



# The *SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION*

Official S I G (Special Interest Group) of AMA

**Dedicated to the Building, Flying and Competition of Vintage Pattern Model Aircraft**

SPA NEWSLETTER [www.seniorpattern.com](http://www.seniorpattern.com) JAN-FEB 2017

## *PRECISION AEROBATICS from PATTERN'S Golden Age*

### OFFICERS

#### PRESIDENT-

Jeff Owens

#### VICE PRESIDENT-

Jerry Black

#### SEC/TREASURER-

Keith Watson

#### PAST PRESIDENTS-

Mickey Walker

Bruce Underwood

#### WEBMASTER-

Jim Johns

#### SPECIAL PROJECTS

Dan Dougherty

#### APPOINTED-

Phil Spelt

Bernie Olson

#### ELECTED-

Scott Sappington

#### EDITOR-

Duane Wilson

[avwilsons@charter.net](mailto:avwilsons@charter.net)



Join our Discussion list from within the webpage or inform any officer and we'll "sign you up". It's like a gigantic Mailing-list, but at NO CHARGE. A service to membership and potentials from SPA.

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#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

—Along about late September or early October the competition season comes to a close. Thoughts turn to other activities knowing that there will be a brief respite from long drives to contests and the ever present need to practice. This is our time to relax, focus on other priorities, and build our new weapons for the next year. But after a few months we miss the camaraderie, the jokes, and the fun. So there, after Christmas and New Years comes an opportunity to get a jump start on the new season – the annual Board of Directors meeting! Now, lest you think that this is a



meeting only for those in elected or appointed positions, let me set you straight! This year we met, as has been the case for the past few years, at the Oakwood Cafe in Dalton, Georgia on Saturday January 28 (Bruce's 79<sup>th</sup> Birthday, by the way!) Nine Board members, two SPA members and five wives/girlfriends attended this annual event and were treated to the usual great breakfast and service provided by the Oakwood Cafe staff. There was a lot of hangar flying and general good spirits shared over breakfast before the actual meeting started. Good times were shared by all. Think about being part of the meeting next year, and get an early start on the 2018 season!



# SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE 2017 BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

*This is the first formal meeting of the Board since 2015*

January 28, 2017: Without important issues to consider last year, this was our first formal meeting since January 2015.

**Our Bylaws list a number of elected officer positions** as well as a number of appointed positions.

Several years ago we also added an elected “at large” representative. As things worked out we had someone from the West position filling either an officer or appointed position – until this year. We wanted to make sure that there was a good channel of communication to the Board for all SPA members. Accordingly, we modified the Bylaws to include **two** elected members, one from each of our two divisions. Now, we just finished the election for this current two year cycle so it fell to me to appoint someone to fill this new position for the next two years. After due consultation with members from the West Division, I am happy to say that Bernie Olson has agreed to serve as the Board member from the West Division. Welcome aboard Bernie!

The next item concerned the modifications to the contest classes. For the past 6 years we have used an Introductory class as a means of attracting new members. This was started back in 2010 because, at the time, the Novice class typically had 10-14 entrants and we wanted a low-key class to attract new members. But in the last few years the Novices have moved to Sportsman or Advanced with the result that there were often only 1 or 2 entrants in Novice and/or the Introductory class. This imposed a cost to the sponsoring club since trophies would be ordered and then not used! So we decided to revert to the way it was prior to 2010. We followed the guidance of the Competition Guide from 2007 (I have a copy from that year.) The Introductory class is gone, but prospective members can fly in Novice using any aircraft that meets the engine rules as stated in the Competition Guide. Aircraft designed after the cutoff can be used, but retracts must be left down and pipes are not allowed. SPA membership is not required, but entrants must use a legal plane and have SPA membership in order to accumulate season championship points. These are the same rules as for the Introductory class – we simply combined Intro and Novice to save on club expenses.

