



ATFAR NEWS

ALL THAT FUN AFTER RETIREMENT

2023

We hope you will join us for RENDEZVOUS 2024 in Phoenix, Arizona

WOW! Did we have a good time during Rendezvous 2023 or what?

What a turnout! Rendezvous 2023, in Huntsville, Alabama was attended by over 100 ATFAR members and we HAD A BLAST!

ATFAR Members had an exciting three days in Huntsville, Alabama which included a fantastic tour of the National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR), getting to see burn cell demonstrations, a demonstration of the capabilities of an ATF K-9, a firsthand look at a post-blast training scenario and always a crowd favorite, lots of explosions at the explosives range.

As if the day at NCETR was not enough, ATFAR members spent a full day at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center where they received personalized tours of the facility and were able to meet rocket designers, rocket scientists, and a genuine NASA astronaut.



A table of goodies donated by ATFAR members for the nightly raffle and auction.

Get your shorts and flip flops ready! ATFAR is headed to PHOENIX.

ATFAR is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization committed to keeping retired ATF employees active, up to date and in touch with each other. Our motto says it all:

Fellowship Based on a
Lifetime of Service.

ATFAR
Box 547
Mountain Home, TN
37684

Jimm Langley
Executive
Director

Yes, you read that right. The ATFAR membership voted to hold our next Rendezvous in Phoenix!

We hope that you can join us for Fun and Fellowship in the desert.

Get your shorts and flip-flops ready, lather up with SPF 30 and buckle up! We are planning a great trip.

More information about Rendezvous 2024 can be found in this newsletter.



WOW DID WE HAVE FUN IN HUNTSVILLE!

RENDEZVOUS 2023

The ATFAR Rendezvous in Huntsville, Alabama was a hoot! Not only was it the most highly attended Rendezvous in recent history but perhaps one of the most fun.

The Rendezvous started off with a schedule change as the trip to NCETR, which had been on the agenda for Monday, was moved to Tuesday. Monday became the rest day with no events scheduled other than the LEOSA range qualification which was attended by about twelve members.

Tuesday morning found ATFAR members boarding two chartered buses and being driven to Redstone Arsenal, home of the National Center for Explosives Research and Training (NCETR). Thanks to Special Agent in Charge Patrick Gorman, ATFAR members were treated to a very special and exclusive tour of NCETR.



NCETR SAC Patrick Gorman welcomes ATFAR members and explains ATF's roll at NCETR.

Attendees were given a fantastic demonstration of the capabilities and skills of one of ATF's highly trained "Item" dogs. They were able to view, not one, but two fire cell burns and participate in two explosives demonstrations and interact with students attending Post-Blast training. Two lucky ATFAR members had very memorable days as they were able to "Throw the Switch" and detonate two separate charges, naturally after yelling "Fire in the Hole - Fire in the Hole!"



Members were able to view a very exclusive explosives demonstration during a HME (Home Made Explosive) class.

While at the NCETR John F. Capono Memorial Explosive Range, ATFAR members were treated to a very fancy lunch of ham & cheese sandwiches, turkey & cheese sandwiches, potato chips and cookies served in brown paper bags. This fine gourmet meal had been lovingly prepared by ATFAR volunteers the evening before after a quick trip to the grocery store for supplies. Over one hundred sandwiches were prepared -there were none left.

After a full and exciting day at NCETR the members boarded buses and went back to the hotel for an evening of fun and fellowship. ATFAR members were able to bid on items donated by members during the nightly auction and won "Adult Dangerous Door Prizes" during the nightly raffle. There were lots of laughs and a lot of money was raised to help pay for the Rendezvous.

Wednesday morning found us again boarding chartered buses and heading to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville for a personal tour of the facility. The groups were broken into three groups and spent the day touring the center, participating in NASA events and even hanging out with a couple of genuine Rocket Scientists. After a full day at the Rocket Center an exhausted crew of ATFARians made their way back to the hotel where we had our annual business meeting and enjoyed a terrific banquet. All in all, Huntsville, Alabama was a great location for the Rendezvous and everyone had a great time.

