

CONTRAILS

ISSUE NO. 182

MAY 2012



Wright Flyer engine 1903

©2003 Griff Wason

© 2003 Griff Wason

Who built the engine that powered the first airplane?

– Pg. 32

RNPA CONTRAILS



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Each Member!

The RNPA newsletter *Contrails* is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain the friendships and associations of the members, to promote their general welfare, and assist those active pilots who are approaching retirement with the problems relating thereto. Membership is \$40 annually for Regular Members (NWA pilots, active or retired) and \$30 for Affiliate Members.

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MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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JUNE

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14 MSP Summer Cruise

JULY

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SEPTEMBER

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26-28 Atlanta Reunion

OCTOBER

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DECEMBER

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JANUARY

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FUTURE REUNIONS

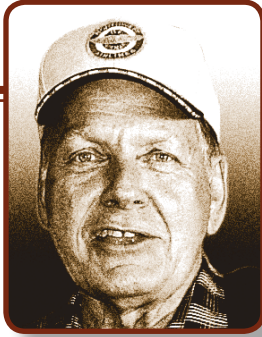
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OCT. 10 - 12, 2013

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SEPT. 26 - 28, 2014

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President's Report: Gary PISEL

Spring has sprung in the desert; flowers and cactus are all in bloom. It is somewhat sad at the Pisel house as our resident hummingbird has not returned. After 3 years of nesting and over a dozen hatchlings, our nest remains empty.

Barbara and I traveled to Sarasota for the Spring Luncheon. A full house of retirees had a great time, all orchestrated by Dino and Karen Oliva at Capt. Jacks. Many memories were relived and friendships renewed.

This brings me to the Summer Cruise. Vic Kleinsteuber says the registration is rather slow this year. Please read the flyer here in CONTRAILS and send in your registration. Everyone is looking forward to your presence.

ATLANTA! Home of DELTA and our RNPA Reunion this September. Again follow the directions elsewhere in Contrails and send in your registration. Be sure to plan to arrive early, take in a Braves/Mariners game; see the aquarium and visit longer. This year we will have both a live and silent auction. There are many items donated that will be of interest to you, not the least of which are a pair of GOLD NWA PILOTS' WINGS. These were donated by a retired pilot that had them made, along with 4 others, in Hong Kong in the early '70s. They are 14K gold and weigh 17.6 grams. Others live auction items are a quilt by Judy Schellinger and Jack Daniels.



You probably noticed the increase in dues. We try hard to keep dues as low as possible. However, with the increase in postage and other production costs we had the option of decreasing the number of issues or increasing dues. The increase of dues was the result as we know everyone looks forward to receiving CONTRAILS!

Summer RNPA Board Meeting is June 13 in MSP and elections are to be held at ATL in September. If you desire to be on the Board or run for office please contact me.

Thanks for your support and attendance at ALL RNPA FUNCTIONS!



Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA

Each year we send out our dues notice in the first week of January. The majority of our members respond quickly, and for the next three weeks until about the end of January I spend about four hours a day entering the payments into the computer. Then the payments slow down, and by the end of February deadline we are down to about one hundred that have not paid their dues necessitating the mailing of a reminder notice to the delinquent members at some cost to the association as well as additional time and effort on

my part. To compensate for that cost and to encourage prompt payment the board has established a five dollar late payment fee. Since that change went into effect the number of delinquent payment has been cut in half to about one hundred. This fee is not intended as a way to make more money, but in the hope that it will encourage everyone to pay their dues promptly. I assure you that I would rather be done with all the due payments in four or five weeks, not months. I do have a life beyond RNPA.

RNPA is a 501C7 tax exempt organization. We are governed by federal laws, and must file a financial statement with the IRS each year. As a 501C7 organization, "ALL" former NWA pilots can be members, and all members receive the same privileges, including obits on their final flight west. We cannot and do not discriminate against any member based on gender, race, religion, political affiliation or any other reason, including an unwillingness to stand in solidarity with their fellow pilots in time of confrontation with management. Enough said.



Editor's Notes: Gary FERGUSON



As soon as a man recognizes that he has drifted into age, he gets reminiscent. He wants to talk and talk; and not about the present or the future, but about his old times. For there is where the pathos of his life lies—and the charm of it. The pathos of it is there because it was opulent with treasures that are gone, and the charm of it is in casting them up from the musty ledgers and remembering how rich and gracious they were.

– Mark Twain

FRESH MEAT

As promised, please welcome aboard John Doherty, Contrails' newest Contributing Columnist. It's fair to say that both Bob Root's and James Baldwin's contributions have been a major factor in the success of the magazine. I am most happy that John has agreed to join what is now a stable of talented writers.

Many readers seem concerned that Olde Bob will not continue The Root Cellar. The good news is he tells me that he intends to return next issue. The even better news, if you haven't heard, is that he was out playing golf again after only two and a half months with his new "Dick Cheney" device.

BOOK REVIEW

Final Approach chronicles the almost unbelievable journey of our own Lyle Prouse from airline captain to the depths of degradation and back again. If we didn't know better one may be tempted to categorize the entire story as fiction.

The book has been a long time coming, but it has been worth the wait. I will not attempt a synopsis, since most of us are familiar with the basics of his fall from grace, but the story of his redemption is quite remarkable, to say the least—something that I doubt many, or even any, of the rest of us could have accomplished.

The accolades from the luminaries involved in this part of his life, including the judge who sentenced him, are memorable, as is the introduction by Ted Kopple. No ghost writers here, just Lyle's story told as only he could.

Final Approach is available at Amazon.

A CENTERFOLD FOR CONTRAILS?

Sure. Why not? Well, there's really no fold involved but you will have to rotate the magazine to look at it.

I'll bet you went there first, didn't you?

Disappointed?

HAVE PITY, DEAR FRIENDS

Please go back and re-read what Dino has to say about dues payment. Would you be willing to spend *four hours a day for three weeks* on the drudgery of entering numbers into a spreadsheet and keeping all this stuff straight? Me neither.

I'm well aware that memory is becoming a real issue with many of us, but that's all the more reason to respond immediately. We should be doing better.

We could offer a senior discount if you were to pay within two weeks. I suspect most of us would probably respond to that in an instant. But then we'd have to raise the dues to cover the difference. Simpler and cheaper just to pay on time.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Skip Foster sent me the germ of the article on Charlie Taylor. Even though some of this had been published in *Air Line Pilot*, I did not recall anything about Charlie's story. For those of you who have seen it, this will be a refresher. The rest of you will find it interesting.

While researching the story and looking for images to enhance it I came across the amazing illustrations on the front and back covers by Griff Wason. For graphics geeks like myself I was floored. I cannot recall ever seeing computer illustrations of this complexity and quality. His client list includes many of the world's most recognizable corporations.

Although I don't technically need permission to reproduce this sort of thing because it's a non-profit enterprise, I could not include these without permission from the artist simply as a matter of conscience. Mr. Wason graciously gave his permission.

If you are at all interested in this sort of stuff I invite you to poke around in his web site: griffwason.com

Whatchabeenupto?



CHRIS HANKS



Hi Guys,

First off I want to thank all the people in RNPA that do all the heavy lifting for the rest of us. It is much appreciated.

Not much to report from the Hanks household. Blessed with good health (for a 68 year old geezer) and Delta keeps sending them cards and letters every month, bless their hearts. That being said Jan and I are still enjoying travelling around the country every summer in our motorhome just like we have done for the last 30 or so summers. We have noticed that we are no longer the youngest guys in the park (go figure). Still have our two herding dogs which forces me to take my ancient butt out of the house every day and walk for a couple of hours or so. Have gotten good at picking up dog #%#@ with a plastic bag if that is possible.

We are still in St. Augustine and are very happy with our choice of retirement location. I still live by the motto that you must do at least one meaningful endeavor a day. Replacing the toilet paper counts.

There you have it. I do hope everyone gets what they deserve and will check in next year.

Chris and Jan Hanks

WRAY FETHERSTONE



Dear Dino,

Thanks again for another great year of service from you and all of the officers. A great New Year to you and yours.

Wray and Barbara Featherstone



PETE HEGSETH



The big event for 2011 was the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary! Time has treated us well. It doesn't seem possible that I have been retired for 15 years.

We did get away from Minn. for a couple of weeks, to Fort Walton Beach for an A-1E Squadron Reunion and to visit my aviation cadet roommate and very close friend of 52 years.

I still farm and keep busy with the grand kids. We spend as much time as possible "UP NORTH" at our cabin during the summer and fall. We have had a beautiful winter so far, although we could use some snow. Minnesota is very much in need of moisture.

Thank you very much for everyone's contribution to keeping "CONTRAILS" going. We look forward to every issue.

Pete Hegseth

MURIEL KOSKOVICH



All the years Joe & I have read and enjoyed "Contrails"—had a hard time tossing. I brought a number of them to my lake home. (Good spot for reading.)

Recently a guest said, "Read that Contrails cover to cover, great magazine!" And that person has no connection with airlines.

Quite a compliment, wouldn't you say?

Much thanks to you.

Muriel Koskovich
(Sure miss Joe.)



STEVE LUCKEY



Dino,

Thanks again for all that you and the rest of NWA's finest do to produce such a quality RNPA publication. It reflects the terrific talent, dedication, and character of the "A-Team" and just keeps getting better.

I'm still doing security/counterterrorism consulting for government and private industry, primarily the Boeing Company.

In addition, I'm working with a group of talented people on a new weapons production company; NEMO. (New Evolution Military Ordnance.) We are producing long range sniper rifles primarily in .338 Lapua and .50 caliber, as well as improved versions of the M-4, and AR 10 in several calibers. They are incredibly accurate. I just can't seem to get away from things that go bang!

All of our production is local and located here in the Flathead Valley. We are affiliated with a space age production facility that also produces parts for several air to air missiles like the AIM-9 and AIM-11.

Hope that this finds you well and please keep up the good work. It's greatly appreciated.

Warmest personal regards,
Steve Luckey

WOODY HERMAN



Dino,

Thanks for all your help (for many years) to keep RNPA going!

Woody Herman

**LOWELL
SCHROEDER**



Hi Dino.

Great to visit with you and Karen at the Seattle Christmas party. Thanks for attending. You still call me FREIGHTER SCHROEDER. I guess I flew just one little freighter too many. Some pilots never forget. But we had good times, didn't we? On time departures too.

Dorothy and I moved to Seattle 30 years ago. Staying right here, but travel a lot. We divide our time between our Champaign, Illinois corn farm, cruises, pass riding, piano playing, and two grown kids. Very satisfying. I really enjoy contrails.

Good luck to Bob Root. We need more of his writing.

Lowell Schroeder
in Issaquah, Wa.

**AL
FELDTSTIEN**



Hi Dino,

All is well here in Rosemount. Have all my kids and grandkids within a few miles of us here. They keep me pretty busy, lots of concerts and games to attend.

I still play slow-pitch softball with the West Metro Seniors 55+ every Tuesday & Thursday. In winter we play some ball at Holy Angels in Bloomington. Summer is at Van Valkenburg Park in Edina. Nice bunch of guys and I get some good exercise which I need.

Miss all the stories and jokes I used to hear at the bidding counter before the computer came along.

Sure enjoy Contrails—brings back lots of good memories.

Thanks for all you do.
Al Feldstien

**KATHY
MCCULLOUGH**



Not much is left of the old barn that you pictured in my Infrared story.



Gary,

We just got back from a ten day cruise to the Panama Canal with friends.

We flew into Seattle from Miami on Jan. 19th—big mistake! I heard the freezing rain on the top of the jetway as we deplaned. Horizon was frozen out, so we rented an SUV to drive to Portland. We made it home on the 20th, after traversing the Columbia Gorge: a big parking lot for semis putting on chains. The power went out right after we unpacked the car, so we fired up the generator and watched a movie on the computer.

Kevin and I aren't blown away yet, although some power lines were blown to the ground leaving us without power for a short time. Actually, it was ice accumulation that pulled the poles over! Pretty impressive.

Retirement is awesome! I can travel without being jet lagged...

Kathy McCullough



My Nikon D7000 died on the cruise! I was so bummed! I couldn't even get a picture of me holding a sloth in Cartagena. So I Photoshopped my head onto another woman's body.

DON HAWLEY



Editor,

Don and I thought you might like to see the article about our 70th. We are both well and very contented in our retirement home.

Don will be 93 years old on Feb. 16, '12. Still driving and very active.

The best to you and yours,
Darlene Hawley

Meet Chateau residents
Don & Dar Hawley
in celebration of their
70th anniversary.

By Chateau resident Glen Bollinger
Seventy years ago, on January 10, 1942, 18 year old Dar and 22 year old Don were married. It was wartime. The Pearl Harbor attack only a few weeks earlier had altered the future of many, and would certainly shape the lives of this young couple. Back in 1940, Don had made a one year commitment to the National Guard, but that one year tour was extended as the threat of war increased. Shortly, he received an appointment to train as an aviation cadet to launch his aviation (and lifetime) career. Don piloted transports, C47s and C82s, during the war. Once, flying a group of G.I.s to a rest camp in Australia, his plane lost a propeller. The propeller hit a wing, tearing part of the wing off. Because they were losing altitude fast, Don commanded all aboard to parachute. His co-pilot insisted on staying with Don, so the two rode the plane down to a crash landing. Both were injured, but Don still managed to destroy his secret IFF transponder. Unfortunately, two of his passengers who had jumped were killed.

Don and Bill Beeby, while exchanging war stories here, soon became aware they unknowingly had crossed paths in the South Pacific.

In 1944, Don's air group in New Guinea had lost many of its pilots. Since new pilots were not available, Don believed that in an emergency he could substitute glider pilots to be co-pilots on the transports. When he learned that there were glider pilots on the Solomon Islands he requested some be assigned to him. Don has now learned that Bill Beeby, stationed on the Solomons, was the officer who accepted Don's request and arranged the transfer of the glider pilots to Don's group. It is no wonder that Dar, and Bill's late wife, Pat, immediately became the closest of friends here.

Don's exploits earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters, and the Bronze Star. In 1947, he attended the General Staff Counter-Intelligence School in Baltimore, and in 1948, he left active duty for the Air Force Reserve to become an airways flight inspector for the Civil Aeronautics Board. Also, he was a member of the international Society of Air Safety investigators.

In 1952, he joined West Coast Airlines as a commercial pilot. When he retired in 1979, after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 60, he had over 25,000 hours of flight time.

During the war years, Dar was busy at home raising their daughter, Donna, born in 1943. As was true with many servicemen of that era, Donna was 20 months old before Don first saw her. Their son, James, was born in 1950. A granddaughter, Talia Lauren, was born in 1984.

The family has always been interested in horse racing, including, at times, owning their own horses.

They have been members of the Kent United Methodist Church since 1956, and were original members of the Chateau, moving in when it opened in January, 2005.

Dar also is the Chateau Resident Council vice-president for 2012.

A congenial couple, we wish that they will continue flying high in a cloudless sky and that there never will be any hard landings.

Happy 70th Anniversary to the Hawley's!

BOB RAATZ



Aloha,

Really enjoy the RNPA magazine. After NWA put a DC10 base in HI in 1992, we moved here, fell in love with it and continue to live here 7 months a year and 5 months in MN.

We live on the Big Island about 25 minutes from Kona and for recreation do quite a bit of golfing and occasional scuba diving and traveling. After retiring I decided to take up paragliding. After some flights on the Big Island, Oregon, New Zealand and Maui, a hard landing in Maui broke both ankles. After this mishap, I gave it up and currently have a Kitfox back in MN to get my flying kicks.

A triple bypass 4 years ago slowed me down for a little while but no damage was done so everything is back to normal.

Summers are spent on a lake by Perham, MN and we keep busy, flying my airplane, fishing and spending time with four grandkids living near the Twin Cities. Hope to get to some reunions next year.

Bob Raatz

HELEN COLE



Cy resides in a nursing home in East Bremerton, Washington. His family was with him on his 97th birthday 12/27/11—Cy and his grandson Eric cole, Billy Cole's son.

Helen M. Cole

GARY THOMPSON



Hi Dino,

After spending the past eleven years in AZ escaping the winter ritual of single digit temperatures and snow up to your "cheeks," we find ourselves back in MN, make sense? Not really, however we had to get away from the "bad air" in Chandler. We will return after locating a place with both a higher elevation and cleaner air. We have been very fortunate thus far having very little snow and not a day of sub zero temps. I figure seeing as tho we have to be here we've lucked out thus far.

We had a great time both on "Das Boat" and in Omaha, it is fun to re-group, so to say, with some wonderful people. I certainly thank you Dino and the rest of the people involved for your efforts to keep the rest of us up to speed on what is going on regarding RNPA.

I am very proud to be a part of the "Red Rudder" Family.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Gary Thompson

JEAN FREEBURG



Dear Dino,

Lots going on here. I will put the property for sale in the Spring. Also, is anyone interested in a Baron (our baby)?

I am well and wish the same for all of you.

Love,

Jean Freeburg

WES SCHIERMAN



Gary,

Not much new to report except after two years & a month, with a lot of help from Marty Foy, I finally got my "Van's RV-12 Light Sport Kit Plane" flying on 10/24/11. Have 16 hours on it so far. Fun little machine! Wishing all a healthy & Happy 2012!

Wes Schierman

CY PETERSON



Editor RNPA:

Last June colleague Captain Steve Towle made a nostalgia flight. The first aircraft that USAF ever allowed him to touch was what the manufacturer called model PA 18 or Supercub.

He learned that Stanton Airfield had one on the line so on his 79th birthday he launched his memorable flight. His companion for the adventure was Brian Weber, grandson of our own Wally Weber. Photo of the heroes on completion of their flight

is enclosed.

To cap the celebration Steve brought a catered lunch for us to enjoy on that lovely summer day under the maples beside Runway 36.

Present were Brian, Marilyn, assorted drifters, Steve's wife, Stevie and my wife, Kathy (who was a Northwest stewardess, not a flight attendant). As Stevie mentioned to me that day, "He always makes a party of it." That day he succeeded.

Cy Peterson

JANINE ROSS



Dino and gang at RNPA,

I retired October of 2010 and so enjoy reading about all of the gatherings. I especially look forward to the St. Croix River cruise in June.

I have moved to Colorado this New Year and am enjoying the healthy sports atmosphere

I am fortunate to have parents that own a lake compound in northern Minnesota so I can still come back to the plains on occasion.

Enclosed my check for the next year's subscription.

Thanks,

Janine Ross



**LARRY
DAUDT**



Dino,

If you see fit to publish this with my dues remittance, please do. I will not be abased if you do not.

I am in the process of writing my memoirs for the children and grandchildren. I have spent many hours going through the logbooks of my days, years, and flights at NWA.

