Kersjes Warms Hearts at State Convention Dinner

Michael Kersjes, author of “A Smile as Big as the Moon,” made the book come alive for an audience of around 50 people at the 4 Aug 12 AFA State Convention dinner. He began with a quote by Albert Einstein: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”

He stressed how he helped his class of special education students work as a team and paved the way for other special needs kids to attend Space Camp.

Kersjes’ talk was amusing, endearing, and motivating as he recounted how his kids progressed as they prepared for camp. His first obstacle was to convince the kids that they were not stupid as they believed the “label” given to them by other kids.

— “The crime is not to avoid failure; the crime is to not give triumph a chance.” H. Weldon

He also fostered their imagination by telling them that he had been to one of the other planets in the solar system.

Continued on page 5

Donations Needed for USAF Flag at Veterans Memorial

By Rick Driesbach, President, AFA Chapter 335

In early 2011, the Huntsville-Madison County Veteran’s Memorial Foundation approached our Chapter to contribute to the memorial site being developed in downtown Huntsville. The Foundation asked our Chapter of the Air Force Association to consider “dedicating” the United States Air Force flag which now proudly flies with the other Service flags as a lasting tribute to all airmen who sacrificed and served their country. The dedication cost for each Service flag was $15,000.

Our Chapter Executive Council discussed the multi-year commitment necessary to sponsor the flag – the $15,000 represented almost four times our annual Chapter budget. We ultimately decided to proceed with the mantra “if not us, who?” We raised $6,000 in tax deductible donations from Chapter members and other USAF retirees in the Tennessee Valley and made an initial payment to the Foundation at the Air Force birthday celebration in September 2011.

We are again collecting donations now and plan to make a second installment payment to the Foundation on Veteran’s Day 2012. If you would like to contribute, please mail your tax-deductible check (made out to AFA Chapter 335) to our Chapter Treasurer, Jack Royster, at 1880 Shellbrook Drive, Huntsville AL 35806.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season!
Teacher of the Year Attends Aerospace Education Workshop

By Dr. Sylvia Dean, Chapter/State Teacher of the Year, Jones Valley Elementary School

The Aerospace Education Workshop sponsored by the Montgomery Chapter of the Air Force Association in June was both inspiring and unforgettable. We flew on a 908th Airlift Wing C-130 from Maxwell AFB to Edwards AFB for a 6-day aerospace career immersion event. There were 45 participants on this trip and I made some lifelong friends and have since teamed with some of them to work on aerospace education projects. Major Lynn Toney of the Civil Air Patrol and I worked together through virtual means to create a presentation for the Alabama AFA Conference that was held in Huntsville last August.

On our trip we toured aerospace related areas on and off Edwards AFB including the Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle test group and the NASA/Dryden Flight Research Center with its SOFIA airplane and F-18 simulators. We went to the Mojave Air and Space Port where we were given a private viewing of Spaceship 2 at Virgin Galactic. We also spent a day at the Tehachapi Wind Turbine Farm and the Terra-Gyn Power Center and learned about wind energy and how wind turbines are built and maintained.

We spent another day touring the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory with a private tour of the “Mars Yard” and a clone of the Curiosity Rover. We followed up this tour with a trip to the Yanks Aviation Museum where we saw aircraft from every decade and even participated in a simulation of the parachute jump on D-day. Our finale was a visit to the Southern California Soaring Academy where I was the first to get to fly a sailplane over the San Gabriel mountain range. The flight was breathtaking and phenomenal.

Upon my return home, I received patches from two Air Force airmen, Susan Mallett sent me a flight suit which I proudly wore on the first day of school with the patches that had been presented to me. I got to speak to the entire third and fifth grade in their classrooms about my trip. All of the students were delighted by the details from the trip and several students wanted to know how they could get to do all these exciting things. I hung photos from my trip outside my classroom.

Continued on page 4
Our Newest Community Partner:

T&W Operations is a Service Disabled Veteran Owned (SDVO) Small Business founded in 2004 by AFA members, Wayne Gardner and Tom Jarrell. Blending their Information Technology and Logistics expertise they supported acquisition and lifecycle management of DoD weapon systems and Government-owned commercial off-the-shelf equipment programs. In 2007, T&W expanded extending IT support to local small businesses who otherwise would not have access to high-end comprehensive IT services. In 2008 T&W Operations received the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award for excellence in business services. Since its inception, T&W has grown from 2 local employees to 48 in 6 States and Afghanistan. They presently support several government agencies including the Missile Defense Agency, Program Manager Force Projection, Navy EOD Technical Division, Air Force Research Laboratories, and Robotic Systems Joint Project Office (RSJPO) under PEO Ground Combat Systems.

