



AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT VETERANS AND RETIREES NEWSLETTER

News for the men and women who served (civilian, government or industry) in the Personal Equipment (PE), Aircrew Life Support (ALS) or Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) professions. The views expressed herein are that of the individual mentioned and do not represent the views of the retired, active duty, ANG, Reserves, or veteran members of the PE, ALS, or AFE career fields.

Reporters

Tommy Tompkins, P.O. Box 372, Equality IL 62934

Allen "Al" Loving, 515 Silk Tree Lane, Chesapeake VA 23320

Bob "Chili" McElwain, 12320 Roadrunner Lane, Victorville CA 92392

Dave Chitwood, 9792 Corbett Place, Manassas Park, VA 20111

Email: tombob@shawneelink.net

Email: aloving@cox.net

Email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net

Email: pantoum5@gmail.com

Visit our web site at www.usafals-afe.net

May 2019 Edition

Looking Forward

By Dave Chitwood, Group Vice President

Time is flying! It's already May! We've been working hard, planning this year's annual reunion. As you may recall, our 2019 reunion will be held September 16-20, 2019 back in Vegas (Details included in this newsletter)

Please spread the word and encourage fellow veterans, retirees, Active, Guard, or Reserve to join us. All are welcome!

A large portion of this newsletter will be devoted to information about this year's reunion and details about how to register for the reunion, and sign up for the various tours, golf, and other events. Many of the events have price breaks based upon the

number who sign up, so please plan early, and meet the deadlines noted in the registration form.

Additionally, feel free to stop by the website <http://usafals-afe.net/> often for all the latest and greatest info!

To those who will soon or may have retired from the military or civil service since the last newsletter, please accept our sincere thanks for your dedicated service to this Great Nation and the United States Air Force.

From The Field

In this edition, we proudly present an update on what's happening at the SPO from Chief Theodore

Angel, and a farewell message to the troops offered by retiring Chief Lawrence Settle.

Chief's Corner

What's Up At The SPO

By Theodore R. Angel, CMSgt, USAF



Mission: Save or Improve Airman's Lives

Human Systems (HS) enhance warfighter performance, increases protection, reduces injuries, and increases survival rates. We at the Human Systems Program Office receive our charge straight from AFI 11-301 Volume 1 where it states "Provide USAF aircrew safe and effective aircrew flight equipment and programs to increase aircrew performance." It further outlines that we should protect and sustain human life during flight operations, prepare aircrew and passengers to survive, affect their rescue, and return to duty if forced to abandon their aircraft during an emergency. Finally, our mission charges us to provide aircrew protection from effects of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons.

Most of you will recognize this mission or at least some portion of it from your time serving in the Air Force. As the current Air Force Life Cycle Management Center AFE Chief, I believe our program office has been moving at a pace never seen to date. This is for multiple reasons, but mainly based off the overarching push from Air Force leadership to be more innovative and pursue speed with discipline on all programs. The days of fielding equipment in 5-10 years are considered unacceptable (you were saying they were in our time too!) and we must procure and sustain AFE faster to keep ahead of our adversaries. To accomplish this goal our office is using multiple approaches to navigate quickly in and around the normal acquisition process. One such approach is Try-Decide-Buy. This strategy allows us to

purchase potential solutions or devices (multiple vendors), try them out by doing local testing (heat, cold, vibration etc.), then decide on which product is best for the user (MAJCOMs provide feedback) and then buy the best device. We recently utilized this program for the first time to field the Survival Kit Electronic Signaling Device (SKED), which replaced the PRC-90 Radio as a Peacetime signaling device. Our office was able to field over 12,000 assets from start to finish in 9 months.