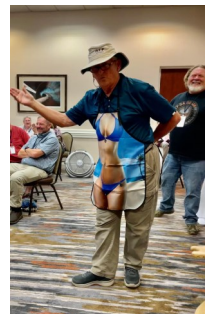


The Rocket Center was very interesting

The Fun and Fellowship during Rendezvous 2023 was fantastic! We hope you will join us next year in Phoenix for another great Rendezvous.



Colleen Then Kern (left) and Gus Gary (right) model their Adult Dangerous Door Prizes.



HAVING A
BLAST IN
HUNTSVILLE

Rendezvous 2023 Huntsville, Alabama

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ATFAR members being welcomed by NCETR SAC Patrick Gorman.



First time attendee Gary Sexsmith admiring the NRT truck that was at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001



Left: Scott Sweetow won the auction for this impressive piece of history. Thank You Scott.



Right: Michelle Kauffman Carr modeling one of the Adult Dangerous Door Prizes.



Is there intelligent life out there? There is at an ATFAR Rendezvous!

**ATFAR IS GOING TO PHOENIX FOR
THE NEXT RENDEZVOUS!
WE HOPE YOU JOIN US.**

A Life Goal 49 Years in the Making



In the fall of 1971, having dreamed of playing college football for the University of Montana Grizzlies, Steve Gunderson made a last-minute decision to walk-on uninvited and try out for the team. A month before the fall semester started, he rushed in an application, took the SAT, and was accepted as a student. He surprised himself by making the freshman team and becoming a starter on the defensive line. Near the end of the season, his SAT was finally tabulated. A poor performance caused him to be placed on academic probation, made ineligible, and forced him to miss the final game of the year.

In 1972, Steve did not attempt to play football, instead focusing on improving his grades. The U.S. was fully involved in the Viet Nam war and Steve held a low Selective Service lottery number. He fully anticipated being drafted into the military any day.

In January 1973, the signing of the Paris Peace Accords ended the war in Viet Nam and the Selective Service draft process along with it. Steve had improved his academic standing giving him hope for athletic eligibility.

In the spring of 1973, Steve decided to once again pursue his dream of college football and – again – walk-on at UM. Head Coach Jack Swarthout commended Steve's performance but by the end of spring drills still had not confirmed whether Steve had, or had not, made the team, or whether there was a future for him in continuing to try.

Steve was discouraged and believed he'd failed to make the team. He considered contacting the coaching staff but believed that if they wanted him on the team, they would have told him, "My self-esteem told me not to pursue it just to be further embarrassed." Like most college students, Steve had inconsistent living arrangements moving between apartments and rental houses (mail would not likely have been received), he had no hard-line telephone, and of course, no email or cellular phone.

In the summer of 1973, believing he had failed in his football goals, Steve left Missoula. He landed in Salt Lake City, found a job, continued his education, met a girl, got married, and together they had a family. He followed the Grizzlies and his once hoped-for teammates through news reports.

Steve went on to an illustrious career in law enforcement as a local police officer and sheriff's deputy before eventually becoming an ATF Agent in 1986. His first assignment was to the Spokane, Washington field office. In the 1990's he served two long-term stints on the ACES (Armed Criminal Enforcement Squad) gang task forces in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, California. He later served as the Resident Agent in Charge for the Billings, Montana field office and finished his career as a street agent in the Missoula, Montana field office. He was highly respected for his undercover work on multiple outlaw motorcycle gangs and other complex investigations. He retired in April 2010, but Steve's football odyssey had not yet ended.

Did you know...

The cost of mailing the ATFAR newsletter is going up and up and up. Also, if you move or have provided us the wrong address the ATFAR newsletter will be returned by the post office to ATFAR at a cost of \$1.00 each! Make sure your address is up to date!!!

Submit your stories for publication in the ATFAR newsletter to atfarsetup@gmail.com

Fast forward to November 2022. While searching for an old friend on the internet, Steve came across an electronic copy of the 1973 University of Montana Football Media Guide (link attached below with page copies). While scrolling through it, he was shocked to learn that forty-nine years earlier he had made the team! The media guide had been produced the summer of '73 without his knowledge and no one had ever contacted him to let him know he was a member of the squad before he'd left town. He'd spent nearly his entire adult life believing that he'd failed to achieve his goal of playing college football until stumbling across the confirmation.