Their services include:

- **Automated Logistic Systems**
  -- COLTS – secure, web-based supply chain management system named Catalog Order Logistic Tracking System, manages flow of systems and parts from manufacture throughout their entire lifecycle.
  -- PTMS – secure, web-based management application. Project Time Management System (PTMS) allows managers to track the progress of projects, providing visibility to cost, labor, materials, and schedule.

- **IT and IA Support and Consulting**
  -- Information Technology – Gold Competency Microsoft Partner, provides IT solutions to commercial and U.S. Government clients.
  -- Information Assurance – working with contractor product teams, develops and maintains products associated with DIACAP certification and accreditation.
  -- Biometric Security – one of the Nation’s first authorized distributors of the Fujitsu Palm Scanning System, National Security Resources Facial Recognition Software and other biometric security systems.

- **Project Management and Management Support** – providing project management and management support from global transportation to missile defense systems and from facilities maintenance to community projects.

Happy Birthday, USAF! A Good Time Was Had By All…

At Amendment XXI, Huntsville, AL, 20 Sep 2012
Aerospace Education Workshop
Continued from page 2

room to further inspire their dreams and I hope to find a couple of teachers this year to lead students through activities in the Civil Air Patrol’s ACE program. I also hope to plan a trip for other teachers to visit Huntsville to see some of the aerospace wonders that we have in our community. Major Lynn Toney, Susan Mallett, and I plan on collaborating to organize this event and will need funding and support from our Huntsville AFA.

Pictured at right:
Dr. Dean’s Mars Yard group

The Huntsville Chapters of the Air Force Association, AFCEA, NDIA, and Cyber Huntsville are pleased to invite you to a

Luncheon Meeting
13 November 2012, 11:00-13:00 hours
Boeing Facility Research Park
950 Explorer Blvd

John Lambert — Microsoft, Senior Director for Trustworthy Computing
John Manferdelli — Intel, Center for Secure Computing
George Stathakopoulos — Amazon, Director Information Security
John Simon — formerly Global Strategist, Microsoft Government

Speaking on:

Cyber Threats in the Marketplace

Check-in Opens at 11:00; Cost TBD
Register online at http://www.rocketcityafcea.org
Kersjes, Continued from page 1

He told how he overcame obstacles by never taking the word “no,” and how he got a company to sponsor the kids. He told numerous stories about how the kids began working together, which was new to them since many of them had learned to lash out as their first reaction to any kind of confrontation. He taught them the often-heard Proverb that “a chain is only as strong as its weakest link” by taking them to the trophy hallway in their school.

Lastly, he talked about how one of his kids took up for another one when someone said that boy couldn’t win the top award because he was mongoloid. Kersjes’ kid said, “No he’s not! He’s American!” But most touching was how that boy with Down’s Syndrome, after winning the top award in the whole camp, cut his award into 22 pieces and gave each person on his team a piece of it...because they had earned it. What a valuable lesson in how to be a winner. — Cathy Scott

The dinner concluded with the AFA presenting a $400 check from all of the Alabama AFA chapters on behalf of Mr. Kersjes to the Space and Rocket Center to help a special child go to camp. From left are: Rick Driesbach, president Tennessee Valley Chapter; Skip Dotherow, Alabama State President; Mr. Michael Kersjes; Chapter 335 member Lt Col Burke Hare; and, Ms. Marcia Lindstrom of the Space and Rocket Center.

Member Jim Porter and his wife Lee Ann recently attended the Air Force / Michigan game in Ann Arbor. Although their son is a student at Michigan, Jim stayed true to his Air Force blue! According to Jim, “the Falcons played their hearts out, and although Michigan was favored by 21, they only beat us by 6, with a final score of 31 to 25.”

State Convention Business Meeting Tidbits

- CyberPatriot V enrollment is looking good!
- People Program for Chapters—Susie Schwartz; Top Two Issues: Spouse Employment and Children’s Education
Above: At last year’s Veteran’s Day Parade, Daryl and Barbara Carpenter (foreground), and John Phillip (right rear) and George Krym get pre-mission briefs before the three silver Avalons began their formation flight down the parade route.

Come out and have some fun with us!

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Want to Become a Community Partner?

Contact **Russ Lewey**

at 256-425-8791

or by email at **LeweyRV@yahoo.com**