



# The Sijan Sentinel

Volume 7 – 2024

December 2024

WELCOME TO AFA  
SIJAN CHAPTER #125



President: Caty Rozema  
Vice President: Aaron Prupas  
Secretary: Gayle Divine  
Treasurer: Coen Williams

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*"Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. [...]"*  
- Margaret Mead

AFA is 110,000+ members strong. We represent a worldwide group of people connected by service in/to, and support of our United States Air and Space Forces. Hundreds of people serve in AFA leadership roles at the local, state, region, and national levels. Your Sijan board is a small (but mighty!) group of six committed people (and their spouses, when they're volunteered) who are changing the world!

In 2024 we:

- Celebrated an amazing teacher through the AFA Teacher of the Year Program.
- Awarded scholarships to bright young students.
- Volunteered at JROTC drill meets and handed out multiple awards to local detachments.
- Collaborated with the USAFA Arnold Air Society cadets to host two campus tours.
- Hosted a table at USAFA's freshmen in-processing day.
- Supported multiple school STEM days.
- Sat with students as they spoke with astronauts on the ISS.
- Collaborated with Janine Sijan-Rozine (Lance Sijan's sister and a dear friend of the chapter) and others to show the Sijan movie.
- Scooped out ice cream for a little spring sweetness.
- Held our first quarterly birthday party. The next one's in January... look for information soon!
- Met with recruiters to work on partnering to share the goodness that is YOUR United States Air & Space Forces.
- Attended the AFA National Convention to learn about how we can be even more effective in our community.
- And on and on and on...

There is nothing more exciting than watching this amazingly dedicated group of humans deliver on AFA's mission to educate, advocate, and support Airmen, Guardians, and their families. Every small act makes our community better. Every good community makes our nation stronger. And a strong nation changes the world!

In 2025, we will continue to change the world. If you want to change with world too, please join us! We have the following board positions open (and we're ALWAYS looking for volunteers):

- VP of Aerospace Education      - VP of Veterans' Affairs      - VP of Programs

Want to know more? Reach out to me any time! [co125.sijan.president@afa.org](mailto:co125.sijan.president@afa.org) or 719-358-0223

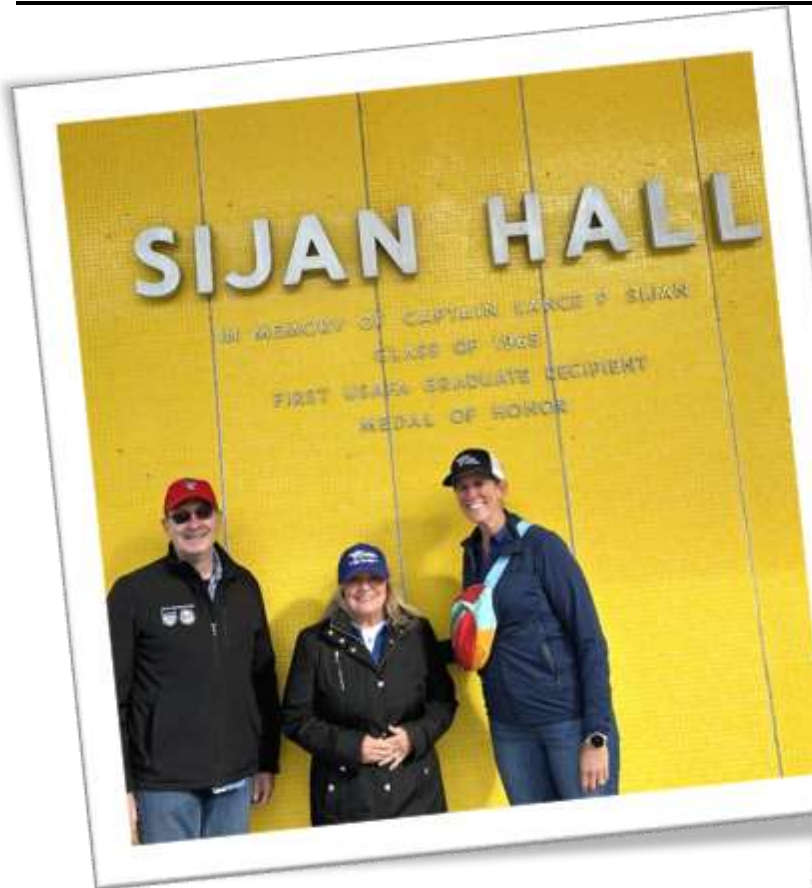
Together, this small group of dedicated people will change the world!

