



# Firebird Flyer



Volume 13 # 1

The Firebird Association

February 21, 2010

## A Gathering of Firebirds In Galveston

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Alan Anderson

When I got up this morning and looked out the window I thought that it looked like we were back in Anchorage. I went out to get the paper and looked at the snow pile covering half of my driveway and about 5 feet high and realized how much I am looking forward to the Firebird reunion in Galveston from April 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>. It will be at the same location as two years ago, the La Quinta Inn & Suites, 8710 Seawall Blvd, phone (409) 740-9100. Those of us attending the reunion

planning session in Galveston in October were pleasantly surprised at the progress being made to clean up after the hurricane. I anticipate that by April, it will be almost impossible to tell that a hurricane happened there. The information on the reunion and registration form is available on the Firebird web page (<http://www.firebirds.org/>).

It is always a joy to get together with old friends who have lived through some of the same experiences you have had, the “been there/done that” group. There are always “war stories” to be told and listened to even if we have heard many of them before. Sometimes I

think the ones we have heard before are the best because they still bring back the best memories. I also realize that I’m not getting any younger and the Firebirds I flew with are also getting up there. Too many are no longer here and more may not be here by the next reunion. It would be a shame to miss out on a last chance to say hello to some old

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## **Firebird Association**

### **Officers**

President:  
Alan Anderson

Vice-President:  
Jay Walker

Treasurer:  
Bob Mattingly

Secretary:  
Warren Miller

Historian:  
Nolan Bailey

Newsletter Editor:  
J. C. Arrington

### **Board Members**

Sam Arnold  
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Sid Marcus  
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Bill Wilburn  
Bernie Warren

### **Past Presidents — 3**

Bruce Huff  
Jerry Livingston  
John Root

friends that won't be here in 2012. It is also great to talk with the people who flew as Firebirds after I moved on. How I enjoy hearing about operations still going on out on the Greenland Ice Cap along with learning about flying in Antarctica. The reunion is planned to maximize the time for people to just enjoy each other. The hospitality room will be the main focus with plenty of free refreshments (both adult and otherwise) and snacks available. Monday evening will be a shrimp and pizza supper free of charge again with free refreshments. On Tuesday from 10:00 to 12:00 AM will be the by-annual member's business meeting. At the same time, the ladies will hold a "surprise party". Group activities include fishing boats in the Gulf of Mexico, organized sightseeing trips of Galveston by street train and golf on a newly renovated championship golf course five minutes from the motel. The Tuesday night banquet at

Moody Gardens is extra cost but well worth it. The food and entertainment is excellent and a very enjoyable way to wind up the formal reunion activities. Breakfast Wednesday morning gives people a chance for final goodbyes before heading their separate ways anticipating the next reunion in 2012.

See you all there.

Alan Anderson  
President

## 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.



Firebirds that have passed on since the 2008 Firebird reunion.

## TAPS

Robert Pinard  
Died February 15, 2010

James Waldman  
Died December 9, 2008

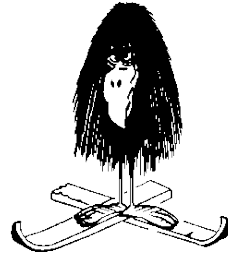
Albert J. (AJ) Hoffpauir  
Died September 9, 2009

Ralph Carboneau  
Died June 7, 2008

Jasper "Pat" Patterson  
Died April 24, 2009

Ray Ekenstam  
Died May 6, 2008

Josie Sommerville  
(Wife of Tom Sommerville)  
Died February 13, 2009



## WELCOME TO GALVESTON

This is a special invitation to all Firebird Association members to attend the 2010 reunion. I included these pictures to “shake loose” a few memories. It does not matter if you are in the 517th, the 109th, or were in the 61st, 17th or VXE-6. We are all comrades. We share the same background. Officer or enlisted, Flight crew, or support, we are comrades.

Please come to Galveston, TX in April 2010, and let us make the Firebird reunion the best one ever held.

