

BLAST OFF SPACE CITY

The Southeastern HCSC Alumni Group had their annual get together in late April in Huntsville, Alabama. Known for its historic significance, Huntsville is also a progressive modern city. When Wernher von Braun came with his team to Huntsville to develop our space program, Huntsville began to grow.

The Southeast group came to Huntsville to renew friendships, have fun and learn about the area. Our hotel was the Embassy Suites in the downtown area. Many activities and restaurants were close by so centrally located. Our 3 day program began with a reception Sunday including heavy hors d'oeuvres followed by getting together in our hospitality suite – used by attendees throughout the 3 days.

Monday, our group boarded a bus for a tour of the largest antebellum area in Alabama, known as the Twickenham district. Our book author and outstanding tour guide Jacque Reeves shared much information and entertaining stories of the history of the area like pointing out where the state of Alabama was formed. The tour then stopped at the Weeden House for a tour of the unique ethnographic museum. This house built in 1819 was the home of the painter/poet Maria Howard Weeden with many unique features of Federal architecture. During the stop, many also visited the Harrison Bros Hardware store on the town square to walk through the historic store that reminded everyone of an original JCPenney store.

After a delicious southern lunch at Rhythm on Monroe, our group went on to visit the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. This Smithsonian affiliated museum is the largest space center in the world with amazing exhibits of our space program through the years. Our visit included watching the digital dome experience titled Our Place in Space.

Tuesday 24 of the event attendees played in the annual golf outing for the Southeastern group held at Hampton Cove Highlands Course – a Robert Trent Jones course. The team of Bill Littlejohn, Susan Geling, Jim Strand and Jimmie Hughes won the team event with Carol Miller and David Geling winning the closest to the pin competition. The outing included breakfast and lunch at the course. The rest of the attendees boarded a bus to visit Burritt on the Mountain with our own member Susan Webb as the tour guide. Burritt, with its view overlooking Huntsville, included touring a

historic mansion and park. After lunch at 1892 East Restaurant, the group visited the Huntsville Botanical Gardens with the nation's largest open air butterfly house and beautiful spring flowers then returned to our hotel.

Later in the afternoon, the Southeastern group attended their business meeting where among other topics new members were welcomed, reports on HCSC National activities and the HCSC Foundation activities were given. John Chapman was elected President for the coming year and presented his recommendation for next year's event – Columbus, Georgia. After discussion, Columbus was approved.

The evening included a cocktail reception and dinner banquet for all attendees at the hotel. Susan Webb provided the center pieces focused on decades of JCPenney memorabilia. Information related to HCSC's 90th anniversary was presented by John Gresham and Cathy and Cecil Naftel recognized our 50 year pin recipients – Jack Johndrow, Ed Savold, Phyllis Schuler and Marty Schuler. Recognition was given to various members who contributed to the success of our event, next year's officers and meeting location were announced and Bill and Patti Alcorn were thanked for their leadership for this year's event.

Our group was fortunate to have JCPenney's Chief Executive Officer Marc Rosen attend our reception and dinner. Many of our members had the opportunity during the reception to meet Marc and talk with him. After our meal, National HCSC President Bill Watson sat with Marc and asked him a series of questions. Marc was able to share his views on the JCPenney Company and the direction he envisions for the future. Members were impressed and encouraged by what Marc had to say. Afterwards, many visited the hospitality room for a final time saying goodbye to their many friends and agreeing to see each other next year in Columbus, Georgia.