In service, Caty

Happy Holidays!

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH CATY

**Left/Below:** On October 19, 2024, a lucky group of AFA members and friends were treated to a tour of the Air Force Academy given by the Cadets themselves. We had the privilege of visiting areas not part of normal public tours. We've shared a few photos in this newsletter but watch for information about another tour and be sure to sign up. You'll get to see a unique view of the Academy and learn about it from a Cadet's perspective.



**Right:** Allie, Caty, and Aaron setting up our first quarterly birthday party at The Club/Hub at Peterson Space Force Base on October 17, 2024. We had a great turnout, giving away lots of delicious cake, some of it graciously donated by our most delicious Community Partner, Nothing Bundt Cakes! We also handed out Josh and John's gift cards to several lucky raffle winners with birthdays in the 4th quarter of 2024!

**Stay tuned for the date/time of our Q1 2025 party!!**

## COMING UP

Be sure to visit our [website](#) for details on upcoming events or email us at [LancePSijanAFA@gmail.com](mailto:LancePSijanAFA@gmail.com). Your participation in these activities and events is a fantastic way to support our future leaders and connect with the local Air & Space Forces community!



### Lance P Sijan Chapter Monthly Leadership Meetings

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of Month, 5:00PM, Visit our [website](#) for in-person location and online link  
These are our regular business meetings, but all are welcome to listen in. It's a great way to learn more about what's happening inside Sijan and find out about volunteer opportunities.

**SIJAN SPECIAL FEATURE****Air & Space Forces Association Nation Convention – *By Linda Aldrich***

As is tradition, our Colorado delegation turned out in force for all events of the 2024 AFA National Convention at the Gaylord in Maryland. Colorado delegates Mike Sumida, Rick Ragaller, Jerry White, Joan Sell, Shannon Farrell, Emily Sawicki, Brent Sawicki, Caty Rozema, Linda Aldrich and Kristen Christy represented three of the four Colorado Chapters, along with Vice Chair of the Board-Education, Stephen Gourley. Not only did we fill nearly all our allotted delegate positions, but we filled every allotted voting position to determine National Board members prior to the Convention. The approach to voting for National officers pre-Convention was a first-time implementation, with voting done on-line up to midnight the first day of the Convention. By so doing, many more members nationwide had their voices heard at the Convention even if they were unable to attend in person. The Rocky Mountain Region was also represented by a full roster of Utah delegates.

Each delegate chose what was of greatest interest to them or their Chapter from the list of four National Convention Workshops. Len Vernamonti led the presentation on the Heritage Committee, a source for our Chapters to get ideas on Vietnam recognition events and to secure Vietnam veteran pins for our local veterans. Paul Hendricks, the newly elected National secretary, gave an advocacy update, a committee in which our own Mike Sumida has been the Colorado representative. Advocacy involves more than just talking about AFA; it also extends to how our local recruiters should be involved in AFA Chapters for the mutual benefit of recruiting and mentoring. Advocacy also addresses Enlisted pay raises, childcare, ICBM modernization and a wealth of issues that affect us all on a national level. Janelle Stafford offered a wealth of suggestions for building stronger chapter and field leaders, the majority of which have direct application for Colorado Chapters. Janelle was recognized as the National Member of the Year, a well-deserved award for all the time and innovation she has brought to AFA. Finally, a much-needed education session was presented by Todd Freece on Understanding and Supporting Space Force Guardians at the Chapter Level. More detail can be found at <https://www.livebinders.com/b/3601891> and <https://www.afa.org/national-convention>.