"As I went through the guide, unbelievably, I saw my name on the roster! I had made the team! I just never knew it. I never expected to be anything great. All I wanted was to play college ball and possibly letter in the sport. I don't think it would have drastically changed my life. It was a youthful goal that I thought I'd never attained."



CONGRATULATIONS GUNDO!!!

*Wow! What a great story!
Not many people get to fulfill
a goal like that and you did it
without even knowing it!*

*A big thank you is sent out to
the anonymous submitter of
this story—keep them coming!*

We need your stories.

Help us keep the ATFAR newsletter interesting. Submit your stories and recollections so we can share them with the ATFAR membership.

Submit your article, story or your recollections to us at:

atfarsetup@gmail.com



Don't forget to pay your dues!



Did you know that 58% of ATFAR members are now Current on their dues? Thank you for staying up to date!

**If you are not one of the 58%
You can pay your dues at
ATFAR.org or mail your dues
to ATFAR— Box 547 Mountain
Home, Tennessee 37684**



RENDEZVOUS 2024 PHOENIX ARIZONA

Join us for **All That Fun And Relaxation in
Phoenix Arizona May 19 - 22, 2024**

Enjoy a Steamboat tour of Canyon Lake, Lunch at an 1800's
Saloon, the Hall of Flame Firefighting Museum, Golf Shopping
and a Float Trip down the Salt River.





Itinerary Rendezvous 2024

Monday May 20: Dolly Steamboat Tour & Lunch at Tortilla Flat

After a short morning chartered bus ride you will be able to sit back, relax and take in the gorgeous views of the Superstition Mountain's famous Canyon Lake. During this one-and-a-half-hour, six-mile cruise, you may see desert bighorn sheep, bald eagles and a host of other animals and local wildlife viewed from the decks of the Steamboat Dolly!

After the Dolly returns us to the dock we will head for the world famous Superstition Saloon in Tortilla Flat and enjoy a late lunch before boarding the bus and returning to our hotel.

5:00 PM—HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS

Tuesday May 21: LEOSA Range & Free Day

Free Day - If you are not shooting at the LEOSA Range, relax, there are no events scheduled for Tuesday. This is your day to enjoy a golf outing, visit the Phoenix Botanical Garden, tour the Hall of Flame Firefighting Museum, the Musical Instrument Museum, or brush up on your Native American knowledge by touring the Heard Museum. Don't forget, there are also several casinos in the Phoenix area

5:00 PM— HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS

Wednesday May 22: Tubing on the Salt River.

Bring a towel, your water shoes and your sunscreen and get ready to have some fun relaxing as you float down the gentle, meandering Salt River. Enjoy the cool and clear water as the river winds its way through the scenic Tonto National Forest. The scenery along the river is beautiful, with towering saguaro cacti, lush greenery, and the occasional glimpse of wildlife. We will take coolers of ice cold beverages along on this float trip.

Or:

Art & Jewelry Class

If you prefer to skip the river tubing you can remain at the Hotel and participate in a fantastic Art and jewelry making Class. Learn the art of making Glass Cabochons and / or make a one of a kind piece of bead-ware jewelry. You may even be inspired in the painting class and create a masterpiece.

5:00 PM - HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS

6:00 PM— ATFAR Annual Meeting & Banquet

Rendezvous wraps up on Wednesday evening with the annual business meeting and Banquet. This year we will be treated to traditional South-West cuisine.





Rendezvous 2024: Registration \$65.00 per person

May 19-23 Phoenix, Arizona

Fellowship based on a lifetime of service

Sunday, May 19,2024: Hospitality Room opens at 5:00 pm.

Monday, May 20: Dolly Steamboat Cruise on Canyon Lake
Lunch—Tortilla Flats Saloon
Hospitality Suite

Tuesday, May 21: Range—LEOSA / Free Day
Hospitality Suite

Wednesday, May 22: Salt River Tubing or Art / Jewelry Making Class
ATFAR annual business meeting.
ATFAR annual banquet

- * Rendezvous Registration fee: \$65.00 per person
- * Dolly Steamboat—Tortilla Flats lunch: \$85.00 per person*
- * Salt RiverTubing—60.00 per person*
- * Art / Jewlery Making—40.00 per person

- * Hotel: \$153.00.00 per room per night.