The next item concerned public relations. We need to attract more members. To this end, Duane Wilson has started writing an SPA column for the K-factor which is the newsletter for the NSRCA AMA pattern organization. And our newsletter will feature articles written by NSRCA members from time to time. Duane has also put together a really nice flyer that we will have at Perry (in just a month from when I am writing this!) He will have more to say about this elsewhere in this issue. As an AMA Special Interest Group (SIG) we can have a ¼ page ad in Model Aviation once per year – we are working to make that happen. Finally, our Chairman of Special Projects – Dan Dougherty (DD) – is working on a proposal to have a National SPA Meet at the Muncie AMA Flying site in 2018. Stay tuned – there is lots of action in the works!

Some of you may have heard about an experiment that Jamie Strong has proposed for the Prattville contest. The idea is to allow people to enter with planes that are from years after our cutoff date of 1976 and this would include planes with pipes and retracts. These planes could be entered in Expert or Sr. Expert in what is being called an Open class. They would compete head-to-head with traditional SPA aircraft, but would have their own separate set of trophies and would not accumulate Championship points. This is an experiment to see if our regular SPA airplanes can compete with the later designs. Is it the plane or is it the person twiddling the sticks? Stay tuned – we shall see! Scott Anderson is planning to do this for the Chattanooga contest, as well. So, we may have a way of bringing in some “new blood.”

The final topic for discussion was put forward by our new Vice-President, Jerry Black. There has been some concern about the balance of class entries, especially this past year. At a number of contest the Sr. Expert class was the largest! In two cases in the East the Expert class only had one entry. The point of the discussion was what to do about this. To understand what was done I need to first fill in some history. Prior to 2009 the Expert/Sr. Expert cutoff was set at 60 years of age. In addition, anyone 65 years or older could choose, once per year, which class they wanted to fly in. So, after 65 one could move up or down once per year (typically that meant you made a choice at the first contest you entered for the year.) I started flying SPA in 2008 in the Sportsman class. Having won the Championship that year, it was time to move up. But I was 62, so I would have had to move to Sr. Expert. I wanted to move up through the ranks and wanted a chance to fly against the Expert class contestants, so I petitioned the Board to do so. Their decision that year was to move the “age of choice” to 60 so that I could then choose to fly Expert or Sr. Expert. I chose to fly Expert and did so for three years, at which point, at age 65, I moved to Sr. Expert. Fast forward a few years and we have the situation I described earlier. The Board decided to move the “age of choice” back to where it had been – 65 years of age. In addition, the Expert/Sr. Expert dividing line has also been moved to age 65. The hope is that this will even out the entries in the Expert and Sr. Expert classes.

*Continued next page....*



Of course, when one makes such a change there may be some who are caught because they intended to move down a class. So, as a phase-in we decided to allow anyone between the ages of 60 and 64 to move to a lower class, should they wish to do so. After this year the age to do that will be 65.

That was a lot to pack into a two hour meeting, but we all had a good time and we are all looking forward to the new contest season. See you on the contest trail! ...Jeff Owens

### *Too Nice a Photo Not to Include*

**Believe it or not,** it's hard to get people, (including BOD members), to pose for the annual BOD photo, but the ladies are always good sports. They allowed what looked like a "photo shoot" at the breakfast meeting with multiple cameras and their flashes going off at once, (which camera should they look at)? Although we have included group photos of the wives and significant others for years, I sense the ladies' photo is taking on an increasingly greater

significance recently, (for example, see the great, (and natural) pose the ladies struck in the MAY-JUNE 2016 newsletter at the "Silver Anniversary" contest last year at Chattanooga.

In this photo of girlfriends and wives, Lori Bush is standing at left, then Mr. May's Beth Carver (now "Mrs. May" as of 2/9/17), and Bobbie Johns. Seated are Scott Anderson's Missy Varner at left, (she was showing off her beautiful engagement ring), and Dan Dougherty's special person Beverley Lubbe at front right. Thanks to all of you for coming and being part of the SPA gang. We hope to see you at as many events as you can make.

## SPA EAST SCHEDULE 2017

DATE	EVENT AND CONTEST DIRECTOR	LOCATION
March 3-4	Southeastern Model Show	Perry, Ga.
April 1	Top Novice Jamie Strong	Prattville, Al
April 29-30	Cullman SPA Steve Byrum	Cullman, Al
May 20-21	Alabaster Cancelled—New Site to be	Determined
June 10-11	Prattville SPA Jamie Strong	Prattville, Al.
July 15-16	Fletcher Flyers SPA Kevin Clark	Fletcher, NC.
Aug 12-13	Chattanooga SPA Scott Anderson	Chattanooga, Tn.
Sept 9-10	CMJ Hobbies SPA Dan Dougherty	Roberta, Ga.
Oct 7-8	SPA East Masters Spelt/Oliver	Knoxville, Tn.

