

# ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONALE



1 September 2010 Newsletter

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Don't do it, Mark. Remember what happened the last time you got the urge for Texas Hold'em. And-by-the way, when the casino asked you to bring green, that meant money, not a suitcase full of green shirts. For those who missed our last two reunions and the Jack Weeks remembrance hosted by the Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, home of Article 132 in Mobile, Mark is the honcho of the EAA CIA store that set up shop at these

Roadrunner events. Mark is one of our favorite associate members as he always brings with him a covey of beautiful young ladies to run the store. Mark, are you sure you're not a pilot?

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## MAIL CALL

Howdy All, Great talking to you Roger and yes, when I get back from this next trip I'll pen a couple of stories, about Col. "Slip" Slater - the best chewing-out/ass kicking I ever got and a bit of flying advise (technique) that served me well in the years that followed. Charlie was damn good in both accounts but "Slip" was the man. Cheers and beers to all, TAngle

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Mr. Barnes, it was a great pleasure speaking with you today. Thank you so much for your service and sacrifice. Its amazing, just speaking to you has overwhelmed me with nostalgia thinking about all that you have seen and done.... and that's only what you've been able to share publicly. I reached out to Rolling Stone magazine in hopes they'll support me learning more about you and your group and sharing it with their audience. I truly believe you and your colleagues have shaped the course of our nation's history in a way we'll probably never truly know. But to learn what we can would be a privilege. If

there is anything I can ever do for your group I'd be honored to volunteer my time and service. Thanks again for your time. Ray Pina  
Senior reporter, Hearst Business Media (787) 467-1181

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Hello, Thank you for posting this fascinating piece. I stumbled upon this site while trying to research info on the real characters, i.e., Philippe Thyraud de Vosjoli, upon whom the characters in Leon Uris's book, Topaz are based. Thanks for the education. Great read. Best wishes,  
L. Washburn

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Sir, Good evening, my name is Andrew J. Witzel. I am a Sergeant in the Marine Corps. I found your email address on B-47.com. I am aware you may not have knowledge of this but I am trying to find information about my great uncle, Rex Robert Witzel. He was a B-47 pilot and died in a crash I believe in March 1956 at Amarillo Air Force Base while doing touch and go's. I believe he was stationed at Altus or Lubbock. So, I suspect Rex Robert Witzel did his pilot training at Reese and then may have been assigned to the 96th Bombardment Wing, Altus AFB. He was the twin brother of my grandfather Max Marion Witzel, a Major in the Marine Corps, a dive bomber pilot in WWII, who passed away in 1995. But now to the point, I don't believe my uncle died in Amarillo, I have researched the area newspapers throughout that entire year and I believe if an aircraft the size of a B-47 crashed right next to a large airport it would at least make the local paper. I am curious if throughout these reunions that have been going on around the country if anyone may have additional information regarding my great-uncle. If and when you get the opportunity, I would love to find out anything I can. Thank you very much for your time. I can be reached via this email address (andrew\_witzel@yahoo.com) or my military email address, [andrew.witzel@usmc.mil](mailto:andrew.witzel@usmc.mil) Respectfully Submitted, Andrew J. Witzel SGT USMC

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Gentlemen, I just wanted to extend my sincerest thanks for all the help you all have extended to my family and I. It was so amazing that all of you working together were capable of finding the information my family has been seeking for such a long time. It just goes to show that American veterans and those who support us are the backbone of the United States, and I am proud to continue to serve my country knowing that there are great people like yourselves here. I am stationed in Frederick, Maryland and can possibly help with veteran events through my work to a certain extent. You can reach me through the numbers

below. Again I extend my dearest thanks from my entire family. Semper Fidelis and with great Respect, Sgt Andrew J. Witzel United States Marine Corps B Co 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn Training and Operations

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Hello TD and Doris, it has been almost four years, since we visited Las Vegas and met you there, but last night we were watching History Channel about area 51, and we saw you! So this is why I wanted to send you a message and greetings to you and Doris. How are you doing? We are fine, Filip and I got married a few weeks ago! And Filip's mom (Marie-José Tassignon) is also doing fine! We really have great memories of our trip to Nevada, the Nellis Airbase and the atomic testing museum! Thanks again! Greetings from Belgium! Katleen and Filip

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This Navy vet (SSBN 628) and civilian pilot visits RI frequently for inspiration and history lessons. Thanks to all of you for making this incredible history available to us.