Drury Inn & Suites
1780 West Ranch Road
Tempe, Arizona
480-940-3700

Rooms blocked under ATF Association of Retirees
Rooms must be booked by April 17 to receive
the \$153.00 discounted rates.

You may contact the hotel direct or go to ATFAR.org and use the link to make your hotel reservations online. You may also register for the RENDEZVOUS at ATFAR.org or register by mail using this form.

**Includes bus rental fee of \$30.00*

**Please register early so tickets may be purchased prior to price increase.*

ATFAR Member Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Guest Name: _____

Total number of attendees x \$65.00 = _____

Total number Dolly Steamboat x \$85.00 _____

Total number Salt River Tubing x \$60.00 _____

Total number Art Class x \$40.00 _____

TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE SUBMITTED: _____

Make checks payable to: ATFAR

Mailing Address: ATFAR—BOX 547
Mountain Home, Tennessee 37684

More Fun From RENDEZVOUS 2023—Huntsville Alabama



**We hope to see you at Rendezvous 2024 in
Phoenix Arizona May 19-23!**

Additional photos are available on the ATFAR Facebook page.

A Life Well Served

Remembering Philip McGuire



This article, prepared by Jo Ann Kocher, was originally published in the ATF Association newsletter. It is reprinted here as a tribute to Phil and his outstanding leadership abilities and his concern for always doing the right thing.

It is believed that, in every life, one or more persons step up and provide profound influence that can change that life. This can be true of organizations too. In ATF's case, Phillip McGuire was often that person.

In 1962, when Phil was sworn in as an ATF Special Agent, he was just 23 years old, making him the youngest ATF agent in the country. He spent most of his first five years undercover infiltrating moonshine operations. He was so deep in these bootlegging cases that his family had to live under assumed identities. His first son was actually born under a fictitious name.

Times change and, when the Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed, ATF's focus moved to investigations involving illegal possession or use of firearms. ATF was subsequently given enforcement responsibility for federal explosives laws, including arson. As Phil assumed progressively more responsible positions in ATF, he worked to define the best ways the Bureau could carry out these laws.

In the early 1980s, an attempt was made to abolish ATF. Many employees received Reduction in Force (RIF) notices, resulting in declining morale nationwide. By this point, Phil was in a position to play an important role in saving ATF, thus safeguarding the integrity of the Bureau and many careers. When he retired in 1989, Phil's many contributions to ATF were recognized and celebrated. These accomplishments are still acknowledged today, even by employees who began their careers long after Phil retired.

Phil's recent passing has caused those who knew him to remember and reflect on who he was and how he helped to mold ATF into a premier law enforcement agency. A few of Phil's colleagues and closest friends define what made Phil so special and important in ATF's history.

From SAC Jack Killorin (retired): Phil became Assistant Director (Criminal Enforcement) as part of a new leadership team in ATF after the nearly successful effort to abolish the agency in the early 1980's. With Director Steve Higgins and Assistant Director (Regulatory Enforcement) Bill Drake, the top leadership had to face the challenge of restoring a bureau with severely damaged morale and depleted personnel. Many special agents and others, with termination notice in hand, had moved on to other agencies. This hit particularly hard in the ranks of newer agents and supervisors with a lot of years to go. There's no question among many of us who worked with Phil during this period that today's ATF only exists because of that leadership team and Phil's role.

Phil embodied the transition of ATF from the days of illegal liquor to the violent gun crime, explosives, and arson agency it is today. He could come across as all country, easy going, and no-nonsense in the same day in a way that engendered both affection and deep respect in HQ and down through the field. Phil was proud of where ATF had come from. "Thunder Road" was kind of a humorous, and but also meaningful theme song. But Phil was also clear-eyed on where the future was. The first serious deployment of computers for the agents occurred under his leadership. The Federal arson laws were passed. From being within a hair of being shut down, under Phil the agency took the lead in acts of violence against women's reproductive health centers, recognizing outlaw motorcycle gangs as organized crime, and violent anti-government enclaves such as the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord.

Continued next page...



