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NEWSLETTER

UBANGI?

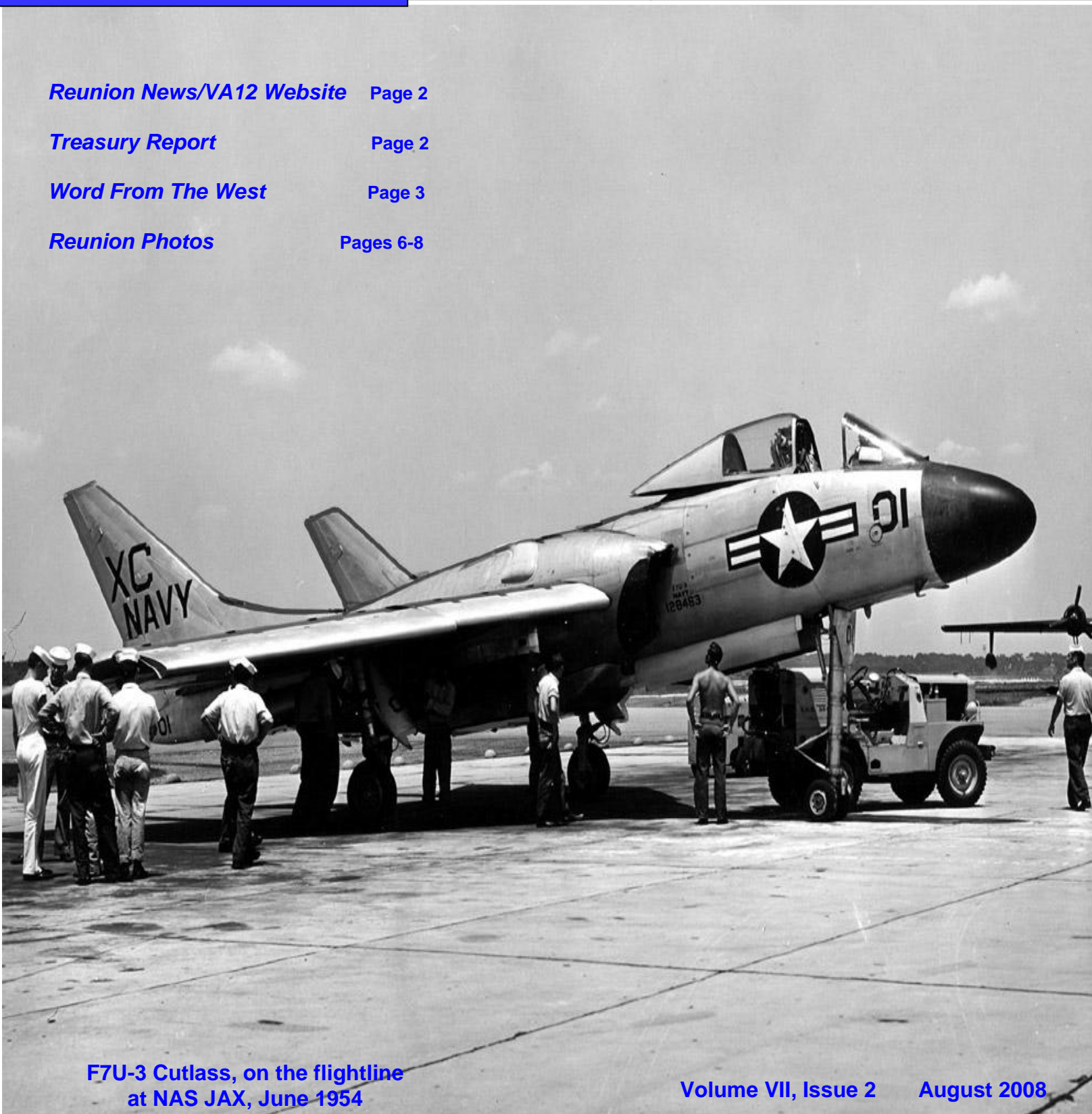
UBETCHA!