## SPA WEST SCHEDULE 2017

April 22	Ft. Worth Thunderbirds Ken Knotts	Benbrook, Tx.
May 20	Golden Triangle SPA	Grand Prairie, Tx.
June 17	Texas Wings Bernie Olson	Newark, Tx.
Sept 23-24	SPA West Open Gary Alphin	Benbrook, Tx.

## Minutes of SPA Board Meeting January 28, 2017

Call to order by SPA President Jeff Owens

• Treasurers' Report and minutes submitted by Keith Watson:	
Original deposit - check received from Eric Nessler =	\$4,468.67
Credits to the account = checks for dues renewal	\$390.00
Credits to the account = \$582.61 from PayPal account	\$582.61
Total Balance before debits -----	\$5441.28

1. Debits from account - \$146.93 for the original order of checks	\$146.93
2. Debits from account = \$20.00 to reimburse Jim Johns - PayPal test	\$20.00
Total of debits-----	\$166.93

Balance as of 1/27/2017----- \$5274.35

**Attending:**

Jeff Owens  
 Phil Spelt  
 Bruce Underwood  
 Kevin Clark - Visitor  
 Duane Wilson  
 Dan Dougherty  
 Scott Anderson - Visitor  
 Keith Watson  
 Jim Johns  
 Jerry Black  
 Scott Sappington

**Discussion items: All items were approved by a majority of members in attendance.**

1. Article VII of the SPA Bylaws was amended to create a BOD position for the West Region. Jeff Owens has authorization to appoint a West board member for 2017. He offered the position to Bernie Olson and Bernie has accepted.  
 —A question came up regarding adding a new SPA region if we should have the need. This will be discussed further if it becomes necessary.
2. Discussion regarding publicity for SPA - Scott Anderson and Duane Wilson will work with NSRCA on this item.
3. Dan Dougherty presented a concept for an SPA contest to be held in the Fall of 2018 at AMA Headquarters in Muncie. He's thinking that there are still many veteran Pattern flyers who would respond to a contest at HQ. His idea is to allow only SPA legal aircraft designs and to allow tuned pipes. Engines allowed would be the same as SPA currently allows, maximum of .65 CI for 2-strokes and .95 CI for 4-strokes. Allowing retracts to be operational will be discussed further.  
 —His proposal calls for an advance team, 2 or 3 members, to go to Muncie for several days to work on logistics to coordinate with AMA face to face. The proposal was approved by a vote of the board members.  
 —He'll follow up with AMA to start the process, starting with a half page or full page ad in Model Aviation, depending on the cost for either option.
4. Scott Anderson will work toward creating the artwork for the MA advertisement. Bruce said he may have the copy for our 1/4 page ad which appears in MA once a year. This copy could be used as a starting point. Scott Anderson and Duane Wilson also offered to work on a new SPA single-page flier to be distributed to all regions. The modeling show at Toledo offers a free booth to SIG's if we have the opportunity to participate.
5. Dave Phillips has asked to have the May 20-21 Alabaster contest moved to a different site since his wife Peggy doesn't feel up to being at the field for 2+ days. Dan will pursue finding a new location for the contest. Rome GA was mentioned as a possible site. Scott Anderson will also contact the McMinnville TN club to ask if they will host a contest in 2017.
6. Jim and Phil are working to update the competitors' guide. The Introductory class will be dropped and the Novice class will be expanded to include Introductory class pilots. All Novice class pilots may use any aircraft, not just SPA-approved designs, but the engines must meet SPA rules. Non-approved aircraft will be scored by SPA rules and their scores will be kept separate from Novice pilots flying SPA-approved aircraft. In this way, the pilots who want to 'run what they bring' will be accommodated and can win 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place certificates.
7. Kevin Clark and Duane Wilson announced that there will be a contest in Asheville this season. Penny and Duane will host a Low Country Boil at their house again. Thanks for your hard work guys!
8. Discussion regarding the age cutoff for Expert/Sr. Expert. No consensus was reached at this meeting and the discussion is to be continued online among the BOD members. Online discussion resulted in new wording finalized by Jeff and Jim to define the rule:

"It is moved to change the Expert/Sr. Expert cutoff age to 65 effective this year. Also, at 65 or older one may choose, once per year, which class to fly. There will be a one-time option this year for those age 60-64 to move to a lower class should they choose to do so." This motion was discussed among the board members and it has been approved for the 2017 season and beyond if it proves to be effective. ...Keith Watson



TOP NOTCH TROPHIES

Awards and Engraving

Bruce & Jane Underwood

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## SPA Growth & Activity

### ...It's Up to Us...

(Taken from the Discussion List)

We all want SPA to grow and be healthy, so ask yourself "what has caused SPA to succeed in the past and what can we do now?"

Before I offend anyone, I do understand that each of our life situations are different. My intention is not to tell anyone else what they should do--we all have individual choices to make based on individual circumstances. It's always a question of priorities.

How far are we willing or able to drive to a given SPA event? The more important SPA is to us, the more likely we will put up with any negatives. Some people have driven from Indiana, Ohio, and even New York for years. They may not make all the events, but they are involved and contribute to the SPA family as they can.

I can identify. Although closer than some, I don't live anywhere close to the SPA East "sweet spot", so I have two choices—**drive further than others to attend—or stay home.** There have been times when I wished I lived in northern Alabama or Georgia, (from an SPA standpoint), but since I don't, I must decide how important SPA is to me verses not going.

We in present day SPA face problems they didn't experience in the early days. Back then, all pilots were concentrated in a relatively small area made up of three southeastern states. Now, if we live outside the "sweet spot", we need to factor in travel as a major "negative," but is it a deal breaker? Again, it depends on our situation, and how we feel about SPA. Many of us have made SPA-related "sacrifices" because it's worth it to us. Long distances and inconveniences are necessary evils if we want to be there.

There are many examples of members dealing with these negatives because to them, the end result is worth it. Look at what Mickey shouldered in setting up and largely carrying SPA himself in the early days. Later Bruce Underwood made huge sacrifices during his long tenure as President. As SPA grew, and distances increased, Bruce as President, was effected more than anyone. On a personal note, I know Bruce isn't a big fan of driving five hours to a distant contest, and I'm forever grateful that he never missed an Asheville Contest. I'm sure the drive was a real pain in the arse for him, (literally). Bruce's successor Jeff Owens, lives way out of the "sweet spot" by anyone's definition! Even with a full-size plane it's a long, expensive haul for him to attend each contest or event--but he does. Of course it goes with the territory of being President, and he knew what he was getting into, but we appreciate the effort nonetheless. In my own humble case, I've been crazy (or desperate) enough to travel hours to a contest, (complete with motel expenses etc.) even though I had lost my last plane a few days before just so I could be there with 'yall! Now that I'm retired, I'm trying to get down to places like Prattville and Alabaster if at all possible.

There are many more examples of people going the extra mile for SPA, starting with each contest CD. Phil Spelt and Dave Phillips have gone through so much at home recently, but others stepped up to help, and the contests went on. Dan (DD) Dougherty has CD'd several events in the same year to make contests happen because he knew nobody else could/would. He has helped us secure new sites when we've lost old ones. Although this is part of his "Special Projects" position, we appreciate his dedication. Our contest sites would dry up without his efforts. Scott Anderson's work with Chattanooga has made those contests the successes they've been. **SPA would be a distant memory without all these folks.** So far I've been talking about SPA East, but I know that Ken Knotts, Gary Alphin, Pat Ensign, Bernie Olson, and others have worked to expand the membership and number of West venues. In spite of the distances between SPA East/West regions, the feel of the contests are the same—a tribute to the CDs. Most have traveled the long distances between regions to attend contests in the other region which builds relationships within the organization. Being active on the SPA Discussion List is also a great way to be involved.