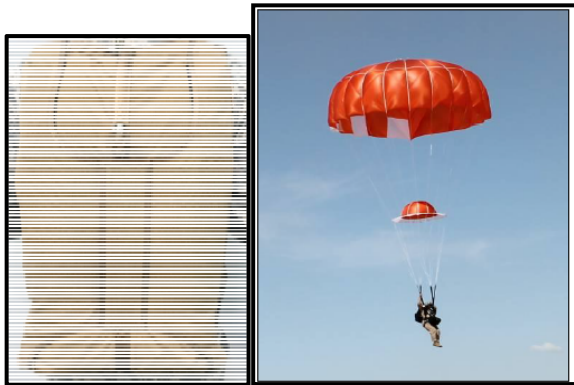
This is just the beginning. We are also working with AFWERX to draw in competition we would not normally have in the helmet business. AFWERX provided an avenue to open the aperture to companies that would not normally be interested in government work by ensuring them we would move rapidly and not get bogged down with the normal government acquisition process. The result was, 101 submissions were evaluated and of those, three top vendors (LIFT, ASU and GENTEX) were selected to move forward with proof of concept designs. This is huge because previously only one company would have come forward to compete. Later this month, our team will be at AFWERX to receive 4 proof of concept helmets from each of the three companies. Amazingly, we selected these three companies in December 2018 and they were challenged to provide prototypes to us in less than six months. This is evidence that these new approaches to acquisition are working not only for us in the acquisitions world but for the Warfighter who requires the most up-to-date technology to accomplish the mission.



our sister service partners to provide items like the AMXDmax urinary device and other possible solutions utilizing the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

We are also working hard to establish a better method for ensuring we address female specific equipment, whether that is better accessibility to female flight suits, creating a better Anti-Exposure suits (fighters), or a better survival vest and harness, that fits females and smaller stature male aircrew. As more challenges present themselves our office continues to partner with industry and our AFE community to ensure we are saving or improving airman's lives every day.

Another positive win for the warfighter is the current fielding of the BA-30 Low Profile Parachute (LPP), this parachute had been used by AFSOC solely, but now we are fielding it (710 so far) to all Airframes utilizing Back Style parachutes as a replacement for the BA-18, -22 etc. (minus B-52, we are still conducting testing).



Farewell Message To The Troops
From CMSgt Lawrence E. Settle

It is exciting to see the progress, upgrades, and replacement of equipment items that most of us have worked on over our entire careers, which leads me to my final thoughts.

I would be failing at my job if I did not address the fact, the Air Force as a whole has placed a focus on Female Flight Equipment issues. As more and more female aviators join our ranks, we continue to provide equipment to them that is considered either male or unisex sizes. In order to better serve our female aviators, our office is concentrating efforts on female specific needs and how our flight equipment affects their ability to accomplish their mission. With support from Air Force leadership, we have been able to tackle some of the items of concern, though we have only scratched the surface of where we need to be heading. We've been working with

My final out is over...the brass bell has been rung. For more than 30-years I have had the honor of being a part of something bigger than I alongside me and for your mentorship, friendship, and positive example setting I am forever grateful. Our task at hand cannot be taken lightly. Your finished work, whether training, equipment maintenance and training, drop zone support, or any other of a myriad of tasks directly impacts the success or failure of our Air Force and support to Joint Operations. Our customers can perform at the edge of their envelope because they have trust in what you do. In these tasks you must be sure...ALWAYS.

Ops tempo is more robust than I can ever remember. That is not an excuse for losing focus on our tasks or each other. We take care of our pilots, aircrew, and operators, but we

cannot lose focus on taking care of each other. We cannot take for granted or assume that our teammates are doing fine; we have to ask. We cannot afford to put on a show for those around us to keep them from getting involved; we have to be open. We are a team...we are Aircrew Flight Equipment...and our ranks are filled with some of the best technicians I've had the pleasure of working with. I want you all to show up...physically, mentally, and spiritually...every day. I'm here to help make that happen in whatever way I can.

Life is full of choices! No manner of reward system satisfies as much as our own internal ones. As we continue building upon our Aircrew Flight Equipment culture, I'd ask that you take some time to focus on what and how you contribute to making us better. Those that WANT to be a part of what we are doing are paving the path for future generations. Those that WANT to show up, do right, and take care of others, represent the best of us by giving the best of themselves. Only you can determine how much of yourself you will give; your individual effort is completely within your control.

