



Blue Angels

2017



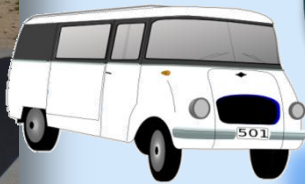
NAWS China Lake, CA

California FMCA HMC Chapter News and Schedule of Events

28th Year



China Lake Sierra Vista RV Park




LIFE SAVER

2017 CAFMCA HMC Rallies

May 11-14, 2017
Jurupa Regional Park
Riverside, CA

October, 2017
Joshua Tree, CA
(More details to come)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
by David Althoff,

Our Blue Angels rally on March 12-15 was held at NAWS China Lake. We parked at the China Lake Sierra Vista RV Park which is located on the Base. We had to fill out a lot of paperwork to be able to go on the Base to spend the entire time there and decide how and where we would do our cooking. I do have to, even if she is my wife, commend Vicky on the job she did to make the rally the success that it was. And, the tram? What would we have done without it? Continued on next page...

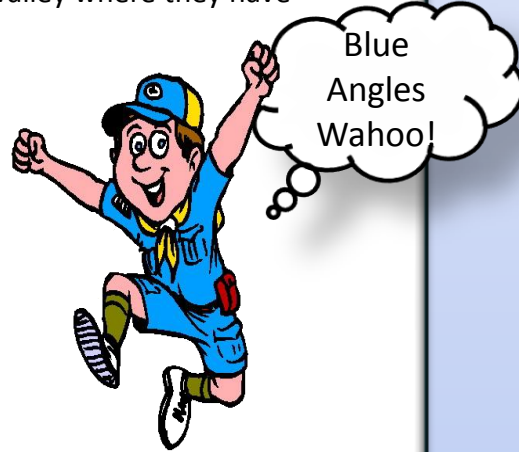


Trailbosses:
David & Vicky & Bruce & Ellen

President's Message Cont.

The Blue Angels rally is the most popular and awaited one that we do. I do have to tell you what my earliest experience was with the Blue Angels. I had just joined the Boy Scouts (and as most of you know, I am from Imperial Valley where they have always done their winter training at El Centro.)

My Scout troop was invited to go to the Blue Angels Show at the air station at El Centro. We got to eat in the Mess Hall (first time in my life), and I can still tell you what I had to eat. Going to Ridgecrest was really a feather in my cap, and by being vetted by the Navy, they accepted us with open hearts. The RV Park was only 2 years old and all management at the Park made sure everything ran smoothly. What a great place! Joan, our Camp Host, said she would be most happy to sponsor any of us to come back on the Base.



One special bit of news: We have 2 new members – Dennis & Susan Craker. Welcome aboard! And there is a possibility that one of our guests might decide to join us! Continued on next page...

Welcome to our RV Family

The group anxiously awaiting their **exclusive** tram ride to see the Blue Angles (We are so special)



Bruce and Ellen's RV- Bruce was our sponsor to get on the base; obviously ex-navy.

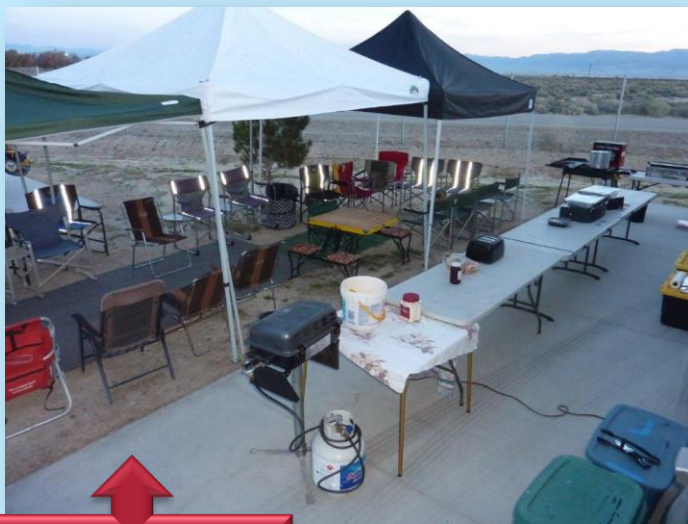


President's Message Cont.