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I had a cousin who did refueling over the Nellis range and then cross trained over to ATC at Edwards, AFB. I know that what you have said, at least/ full is true. Your guy's work came at great cost to you, why you did it is beyond me? I can only say, I wish I had been able to know my cousin. God Bless!! CRS Gonzales

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GREAT STORY, WILL FORWARD TO MY SON, THANKS.

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Clyde Fancher

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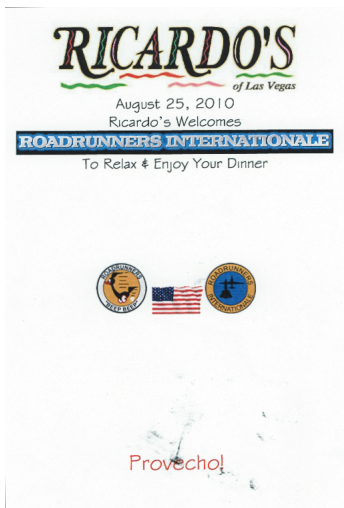
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Warren Johnson [wjjohnson@connections-etc.net](mailto:wjjohnson@connections-etc.net) To: Jim Anderson I've always been proud and looked up to my big brother. I remember as a small child seeing him fly over our farm in a B-36.

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As usual when we hear an out-of-town Roadrunner is coming to Vegas the local Roadrunners organize a surprise dinner at Ricardos. The surprise isn't the dinner - the surprise is when our guest learns we put the bill on his tab. This last month approx 20 Roadrunners and wives welcomed Russ and Carolyn Buyse. Next month we hear Tony Bevacqua is coming to Vegas for the big auto show. Yo! Tony. Would you be interested in a dinner with the local Roadrunners?



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## Message from Roadrunner President T.D. Barnes

Dear fellow Roadrunners and Associate Members.

This is a very difficult moment, but I feel we need to address our future and get our affairs in order. To do so we seek your input on the options I will offer herein.



In a very short time we have sprung from beneath a 50-year shroud of secrecy to worldwide notoriety. Since the C-span coverage of our last reunion and the articles by Annie Jacobsen that spawned Roadrunner interviews across the nation, we have been flooded with a young generation of aviation enthusiasts seeking associate membership. Having consulted with



our advisory committee and surveyed all the current associate members, we have concluded that we will not accept any more associate member applications, nor will we actively recruit original participants in the Aquatone and Oxcart projects. This decision is based on the anticipated short remaining life of our association.

The response to our survey was great with most agreeing with our intent to allow the association to die when the time is right as voted by our members at the last three reunion membership meetings. Today, our membership breakdown is: 87 AF (both A-12 and YF-12/SR-71), 68 contractors, 27 CIA, 70 associates, and 20 widows (honorary). Our treasury is healthy with about \$20K. With so many now being in their octogenarian years, there is no question but what our association will suffer severe attrition from here out.



This and our association having reached the pinnacle of its promoting its legacy suggest now being the time to get our organization's affairs in order. As ole snoopy above and the rooster suggest, we're starting to flame out and are no longer spring chickens.

The current leadership is acutely aware that some members have always opposed any association activities other than social. Some even stopped attending our reunions because they didn't like the direction our association was headed. On the other hand, a majority of our members still has that fire in their bellies and are not ready to surrender into a hospice mode. For this reason I am going to attempt to present options that will satisfy both those wishing our association to be a social group from here out and those wishing to continue the promotion of the OXCART and their personal legacies.