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F7U-3 Cutlass, on the flightline
at NAS JAX, June 1954

2010 REUNION PLANNING

Yes, it is that time once again. I guess we are either looking forward to the next Reunion or looking back at the last one. I was extremely pleased with the 2008 event held in Chattanooga, TN last May. And now it is time to turn our attention to 2010. Where will it be? As you can see from your enclosed Ballot, we again have four excellent sites proposed. John Larch and Bob Fossum are not giving up on bring us to their home locations coincidentally located on each coast. Some of you have decided to stay put in your own back yard after returning from active duty those hundreds of years ago, while us "Yankees" hop on planes or drive our vehicles to the land of sunshine every other year. Yeah, believe it or not, the sun also shines above the Mason/Dixon Line. So as always we will try to let the voters decide. Please review the information following presented by my potential helpers regarding why they believe their proposals are the best.

Why Go To Las Vegas

In addition to the obvious opportunity to indulge in gambling, there are numerous other activities to appeal to convention goers. These are set forth below.

A GLOBAL CULINARY CROSSROADS

Once known for its all-you-can-eat buffets and bargain shrimp cocktails, Las Vegas has transformed itself into a top culinary destination. Within a decade, Las Vegas has redefined the culinary and wine experience by offering the most comprehensive collection of celebrity chefs and world-class restaurants, more Master Sommeliers than any other city in the world and more wine sold per capita than in any other destination.

Buffets are still popular in Las Vegas. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the average buffet features about 45 food selections per meal including salads, fruits, roast beef, baked ham, roast turkey, vegetables and a variety of desserts. Several properties are taking their buffet experiences to the next level. The **Rio All-Suites Hotel & Casino** renovated its **Rio Carnival World Buffet** and **Village Seafood Buffet** by increasing its dish selections. The Carnival World Buffet has more than 300 offerings and 70 dessert dishes from around the world - from pizza to omelets and from teppanyaki to fresh pasta. **The Buffet at TI (Treasure Island)** and **Cravings** at **The Mirage** both showcase an international line-up as well with American barbeque, a sushi bar, and specialty pastas - all in addition to the traditional buffet items. Meanwhile, **Flavors, Harrah's Las Vegas'** newest buffet, features live cooking stations, freshly prepared seafood, Prime Rib and a varied menu that also includes Churrasco (Brazilian BBQ), hand-rolled sushi and Italian casseroles prepared in a wood-burning oven.

NIGHT LIFE

From elaborately themed nightclubs that stay open until dawn to the new wave of trendy, ultra-chic lounges sweeping the

Strip - visitors know when they step out in Las Vegas for the night it will be an experience they won't forget. Take in a Broadway performance such as "MAMMA MIA!" at **Mandalay Bay** or "Phantom, the Las Vegas Spectacular" at **The Venetian**. Be captivated by "Le Rêve" at **Wynn Las Vegas** or **Cirque du Soleil's "O"** at **Bellagio**. Laugh out loud to the comic wittiness of **Rita Rudner** at **Harrah's Las Vegas** as she explains the hilarious differences between men and women.

GOLFER'S PARADISE

Las Vegas is no longer golf's best-kept secret. In fact, Las Vegas recently was named the top emerging golf destination in the world by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators.

From exquisite championship courses designed by legends of the sport to lush fairways and breathtaking views - golf is just another reason the destination attracted 39.2 million visitors in 2007. Today, more than 60 golf courses are available for play in Las Vegas throughout the year thanks to the area's inviting climate. Las Vegas offers challenging, yet beautifully sculpted courses developed by world-renowned designers including Jack Nicklaus, Tom Weiskopf, Billy Casper, Arnold Palmer and Pete Dye.

ATTRACTIONS FOR ALL AGES

When you're not winning in the casino, lounging by the pool or savoring delicious cuisine, you'll find that Las Vegas has a variety of must-see attractions and entertainment options to keep you and the whole family occupied. From thrilling roller coasters to virtual-reality simulator rides and erupting volcanoes to wax museums, Las Vegas' attractions appeal to people of all ages, interests and budgets.