There was one special time for me. I presented to Irene Griffin an FMCA certificate to give to her and Frank's very talented daughter, Susan Cardella. As you know, Susan is our editor for our newsletter. This year FMCA awarded to Susan a certificate stating our newsletter was the "Best Overall Newsletter". And as you all know, FMCA has many clubs/chapters in our Western Division. This was indeed an honor. THANKS TO YOU SUSAN, AND OUR CONGRATULATIONS!



I wish to express my thanks for this cherished award.



No kitchen, no problem

-we got this



Loading up the tram for the show



Blue Angels

NAWS CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA

by Vicky Althoff

Trail Bosses: David & Vicky Althoff, Bruce & Ellen Chapman

Oh, those Blue Angels! Such a thrill to watch them and to know that they, and all our military forces, are there to fight for our freedom in this great country of ours! And how can anyone not stand in complete silence and gratitude every morning at 8:00 am when our Flag is raised and our National Anthem is being played. This year we were not close to where the Flag is raised on the pole, but we all stood in attention at the Flag that our sponsor Bruce Chapman had on his coach.



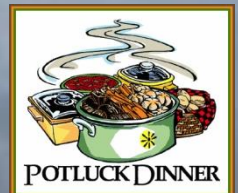
Our rally began on Thursday, March 16, with 41 Blue Angel admirers. In attendance were: David & Vicky Althoff, Bruce & Ellen Chapman, Bart & Debbie Van Holland, Alan & Judy Mersereau, Ray & Linda Macken, Frank & Irene Griffin, Joe & Betty Kloss, Robin & Trudy Ririe, Richard & Teresa Catton, Richard Grieser & Karen Smithey, David & Marie Hilber, Tom & Kathie King, Vicki Smith, Scott & Susan Stave, Gary Russell & Jean Kidney, Fred & Kathy Scheer, Dennis & Susan Craker, Paul & Lisa Mitchell, Paul & Carol Bostwick, and Don & Lotte Duddy.



Starting out early, Vicky, Linda and Ray, ready the omelets for muster.

After all coaches had arrived and settled in on Thursday, we gathered in between our coach and Bruce & Ellen's coach for our Happy Hour, a potluck dinner, and a "miniature" dessert! It was great to get together, update us all on our experiences since our last time together, and to meet guests and new members.

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Mini
Desert

From your Trailbosses: Cont.

Friday morning began at 9:00 am with a Breakfast Burrito prepared by Ray & Linda Macken. During the day we watched the Blue Angels practice for a short time and just relaxed and visited with each other. That evening we had our Happy Hour (with margaritas like we did on Thursday) and feasted on hot dogs, Cowboy beans, an assortment of potato chips, and dessert provided by our members.



Great Job



**Our margarita masters :
Paul and Lisa Mitchell**



Blue Angels in formation



Good to see our friends Sue and Scott Stave and Joe and Betty Kloss back from their travels.

Our Saturday's breakfast was sausage gravy (and biscuits) prepared by yours truly. We then journeyed to the Blue Angels Show in trams provided by the China Lake Sierra Vista Park (where we stayed on Base for the entire time). The tram took us directly to the back side of the entrance; we did not have to go through the Main Gates. And boy, was that special – not to have to wait in line with all the other viewers. The Blue Angels Show was again great, and it is so special to watch our young pilots flying those beautiful planes. After the Show, we again gathered for our Happy Hour and hamburgers, potato salad and chips, plus dessert provided by our members. We did have to move our grills, and chairs, plus take down our pop-ups because the wind decided it was time for it to make a show!!!!!!
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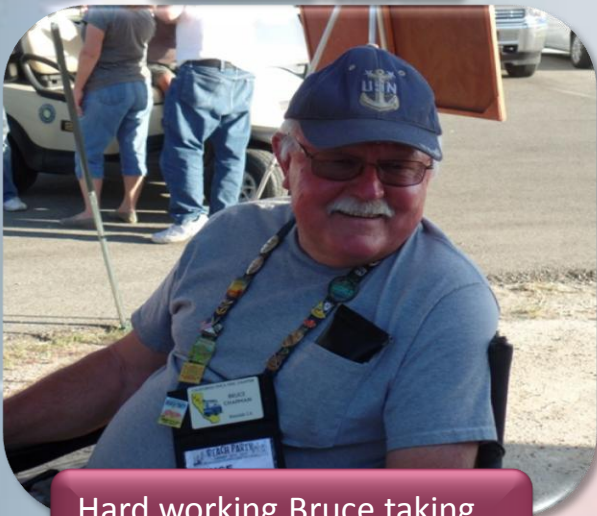
Kathy and Tom

From your Trailbosses Cont.