ATFAR CHALLENGE COINS
Beautiful High Gloss Gold Colored Challenge Coins
with ATFAR logo and ATF Retiree badge

2 coins for \$26.00 includes shipping via USPS

Priority Mail

www.atfar.org

Less visible, but just as important, Phil rebuilt a leadership team for the agency. Phil introduced bringing in agents to HQ as part of their development as future supervisors alongside supervisors on the ASAC track. Training was remodeled on his watch, from new agent to supervisor to in-service and he paid close and personal attention that those programs matched what he intended. It is no exaggeration, that the law enforcement agency leaders and executives who came up under Phil bore his stamp of approval and were committed to meeting his expectations of us.

From SAC Stewart Allen (retired):

I first met Phil in 1985 when I was transferred from Resident Agent in Charge in San Antonio to ATF Headquarters. Assigned to the Resources Branch responsible for Law Enforcement budget, staffing and hiring, I was required to frequently brief Phil, Associate Director and Dan Hartnett, Deputy Associate Director for Law Enforcement. Over the next two years I saw the dedication that Phil had to ATF Law Enforcement and the men and women who worked there, which he demonstrated on a daily basis. His leadership abilities were outstanding. He focused on what was best for ATF Law Enforcement and its mission and he had the ability to build consensus among individuals with strong differences.

In 1987, under his leadership, the Office of Law Enforcement was authorized to hire over 400 new Special Agents in one year; the largest increase in hiring in decades. This significant staffing increase, along with other new programs initiated by Phil, including drug testing and accountability programs, resulted in long hours. As result, I sometimes had early morning coffee with Phil and found we had many things in common including hunting, fishing and antiques. I was transferred as ASAC to New Orleans in 1988 but still often had phone conversations with Phil normally discussing hunting or his purchase of antiques for the new log house he was building in Boone as his retirement home.

After Phil retired in 1989, we remained in contact and in 1990 he invited me up to his newly built hunting cabin on several acres up near Black Duck, Minnesota. Phil was an avid bird dog trainer and Grouse hunter and I also loved to Grouse hunt. Excepting for three years, for the next thirty years every October we would spend at least a week at his cabin hunting, some fishing and in, general, having a great time. Phil was highly thought of and had many, many friends in and around Black Duck. Hunters would routinely gather at his cabin to eat, socialize and tell tales of their hunting exploits. During the months each year that he spent in Black Duck, Phil would also routinely help friends and neighbors with repairs, errands and any other assistance they would need. These were enjoyable times.

From 1989 until his death, seldom a week went by that Phil and I didn't have a phone conversation. He would always inquire about my wife's Bonnie health and our children's activities. He never complained about his own health issues. His concern was for others. Phil was a friend to many people from all walks of life. When I say friend I don't mean acquaintance; I mean "friend". A person you could count on in good times and bad times: an "ear you could bend": a counselor: a mentor, a true friend. And, as a leader he was both strong and compassionate. He truly understood people and had empathy. I will miss him.

From Senior Operations Officer Mike Angel (retired): I first met Phillip McGuire during the 1970's in north Wilkesboro, N.C. while waiting to testify in federal Court regarding a major undercover illicit whiskey case. Prior to the meeting I met with Southeast Region Special Agents and Supervisors in the North Wilkesboro post of duty. They spoke of Philip with admiration and related stories of successful undercover investigations and cases throughout the Southeast Region. At this time, I realized he was something special and a positive role model. With such a reputation, I did not know what to expect and how he would treat a neophyte compared to him. He was truly a southern gentleman, offering welcoming suggestions and advice regarding my upcoming testimony.

Continued page 12...



**Know someone that is
 retiring or has retired from
 ATF? Pass along our web
 page address: Atfar.org**

McGuire continued....

A few years later, Philip was promoted to Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Cincinnati District, and I found myself as his Analyst (precursor to the District Operations Office). I had daily one-to-one contact with him and was fortunate to witness first hand his abilities as a leader. He was always calm, cool and collected. His counseling abilities were unmatched and as the old timers would say, "He had the unique ability to separate the fly specks from the pepper." Mr. McGuire was a true and natural leader. Over the next forty plus years, we became very best friends. I am grateful that I knew him as I did. He will be missed and not forgotten.