J.C. Arrington



# FIREBIRD ASSOCIATION REUNION

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

**April 11-14, 2010**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Revised 11/19/2009-

<p><b>Sunday, April 11th</b>  <b>Travel Day</b></p>	<p>1200-1900: Registration in Firebird Command Post – La Quinta Inn and Suites Board Room (Lobby) 1200-2300: Hospitality Suite opens** -- Location to Be Announced 1800-2300: Hors d'oeuvres and deli trays in afternoon and early evening for the "Early Birds"</p>
<p><b>Monday, April 12th</b>  <b>Reunion Day</b></p>	<p>0630-1030 Free Continental Breakfast—La Quinta Main Lobby 0630-1400: Golf Tournament– Arrangements TBA 0630-1400: Fishing Trip– Arrangements TBA 0930-1130: Galveston tour train 1000-1400: Registration continues in hospitality room 1800-2300: Hospitality Suite open -- Free <i>Shrimp and Pizza Supper &amp; Beverages</i></p>
<p><b>Tuesday, April 13th</b>  <b>Reunion Day</b></p>	<p>0630-1030: Free Continental breakfast -- La Quinta Main Lobby 0700-1730: Hospitality room available** 1000-1200 Ladies surprise party– La Quinta breakfast room. 1000-1200: Firebird Association business meeting—Hospitality Room 1300-1400: Lunch Break (on your own) 1300-1600: Moody Gardens tour—Time as arranged 1845-1900: Presentation of the Colors 1900-1930: Banquet: Buffet in the Moody Gardens Garden Restaurant*** 1930-2100: Banquet: Program and awards Ceremony 2100-2200: Music for your dancing and listening pleasure—Mack Haynes 2215-2400: Hospitality Suite open**</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, April 14th</b>  <b>Travel Day</b></p>	<p>0630-0930: Free Continental breakfast for hotel guests -- Main Lobby 0800-1200: Hospitality room open for visitation purposes</p>

\* 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.**

## 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, 2009.

Normal room rates are over \$116 per night during April, but General Manager Willis Gandhi of the La Quinta Inn and Suites is setting up a special price of \$75.00 per night for all "standard rooms," which are not a suite. Two-room suites will be priced at \$149 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 reserved 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 eat-

ing 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 let's make it our goal to fill them all with Firebirds.

### RV PARKS

Bayou Shores RV Park  
888-744-2837  
[www.bayoushoresrvresort.com](http://www.bayoushoresrvresort.com)

Galveston Island State  
Park 409-737-1222  
[www.tpwd.state.tx](http://www.tpwd.state.tx)

Jamaica Beach RV Park  
866-725-5511

Tiki Tom's RV Park  
409-935-5599



The *Garden* Restaurant  
FIREBIRD  
DINNER BUFFET  
April 13, 2010

Soups

Creamy Clam Chowder  
Chicken Vegetable

Salads

Garden Tossed Salad with grape tomatoes  
Caesar Salad with garlic croutons  
Cucumber Thai Salad  
Penne Pasta Salad with fresh basil  
Seasonal Fruit Salad  
Sesame Seed and Angel Hair



Entrees

Crusted Baked Tilapia

Seafood Fettuccini

Rosemary Baked Chicken

Roasted Pork Tenderloin with Herb Potatoes

\*\*\*\*\*

Wild Rice Pilaf

Broccoli Hollandaise

Buttered Squash and Zucchini

Fresh Green Beans Almandine

Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

\*\*\*\*\*

Chef's Assorted Rolls and Desserts

## REUNION ACTIVITIES

### **Treasure Island Tour Train:**

Arrangements have been made for a Monday morning tour of Galveston Island. Normally, the tour departs from 25th & Seawall Blvd. However, for a small additional fee the Association has arranged for the tour to begin at the hotel. Those wishing to take the tour will be picked up at the hotel at 9:00am on April 12th, weather permitting. The cost will be only \$12.00 per person, and is limited to 70 people. The return will be approximately 10:30 am.

The tour covers 17 miles and is a talking/riding tour. This is the Train Ride that they advertise— it's really a three car tram pulled by a John Deere tractor with a wooden box on the front, painted like a train. Everyone should dress warmly, Galveston can be pretty cold in the early mornings of April, and windy too. Of course if the weather doesn't permit, the Association will refund the \$12 per person fee.

### **FISHING TRIP:**

Each boat cost \$500.00, plus 15% tip, for six fishermen. Everything is provided except for food and beverage of ones choice. Reservations must be made by March 15, 2010 (first come... first served). The Firebird Association must guarantee the \$500.00, so no refunds can be made after this date. However, if a *fisherperson* has to cancel after paying the fishing fee, and can find an alternate, substitutions may be made.

Cost will be \$100.00 per person and include a 15% gratuity. Two boats have been reserved with a maximum capacity of six persons per boat. Fishing licenses are available at Wal-Mart, which is just down the Seawall Boulevard from the hotel

License fees: Texas resident \$10.00  
Non resident \$15.00

Contact Jay Walker using [WALKER130@aol.com](mailto:WALKER130@aol.com)

## **Golf:**

A “best ball” golf tournament will be held at 7:30 A.M. on Monday April 12th at the Moody Gardens Golf Course in Galveston. The golf registration fee will be \$40.00 per person and will include the tournament and prizes. Prize to be a dozen golf balls given to each player on the top team. Play will begin with a shotgun start and will probably take from 4 1/2 to 5 hours. Prizes will be awarded at the banquet. Each twosome is a single team and each person on the team will be able to continue no matter what their skill level. Two-person teams will be set up with an attempt to have golfers of varying skill levels in each group— by handicap. I strongly encourage everyone at any skill level to come out and enjoy the day.

