

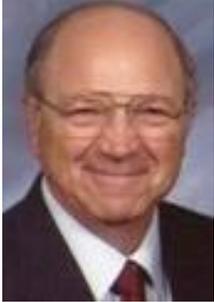


The Red Tail Report



News about the Air & Space Forces Association
Volume 12, Number 2 Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 Ocala, Florida April-June 2022

President's Message



The big news of course is the new name of our organization. We now are the Air & Space Forces Association, and we now also have a new logo, pictured elsewhere in this newsletter. We retain the AFA acronym. "Today, both military services are represented by the Department of the Air Force, and thus, both are fully represented by our Association," said AFA Chairman Gerald Murray, former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on April 7. "This change makes clear to everyone that space is integral to our mission."

As you also can see from the other pages of our newsletter, we can celebrate chapter success on at least two fronts during the last three months. This happened because we've got a great team working together. Unlike last Red Tail Report when I grouched about lack of nominees for Teacher of the Year, we finished with two! In addition, we had the honor of presenting, in person, five Cadet of the Year Awards.

Levy County's Superintendent of Schools referred us to Chiefland Elementary School for a nominee. Jerry Deese, Christy Katz, and Terry Dickensheet identified another at the Silver River Museum and Environmental Education Center in Ocala. We take great pride in our 2022 Teachers of the Year. They are Erin Benavides of the Museum and Lena Weatherford, a fifth-grade teacher in Chiefland. Larry Stanley of Williston in Levy County and yours truly had the privilege of presenting the award to Ms. Weatherford. Terry presented the award to Ms. Benavides.

Terry and Christy also masterminded our recognition of AFJROTC cadets. The results: standing before cadets, their parents and family members, your Air & Space Forces Association recognized five high school students with Cadet of the Year Certificates. They included students at Belleview High School, Forest High School in Ocala, North Marion High School, Dunnellon High School, and Citrus High School in Inverness. Thank you to Terry and Christy for managing these presentations and making the presentations. We like forging new relationships with area schools and their cadet programs.

(cont.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4 – Freedom Run, Marion County Veterans Park, 0730

July 18 – Chapter 136 monthly meeting, Ocala Airport Terminal, 1900

July 22-23 – AFA Florida State Convention, Tallahassee

September 16 – POW/MIA Recognition Program, Marion County Veterans Park, 1100

September 17-21 – AFA National Convention, National Harbor, MD

Hats off also to Edwin Barbosa, who brought in a new community partner: Pasta Faire, a restaurant in Belleview. Great work, Edwin, and welcome Pasta Faire! Community partners are the chapter's sole source of income. One-half of their membership fee (\$45) stays with the chapter and the remaining amount goes to National. Contact Howard Burke, 352-861-0886, for guidance on recruiting new community partners. We need them.

Next up is the AFA Florida State Convention to be held this year on July 22-23 in Tallahassee hosted by the Bud West Chapter 419. Bruce Gillett and I are planning to represent the chapter.

In July we start the nominating process for new chapter officers. We welcome members who come to monthly meetings and help forge our future. Our next meeting is on July 21. Our next social will begin at 5:30 p.m. on September 15 in Elevation 89, the restaurant in the Ocala Airport Terminal. Members, spouses, and significant others are totally welcome.

Aim High!

Ben Langer

LOCAL NEWS



Pasta Faire in Belleview was welcomed as a new Community Partner by chapter members Edwin Rodriguez and Stephen Spires on May 2. Edwin presented the recognition plaque to general manger Brandon Magnuson.

The new Ocala VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic held a grand opening ceremony on June 22. Many VA and local officials attended along with numerous local veteran organizations. The Master of Ceremonies was Dr. Jose Torres-Rodriguez (below standing), the Chief Medical Officer of the clinic. The 45,500 square-foot clinic includes Primary Care, Mental Health, Audiology, Podiatry, Laboratory Collection, and Telehealth Specialty Services. Optometry will come later. Its address is 4826 SW 49th Road, 1.4 miles from I-75.



2022 CHAPTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By Ben Langer

Ms. Lena Weatherford, a fifth-grade science teacher at Chiefland Elementary School, is the Air and Space Forces Association Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Weatherford received the award on May 18 from Chapter President Ben Langer and Member Larry Stanley during an after-school faculty social in the school. The award recognizes classroom teachers for their efforts to get students excited about science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

“We hope that students who excel in math and science will go on to make big contributions in the high tech world that we live in today, maybe even in the U.S. Air or Space Force,” Langer said. “Good teachers are a direct path to success for students, and we think that Ms. Weatherford is one of the best.” She has been a teacher for 33 years, including stints in front of second, third and fourth grades as well as her current fifth grade class.

Chiefland Elementary School Principal Deanna Feagin recommended Ms. Weatherford for the award. “Mrs. Weatherford not only understands the great value in building relationships with her students, but she is also skilled in implementing thoughtful and engaging hands-on lessons for them,” Ms. Feagin stated.

Her daughter, Megan Snyder, a third-grade teacher also at Chiefland Elementary, went further: “My mom inspires me every day. She never stops working. Even in the summer, my mom is working on lesson plans and activities to use during the coming school year.” Wayne Weatherford, the Teacher of the Year’s husband, claims that his wife would teach “even if they didn’t pay her. She loves it that much.”

