



The Stratojet Newsletter

April 2013 Volume 39

For Those Who Designed, Built, Flew, Maintained and Loved the B-47



The EB-47E of the Pima Air & Space Museum forms the backdrop for this group photo of attendees at the 2012 Reunion. A good time was had by all! This bird served with the 376th BW at Lockbourne AFB.

Photo: Bill Korhely

The President's Corner

We had a very successful meeting in Tucson, thanks to the efforts of Bill Clark. He, the Reunion Brat, and the personnel of the Doubletree did an outstanding job. The hotel personnel were very cooperative and friendly. We had 86 members at the reunion, the number was not as high as at earlier reunions, and that is to be expected. We are getting older and less mobile. However, this did not deter others who attended and used walkers and canes. About half the attendees had been at a reunion previously, while it was a first time for the others.

Friday we took a tour of the boneyard; this was followed by a visit to the Pima Air Space. The museum is quite large and Bill Clark arranged for a bus tour of the museum. This was a God-send. A docent accompanied us; he identified the aircraft and provided historical anecdotes about many of the aircraft.

Saturday morning there was the Sonora Desert tour and a Crew Chief's Symposium. Dave Neel was the moderator of

The President's...continued on page 3

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Mea Culpa

I apologize for the extreme tardiness of this issue of the *Stratojet Newsletter*. I started the year off with a broken finger which hampered my ability at the keyboard and just as that was getting manageable my wife and I came down with a respiratory illness that eventually resulted in pneumonia for me. We were both very ill for over a month and it has only been in recent days that I have been able to carry on normal activities. The result is that you have waited far too long for this issue, but on the positive side there are more pages than normal and there is color throughout.

We had a good reunion. I hope the photos herein remind those of you who attended of that and spurs the rest of you to plan on attending the next one in Ft. Walton Beach in 2014.

As always, we are in need of good material for the *Newsletter*. We can especially use short stories or memories that need to be told. But don't worry about length or format, just send them!

Please forgive my shortcomings and I will do my best in the days ahead to live up to the legacy that you fellows have established.

Your humble editor,
MH

Important Reminders

- **Pay your dues for 2013** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- Send dues to address at bottom of page 11.
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Dick Curran.
- Send newsletter articles, photos, news about members, etc. to Mike Habermehl, Editor.
- Plan on attending the Reunion in Fort Walton Beach FL, 30 October - 2 November 2014.

The B-47 Stratojet Newsletter is published three times each year. It is intended solely for the enjoyment, camaraderie, and enlightenment of the membership of the B-47 Stratojet Association. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the Association. Requests to use or reprint any portion of the contents should be directed to the Editor. Contributions of material to the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor, B-47 Stratojet Newsletter, P. O. Box 1144, Brenham, TX 77834-1144, cmhs@sbcglobal.net.



Alex answers a question during the Saturday morning business meeting. He later presented a pictorial review of B-47 history.

The President's...continued from page 1

the symposium while Ron Young, Jim Diamond, and Roy Buechele occupied the moderator's table with him. What struck me was that after almost fifty years how keenly they remembered their crew chief duties. The other was their God-like awe, fear, and respect for the line chief. It reminded me of Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi's fear of the Penguin (the Catholic nun that ran the orphanage where they grew up) in the "Blues Brothers" movie. In the afternoon, I made a power point presentation entitled "The Boeing B-47 Stratojet, the Queen of the Sky. A Pictorial History of the B-47 Stratojet."

That evening at the banquet, Bill Clark and Jim Obenauf did their Huntley Brinkley presentation of Jim Obenauf's heroic act of landing the B-47, without a canopy, and an armed ejection seat, to save the instructor navigator, who had no chute. I have seen the event on TV and have read the book on the exploit; but hearing it presented brought a totally new sense of realism to the act of courage. Following the presentation. Mr. C. Kirby, who was a crew chief on Jim's aircraft, came forward and relayed his recollections of the event. Jim was presented with a monetary remuneration in lieu of plaque. Jim is a radio plane hobbyist and it was felt that he would prefer the money, in pur-

suit of his hobby. Bill Clark was presented with a plaque in recognition of the outstanding job he did in organizing the reunion in Tucson.