And Sunday? Continental Breakfast and our goodbyes until the Rancho Jurupa Park rally on May 11-May 14.

David & I and Bruce & Ellen want to thank everyone who helped make this rally such a big success. Thanks to Kathy King for helping with our "miniature" dessert, and Kathy and Tom seeing that we had our fruit every morning. Our grillers were Bruce and Bart Van Holland. A very special thanks to Scott & Sue Stave and Paul & Lisa Mitchell for keeping that margarita machine going and everyone happy!

And, special thanks to so many more who helped whenever we needed something. We have so many great and special people in our Chapter who are always there to help whenever and wherever we need them. Again, David & I and Bruce & Ellen thank all of you.



Hard working Bruce taking some time to relax.

Grill master Bart always willing to lend a helping hand.



David knows who to hang out with at happy hour!



Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the Success"
unknown

A Note from your Wagon Master

“Blue Angels China Lake, March 16-19, 2017”

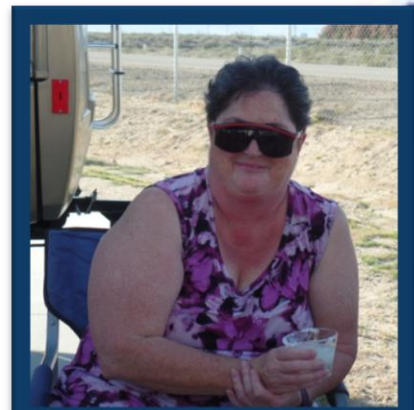
What a wonderful outing and good eats. Vicky, David, Ellen and Bruce did a wonderful job once again for our Blue Angels rally. We had perfect weather, beautiful clean and new camp ground for our members to use. Very friendly and helpful camp host and wonderful informative park neighbors. The shuttle bus was a great idea, did you guys see the line of cars that we just went right past? We seemed to have a better close up view of the planes this year too. Our hamburger dinner was a bit stressful with the wind blowing, Ray lost his plate on Linda's chair and Judy had a hard time getting a big bite the hamburgers were so big and juicy. I was hoping for a more colorful desert scenery since the news had been talking about all the wild flowers in our deserts but the flowers were not quite ready for us to see. It was so nice to see everyone again thank you to Linda and Ray for the fresh home picked oranges. I hope everyone had a good time and a safe trip to their next destination.

Our next rally is at Rancho Jurupa RV park in Riverside, I know it's Mother's Day but it's so close to home everyone could be home and enjoying their families by lunch time. I hope to see everyone there in May, if not I hope you enjoy your family time and Happy Mother's Day.

I'm still working on our August-September rally, hope to get the information to you soon. Our final outing of the year will be back at the Sportsman Club in October, thank you to John Hamilton for setting that one up and volunteering over a year ago for me on this one.

Happy travels to all of you hitting the road this spring and summer, I look forward to hearing about all of your adventures.

Debbie Van Holland
CA HMCA FMCA Chapter Wagon Master



Our hardworking Wagon
Master, Debbie Van Holland

Membership News

We have two new members, Dennis and Susan Craker and Vicki Smith who joined us at the China Lake Blue Angels rally. WELCOME.