Saturday afternoon kicked off with a welcome by Chairman, Bernie Scoch, introducing two days of business sessions and announcement of the newly elected National officers. National election results: Gary Copsey, Vice Chair of the Board Education; Paul Hendricks, National Secretary; Chuck Martin, National Treasurer; Bobi Oates, National Director for the West Geographical Area; and Doug “Odie” Slocum and Dan “Ohno” Ohnesorge, National Directors at large. Congratulations to our officers. We know we will continue strong and effective leadership for AFA!

It’s no surprise the Awards Banquet at the Annual Convention is the highlight of the trip for most of us. As always, it is a grand event in a ballroom at the National Harbor Gaylord with big screens, music to accompany each award and lots of shouting and cheering as our Chapters receive awards. Once again, Mel Harmon Chapter in Pueblo was Colorado’s star of the show with Mike Sumida receiving, on behalf of the Chapter, Aerospace Education Achievement, Aerospace Education Excellence Award - Small Chapter, Community Partner Achievement Award, Community Partner Gold Award, and National Best Small Chapter Award. Stephen Gourley proudly accepted the Aerospace Education Achievement and Exceptional Service Award - United Forces & Families for the Mile High Chapter. Additionally, Caty Rozema was recognized individually as a Medal of Merit Recipient! Because not all of our individual award winners were able to attend, we recognized Kenn Bowens, Mark “Yak” Maryak, and Patricia Swan at the State Awards Banquet as Medal of Merit recipients. Well done, Colorado, you certainly represent the dedication of our local volunteers.

Saturday evening closed with Regional Caucuses, one being held for Rocky Mountain Region and run by Fran Bradshaw from Utah. The primary discussion was on organizing a committee with members from each Rocky Mountain Region (Colorado, Utah, Wyoming) to recruit executive board members for the next two-year term, to include more than just the Region president. Having a full executive board will allow for better communication to the state chapter, facilitate mentoring an incoming president for the turn-over every two years, and help ease the burden of award reviews and information flow for the president. The measure was approved by the delegates.

The AFA National Convention is always a huge opportunity for delegates to gather information and a host of materials to take back to our Chapters in the field to better support the mission of AFA. Our delegates are looking forward to the quarterly state meetings where they will have an opportunity to share all the suggestions and recommendations acquired

from the National presentations. We understand it is expensive to travel to the east coast, so we are particularly appreciative of the delegates who donated their time and finances to make the trip. We owe a huge thank you to the AFA National Staff for the enormous amount of planning, preparation and time required to bring about an event such as the Convention. Every year is a success most certainly because of their outstanding efforts.



**Left:** Mike Sumida receives a National Award for Mel Harmon Chapter



**Right:** Stephen Gourley receives a Mile High National Award

**Right:** Caty Rozema and National staff member, Kari Voliva



**Far Right:** Emily and Brent Sawicki



## 2024 SIJAN BOARD HOLIDAY DINNER

On December 12, the Sijan board met for our holiday party. We swapped out our usual meeting treats of coffee and pastries for delicious steaks and all the fixin's. We caught up on life "outside the chapter"- including how quickly kiddos or grandkiddos are growing, the next classic car show, travel plans, work or retirement updates, and all other manner of life events and activities. It was, in a word... wonderful!

We couldn't help but plan for 2025 because that's how much we love serving this community! Just like Santa, we've got lots of great things in store, so keep your eyes peeled for information. Have ideas about how we can serve the Front Range in 2025? Let us know!