After I mailed my 2012 RNPA use today and I started to reminisce the flights and the captains who so patiently took me under their wing and from whom I learned so much. Some of them are still with us and are up in years. I hope they can read this and to them I say a special Thank You.

What struck me is that so many of them have flown West without a thank you from me. May I in retrospect make an attempt to right the error and correct the oversight.

They may not read this but maybe somewhere, someday we will be flying again together and I will again be learning from them.

To name a few:

Spencer Marsh hired me at NWA in Sept of 1965. I later had occasion to fly as his C/P on my first flight to Alaska.

Other of those gentlemen were Ralph Render, Dick Smith, Thom and O'Brien, Tom Finnely, Bill Rowe, Bill Halverson, Mac McCary, Clair Davis, Ed Adamek, Neal Potts, Dan Neuman, Floyd Homstead, Burt Sissler, Bill Smith, Jack Sullivan, Shake and Bake Shotwell, Herb Johnson, Lou Damiani, Art Peterson, George Stone, Ken Marsh, Bob Kise, Burt Quam, Dick Suhr, Rocky Rockwell, Dino, Roger, and Paul Ludwig who so professionally handled a 720 exposed engine fire on take off from JFK. I have a complementary letter from James Michener, the writer, to this day.

And to all those who I have not mentioned: Thanks for a wonderful career and retirement protection.

All is well in retirement here in Boerne, Texas with both daughters and three grandkids just down the street.

Lenice and I plan to attend the Atlanta gathering so see you then,
Larry Daudt

**PETE
DODGE**



Hi Fergie.

Thanks for a great magazine. You are a pro.

With each passing year I feel very fortunate to be able to say "another year has gone by." Stephanie and I are both healthy and enjoying an active life with a lot of time spent with our 2 daughters and 5 grandkids.

We love Arizona, but spend the summers and Christmas in Minneapolis where the youngsters reside. Golf, tennis and travel take up our free time. We made a couple of trips to SE Alaska and one to the Black Hills in 2010 and plan on Ireland in 2011... for starters.

Rumors in the paper this morning (1/13/12) that along with USAir, Delta may be interested in merging with bankrupt American. Good luck with THAT! Life seems so much simpler now.

Thanks for keeping RNPA such a vibrant organization.

Pete Dodge

**DAN
LINEHAN**



Always look forward to the Contrails. Great stories and pictures.

We all are thankful that you all are doing a great job & keep the magazine interesting & informative.

Dan Linehan

**NANCY
BATES**



Hi Dino,

Thanks for all your hard work keeping us in line and this organization running.

We are enjoying the winter in sunny Arizona and will take a trip to Maui in March with our daughters and grandson, Thor, now 3-1/2 years old. Very cute, of course.

Ran into Walt and Jan Mills at Costco in Scottsdale today and had a nice visit. Have also visited with Doug Jones and John Hicks and their wives.

See you and Karen in Atlanta. All the best in 2012.

Take care,
Nancy Bates

**NORM
MIDTHUN**



Thanks Dino,

Bill's looking forward to time with you!

Joe Lapensky's funeral today. The old NWA guard is dwindling.
Norm Midthun

**BILL
ROWE**



Hi Dino,

Dorothy and I just celebrated our 64th wedding anniversary. Three of our four children were there. I'm still playing golf and tennis. Not bad for 86 years old.

Looking forward to the Spring Luncheon.

Bill Rowe

YOUR LETTER HERE

*No charge!
(Free state stamp)*

**PAUL
LUDWIG**



The Museum of Flight here in Seattle invited me to the ceremony dedicating the new Charles Simonyi building where the Space Shuttle Trainer will be installed by next June and it blew me away to be among so many important people because all I did was donate a few dollars over the year.

I looked around expecting to see people I knew from the airline. I was seated next to the architect who designed the building and told him I was surrounded by VIPs and he said, "We'll let you sit at our table," and laughed.

Donations help. Donations do not necessarily need to be money. We retired pilots often find ourselves with a shelf of books or collections of model airplanes or we have rare or one-of-a-kind items relating to flying which we no longer cherish; and which, if donated, would help teach the visiting public the story about aviation and space travel and enrich the Museum's collections.

Those of you who may not have followed last year's selection process regarding which museums will receive the retired Space Shuttles may not know that of the Space Shuttles and the Space Shuttle Trainer, people visiting museums which receive Space Shuttles will not be allowed inside the shuttles. People visiting the Museum of Flight's Simonyi wing will be allowed inside the Space Shuttle Trainer.

So if you are able to donate a book or two or some rare object, you don't need to travel to Seattle to do it. Find the phone number for the museum and someone will direct you to a method to donate your item or items.

Paul Ludwig

**WAYNE
ANDERSON**



Dino,

As always, thanks for your time and efforts to keep the RNPA organization intact.

I am still healthy and lucky to be living in the Phoenix area in the winter months, and on Flathead Lake in Montana in the summer. My wife and I are always anxious to have pilot friends visit us at either place. I am very involved with playing golf at both places, and also keep busy with making fun videos of family and some of our travel adventures.

In October 2011 I was able to visit the former NATCO headquarters where John Vivian was kind enough to let my grandson view the 747-400 simulator. While there I saw Carl Simmons who is still instructing on the 400. It reminded me that I had an old VHS tape we made years ago after his 727 incident where the number three engine blew up and damaged the number two engine also. It is a great story and had YouTube existed in those days, Carl would have been as famous as Capt. Sully is today. If interested in Carl's interview, I have posted the video here: <http://vimeo.com/30763514>

(By the way, it was surprising to learn that the entire NWA complex, including the corporate headquarters, along with NATCO is for sale. I believe it is around 180 acres plus the buildings.)

Additionally I digitized a couple more old videos from Northwest days. One is of Capt. Dan Lindsey showing what not to do regarding CRM and can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/33088456>

This video was produced by Bob Root and myself (with help from the NWA audio/visual department), during the initial stages of CRM training. Dr. Jerry Berlin the

aviation psychologist who consulted with NWA back then, used this video up until very recently as part of his presentations to aviation groups around the country.

The other video is a video that was made by Northwest ALPA talking about the history of NWA. The first part of the video is from the cockpit of a NWA 747 on a flight from NRT to the mainland. It can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/31823271>

Another historical video is one produced by NWA talking about the history of the airline and has some interesting old footage. It can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/33133241>

Many of the RNPA members heard about the videos via an email from RNPA, and it has amazed me the number of people that have viewed the videos. It was a fun project for me to digitize the videos, and brought back many great memories about the fantastic people and company that was NWA.

Best Regards,
Wayne Anderson

**GORDON
CROWE**



Dino,

Thank you for your continued time, talent and effort on my behalf. Happy & Healthy New Year.

Sincerely,
Gordon Crowe

**B. J.
MOLÉ**



Dino,

Great seeing you at the Seattle Christmas Party. Sorry we didn't get to talk more. The Contrails is a great pub.

Thanks for all your work.
B. J. Molé

MINNESOTA DECLARES WAR ON THE U.S.

President Barack Obama was in the Oval Office when his telephone rang.

"Hello, President Obama," a heavily accented Norwegian voice said. "'Dis here is Sven, over here at the Muni Liquor Store in Menahga, Minnesota. Ve don't like some a yer policies so I am callin' to tell ya that we are officially declaring war on ya!"

"Well, Sven," Barack replied, "This is indeed important news! How big is your army?"

"Right now," said Sven, after a moment's calculation, "there is myself, my cousin Knute, my next-door-neighbor Ole, and the whole pool team from the Muni "

Barack paused, "I must tell you Sven that I have one million men in my army waiting to move on my command."

"Wow," said Sven, "I'll haf ta call ya back!"

Sure enough, the next day, Sven called again. "Mr. Obama, da war is still on! We have managed to acquire some infantry equipment!"

"And what equipment would that be, Sven?" Barack asked.

"Vell sir, ve got two combines, a bulldozer, and Sigurd's farm tractor."

President Obama sighed. "I must tell you Sven, that I have 16,000 tanks and 14,000 armored personnel carriers. Also I've increased my army to one and a half million since we last spoke."

"All right den, said Sven. "I'll be getting back to ya."

Sure enough, Sven rang again the next day... "President Obama, da war is still on! We have managed to git ourselves airborne! We up an' modified Ole's ultra-light vit a couple'a shotguns in da cockpit, and four boys from the coffee shop haf joined us as vell!"

Barack was silent for a minute then cleared his throat.

"I must tell you, Sven, that I have 10,000 bombers and 20,000 fighter planes. My military complex is surrounded by laser-guided, surface-to-air missile sites. And since we last spoke, I've increased my army to TWO MILLION!"

"Two million you say?," said Sven, "I'll haf' to call you back."

Sure enough, Sven called again the next day. "President Obama! I am sorry to have to tell you that we have had to call off this here war."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Barack. "Why the sudden change of heart?"

Vell, sir," said Sven, "we've all sat ourselves down and had a long chat over a few beers, and come to realize that there's jyst no vay ve can feed two million prisoners."

**KEN
MEISNER**



I am a new member and my dues are coming separately in snail mail.

I retired from NWA/Delta November 1, 2011 having gotten hired by Northwest in July 1984. Like many it went slow and too fast but looking back it was mostly fun and rewarding. The wonderful people I was privileged to fly with made it all worthwhile.

Northwest was my third airline with USAF, Air Florida for over 4 years and Arrow Air for only a few months. Thank goodness! I flew the B727, B757, B747 classic as 2/O, F/O and Captain and The A330 and B747-400 as Captain.

I now live in Overland Park Kansas where I am equal distance from kids and grandkids and the winters are much milder than the 25 years in Minnesota. I am looking forward to finding other pilots I knew and having a few beers.

Life is great and I hope my golf game can come back!

Ken Meisner

Welcome aboard, Ken. Spread the word, bring some friends to help keep this organization going! – Ed.

**JACK
CORNFORTH**



Hi to All and Happy New Year,

All is well at our house. We had a good Christmas and quiet New Year. The RNPA Christmas party was wonderful. We enjoyed seeing everyone. Thanks to all who was in charge of all the work.

The weather in Minnesota is pretty good—54 degrees and a record for 10th of January. Enclosed are our '12 dues.

Thanks again,
Jack & Betty Cornforth

**RON
VANDERVORT**



Dino et al.,

Thanks to all at RNPA for your great efforts in running this wonderful organization and producing this great publication.

Perhaps these few words will contribute as well to the intent of and interest meant to be shared in this publication.

I have been living on an Airpark in Silverdale WA... between Poulsbo and Bremerton since 1995 and do Goodyear AZ (since 1999) in the winter. Usually fly my RV-6 for the migration each way basing the aircraft at Glendale airport in AZ.

Used the airplane to go to Roatan Honduras via Mexico and Guatemala. Later another time to Mulege Mexico, for whale watching trip. Been all around the perimeter of the USA as well.

Latest big news (2 years old already) is after 15 years of bachelorhood I found a neat lady, Carol, to share the same digs and airplane with. We had a shotgun wedding. The wedding was held in our hangar with a great jazz band on the back of a '46 Chevy farm truck.

I was escorted in by a redneck groomsman with a 12 ga. shotgun. It was a good time with our great friends and neighbors. (It turns out the shotgun wasn't necessary, whew!)

We have just completed a new house next to our hangar at the WA Apex airpark... so now AZ doesn't look so inviting this year. I guess we will go south about Jan 20th with the airline folks... hope it is not fly by wire.

Check in with us in AZ or WA, 360-620-3366

Ron and Carol Vandervort

**LLOYD
MELVIE**



Dear Contrails crew,

Once again a big thanks for all your efforts in keeping us informed and entertained.

2011 was a very eventful year in our lives. We sold our lake home in Spicer MN and lived in our patio home and a couple of storage units until we bought a home in Buffalo MN and got moved in before winter. We love this town and being just minutes away from our grandchildren, plus closer to the Twin Cities and lots of other places.

I'm still Pastor of Lake Union Covenant church near South Haven and we went through a big building project this past summer, adding new worship space, social space, kitchen, bathrooms and entry so everything is now handicap accessible. We broke ground in April and moved in early October, so everything went pretty smooth. In mid-December I began to feel like something was not quite right inside of me and discovered during a physical that I was right, I had blood clots in both lungs that fortunately had not stopped somewhere critical on the way. However, I feel good again and thankful for every day that God gives me. I didn't even miss a Sunday in the pulpit.

Keep up the good work!
Lloyd Melvie

**DIXIE
MITCHEL**



Dino,

Enjoy the great magazine. We upgraded to a new-er (to us) motorhome so hope to join one of the reunions in 2012. Love retirement. We are both blessed with good health.

In appreciation,
Dixie Mitchel

**DAVE
BOWEN**



Dino and Gary,

It is snowing right now here on Whidbey Island [Jan 18th] and all is white and beautiful.

The only travel activity of much interest to report from here is that Connie and I took off last September for a 8,768 mile coast to coast round trip road trip in our trusty Chevy Tahoe. You remember the Dinah Shore Show? "See the USA in your Chevrolet." We went through 24 states from the Pacific to the Atlantic and return. Several "bucket list" items accomplished. Even covered a good part of old Route 66.

After seeing so much of the US from the air, it was great fun to avoid the Interstates and freeways where possible and travel mostly on the back roads. Things like visiting the Daisy Airgun Museum in Rogers, AR., and Ernie Pyle's home in Dana, IN. and camping in the Bad Lands at sunset just to mention a few of the many highlights.

All is well here in my 19th year of retirement. (Good grief, can that be possible?)

Best regards to all,
Dave Bowen

**BOB
KUNOLD**



Dino,

Thanks for all the good work you do with RNPA. Contrails is one of my few ties with the old group from NWA, so I read it from cover to cover. My wife is still dragging me to 2 or 3 Little League games a week. That's the trouble with sixteen grandkids, don't travel as much as we'd like. But we thank God for our good health and the well being of our family.

Best wishes to you and yours,
Bob Kunold

BOB GOULD



For those who knew Denis as a mechanic in HNL or had contact with him in MC, you know how special he was. If he worked on your airplane, chances are it was fixed; not approved for further service. He could answer questions off the cuff that had other mechanics scratching their heads even with the manuals open.



I regret to inform you that he died on January 3, 2012 at Castle Hospital in Kailua, HI after a long illness. Denis fought off amyloidosis starting in 2002 or earlier including an autologous bone marrow transplant at Mayo Clinic in 2003. The disease, however, had taken its toll, and his health has suffered ever since. He checked himself into Castle with pneumonia on October 12 of last year, and was doing fairly well, even being released to a rehab nursing home two months later to try and get him back on his feet, but unfortunately he had to go back to the hospital where he died 10 days later.

His sister plans a memorial service in the spring in either MSP or WI, and we will take him for one last ride in the Seabee that he spent so many hours helping me restore,

then after landing in Kaneohe Bay we plan to scatter his ashes. This will take place sometime after February 1st.

Denis started with NW in 1968 and retired after 41 years of service. He was always helpful, always professional, and always kept us going.

Bob Gould

DONNA CATLIN



Hi Dino,

I still enjoy RNPA even tho I know so few now!

I sure remember the good days serving 21 people & a box lunch.

Donna Catlin
(Mrs. Bruce)

GIFF JONES



Gary, Gary, Dino, et al

Thanks... yet again for another engaging year of CONTRAILS. I have sent separately and gratefully, my 2012 dues check, acknowledging the increase in fare. CONTRAILS is still the best bargain in the literary world short of a public library.

Personal news? The world continues to spin on its axis per normal as observed from our Lake Union houseboat here in Seattle. As we continue on our own retirement



DICK SUHR



Hi Dino-

Hope you are off to a great 2012. As for me, I am trying to recover from a miserable 2011. I was in the Mayo Hospital for 3-1/2 months and then a couple of others for two more months. March thru September.

Things are looking up now, and my strength is returning. Am able to play an occasional round of golf.

I really appreciate all the good work that you and the [Contraails] group do. Tell "Olde Bob" that I hope he is soon back writing his column.

Dick Suhr

orbits in good health, we try not to take any of it for granted, affirming often, "How fortunate we are!" in so many respects.

We manage to follow the sun to various southern locales for a couple of months each winter and spend much of the rest of the year in our PNW, dividing our time between local volunteerism, Mary's community gardening, sailing the northern latitudes in our 38' ketch, and my trying to account for it all from in front of this digital Cyclops.

Since it's just a few days into the new year, it seems fitting to wish all of you out there equally good or better fortune, along with a best ever Happy New Year!

Cheers,
Giff Jones

BILL BYERS



Hi, Gang,

Sorry, I have to send this the old fashioned way, but I don't know how on the computer. I dislike the computer almost as much as the telephone, so only able to do the basics there.

Not a lot to report from Arizona. I head back to Minn/Wisc every November for deer hunting. We have a group that has been doing this for many years. The WWII guys are gone now, so I and another are the old guys now. The young guys are in their 40's, but we still have to show them how it is done each year.

Kathy and I don't travel and have no desire to. I drive back to Tonkawa, Oklahoma once a year to visit relatives and old high school buds. Two high school friends own the only two bars in town, so I can play one against the other for freebies. Although by the end of the night, I still have no money left. At least in Tonkawa, you can walk home, or bum a ride with anyone going by. Small towns, everyone knows everyone.

I did make it to the Tailhook Convention in Reno this year for the first time. With the 4,000 attendees, I did not recognize anyone. I have a friend from the Navy Reserve days, who lives in nearby Truckee, so we had a mini-reunion

of our own, with the convention as a backdrop. One of the youngsters from my hunting group flew in for the Friday night flight suit party. He is former Air Guard C130 type, and now with United.

I am enclosing a couple of pictures from Tailhook. Some of the guys from the Navy Reserves in Selfridge and Oceana, will probably recognize Norm Justesen (in the shorts). He was our TAR in the A-4s and is retired from United (lives in Truckee). The other picture is of me and one of the youngsters from the deer hunting group, Ross Becker.

Bill Byers



WEB BATES



It's great having a contact, bridging the gap between the old NORTHWEST and now, which is you at Contrails and RNPA. I've been a RNPA member since retiring in April '97 and have enjoyed both immensely.

My wife, Pat, and I are still in Seattle (same house 45 years) with grandkids close by and relatively good health. Time is taken up with golf, tennis, travel, and gardening. We attend many of the conventions and hope to attend this October. If you keep up the good work, I'll keep following along.

Web Bates

DOUG MILLAR



To the Editors of Contrails:

What a wonderful magazine you guys continue to put out for all of us. Please keep up the great work!

I also want to thank each of you who thought of me, prayed for me, or contacted me in December when I was having a golf ball sized tumor removed from my brain. It all went well and I hope to be back to playing trombone again soon.

Ken Miller says that he has heard that playing too many "omp-pah songs" in German bands causes brain tumors. He says that I'd be better off to stick with Dixieland! He might be onto something, being an old tuba player himself.