Irene Griffin,
Membership



Dennis & Susan Craker

Vicki Smith

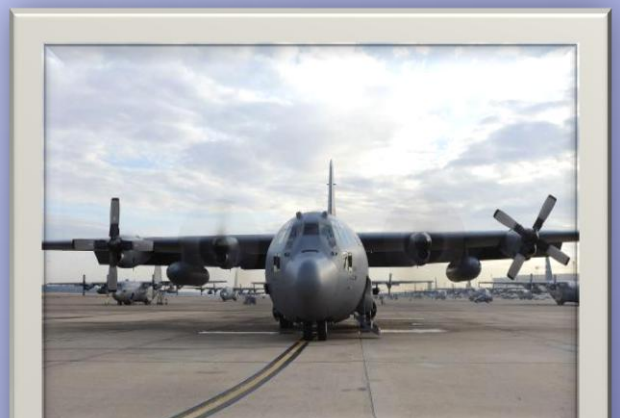
The Mackens Meets Hercules, AKA “Fat Albert” Twice

Not many of us have ever met “Hercules” but Linda and Ray were lucky enough to have done just that on their travels. The following is Linda’s account of their twice chance meeting; a testimony to it being a small world:

Last January Ray and I were on a Hawaii Cruise. On our way back to LA - south of Ensenada - one of the passengers became very ill and the captain arranged for an air lift by 2 Blackhawk helicopters. The copters came from San Francisco and hovering over the ship airlifted the passenger and his family and took them to land. While we were watching the helicopters during the maneuver we noticed a C130 aircraft flying over the ship. This plane accompanies the copters to enable them to refuel in flight.

Fast forward to our Blue Angels rally at China Lake in March. There was a C130 as one of the static displays. We were allowed to walk through the plane and ask questions. As we were entering the cargo area of the plane there was a crew member (the Load Master) directing the lines. He was the crew member in charge of all that happens in the cargo area of the plane. I had been curious as to why the helicopters and C130 that we had seen in January had come from San Francisco and not San Diego since it obviously was closer to Ensenada. I started to relay the story of the air lift at sea and the crew member asked if it was an elderly man who had been ill. I answered that it was and he proceeded to inform us that the plane we were in was the actual plane that had accompanied the copters and he was on that mission also. What were the odds that that would happen!! He then proceeded to explain that the copters and plane had come from San Francisco because they were the best trained crew to accomplish the air lift. He explained that the man was then taken to San Diego for emergency medical care.

We of course thanked the entire crew for all that they do everyday and walked off the plane in awe of the coincidence we had just experienced.



The impressive C130 Hercules
Aircraft nicknamed “Fat Albert”

Hotel
Oscar
Sierra
Papa
India
Tango
Alfa
Lima
India
Tango
Yankee

Romeo
Echo
Papa
Oscar
Romeo
Tango

It is with great sadness that we report that Bart Van Holland's mother passed away, the family asks for privacy at this time.

Robert Gerberick was in the hospital, however, he has been released and we hope he is recovering nicely.

At our recent rally in China Lake, we were missing a couple of members, Anna Danaher broke her arm and was unable to attend, and Phil Griffin was having some difficulty with his back and was unable to be there. Hopefully both are doing well at the time of this posting.

We send our best to Gloria Fernandez who was in the hospital recently for some heart surgery but is now doing much better.

Vicki reports that she and David just had a recent surprise visit from Marwilda Wilson. She is of course one of our "Lifetime Member's. She is doing great, keeping busy at home and doing some volunteer work with her hospital group. Said to tell everyone hi for her and she always reads our newsletter and email notes every time they come out.

Betty Kloss

High flying fun at the Blue Angles Rally



The Best of the Best

By Susan Cardella



If you were a kid in the 1980's you may have fantasized about someday becoming the next "Maverick", actor Tom Cruz's call sign as a navy aviator in the movie Top Gun. That fantasy may have been further fueled if you were fortunate enough to see an impressive air show put on by the famed Naval aviators, the Blue Angels, or the Air Force's counterparts, the Thunderbirds, where the speed and technical ability of these exceptional pilots and their planes to make incredibly tight maneuvers is demonstrated. So what would the path look like for someone who wanted to follow in "Maverick's" shoes to become a fighter jet pilot or a rock star Blue Angel pilot?