So many of you have contributed to who I am and where I am. I could not have completed this part of my journey without you. Lead by example, stay involved, stay engaged and keep that G.A.S. tank full! My family and I thank you for your continued service and contributions to our Nation. Our Nation and Airmen deserve your best. I expect they will get it. I'm proud to have served alongside you and I'm proud of you. Blue Skies!

...so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach, if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously, if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12: 5-8

CMSgt (Ret) Lawrence E. Settle

Chili Sez!

By Bob McElwain



Call for Nominations

It's time to elect a new USAF ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Group Board of Directors. The election will be held at this year's reunion in Las Vegas.

This is your chance to help lead the group and stimulate and maintain the camaraderie and brotherhood within the Aircrew Life Support (ALS) and Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) community.

We are seeking eligible candidates (members who attend or pledge to attend our annual reunions on a regular basis) for election to the offices of President, Vice President, and Secretary. A brief description of the duties for each of these elected Board positions are as follows:

President: The President shall be the Executive Officer of the Group and shall preside at all meetings.

Vice President: The Vice President will familiarize himself with the activities and duties of the President. The Vice President will officiate during periods of the President's absence or incapacity.

Secretary: The Secretary will record the minutes of the annual meeting and assist the board members as directed.

Nominations for office and Members who have an interest in an elected office are to contact John Patti as soon as possible but NLT 1 August

2019 at Phone: (864) 245-0715 Email: johnpatti7@gmail.com.

2019

USAF Personal Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Survival Equipment, and Aircrew Flight Equipment (USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE) Reunion

The 24th Annual USAF PE/SE/ALS/AFE Reunion will be held at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV starting Monday 16 Sept 2019 thru Thursday 19 Sept 2019. Travel days are Monday, 16 Sept and Friday, 20 Sept. If you would like to arrive a day early (Sunday, 15 Sept), you will get the discounted rate as long as you indicate you are coming in for the reunion. All veterans, retired, active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel who are working or worked in the USAF Personal or Survival Equipment career fields, Aircrew Life Support or Flight Equipment career fields, or members of other branches of the US military in related professions and their guests are invited to attend.

HOTEL RESERVATION: Our group room rate is \$52.00 plus tax per night single or double occupancy. The hotel will waive the \$17.99 resort fee per night for the group. Early reservation at the hotel is encouraged especially since there is a limited number of non-smoking rooms. To do so, go online to www.OrleansCasino.com/groups and use group code: A9USC09 or call into Hotel Reservations at 800-675-3267! To avoid long hold times we recommend making your reservations on-line. Reservations must be made on or before 8/17/2019 to ensure availability and group rate. Group rate will not apply after the cutoff date.

Any room requiring triple or quad occupancy will be surcharged an additional \$20.00 per guest, per room, per night. (Children age fourteen and under, in the same room with parents in existing bedding, are free.) Room rates are subject to Clark County room tax, which is currently thirteen percent (13%)-subject to change.

There will be a \$6.00 plus tax daily charge for in-room Wi-Fi. Guests requesting Wi-Fi connectivity are to notify the front desk that they would like to pay for this service upon arrival. A photo ID will be required upon check-in.

Upon arrival, all guests will be required to post a \$100.00 security deposit via a credit card to secure their individual room accounts. The hotel reserves the right to retain the security deposit and charge the credit card utilized for the security deposit any additional amounts necessary to fully compensate the hotel for: (1) any damage to any of the hotel rooms (including the cost of repair and lost revenue for any time during which the hotel room cannot be utilized because of such repair work); and (2) the costs associated with any excessive cleanup of any hotel room that may be necessary as a result of the condition of any hotel room used by our group.

HOTEL CANCELLATION: Hotel policy for cancellation of an individual guaranteed reservation is at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to scheduled arrival date. Rooms released less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to arrival date and all no-shows will be subject to a cancellation penalty equivalent to the first night's room and tax.

HOTEL CHECK-IN/CHECK OUT: Check-in for individual arrivals begins at 3:00 p.m. Check-out time is at 12:00 noon. The hotel agrees to make rooms available prior to the stated check-in time and to extend late check-out to guests on a preferential basis, if available. The hotel may request early check-in fee or late check-out fee. The fee may vary and will be determined at the time of the request.