The current slate of officers would welcome replacements to carry the association from here out. To accommodate both those wishing nothing more than a social event every two years and those wishing to continue flying with the eagles, we feel those elected to lead the Roadrunners must be able to set aside their personal opinions and support both elements of our membership. Lacking an articulate leadership will cause the hastened demise of the association. This has at times been the case in the past and has created problems that should have never existed. I encourage the membership to think hard on what they want for the future of the association and let me know.

Before standing down we feel we have the responsibility to:

1. Preserve the results of our past few years of establishing our legacy for the sake of family and history.
3. Provide a support base for those members wishing to continue with Roadrunner-based public appearances, interviews, and the telling of our legacy as occurred at our last reunion and is occurring in Washington, D.C. this September.
3. Address the affect our future demise as an association has on our associate members who have so strongly supported us.

These three responsibilities are so intertwined one must start with number 3 to find solution to the first two. For several years, our associate members have supported our association much more than most of our regular members realize. This is the reason they joined the association and why we allowed it to happen. At the risk of overlooking someone or some deed, I will stress some of what the associates have done for our organization and ask forgiveness of any oversight. I hope by my acknowledging a sampling of those supporting our aging members, that this will convince the Roadrunners that their legacy will not fade away, and that it will focus our associate members on how they can continue their support of my fellow secret heroes of the Cold War, the Roadrunners of Groom Lake.

Ever since we started constructing our website, we have had full support of associate members at Edwards/Dryden who provided photos and information. A number of associate member webmasters have shared information and helped on our website just for the asking. Numerous other associate members have provided me with information of interest for the website and the newsletters. Each reunion various associate members provide displays, take photos, conduct interviews, etc.

[Associate members and independent webmasters](#)

		
Leland Haynes	Joerg Arnu	Alan Johnson

My go to guys for photos, video, and information. They know all!!!



Associate member Tony Landis



Associate member Pete Merlin

Those of you attending the last reunion saw the Atomic Testing Museum hosting us at no cost for two days. Think about what I just said. [A Department of Defense affiliate hosted the Roadrunners of Groom Lake.](#) Associate member Dr. Mary Palevsky devoted her time to interview various Roadrunners throughout those two days. Associate member



George Knapp moderated a symposium panel video recorded in its entirety by C-span where it continues to air today. The following day a second symposium panel was likewise video recorded by the museum and airs on our website today. When we saw Dr. Palevsky would be unable to interview all the Roadrunners wanting same, associate member Jonathon Levin-Turner from Canada and Angus Batey from the UK conducted several interviews that I was able to post to the website. Jeff Hollenbeck likewise assisted

during the reunion and is another steady source of information that I share with the Roadrunners. As always, associate member Mike Schmitz provided photo service for the association in addition to his providing at his expense hundreds of dollars of framed photos to various supporters of the Roadrunners including the Central Intelligence Agency. Associate member Dr. Jim Griffin of the Southern Museum of Flight supported the two days at the museum as did associate member Robert Friedrichs, Deputy Director NVAHOF. Working with Roadrunner president Barnes and secretary Andersen during the months of preparation were: NVAHOF treasurer Jim Braun (Acting Director of the Atomic Testing Museum), NVAHOF Director of Communications Dawn Curtis, and NVAHOF Director of Education Angie Ameling (both also holding these positions at the Atomic Testing Museum), and associate member Connie Pardew who is also the NVAHOF Director of Communications for Northern Nevada.

Finance Director Jim Braun, Curator Karen Green, Acting Director Chuck Costa, Director of Communications Dawn Curtis, and Roadrunner President T.D Barnes



Associate members Pete Merlin, Dr. Paul Suhler Ph.D., and Joerg Arnu with their display at our last reunion.