From RAC Randall Lacy (retired):

I had the privilege of meeting Phil McGuire in 1975 shortly after he was transferred from San Francisco, California to Cincinnati, Ohio as the Assistant Special Agent in Charge. I found him to be very intelligent, knowledgeable of the federal laws, ATF policies and procedures. Phil was very loyal to the ATF and its mission.

He had an uncanny ability to deal with people especially with his style of constructive criticism. In other words he could chew you out royally and make you feel good at the same time.

Phil McGuire was a very accomplished outdoor person, especially hunting, fishing and camping, of which we did a considerable amount over the years. We had and maintained an unwritten rule during these excursions that there would be no mention of ATF business, investigations or personnel matters.

For forty-five plus years, I considered Phil McGuire a true friend, an excellent co-worker and an excellent supervisor. Phillip McGuire was just a special type of person affectionately known as The Man from Boone.

From SAC James L. Brown (retired):

I first met Mr. McGuire in 1977 after arriving in HQs. as a lucky member of the first "WHACK A RAC" program. As a lowly HQs. project officer, I was initially impressed with Phil's demeanor and down home personality which he exhibited toward those of us who were at a much lower rank in the Bureau.

When Phil was promoted as the Associate Director (Criminal Enforcement) (ADCE) in 1982, ATF was on the verge of being abolished as a Federal law enforcement agency. But, under his exhibited leadership, the Bureau survived the proposed abolishment, and later became an even stronger and more respected Federal agency.

I owe a great deal of gratitude for my career advancement in the Bureau to Phil as I was his first field SAC promotion to Louisville upon his selection as the ADCE. But, 5 years later, I still vividly recall a phone call from him while I was happily enjoying my time in my home state of Kentucky. Phil's conversation started something like this, "I'm going to need you in Miami," and the rest of the conversation went downhill from there.

To make things even worse, he assured me that once I spent a couple of years there, he would bring me back to HQs. (what a deal). Shortly upon my arrival in south Florida, I did an interview with the Miami Herald, which they correctly entitled "Things are Different Here", and were they ever!

Since Phil always kept his promises, two years later, I was back in HQs. for "another seven years." But, after he finally retired, I managed to get back to Louisville as the SAC in 1995.

In spite of my transfer differences with Phil, I always had the highest respect for him for his professionalism and exhibited common sense management style. As a result of his efforts, ATF gained its current day reputation as a premier Federal law enforcement agency.

Even well after his retirement, we stayed in contact by telephone reminiscing about the good ole days, while also complaining about our health issues. Phil had other Kentuckians as longtime friends like Stewart Allen, Mike Angel, Randy Lacy (and many others) who were just common folks like me, and who will continue to cherish his longtime friendship even after his recent passing.

Mary Ann and I extend our deeply sympathies and heartfelt

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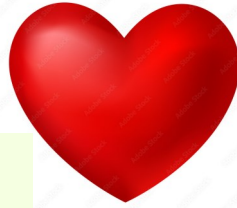


**ATFAR has a new mailing
Address**

**ATFAR
PO BOX 547
Mountain Home TN 37684**

**Please send all correspondence
and / or payments to the new
address.**

A Thank You Gift for Neta from the members of ATFAR



As a token of appreciation and gratitude for her service as ATFAR Executive Director for twenty one years. The membership of ATFAR presented Neta Rice with this beautiful, museum quality settee handmade by ATFAR member Michael Angel's company, Red Dog and Company.

Enjoy the settee Neta—we love you!



The settee was delivered to Neta at her home on St. Simons Island by ATFAR member Matthew Stone and Kim Bowles. Matt commented that "Neta was so excited about the settee that she ran out of the house with only one sock on!"



WE
NEED
YOU...

TO TELL
YOUR
FRIENDS
ABOUT ATFAR

Thank You—Thank You

We would like to thank those of you that have made generous donations to ATFAR for the RENDEZVOUS door prizes, auctions and raffles. Your generosity allows us to have All That Fun during the Rendezvous and raise money to help defray the cost.

Please check the address label on this newsletter. The date shown is the last year you were current on your dues.

ATFAR will no longer send Newsletters to anyone over five year delinquent. If you are in arrears, you may go online and pay your current year dues at ATFAR.org.

TO DO LIST.....