A short business meeting followed. The organization is on sound fiscal grounds, and we have enough cash on hand to see us into the future for at least seven years. The next reunion will be held at Fort Walton Beach, FL. in 2014. Dick Curran will be coordinating the event.

I was re-nominated to be President of the organization for another two years by the Board of Governors. I accepted and will do my best to serve the membership.

*Sigmund "Alex" Alexander
President
B-47 Stratojet Association*



Our Tucson Reunion Hosts, Bill and Ginny Clark.



Our Banquet Speaker, B-47 Hero Jim Obenauf and wife, Linda

***Minutes of the
B-47 Stratojet Association
Board of Governor's Meeting,
Tucson, AZ,
1 November 2012***

Present:

Sigmund (Alex) Alexander; President
Donald Cassiday; Vice President
Richard (Dick) Curran; Secretary/Treasurer
Richard (Dick) Purdum; Membership Chairman
James (Jim) Diamond; Website Manager
Mike Habermehl; Chaplain and Newsletter Editor
Augustine (Gus) Letto; Member, Board of Governors
Robert (Bob) Griffiths; Member, Board of Governors

1. The Meeting convened at 1500 hrs.
2. The minutes of the June 28, 2012 Board of Governors (BoG) meeting were reviewed and accepted.
3. Sigmund Alexander reported that Andy Labosky had presented David Hitchcock with a plaque in appreciation of all his good work in behalf of the Association.
4. Gene Johnson, one of the Volunteers at the Strategic Air and Space Museum, Omaha NE., briefed the BoG on the progress of the restoration status on the B-47 at the museum. The BoG thanked Gene and his crew for their outstanding work. Don Cassiday suggested that any left-over hats, book bags, pins, and decals be sent to the volunteers of the Strategic Air and Space Museum and the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum, Rantoul, IL, in recognition of their efforts. Dick Purdum will provide a point of contact at both museums, to enable these items to be sent to the correct people.
5. Sigmund Alexander congratulated Bill Clark for the outstanding work he has performed as the host for the 2012 reunion.
6. The BoG unanimously approved the revised constitution and by-laws dated November 3, 2012. The proposal to vote by telephone or e-mail was rejected.
7. Dick Curran presented the Association balance sheet as of October 15, 2012; the net assets of the Association were \$66,672.10, with \$50,000.00 in a certificate of deposit earning 1.15%. The report was accepted.

8. Dick Purdum presented the Association membership report as of October 15, 2012. As of the 1 November, the Association had 782 members. During the year, the Association gained 66 life members and 28 annual dues paying members. Twenty one members passed away since the 2010.

9. Dick Curran reported that the B-47 Flight Jacket produced by the Positive Impressions Inc., of Ottawa, KS will return \$10.00 for each jacket sold, payable on a yearly basis. The jacket information will be put on the website and in the newsletter. Dick Curran will serve as the point of contact for this action.

10. Dick Curran addressed the disposition of items in the BX inventory. Items from previous reunions remain unsold. Sigmund Alexander will contact George Brierly with regard to their disposition.

11. Jim Diamond reported the website was running without any problems.

12. Mike Habermehl reported we have produced two newsletters #37 and #38 this year with #39 in the works. Future newsletters will be printed in color and on slick paper.

13. The BoG selected Ft. Walton Beach, FL., for the site of the 2014 reunion. Dick Curran agreed to serve as project officer. The dates will range from early October to mid-November, depending on hotel rates, the availability of rooms and the hurricane season.

14. Sigmund (Alex) Alexander was nominated and approved for a two year term as President. Donald Cassiday was nominated and approved as Vice President. Robert (Bob) Griffiths and Augustine (Gus) Letto were approved as members of the Board of Governors. All the remaining Members of the Board of Governors were re-elected to their respective offices.

