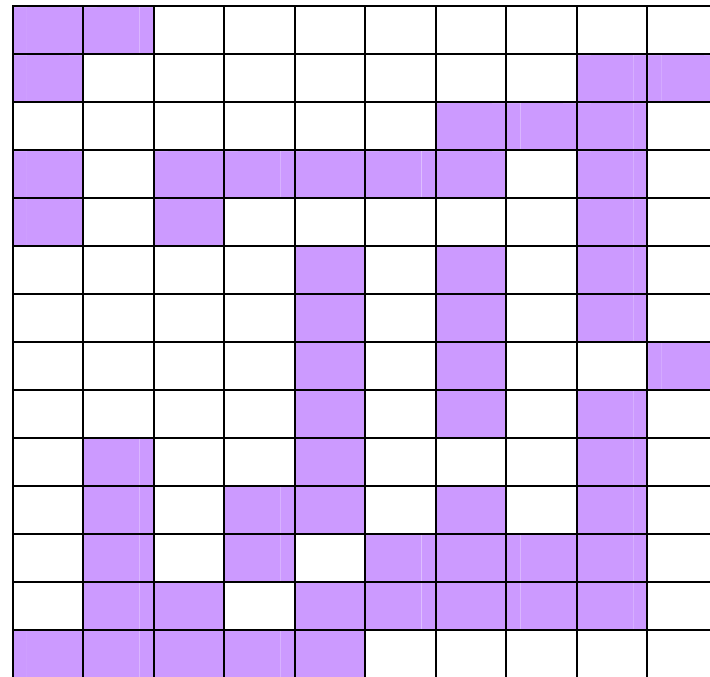


Editorial Staff:
 Barb Wagner, Editor in Chief
 Connie Riley, Editor/Reporter
 Darlene Riley, Reporter
 Kirby Pitts, Reporter
 Nancy Bearden, Reporter

For questions or comments regarding this newsletter, or to contribute an article, please contact Barb Wagner, at 281.280.6786, or Barb.Wagner@usa-spaceops.com.

Summer 2008 Puzzle



Fill in the blanks with the words provided below. Each word is used only once. Words can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, backward, and forward. Enjoy!

The answer will be announced in the next newsletter. **Good Luck!**

Word List

5 letter words

- Sandy
- Beach
- Water

6 letter words

- Picnic
- Summer
- Skiing
- Suntan

7 letter words

- Boating
- Concert
- Sunburn

8 letter words

- Swimming
- Barbeque
- Sunshine
- Vacation



Get Involved – Stay Involved

By Fawn Nolen, Chapter President



Welcome members!

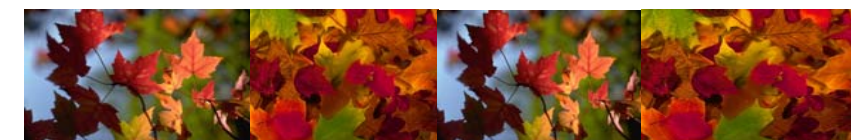
We are looking forward to another great year. We have some new faces on the BELA board as well as some new members. This year's focus will be on offering some fun networking activities, great programs, and training development through our professional development program. Our new officers have been busy planning the year's activities. Our year runs from July through June.

Our BELA chapter is dedicated to the growth and development of employees through education, social interaction, committee participation, community service, and leadership responsibilities. Our chapter being successful can only be achieved by your support and being involved.

There are so many ways to be involved – through committees, by participating in our events and programs, and helping out with our community activities. BELA is a great way to meet your coworkers and participate in a great professional organization. Contact any officer to see how you can participate more. There are a variety of opportunities coming up such as our annual speech contest for high school students, supporting committee and charity activities, and by helping support our annual Make and Bake sales that benefit all our BELA programs.

But also remember that we represent "Leaders in Life." So don't limit yourself. See what else is out there that you can become a part of. It is really easy to say, "I don't have time for this or that."

What I have learned over the years is that you make time for the things and for the people that are important to you and in your life. Anyone can make a difference. It can be big or small. Every little bit counts and whether it is your time, your creativity, your donations – it all matters to the ones you are supporting. Something little can make a big difference in someone's life. Ask yourself, "What can I do?".



Growing up I had a poster on my wall that read,

"There are those that **talk** about things they want to happen,
 Those that **watch** things happen,
 and
 Those that **make** things happen."

I hope you will take the challenge to "**make things happen.**"

Get involved, not just with BELA, but in your community. Help out your company on great projects such as Operation Shoebox. Take time to meet your coworkers. Build friendships that will last a lifetime. Take a class to keep growing. Life is too short. Get involved and stay involved!