REGISTER FOR RENDEZVOUS
IN PHOENIX ARIZONA

MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS IN
PHOENIX ARIZONA

FIND + PACK ITEMS FOR
AUCTION

WRITE A STORY FOR ATFAR

PAY DUES

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT
ATFAR

Of all possessions a Friend is the most precious - Herodotus

MY LIFE IN RETIREMENT ..

EPISODE II

BY: CARLOS GONZALEZ



In the last newsletter Carlos told us a hilarious story about his 29 hour career at Total Wine. Carlos has returned for this issue with an update on his life in retirement.

So my employment with Total Wine lasted a total of 29 hours which must be a record of some sort. After a few months hiatus from the stresses and hardships of Total Wine, and again putting my liver through hell. I decided that I really needed to go back to work and give my liver a vacation because again, happy hour was starting earlier and earlier. I applied to Costco. I applied based on the recommendation of a friend of mine who works at Costco and felt certain I would get the job. Costco is a lot like the La Cosa Nostra, the Mafia. If you do not have a “godfather” that works there to vouch for you, you will never be a “made man” or employee. I was vouched for by my friend and was scheduled an interview with a member of the management team. I knew that with my work experience, decades as a federal agent, I would fly through the interview like a hot knife through butter. I excelled. My interview was over in just a few minutes and I was told to return at a later date for one final interview.

What on earth could they possibly ask me during the second interview that had not been covered in the first one? I thought about the second interview for hours and pondered which direction it would take. Did I feel qualified to move into a management position? Would I impart some of the wisdom I had developed as a federal agent to the Costco management team? I had no idea where they would go. On the day of my second interview I dressed nicely, arrived early and presented myself for questioning. I was asked one question, “Why do you want to work for Costco?” That was it. I had stressed about and contemplated this interview for days only to be asked why I wanted to work there. Resisting the urge to wisecrack an answer, I replied; “because everyone has a smile on their face and Costco got good reviews on Google for treating their employees right”. Bingo! Right answer! On November 30th I began my second retirement career working for Costco.

My first week was hilarious. I was assigned as a cashier assistant, which is another name for bag boy. No one taught me how to pack carts, there was no on the job training, they just threw me to the wolves and I was supposed to learn how to properly pack a grocery cart by trial and error. I figured hell, you can teach a blind monkey to pack a grocery cart, but believe me, it's more complicated than you think. It's like playing Tetris compounded by the need to put soft items on top and cold items together.

So, one day during my first week as I'm packing a grocery cart, I watched a customer approach the conveyor belt and put a guitar on the belt along with several packages of King Crab legs. This guy looked like one of those guys we've all arrested multiple times during our careers. Before the cashier could say anything, the general manager steps in, looks at the guy, and asks “Where's the box to the guitar?” The so-called “member” who, I could not help thinking that he looked like he had just rolled in dirt said, “I walked in with it—I'm trying to return it—because it doesn't strum right.” The store manager, having seen this type of thing before, knew this guy had taken the store “display” model from the shelf and was trying to exchange it for two hundred and fifty dollars worth of King Crab legs.

ATFAR MEMBERS CAN NOW SAVE 15% ON FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS.

No, this is not a fun subject but it is a necessary one. At one point we are all going to need to secure funeral arrangements for a loved one, a family member or ourselves. Why not save a little money in the process.

Planning a funeral can often be an overwhelming task for family members. There are hundreds of decisions to be made and arrangements to confirm. As a member of a Dignity Memorial® Funeral Benefit partner, you and your extended family are eligible for a range of benefits through our funeral benefit partner, Dignity Memorial that can help alleviate the financial and emotional burdens of planning a funeral.

As an ATFAR member you are entitled to 15% savings on all funeral or cremation products and services you select at Dignity Memorial affiliated funeral homes. 15% savings on cemetery interment rights, products and services through Dignity Memorial affiliated cemeteries.¹

Eligible extended family includes spouse or domestic partner, your children (natural, adopted or stepchildren), and parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of both the ATFAR member and their spouse or domestic partner.

A Dignity Memorial representative can show you how to use these benefits to assist aging family members in making their final arrangements, plan your own service in advance or respond to an unexpected death.

For mor information visit ATFAR at [www: ATFAR.org](http://www.ATFAR.org) and click on the Death Benefits link.