Anne and I continue to live in Leavenworth, WA and enjoy the fourseasons. Lots of fun things happen here all year long. It's a great place to visit!

Wishing you all the best of 2012.

Doug Millar

**DENNY
BAUMANN**



Hi Dino,

I haven't written in to the newsletter yet but I've been wanting to do so for a long time. One of my greatest regrets is that I never sent in a few words which could have been included in the excellent article about "What we do in retirement." I have always been a strong advocate for the age 60 rule and that article proved why it was a good rule. It's amazing at what wonderful things guys can do if they have the time, means and health to do them.

I take my hat off to the many NWA guys who are now making a major contribution to their communities and society in general. I have been fortunate enough to have fallen into two little endeavors which give me a great reason to get up every morning.

One of them is that I have been a docent at the Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles (IAD). I began training just prior to my retirement from NWA so I was part of the initial cadre of docents who spoke to adults and children alike since the museum opened on Dec. 15, 2003.

I also chair the school tour committee which means that I write and give a lot of tours to children of all ages. I have learned more about aviation since joining the NASM than I ever knew in over 45 years of flying airplanes.

My other little endeavor is to refurbish computers and then GIVE them to some of the poorest schools, churches, community centers and job training facilities throughout the U.S. and many foreign countries. This little project started in 1994 when I was an Airbus F/O on a lay-over in MEM. A very poor school in Walls, MS needed about 12 computers to teach the kids "keyboarding." I put a notice in our pilot lounges

in DTW, MSP, SEA and NRT. In no time at all I got 12 desktop computers from NWA pilots and donated them to the school. That was a LOOONG time ago and well over 2,000 computers ago. I am still doing this in both Virginia and Florida and am now in need of about 200 laptops for some schools in Haiti. I can say a lot more about this if anyone is interested.

Meantime, I just want to thank you for the work of RNPA and the wonderful opportunity it gives us all to enjoy our retirement.

I'm happy to send you my dues and wish you all a healthy and happy 2012.

Denny Baumann

**GARY
MCGAHUEY**



Dino,

Enclosed find my check for \$40 to happily renew my dues for RNPA. It's hard to believe that I've been retired for 10 years now.

10 years ago my retirement ID card said NWA, not Delta as it does now. I had my Delta retirement photo taken on the last day that the FSB was open at MSP. Out with the old and in with the new, or at least the different. I turned 70 this year and, thanks to our son and daughter, I ran my first half marathon. Both our children ran full marathons, so they said I should be able to run a half. Naturally, I said no problem! Of course later I realized that I was now committed to run 13.1 miles, continuously no less!

Fear, if nothing else, made me train for the race, so that 4 months after my 70th birthday I ran the Disneyland Half Marathon with our daughter and son. We all had a blast, and I lost 25 pounds running the nearly 200 miles in training for the race.

Gary McGahuey

**JOE
FOURAKER**



Thank you for keeping the Contrails at four issues. I look forward to each and every issue.

This past year has been full of events in our lives. My wife of 36 years, Gale Surman, had kidney failure in February and had to go on dialysis. However, it doesn't slow her down for daughters and grandkids. She was able to go to Kansas City to plan our youngest daughter Amy's wedding. And then of course, go back for the wedding. (I tagged along, too.)

The dialysis center is gracious enough to set up treatments in the various cities. We also made a trip to Virginia because our grandkids were going to be there. Then this Christmas we traveled to Monterey CA to see our oldest daughter, Sarah. She is the one with the kids. We still are glad we settled in Florida. It's always great to come home to.

Other than that, I still wonder how we found time to work with all the many things I find to do.

I still miss my buddy, Doug Wulff. It's been a year now.

Joe Fouraker

**ROSE MARIE
NICHOLS**



Dear Dino,

I am fine and so blessed with five of my children here in Minneapolis.

I miss my wonderful husband every day and thank the dear Lord that we had 58-1/2 years together as man & wife.

Thank you for all that you do for us. Our youngest son is checking out in Houston on the 733. I know Chuck is very proud of him.

Fondly,

Rose Marie Nichols

DICK DUXBURY



Hi Dino and RNPA folks,

Good news today. We completed and verified our update into the Delta system.

Thanks RNPA and Gary Pisel for sending very specific information and reminders.

Last year we did indeed fly Delta to Europe and back. No pass stuff—just tickets, and it was a good decision. The flights were full and we looked at pass riders as we boarded. Oops, I made the mistake of having my DAL picture ID on a RNPA neck rope. One unhappy pass rider (their second day of waiting at CDG) asked me how we were able to get a seat assignment—thinking we were space available folks. This was September, and I confessed that we had had full fare tickets since March.

We have since done some domestic pass riding—works out OK if you watch the loads in advance.

Sue and I are still enjoying the migration life style between Minnesota and Tucson. We always go back to Minnesota and often DCA area for Christmas. Thus we enjoyed the MSP RNPA Christmas party—thanks to the volunteers that put this on every year. In that same regard, we enjoy the St Croix boat trip in June.

We are signed up for the ATL convention this fall. OK, I'm still dealing with the loss of the Northwest history and name, but I'll survive and I believe that Richard Anderson is a very good CEO in a tough and difficult business. We should all paint our "tails" red and take a "moon" picture for our next convention. (Sue thinks that's a very stupid idea—and is likely correct.)

By different correspondence, I've sent in my 2012 dues to Dino; on time and resisting the urge to pay for 5 years in advance, which

is against the rules. Perhaps it's the best, since at age 75, one does not know for sure whether he should buy very green bananas or pay advance dues. In that regard, the RNPA magazine continues to be an absolute top quality publication. Thanks to the other Gary!

I've noted that some airlines are now flying many B-757 (my favorite pilot airplane while at NWA), to Europe. Mostly it works great for thin routes that would not support a bigger wide body bird. But in the winter jet stream winds, it does indeed result in needed fuel stops—rather than the scheduled non-stops. Northwest even did that for a few years as I recall—perhaps from Hartford? In any event, the press has noted that some of these scheduled B-757 non-stops are NOT non-stops in the winter.

I can recall one flight at Northwest on the B-757 (circa 1991?) that we were scheduled for Boston to SFO. Departing in the early evening in January. There was also a NWA DC-10 crew leaving for London Gatwick. They noted that their flight time was the shortest they had ever flown.

Oops, we looked at our flight time and found it was over 1 hour longer than schedule. In fact it was 10 minutes longer than the DC-10 flight to Gatwick. Of course, that crew gloated that they would be in London before we would be in SFO. Well, I would have done the same thing if on that crew. We asked the gate agent to tell the almost full flight that we would be late due to winds. Not sure he/she did that and we were indeed over 1 hour late. Fuel was not an issue but the slower mach speed (compared to the wide body birds) could not be changed much.

Brings back memories of some long (hours) headwinds going to Narita in the winter with the whale.

I think all on the crew would pucker their seats as we looked at the fuel, the time, and the decision to continue.

Visited the Northwest History Centre over Christmas. It is indeed a great museum. I hope it can continue and needs financial support from our retired group.

Warm regards from now
Tucson for the winter,
Dux (Dick Duxbury)

BRIAN SHAY



This is to update everyone on the movements of Brian and Michele Shay from 187 Moose Drool Lane in Sandpoint, Idaho.

We purchased a home in Tarpon Springs, Florida so that we could escape the cold and snow of the mountains in the winter. We are heading down for February and March 2012 and next year much longer. Anyone who is in the area, we would enjoy seeing you... please drop by.

Our contact information in Florida is as follows: address 1462 Watermill Circle, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689 Phones: Brian 208-255-9496 and Michele 208-290-4474.

Happy Spring!
Brian and Michele Shay

MARILYN BENNETT



In memory of Kenneth D. Bennett 08-16-1927/02-08-2011. ABSENT from the body and PRESENT with the Lord. II Corinthians 5:8. This is a temporary separation for us as I am claiming John 3:16 as a promise of everlasting life together. So until then I'll keep on.

"Sing"cerely,
Marilyn Bennett

**KATHLEEN
ATKINSON**



Dear Dino,

I continue to run the condos Niel and I bought twenty years ago. I spend my time between Grand Marais, Newport, Oregon and Costa Rica. Life is good, I still have my health.

Kathleen Atkinson
(Surviving spouse of Niel Atkinson)

**DENNIS
GUENTZEL**



Hi Gary,

Great job on the Contrails as always! I finally retired from the Bridger Canyon Fire Dept. after 13 years, having skillfully worked my way down to Assistant Chief. That's not a typo. It was a rewarding experience, but heart wrenching at times when you encounter the result of combining youth, alcohol and fast cars on our winding mountain roads.

This August the Waco is taking me along on another Barnstormers Tour. This time we start at the Fargo, ND Aviation Museum and end up in Blakesburg, Iowa at the Antique Aircraft Association Fly-in on Labor Day weekend. The number of aircraft going on the tour has shrunk to thirteen, but we will still have a really nice representation of antiques. Anyone interested can look up the schedule and details at americanbarnstromerstour.com

Gary, I too don't have much time for the phrase "going forward." The only time I was ever called into the chief pilot's office, I distinctly remember that Will Tanahill said, "Dennis, 'IN THE FUTURE' you will not..... ." "Going forward" simply would not have cut it.

Thanks Gary and Best to all,
Dennis Guentzel

**NICK
MODDERS**



Gary,

Thank you for your treatment of my recent article in "Contrails."

It was well presented in the magazine and made me look pretty good. Interestingly, I've gotten several emails and phone calls thanking me for the entertainment.

Are extra copies of the February, 2012 issue available? If so I'd like four more to share with children and other worthies.

Thank you for your tremendous effort in turning out a first class-magazine.

Yours,
Nick Modders
Twin Cities Rapid Transit
employee 2925
NWA 77358
USAF FR3130947

As I explained to Nick, I usually send extra copies to anyone who submits an article for Contrails. In this case, I just forgot.

Would you like extra copies, too? Send me an article. – Ed.

**DAVE
WOODEN**



Hi to All,

It has been another good year for Lorna and I. We have vacationed in Brazil and Ireland. Also covered many states of the Union. This winter we are trying Arizona.

Thanks everyone for the work you do for Contrails. I sure look forward to every page.

This year's challenge is learning how to sail, as my wife talked me into a sailboat. Something without an engine just does not seem right. Take care.

Blue side up!
Dave Wooden

**LOREN
DESHON**



Dino,

Thanks for all the efforts you and the guys make to keep us all up-to-date. Very much appreciated.

We (Kathie & I) still live in Redmond, WA. Fortunate to have both of our kids and their families in the area. Both have been involved in aviation. My daughter is an aviation law attorney and a few years back when she was flying, got typed in a Cessna Citation. My son has an air charter/flight training operation in Friday Harbor, WA—Westwind Aviation.

I'm still doing investment management for a small number of clients and golfing whenever the opportunity arises. We both like to travel and try to get to a new place in the world every year.

Best wishes to everyone,
Loren DeShon

**LOU
SHUMWAY**



Hello Gary,

I just sent in my dues in order to remain a member of RNPA in good standing, and I thought that it has been a long time since I said "Thank You" to all of you that keep RNPA up and operating. Really good work that all of you do.

Life continues here in Illinois. Hopefully as time goes by, I'm aging somewhat gracefully. Since we live under the 14R approach to ORD, I still have the habit of looking for those "Red Tails" flying overhead. No matter how hard I look though, they are not there. I miss them.

Other than a few health issues this last year, we are doing well, traveling some, and generally enjoying life. Thanks again for all you do for our group.

Lou Shumway

**WALLY
WEBER**



I am now in my 28th year of retirement. Built two airplanes, an RV-6 and an Aerosport Two (ESS design). Rebuilt a PA18 Super Cub & 1941 Taylorcraft. During that time maintained a 1940 J3 Cub that two sons and two grandsons learned to fly in. We also have a 1979 Citabria that I bought from Bob Mello in 1995. So you can see we are truly an aviation family.

Travelled to many countries. Had several memorable ocean cruises taking our children on the 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries. Many of the items on my “bucket list” have been fulfilled. The last one occurred on October 20th of last year. Flew down to Louisville, Kentucky and drove up to Tell City, Indiana to visit the crash site of NWA Flight 710 that was enroute to Miami.

This happened on March 17, 1960. This was a loss of the first Lockheed Electra. I knew all six crew members, having worked with each one in the past. I was especially fond of Captain Ed LaParle. Because of our relative seniority we were often teamed up on the Boeing 377 Stratocruiser that NWA put into service in 1949. Because the aircraft went in almost vertically and at a high rate of speed it was decided not to recover the aircraft or human remains. Four clergymen conducted a service at the site later on. Tell City residents constructed a monument at the site. It is well maintained.

In the mid 1950s, my wife, myself and our five year old son, Stephen, were returning to Minnesota after visiting her family in Massachusetts. We had boarded an airplane at the Idlewild airport (now Kennedy). Shortly before departure, the agent came up to us and said he needed our seats. As we walked past the nose of the aircraft back to terminal, the cockpit window opened and Captain LaParle inquired what was our problem. I said,

“Ed, the flight is full.”

He said, “Just a moment.” Shortly thereafter, the agent escorted us back on the airplane and up to the cockpit. My wife sat in the jumpseat, I sat in the navigator’s seat and Stephen sat in Ed LaParle’s lap all the way back to Minneapolis. Stephen is now a senior 767/757 captain at the MSP base. Needless to say, our friendship for Ed LaParle was enhanced by his kindness.

So, Captain Ed LaParle and all the others at the site—Rest in Peace, you are not forgotten.

Wally Weber



LARRY WEIDKAMP



Hello Dino,

Happy New Year to all.

As usual, we're spending winter and early spring in Saint George, Utah.

We are looking forward to a better year in 2012, but I guess we don't have a lot to complain about for 2011. Our lifestyle is a little complicated by having two residences... the other in Hansville, WA; however, the advantages for both places is tough to beat—so we feel like we have the best of everything to accommodate our likes. We live in an "over-55" community here in Saint George which offers enough activities to make your head spin.

Of course it has a golf course, and our home overlooks the 6th green with a gorgeous view of a nearby Red Rock Mountain as a backdrop. I've about given up on improving my golf skills, but still enjoy it a couple times a week.

Linda is a member of a jazz dance group which entertains at various places all around the Saint George area. In addition to the "ordinary" life, we very much enjoy cruising. We've done a lot of it over the past 25 years. Our biggest recent highlight was a South America-Antarctica cruise over the year end of 2009-2010, and then Linda spotted a cruise which was too good to pass up, so we went on a 10 day trip with Eileen Reed, a former NWA FA to the western Med. Unfortunately (fortunately for her?) they got stuck in southern Europe because of the Iceland volcano eruption, so they elected to stay on the same ship for a tour of the eastern Med. Then for my 75th birthday in February 2011, Linda set us up for an "anniversary" 25 year redo of our first cruise... a relaxing cruise to Mexico. We are only 1 1/2 hours from Las Vegas, so

we take advantage fairly frequently of the show offerings there. Our timeshare in Vegas often makes decisions to go there pretty easy.

Our big upcoming event for 2012 is our treating the entire family to an Alaska cruise in July. Twelve in the party, so you can imagine the state of the bank account! Oh, well, "You can't take it with you." (To coin a phrase?) If fishing permits, we hope to take in a couple retired NWA events this summer as well. Hope to see all soon.

Larry and Linda Weidkamp

FRED ELLSWORTH



Hi Dino,

Hard to believe it's 2012. Sixty years ago I was in co-pilot ground school on Ford Parkway in St. Paul.

My first trip was with Gene Shroeder—DC-3 flight 101 to Billings. Can't help but to think of those that I flew with on the '3': Nyman, Bates, Catlin, Sutter, Pieper, Lemley, Runyon, Ruona, Keller and others, all great guys! Most have gone west.

Thanks to you and those that have kept RNPA the good organization that it is

Best Regards,
Fred Ellsworth

TOM ADAMS



Hi Dino,

Lori and I are still here in the Nashville area. We are still doing the same old things. She hunts for antiques and I fool with my airplanes. We took a weekend trip last fall in the J-3 to watch an air show in eastern Tennessee, a great slow and low trip. The colors were outstanding.

My son Kelly and I bought a high performance acrobatic plane a few years ago and have both

been competing with it. The A/C is a Staudacher S300-D. The plane weighs about 1200# and has a Lycoming 330 HP engine. Kelly won a slot on the US Advanced team and he competed in the world contest in Radom, Poland in 2010. He had to rent a German Extra 300 to use in the contest. There were 85 competitors from 26 countries. He finished 49th overall. I was selected as the US judge for that contest so I was along also. He took third in the National championships in 2011, which put him on the team again and will compete for World Advanced Championship this year in Hungary. I am up for team manager, we'll see. This time we plan on containerizing the plane and shipping it overseas. It's always better if you can fly your own equipment.

I still compete but in one of the lower/easier categories, intermediate. Those negative "G"s were kicking my butt. Kelly is a capt. for Continental AL so his time doesn't allow for many regional contests.

My schedule, being wide open, lets me compete in about 8 or 9 contests during the summer season. Lori doesn't complain, she knows it keeps me out of the dark smoky bars.

Take care,
Tom Adams

GAIUS BERG



Hi Dino,

Now that I've reached age 91, I recognized only a few of the pilots still flying, but still enjoy the publication

Thanks for staying with it and keeping it alive.

Gaius Berg
(dispatcher retired in 1982-30 years ago!)

**LYLE
PROUSE**



Hi Dino,

I'm sending my dues in per the "do it now" slogan at the bottom of the billing request. Thank you, Dino, and everyone for all you do to keep RNPA going! I applaud the decision to keep the RNPA publications at four per year and to raise the dues \$5 (I never was a 'real pilot' so \$5 doesn't stop my heart!).

Life here is good and Barbara and I are moving along nicely. I still feel half my age and am still climbing 20 feet up in trees to deer hunt with noooo problems at all. Barb is doing well also.

I finished and published a memoir project in late November '11 that was begun in '02 or '03 and then dropped for about four years. It's entitled "Final Approach." It contains a full story, start to finish, and includes growing up in Kansas, the travails of an alcoholic home and the demise of my parents, life in my Native community, my Marine Corps journey from private to captain, and infantryman to combat pilot in Vietnam.

Rapid Robert Polhamus and I were in the same squadron, which presented one of the more formidable challenges to Marine Corps equilibrium during the Vietnam war...!

And then came the ill-fated Northwest Flight 650 event, the trial, prison, and life afterwards... ending in the miracle of retirement as a 747 captain and a presidential pardon. If anyone is interested, they can find "Final Approach" at

www.lyleprouse.com
or Amazon.com.

It's currently cheaper at Amazon.com (and there are reader reviews there as well) unless someone wants a signed copy which is found on my website. I wrote this

for family and friends and have no illusions of it being a 'best seller' nor do I particularly care; I'm just glad to have it finished.