We look forward to another successful year in 2008-09! ☺

Local Family Outreach

We received a heartfelt thanks from the mother of two children who lost everything in a fire. We collected \$615 in monetary donations, school supplies for both children, and food to help fill their pantry. She expressed her gratitude for everyone's generous donations! A special *thank you* to **Connie Ischy** for spearheading this outreach. ☺

New Members

- Jennifer Goldman
- Trevor Mack
- Angela Moffett
- Nancy Bearden

Welcome aboard!

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2008-2009 Officers & Directors

President	Fawn Nolen	281.280.6829
Vice President, TGCC Secretary	Patricia Vergil	281.282.4880
Treasurer	Connie Ischy	281.280.6776
Secretary	Sandra Culpepper	281.280.6791
Member Relations	Kirby Pitts	281.280.6795
Programs	Debra Dallas	281.280.6745
Professional Development	Amy Spenrath	281.483.5725
American Enterprise/Community Relations	Lori Broussard	281.280.6739
Public Relations, Associate National Director	Barb Wagner	281.280.6786



Congratulations to **Vicki Atkins!** She correctly identified the object in the BELA Vista! Spring Puzzle. Her prize was a shuttle snow globe.

Believe it or not, that object (circa 1956) was a 5MB IBM hard disk drive, weighing over a ton!



Have a safe and fun Labor Day!

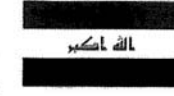


2008 Calendar of Events

- JULY**
 - 22 Cards/Letters for troops
 - 30 BELA officers installation @ Las Haciendas
 - 31 Texas Gulf Coast Council (TGCC) Chapter Operations Clinic
- AUGUST**
 - 7 TGCC Speech Contest t-shirt sale
 - 18 School Supply Drive
 - 21 Fundraiser – Local Family Outreach (single mother of two)
- SEPTEMBER**
 - 3 Brown Bag Lunch Lesson
 - 18 NMA Online Course, Who Do You Trust?
 - 23 Lunch fundraiser for the Texas City Prairie Reserve Boardwalk Restoration Project
 - TBD Fun event
- OCTOBER**
 - TBD “Supreme Teams” brown bag
- NOVEMBER**
 - 20-21 Pre-Thanksgiving bake sale
 - TBD Moody Gardens event
- DECEMBER**
 - 9-10 Happy Holidays bake sale
 - TBD Toy/Clothing Drive

**Charity is like an unsung anthem,
 Harmonizing everything we see.
 A gift can be a work of silent witness,
 Remembrance, reverence, unsought forgiveness,
 Intention, labor, time, philanthropy.
 The worth is measured only by redemption,
 Yielding nothing but the grace to be.**
 - Nicholas Gordon

Operation Iraqi Freedom



IN APPRECIATION
 FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TO

TROY'S PLACE

Presented to

Bastion Technologies, Inc

JOINT BASE BALAD, IRAQ



April Castro
 SSgt April Castro
 Troy's Place, Manager



Jeffrey D. Granger
 Ch, Capt Jeffrey Granger
 Troy's Place, Chaplain



normal life. Now it is time to focus on packing up and getting out of here. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

I remain your friend, brother, and son

Always
Ben



THE NEW TEAM!!! (l-r) MAJ Michael Ivy (MAJ Adam Trask replacement), MAJ Ken Slover (my replacement) CPT Michael Phelan, MAJ Adam Trask, and SSG Kevin Woolfork.

The new team Address is:

NPTT 6010
FOB PROSPERITY
APO AE 09348



Our farewell meal with our Iraqi counterparts.



The new team takes the lead during the meetings.



This was a picture taken while I visited the Air Force Detachment rewarding Airmen with coins for all there great support. No I am not dancing! I wanted to clarify that but it was very special event for me and what better way to end my final newsletter...with a smile on my face. I am coming home!!!! ☑

Hello,
I hope this finds you doing well. I am doing good. I am getting very close to coming home now and am looking forward to seeing my babies. I hope to be home by the second week of August. We received packages the other day from you and it looks like many others. There were many smiles in those boxes. We have enjoyed all of the toiletries and snacks as well as the many cards. There were also the cards from the elementary kids and they were so precious! Thank you so much. Please share this thank you with all that helped to make the packages possible and also for the many prayers. God's love could be felt amongst the good wishes and thank you's in the cards. Peace and Blessings,

Rebekah E. Byrd ☑

This is one of the Airmen from Ellington that started receiving our packages.