Minutes later the would-be thief was being escorted from the store and I thought to myself that this was going to be a fun place to work—that I would encounter all types of people.

Although I have only been at Costco a short time I am totally amazed that a lot of people who have paid between sixty and one hundred and twenty dollars per year to be a Costco member, feel it is alright to try to steal. I'm not talking about people too poor to pay, I'm talking about people carrying Dolce Gabbana bags, wearing Prada or who drive a Bentley, stealing from Costco. Must be a wealthy thing. Recently a woman dressed in very expensive clothing and Gucci sunglasses approached the register with a three dollar bag of popcorn and a pear in her mouth. We don't sell individual pieces of fruit. She had opened a bag of ten and taken one out to eat while she shopped. Unable to prove she stole the pear the cashier charged her three dollars for the popcorn and we watched her leave.

Costco policy states that even if we were to see someone pushing a big screen television out the door in a cart we are not to intervene. We are only to attempt to take a photo of them and one of the vehicle they put the item in and let management handle it. Crazy! —but I am only an employee. Stay tuned.....

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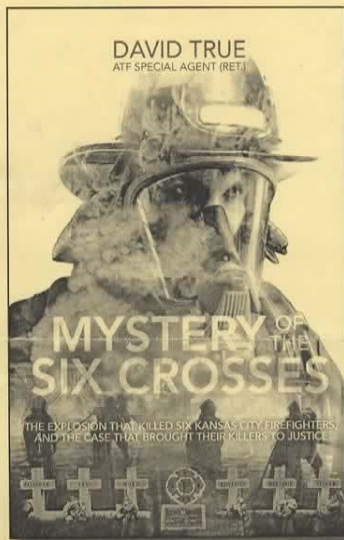
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MYSTERY OF THE SIX CROSSES

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by David True, ATF Special Agent (Ret.)

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About the Author

David True began his career as a public servant from 1966 to 1968 as an Explosives Ordnance Disposal Specialist (EOD) in the United States Army. From 1968 to 1971, he was a St. Louis Metropolitan police officer and detective, assigned to the Bomb and Arson Unit in the homicide division. He joined the ATF in 1971, assigned to the St. Louis and Kansas City offices, performing duties in various capacities as an agent and supervisor. He retired from ATF in 1997 after twenty-six years of service, and accepted a position as a corporate security manager and investigator with Yellow/Roadway Corporation (YRC) until retiring in 2013.

David's first book, *Gangsters, Outlaws and Mobsters—A Missouri History of Twentieth Century Crimes and Criminals*, was published in 2021.

Praise

"David True has documented how one of Kansas City's most heinous crimes was brought to a successful conclusion after eight years of intensive investigation.... As the lead case agent, the final result is a testimony to Agent True's skills as an investigator, supervisor, and diplomat."

— Larry J. Joiner, Kansas City Police Chief (Ret.) and former U.S. Marshal, Western District of Missouri



A message from the ATFAR Executive Director

During the 2023 Rendezvous in Huntsville, Alabama, the ATFAR membership voted me in as Executive Director. I would like to thank each of you for your vote and your vote of confidence. I will do my best to keep ATFAR growing and progressing in a forward trajectory while embracing the core values that make up ATFAR - **Fellowship Based On A Lifetime of Service**. I am very excited about the things that are happening with ATFAR and see that we are filling a much needed service as an association.

We need your help. Along with growth comes the need for more input from the membership. We need to hear from you. Let us know what you would like to see ATFAR doing and how we can better serve the membership.

We also need your time. We need members to contribute time helping with membership drives, hosting and / or assisting with the Rendezvous, tracking ATF retirements and other administrative tasks. We also continue to need members to contribute their stories and remembrances for the ATFAR newsletter. Without your input the newsletter will not survive.

We need your understanding. Not long ago we implemented the ability to pay dues online. It was a great success! There have been a few glitches along the way, a few double billings and a few malfunctions. In each and every incident we have taken corrective actions when we were notified of the error and we thank you for your understanding. One day we will have all the kinks worked out and things will run seamlessly.

Again, thank you for your vote of confidence.

Thank you for your support.

And, as always, thank you for being a member of ATFAR.

Jimm Langley

Executive Director
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