Tom Cruz as "Maverick"
In the movie Top Gun

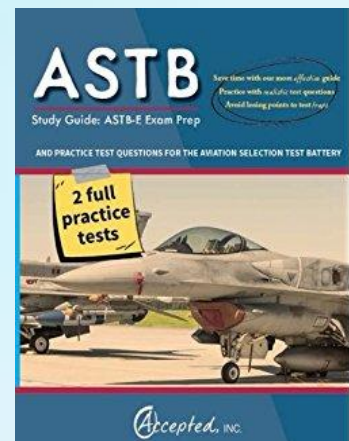


Blue Angels Diamond formation

There is no easy or guaranteed path to this goal, but to make it to the consideration point takes a lot of hard work and determination. First of all candidates need to be enlisted in the Navy or Marines, and for many, that starts with joining the NROTC (Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps) program in college. It takes good grades in High School which pays off as the program often pays for all or a portion of collage. The student gets to have a normal college experience but will participate in weekly drills, summer programs and community service projects to learn leadership and prepare for a future role as a Naval Officer.

If, however, you already had a college degree before joining the service, the path to becoming a pilot would start by attending Officer Candidate School. The third way to becoming an officer is through the U.S. Naval Academy. This route is deemed the most rigorous for acceptance and requires top grades, a history of leadership and participation in sports at a varsity level is a plus.

There is also an age limit to become a commissioned officer, which must be achieved by the age of 28 as well as a requirement to be a U.S. citizen to be able to pursue becoming a pilot. (The average age of a Blue Angel pilot is 33.) The next criterion requires the ability to pass the Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB). The test includes 5 categories, with time limits, namely: mathematics, verbal and mechanical comprehension, aviation and nautical, spatial perception and survey gauging interest in aviation. The inception of this test occurred during World War II and has received only minor updates since then. Continued on next page...



**20/20
VISION**



Best of the Best: Cont.

In addition to the scholastic tests the prospective pilot must also pass physical, psychological and background tests to insure there are no medical issues that would prevent him or her from flying. The vision qualification is critical. Color blindness and depth perception problems would be disqualifying conditions and the vision limit, uncorrected, is 20/40 but must be correctable to 20/20, to qualify to become a pilot.

located in Pensacola, Florida.

At this point, the pilot candidate has earned a commission as an officer, is in prime physical and mental condition, and has passed the required knowledge tests. The next step to becoming an aviator is to attend flight school, but this is more of an additional screening process which includes 25 hours of instruction and the completion of a minimum of three solo flights, one of which has to be cross-country. Exceptions can be made for this step if the candidate already holds a private pilot certificate or higher and has made a successful cross-county solo flight with a private aircraft. Completion of these steps finally allows the candidate to enroll in the Navy's program for aviators located in Pensacola, Florida.



The Navy's Orange and White training plane used in Pensacola's flight school

After the initial six week aviation pre-indoctrination training the candidate will begin preliminary flight training where, upon completion, will have accumulated 100 hours of flight time in the Navy's main training aircraft or flight simulators mastering basic flight skills, night flying, flying in formation as well as aerobatics. Following preliminary training is specialization training where the pilot will be chosen to specialize in a particular aircraft, the types of which range from helicopters to turboprop planes (which operate from aircraft carriers) to tactical jet aircraft. The type of aircraft chosen determines the Navy's location for training for that particular aircraft. After completion of this advanced training and completion of an excess of 100 additional hours of flight time, a pilot finally gets his wings.

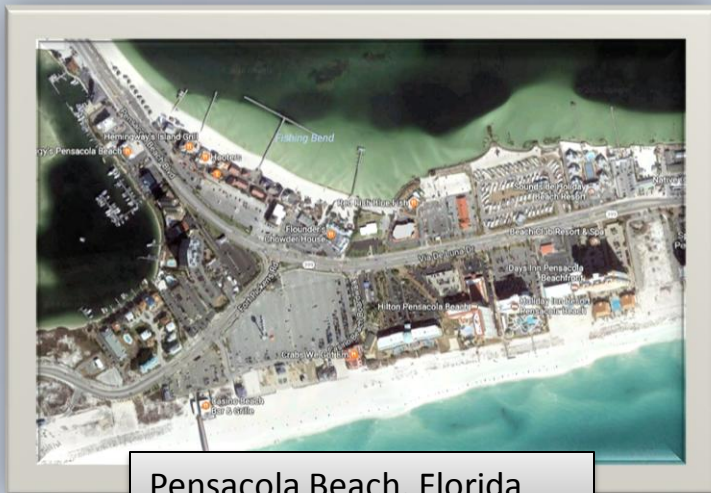
The pilot is ultimately assigned a position and becomes part of a crew and if the pilot shows exceptional skill and leadership he may be chosen to attend the Navy's elite top school, nicknamed "Top Gun" for a four week term of specialized training he can bring back to implement with his crew. This actual school, formerly named the Navy Fighter Weapons School, located in Miramar, California specialized in aerial tactics needed to defeat Soviet fighter aircraft but has since moved to Fallon, Nevada, has been renamed to United States Navy Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor program (SFTI) and continues to expand from its initial purpose and scope. Nevertheless it is still referred to as "Top Gun".

