

## **Missionary Computer Fellowship – Martin’eze Spoken Here**

By Phil Morrison (Retired 1998)

If your career was in the Defense or Aerospace business like ours, once you enter the world of retirement it is often difficult to assimilate with retirees from other professions. Top secret, secret, confidential, compartmentalized, black programs, missiles, fire control systems, lethality designs, state of the art advancement, etc. etc. – these are fairly unique background associations that limit our ability to share memories and experiences after we retire. But there are some exceptions – one is that you continue to consult part time at the “Plant” or you become a volunteer along with other fellow retirees in REALM or some other non-defense related activity. Unfortunately there are not a large number of volunteer opportunities that we can share with others having our unique background. However there are at least two besides REALM which have attracted significant retiree participation from those of us that initially worked for Martin Marietta in Orlando before it became Lockheed Martin. One is the Orlando Science Center which attracts many of our retirees and the other is Missionary Computer Fellowship. Missionary Computer Fellowship (MCF) was conceived initially by George Wilson, a Data Systems Retiree, and then implemented in 1989 with major assistance from Walt Trippe (Missiles and Fire Control Systems Retiree). The initial focus was to develop unique software applications to support Christian missionaries at a point in time when the now ubiquitous personal computer (PC) usage was just emerging. The ministry was begun using a \$5,000 grant from the G.T. Wiley foundation – Mr. Wiley was the Martin Marietta Orlando General Manager in the 50’s and 60’s. George Wilson was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and arranged for them to provide the facilities and initial sponsorship for MCF. With the addition of fellow Martin retirees John Tracy, Larry Devine and Frank (Herb) Walker, the ministry quickly expanded to include the building and refurbishment of PC’s, the development of a modified PC that would run directly off a car battery so that missionaries could operate the early PC’s in the field, and the training of missionaries in the usage and maintenance of their PC’s. Walt housed many of the missionaries in his own home while they were being trained.

By the time I joined MCF in 1998, they had grown to about 25 volunteers that now included Lloyd Riffe, Bob Carey and other non-Lockheed Martin retirees. In less than 10 years they had already built, repaired or refurbished thousands of PC’s for missionaries, churches and other charitable groups. If you ever worked for or with Walt Trippe or played on his baseball teams, this rapid growth and expansion of MCF is no surprise. Walt is a VERY active catalyst and fostered the fellowship at MCF that we once shared at the Sand Lake Road plant. Walt said he had never worked this hard at Lockheed Martin and was regularly contributing 60+ hours and sometimes 6 or 7 days per week during the 1990’s.



***Walt Trippe and Jim Gibboney- MCF Leaders***

Currently sponsorship of MCF has shifted from the Orlando First Presbyterian to the First Methodist Church and Walt had handed over the main operation of MCF to Jim Gibboney. John Tracy, Frank Walker, Bert Kremp, Lloyd Riffe and Larry Devine provide major assistance to Jim in the current operation of MCF. Retirees such as John Cudd, Sam Briedt, Frank Dement, Dale Dibble, Dave Emmons, Scott Haselwood, Don Hickman, Stu Hydanus, Tom McNutt, Clare Adams, Ed (STL) Jones, John Thomson and myself volunteer from time to time. John Tracy serves as our Technical Director/Guru and is often able to fix problems we can't by simply

having us try to demonstrate the problem to him! Since we have been in operation we have often had old friends drop in to seek PC assistance or drop off a donation such as Craig Andrews, Jim Buchan, Bob Vaughan, Bob Bond, Hawk Eggerton, Tom Goslin, Len Wroten, Al Cowens, Jim Sweeney, Mac Hammond and many others.

While volunteering at MCF it is great fun to re-tell the old Martin Marietta stories, discuss the many brilliant and one of a kind characters that we worked with and for and share the struggles we jointly experienced in developing many of the Country's premier weapons systems such as Pershing, Sprint, Walleye, Patriot, TADS/PNVS, CLGP/Copperhead, Lantirn, Hellfire, Longbow and others. If you visit us you will quickly note that we are not located in a Class A clean room, no one wears anti-static wrist straps, there are no MARS tags, process plans, unverified failure committees, etc. But make no mistake many of the lessons learned while working in the Defense field are often put to use in repairing and refurbishing PC's so that we can help others.

Besides the change in sponsorship and leadership, the need and mission for MCF has also shifted. PC prices have dropped so dramatically and PC literacy and usage is so wide spread that most of our prior clients no longer need our services. Consequently MCF is currently only open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 AM to 5 PM. We still refurbish and repair PC's but primarily for missions in the third world or local non-profit organizations. Our largest order was for 1000+ PC's to Africa several years ago and a recent order was for 100+ PC's to Ecuador to support a home for orphan boys. Currently we estimate MCF has built, repaired or refurbished over 25,000 PC's since 1989! Missionaries from all over the world have benefited from MCF as have numerous churches and charitable – non-profit organizations such as Anthony House, Boy Scouts, Children's Ranch, HOSPICE of the Comforter, House of Hope, Spouse Abuse, Second Chance Ministries, Living Hope Ministries, Jail Chaplin's Office and many others. We have hundreds of cards and letters thanking us for our support – it is great feeling to know that we have helped so many.



***Some of the Lockheed Martin Volunteers at MCF- (left to right) Frank Walker, Phil Morrison, Clare Adams, Don Hickman, Tom McNutt, Lloyd Riffe, Ed Jones, Frank Dement, Jim Gibboney, Gene Dibble, Bert Kremp and John Tracy.***

We obtain the bulk of our PC's from corporate donors who have upgraded their PC's, but we also get numerous private donations. Currently we are accepting monitors less than 10 years old, PC's with CPU's operating above 350 Mhz, and Windows 98 or beyond software. We always need high performance laptops since they are still in demand by many missionaries. Because there is not a significant need for printers or scanners, we do not accept any scanners and will only accept HP printers. We do have a

charitable organization rating so we can provide a donation receipt for tax purposes. Our phone number is 407/422-9265 and we are located on the second floor of the First Methodist Church Administration/Day School building on the southern corner of Magnolia and South Street in downtown Orlando. It is not easy to locate us so it is best to call ahead. We might even speak some "Martin'eze" when you come by to visit or drop off a donation.