I just received your care package, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Im pleased that you guys back at the states are thinking about the troops, again thank you and god bless you. MSgt Jose L. Briseno ☑



School Supplies Drive

By Nancy Bearden



Summertime is waning, and school bells are about to ring all over our community. Fawn Nolen, Chapter President, led a successful school supply drive that will benefit The Bridge, Ronald McDonald House, Bay Area Turning Point, and Destiny House children unable to afford their own.

BELA collected over two boxes of a variety of school supplies from generous people at Bastion locations onsite and offsite.

Our thanks to everyone who participated in the drive, both the donors, and the tireless workers. A special thanks to **Connie Ischy** for coordinating this drive. ☑

Installation of Officers and Awards Luncheon

By Connie Riley

Installation of 2008-2009 BELA Officers was held July 30 at Las Haciendas Bar and Grill. The following officers and Board Members were installed by NMA National Director, Gary Waits.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| President | Fawn Nolen |
| Vice President | Patricia Vergil |
| Secretary | Sandra Culpepper |
| Treasurer | Connie Ischy |
| American Enterprise | Lori Broussard |
| Member Relations | Kirby Pitts |
| Professional Development | Amy Spenrath |
| Programs | Debra Dallas |
| Public Relations | Barb Wagner |



From left, Jim Flannery, Fawn Nolen, and Lori Broussard

Congratulations to the **Manager of the Year, Fawn Nolen**, and the **Manager of the Year, Jim Flannery!**

Yes, you read that right. We had two Manager of the Year awards to present. Lori Broussard, Committee Chair, said that this is the first time we have had a tie in our chapter's history! Rather than have another ballot to break the tie, the Committee decided to give two awards.

Four new members were announced: Jennifer Goldman, Angela Moffett, Nancy Bearden, and Trevor Mack!! Trevor only signed up the day before but showed up for the luncheon. **Way to go, Trevor!** ☑

Six of the officers are new to the Board or to their new position.

After installation of officers, Fawn Nolen, handed out Awards to members who assisted the Chapter in some way or had special projects, officers, and committee members.



Congratulations to **Connie Ischy, Member of the Year** recipient!

Don't miss the Brown Bag Lunch Lesson on Wednesday, September 3 at 11:30 am, held at 1150 Gemini, 2nd floor conference room (#14).

Letters to Soldiers

For BELA members and Bastion Employees:



Good afternoon all -

Bastion Employee Leadership Association (BELA) is going to support a current effort to send letters/notes to soldiers in Iraq. We need your help in writing a note or two to our brave men and women protecting our country.

Put yourself in their shoes for a moment... Help us let them know how much we appreciate them.

If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact me via [email](#) or phone (281.280.6829).

Thanks,

Fawn Nolen
BELA President

[Thank You BELA and Friends for supporting our letter and card campaign for our soldiers. Your personal letters and donations are greatly appreciated and really make a difference. Please read some of the letters we received back from our soldiers.](#)

Replies From Soldiers

The following pages are the letters and pictures we received from grateful soldiers who received our notes and care packages over the past year.

"I received several of your boxes yesterday that was so awesome I really appreciate everything your doing for me and the rest of the soldiers they are really enjoying the freezer pops especially the guys that are mechanics and they stay out in the hot sun and everyone was so happy about the water balloons because we are planning a special event this weekend and the arrived just in time well take care and once again thanks.

SPC Crystal D. Edmond
391 CSSB
COB Speicher, Iraq" ☒

"On behalf of the AFFORR A67/EI Team want to Thank you and your support Staff, We just received more care packages, it was like Christmas in Aug.

Again thank you very much for your support its good to know folks back home are behind the men and women of the greatest armed forces.

MSgt Jose Briseno, AFFOR A67/EI" ☒

".....they came all right, chocolate always has problems getting too the desert, unless in chocolate chip cookies. Peanut butter snacks like nutter butters are greatly wanted out here, and girl scout cookies are also coveted. Gold fish are also big on the want list, per my duty section. They all gave me their thanks for the snacks you sent, and some of them who were even on diets out here broke down and ate some. And as for the picture I sent, it is of the 6 people that work in my shop, me being the creep with the mustashe. Thank you again

A1C Greg Kimball" ☒



"Hello there,

I opened a box today of items sent to me in the desert. It was especially meaningful or appreciated this time because yesterday was my birthday. I also am a Texan and hope to be back in Austin by Thanksgiving. The cards and letters are a wonderful thing. I along with the rest of my team thank you.

All of us here at the 379 ECS/ EI really appreciate it. One of the guys came running in my office showing me the video game he received in his package. You would have sworn it was his birthday too.

