

# Friends Newsletter

Volume 4, Number 5, August 2010

## *President Johnson's JetStar Returns to the LBJ Ranch*



Chief Ranger Gus Sanchez stands beside the JetStar in March when it was released from the Air Force to the National Park Service.

Retired Brigadier General Jim Cross, former pilot of Air Force One for President Johnson, escorts the JetStar from its assembly point on the south end of the ranch airstrip down the taxiway to its permanent display location under a shelter north of the airplane hangar.



The Lockheed JetStar, tail designator 61-2490 makes a final pass in front of the LBJ Ranch airplane hangar before stopping under the protective shelter where it is now on permanent display.

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The Friends of LBJ National Historical Park and the National Park Service are proud to announce that one of President Johnson's Lockheed JetStar aircraft has been restored and returned to the LBJ Ranch. The process to transfer the aircraft from the United States Air Force to the National Park Service began almost three years ago. With the combined efforts of the Friends Board, many individual friends of the park, and park staff the goal of returning one of Johnson's aircraft has been achieved.

The Lockheed JetStar, delivered to the United States Air Force in 1961 began presidential service in 1963. It remained in the President's aircraft fleet until 1978 when it was transferred to Air Force V.I.P. service. The aircraft was retired from service in 1987 with over 17,000 flight hours. It sat in the Sonoran desert at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base until March of this year when the tires were filled and it was moved off base to a nearby location for disassembly and transport to a paint facility in Kingman, AZ. Straube's Aircraft Services did a beautiful job restoring the exterior of the aircraft to its 1960's appearance when it served President Johnson. According to General Cross, President Johnson affectionately referred to the JetStars in his fleet as "Air Force One-Half." Our JetStar is one of six that served President Johnson, but only two, 61-2488, and ours, 61-2490, displayed the presidential paint scheme.

The public has reacted very favorably to the aircraft since reassembly began on the ranch. With only the wings reattached cars were already stopping and visitors were taking pictures and asking questions. Superintendent Russ Whitlock said, "Good communications and fast, reliable aircraft enabled President Johnson to spend one-quarter of his presidency on the LBJ Ranch. Returning the JetStar to the ranch helps the public make the connection."

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### **Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony, August 27<sup>th</sup>**

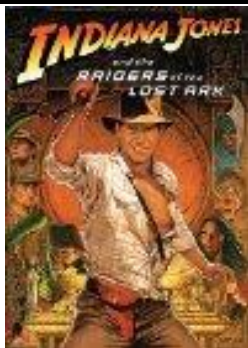
The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park welcomes a United States Air Force Color Guard to the LBJ Ranch at 10:00 AM on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, as we recognize the 102<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of President Johnson's birth. It has been a tradition for many years for the sitting President to send a wreath to the past President's grave site on their birthday. This year General Cross will participate in the wreath laying and share a few memories with the public. Following the ceremony the public is invited to rejoin General Cross at the JetStar to hear his comments and ask questions. General Cross will be available to sign copies of his book, "Around the World with LBJ."

It is a full morning as the park's interpretive ranger staff unveils a new exhibit in the airplane hangar. The exhibit entitled, "The Circle of Life," displays through artwork, photographs, and video President Johnson's ties to the land and the family's history in the area. Also that day, James Davis, an employee and beloved friend of the Johnson family for over 50 years will be on-hand for the dedication of James Davis Road on the ranch. This new road connects the taxiway to the ranch exit route and allows the Texas White House complex to be pedestrian only.

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### **Aircraft Fill the Sky Over the LBJ Ranch September 18 and 19**

The International Bird Dog Association and the Texas Military Forces Museum, in cooperation with the National Park Service is sponsoring a "Vietnam Service Commemoration and Bird Dog Invitational Fly-In" to the LBJ Ranch the weekend of September 18-19. "Bird Dog" was a term referring to single engine scout planes used during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Joining the Bird Dog event will be representatives from Camp Mabry in Austin who will display a Vietnam era camp and fly in Huey helicopters for display. Vietnam re-enactors from around the country will conduct a combat demonstration on both days. Watch for a press release on event times or visit the park's website at [www.nps.gov/lyjo](http://www.nps.gov/lyjo).



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### **Raiders of the Lost Ark on the Big Screen, September 25**

Remember the first time you sat on the end of your seat as Indiana Jones ran out of that South American cave with a huge boulder closing in? Our Movies Under the Stars programs have been enjoyed by hundreds on the LBJ Ranch through the last three summers. The Friends and park staff thought it would be fun to bring the opportunity for families to gather under the stars in Johnson City and enjoy more recent classics. Bring your lawn chairs, picnics and favorite beverage. The movie will be shown in the back yard of President Johnson's Boyhood Home. The movie begins approximately 7:30 PM.

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### **Third Annual Barbeque on the Pedernales, October 23**

The Friends are happy to announce the next Barbeque on the Pedernales will be held in the historic oak grove, along the Pedernales River, on the LE Ranch. Bret Graham and his band will join us again to provide wonderful western swing and country favorites. LBJ Library Director Mark Updegrove is planning a fun "history lesson" on the rancher president. And the barbeque dinner of brisket, sausage, and chicken will be prepared by Blanco's own Riley's Barbeque. The event begins at 4:00 PM with drinks and time to greet old friends and make new ones.



The program begins at 5:00 PM with the meal served at 6:00 PM. Guests are invited to enjoy the lovely setting and Bret Graham's music into the evening. Registration is available on the Friends website.

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### **Follow the Friends and the Park on Facebook**

Weekly we are posting pictures and articles about the park on our Facebook Page. Become a fan of the Friends on Facebook and you'll receive automatic updates when new pictures or links are added to the page. There is nothing like pictures to tell our story, and you'll see many projects in the works throughout the park.

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