When registering for the golf, be sure to include what you believe to be your average 18 hole score for each registrant.

For additional information, you can contact Bob Mattingly at “e” mail: [bobc130d6@yahoo.com](mailto:bobc130d6@yahoo.com) or telephone (321) 254-7422.

## **Tours:**

Treasure Island Train Tour:	\$12.00	1.5—2 Hours	30 people min.
Deep Sea Fishing Tour:	\$100.00	6 Hours	6 people per boat
Moody Gardens Tour:	\$5.00 per Venue		
The Lonestar Flight Museum	\$8.00 Adults & \$5.00 Seniors		

## **Airplane Rides**

The Lonestar Flight Museum offers prearranged

Airplane rides. The rides must be prearranged so that a flight crew will be available.

Call (409) 740-7722

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

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

T-6 Texan \$290 per

PT-17 \$225 per person

## **REUNION ACTIVITIES (Cont.)**

### **POSSIBLE STATIC DISPLAY:**

We are still trying for a static display from the 109th NYANG TCW. At this point prospects do not look good, Washington says "NO" so we are trying a different approach. Plans for Tuesday afternoon can not be finalized until the display matter is resolved. Regardless, we have tours planned for both The Lonestar Flight Museum and Moody Gardens. Should we get the display, it will be at the museum. The two facilities are located with adjoining parking lots and tram-transport between the two. This part of the plan has been agreed on we're just not certain of the exact times. Moody Gardens has 3 main areas to tour. They are worth the \$5.00 charge. That is \$5.00 for each attraction, they have an aquarium that is world class and a rain forest and a I-MAX theater. By April we will have a show program for the I-MAX.

### **BANQUET:**

Moody Gardens will shut down entry to the public at 4:30PM but remains open until all tours have been completed, about 5:30PM. Complete touring facilities are then closed and only the restaurant facility is open for reserved parties such as ours. This facility has a beautiful open view of Off at Bayou and West Bay. There is seating at a outside veranda, weather permitting. The meal is full buffet with a pretty fabulous menu. You can pick one up at the reunion registration desk. The doors open at 6:00PM with a cash bar. Cost is \$26.00 per person we have live music from 6:00PM to 10:00PM for your listening pleasure. Attire for the evening is Dress/Casual.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

**ATTENTION:** There are two LaQuinta Hotels on Galveston Island. You will be going to the one on the west end, near the airport, 8710 Seawall Blvd.

**AIR LINES:** No commercial air lines fly into Galveston. Arrivals must fly into Houston, either Bush International or Hobby International. If you plan to rent a car and you are arriving at Bush International, then you will have to drive through downtown Houston. Check the Houston Travel section. Hobby is about thirty miles closer to Galveston and is much easier to travel from.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION (cont)

### Limo Info:

Bush IAH airport, regular rate \$100.00 per person, round trip.

Discounted rate \$70.00 per person round trip.

Hobby IAH airport Regular rate \$80.00 per person round trip.

Discounted rate \$60.00 per person round trip.

Reservation and prepayment is required by April 5, 2010 for the discount rate.

Cancellation deadline: April 6, 2010 for a refund.

After April 5, reservations and prepayment is required at least two days in advance to guarantee a seat at the regular rate. Walk ups would be on the next available schedule.

All of the above would be a SCHEDULED SHARED shuttle.

Questions: Frances Serrato 1-800-640-4826 or 409-744-5466

**DRESS:** Bring warm cloths. Galveston is open to the Gulf of Mexico and even with her mild temperatures, the almost constant sea-breeze can leave you with a chill.

### HOUSTON TRAVEL HINTS:

Houston has two major complete loops, the inner loop is 610, the outer loop is Beltway 8.

**NOTE**—Beltway 8 and Sam Houston Parkway run concurrently. Parts of the Sam Houston Parkway are toll areas, some are not. Eventually the total parkway will be tolls, but for now it is still a work-in-progress. If you stay on the ground level of Beltway 8 there are no tolls, but you have traffic lights and cross streets. Tolls run between 25 cents to \$1.25, and you can get change by going thru a booth in a lane with a blue overhead sign.

If you are driving thru Houston from the west on I-10 you will be driving on a great newly finished 27 lanes wide in places. Pay attention to the overhead signs.