Scenic Getaways

Many travelers are drawn to the lights and excitement of Las Vegas, but too few are aware of the spectacular Southwest landscape that surrounds them. Rugged mountains, red rock canyons and deep desert valleys offer stunning scenery and myriad outdoor recreational opportunities. The region's favorable climate makes outdoor activity around Las Vegas an attractive option year-round.

Hoover Dam is an engineering wonder of the world just 35 miles (56 kilometers) southeast of Las Vegas. Formerly named Boulder Dam, this historic man-made creation tamed the mighty Colorado River and created North America's largest man-made lake, Lake Mead. The 726-foot-high, arch-gravity dam is 660 feet thick and forever changed the face of the western United States. On-site tours of the dam are available to the public throughout the year.

Mt. Charleston is 35 miles (56 kilometers) from Las Vegas, with its highest elevation at 11,918 feet (3,615 meters). An average of 20 to 30 degrees cooler than Las Vegas, Mt. Charleston is perfect for skiing, picnicking, hiking and horseback riding. In addition to year-round hotel accommodations and tours, full-service camping is also available from May through September. For information, call (702) 873-8800.

Red Rock Canyon is just 15 miles (24 kilometers) west of Las Vegas. It is a scenic area of rock formations and desert with a 3,000-foot (910-meter) escarpment produced by a thrust fault. Open to the public year-round and a popular destination for

hikers, bikers, joggers and rock climbers, Red Rock Canyon offers a Bureau of Land Management visitors center and is home to feral horses, wild burros, bighorn sheep, coyotes and a variety of desert plant life.

Valley of Fire State Park is only 55 miles (88 kilometers) northwest of Las Vegas and comprises scenic landscapes, hidden canyons and unique red rock formations. Petroglyphs and remains of ancient Native American civilizations can be viewed here and a Nevada Park Service visitors center provides tourist information. The park is open to the public year-round and tours are available.

Mojave National Preserve is only 60 miles (97 kilometers) southwest of Las Vegas. This 1.6-million-acre preserve, which protects one of the most diverse environments in the world, abounds with sand dunes, volcanic cinder cones, Joshua tree forests and mile-high mountains. The preserve's visitor centers, located in Baker and Needles, Calif., welcome visitors year-round.

Death Valley is located in western California, 135 miles (216 kilometers) from Las Vegas. This scenic wonder has the lowest elevation on the North American continent at 280 feet (84.93 meters) below sea level. Points of interest include Zabriskie Point, 20 Mule Team Canyon and Scotty's Castle. Tours are available.

Grand Canyon West, a destination owned and operated by the Hualapai Tribe at the Grand Canyon's western rim, opened The Skywalk last year. This modern-day marvel is the first-ever cantilever-shaped glass walkway to suspend more than 4,000 feet above the canyon's floor and extend 70 feet from the canyon's rim. Envisioned by Las Vegas-based entrepreneur David Jin, The Skywalk was designed by MRJ Architects and is located 120 miles east of Las Vegas at Grand Canyon West's Eagle Point.

Bryce Canyon is located 210 miles (336 kilometers) northeast of Las Vegas in southwestern Utah. This popular national park offers an outdoor exhibition of unique rock formations with imaginative names like Pink Cliffs, Silent City and Cathedral. Bryce Canyon is open throughout the year.

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

Sometimes a girl just needs a break from it all. Gals can indulge in manicures, pedicures or other services, all while sipping champagne.

Shop Till You Drop

If you want it, Vegas has it. From designer splurges to bargain deals, Las Vegas has become a one-stop shopping Mecca. Everything from colorful souvenir shops to haute couture boutiques can be found in retail centers along the Las Vegas Strip and surrounding areas.

The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace with more than 526,000 square feet of retail space features 160 shops and boutiques such as Harry Winston, Ted Baker, Thomas Pink, Nanette Lepore and Vosges Haut Chocolats. Gucci, Guess, Christian Dior, NikeTown and Fendi, plus 13 restaurants and specialty food shops such as Wolfgang Puck's Spago, Joe's Stone Crab, Il Mulino, Sushi Roku and Boa Steakhouse.