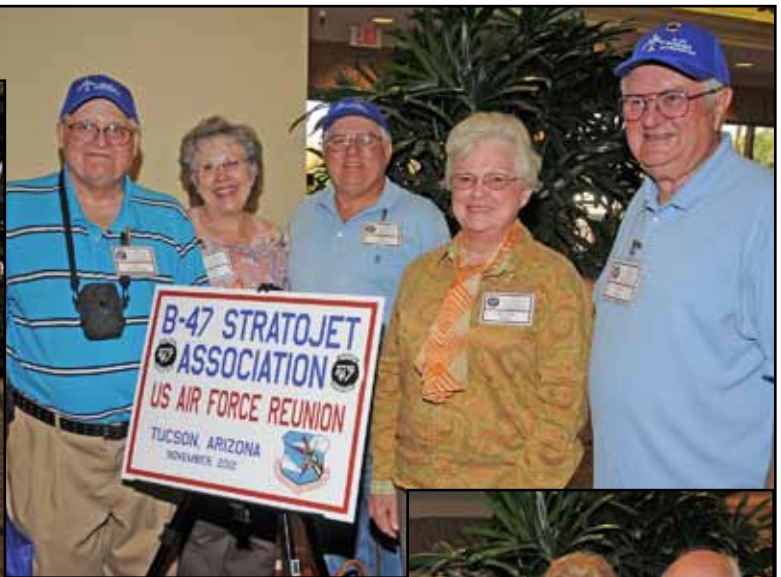
*Richard J. (Dick) Curran
Secretary/Treasurer*

Special Thanks - from the Association

To Col. Carrington for the model and the poster of B-47 emblems.

To Bill Korhely of Roadrunner Photo (Mesa AZ) and Gus Letto for Reunion photos for this newsletter.

Tucson Scrapbook~













Fall Of An American Icon

by Sigmund "Alex" Alexander

At the end of 2011, Airbus had booked 1,608 gross orders while Boeing recorded 921 orders. Boeing, which advertised that it was "the aircraft builder to the world," had fallen behind to number two and was now a poor second. How was it that Boeing, the undisputed leader in world commercial aviation in 1997, was now also ran in 2012? The answer is simple arrogance and incompetent management.

Airbus came on the scene in 1974 with the building of the A300. The A300 was the first aircraft built by Airbus. Individual efforts by France and the United Kingdom to produce commercial jets had proven to be a failure and the various European nations (Germany, France, United Kingdom, and Spain) pooled their resources to create a company that could compete with Boeing. Boeing's response was "We build airplanes, Airbus builds jobs." Much to Boeing's dismay, Airbus proved it was also capable of making good aircraft. In 1981, Airbus launched the A320, which was comparable to the 737, and had 400 orders before it first flew. This should have been a wakeup call for Boeing that it was now facing a major competitor in the commercial aviation market.

Boeing was reaping in huge profits from the sale of 737s, 747s, 757s, and 767s. What should the company do? Should the company invest in R&D for future commercial aircraft or acquire other companies? The company decided to invest its profits in the acquisition of Rockwell North American and McDonnell Douglas and buy back shares of its stock. Those running the company thought that buying back stock and having a military component would provide a stable component to the highly volatile commercial field. Scott Hamilton, an aviation writer, felt the better choice would have been to invest in the development of future commercial aircraft.

The joke in the industry in 1997 was McDonnell Douglas acquired Boeing with Boeing's money. MacD's executives now played a prominent role in how Boeing was run. A number of MacD's executives formerly worked for GE. They were captivated by President Jack Welch's 15% profit per year and turned down aircraft orders for 737s if they couldn't make 15%. Airbus was willing to accept less than 15% and filled the bill. A customer lost is not likely to return. Production problems forced a shutdown of the 737 production line. Relations with labor were not the best

in Seattle. Boeing had relied on American airlines as its primary customers and the rest of the world was expected to follow suit. Airbus successfully wooed the Middle East and Southeast Asia airlines. Airbus could no longer be ignored, its A300-10-30s and A318-19-20-21s were excellent aircraft and airlines were buying them. Douglas was financially troubled when McDonnell acquired them in 1967. The future looked bleak for the commercial division; there was no Douglas follow on to the existing DC-9 and DC-10

In 1990, Airbus raised the stakes with the A380, an aircraft that had the potential of carrying twice the number of passengers as the 747. Despite all its subsequent problems, Airbus had opted for the right course. Boeing's answer was a remodeled 747, the 747-800. Boeing had made a fortune on the 747, and a new aircraft, not an update of an existing aircraft, was in order. Even Henry Ford realized when it was time to replace the model T. The 777 was the star in Boeing's stable of aircraft and nothing Airbus had could match its performance. The A340 that Airbus fielded was a dismal second best. Finally Airbus pulled the A340 off life support in 2012.

