Quinta Inn and Suites is setting up a special price of \$70.00 per night for all "standard rooms," which are not a suite. Two-room suites will be priced at \$109 per night. This special rate does not include state and local taxes of approximately fifteen percent (15%).

Be sure to inform the reservations clerk that you want the special Firebird Association room rate--Group Code: Firebird Reunion

All rooms have been re-

served for the Firebirds at this price; first come, first served. Additional nights are subject to availability--just ask when registering.

According to the hotel, the special group rates apply before and after the reunion dates. Therefore, please make reservations at your earliest opportunity. Note that three different Firebird Association members, and their wives, have traveled to Galveston to check this property and have recommended it for our reunion.

A consideration in choosing this property was the hospitality room, and hotel approval for the Association to serve its own beverages and snacks.

The La Quinta Inn & Suites is located just three miles from the center of the island city of Galveston. The hotel has a sparkling outdoor Swimming Pool and a relaxing Hot Tub, plus a Fitness Center

for use at one's leisure. Every morning, guests may enjoy a tasty complimentary Continental Breakfast served up by the courteous staff in the eating area off of the hotel lobby.

Please make an effort to attend. The hotel manager has promised to give the Association all available space in the hotel for hospitality purposes if most of the rooms are reserved by Firebird Association members. There are 120 rooms in the hotel, so lets make it our goal to fill them all with Firebirds.

Acknowledgement

I want to thank Nolan Bailey the Firebird historian for his help on my first Firebird Flyer. Also, thank you Mrs. Betty Huff for your help and the flow of information that you provided. And last but not least, my oldest daughter Virginia, (A.K.A. Gin Gin) born at Elmendorf. For her computer and publishing help.

The Firebird Association

In 1982, former members of the 17th TCS and 17th TAS officially organized the Firebird Association.

The stated purpose of the Association is to commemorate the aviation history of the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron of the United States Air Force, its predecessor and mission-successor organizations, and of all military units who have flown ski-equipped versions of the C-130 aircraft within any of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. And, provide social and recreational activities for, and to maintain fraternal contacts between, its members.

Eligibility for membership is open to any and all persons who served on active duty in the United States Air Force with the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and/or the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron; any and

all persons who served with any of the predecessor or mission-successor organizations of the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and/or the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron, including but not limited to the 61st Troop Carrier Squadron, the 109th Tactical Airlift Group/Wing, or the 517th Airlift Squadron; any and all persons who served with United States Navy Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VXE-6); Any and all persons who, while on active or active-reserve duty with the United States Air Force or the United States Navy, have ever flown as a crew member on a ski-equipped model of the C-130 aircraft; Any and all persons who have supported the mission(s) of the ski-equipped C-130 aircraft flown by any active duty, reserve or National Guard unit of the Armed Forces of the United States, such as but not limited to, operational

control, aircraft maintenance, aerial port, combat control team and industry technical representative; The spouses, widows, widowers and children of any of the above; and Upon nomination for membership by any active Firebird and acceptance by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, any other person, not otherwise qualified, who has an interest in this association and supports the purposes for which it is organized.



Firebird Association Membership Application

Name: _____

- Initial Membership
- Renewal

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ + _____

Phone: (_____) _____ FAX: (_____) _____

E-mail: _____

Unit(s): 17th TCS 17th TAS 517th TAS Other _____

Please mail completed form and payment to:

Bob Mattingly
Firebird Association
1255 Circlewood Drive
Melbourne, FL 32935-5536

Please check one block:

- Biennial Dues \$20.00
- Life Membership \$100



J. C. Arrington
The Firebird Association
3778 Lark Court
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Place
Stamp
Here

Place Address Label Here