The Fashion Outlets of Las Vegas shopping mall in Primm, Nev., features more than 100 brand names such as DKNY, Calvin Klein, Kenneth Cole, Banana Republic, Williams-Sonoma, Harley-Davidson, Alpaca Pete's, Bath & Body Works

and Wilson's Leather. It is located at the Southern Nevada/California border, 35 miles south of Las Vegas off of Interstate 15. Shuttle bus service is available from the Las Vegas Strip as well as from New York-New York Hotel & Casino and MGM Grand.

VALUE-ADDED VEGAS

For those looking to make the most of their travel budget while visiting the "Entertainment Capital of the World," there are myriad options for the value-conscious visitor. Here are just a few:

Free attractions line the Las Vegas Strip and they're not hard to find. **The Mirage's volcano** erupts in a lagoon filled with waterfalls and palm trees every 15 minutes from dusk to midnight. The Mirage is renovating its famed volcano and will reopen the attraction by the end of 2008. The volcano at The Mirage has mesmerized spectators since the resort opened in 1989.

Next door, nightly passersby can catch the **"Sirens of TI" at Treasure Island**. The revamped version showcases the popular pyrotechnic war as male renegade pirates battle "sexy sirens" of Sirens' Cove. Performances run every 90 minutes beginning at 7 p.m.

Meanwhile, the world-famous **Fountains at Bellagio** thrill visitors with more than 1,000 water-emitting devices choreographed to music by artists such as Frank Sinatra, Elton John, Whitney Houston and Andrea Bocelli.

At The Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino, the newly reinvented "Show in the Sky" features dancers in costume fashions on floats suspended above the crowd. Three different performances include sexy and seductive "scenes" coordinated to today's top music hits.

Downtown's famous, casino-lined street is now the **Fremont Street Experience**, a 175,700-square-foot pedestrian area covered by a continuous canopy studded with more than 14 million lights. Each evening on the hour, this canopy comes alive with spectacular light-and-sound shows.

NEW VA-12 ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Darren Whitehead 1980-1984

TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$823.07
Dues/Donations	1985.55
SUB TOTAL	2808.62
Stamps	90.00
Envelopes	25.21
Printing	237.31
Reunion Expenses	1864.72
CURRENT EXPENSES	2217.24
NEW BALANCE	591.38
Set aside for Navy Memorial Plaque	460.00

I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones, Burke.

A sailor could find much in the Navy – comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, we still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods – the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chiefs' quarters and mess decks. Gone ashore for good now, we grow humble about our Navy days, when the seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, we stand taller and proudly say, "I was a sailor once."

THE DAY AFTER ELVIS DIED

Well, the day Elvis passed away was August 16, 1977. But the significance of this is actually what happened the next day. And where I was, was on-board CV-62 USS Independence in the middle of a Med Cruise.

That next day, the 17th, started without any particular fanfare; wake up, visit the head for various reasons, dress and go to chow, and then go to the shop. I think it was when I first reached the shop that we knew the day had changed.

This was AIMD Shop 3 and there wasn't a terrible back-log of gear to work on. As far as we knew in advance, this would be just another day at sea, working on gear.

One of the guys in the shop was an AE2 named Ray Cates. Ray was a big ol' southern boy and he enjoyed listening to his

collection of Waylon Jennings and Elvis Presley – with a little Willie Nelson thrown in - while working on gear. He was a pretty mild-mannered sort of guy who always had a dip of Copenhagen chew working, and you never heard much commotion coming from his neck of the woods. I won't say he stuck to himself; he was just a quite guy who did his job. But on this day he was not quiet. He was bawling his eyes out and everyone who arrived at the shop heard this. Several of us who arrived at the same moment collected over there near the bench where he typically worked, and there he was crying. It was a tough thing to see somebody so torn up over something. You don't often run into such profound and heart-felt emotional pain.

One of the guys asked him what was going on and he had to calm down a bit to get it out, that back home in the US, Elvis Presley had died. I can't remember how the news had arrived, over the Indy TV channel, or via the Indy daily newspaper sheet. I don't recall hearing this over the 1MC.

He said that this might not mean much to most folks but for him, Elvis was his hero. Elvis came up out of the Mississippi mud of nothingness to become the King of Rock And Roll.