The successor in the medium two aisle aircraft category to the A330 and 767 was the next struggle between Boeing and Airbus. Boeing initially opted for speed with their sonic cruise liner. Their corporate memory was poor, as they forgot the price Concorde paid for speed. Boeing regrouped and the result was the 787, the world's first composite "plastic" airliner. The first roll out was in 2007. Initial orders for the 787 were slow, but eventually Boeing racked up almost 1,000 new orders for the 787. Airbus chose to build a conventional aircraft, the A350. When airline companies rejected Airbus' proposal, Airbus went back to the drawing board and came up with a composite A350, aping the 787.

Supposedly now, Boeing had a significant lead in the development of the 787. However, this has not proven to be the case. The 787 has proven to be a major headache for Boeing. Their delivery schedule was a hallucination. The first delivery was 2011, years behind its planned date in 2008. Boeing was building a new aircraft with new technology that had never been done before. Added to this was the concept of profit risk sharing by various aerospace and subassembly builders all over the globe. Boeing/Wichita was sold and became Spirit aircraft.

Selling off Boeing/Wichita supplied Boeing Commercial

Fall...continued from page 11

Aircraft, BAC, with cash, but resulted in a loss to Boeing of engineering talent. In addition to making 737 fuselages and noses for the 787, Spirit is now also manufacturing components for the Airbus 350. BAC was to be an assembler of aircraft, putting together components built from all over the world. What looked good on paper did not work out in practice. The new composite components proved difficult for sub-manufacturers to build and Boeing's delivery schedule was now over three years late. Boeing engineers were scrambling all over the world helping subcontractor's resolve production problems. The 787s coming off the production line were all different and had to be put aside and modified to meet a standard configuration. There was a shortage of fasteners which added to the assembly delay. The aircraft had also exceeded its design weight. During a test flight a 787 was forced to land in El Paso due to an electrical fire. The fire at an electrical bus required a redesign and added to the delay.

Philip Condit, Mr. Big at Boeing, who was responsible for the acquisition/buy back strategy and the sonic cruiser, decided to move the corporate headquarters to Chicago. The reason given was Boeing was now a diverse corporation and not just a commercial aircraft builder, and the location of the new headquarters would attest to this. I personally believe it was spitefulness on his part to get even with his labor adversaries in Seattle. In 2003, the 767 tanker and Expendable Launch Vehicle procurement scandals broke and it was revealed that Mr. Condit was involved in a number of affairs with company employees. Condit resigned and was replaced by Henry Stonecipher, an original MacD corporate officer. MacDonnell Douglas was now in fact running Boeing. Stonecipher did not last long as CEO, as he had an affair with an employee and was asked to resign. In 2005, he was replaced by James McNerney, who had been the CEO and chairman of the Board at 3M. McNerney was very well qualified, but by selecting him they passed over Alan Mulally, who knew how to build airplanes. Mulally went on to great success at Ford without a government bailout.

Boeing had contemplated a completely new version of the 737, but very little work had been done on it. In 2011 Pratt and Whitney was offering aircraft manufacturers a new engine that they had developed. It was a geared turbine jet engine which promised greatly improved fuel savings. Airbus latched on to the P&W engine and created the A-320 neo. A thousand customers signed up for the new aircraft. Boeing was caught flat footed and finally was

forced by American Airlines and SouthWest Airlines to come out with a more fuel efficient 737.

McNerney made the mistake of attacking labor in public, and that brought down the wrath of the Obama administration's pro-labor National Labor Administration. The NLRB was considering the closure of Boeing's South Carolina 787 assembly plant. McNerney made peace with the union at Boeing and the NLRB dropped its unfair labor practice investigation against Boeing.