If you prefer to travel I-10 thru downtown then read carefully. After you have crossed under Beltway 8/ Sam Houston Pkwy, stay in one of the two left lanes. After you cross under Loop 610 remain in one of the two left lanes. Stay in the 2nd from the left as much as possible because eventually that lane feeds into I-45 south. Once you've made the feed, you will be on I-45 South. Move into the 2nd from the right lane ASAP. Go about 1 1/2 miles and you will see a large overhead sign that says "GALVESTON". This is over the right lane, don't panic, both lanes feed into the I-45 South elevated thru downtown. Important— STAY IN THE MIDDLE....both the right and left lanes exit and without much warning. Once you leave the elevated portion, you are on I-45 South. From here it is a nice multi-lane freeway all the way to Galveston, about 45 minutes.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION (cont)**

**IMPORTANT:** I-45 has a street name, “The Gulf Freeway”. They are the same.

If you are driving from the east on I-10, the best way is I-10 to Beltway 8/ Sam Houston Pkwy, go south on Beltway 8 to I-45, then go south on I-45 to Galveston. It’s about 30 minutes travel time.

If you are traveling from the east and you would like to meander thru the country-side, take state hwy 124 south at Winnie TX. 124 goes south to the beach road state hwy 87. Go west on hwy 87 to the Bolivar Ferry. The ferry is a free ride across to Galveston Island. “Draw Back”....these are not large boats and the wait can be as long as an hour, but usually is only about 15 min.. When exiting the ferry, stay on Hwy 87 unit you reach Seawall Blvd. (only about a mile). Go west or right on Seawall for about 5 or 6 miles to the hotel. One word of caution, if you drive this route you will be going through some of the worst devastation from the hurricane, but I am told that the highway is good.

Traveling from the N/E on Hwy 59, stay on Hwy 59 around to the south side of the downtown area and intersect with I-45, go south on I-45, about 45 minutes from Galveston.

Coming from the north on I-45, when you are going around downtown, stay in the next to the right lane and you will be OK.

Coming in from the N/W on Hwy 290 take Loop 610 to the east or left all the way around to the south side of Houston and go south on I-45. You are about 40 minutes away.

### **AIRPORT ARRIVALS-RENTING CARS:**

Bush International Airport or HIA, Exit the airport on JFK Blvd to Beltway 8, go west or right on Beltway 8 to I-45 and follow the instructions already given for “Coming from the North on I-45”.

Hobby Airport..... Exit the airport on Airport road, go south or right to I-45, go south or right on I-45. You are about 40 minutes from Galveston.

### **EVERYBODY**

#### **GALVESTON ARRIVAL AND TRAVEL:**

Cross the Galveston Causeway, turn right at 61st Street (there is a traffic light). Go to Seawall Blvd and turn right. The hotel is about 2 miles on the right. The bay is on the left. Look for the red roof.

Firebird Association Reunion X  
Galveston, Texas  
April 11-14, 2010  
Registration Form

**Registrant Information:** (Please Print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ +4 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Military Unit(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Assigned to Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fees:**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Firebird Association Dues* See footnote	___ @	\$20.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Reunion Registration Fee**	___ @	\$40.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet Tickets** Tuesday night dinner at Moody Gardens	___ @	\$26.00	\$ _____

**Tours & Activities:**

(Subject to Availability, Interest, and Change)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Tournament - TBA Monday: 0730 to 1400	___ @	\$40.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Deep Sea Fishing *** TBA Monday: 0600-1800 (Min. 6)	___ @	\$100.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour 1 - Treasure Island Monday: 0930-1130 (Min. 20)	___ @	\$12.00 ea.	\$ _____

**Golfers:** List average 18 hole score(s) here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail form and check to:** Firebird Association, 1255 Circlewood Drive, Melbourne, FL 32935-5536

**See additional important information below.**

**Hotel reservations are NOT included on this form.** To reserve a room, call the Galveston LaQuita Inn & Suites at **409-740-9100**. Use the code word "**Firebird Reunion**" to receive the reduced room rate.

**NOTICE:** Due to circumstances beyond our control, those early registrants paying less than the final price for a meal or activity, will be asked to make up any difference at the reunion. If one has paid for a tour or activity that does not occur because of a lack of participation, or paid too much because an original price has been reduced, he or she will be given a refund at the registration table in Galveston with an association check.

**The Association is offering a special invitation to surviving spouses or family of deceased members, and World War II members, who may wish to attend the reunion. These persons may participate by paying for their room and the individual activities, meals, and tours that they elect to attend. They will not be required to pay the membership or registration fee.**

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- \* **Firebird Association Membership:** To register for this reunion, your Firebird Association membership must be up-to-date. If Association dues for the Years 2008-2009 have not been paid prior to registration, a membership fee of \$20.00 must be included.
  - \*\* **Reunion Registration - The registration fee does not include a ticket to the Tuesday night buffet this year. Due to limited seating in the banquet room, banquet/buffet tickets will be offered on a first come, first served, basis. Only ONE registration fee is to be paid per Firebird, or a Firebird's entire family.**
  - \*\*\* **For more information** on fishing, tours, or golf, please visit the **Tours and Golf** menu. Tour times as listed are approximate.



### Firebird Association Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Membership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal

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