We've done all we wanted to do to get our story told and it is now time to ensure our legacy continues. As most of you know some of us worked with Mary Palevsky on the UNLV Cold War Oral History Project for close to 8 years during which we successfully provided the opportunity for our members to record their stories in books, interviews, and on C-span. In the last newsletter we referenced our members to the web page we've created on the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame website to host individual video interviews. This website is managed by the Art Institute of Las Vegas students, ensuring along with what we have on the UNLV web site, a video account of our legacy long after we are gone. The huge photo archive we've collected of all the modern day projects in this state is also being uploaded to the NVAHOF site for management into the future. We intend to ensure all our material remains online through universities, museums, and/or authors.

Growth of the RI website has fairly well stabilized and will remain online, eventually to be maintained by an associate willing to assume the responsibility. The newsletter will continue as well, so in effect, no major changes will be occurring other than our giving our associate members a bit more rein to continue our legacy as they have been for quite some time as evidenced in this newsletter.



Panel #1  
Moderated by George Knapp



Panel #2  
Moderated by Annie Jacobsen



Associate Member - George Knapp



NVAHOF BOD - Dr. Mary Palevsky





Associate members: Back row L-R: Peter DeForth, Al Rubin, Jon Levin-Turner, Don Stein. Front row: Mike Schmitz, Paulann White, and Connie Pardeu



It is through the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame, a 501C(3) non-profit Nevada corporation, that our members have an option of continuing the Roadrunner legacy. <http://nvahof.org/> The mission of NVAHOF is both educational and to honor those contributing to aerospace and aviation within the state of Nevada. NVAHOF is seeking a permanent affiliation with a museum for exhibiting the rich history of aviation in Nevada. We hope the Roadrunners will consider NVAHOF as custodian of their historical collections for future display. Many of you know the principals of NVAHOF either through the Roadrunners or as those who hosted our 2 days at the Atomic Testing Museum last October:

### NVAHOF STAFF



T.D. Barnes - Director



Robert Friedrichs – Dep. Dir



Jim Braun – Finance Officer



Dawn Curtis  
Director of  
Communications S. NV



Angie Ameling –  
Director of Education



Connie Pardew –  
Director of Communications N. NV

### Other Staff and Directors

Howard Hickson Director Emeritus of the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko, Board of Directors: Dr. Mary Palevsky Ph.D. mentioned earlier and Dr. Darrell Pepper Ph.D. with the UNLV faculty, Mark Hall-Patton, Clark County Director of Museums, Col. Steven D. Garland, Commander 99th Air Base Wing Nellis AFB (ex-officio), Peter Merlin, Archivist and Historian

Working with the young aviators-to-be is a major function of NVAHOF. As we speak, the NVAHOF staff is putting together student scholarships for CAP and ROTC cadets to be honored in conjunction with the enshrinement of aerospace giants who pioneered and furthered aerospace in the state of Nevada. We would certainly welcome as members any Roadrunners who might want to be involved in our endeavors to record and maintain the legacy of aviation and aerospace in our state.

This past week I disseminated information to our members about an upcoming Oxcart Legacy Tour. Now with the veil of secrecy lifted, the full story can now be told, including our enduring legacy. During this tour, some of the program’s pioneers will gather to share our history: from sky-high successes to fiery crashes. CIA chief historian Dr. David Robarge Ph.D. will be joined by program veterans Dr. Robert B. Abernethy Ph.D., inventor of the J-58 engines used in the A-12, Thornton D. Barnes, hypersonic flight specialist, and AFIO’s President Dr. S. Eugene Poteat LL.C, the CIA officer who assessed threats to the A-12, Project Pilot Ken Collins, Lockheed Test Pilot Bill Weaver, 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS Operations Officer Roger Andersen, Pratt and Whitney engineer Dennis Nordquist, Lockheeds Director of Operations Bob Murphy, and Imagery Expert Arthur Beidler. The Oxcart team will arrive in Washington on 22 September and most will be departing on 1 October. As quickly as possible thereafter, I will disseminate a full report on the tour with hopefully a ton of photos.