The future for Boeing Commercial remains uncertain. There are still problems with the production of the 787 and late deliveries are forcing Boeing to compensate customers. It is questionable whether the passenger version of the 747-800 will ever attract many customers. The freighter version may prove to be more successful, but it also has had its problems. A replacement for the 777 is needed as well as that for the 737. A new 737 will face competition not only from Airbus, but new aircraft from Brazil, China, Canada, and Russia. Above all, what is needed at Boeing is a bold vision again and a management enamored with building aircraft above the bottom line. Might I cite a new super aircraft to surpass the A380 and 747? There is one which Boeing has made sketches of, but not much else.

New Publications

Wilton Strickland sent a note with the following information that you may find of interest.

I was a B-47E maintenance crew chief at Lincoln AFB, NE, Oct '57 - Mar '60; commissioned via USAFOCS in Sep '60; flew 5000 hours as navigator-bombardier in B-52D, E, F, G, H, including 72 Arc Lite and 6 Linebacker II missions in Vietnam.

Here is a link to a Linebacker II (the 11-day B-52 bombing campaign in Dec '72 that led to ending the Vietnam War) article in current (Dec) *Aviation History* Magazine that I helped to write, edit, etc. <http://www.historynet.com/the-11-day-war.htm>

I was also deeply involved in helping to write, edit, etc., a book by author of the above article, Robert O. Harder, *Flying From The Black Hole: The B-52 Navigator-Bombardiers of Vietnam*; available at amazon.com. I was also deeply involved in helping to write, edit, etc., *The Goldsboro Broken Arrow*, by Joel Dobson, a book detailing the 1961 crash and recovery of a B-52G and its two nuclear weapons near Goldsboro, NC; available at lulu.com and amazon.com

Roll Call Of Honor

One of the more difficult responsibilities of this Association is keeping good records of members who have passed away. Many of you have advised us, as have family members, and we appreciate that. But we know we have missed many. Due to the efforts of our Secretary/Treasurer, we have a comprehensive list of members who have passed away over the last five years. The following list is composed of deaths that have not previously been recorded in the Newsletter. Thanks, Dick!

Allen Robert R. Tucson AZ 03/31/08

Baechtold Rodney L. Mesquite TX 03/11/11

Brooks William K. Melbourne FL 02/10/05

Caithaml Art Fairview Park OH 01/02/11

Capps Robert S. Alexandria VA 03/21/11

Carlisle Jason J. Chico CA 07/01/10

Cronin James Middletown DE 03/07/12

Dahl Raymond H. Silverton OR 10/28/08

Davis Bennie L. (Gen USAF) - CINCSAC (1981-1985)
Georgetown TX 09/24/12

Dean Marshall A. Wetumpka AL 04/23/10

Eggert, Jr. JoAnn St. Petersburg FL 07/01/08

Elzey Norman J. Winter Park FL 03/26/06

Epperson Lewis M. Spruce Pine NC 08/07/06

Finley Harold W. San Antonio TX 08/05/12

Franz Joe Nashville TN 12/03/12

Giserman Simon Bronx NY 09/13/11

Hall Robert N. Oak Harbor WA 12/07/12

Harrison James E. Lakewood CO 12/05/10

Henderson David L. Ft. Walton Beach FL 08/21/10

Hooke James W. Pittsville MD 05/01/09

Hoover Robb L. Bellevue NE 10/29/12

Horner Jack D. Jacksonville FL 03/31/12

Hycki Richard B. Warren MI 04/20/01

Irvin, Jr. David W. Peachtree City GA 10/24/06

Johannsen Wayne B. Belleville IL 09/26/09

Johnson George H. Lompoc CA 08/30/06

Keller, Jr. Louie T. Orlando FL 09/14/05

Latimer Clement M. Columbia SC 09/20/11

Lincoln Fred E. Riverside CA 07/14/09

Lutz Warren G. Huntington WV 10/04/11

Mack John W. College Park GA 07/01/08

Maki Orville A. Tallahassee FL 06/10/09

McCormick William J. Las Cruces NM 09/05/09

McNay Curtis E. Wichita KS 10/07/07

Mercer Earl L. Clyde TX 05/21/10

Myers James B. Albuquerque NM 04/23/09

Nicholson Charles E. Tulsa OK 04/23/09

Ogren John San Marcos CA 12/26/11

Parent David Neil Harwich Port MA 12/10/08

Passey L. Keith Fruit Heights UT 03/22/11

Peterson Maurice D. Aurora CO 06/16/10

Resh Ronald E. Silver Spring MD 10/26/10

Riley James R. Derby KS 11/20/09

Roberts Arthur W. Grass Valley CA 08/17/08

Robinson Edward G. Tavernier FL 05/09/10

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Rose Jacob W. Swansboro NC 02/25/09