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Best of the Best :Cont.

As a Naval or Marine pilot's career advances, he continues to accrue the necessary hours of flight time required for minimum consideration to join the ranks of Blue Angel pilots. The requirements are a minimum of 1,250 tactical jet hours and the pilot must also be carrier qualified. An applicant begins a formal application which includes a personal statement, their flight records along with letters of recommendation that carried up their chain of command. Once qualified, the applicants participate in a process similar to a fraternity rush, where, at their own expense, they attend numerous air shows, usually between April and June, where they shadow the existing Blue Angles team and are included in seeing how the inner workings of the team are carried out. They also interact with the public through community service events. This gives the existing team a chance to interact with prospective newcomers to see if they would be a good fit and observe how they conduct themselves among different demographics of age and abilities. The process also provides the rushes an opportunity to see what it would be like to be part of the Blue Angel team. In a typical "rush" period there are around 80 to 90 candidates in the ranks which are then narrowed down to about 30 toward the end of the rush period. The candidates are not only pilots but also include those being considered for other supportive positions on the team as well.



Pensacola Beach, Florida

The chosen 30 are then invited to Pensacola Beach, Florida for a week of varied social activities giving candidates the opportunity to meet and spend time with current members and their families and to observe more of the team's process for putting on the show. Pilot candidates have to pass a strength test but all have to go through a formal interview. Imagine being interviewed by multiple bosses at the same time, all looking for specific attributes important to them.

The current Blue Angel officers each ask the candidate one question geared to eliminate anyone who would not be the best choice to be a representative of the U.S. Navy or Marines, being in the public eye, for the 2 year time frame for serving in this capacity. The chosen candidates for the new team must have a unanimous vote of approval. This is necessary because the Blue Angels team needs to be a unified, cohesive group, able to trust and co-exist with their team mates for 280 days out of the year as they travel all over the country and possibly the world. They will be ambassadors of the United States Navy and Marines, thrilling and impressing spectators with their high flying acrobatic skills.

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Blue Angels on Delta Formation



The Best of the Best

Even on the ground they are in formation, with their blue flight suits, sunglasses, and synchronized stride.

Best of the Best Cont.

The path is narrow for those with a goal of becoming a coveted Blue Angels pilot. It means a putting forth a great effort, having conviction, strength, skill, and perseverance; first to become an officer in the Navy or Marines, then to go through the long process to become a seasoned jet fighter pilot.

But few have that special something that they have exhibited throughout their careers. Their exceptional work ethics, leadership and teamwork have made them stand out as the best of the best; the qualities needed to make it into one of the six coveted rock star slots in the Blue Angels formation.

Funny Aviator Call Signs

The newly selected commanding officer for the Blue Angels is Cmdr. Eric Doyle, his call sign is "**Popeye**"

Here are some more creative call signs found on the web:

- Lt "**Orville**" Redemacher
- LCdr "**Stretch**" Buck
- Lt "**Chewy**" Wrigley
- Lt "**Peachy**" Keene
- Lt "**Skid**" Rowe
- Lt "**Rand**" McNally
- Lt "**Oscar**" Meyers
- LCdr "**Goose**" Chase
- LtJG "**Lovey**" Howell
- LCdr "**Haley**" Mills
- Lt "**Doc**" Mengel
- LCdr "**Neck**" Hickey

(these could be totally fiction but hope they make you smile)



2016-2017 Officers California FMCA HMC Chapter

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- VP-Wagonmaster.....Debbie VanHolland
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