REUNION RESERVATION AND CANCELLATION: To register, send in the attached registration form NLT 31 Jul 2019. Reunion cancellation must be received NLT 31 Aug 2019 or there will be a loss of your banquet fee.

REUNION CHECK-IN: After getting your room, look for the reunion check-in counter/booth in the hotel lobby to get your reunion package. Don't forget to stop by our hospitality room after 5:30 PM for food and drinks.

GOLF TOURNAMENT: Our annual golf tournament will be held on Thursday, 19 September 2019. This year we have decided to try out TopGolf. TopGolf is a lot of fun for golfers and non-golfers alike. Points are scored by hitting micro-chipped golf balls at targets on an outfield. The closer you get your ball to the center or 'bullseye' and the further the distance, the more points earned. Targets are as close as 20-30 yard pitch/chip, to 100, 150, 180, 200 yards! Just like bowling, the computer keeps score. Enjoy delicious food and drinks brought to you while you play. A lifetime membership card is only \$5, but is waived for the tournament so you don't have to be a member. Other info includes the following:

- Both male and female right-handed and left-handed clubs will be available and are included in the price.
- There are arcades, pool tables, full bar/lounges for non-golfers.
- Free parking
- If available in your area we encourage potential players to visit a TopGolf facility and check it out. It's great fun!
- Here's a video highlighting Vegas Top Golf. The Vegas one even has a swimming pool. For a sneak preview of Topgolf click on the following link or type it in your browser:
<https://youtu.be/3ASwq5caYWw>

Contact Dave Chitwood for additional information, and if you intend to play, send Dave a golf fee of \$50 per person NLT 31 August. Fee includes clubs, golf, brunch, and dedicated assistants to help set up and explain games, and keep the food/beverages flowing! Dave's address is 9792 Corbett Place, Manassas Park, VA 20111. His phone number is 850-543-7771 and pantoum5@gmail.com is his email address.

RAFFLE: We are accepting gifts/prizes/give aways for our tournaments and raffle and thank you in advance for your support. Please bring your donations to the reunion or put them in the mail NET 8 Sept and NLT 9 Sept 2019. Address all donations as follows:

The Orleans Hotel & Casino
4500 W. Tropicana Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89103
Hold for: Bob McElwain, The USAF
PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion

Replace Bob McElwain's name with Dave Chitwood if mailing prizes/gifts for the golf tournament.

IF YOU ATTENDED ONE OF OUR RECENT REUNIONS PLEASE BRING YOUR REUNION ISSUED NAME TAG WITH YOU. NEW NAME TAGS WILL ONLY BE ISSUED TO FIRST TIME ATTENDEES. GUEST NAME TAGS WILL BE ISSUED TO EVERYONE ELSE.

In addition to our annual raffle, golf, and pinochle tournaments, other events are:

- Our annual reunion picnic
- A Tour of the 414th Combat Training Squadron "Red Flag Facility. Exercise Red Flag is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the United States Air Force. The purpose is to offer realistic air-combat training for military pilots and other flight crew members from the U.S., NATO, and other allied countries.
- Special Door Prize Drawing
- Voting for the location of the next two reunion locations by all attendees
- Voting for our next Board of Directors
- Farewell Banquet

The requested attire for our banquet is "something nice". ***Coat & tie are preferred but not absolutely necessary. For the military, the equivalent uniform is preferred.***

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP: If your company or business is interested in helping us support this year's reunion, please send a check or money order payable to the Reunion

Committee Chairman, Mr. Bob McElwain and address it as indicated below. For your contribution, your company's name will be listed on a poster board proudly displayed at the hotel entrance recognizing corporate and individual contributors.

If attending our reunion and you would like to brief the attendees on your company's products or service, fill out the attached Industry Registration form and mail it in NLT 31 July 2019.

The 2019 reunion planning committee thanks you in advance for your gracious support and generosity. Send your thoughtful donations payable to:

Bob McElwain
12320 Roadrunner Lane
Victorville, CA 92392

PROPOSALS FOR REUNION 2020 AND 2021:

If interested in hosting one of our reunions in your area download and complete a copy of the reunion worksheet located [here](#) or visit our website at www.usafalf-afe.net and look for the worksheet under the Reunion tab. Email it to bob.mcelwain@charter.net NLT August 1, 2019. All proposals will be presented to our September 2019 reunion attendees for selection of a reunion location in 2020 and 2021. The selected locations will be decided at our September reunion.