Ross Ed Wichita KS 03/20/12

Saulnier James E. Sparks NV 06/22/11

Saulsbury Jack L. Mariposa CA 08/08/12

Schrawger Robert T. Georgetown TX 08/27/08

Smith Billy D. Atwater CA 06/04/10

Stiltner Clint Grundy VA 01/01/05

Terrell Harry E. Newport Beach CA 11/13/09

Watson Robert M. Carson City NV 06/16/05

Wilson Jackie L. Gulf Breeze FL 09/22/12

Corrections

Arhtur Cross says he is alive and well even though he was listed in Roll Call in *Newsletter #38*. Sorry, Arthur!

Gordon Daniel goes by "Scotty" and would like his directory listing to reflect that. His new email address is t6gtnr@yahoo.com.

BX Changes

A number of factors have led us to conclude that we need to reduce the volume of stock carried in our BX. Accordingly, over the next few years, we will let the BX "sellout" and not restock any items other than such things as "Official Hours pins." The internet has a remarkable array of B-47 products at a site called cafepress.com and we encourage you to consider these if you are looking for B-47 items.

B-47 Flight Jacket

The B-47 Flight Jacket is once again available. See the Association website at b-47.com for more information and an order form, or contact Dick Curran at the address on the *Newsletter* masthead (also on the membership application on page 15).



SAC Memorial Dedicated At SASM

A new Strategic Air Command Memorial was dedicated in impressive ceremonies at the Strategic Air & Space Museum in Nebraska on 2 June 2012. The monument is prominently located near the Museum entrance close to the SR-71. It was funded, built, and located at the museum largely through the efforts of one of our members, Mrs Marjory "Peaches" Janssen of San Antonio TX. She worked tirelessly to make the event possible to honor the memory all those who served in SAC, including her husband who passed away several years ago. The monument was built by the same company that made the B-47 Memorial that we dedicated at the Museum of The United States Air Force during our reunion in Dayton in 2004. Thank you, Peaches, for your enthusiasm for SAC and its people and your diligence in seeing this project through. We are indebted to you.



B-47A 49-1901 still exists! VP Don Cassiday stands next to the 4th B-47 built. Only the nose is extant.



Send Application and Check to

B- 47 Stratojet Association
 Dick Curran
 219 Charles Court
 Dandridge, TN 37725-3333

Tel. (865) 940-1020 e-mail: dickcurran@hotmail.com

(Last) _____ (First) _____ (Middle Initial) _____ (Highest Rank Achieved) _____

(Spouses First Name) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

B-47 Wings you served with and dates of service: _____

Air Crew or Ground Position: _____ Civilian Position: _____

Status: Active Duty _____ Retired, when? _____ Separated, when? _____ Veteran _____

Civilian, your relationship to the B-47: _____

Current Occupation: _____

Any other comments you may care to add: _____

Annual dues are \$15 a year payable every January. Send checks to: The B-47 Stratojet Association.

The Lifetime membership option is obtained by using the below table:

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| under age 59 | \$300 |
| age 60-64 | \$250 |
| age 65-69 | \$200 |
| age 70-74 | \$150 |
| age 75-79 | \$100 |
| age 80 or over | \$50 |

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Send application and check to:
Dick Curran
B- 47 Stratojet Association
219 Charles Court

B-47 Stratojet Association
P. O. Box 1144
Brenham, TX
77834-1144

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77833
Permit No.
#84



The queen of the Pima Air and Space Museum fleet (as far as we are concerned). The EB-47E is in very good shape respelendent with the 376th BW emblem on the nose. 53-2135 was converted to EB status in 1959. The Phase V pod installed in the bombbay is evident in this shot. The mission was to shield the fleet during the attack by jamming enemy radar.

Photo: Editor

***Next Reunion ~ 30 October-2 November 2014 ~ Ft Walton Beach FL
Pay Your Dues For 2013 Today!***