Barb and I hope to make the ATL RNPA reunion since it's in our back yard. We missed you in OMA but had a great time in RAP the year before!

I'm still flying, mostly charity flights for Angel Flight and the Animal Rescue organization, still have a First Class FAA Medical, and still love seeing terra firma from several thousand feet up. Crew meals are pretty lousy and coffee service is pretty scant, but I get all the legs and that makes up for the rest!

Blue skies,
Lyle Prouse

**JIM
PALMER**



Hi Gary,

Thanks for all the great work you do publishing the Contrails. In your book review in the Feb. issue you wrote about the book "Aphrodite a Desperate Mission." Back in 1981, I believe it was, on a layover in Honolulu, I was in a used book store and discovered a copy of the book. I was thrilled reading about the missions and particularly about "Sam" Houston and his involvement in the whole thing. It's a true miracle that he survived that parachute jump from that B-17.

I loaned that book to many friends and RNPA members who came to the monthly lunch in Seattle. About 5 years ago it was not returned to me and I can't remember who was the last one to borrow it. After "Sam" flew west for his final check, they had a big memorial for him at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field. One of the people that attended was Jack Olsen the author of the book. He lived in Washington State somewhere near Seattle and

had obtained a lot of information for the book by interviewing "Sam".

My wife Bev and I attend the picnic and the Christmas party every year. It was a big surprise to us when they announced that I was the senior man in attendance, and I was given a nice bottle of Dave Nelson wine for being that man. I know there are members senior to me in Seattle that did not come to the Christmas party for some reason or other. They did say that Joe Kimm was too ill to come.

It's kind of scary with old age coming on, I'll be 90 on May 29th. The biggest change for me was to give up golfing at our country club of which I can see parts of nine holes from our house.

I also donated my beautiful old drum set to the local high school for their Swing Band, I hope. Its bad when your hands and knees won't allow you to do some of your favorite things.

I always enjoy the photos taken at the parties. I was disappointed that the photo that Doug attempted to take of Bev and I at the Christmas party didn't get printed, perhaps the reflection off my head spoiled it!

Sincerely,
Jim Palmer

*Too many photos, too little space,
Jim.*

*I'm still trying to decide on the
article you sent. Maybe next time.*

– Ed.

**AL
TAYLOR**



Dino,

This comes with a heartfelt "Thank You" for what you are doing for us "Fogie" pilots; and, moreover, for all of the special things you have done over the years (and Years). You are greatly appreciated.

Al Taylor

**LARRY
DORAU**



Hi All,

It was great, once again, to see so many friends at the annual Christmas party in MPLS this year and now our attention turns to the cruise on the St. Croix and then on to Atlanta.

Marcy has been able to join me in retirement now with the sale of her veterinary clinic here in our home town of Star Prairie, Wisconsin. We still are busy maintaining the rental cabins we have in Cornucopia, Wisconsin on the south shore of Lake Superior near Bayfield. Check us out at www.cornucopia-cabins.com.

We see Bob Burns once in awhile at the neighboring town of Port Wing where he seems to catch all of the big lake trout instead of leaving some for the rest of us.

Again, thanks to everyone involved for all of the hard work that goes into RNPA. It is much appreciated. As they say, "The check is in the mail."

Larry and Marcy Dorau

**JOHN
PIEPER**



Dear Dino,

Not too much new. Julie is coming along. She continues to manage her life being paraplegic and is a real inspiration to everyone who knows her.

I have a bit of COPD which requires me to be on oxygen. Although we both have good vitals we stay close to home these days. We are happy overall and hope all is well with you and your family.

Thanks to you and your staff for dedicated service and doing an excellent job.

Sincerely,
John Pieper

**STEVE
CRAWFORD**



Dino!

I'm pushing 33 years with the airline now, and am set to go at age 60 in a little over a year and a half (09/13). While I still thoroughly enjoy flying jets around the world, it JUST AIN'T THE SAME!

Buying Republic Airlines was one thing, but this Delta merger is a whole different animal. I can honestly say that, for the first time in my career, I'm looking forward to retirement. Will concentrate on flying my RV-4, playing golf, karate, skiing, beer-drinking, etc.

All for now. THANK you for all your great work. Hope to see you at the DLI in September? Maybe even a RNPA gathering between now and then?

Ja, dewa matta-ne! Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu!

(Okay, see you later! Happy New Year!).

Steve Crawford

**GARY
DICKINSON**



Hi Dino,

I can hardly believe I retired 22 years ago. We retired from the farm after 35 years in 2009. Miss the cows and calves but not the manure.

We now live in Sequim, Washington in the summer and Aguila, Arizona in the winter.

I'm still fortunate to hold a medical and really enjoy flying just for fun. Of course there are lots of grandchildren & great grandchildren to keep the old folks busy.

Thanks to all the staff at RNPA for a wonderful magazine. I look forward to the next issue every [quarter].

Thanks,
Gary Dickinson

**DAVE
ELBOW**



Hi Gary, Dino and all,

Toughing out winter in Kansas. City on track for lowest snowfall in history. I am recovering from varicose vein surgery but should be ready for shorts soon—hopefully on a trip to Buenos Aires.

I played some golf with Aubrey Hall in November in Phoenix. He is doing fine. Heard from Bob Pascal. He and Sue Ellen seem to be well in Tucson. Also attended Brad Navarro's Christmas bash in St. Paul.

Looking forward to another summer of fishing at our residence in Anchorage. We threw a party there to celebrate our first social security checks and to encourage continued generosity. I sometimes see Dave Hall up there. Please call if you are in the area—we are in the book.

Thanks for all your work on this great publication.

Check 6,
Dave Elbow

REMINDER

U. S. POSTAL SERVICE:
We are unable to change mailing addresses seasonally. Instead, Contrails and all other mail is sent First Class to your permanent mailing address, which provides for forwarding, unlike our previous mailing system. If desired, please arrange forwarding through the U. S. Postal Service.

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Your BOD*

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Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**



Fukushima Daiichi *It's not that simple!*

Just a year has passed and hardly a word is heard any longer concerning the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Powerplant, located in the Fukushima Prefecture of Japan. The challenges have not abated for those directly affected by loss of life and home after the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, but it is the unseen nuclear detritus that is defining the real aftermath. In the hours and days that followed, three of the six reactors suffered partial to full melt downs to create the biggest nuclear disaster since the 1986 Chernobyl accident. The scale and effect of this, to some, an unexpected event, will not be known for generations. Considering Japan's current sovereign financial condition, it might not have been able to come at a worse time.

March 11th, 2011 probably started out like most any other end of winter/early spring day in Tokyo. It was a little soon for Sakura (cherry blossoms) but the new baseball season was being talked about and the new TV shows were just around the corner, coming in April per Japanese standard. Little did anyone know this day would be their own, albeit different version and more, of the 9/11 disaster America suffered in 2001. Our 911 was going to be their 311, or "san ten ichi ichi," as they say in Japan.

That day was different for me too. In my room on the ninth floor of the downtown Tokyo Hilton Hotel, recuperating from the odd hour crossing in our Delta 747, the weather was bright but cool with just a whisper of wind. Earlier that morning we had arrived at Haneda after a midnight departure from Los Angeles. Delta Airlines had lobbied extensively with the Department of Transportation to begin again serving the Haneda Airport located more conveniently to downtown Tokyo. This resumption of service probably brings back memories for the NWA guys who had done it and retired before I even got here. The Japanese airlines, JAL and

ANA, had somehow (?) already gotten approval and had made Haneda a hub both internationally and domestically. Competitive advantage? Duh.

The US airlines fought out the limited access made available to them and Delta came up a relative winner, gaining two of the four routes. For reasons not completely explained by the Japanese authorities responsible, the departure times from LAX and DTW were constructed in order to be able to meet the requirement of arriving or departing at Haneda between the hours of 10 pm and 7 am. Of course those restrictions did not apply to the Japanese carriers who had already built extensive domestic links around more desirable times. Competitive advantage? I don't need to answer that again but it might have given us a hint of how the word "inscrutable" became linked to our friends in Japan if it weren't so obvious.

Anyone who has travelled to Japan over the years has probably experienced at least a few tremors and aftershocks. I was sitting on the edge of the bed with my computer when, at 2:46 pm, I felt a pretty good movement of my surroundings. I initially figured it was nothing new but moved over to the window and was almost shocked at the view of the surrounding skyscrapers as they began their swaying motion back and forth. To see structures fifty and sixty stories high moving visually half again their width gave me pause to wonder if I was in a very good place. With my nose pressed against the window out of curiosity, it finally dawned on me this wasn't an ordinary quake. Just about the time I figured I'd better move away from the window I was literally tossed to the floor in a confused stumble.

I turned the TV on but only Japanese stations were available and as those of you who have been there can imagine, the hieroglyphics on the remote control were of no help in determining where CNN was. I had an idea

something big was up but didn't have a clue of where it might be centered. To assume it was an ordinary earthquake like many others was quickly dispelled after I finally accessed an English speaking commentator, but they hadn't heard of what was really going on yet! It was only after a little channel surfing that I was able to see the initial reports begin to come in regarding the event. After all of the coverage we have now seen of both this 2011 undersea buckling and with the Boxing Day 2004 Indonesian earthquake, it might seem obvious that there would be further trouble from a tsunami. But now that's only because we know both were centered far out to sea.

The swaying motion, with a few jolts intermixed, continued for almost an hour and the hotel emergency system explained we were to stay in our rooms as the elevators were inoperable. The view out the window was a tribute to the engineering that had been done to make these buildings safe during these, for this region, ubiquitous events. I looked out again, expecting to see large chunks of siding and masonry falling but saw nothing. For me this was starting to be a little bit of fun—heck, there was no place to go anyway.



A whirlpool near Oarai City, Ibaraki Prefecture, northeastern Japan, March 11, 2011.



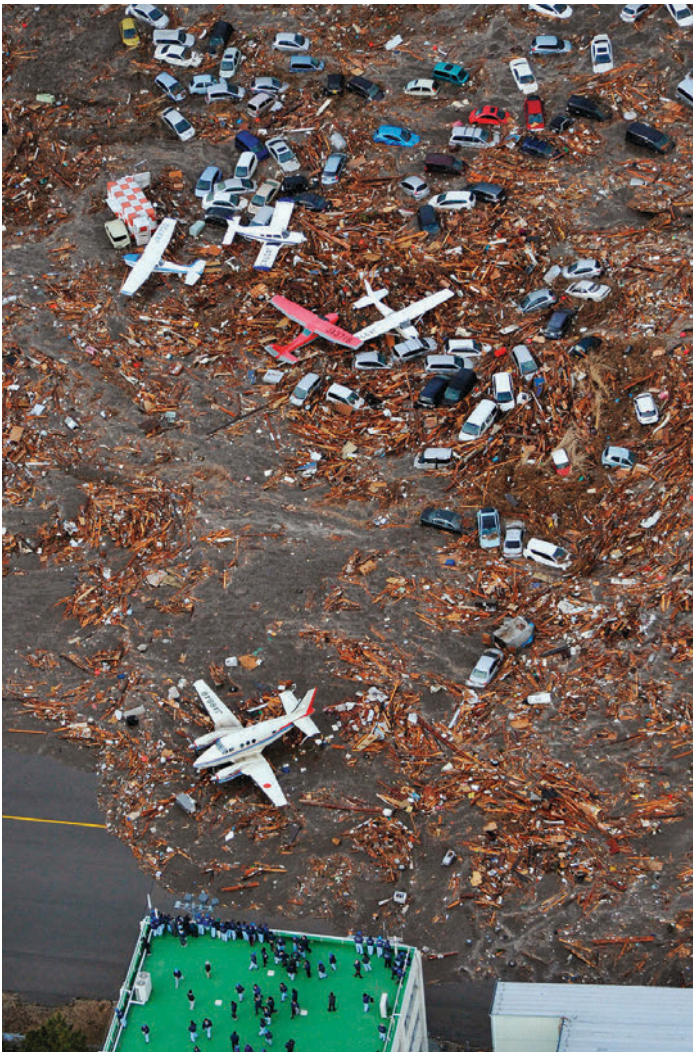
This picture taken on March 11, 2011 by Sadatsugu Tomizawa shows tsunami waves hitting the coast of Minamisoma in Fukushima prefecture.

Well, it wouldn't have been fun if I had had an idea of the unprecedented tragedy unfolding 150 miles further north in Fukushima. And of course while some of the coastal residents began, at that point, to make their way to higher ground and to the rooftops, there were a lot of Japanese who either had no idea of what was coming or did not have the means to initiate a personal solution. In the end, there would be over eighteen thousand former residents who had stories that would never be told.

Yet to come was the tsunami that was still out to sea, not yet near the coastline. It would take almost 50 minutes for the reported wave, some 15 meters tall, to reach the beaches and communities of Okuma, Futaba, Iitate and beyond. The loss of life and the utter leveling of property were yet to come. The word "nuclear" had not been mentioned and it wouldn't be for hours that I would discover the streets below my hotel window flooded with city dwellers that raided the mini marts and cleaned the shelves. McDonald's closed the next day with no new supply of raw materials. The hotel did a wonderful job of keeping us informed and fed and except for the occasional aftershock, life was almost normal.

Our outbound flight back to Detroit was immediately cancelled as there was no inbound aircraft and, as it turned out, wouldn't be for at least another day or two. After enduring a couple of premature notices to suit up and get ready for the bus ride to the airport, the return flight finally occurred and was uneventful. Of course everyone had their own story but looking back, none compared to what we would later learn had happened or, for that matter, were happening at that very moment.

In the subsequent months and trips to Narita, Osaka and Nagoya, Delta Airlines made an effort to keep us informed of the reported health related factors to make sure we understood we were safe to continue our travels to Asia. They even



People stand on top of a building near cars and airplanes among debris swept by the tsunami at Sendai Airport.

stationed personnel in the lobby of the Radisson Narita for a few weeks to answer questions, but we were getting the same irregular and sometimes downright false information disseminated by the government and the Tokyo Electric Power Company. USA Today was considered an equal source. The reaction to the nuclear portion of this event by the Japanese populace morphed quickly into distrust and disbelief. Stories changed depending on who was reporting and to this date the actual conditions are so dynamic as to never be anything but in a state of flux. Considering the complexity of nuclear reactions and the associated chemistry, this is not at all surprising; the solutions chosen appropriate in the cleanup process are changed readily as the condition of the reactors and surrounding support equipment is discovered.

Reaction around the world to the scale of the nuclear disaster was varied but uniform in one respect: the debate was reignited about the benefits of nuclear based energy generation versus the demonstrable possibilities

of a nuclear accident and disaster. Fukushima was an example up front and in the world's face.

The scale of the problem is perhaps best dimensioned by understanding the amount of materiel required to yield the copious amounts of power these reactor/generators produce. Reactor 1 was the smallest and first of the six General Electric products put into service at Fukushima Daiichi or, Fukushima Number 1, from 1971 to 1979. The rated 439 megawatts of power produced by Reactor 1 in plain language is 439 million watts, or absent the transmission losses incurred, 4 million plus 100 watt light bulbs. The fuel, a form of processed uranium called uranium dioxide, measures in excess of 78 tons! It is enclosed in very sophisticated containers, tubes really, made of nearly 33 tons of zirconium alloy with 12 tons of exotic steel used to support various pieces of the complex arrangement. Each reactor building also houses a "spent fuel" pool holding, in Reactor 1's case, about 60 tons, requiring a constant supply of water to cool the residual heat of reaction. At the time of the accident, that a staff of plant operators and maintenance workers numbered 6415 people, including the 5500 subcontractors further explains the size of the operation. This wasn't some test tube size reactor magically supplying power to thousands of businesses and homes. And it was the smallest of all of the reactors at Fukushima Daiichi!

Japan has 54 reactors at 17 plant sites that produced, before the tsunami, 29 per cent of the country's electric power. As of this date all but two of the reactors are shut down, which has sent Japan on a hydrocarbon buying binge throughout the world. It has affected their balance of trade and is not a sustainable solution with the removal of nuclear power. A portion of the population is in denial and for a country that has had six different leaders in the last six years, the resolute leadership required to lead Japan to a reasonable compromise is clearly missing.

When the reactors overheated due to a lack of cooling water, the temperatures inside the Zircaloy fuel rods containing the uranium dioxide eventually exceeded any temperature they were designed for and essentially lost strength and melted together to form what is called corium. Corium is simply the combination of all of the materials found inside a nuclear reactor when melted together. Of course if the primary reactor vessel is compromised this also allows the concrete in the containment vessel to be included in the mix. Estimates for Reactor 1 are that the corium mixture had penetrated the concrete floor of the containment vessel by as much as two feet. Without going into horribly complicated technical detail (I hope there's no test, I'm not sure I understand what



In this March 24, 2011 aerial photo taken by small unmanned drone, the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is seen in Oku-mamachi, Fukushima prefecture, northern Japan. From top to bottom, Unit 1 through Unit 4.

I've read), it is easy to accept how complex remediation is when the nuclear corium mix is dynamic, moving and changing in real time.

The current Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, said in October, 2011 that the initial amount allocated for cleanup in the areas contaminated by radiation would be a minimum of \$13 billion. Removing and disposing of 29 million cubic meters of soil from a vast area surrounding the reactors is just a start and has been estimated by the Japanese government to take possibly as long as four decades to complete. As a quick aside here: Cesium 134/137 is the primary culprit in hazardous nuclear residue that was distributed both atmospherically and by the release of contaminated cooling water. An interesting footnote in one report was: "burying the reactors in sand and concrete is considered to be a last resort." I can imagine the Minister is hoping somehow that 13 bil will do the job. Doubtful to me is the notion that the problem has, at this early date, even been adequately defined. Only time will solve that. For a country where nuclear power comprises so much of their power, shutting down all of the reactors has been difficult economically for the country.

Meanwhile the fallout, no pun intended, around the world has been explicit yet curious in several different aspects. At one end of the spectrum of choice is to completely abandon nuclear power, which is the goal of Mrs. Merkel, Germany's Chancellor. Germany depends on nuclear for 28 per cent of its power. They'd better figure out how to build BMWs and Mercedes without

electricity pretty quickly because the goal is to abandon nuclear completely by 2022. At the other end of this consideration are the countries that either have no nuclear capability or depend on it so completely that alternate forms of energy generation are simply impractical from an economic standpoint. One example is Poland, who would like to rely less on Russia for gas and oil. Another significant example of complete dependence might be a country like France, where 74 per cent of the energy is from uranium. But then, the French have always been a little bit different anyway.

The list goes on and the degree of reliance of course varies greatly country to country, but the wake up call that Fukushima provides is troublesome if for no other reason than the lack of information our media supplies. Lives were lost, thousands of people were displaced, never to be able to return to their homes. For some reason

we hear more about Lindsay Lohan's arrest record than Fukushima. With a Cesium 137 half life of 30.17 years, the remediation of the area surrounding Fukushima Daiichi and the problem of deciding how to power our world will be here long after all of us are gone.