After 33 years, is Ms. Weatherford going to quit teaching? “Nope, I don’t know what else I would want to do,” she said.

As the Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 Teacher of the Year, Ms. Weatherford received an award certificate, an Air Force Association portfolio, Chapter Teacher of the Year pin, complimentary one-year membership in the Air and Space Forces Association with an accompanying subscription to Air Force Magazine, and a no-strings-attached check for \$250.



On hand at Levy County’s Chiefland Elementary School for the presentation of the AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year Award were Wayne Weatherford, husband of the Teacher of the Year; Megan Snyder, third grade teacher at Chiefland and daughter of the Teacher of the Year; Lena Weatherford, AFA Chapter 136 Teacher of the Year; Ben Langer, AFA Chapter 136 president; and Larry Stanley, chapter member from Williston representing Levy County.

2022 CHAPTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The Silver River Museum and Environmental Education Center is a program of Marion County Schools. The museum has been in operation since 1991 and sees students who attend on field trips during the school year. Students focus on science and Florida history, visit the museum and science lab, and take part in nature hikes and eco-tours of the Silver River aboard the museum boat.

Erin Benavides has worked as the Resource Teacher since 2018 and coordinates all curriculum and field trip activities for the program. Ms. Benavides has inspired tens of thousands of students since joining the museum staff. She always gets rave reviews from both students and teachers attending the field trips... ” best program ever.”

Prior to coming to the museum Ms. Benavides was a classroom teacher, science curriculum coach for other teachers and she also organized the Big Springs Science Fair (a three-county STEM fair) here in Marion County for several years. Ms. Benavides has a strong background in science and easily translates this depth of knowledge to the classroom.

Since August 2021

- Marion County teachers reached during field trips or classes in person and online - 187
- Elementary students taught in person and online - 9,900
- Secondary students taught in person and online - 540



Terry Dickensheet presented the AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year award on May 14 to Erin Benavides. She teaches fifth-grade science at the Silver River Museum.

AFJROTC AWARDS



Dunnellon High School AFJROTC Cadet of the Year Joshua Lathrop presented by Terry Dickensheet on April 28.



Forest High School AFJROTC Cadet of the Year Bradley Heirenerone presented by Terry Dickensheet on April 20.



Citrus High School AFJROTC Cadet of the Year Anthony Le presented by Ben Langer on May 6.



Belleview High School AFJROTC Cadet of the Year Austin Lambdin presented by Terry Dickensheet on April 12.



Matthew Wardell, Music Director

RED, WHITE AND OCALA SYMPHONY BLUE: A SALUTE TO OUR TROOPS

July 3 | 3 PM | Reilly Arts Center



Celebrate our nation's 246th birthday with the Ocala Symphony as we present your favorite music that reverberates red, white and blue. Patriotic marches, film music from *The Patriot*, and a special salute to our troops are just the beginning!

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The Air & Space Forces Association Mission

1. *Educate the public about the critical role of aerospace power in the defense of our nation.*
2. *Advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense.*
3. *Support the Total Air Force and Space Force, including Active Duty, National Guard, civilians, families, and members of the Civil Air Patrol.*

It's a Fact: Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 draws members from eight counties: Citrus, Alachua, Marion, Sumter, Dixie, Levy and parts of Lake and Putnam. It is not necessary to be an Air Force veteran. Tell your friends to contact Howard Burke, 352-861-0886 for information about joining.

The Red Tail Report is a quarterly newsletter published by the Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 of the Air & Space Forces Association; Ben Langer, president, 4005 N Hatchet Cir, Beverly Hills FL 34465, 352-527-2729; Stephen Spires, editor, 5800 SW 89th Pl, Ocala, FL 34476, 352-873-6159. The Red Tail Report is distributed electronically and upon request on paper via USPS.

Power Points

- **Next Membership Meeting**
July 18 in the Ocala Airport Terminal conference room. Members are urged to attend. Guests are always welcome.
- **Membership**
As of June 17, the Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 had 403 members. Howard Burke, 352-861-0886, is the chapter's membership director.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136 salutes its Community Partners. The Air Force Association enjoys a warm relationship with the following businesses through its Community Partners program. Please support these local businesses.

<p style="text-align: center;">Rob's Hobby World 8602 SW Highway 200 Ocala, FL 352-854-2799</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Grand Living 850 W Norvell Bryant Hwy Hernando, FL 352-263-9404</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Unique Auto Repairs 3171 SW 143rd PI Rd Ocala, FL 352-245-6976</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nature Health Associates Dr. Bhadresh Patel 3775 N Lecanto Hwy Beverly Hills, FL</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Anwar Khan Alliance Medical Associates Board Certified Internal Medicine 1800 SE 17th St 10969 SE 175th Place Bldg. 800, Ocala, FL Suite 200, Summerfield, FL 352 622-7268</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Central Florida Eye Institute Dr. Thomas Croley 3133 SW 32nd Avenue, Ocala, FL 352-237-8400</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pasta Faire 10401 SE Us Highway 441 Bellevue, Florida 34420 352-347-3100</p>	<p><i>Would you like to become an Air Force Association member or community partner? You will be supporting an association that supports airpower, the U.S. Air Force, its mission, and personnel worldwide. If you or your business would like to become a member of the AFA or community partner, contact Howard Burke, 352-861-0886.</i></p>

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*U.S. postage
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