If I Hated My Time in The Military, Why Should I Attend the Reunion?

Are you one of those people who truly *disliked* your time in the military? Regardless of the amount of time you served, if you view your time in the military as something you'd like to forget, and you believe attending our reunion is not going to help, give us a chance to change your mind.

The 2019 Personal/Survival Equipment, Aircrew Life Support/Aircrew Flight Equipment reunion is gearing up once again, and many people around the country have decisions to make.

Some are busy reaching out to old friends and making plans for reconnecting at the event. These are the people who loved their time in the military. Maybe they just had an awesome group of friends and bosses. They might have been extremely popular and known by pretty much everyone, or maybe they found their own niche working in a particular section of their shop. Whatever the case, they have very fond memories of their military years.

Another segment of the population has more lukewarm feelings on the subject: they didn't like their job, their leadership or perhaps they discovered that they didn't like where they were stationed. Uploading and downloading transport aircraft with equipment at a northern tier base in the dead of winter was horrible. Parachute inspections on F-4s in Korea during the miserable winter months was sometimes even worst. Having to face the squadron commander after failing a major inspection seemed like the worst day of your career. Or, there might have been a couple of embarrassing incidents that are better off forgotten.

I've heard a lot of reasons some people are angry about their time in the military and some of them are ridiculous. Is it you who said or is thinking the following:

"I bet everyone at the reunion just wants to share their accomplishments, and nothing much has been going on in my life."

"The senior NCOs and officers were never held to the same or higher standards as the airman when it came to punishment."

"The subordinates that I trained who shared the same rank as me should not have been promoted to the next grade before me."

For some people, the military brings back these feelings of resentment. Is this you and is the reason you will not attend is that you are still bitter about something that happened during your time in the USAF? Did you have a difficult time getting along with your superiors or inspectors? Whatever the problem, you survived it along with everything else the USAF

threw at you and surviving it may have made you a better person. I beg of you to forget it, let it go!

Are you not attending because you think you won't know anybody and won't know what to talk about?

Many people are in the same boat and will be grateful if you approach them. You can start off by asking about what they've been up to since discharge/retirement, but try to move past the superficial questions if you get a chance. Ask them about their favorite military memories or what they like best about where they're living now.

Come join us in Las Vegas this year. You might be surprised. Often, it's those who have the least expectations about their reunion who end up having the most fun. If you attend without any cares, you'll most likely be more relaxed. This will make it easier to engage in conversation, and you may learn some really interesting things about your old buddies. And remember, we all have something in common that will always bond us to each other, the USAF PE, Survival Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, and /or the Aircrew Flight Equipment career field.

Furthermore, attending the reunion gives you the opportunity to interact with people you spent many hours, days, or years working with. Seeing each other again gives you the chance to hopefully heal old emotional scars. And, just like you, other people are likely harboring feelings of regret about something or other.

Sharing a sincere conversation and maybe an apology can shed emotional baggage like nothing else can.

If you are still carrying around bad feelings about a part of your life that was a decade or two, or three, ago, you owe it to yourself to try to heal them. Negative feelings weigh you down. Forgiveness makes you feel lighter.

I am told that one of the best things about the reunion is the mystery of "who's attending this time that I haven't seen in years?" Almost every year a new face shows up and when that happens, it is pure joy to see the warm, emotional embrace of two adversaries who have not seen each other in years.

I hope reading this has made you re-consider attending our reunion. You may even emerge from the experience with a new (or renewed) friendship or two.

See you in September? I hope so!

Chili

In Closing

By Dave Chitwood, Vice President and Newsletter Editor

Once again let me say thank you for the honor to serve as the vice president of the USAF ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Group and your newsletter editor. This is an awesome group, and I look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces at the upcoming reunion. Please plan now to attend the 2019 reunion and **spread the word!** Registrations forms are attached! I'll see you in Vegas in September 2019!