An aerial view of a tsunami swamped Sendai Airport in northeastern Japan.



The WAY

it

WAS

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY

LONG AGO, ON A LINE FAR AWAY

What better way to begin my nostalgic submissions to *Contrails* than with reminiscences of PROBATION (which I consider my submissions to be permanently on)? A place where our pilot careers began.

The purported idea of probation was that the airline could take a close look at apprentice pilots over time and determine whether or not they would make good permanent employees. The somewhat arbitrary use of the system by the company leads me to wonder if the dirt compensation wasn't a factor too. (My first checks in 1968 were \$550/mo.—although I flew with co-pilots whose probationary pay

was \$450, so they would accuse me of being pampered compared with the privation they endured.)

And there were oddities such as a pilot who came off probation after the 15th didn't get full pay for that month, but those coming off before the 15th did—and surprise! surprise! Most pilots came off probation after the 15th. And there was the further financial oddity that the “year” of probation didn't start until the pilot flew a line trip, meaning that the “year” was more like 15 months.

Was the system effective? I imagine all of us remember pilots who made it off probation that shouldn't have—and I recall one famous case where the company fired a pilot at the end of his probationary period, but made the mistake of firing him the day after his probation ended. With the help of ALPA the pilot was reinstated, flew a flawless career, and retired as a 747-400 captain.

Most captains didn't take probation too seriously—one of the captains I flew with was a case in point. We had a lengthy PHL layover; as it turned out the co-pilot and the “A girl” (as they were known at the time) were “flying together;” the “B girl” was dating a PHL local, and the third “stew” wasn't socially inclined, leaving the captain and me to our own resources.

In this case the resource was an extended exploration of the PHL watering holes the captain knew. Walking home I was struck with a nausea attack—with the predictable result. The next afternoon in the van the captain took delight in telling the cabin crew (some of whom had openly wondered if I was old enough to shave) he had figured out what the splatters on his shoes were from—and threatened to comment on my probationary report, “Threw up on captain's shoes.”



I learned a lesson from my probation—some of the captains would give the form to their second officers to fill out themselves. I flew with one such captain. Wanting to come across humble, I gave myself a “below average” in communication procedures in that I had screwed something up on the company frequency that caused my captain embarrassment—assuming that he would note with approval my humility and change my pencil entry to something better than “below average.”

During my end of probation interview with Ray Moen, we went over my stack of probationary reports. Ray commented approvingly of the positive reports but allowed how he was concerned about this one particular case where my captain had found me “below average” in communication procedures. Permanent note to self: “Don’t ever be humble in making formal self-assessments.”

Probationary reports had lots of folklore associated with them. For a time the probationary pilots were required to provide their captains with the forms, but if a pilot felt the captain might submit a harsh report, he/she could follow the expedient of not giving the form to the captain to fill out.

The company figured out this practice and started putting the forms directly in the captains’ mailboxes. Not deterred by such a transparent stratagem, the probationary pilot network created a list of captains known to write critical reports. If a pilot was going to be judged by one such captain, he/she would keep checking the subject captain’s mailbox, removing the form before he ever knew it was there and thus avoiding a possible career ending negative report.

Line stories surrounded the writing of the reports. One scenario had the captain filling out the report at the end of the month and turning to the second officer and asking, “How do you spell incorrigible?”

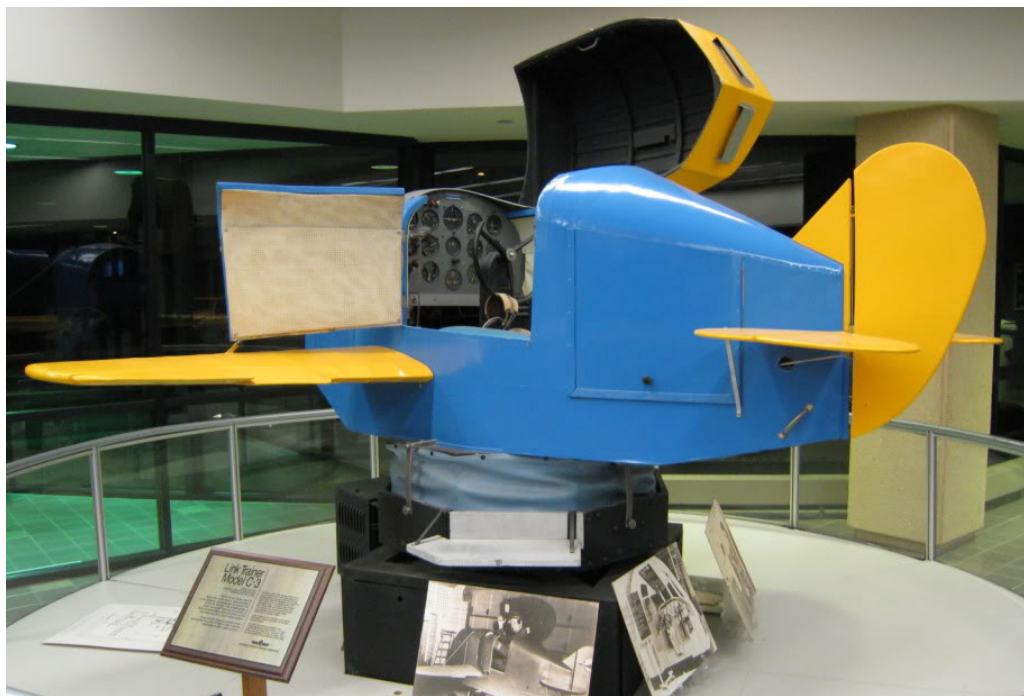
My favorite probation story: a close friend (call him Jim) was flying with one of our then most colorful captains—I say “then” because the captain involuntarily left the airline in the ’70s for “other op-

portunities.” He was known for his creative humor, for instance advising co-pilots making landings under difficult circumstances, “Just get it in the field boundaries so the ambulances can get to us.”

In this particular case “Jim” got onto a stretch 727 that had been baking in the sun on the ramp in CLE. Getting onto the aircraft with passenger boarding imminent, Jim went to the cockpit, threw on the air-conditioning packs and left for his walk-around, not noticing that the cooling fan on one of the packs was placarded inoperative. (This was in the days before maintenance started disabling packs without cooling fans.)

Passengers were boarded while he was outside, and just as he returned to the cockpit, the pack without the cooling fan tripped off and filled the cabin with acrid fumes. Coincidentally (at least we can hope it was coincidental), an old-timer passenger chose that moment to have a fatal heart attack. There was a period of confusion with EMTs taking the now departed passenger off the aircraft, figuring out where the fumes came from, clearing the air in the cabin, and reassuring the flight attendants and passengers.

Said captain filled out Jim’s probationary report as follows (and I have to assume that all his reports were outrageous enough that the company ignored them): “Jim’s work has improved 100% since he quit drinking so much—and we only lost one passenger this month due to his air-conditioning procedures.”





PIK PIGNIC



Georganne & Dennis Burton, Norm & Lee DeShon, Al & Ina Sovereign, Art & Enid Steadman



Helen & Gene Frank, Gary & Brenda Dickinson, John & Dianne Andres, Dean & Meredith Sunde



2

1012



Al Sovereign, Sue & Dick Duxbury, Georganne Burton



Jerry & Sherry Cooper, K P & Nancy Ann Haram, Don & Jane Chadwick



Charles E. Taylor: The Man Aviation History Almost Forgot

by Bob Taylor

Three men were involved in the invention and development of the first powered airplane—that’s right, three. Everyone knows about the Wright brothers, but that third man was Charles E. “Charlie” Taylor, a quiet genius who loved cigars and the sound of machinery. Although he contributed to one of man’s greatest achievements, “Powered Flight,” his name was almost lost in aviation history—until now—and if it hadn’t been for Charlie, that first powered airplane would never have gotten off the ground.

Charlie Taylor was born on a little farm in Cerro Gordo, IL, on May 24, 1868. As a boy Charlie moved to Lincoln, NE with his family. Charlie quit school at the age of 12 and went to work as an errand boy for the Nebraska State Journal. However, Charlie was mechanically inclined so later, when he began working with machinery in the Journal’s bindery, it came easy for him.

When Charlie was in his twenties he moved to Kearney, NE, where he went into a business of making metal house numbers. While in Kearney, Charlie met a young lady named Herietia Webbert in 1892 and married her two years later. In 1896 the Taylors moved to Dayton, OH, where Charlie worked for a Stoddard Manufacturer which made farm equipment and later bicycles. It was in Dayton where Charlie met the Wrights. Mrs. Taylor’s uncle rented the building on West Third Street to the Wright brothers for their bicycle business. This was a convenient connection, because, in 1898 when Charlie started his own machine shop, Orville and Wilbur Wright brought him special jobs, including a bicycle coaster brake they had invented but later dropped.

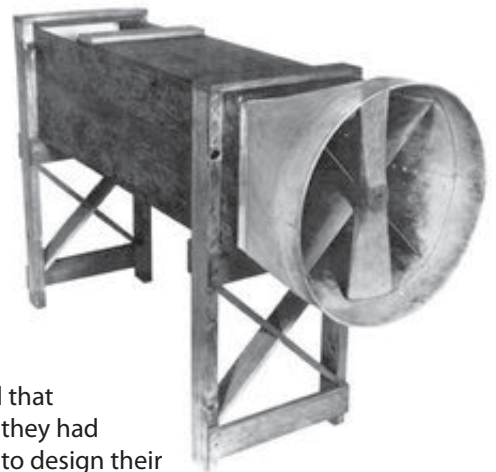
Charlie eventually sold his tool shop for a profit and went to work for the Dayton Electric Co. However, he didn’t like his job so he accepted, when the Wright brothers asked him to work for them at \$18.00 per week. This was a good decision for several reasons: The Wright brothers’ shop was only six blocks from where Charlie lived, he could ride a bike home for lunch every day, he was making eight dollars a week more, and he liked the Wright brothers a lot.



Charlie started to work for the Wright brothers on June 15, 1901, doing routine repairs on bicycles. This let the Wright brothers pursue their experiments with gliders, which included many trips to Kitty Hawk.

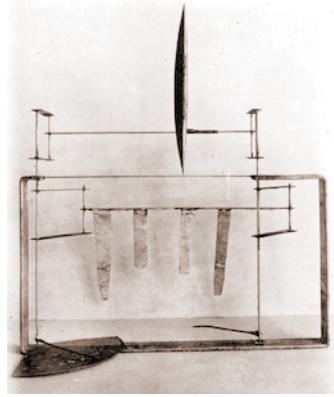
After one of these trips, the brothers decided they needed more accurate information than was available and decided to build a small wind tunnel with delicate force balance. With this, they would measure the amount and direction of air pressures on plane and curved surfaces operating at various angles and improve their theories based on their gliding experiences.

Building the wind tunnel was the first job that Charlie Taylor did for the Wright brothers that had any connection with aeronautics. The wind tunnel was a rectangular box with a fan at one end driven by a natural gas engine. Charlie ground hacksaw blades and used them for balance in the tunnel. The Wright brothers did many



1901—
Back in Dayton, the Wrights decided that the information they had been relying on to design their gliders was in error. They built this wind tunnel to test over two hundred wing shapes and generate their own design data.

1901—The Wrights built several balances to use in the wind tunnel to measure various forces on the wing shapes. This was their “lift balance.”

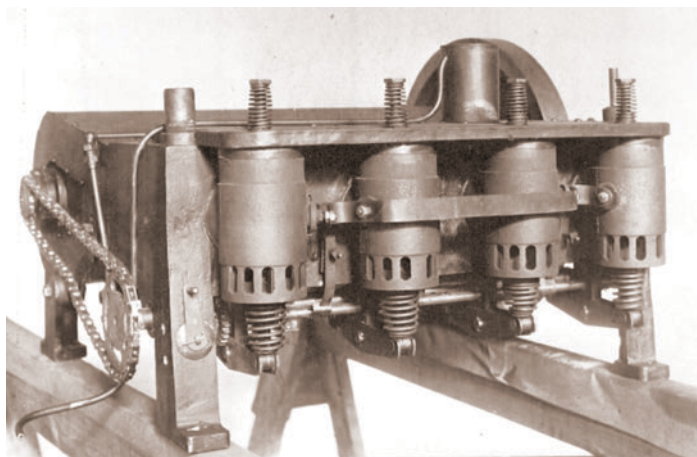


experiments in their wind tunnel and from this data they began to make their 1902 glider with Charlie machining many of the parts.

On August 13, 1902, the brothers shipped the glider to Kitty Hawk. They did several flights with the glider and on October 31, 1902, the Wrights returned to Dayton to make plans for a powered airplane. Through their experiments, the Wrights were able to accurately predict the horsepower—eight—which was needed to produce and achieve powered flight. The next problem was where to get a light engine that would produce eight horsepower. The Wrights knew that a steam engine might suit their purpose, but a gasoline engine would be safer and more efficient.

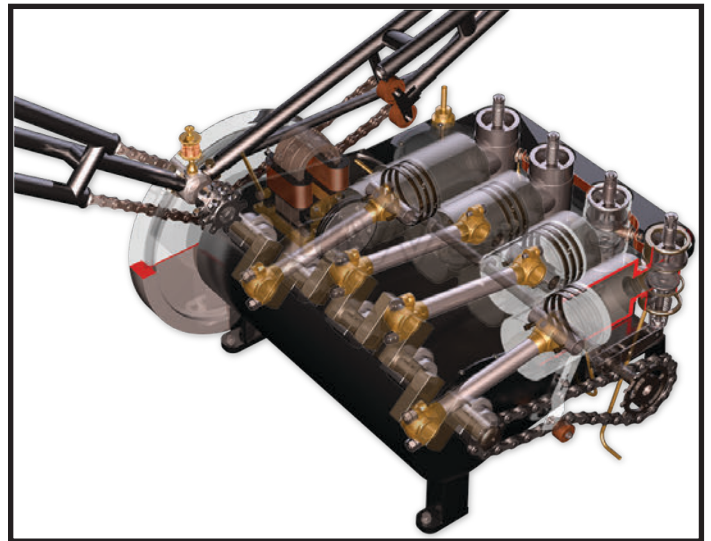
On December 3, 1902, the Wrights sent letters to almost a dozen automobile companies and gasoline engine manufacturers asking if they could produce or modify an engine that would develop eight to nine brake horsepower, weigh no more than 180 pounds, and be free from vibration. Most companies replied that they were too busy to undertake building such a special engine.

Falling back on their own mechanical experience, the Wright brothers decided to design and build their own engine. They estimated they could build a four cylinders engine with four inch stroke and four inch bore, weighing no more than 200 pounds with accessories included. By their calculation, it would develop the horsepower necessary to power the glider in flight. Now



the problem was who was going to build the engine, but it was easily solved. The brothers decided that they would give the task to Charlie and they would build the airframe. Charlie was excited about this new challenge. From his knowledge of mechanics and design he knew that the engine design was basic, straight forward, simple, and capable of being successful. Charlie had very limited knowledge about gasoline engines, but he used his craftsmanship, genius, enthusiasm, and efficiency to tackle the task.

Charlie started building the engine in the winter of 1902-03. Without any formal drawings available, it was necessary for each part to be crudely sketched out by the Wrights or Charlie on a piece of paper. After a thorough discussion about it, Taylor would pin the drawing above his workbench and go to work to complete it. Using these sketches and specifications, he finished the engine in six weeks—an amazing accomplishment.



I want to describe in some detail how Charles Taylor made the engine so you can appreciate the craftsman he was. The first problem that Charlie and the Wrights faced was the crankcase. The case had to be light and strong. Aluminum was still a rare metal in those days and it was difficult to get a good sound casting. John Hoban, foreman of Buckeye Iron and Brass Foundry in Dayton, took on the job of making the crankcase using the strongest aluminum he had. The cylinders were turned from fine-grain gray cast iron and had a bore of four inches. The top and bottom of the cylinders were threaded so they could be threaded into the crankcase and a water jacket could be threaded on them.

The next major task for Charlie was making the crankshaft. Being a mechanic most of my life, I would never even attempt taking on a project of making a crankshaft with the equipment that Charles Taylor

had—a drill press, a lathe (both run by a natural gas engine), and hand tools. Charlie secured a plate of high carbon tool steel that measured 1-5/8 inches thick, six inches wide, and 31 inches long. On the plate he traced an outline of the crankshaft and carefully, painstakingly drilled hundreds of holes along the outline of the crankshaft. This weakened the plate enough so he could knock the excess material away with a hammer and metal chisel. Once this was done, he had the rough cut crankshaft ready for the lathe and the finish cut. With the small natural gas engine chugging away at full power driving the large wide leather belts that turned the lathe, Charlie turned out a near perfect crankshaft to the thousandth of an inch. The next part that Charlie worked on was a fly wheel from a solid block of cast iron.

The connecting rods, intake valves, exhaust valves, pistons, valve guides, rocker arm, and numerous other parts that made up the complete engine were carefully thought out by Charlie and tailored to fit the operation of the engine. Charlie painstakingly assembled the engine part by part, fitting and refitting each piece with the meticulous care of a jeweler making a watch. He scrutinized every detail. He assembled and disassembled the parts, time and time again, making sure of their operation until all the parts were working in harmony.

It took a lot of genius and ingenuity and the engine was finally complete and assembled in February 1903. It was mounted on a test stand and ran well, producing eight horsepower at 670 rpm and 11 hp at 1000 rpm. Charles E. Taylor had successfully built the first aircraft engine.

As a result of the engine producing 12 horsepower at full rpm, the Wright brothers were able to add another 150 pounds to the aircraft which allowed them to strengthen the wings and framework. The engine with its dual propeller drive drove two counter rotating pusher propellers by means of chains. The Wright brothers designed and tested propellers in the wind tunnel and built several propellers that would be used for the first successful flight. Charlie also made all of the metal parts such as all of the metal fittings where the wooden struts

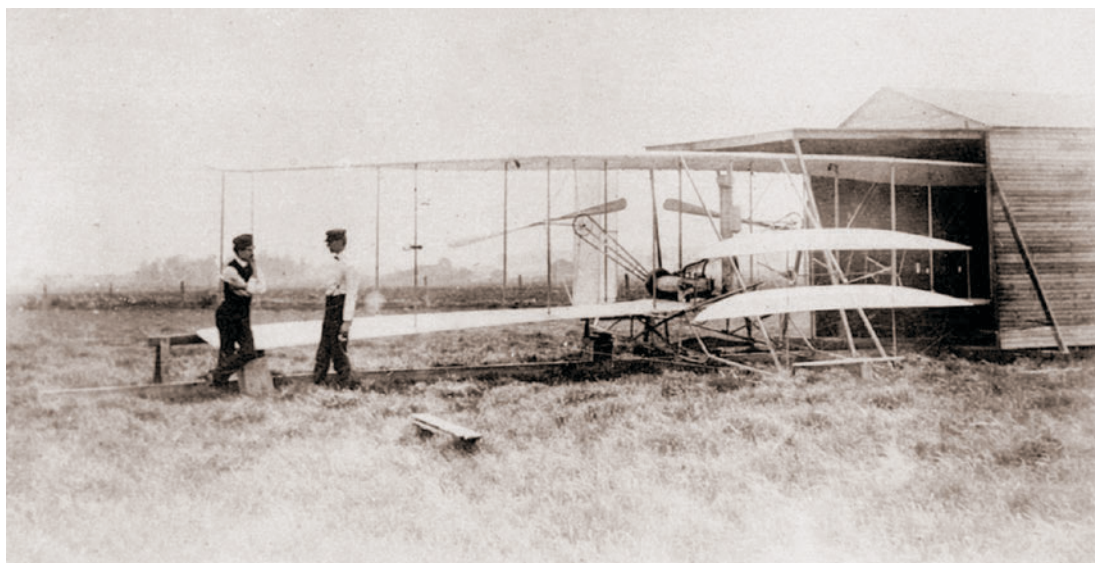
joined and spruce spars and Roebling truss wires were attached.