When it comes to support personnel, Jim Johns is in a class of his own IMO. He has allowed himself to be "roped into" being the scorer for so many contests all over SPA East that wouldn't have happened at all if he hadn't sacrificed his time and effort. I don't think he got tricked into this—he's a dedicated guy. Let's take a special moment to say "many thanks" to Jim. There are so many who contribute to make SPA a success—I apologize if I didn't think of you, but you know who you are, and what your contribution is. Please keep it up with your innovative ideas, and by donating your talents to the organization.

How do we establish new contest venues? It isn't easy. There are so many things to consider. If you have a well-oiled established contest with a bevy of volunteers to make things happen like clockwork, I envy you. Close to home for me, this season's Asheville/Fletcher contest scheduled in July came very close to not happening...that little bit of extra effort at the right time finally put it on the schedule. Kevin Clark and I had a couple of crucial conversations about whether we really wanted to, or even should attempt a new contest near Asheville—a lot of weighing pros and cons. When we finally made the decision to approach the club, the Fletcher Flyers turned out to be very open to the idea. There remains lots of details to work out and we've got our fingers crossed, hoping for the best. I know the SPA community will do everything possible to make the contest a success. We've lost some venues lately, and have developed several new ones over the past couple seasons—let's go out of our way to let these new sponsoring sites know we appreciate them.

In closing to summarize, I guess what I'm trying to say is that nothing happens without work or effort of some kind. Each of us plays a part in SPA's success, and we each make those pro-verses-con decisions about our level of commitment. It all starts with your SPA dues, then to contest attendance, (and don't forget early registration), and finally by stepping up to the plate in some way to make something happen in your local area when opportunity knocks, or when a need makes itself known. Think about your own contribution to SPA, and what you can do to help the Senior Pattern Association grow. Remember, that's what we all want! Here's to a successful and winning 2017 season.

...Duane Wilson

## Finding New Life From a Wreck- Bernie Olson "Clones" His Blue Angel

After straining my favorite pattern plane through a tree in September I figured it was time to start making lemonade. I'd been

thinking about making a fuselage mold for future Blue Angels and this provided just the opportunity to make it happen.

The damaged fuselage was pieced back together then smoothed with filler and primer. The plastic canopy had been broken in the crash so it was replaced with



a fiberglass duplicate. The horizontal stabilizer was sawn off leaving a flat, filleted area on each side for installing a future stab. This was also a good time to adjust some of the things that were never quite right with the original model. The incidence of the stab was tweaked to correct for the up-trim that the original model had. The nose wasn't quite symmetric from side to side so that was corrected and the nose ring was adjusted for 2° of right thrust.



A shadow board was assembled with a cutout matching the profile of the repaired fuselage. The board was finished with Minwax to seal the surface. The now-completed fuselage plug was inserted into the shadow board for molding. Modeling clay was used to fill the gap between the plug and shadow board. Several coats of Johnson & Johnson Carnuba wax were rubbed into the plug and shadow board then they were coated with polyvinyl alcohol (PVA).



Eight plies of glass were laid up over the plug and board using West System epoxy. The first ply was three ounce satin-weave glass to minimize pin holes and give a smooth surface finish. The other plies were of six ounce satin-weave glass. Satin-weave glass conforms to contours more easily than bidirectional glass and is much less frustrating to lay up. After curing, the shadow board was removed leaving the first half of the mold and the plug. This was also waxed and PVA was applied.



The second half of the mold was laid up in the same manner as the first half. After curing the plug was removed (OK, busted out) and the two halves of the mold were touched up and completed.



These molds were then waxed and a pair of fuselages laid up with two plies of fiberglass. The first ply was three ounce glass and the second was six ounce. Some graphite tow was sandwiched between the two plies running from the wing to the vertical tail to add some additional stiffness to the aft fuselage.



The two halves were trimmed and popped out of the molds. Note that the glass is easily trimmed after the epoxy has started to set but not yet hardened. A sharp X-Acto knife or razor blade works well for trimming at this point. That's usually a few hours after lay-up. They can also be trimmed after curing but are harder and messier to cut. They were then reinserted into the molds and joined to each other with fiberglass 'tape' soaked in epoxy. Joining the two halves in the molds helps assure alignment. Two fuselages were laid up with the goal of creating a pair of identical models.