## 2024 AIR FORCE ACADEMY TOUR



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

### AFA Announces 2025 Scholarship Opportunities - Air & Space Forces Association

#### AFA National Scholarship Application Cycle is OPEN APPLY NOW!



Offering more than \$100,000 in educational funds to support Airmen, Guardians, their spouses, and their children in pursuing higher education. Applications for all 11 Scholarships accepted through April 30, 2025

### Become a Community Partner!

“Becoming a Community Partner is a great way to get your business involved with your local Air Force and Space Force community! For more than 40 years, businesses have been joining the Air & Space Forces Association to support both AFA National and local AFA chapters.

Not only does a Community Partner receive all the benefits of an AFA membership, such as a variety of product and service discounts, insurance programs, and much more, but the partner will also receive a wooden plaque with a date medallion and a window decal. These will show customers and clients that your business supports our troops!”

Category One (CP I) \$90.00 annually - Business can designate one person to receive AFA Membership and enjoy all benefits thereof.

Category Two (CP II) \$180.00 annually - Business can designate two people to receive AFA Membership and enjoy all benefits thereof.

Want to know more? Check out <https://www.afa.org/membership/community-partners>

Do you like golf? Birthday parties? Races? Ball games? Corn hole? We want to hear from you! *Send us a note, stop by an event, or join us for our monthly leadership meeting.*

Your AFA Sijan Chapter has opportunities for involvement in multiple areas, as little or as much as you would like. Areas of most need are in support of education and programming

**VOLUNTEER**  
*you can make a difference!*



## CHAPTER AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- *To contact us or to be added to the Lance P Sijan chapter distribution list, please email us at: [lancepsijanafa@gmail.org](mailto:lancepsijanafa@gmail.org)*
- *To update your contact information, email National AFA at [membership@afa.org](mailto:membership@afa.org). Note that the chapter cannot change your email, mailing address, or other contact information. It must be done on your National membership profile.*
- *To join or renew your AFA membership, visit [www.afa.org](http://www.afa.org)*
- *For details on AFA member benefits, visit <http://www.afa.org/afa/memberbenefits>*

Make sure you continue to receive our communications. You don't want to miss out on \$1 ice cream sundaes or any of the other exciting events we have in the works. Update your contact information today. Email National at [Membership@afa.org](mailto:Membership@afa.org).

While we can update our mailing list, Sijan representatives cannot update your official AFA contact information. You must contact National.

Do you know someone who would like to know about our events but isn't a member yet? We're happy to add them to our mailing list. Have them send a request to us at [LancePSijanAFA@gmail.com](mailto:LancePSijanAFA@gmail.com).



**CONTACT US!**

**Sijan Chapter**

**Website:**

[www.lancepsijanafa.org](http://www.lancepsijanafa.org)



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Lance P Sijan Chapter #125  
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**AFA National**

**Website:**

[www.afa.org](http://www.afa.org)

The AFA is an independent, nonprofit, civilian education organization promoting public understanding of aerospace power and the pivotal role it plays in the security of the nation. AFA publishes Air Force Magazine, conducts national symposia and disseminates information through outreach programs. It sponsors professional development seminars and recognizes excellence in the education and aerospace fields through national awards programs. AFA presents scholarships and grants to Air Force active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members and their dependents, and AFA awards educator grants to promote science and math education at the elementary, secondary, and high school level. Nationally, AFA has more than 100,000 active members. The AFA National Website is [WWW.AFA.ORG](http://WWW.AFA.ORG)

The Lance P. Sijan Chapter is one of the largest, most active chapters in AFA, with more than 1600 members. The Sijan Chapter, one of four AFA Chapters in Colorado, primarily focuses on support to the Colorado Springs area, including Peterson AFB, Schriever AFB, Cheyenne Mountain Air Station, and the USAFA. The AFA Sijan Chapter is proud of our rich heritage and strong support for the Colorado Springs Air Force community. We pride ourselves on active support to the local Colorado Springs "Air Force Family," providing approximately \$40,000 and thousands of volunteer hours in support annually!