On September 23, 1903, the Wright brothers left Dayton for Kitty Hawk to start preparation for man's first powered flight and the Flyer followed on September 25. The Flyer was assembled and the engine was installed on November 2. To reduce the danger of the engine ever falling on the pilot in case of a wreck, it was placed on the lower wing to the right of center. When the engine was started, the vibration from the irregular firing caused failure of the prop shaft extensions. Charlie made new shafts out of solid steel which held up during the first flights.

On December 17, 1903, in the mid morning after a run of about 40 feet at a rate of approximately seven to eight mph, the first successful powered aircraft lifted off and flew 120 feet in 12 seconds thus introducing a new era of transportation. Although the first flight wasn't publicized that much, Charlie and the Wright brothers were very excited.

The Wright brothers decided to build another flying machine, but decided against going again to Kitty Hawk. They looked near Dayton for a level place for flying. After a few days of searching the Wrights found a suitable ninety-acres pasture, often called "Huffman Prairie," belonged to Torrence Huffman, a Dayton bank president. He allowed them to use it free—provided they didn't run over his cows. Charlie and the Wrights built a hangar to house the airplane and moved into the new facility on April 20, 1904. Charlie took care of the field and facility while the Wrights were going around the country and world. He was the first airport manager.

In a 1948 interview Charlie said that he had "always



1904—The Wrights decide to continue their flight tests closer to home. They build a second copy of the Flyer and begin to test it at Huffman Prairie, near Dayton, Ohio.

wanted to learn to fly, but I never did. The Wrights refused to teach me and tried to discourage the idea. They said they needed me in the shop and to service their machines, and if I learned to fly I'd be gadding about the country and maybe become an exhibition pilot, and then they'd never see me again. How prophetic those last words were!

The Wrights were trying to sell the aircraft to the military and started to do demonstration flights on September 3, 1908. Orville flew and Charlie kept the aircraft in good flying condition. On September 17, Charlie was slated to fly with Orville, but before the flight, larger propellers were installed to compensate for the heavier weight of the two men. At the last minute Charlie was replaced by Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge, a 20 year old West Point graduate from San Francisco. During the flight Orville heard a strange noise. He looked around, but didn't see anything. However, he decided to shut the engine down and land. Suddenly, there were two large thumps and the aircraft shook violently, as Orville tried to control the aircraft to the ground. About 20 feet from the ground the aircraft started to correct itself, but it was too late. The aircraft hit the ground, killing Lieutenant Selfridge and badly injuring Orville Wright. Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge became the first passenger casualty in a powered aircraft.

After the accident, Charlie investigated the crash scene and found the new propellers that they put on before the flight had delaminated. Charlie reported his findings to Orville, who was in the hospital recovering from his injuries. Charles was the first person to investigate a powered fatal accident flight.

Charles Taylor continued to work with the Wright brothers until 1911. At this time an adventurer and a pilot, Calbraith Perry Rodgers, wanted to make the first continental flight across the United States. He purchased an aircraft from the Wright brothers and enough parts to build two more aircraft. Orville realized that the aircraft would not last more than 1,000 miles without proper maintenance, so he lent Charlie to Rodgers knowing that he would be the only one that could keep the plane flying for that distance successfully. Charlie sent his family ahead to California and got on the three car train that was to accompany the flight. One car of the train was a repair car where the aircraft parts would be stored and the aircraft repaired. It took Cal Rodgers 49 days to cross the United States. Three days, ten hours of that was actual flying time. His longest single flight was 133 miles. He had 16 crashes and the aircraft was repaired so many times that at journey's end only the vertical rudder, the engine drip pan, and a single strut of the original plane remained—a testament to the skill



1908—Orville crashes during the last trial flight, breaking his leg and hip. His passenger, Lt. Thomas Selfridge, died of a blow to the head. The Wrights delivered a new Flyer to the Army and completed the military trials in 1909

which Charlie used in keeping the aircraft flying.

This was the last of Charlie's big adventures. Charlie returned to Dayton and worked for the Wright-Martin Company until 1920. Charlie eventually moved to California and lost touch with Orville Wright, but things turned bad for Charlie. The Depression hit and Charlie's machine shop failed. He lost his life's savings in a real estate venture and his wife died. Charlie Taylor's contribution to aviation was forgotten until 1937 when Henry Ford was reconstructing the old Wright bicycle shop in Dearborn, MI. Detectives found Charlie working at North American Aviation in Los Angeles for 37 cents an hour. None of his co-workers realized he had built the first aircraft engine. Charlie worked for Ford until 1941 when he returned to California and worked 60 hours a week in a defense factory. However, in 1945 Charlie suffered a heart attack and was never able to work again.

In November 1955, a reporter discovered Charlie in Los Angeles General Hospital's charity ward—he was almost destitute. His income was his Social Security and an \$800 a year annuity fund belatedly established by Orville Wright before his death in 1948. The aviation industry immediately started a campaign to raise funds for Charlie. He was moved to a private sanitarium where he died a few months later on January 30, 1956, at the age of 88. Having no close relatives, Charles E. Taylor was buried in the Portal of Folded Wings Mausoleum dedicated to aviation pioneers, located in Valhalla Memorial Park, Los Angeles.

Charles E. Taylor was the last of the three that shrunk the world by building the first successful powered airplane—the mechanic who made the flight possible. ✈

— Article suggested by Skip Foster

SW FLORIDA SPRING LUNCHEON



MARCH 6, '12



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL
SPRING LUNCHEON THANKS
TO THE HOSTS, ONCE AGAIN,
← DINO AND KAREN OLIVA.

Next Spring it's back
to the same place on
March 4th.

Photography thanks to Bill Horne



Barbara & Bob Vega



K.C. & Martha Köhlbrand



Dick & Doni Jo Schlader



Barbara Beckert, Ty Beason



Connie Thompson, Verna Finneseth



Gary Webb, Connie Thompson



Gary Pisel, Cortney & Gary Webb



Bill & Sylvia Douglas, Ellen & Ned Stephens



Wendy & Pete Vinsant, Cortney Webb



Bruce & Susan Burkhard



Dee & Don Bergman



Rita & Wayne Ward



Gary Webb, Candy Kane



Bobbi & George Lachinski



Kathy Davis (Crippen), Rowdy Yates



John Scholl, Cortney Webb



Tom & Berit Roberts



Ursula & Glenn Houghton



Jane Finney, Jan Hanks, Janet Baron



Dave Good, Jackie Wiczorek



Sandra & Dan DeLosh



Doug Nelson & Marsha Mayer



Jackie & Gary Smitson



He's at it again!



Candy Kane, Jan Hanks



Kathy & Bob Lowenthal



Nancy & Jim Bestul



Joyce & Dan Farkas



Cortney Webb, Claire Lackey, Wendy Vinsant



Bill Isaacson, Linda & Arnie Calvert



Jan & Dave Sanderson



Jan & Lois Christman



Tom Wondérgem, Rowdy Yates



Don & Evy Hunt



Arlen & Claudia Anderson



Marilyn & Howie Leland



Al & Jeanne Teasley, Kathy Davis (Crippen), Gary Webb



Bill Waterbury



Paul & Patricia Baertsch



John & Claire Lackey



Paul & Jan Sahler



Edith & Don Scrope



Julie & Roger Moberg



Kathy Zélie & Keith Maxwell



Boki & Dennis Olden



Joe & Janet Baron



Mike & Nonie Young



Linda & Gary Mau



Al Teasley, Dick Haglund



Gary & Barbara Pisel



Gale & Joe Fouraker



Chris Hanks, Dale Nadon



Don & Phyllis Nordlund



Gary Webb, John Scholl, Terry Marsh



Vince & Valerie Catalano



Gary Webb, Adrian Jenkins



Gary Smitson, Jane Backus



Jane & Bill Backus



"The Beas"



Linda Calvert, Jackie Smitson, Connie Thompson



Adrian Jenkins, Steve Towle



Joe & Janet Baron, Jan Hanks

Candy Kane & John Badger



Jane & Ken Finney



Jane Finney, Cortney Webb



Gary Webb, Tim Walker, Chris Hanks, Randy Moss

JULIE E. CLARK INDUCTED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF AIR SHOWS (ICAS) FOUNDATION AIR SHOW HALL OF FAME



LAS VEGAS, NV
December 7, 2011

The evening of Wednesday, December 7, 2011, marked the closing of the International Council of Air Shows convention where thousands of delegates gathered for education sessions, to book air show performers and where performers put on their “game face” to make connections and book air show events.

Capping off that Wednesday evening was the presentation of the 2011 ICAS Foundation’s Air Show Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The ICAS Foundation was established in 1995 to honor those who have made a significant contribution to the air show industry. Recognizing the industry’s top performers is one of the clearest goals and purposes of the ICAS Foundation. That evening, Julie E. Clark, along with Jim and Ernie Moser; Steve Oliver and Suzanne Asbury-Oliver, were inducted into the 2011 Hall of Fame. Julie and her fellow inductees join the ranks of air show legends Art Scholl, Bill Barber, Bob Hoover, Betty Skelton and Jimmy Franklin, just to name a few.

Ms. Clark’s career in aviation began with a desire to become an airline pilot, just as her father, Captain Ernest Clark, had been. A pilot for Pacific Airlines in the 1960’s, Captain Ernest Clark and all on board fateful flight 773, were killed by a deranged passenger on May 7, 1964. Prior to the days of the required locking cockpit door, a suicidal passenger stormed the cockpit, struggled with Captain Clark, his co-pilot and a flight attendant before succumbing to their injuries and the eventual crash of the airplane. Subsequent FAA regulations requiring the use of locking cockpit doors were written for Captain Ernest Clark and flight 773.

Undeterred by her father’s death, Julie reached her goal and became one of the first 21 female airline pilots in North America. Remarkably, throughout her 28 years as an airline pilot, (achieving the title of Captain in 1983) Julie simultaneously maintained a career as an air show pilot too! Actively performing on the air show circuit today, Julie is looking forward to an active 2012 air show season. Julie is the recipient of more than 40 individual awards spanning the last three decades.

Founded in 1980, American Aerobatics, Inc. is a woman-owned, small business with offices in California and Minnesota.

American Aerobatics, Inc.

For more information:

Kristin Bergevin, American Aerobatics, Inc.
(530) 677-0634 ~ kristin@americanaerobatics.com



Photo: Clark Cook

From left: Julie’s sisters Judy Grilli and Sharon DeVos. Center: Julie Clark and to the right, Carolyn Trinkwalder, presenting.



By Kathy McCullogh

⦿ Another night, another hotel room. Tokyo, Japan. The twelve-hour Pacific Ocean crossing leaves me exhausted. All I want is my bed. I'm asleep before my head hits the pillow.

I awake a few hours later. Terrified. I keep my eyes closed, pretending to be asleep. There is a man in my room. He is at the end of my bed, shaking it. What does he want? How did he get in?

Shit. I was so tired that I never looked under my bed or checked the closet. Did I even lock my door? I try to think of a plan. I need a weapon. I can reach the lamp by my bed and use it!

No, the lamps in this hotel are attached to the wall. That's it! The walls are paper-thin. I'll scream! I scream, at the top of my lungs. Now I've really made him angry. He's shaking the bed harder.

This is like my worst nightmare. No sound comes out of my mouth when I scream. I don't want to be raped or tortured. I am so scared. Maybe I'm having a nightmare. I begin to wake up.

The shaking is too violent and rhythmic to be manmade. It's an earthquake! Thank God, it's just an earthquake. I'm so relieved it's not a rapist that I fall back asleep until morning.

The quake was a 6.7 on the Richter scale.

⦿ Another night, another hotel room. Spokane, Washington. A giant snake is strangling me in a jungle monsoon. Gagging, I try to rip him off of me. He only squeezes harder. Turning on the light, I remember where I am.

Who decorated this monstrosity of a room? The carpet is bright grassy-green shag. The wallpaper is a shiny, foil design with huge green leaves and bright orange flowers escaping from the tangle. My jungle.

The bedspread is also bright orange, and I've tossed and turned and tangled myself tightly in the sheets. I can barely breathe. My giant snake.

What about the monsoon? I'm soaking wet. The sprinkler system has malfunctioned and everything in the room is drenched, including me. My monsoon.

We share horror stories in the flight deck. Flying is, by definition, hours and hours of boredom, punctuated by moments of sheer terror, right? While this is not true, crossing the ocean on international flights did give us hours to talk. The guys have hotel stories that put mine to shame. These next three stories are from pilots I flew with:

⦿ Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "Something is crawling on me in the middle of the night. I turn on the light, and a nine-inch long cockroach is sitting on my chest, looking at me. It leaps off the bed. I chase it across the room and beat it to death with my shoe, until the white stuff gushes out. Then I put it in the trashcan, planning to show the hotel manager tomorrow. But by morning it is gone. Did it crawl off in pieces or did something bigger eat it? Things to ponder alone in the dark."

⦿ Montego Bay, Jamaica. "I woke up hurting; my arm was throbbing and the sheets were sticky. I reached for the light. A rat was in bed with me! He was chewing on my arm and there's blood all over my bed. He ran off before I could kill him."

⦿ Chicago, Illinois. "I used to sleep in the armchair with a blanket wrapped around me at our Chicago layover hotel. Even then, when I closed my eyes all I could see were creeping, crawling things all over my skin."

The mattresses were infested and this was the hotel we referred to as The Bedbug Inn. The name may not be very original, but it is accurate.

It's no wonder we had nicknames for the worst hotels. Mildew Manor. Bedbug Inn. Cockroach Castle. When we complained to ALPA they would switch hotels, but often the new hotels were worse than the old.

All hotels are difficult to sleep in during the daytime, even when you have been flying all night and think you can sleep anywhere. I always put out my Do Not Disturb sign, but it didn't always work. Either the maids didn't notice or didn't care, so the chain clanged against the stop as they tried to enter. "Perdone!" doesn't help much after they've woken you out of a sound sleep.

☉ I remember one morning vividly. I was flying for the U.S. Forest Service, mapping forest fires in California in an infrared equipped King Air. Infrared is most effective at night, so we fly all night. I was incredibly tired. Televisions were blaring in the rooms around me and the vacuum cleaners whined as the maids cleaned. Tossing and turning, I somehow managed to get to sleep. But not for long.

"Do you think Angie will keep her baby?" One of the cleaning ladies yells over her vacuum.

"Naw, I'll betcha she has one of those illegal abortions." the other maid answers.

"Last time she had a baby they made her give it up for adoption."

"No wonder, after she tried to abandon the poor thing. Do you have any more soap? What pig stayed in this room?"

"Didn't you hear she almost miscarried yesterday after Tony tried to kill her?"

"No! Lord have mercy! Did they arrest him?"

"Are you kidding? His brother is the Chief of Police. Besides, this is the third time he's tried to kill her. Remember the car accident, and that bad fall she took last year?"

"No! That was Tony?"

"Yep. And his brother even knew about it."

"Why does she keep seeing him?"

"Search me. Guess she must love him."

By now I'm sitting bolt upright in my bed. I know I will not be able to get back to sleep. I'm going to turn Tony and his brother in. And Angie needs long term psychiatric help!

Music plays in the background and one of the maids says, "Look, there's poor Angie now, crying her little ol' heart out."

A soap opera. I feel like a fool.

There is no way I can sleep now. I get up to take a shower.

The showerhead is set a foot too low, and I ram my head into it. Then I burn myself as the water temperature changes to scalding hot when someone flushes a toilet. I wonder how I will be able to stay awake during the flight tonight.

☉ The plastic mattress pad I slept on in Chino, California when I was flying for the U.S. Forest Service was another experience. The bed crackled every time I turned over. The place was obviously frequented by high-class clientele. Upon check out, the establishment told us they usually only rent rooms by the hour.

Once I woke up and the whole room was actually shaking. Another earthquake! No. The train tracks were directly behind the motel and it sounded as if the trains were coming through my bathroom window. To make matters worse, the motel was so close to the highway that the semis on the highway in front shook the room, too.

During the last twenty years of my career I spent fewer nights in the Mildew Manors of the world. My international travels took me to a new level of comfort. Asian hotel rooms are wonderful. Large and spacious, the rooms are filled with teak furniture and marble baths, decorated in beautiful silks and oriental prints. Hot tea and baskets of fresh fruit awaited my arrival. The bed was turned down at night, and there were mints and orchids on the pillow.

Foolishly, I sometimes took these comforts for granted. We used to wait six hours for our rooms after being up all night because it was too early and not enough guests had checked out yet. (England, Hawaii) Or, if our usual hotel was full they sent us to one where the entire room was the size of my bathroom at home. (Japan)

☉ Another night, another hotel room. Singapore. I can sleep in the middle of any airport, dead to the world, while public address systems blast away and people yell into their cell phones. I can sleep on the floor of a freighter as the loaders slam boxes around and groomers vacuum. I can sleep through ice machines, elevators ding, drunks in the hall and heavy street noise. Why can't I sleep now, when I have to fly in four hours?

There's an argument in the next room. A lady screams at her boyfriend to get the f___ out. He doesn't want to leave. He loves her. He just wants to be with her.

I'm not mad anymore; I'm intrigued. But it is hard to hear the whole conversation. I grab a glass and press it against the wall, mashing my ear into it.

The lady is a pornographic movie star from California! Her boyfriend is still turned on by her acting on the set today. He can't leave her alone. She, on the other hand, is just tired and wants to sleep. They've had sex nine times tonight and he still wants more. This goes on for twenty minutes.

Unfortunately, security arrives and the couple is separated. The boyfriend is led away in protest, still pleading his love. Wide awake, laughing, I take a shower and get ready for pickup. I thought Singapore had strict laws against pornography, but maybe that's just importing it.