Meanwhile, in tune with the focus of this message, I want to emphasize that this Oxcart Legacy Tour was the product of our associate members.

During our reunion I mentioned to our associate members with the EAA CIA store about our need to conduct a symposium panel event at CIA while our members are still able to travel. Associate member Peter DeForth must have read my mind, as he called me shortly after the reunion wherein he volunteered to work on that end to make this happen. Over time, Peter convinced CIA that this needed to be done now if at all. He also started contacting other venues to weigh the interest for similar panels to be hosted by them. This was no easy task with the shape of our economy is in. Defeating all hurdles thrown his way, and with the assistance of SR-71 pilots Rich Graham and Buz Carpenter, Dr. Gene Poteat, LL.C., Toni Hiley and Dr. David Robarge at CIA, (all being associate members of RI), the tour is fully on track. Along the way, the organizing team expanded from those named in Washington, Frank Murray, Ken Collins, Roger Andersen, and myself to several more at the various venues in Washington that I can not name until after the fact due to security and other considerations. You will be given a full account next month.



Peter DeForth



Col. Rich Graham



Col. Buz Carpenter



Col. Ken Collins



Lt. Col. Frank Murray



Dr. David Robarge Ph.D.



Assoc. member Dr. Gene Poteat LL.C. and TD Barnes



Associate Member Mike Schmitz has done so much for the Roadrunners he deserves his own space.

Associate members Mark Wiggins and Cheryl Moore have manned the EAA CIA store at our past two reunions, and at the Jack Weeks remembrance at Mobile. We also had the pleasure of having other members of the EAA store at our social events.



Cheryl, T.D., and Barbara





TD, Doris, Cheryl, Suzanne, and Mark doing Vegas. Nice of you to bring all that GREEN to Las Vegas, Mark



Associate Member Mark Wiggins, Bill Moore, Ne-Cole Ham, associate member Cheryle Moore





It doesn't get any better than this. Dick Wilson, Frank Murray, Roger Anderson, Sam Pizzo, Roger Andersen and T.D. Barnes are definitely outnumbered by associate members from EAA CIA and the Battleship Memorial Park Museum staff in Mobile, along with assoc. members Mike Schmitz, and Connie Pardew, but as long as they paid who cares.



Associate member Bill Tunnell, Director of the Battleship Memorial Park, T.D. Barnes and Frank Murray doing their bit for the local media.



Frank Murray and associate member Dr. Jim Griffin Ph.D. sharing a chuckle at something that Agent 007, known at the Ranch as Major Sam Pizzo, is doing to impress Pardew.



Connie Pardew and Sam look happy. Be careful, Connie - navigators, especially Bird Colonel navigators are worse than pilots but won't admit it.



Notice how reserved Dr. Robarge and Barnes are with Sharlene Weeks



On the other hand, Annie Jacobsen found herself in the same situation with Col. Slip Slater and Jim Freedman as Connie with Sam Pizzo



Associate member and President Las Vegas Chapter of AFIO Richard Cohr



Associate member Owen Miller with the Battleship Memorial Part in Mobil



Associate member Allan Rubin President of Wings of Flight in Canada  
visiting RI President T.D. Barnes



Associate members and EAA CIA Staff Cheryll, Jennie, and Mark checking out the  
A-12



THEN THERE IS THE ASSOCIATE MEMBER MIKE THOMPSON DOG AND PONY  
SHOW WITH THE EAA GANG





Mike loves his job -  
 Yep! He has to be a pilot - obviously Navy



For gosh's sake, Mike, what in the  
 world did you say to Jennie?

CIA A-12 project pilot Frank Murray, Dutch 20, recruiting an associate member into RI



Sure!! You can be an associate member. Scoot over and I'll show you how we flew buddy flights  
 in the A-12

*President/Weber*  
*J.D. Barnes*