Mark your calendars now for the 24th Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held September 16-20, 2019, at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. September 16 and 20 are the travel days. Be sure to visit our Group website (www.usafals-afe.net), and on social media.

24th Annual USAF Personal and Survival Equipment, Aircrew Life Support & Flight Equipment Reunion

16 – 19 September 2019

The Orleans Hotel & Casino

4500 W. Tropicana
Las Vegas NV, 89103

Registration Form

Registration fee includes one U.S. Military Active Duty, Veteran, National Guard, Reservist, and one family member or guest. It also includes one civilian working in any profession related to aircrew survival/protection and one family member or guest.

YOUR NAME (as you want it on your name tag) _____
PHONE NO _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
NAME OF YOUR ATTENDING FAMILY MEMBER/GUEST _____
DO YOU OR YOUR GUEST NEED ONE OF OUR NAME TAGS? _____

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Our annual golf tournament will be held on Thursday, 19 September 2019. This year we have decided to try out TopGolf. TopGolf is a lot of fun for golfers and non-golfers alike. Points are scored by hitting micro-chipped golf balls at targets on an outfield. The closer you get your ball to the center or 'bullseye' and the further the distance, the more points earned. Just like bowling, the computer keeps score. Enjoy delicious food and drinks brought to you while you play. Click on the following link: <https://topgolf.com/> or contact Dave Chitwood for additional information. If you intend to play, send Dave a golf fee of \$50 per person NLT 31 August. Fee includes clubs, golf, and brunch. Dave's address is 9792 Corbett Place, Manassas Park, VA 20111. His phone number is 850-543-7771 and pantoum5@gmail.com is his email address.

Will you be participating in our golf tournament? Yes _____ No _____

HOTEL AND REUNION REGISTRATION

HOTEL REGISTRATION: The rate per night is \$52.00 plus tax for Monday, 16 September thru Thursday, 19 September 2019 for single or double occupancy. Reservations must be made before Saturday, August 17, 2019, by going on-line to www.OrleansCasino.com/groups and use group code: **A9USC09** or call into Hotel Reservations at **800-675-3267**! Reservations must be guaranteed with a major credit card. First night's room and tax will be charged at the time the reservation is made. Hotel cancellation without penalty must occur at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to scheduled arrival date.

REUNION REGISTRATION: Complete this form and mail it NLT 31 Jul 2019. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT 31 Aug 2019 at 760-684-3790 or email him at bob.mcelwain@charter.net

REUNION REGISTRATION FEE (Covers handouts, meeting rooms, coffee, pastry, picnic & etc.): \$75.00
BANQUET FEE: \$50.00 Per Person Times the Number of People _____ = _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Will you be staying at the hotel? Yes _____ No _____

Complete this form and mail it NLT 31 Jul 2019 with a check or money order payable to:

BOB MCELWAIN
12320 ROADRUNNER LN
VICTORVILLE, CA 92392

CELL PHONE: 760-684-3790
Email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net

**24th Annual USAF Personal and Survival Equipment, Aircrew
Life Support & Flight Equipment Reunion**

16 – 19 September 2019

**The Orleans Hotel & Casino
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Vendor's Registration Form

Registration fee includes one U.S. Military Active Duty, Veteran, National Guard, Reservist, and one family member or guest. It also includes one civilian working in any profession related to aircrew survival/protection and one family member or guest.

YOUR NAME (as you want it on your name tag) _____
PHONE NO _____ **E-MAIL ADDRESS** _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
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BANQUET FEE: \$50.00 Per Person Times the Number of People _____ = _____
DONATION TOWARDS OUR THEME: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Will you be staying at the hotel? Yes _____ No _____

Complete this form and mail it NLT 31 Jul 2019 with a check or money order payable to:
BOB MCELWAIN CELL PHONE: 760-684-3790
12320 ROADRUNNER LN Email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net
VICTORVILLE, CA 92392

WILL YOU BE SETTING UP A BOOTH OR BRIEFING THE ATTENDEES? IF YOU ARE THEN COMPLETE THE INFORMATION ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM.

