

John Ockenfels, Chair
North Central Section
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I grew up in the communities of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, Iowa. I attended the University of Iowa for 2 years then joined the US Air Force in 1972. While in Air Force weapons technical school, I volunteered for and was selected to fly as a "Gunner" on the AC-130 "Spectre" Gunship. In this role I served two tours based in Ubon and Korat Thailand. After being discharged on January 1st 1976 I returned to Iowa and joined my father in the family trucking and paper recycling business. I eventually retired in 2010 and focused more time toward rotary and flying for fun.



I joined the Rotary Club of Iowa City in 1986. Two years later I was asked to join the club's extension committee which had a focus on starting a new Rotary Club in the Iowa City area. In January of 1989 the Rotary Club of Iowa City AM officially chartered with a new membership of 72 Rotarians. I chose to stay with the new club because it fit my work schedule very well.

I was on the AM club's board for 10 years and held numerous positions within the club, including President (1998 – 99). It was in 1998 that I first joined IFFR and met other members when I flew my Cessna 210 to Indianapolis for the RI International Convention. I eventually let my membership lapse for a few years, but joined again in 2012. My involvement in Rotary has led to being able to fly in India and Brazil while visiting for Rotary programs.

I was Governor of District 6000 (Southern Iowa) in 2014-15 and have met a number of IFFR members as I progressed through the RI training programs.

I have been flying in the "Oshkosh" Airventure Warbird Airshow for over 15 years, originally in a Stearman trainer, and for the last 5 years in a North American T-6 "Texan". (Yellow - IOWA ANG). I truly enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many members at several of the events surrounding the Oshkosh celebration last year. I really wanted to join the Fly Out after Oshkosh, but couldn't make it work out with the other commitments.

My wife, Deb, is also a Rotarian and has enjoyed meeting numerous IFFR members over the last few years. Together we look forward to making more friends and enjoying more adventures through IFFR in the years to come.