Well eventually it all quieted down. Later on, I borrowed the occasional cassette tape from Ray and listened to a lot of Elvis Presley stuff. Things you don't often hear when a medley of his hits is played. I developed my own fondness for Elvis' music and enjoy many of his later hits to this day.

But I have a hard time forgetting how bad the news of his death had been for Ray. This was maybe the first time I had been close to someone who was overcome by emotions and pain to that degree.

MY ELVIS CONNECTION

I attended "AQ - A" school at NATTC Millington in 1975 and one of my classmates was a 2nd class who was cross-rating to the AQ aviation rating. We'd all chat during breaks and it came out once that this guy's wife was a nurse who had gotten a job in a Memphis hospital while he was attending the Navy school. This turned out to be the very same hospital that Elvis was admitted into for one of his so-called "gastric distress problem" episodes. My schoolmates' wife was in the unit where he was treated. Upon his discharge, Elvis bought everyone in that unit a brand new 1975 Pontiac Bonneville, including my buddies' wife. That's what he claimed, anyway. (But after all these years, I can't remember if he preceded the story with "Once upon a time..." or "Now this is no shit...") (Submitted by John Larch 76-79)

SHIPBOARD NEWBIE GO'FER ITEMS

You got a newbie in the shop and it was time to treat him to the Royal Run-Around, right? Here's an assembled list of GO'FER stuff, or jobs to be done.

- A bucket of prop wash for an A-7E
- A gallon of jet blast

- A left-handed wrench from the tool room
- A fathom of flight line
- A fathom of water line from the boatswain's locker
- Red and green oil for the running lights
- High frequency cleaner from the AE shop
- Aluminum panel stretcher from the Airframes shop
- Dehydrated water from the boiler room
- Relative bearing grease
- Fifty feet of chow line
- The keys for aircraft 407
- A Sea Bat
- Sound powered phone batteries
- Report for sweepers in the bowling alley
- Go find a fallopian tube for the PMS Radar

UBANGI STOMP

John Gynan treated some of us having an internet connection, to a snippet of film from a Bob Hope Christmas Show in 1966. Bob and guest Joey Heatherton were doing the "UBANGI STOMP". So I got curious and here are the lyrics to that "Rockabilly" song:

UBANGI STOMP

Warren Smith, 1956
 Well I rocked over Italy and I rocked over Spain
 I rocked in Memphis, it was all the same
 Well, I rocked through Africa and rolled off the ship
 And seen them natives doin' an odd lookin' skip
 I parted the weeds and looked over the swamp



Advance Guard Reunion Scouts, cleverly disguised as golfers. L to R - John Larch, Eric Harvie, Bob Fossum, Bill Heck, Ed Thomas, and Mike Landers.

I said that's alright, you go right ahead
 I'm gonna Ubangi-stomp 'till I roll over dead

NAS CAR FANS

Ed Fennell lives in Bristol, TN very near the speedway. He has graciously offered a place to stay for Ubangis attending the race. Call (423) 538-9667, or (423) 431-4586.

2008 PHOTOS



Friday golfers. Standing L to R - Eric Harvie, Bill Heck, Joe Kyle, Lynn Heck, John Larch. Kneeling - Ed Thomas, Mike Landers, Bob Kaplan. Bob Fossum Photo



Friday Icebreaker Fun at the Marriott



Friday Icebreaker Fun at the Marriott



Friday Icebreaker Fun at the Marriott



Saturday Evening. Ubangis preparing to board the SOUTHERN BELLE dinner cruise boat.



VA-12 Wives on-board the SOUTHERN BELLE



Saturday Evening. Seated for dinner on the SOUTHERN BELLE.



The SOUTHERN BELLE



Our Chattanooga Hosts Bob and Dottie Kaplan, and Lynn and Bill Heck.

UBANGI?

UBETCHA !



EDITORS CONTACT INFO

Joe Kyle 10421 Barbara, Pinckney MI 48169
 Home (734) 878-0556
 Cell (810) 923-4426

John Larch 4689 Future Drive NE Salem OR 97305
 (this issue) Home (503) 362-3550