The flight engineer is already in the lobby. He was in the room on the other side of the feuding couple. We double over laughing, comparing notes and filling in missing pieces of the story.

Our captain comes downstairs and he is furious. He does not appreciate being woken up early. He yells at the front desk clerk; the same desk clerk has already apologized to us over and over. We try to calm him down, telling him what the disturbance was about.

He's mad at us for laughing. We can't stop. Here we are, thousands of miles away from home. This is the best entertainment we've had in a long time!

⊙ New York City, New York. Finally, I am spending the night in a hotel that is actually famous. I have seen advertisements for this hotel on television and the rooms looked amazing. The location is great, too. It's close to Times Square, surrounded by good restaurants and theaters.

The lobby is amazing. Huge chandeliers hang from the ceiling and luxurious carpeting stretches wall to wall. Yes! This is my kind of hotel. People in fur coats, elegant gowns and tuxedos surround me. A bellman accompanies me upstairs and carries the bags into my room. Service!

Wait! There must be some mistake! This \$250 a night room is smaller than a walk-in closet. There is no floor space because the tiny bed takes up the entire room. Two walls are covered with bright, fuzzy cherry-red and silver foil wallpaper. The other two are mirrored, as is the ceiling, in a pathetic attempt to create an illusion of space.

I turn on the television and hear the passion before I see it. A pornographic channel. Quickly I switch it off. Later I learn that the hotel has hidden cameras in the room recording your escapades and

trysts, should you have any. The captain I'm with said he turned on the channel and saw he and his wife on it! Great, just great.

Opening the curtains, I look out my window directly into an apartment. It is less than five feet away. There is a man in a dirty white tee shirt drinking a beer, belching loudly as he watches his television. So much for advertising.

Once, the doorknob actually fell off in my hand when I tried to enter my hotel room. The desk clerk didn't even look surprised when I handed it to him. Often, jet lagged and exhausted, the key card won't work in the door and I have to drag my bags all the way back to the lobby.

Sometimes the room is occupied, and not just with someone else's belongings. Who is this half naked guy laying on my bed? He's snoring loudly in his underwear and cowboy boots. He's cute, but I quickly back out the door.

The desk clerk is so apologetic. "Oh, I'm so sorry! The Dallas Cowboys are here and I gave you one of their rooms by mistake!"

Maybe I should have kept that room. It gets lonely on the road, miles away from everyone you love. If you can't be with the ones you love... "Can I have that key back, please?"

⊙ Another day, another preflight. Miami, Florida. I'm in the cockpit getting everything ready to fly.

A flight attendant comes up to the flight deck to say hello and tells me she is deadheading. She seems weary and shaken. I ask her what's wrong. She sighs, drops into the jumpseat and tells me her story:

"I stepped into the elevator this morning and pushed the button for the lobby. As the doors closed, I realized I wasn't alone. A big rat was trapped in the elevator with me. I mean huge—two feet long, not including his tail. I start screaming; the rat freaks out. He starts running up the walls. When he gets to the top he falls to the floor, onto my feet!

I screamed louder. I couldn't reach the elevator buttons without stepping on the rat! Over and over again he runs and falls, runs and falls. The doors finally opened and I ran out into the lobby and fainted."

Meanwhile the elevator went up to the fourth floor to pick up another flight attendant. The rat ran out over her feet and down the hall. She starts screaming. People are trying to revive me.

The front desk clerk tries to calm us, repeating over and over that it was just a 'leettle mouse, yes?'

Finally I lose it and I grab him by his tie and yank him toward me. ‘No, it was a huge, f___ing rat, over a foot long, get it?’ He got it.”

I stare at her with my mouth open. Now that’s a bad day.

☉ San Francisco, California. A flight attendant told me this story:

“Exhausted again after another ocean crossing, all I wanted was a shower and bed. The smell hit me like a wall when I opened the door. It smelled so awful that I couldn’t even go in. I dragged my bags back to the front desk and asked for a new room.

The desk clerk says they’re full. Completely. He sends housekeeping up with me to check out the room. I don’t think anything will help, but I’m too tired to fight.

We open the door and the housekeeper starts spraying pine tree air freshener. The smell disappears. Now the room smells like a forest. A fresh pine forest. This is much better. I nod my head and thank her.

She leaves the air freshener with me, just in case I need it. I jump into the shower. When I am done, I reach for a towel and just about keel over. The smell is back.

Holding my nose, spraying the air freshener, I drip to the phone. I insist they send the manager. The manager gags when I open the door to let him in. He checks inside the closet, behind the curtains and under the bed.

There’s a dead body under the bed.

Apparently, three days before, the previous occupant never checked out. The maids packed up his belongings, cleaned the room and made the bed. It happens. They never noticed that the man had been murdered and stuffed under the bed.

I’m horrified. We call the police. The hotel is full and the only room open is the penthouse suite. I deserve it.

Six rooms on the top floor of the hotel. The dining room table seats twelve and there is a full kitchen with a washer and dryer! The place is luxurious. Nice. There are even knick-knacks and a killer stereo system.

I wander around, too revved to sleep. I can’t get my thoughts to turn off. I check under the bed twice. Apparently they cleaned this room better because there aren’t even dust bunnies underneath.

When I lie down, all I can think about is the dead body. The most important advice I give people now is to always check under the bed first.” ✈

SEA SUMMER PICNIC

August 16th 11am—3pm



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\$25 Per Person, checks payable to “Sunshine Club”

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PO Box 1240
Orting WA 98360

Info @ 360.889.0079
email: db-peterson@comcast.net

The establishment itself. The place had to have walls covered with ship and squadron plaques. The walls were adorned with enlarged unit patches and the dates of previous deployments. A dozen or more old, yellowed photographs of fellows named “Buster,” “Chicago,” “P-Boat Barney,” “Flaming Hooker Harry,” “Malone,” “Honshu Harry,” “Jackson,” “Douche Bag Doug” and “Capt Slade Cutter” decorated any unused space. It had to have the obligatory Michelob, Pabst Blue Ribbon and “Beer Nuts Sold Here” neon signs. An eight-ball mystery beer tap handle and signs reading, “Your mother does not work here, so clean away your frickin trash.”

“Keep your hands off the barmaid.”

“Don’t throw butts in urinal.”

“Barmaid’s word is final in settling bets.”

“Take your fights out in the alley behind the bar!”

“Owner reserves the right to waltz your worthless sorry ass outside.”

“Shipmates are responsible for riding herd on their ship/squadron drunks.” This was typical signage found in any good liberty bar.

You had to have a juke box built along the lines of a Sherman tank loaded with Hank Williams, Mother Maybelle Carter, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash and twenty other crooning goobers nobody ever heard of. The damn thing has to have “La Bamba,” Herb Alpert’s “Lonely Bull” and Johnny Cash’s “Don’t take your guns to town.”

The furniture in a real good liberty bar had to be made from coal mine shoring lumber and was not fully acceptable until it had 600 cigarette burns and your ship’s numbers or “F**k the Navy” carved into it. The bar had to have a brass foot rail and at least six Slim-Jim containers, an oversized glass cookie jar full of Beer-Nuts, a jar of pickled hard boiled eggs that could produce rectal gas emissions that could shut down a sorority party, and big glass containers full of something called Pickled Pigs Feet and Polish Sausage.

Only drunk Chiefs and starving Ethiopians ate pickled pig’s feet and unless the last three feet of your colon had been manufactured by Midas, you didn’t want to get anywhere near the Polish Napalm Dogs.

No liberty bar was complete without a couple of hundred faded ship or airplane pictures and a “Shut the hell up!” sign taped on the mirror behind the bar along with several rather tasteless naked lady pictures. The pool table felt had to have at least three strategic rips as a result of drunken competitors and balls that looked as if a gorilla baby had teethed on the sonuvabitches.

Liberty bars were home and it didn’t matter what country, state, or city you were in. When you walked into a good liberty bar, you felt at home. These were also



establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to “tell” and “listen” to sea stories.

You learned about sex at \$10.00 a pop—from professional ladies who taught you things your high school biology teacher didn’t know were anatomically possible. You learned how to make a two cushion bank shot and how to toss down a beer and shot of Suntory known as a “depth charge.”

We were young, and a helluva long way from home. We were pulling down crappy wages for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn’t know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. And a lot of that association took place in bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal.

While many of our classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo’s Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror.

But when we came ashore on liberty, we could rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of, in saloons and cabarets that would live in our memories forever. Long live those liberties in WestPac and in the Med—they were the greatest!

Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, “I served in the United States Navy.” ✈

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ATLANTA IN 2012

September 26–28

WESTIN
PEACHTREE
PLAZA
HOTEL

Please
bring all my
fuzzy friends to
Atlanta with
you!



Rowdy Yates, an Atlanta commuter for most, if not all, of his career is the “Reunion Wrangler” for this year’s Reunion, and he has planned a dandy.

Most of the activities take place right in the heart of downtown and we’ll be staying at **The Westin Peachtree Plaza** hotel right on Peachtree Street. All of the tours except for the **Delta Air Transport Heritage Museum** are within walking distance, but there will be shuttles for those who may need them.

We will have lunch under the wing of the famous employee-purchased B767 while at the Delta Museum. As always, we’ll have the President’s Reception with heavy hors d’oeuvres the first evening and the Banquet on the final evening.

MARTA, Atlanta’s rapid transit light rail leaves directly from the airport and stops at Peachtree Station a half block from the hotel.

It’s important to note that there are some stringent deadlines and penalties in order to control contract costs, which helps keep the fees reasonable. Pay attention!

The Westin direct web site (below) is now available to book your room. If you book by phone be sure to call the hotel directly to get the group rate, not the universal Westin number: **404.659.1400**

<http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/retirednorthwestpilotsasn>



The Tours:

- Delta Air Transport Heritage Museum
- Georgia Aquarium
- World of Coca Cola
- Inside CNN

HOTEL: \$119/NIGHT
(Good for 3 days prior and after Reunion)

REUNION FEE: \$194/PERSON
Register before June 1st for ONE chance to win a free room for the entire reunion stay.

REGISTRATION

NAME(S) _____

Check for \$194/person payable to “RNPA” and mailed to:

Terry Confer
9670 E. Little Further Way
Gold Canyon AZ 85118

Please note: Registrations after July 1st, 2012 are \$244





uP fOr sAle?



Many of you will remember seeing this as it made its way to most of our inboxes in mid March, but I think it's important for the roughly half of you without email to read it as well. We can thank our dedicated NWA ALPA leadership for the way in which our pensions were managed that we are not in the same boat. – Ed.

through the airport in a rush to the next plane in an effort to get back on schedule. Tie may have stains from fast food meals that were hurriedly eaten while at the controls.

Tie comes with your choice of pins, Air Line Pilots Association, Air Force, or Airplane. Pants may show signs of wear from many hours spent strapped into a seat. Hip shows some signs of wear from firearm used to protect you and your passengers from harm. Shoes are shiny but worn. Suit comes with choice of Old Delta or New Delta emblems. Many prefer the Old Delta.

Suit is thought by many to have aphrodisiac qualities, although this cannot be confirmed or denied.

BEWARE: Putting on this suit can have adverse effects on your life. It can cause you to miss your children's birth. It can cause you to miss holiday reunions, family times, and weekends. You may miss your daughter's prom and your son's graduation. Your family may think Christmas is not always on December 25th. Your wife will have to learn to be a single parent when you are gone for days. The suit can cause you to miss entire nights of sleep or get up at 3 AM to meet your next schedule. Your neighbors may be jealous of you and think you do not deserve to wear the uniform or be compensated for your work. Originally suit required a four year college degree and an internship of 5-10 years in the military, and another 10-15 years for the fourth stripe. Suit comes with a promise of a pension if you provide years of dedication and service.

THAT PROMISE MAY BE AS EMPTY AS THE SUIT: Now it can be had for the highest bid.

Good Luck bidding.

Bidding started at \$1.00. Before eBay pulled the plug on the auction, Lewis apparently received hundreds of emails from other airline employees.

Recently eBay pulled a listing that a Delta Air Lines captain had placed on the auction site. Up for sale? Captain Wendall Lewis' captain's uniform. After Lewis saw his monthly pension of \$6500 slashed by 73%, he decided to make this statement:

AUTHENTIC DELTA AIR LINES CAPTAIN PILOT UNIFORM

This uniform was worn by a dedicated Delta pilot for many years. Now retired and robbed of part, or all, of promised pension, uniform is now offered for sale to supplement income. Suit is worn and empty but filled with memories and honor. Suit has been across many miles and many experiences. Suit was once filled with pride and service getting thousands of passengers to their destination safely. Suit has been through rain, snow, ice, and wind without a single tear or scratch. Suit once controlled multi-million dollar assets, flown throughout the world, with billions of dollars of liability to the company. Suit has never cost company one (1) cent in accident or injury.

Although the suit is worn and has been discarded by the company, it can be yours. Suit is clean but used. Coat may be soiled from hydraulic fluid or grease as plane was inspected. Shirt may be soiled from mad dashes



Doug Sameit 1949 ~ 2011

Douglas Edward Sameit, age 61, a retired Northwest Airlines and US Navy Captain “Flew West” for a final check on Friday, July 8, 2011, doing what he loved in the place that he loved; soaring through the air in a glider over the Flathead Valley. Doug was born in Berkeley, Calif., on September 18, 1949, to George and Isabelle Sameit, and flying was in his blood. At the age of 12, Doug began flying gliders and had his pilot’s license by the age of 16, flying gliders and Learjets around the Bay area. He decided to pursue his passion for flying and attended the United States Naval Academy with the single goal of becoming a fighter pilot, which he did, flying both F-4s and A-4s for the next 29 years. Doug lived for those quiet moments soaring through the clouds and the excitement of dog fighting fighter jets over the skies of San Diego and Virginia Beach.

Doug pursued his love of flying after leaving the Navy by joining Hughes Air West in September 1978 which in 1982 merged with Republic Airlines. Republic merged with Northwest Airlines in 1986, and by the time he retired Doug had flown DC-9s, 757s, and A320s around every corner of the United States for over 31 years. Besides flying, Doug shared the enjoyment of any sport or hobby that would allow him to connect with friends outdoors. After he retired his fighter pilot wings, Doug became an avid golfer

and made some of his best friends in Montana and Virginia Beach. The thought of golfing in the summer with his friends in Lakeside, Montana carried him through the colder winter days in Virginia Beach, Virginia. An amazing round of golf with good friends preceded Doug’s final glider flight. Doug worked on his fishing, skiing and scuba diving skills when he found himself in warmer waters. In addition to his passions for all things outdoors, Doug was a devoted husband to Mary for 40 years, a devoted father of Dan, Paul and Mark, and a caring grandfather to Breanna, Blythe and Patrick. A new grandson Henry was born in December 2011, and another grandchild is on the way. Doug has two younger siblings, Paul Sameit and Laura Kemp.

He reveled in the summers that he and Mary got to spend in Montana, and loved to share that time with his sons and their families, as well as his friends from around the country. In his home in Cherry Hill, Doug was known as the “Dock Master” as he sat on his back porch looking out at the lake and mountains, sipping a scotch and always ready to help anyone in need. Despite Doug’s leaving us earlier than we wanted, he lived several lifetimes in his time with us. Words cannot express how much he is loved and how sorely he will be missed.

– Vic Britt





“Bill” Sorum 1929 ~ 2011

L-R
Arnie Pleasant,
Greg Booze,
Bill Sorum,
Ray Welker

Willis “Bill” James Sorum, age 83, “Flew West” for a final check at 3am on Friday, May 13, 2011 peacefully holding a nurse’s hand at Good Samaritan Hospital. His son Ken and daughter Vicki were with him just hours before he died. They planned to take him home for the weeks the cancer had left him, but evidently he decided to file his own flight plan. Bill’s sudden death was unexpected as he was vibrant and active only weeks before his death, and only found out about his cancer a month before his death. Widowed twice, his first wife Delphine died 1961, and his second wife SaraJane died in 1994.

Bill Sorum and Doug Parrott were in a class of ten pilots that started Northwest Airlines ground school on February 3, 1953, and finished on March 8, 1953. When Doug got hired by Northwest Airlines he and Shirley flew their Piper Tri-Pacer from LaGrande, Oregon, where Doug had a FBO, to Minneapolis for the initial ground school. Bill and Doug became good friends during ground school, and since Bill drove by Doug and Shirley’s place every morning, he always stopped to pick Doug up for class at the GO Annex by the Ford plant in Saint Paul. Bill was a fairly new Commercial and Instrument Rated pilot, and at that time pilots had to be pretty good with Morse Code, so Doug helped Bill practice code while they were going to Ground School. On February 15, 1953, 59 years ago, Doug and Bill flew the Tri-Pacer out of the MSP airport and practiced instrument approaches on the Low Frequency Range and the Omni at MSP to get a jump on their coming

checkout. Doug started DC-3 and DC-4 checkouts on March 23, 1953 which became his seniority date, and Bill started training on April Fools Day, 1953, and that became his seniority date. After training Bill stayed in MSP and Doug went to the PDX base, later transferring to SEA. Bill ended up at SEA also, and Doug and Bill always stopped to visit and catch up whenever their paths crossed during their many years with NWA. Doug remembers Bill Sorum as a really great guy, very friendly, and one of the many truly great Northwest Airlines pilots!

Jim Fletcher remembered “Willi” as a great guy to work with because you worked with him, and not for him. “Bill cared about the entire crew, always had a smile and treated everyone with respect. He could laugh at and see the good side of any situation.”

Jim said that, “Bill loved to play golf, and the DLI, a west end RNPA golf invitational tournament held every September and named after Bill Dean and Bud Ludwigsen, could have been called the DLSI (Dean, Ludwigsen, Sorum Invitational) as Bill was an original, long lasting member, and one of the grey beards of this famous event.”

Bill shared the details of a “famous” UFO sighting he had with Marv Peterson. Marv says, “Bill was flying a B-747 freighter from SEA to ANC at night and was in radar coverage about 150 NM south of Anchorage. A bright light off his left wing stayed at the same position for a long time. He asked the ATC controller if he had



traffic and was told he did have unidentified traffic, and they could not explain what it was. Approaching ANC, the light shot out of sight, giving Bill and the ATC controller a shock. The controller later advised Bill's crew that 'believe it or not', the UFO was hovering over Fairbanks. Elmendorf AFB had been alerted, but Bill never heard any more about it."

Bill and Marv, both lefties, won the Tam O'Shanter Invitational in 1980. Marv said, "We were playing absolutely great and on the 18th hole Bill says to me, "I think we're going to win this". I immediately 3 putted, but we won anyway, and I was shocked to find we had

won \$3000! Bill made side bets and never told me a thing about them. I cringe to think what if we had lost! He was a great guy, a pilot's pilot, and I felt fortunate to be part of his life. A true, true friend!