Thanks,
Johnie Wm. Elsenburg III
CAOC A67 E&I" ☒

Goodmorning ma'am you and your friends/family are so awesome I've received your other boxes already words cant express how much I appreciate the things you are sending to our unit it makes everyone day a little better knowing you care god has truly blessed you with a great heart talk to you later my friend.

SPC Crystal D. Edmond
391 CSSB
COB Speicher, Iraq" ☒

MAJ Benjamin L. Garrett
NPTT 6010
Unit 43479
APO AE 09344-3479

August 16, 2008

Dear Friends and Family

I hope this note finds everyone in great health and high spirits. I am very happy to announce...change of mission!!!! Wednesday was the last time I traveled outside to wire to visit our Iraqi National Police counterparts, bid farewell and transfer the mission to the new National Police Transition Team. Unfortunately the past two weeks have been just as demanding as the first two after arriving into theater, however at the close of each day it was gratifying to realize it was one day closer to change of mission and preparing to redeploy. It has been a long year for the members of our team and we are all ready to return to home and begin the next chapter of our own stories. It has been a long demanding year and it is time to get home!!

As we prepared to leave our counterparts over the past couple of weeks, they all expressed feelings of sympathy for our departure. To the man all greatly cherished the relationships we developed over the past year and praised our team for the efforts we made to improve their operations and improve the overall security here in Baghdad. Of course no farewell would be complete without a customary Iraqi meal. Each subordinate battalion and the brigade headquarters we were associated with hosted our team for one final meal. As usual it was something to behold with the sheep, goat, vegetables, and other traditional entrees fruits and desserts. Fortunately no one experienced any stomach irritations!

As we began to close out and introduce our replacements most of the conversations with our former counterparts dealt with what we thought about our experiences over the past year. I admitted to our former counterparts there were tremendous changes in Baghdad over the past year. I told our counterparts as we arrived in Baghdad it was very dangerous to travel on any road. There were days that we would delay our departure due to hostile activity on the routes or in the vicinity of the routes. I told them during December through February we routinely received mortar fire nightly and just after Morning Prayer. We never slowed down and literally pushed our way through traffic or would jump to the opposite side of the road and "swim" against traffic. The first eight months of this deployment was very demanding and at times just plain nerve racking but after the operations in Basra and other parts of the country there was an overall change in many perceptions. The rogue elements in Baghdad were on the run and the government was beginning to build a better reputation of providing security for the population. For example we recently traveled through Baghdad on a route we used frequently in the first months. We had not been that particular way in some time but this time we

were traveling at night. There had been so much road work completed and we could barely make it down the side of the road, driving in the streets and the pedestrians wandering on the road. They were visiting stores shopping, eating at the local restaurants and overall a very festive Saturday night. When we first arrived the stores were closed and the setting was one of filth and despair. My point is the population is more secure and life is returning to Baghdad. Furthermore the population wants to live in a secure environment. AS we discussed this with our counterparts all of us agreed that the remainder of 2008 and 2009 will be the turning point for Iraq. There is a strong opinion, personal and between our interpreters and former counterparts, that the people of Iraq will not tolerate the violence, report the criminals and terrorist to the proper authorities so they can live in peace. I firmly believe the surge worked in Baghdad, I am proud to have participated in order to provide this opportunity to these people and my hope is that they never return to such a violent state of existence. It will take time but as I depart I know life is better for the Iraqi people.

Over the past year I have developed some great professional relationships. I must point out a special relationship our team developed with the Air Force Police Transition Teams. We worked closely to develop relationships between our National Police counterparts and their counterparts. We spent many hours in meetings and shared some great laughs throughout the year. I will miss working with those professional and I wish them all the best on their final time here in Baghdad. They too will be redeploying soon. Best of luck!

I have received fabulous support from home. I can never thank you all enough for the boxes, cards, and emails! The support sustained me and reminded me at times that this hostile environment was temporary. I certainly hope I do not offend anyone but I want to recognize someone who sent me over forty care packages over the year. She has an organization where she collects donations and organizes volunteers at her place of employment and packs boxes for the troops. She received my name from my cousin who teaches at a school in Houston and began to send me boxes. Now I am not the only one who received boxes from her; she sent nearly one thousand boxes over the past year. So Trudy Duhon, on behalf of my team and every person deployed that received boxes from you and the volunteers you work with I thank you for all of your support.

Once again I have included some more pictures and will explain some of the captions. As I close I want to thanks everyone for the support and comfort you all have provided my family, my team and me over the past year. I could not have made it without hearing from you and keeping life in perspective for me. I thank God for his love and protection he has provided to our team, my family and all of you over the past year and I pray it continues for you all and our team as we return and reintegrate to