Another couple of molds were also created for a lower nose hatch and belly fairing for blending the wing with the bottom of the fuselage.



### To finish up:

Wing and stab cores came from Eureka. Both planes are painted with Klass Kote. The finished weight came in at 7 lb 1.3 ounce and 7 lb 1.6 ounce.

**Only three months from a wreck to a pair of completed Blue Angels and they both sure fly sweet!....Bernie Olson**



# A New Brochure for SPA

At places like the Perry show we have always handed out old copies of the printed newsletters to let people know about SPA. Since they are now electronic, how do we get our message out to potential new members? At the January meeting, the BOD voted to come up with a brochure for SPA that can be handed out in both the East and West regions. The inside of the tri-fold flyer is displayed below. ...Duane Wilson



**Find yourself:** Found in the flyer are members Scott Sappington, Mickey Walker, John Nessler III, Beppe Fascione, Joe Grant, Grant Schroeder, Ellis Newkirk, Ken Knotts, Gary Alphin, Jerry Black, Bill Collins, Keith Watson, and Jim Strong.

**An idea that's still going strong** over two decades later is worth checking out. Precision aerobatics competition that is basic, fun, and inexpensive is a good idea for today...



## SPA founder Mickey Walker

Some 50 years ago, R/C technology finally progressed to the point where precision aerobatics became feasible, with larger engines and proportional transmitters coming on the scene. It seemed that everybody had either a trainer, a Cub, or a pattern ship. Pattern contests were everywhere and within an easy drive. At first there was only a small tech gap between average flyers at the local field and the world's best, but over time the gap widened. Pressure continually pushed pilots to upgrade to state of the art equipment to get that competitive edge. The cost eventually became prohibitive for many, and they started looking for other outlets within R/C. Only in AMA Novice was a deliberate effort made to attract new pilots by keeping things basic. This fact wasn't lost on Mickey Walker who later formed SPA and extended the Novice rules to all classes.

The conversion to Turnaround pattern was welcomed by many, but like any major change, others decided not to make the transition. This further depleted the ranks of pattern flyers as they moved on to something else.

In 1991 Mickey Walker, a former pattern flyer from Georgia, missed the fun and challenge that only real competition provides. Without the contests, there was no reason to practice diligently to make their aerobatic maneuvers "perfect." Mickey felt that pattern had strayed from its early roots and left the competitor with a limited budget behind. He and some friends decided to return to the days of "simple and inexpensive" by starting SPA, which now provides an outlet for real competition in front of judges, but at a more modest price.



**Today's SPA**— Over the past 25+ years we've grown from our original base in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, by adding a second region in the Dallas/Ft Worth, Texas metropolitan area. We perform "classic" style maneuvers with one maneuver per pass, (centered on the pilot), instead of Turnaround.

We're always looking to expand SPA and work with new growth areas in any part of the country where an excited, interested nucleus of pilots exists. That's how the Texas Region started a few years back.



**Competition Classes**—We fly five classes of pattern, NOVICE, SPORTSMAN, ADVANCED, EXPERT, and a SENIOR EXPERT class for older flyers. You move from class to class based on points won during contests. If you don't get enough points per season, you can remain in your class or choose to move up at any time.

We fly a variety of aircraft from a legal list of pre-1976 designs. Why 1976? The year is arbitrary, but it is approximately the time when retracts and tuned pipes became routine at most pattern events nationwide.

At least three good performing ARFs are available. In the spirit of "keeping it simple", we do not allow retracts, (except in the down position), or tuned pipes.

Why not try out the "SPA experience" for yourself. At some contests an "Open" class for non-legal planes may be offered. Check the website for the latest contest info at [seniorpattern.com](http://seniorpattern.com). See you there!



# SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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@

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seniorpattern.  
com**

www.seniorpattern.com

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_ AMA Number \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form along with check/money order made out to The Senior Pattern Association for \$20.00 to: Keith Watson 1411 Farmington Court Marietta, Ga. 30008

Keith Watson  
1411 Farmington Court  
Marietta GA 30008