Marv said he chuckled at Bill's memorial service when a young lady got up and narrated how Bill lectured her about the evils of smoking. Marv says, "Bill Sorum loved his pipe, and chewed it to death!" Bill is survived by son's Kenneth Wayne Sorum and John Mark Sorum; daughter Vicki Janine Sorum Ardoin; and sisters Joyce Magner-Jorgenson and Joan Lee of Newfolden, Minnesota.

– Vic Britt



Claire Weber 1923 ~ 2012

Claire G. Weber, age 89, of Hastings, Minnesota passed away peacefully Friday, February 3rd, 2012 at Regina Assisted Living. Claire was born in North Adams, Massachusetts to John and Elizabeth Fee, and completed Catholic grade school, high school and some college before enlisting in the United States Navy in 1943. Claire joined the WAVES, a World War II division of the U.S. Navy consisting entirely of women. WAVES was an acronym for "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service", and "emergency" implied that the acceptance of women was due to the unusual circumstances of the war, and that at the end of the war the women would not be allowed to continue in Navy careers. A distinction between the US Army's WAAC's and the Navy's WAVES was that WAAC's was

an "auxiliary" organization, serving with the Army, not in it. WAVES were an official part of the Navy and held the same rank and ratings as male personnel, received the same pay, and were subject to military discipline. However, women did not gain permanent status in the armed services until after World War II with passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948.

Claire met her future husband Wallace Weber at NAS Miami, Florida, an advanced flight training base for torpedo bomber pilots flying TBM and TBF "Avengers." Wallace and Claire were both Aviation Metal-Smiths, and in 1945 they traveled to her hometown of North Adams, Massachusetts to get married. After a short honeymoon they returned to NAS Miami, Florida, and shortly after Claire received promotion to Aviation Metal-Smith, First-Class, after less than three years on active duty. The Navy took a picture of Claire having her 1st Class Rating patch pinned on by Wallace as a promotion piece about a married Navy couple who were both metal-smiths.

When Claire and Wallace were discharged after the war, they moved to Minnesota to start their family. Claire traded her wartime stint as a metal-smith to become a housewife, and she and Wallace raised four children. She volunteered at Guardian Angels, delivered Meals on Wheels, was a co-leader of a Girl Scout troop, became a home health aide, and enjoyed camping and traveling.

Claire will be sadly missed by her husband: Wallace, children: Tom, Marjorie, Stephen, and Paul, grandchildren: Tanya, Tony, Cathy, Dan, Adam, Eric, Brian, Caitlin, and Erin, four great grandchildren, and sisters: Catherine Tomlinson and Veronica Whittle.

– Vic Britt



Alta Mae Christ 1929 ~ 2012

Alta Mae Christ (nee Smith), age 83, a retired Northwest Airlines flight attendant who flew for 42 years “flew west for her final flight” on March 16, 2012. Alta Mae was born February 4, 1929 in the town of Russell, Wisconsin and graduated from Elkhart Lake High School. She earned her teaching certificate from Sheboygan County Normal School, and taught for two years before pursuing her passion for travel and

becoming a Flight Attendant for Northwest Airlines. Her career in the sky spanned the globe. All who knew her loved to hear the joy in her voice as she spoke of her traveling adventures. After retirement from Northwest Airlines in 1997 she maintained dear friendships, joined the Retired Northwest Pilots Association (RNPA) as an affiliate member, and attended airline functions through the last year of her life.

Alta Mae enjoyed sports and loved to support her Green Bay Packers. She enthusiastically attended events that her grandchildren participated in and was their biggest fan. She was blessed with a wonderful sense of humor and a sharp wit that delighted all who knew her. Alta Mae was very proud of her Irish heritage, felt that every day ought to be St. Patrick’s Day, and the “Wearin’ o’ the Green” was very important to her. A devoted parishioner of St. Anthony Church in Menomonee Falls, Alta Mae’s Catholic faith was an anchoring presence throughout her life. She will be remembered forever by her family and friends as a loving wife and mother, world-class mother-in-law, dotting grandmother and loyal confidante. She always took great care to commemorate special events in the lives of her family and friends with a personal note and a special touch. She will be sorely missed and remembered with boundless love.

Alta Mae was the loving wife of James F. Christ; Cherished mother of Mary, Thomas and Kevin; Proud grandmother of Caden, Casey, Shannon, Aimee, Paul and Jenni; and fond sister of Margaret O’Reilly.

– Vic Britt

Kenneth J. Stomberg, age 84, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain “Flew West” for a final check in Smyrna, Georgia on May 29, 2011. Ken was born in St Paul, Minnesota on December 30, 1926. Ken and his wife Mary Jane “MJ” moved to Sammamish, Washington for seventeen years after their marriage, keeping a beautiful home and garden and entertaining friends and family. When Mary Jane’s health declined they returned to Minneapolis to be closer to their family. Dale and Bonnie Morrow, their close friends and neighbors in Sammamish, said the Stomberg’s held some wonderful dinner parties and they will always remember great times with two beautiful, gracious people, whom they missed dearly when they returned to Minnesota. After Mary Jane’s death in 2007 Ken moved to Georgia to be near family.

Dick Smith flew a lot of flights with Ken in the 1960’s, mostly in the 707-720’s and 320’s, which many of the senior pilots still regard as truly the “good old days.” He said Ken was always professional in the cockpit, always a great credit to Northwest Airlines, and that he appreciated not only Ken’s flying ability but his personality and sense of humor as well.

Harry Bedrossian flew co-pilot for Ken in the DC-6 and DC-7 days and enjoyed every trip. He said Ken was a wonderful guy who was always fun to fly with. Ray Dolny and Sandy Mazzu both enjoyed working together with Ken for many years at Northwest.

Ray and Sandy said that Ken was always fun to be around, and that he will be missed by all those who knew him.

– Vic Britt

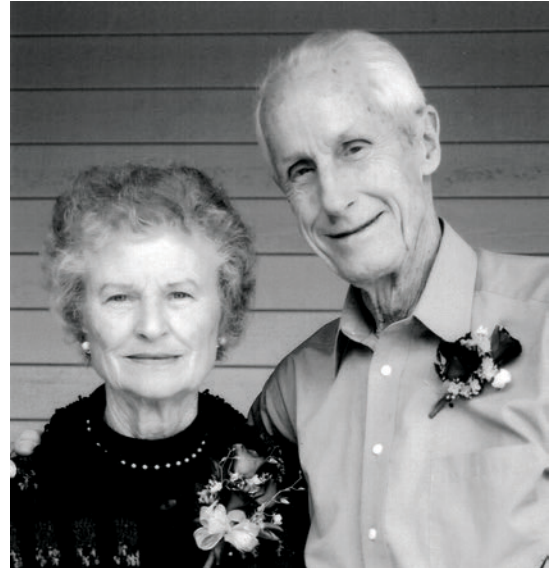


Marjorie G. Eklund, age 90 of North Oaks, formerly of St. Paul's eastside and wife of retired Northwest Airlines Captain Chet Eklund, died peacefully surrounded by family on February 27, 2012.

Marge was a beloved Wife, Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother, and a life-long member of Arlington Hills Lutheran Church. Friends and family will always remember Marge's friendly disposition, grace and charm. She is survived by loving husband of 68 years, Chet; children, Don, Dick and Jeannie; grandchildren, Amy, Richard and Betsy; great-grandchildren, Jane, Ellie and Charlie Fleming.

- *Donnis Bergman*

Marjorie Eklund
1922 ~ 2012



Phyllis Joan (Petie) Smith (nee Peters), passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in Naples, FL on February 13th, 2012 while vacationing with her husband, retired Northwest Airlines Captain Noel Smith. Petie was born on April 28, 1929, in St. Cloud, Minnesota, the youngest of five children born to Hubert & Abbie Peters (Wocken). She was a graduate of Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and one of five women among the 115 graduates receiving their B.S. in Business Administration from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1951.

As a 'stewardess' with Northwest Airlines, Petie met a passenger who became the love of her life and from whom she was inseparable the rest of her days, Lt. Junior Grade Noel L. Smith. Noel and Petie married in 1956 and their first residence was in Northfield, New Jersey where Noel was stationed as a Navy carrier pilot. They moved to Minneapolis in 1957 and Noel became a pilot for Northwest Airlines. During his 30 years with the airline, they also lived in Rosemount, Minnesota, and Honolulu, Hawaii before transferring to the Seattle, Washington area in 1972, and eventually retiring in Clyde Hill, Washington.

In addition to being a wonderful wife, homemaker

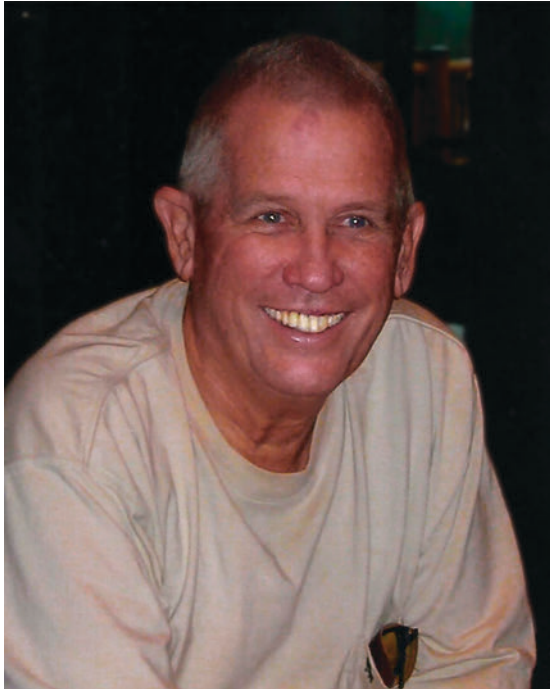


"Petie" Smith
1929 ~ 2012

and mother, Petie was giving of her time and talents to her community. She has been an active supporter of Sacred Heart Church, the Overlake Hospital Foundation, and a long time active member of the Overlake Country Club ladies' division. Petie was a member of the Cancer Auxiliary at Overlake Hospital and was an active walker in the Walk for Life program at Bellevue Square. She was also a lifetime member of Marquette University's President's Club and the Evans Scholars Par Club. She also belonged to the Children's Hospital Circle of Care, the Marquette Alumni Club of Western Washington, and the Northwest Airlines Retired Airline Pilots Association.

Phyllis is survived by her loving husband of 55 years, Noel L. Smith of Clyde Hill, Washington and 4 remaining children: Angela, Michael, Patricia, and Stone (Samantha). In addition she is survived by 10 grandchildren: Laura, Adrian, Alison, Adam, Kim, Erin, Tom, Benjamin, Zachary, Samuel - and one great grandson, Matthew Challen who was born on her 82nd birthday. Petie is preceded in death by her parents and 3 older siblings: Sylvester, Lloyd and Esther as well as her beloved daughter Catherine Ann Smith.

- *Vic Britt & Ray Alexander*



Syl Reed
1940 ~ 2011

Syl Reed, age 70, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain “Flew West” for his final check ride peacefully at home in Bulverde, Texas on September 16, 2011. Syl courageously battled lymphoma for five years.

He was born in Commerce, Texas on December 12, 1940, and was working at a plutonium processing plant in Denver, Colorado when he made the decision to take flight training. He acquired his commercial and instrument ratings and was hired by Northwest Airlines in 1966. During his thirty-five year career with Northwest, Syl flew as captain on the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 727, 707, 747-200, and the 747-400 which he was flying internationally upon retirement from Northwest at age sixty in December 2000. Syl’s retirement years were spent traveling, reading, and spending quality time with his family.

Syl Reed is survived by his loving wife Gwen of thirty one years; their daughters Samantha and Veronica; and his children of previous marriages, Tamara, Jim, Christina, Craig, Cameron and Cinnamon. He is also survived by his brother Pat Reed of Rosemount, Minnesota who is also a retired Northwest Airlines Captain.

– Dan Farkas

C. I. “Irv” Durgin, age 87, a retired Northwest Airlines pilot “flew west” peacefully on January 8, 2011 with family members and friends by his side. He was born in Auburn, Washington on Sept. 23, 1923 and graduated from Enumclaw High School, living most of his life in the Enumclaw and Buckley area. He lived the last 10 years in Tacoma enjoying a view overlooking Commencement Bay and Olympic Mountains.

At the start of WWII, Irv enlisted in the Navy where he served on the aircraft carrier USS Lexington. In March of 1952 he became a pilot for Northwest Airlines, and for the next 31 years flew and instructed on airliners from DC-3’s to the B-747. Irv was an aviation enthusiast since childhood and owned numerous general aviation airplanes, sometimes several at one time. He flew and instructed on everything from small experimental airplanes, to gliders, helicopters, and many airliners. A lifetime member of the OX-5 Aviation Pioneers, he enjoyed flying, golf, and fishing in Alaska after retirement in 1983.

Survived by his partner Helen Whitehouse of Tacoma; daughter Lynn Bridge of Lake Tapps; sons Tom and Jim Durgin of Buckley; seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

– Vic Britt



“Irv” Durgin
1923 ~ 2011



Membership Application and Change of Address Form

NAME

SPOUSE'S NAME

PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS

STREET

CITY

STATE **ZIP+4** **PHONE**

EMAIL *
Leave this blank if you do not wish to receive RNPA email news. (See note)

SECOND OR SEASONAL ADDRESS (for RNPA annual directory only)

STREET

CITY

STATE **ZIP+4** **PHONE**

DATE OF BIRTH (Optional for affiliate member)

DATE OF FIRST EMPLOYMENT WITH **NWA** **DELTA AS:**

AN EMPLOYEE **A PILOT**

DATE OF RETIREMENT FROM **NWA** **DELTA AS:**

AN EMPLOYEE **A PILOT**

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY DELTA INDICATE:

BASE **POSITION**

IF RETIRED, WAS IT "NORMAL" (Age 60/65 for pilots)? **YES** ___ **NO** ___

IF NOT, INDICATE TYPE OF RETIREMENT: **MEDICAL** ___ **EARLY** ___ **RESIGNED** ___

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS LOGGED

AIRLINE AIRCRAFT TYPES FLOWN AS PILOT

REMARKS: Affiliates please include information as to profession, employer, department, positions held, and other relevant info:

CHANGE: This is a change of address or status only

MEMBERSHIP TYPE

REGULAR (NR) \$40
Pilots: Retired NWA, post-merger retired Delta, or Active Delta

AFFILIATE (AF) \$30
Spouse or widow of RNPA member, pre-merger Delta retired pilots, other NWA or Delta employees, a friend, or a pilot from another airline

PAYMENT

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
"RNPA"
AND MAIL TO:
Retired NWA Pilots' Assn.
Dino Oliva
3701 Bayou Louise Lane
Sarasota FL 34242-1105

MAILING NOTES

U. S. POSTAL SERVICE: We are unable to change mailing addresses seasonally. Instead, Contrails and all other mail is sent First Class to your permanent mailing address, which provides for forwarding, unlike our previous mailing system. If desired, please arrange forwarding through the U. S. Postal Service.

***EMAIL NOTE:** To protect email addresses they are published only on the RNPA website (www.rnpa.org), which is password protected. You must send any future change to Phil Hallin:
RNPAnews@bhi.com

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Permit No. 4127

FIRST CLASS

Notes about the Wright Flyer engine:

The Wright engine was a little crude, even by the standards of the day, but it was designed to fulfill a specific purpose and nothing more. It had four horizontal inline cylinders. The 4-inch bore, 4-inch stroke, cast-iron cylinders fitted into a cast aluminium crankcase that extended outward to form a water jacket around the cylinder barrels. The engine was cooled by water from a narrow vertical water reservoir mounted on a forward wing strut. The system did not operate as a radiator in the typical sense, as the water did not circulate. The reservoir simply replenished the water jacket as the water evaporated from it.

How the engine worked:

The Wright engine, with its aluminium crankcase, marked the first time this breakthrough material was used in aircraft construction. Lightweight aluminium became essential in aircraft design development and remains a primary construction material for all types of aircraft.

The Wright engine had no fuel pump, carburettor, or spark plugs to speak of. Nor did it have a throttle. Yet the simple motor produced 12 horsepower, an quite acceptable margin above the Wrights' calculated minimum requirement of 8 horsepower.

Gasoline was gravity fed from a small quart-and-a-half tank mounted on a strut below the upper wing. The gasoline entered a shallow chamber next to the cylinders and mixed with the incoming air. Heat from the crankcase vaporized the fuel-air mixture, causing it to pass through the intake manifold into the cylinders. Ignition was produced by opening and closing two contact breaker points in the combustion chamber of each cylinder via a camshaft. The initial spark for starting the engine was generated with a coil and four dry-cell batteries, not carried on the aircraft. A low-tension magneto driven by a 20-pound flywheel supplied electric current while the engine was running.

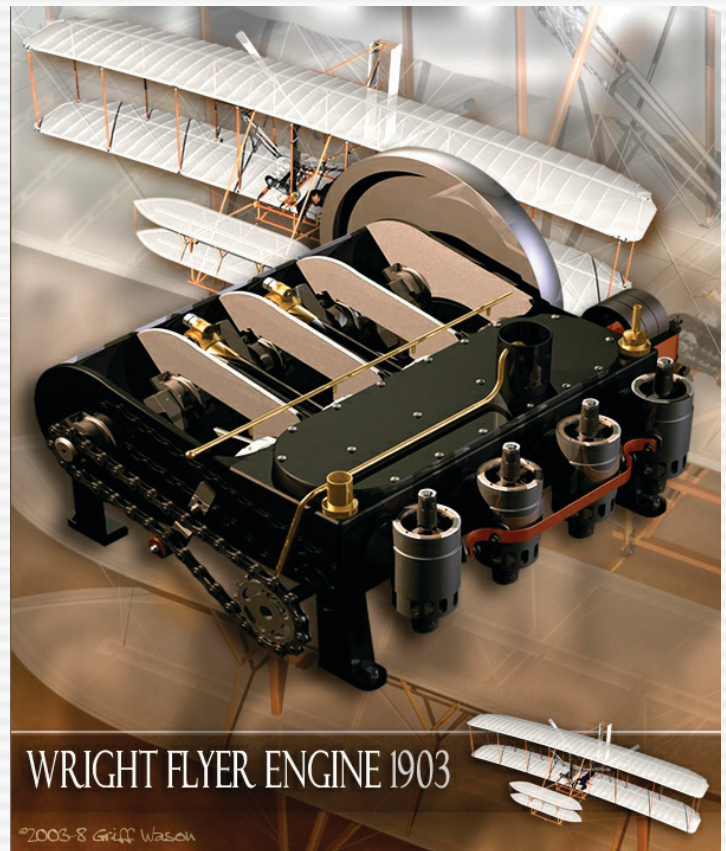


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