



GOLDEN CONTRAILS

... and oft' the setting sun is pleased to trim the clouds with molten sails,
and lace the way of passing jets with golden condensation trails.

April, 2003



RYAN ST-A

Hal Ross, owner

Captain's Corner

It was my privilege to be in Houston on February 15, 2003, and to watch history being made. The historical event happening that day was the final Continental flight which closed out the 39 year career of Captain Cliff Pleggenkuhle, Jr. The most unique aspect of this retirement is that, as far as I can determine, it is the first time that a father and son have both served as Continental Airlines pilots until reaching age 60 retirement. For much more on this story, please see inside this issue of the Golden Contrails.

Houston will also be the site of the 31st "Gathering of the Eagles" as we attend our convention and reunion at the IAH Marriott Hotel on Friday and Saturday, October 10 and 11. The annual golf tournament will begin on October 9 at the Lake Windcrest Golf Club in Magnolia, Texas. Information and reservations forms for all the events are included in this issue for your convenience.

The big news for this convention is that we have finally been able to arrange another performance by Jim Gamble and his puppets! Jim's previous performance several years ago received rave reviews by all who saw it. Jim is one of our own pilots and a member of the Golden Eagles, who began "puppeting" long ago and has developed a company of about 20 puppeteers who now perform all over the world! He personally has several performances scheduled in Europe between now and the time of our convention. Watch for more on the Jim Gamble story in the August issue of the Golden Contrails.

By the time you read this, our nation may be at war. Whether we are or not, we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to our men and women in uniform who are protecting us around the globe. No doubt many of us remember Korea in the 1950's and hope the current situation there can be defused peacefully. It doesn't really seem much different whether it is Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf war of the 1990's, or present day Iraq, the sacrifices by our nation are much the same. Also, we have the same emotions about being of service to those who protect us, as illustrated by the touching piece inside written by a flight attendant on a recent CRAF flight.

Many of us are veterans of the conflicts mentioned above and, as the current USAA motto says, "We know what it means to serve." Therefore, let us always remember how important it is to support our nation, and especially our armed forces.

Your Golden Eagles officers and staff wish you a very pleasant Spring and early Summer. As you make your plans for the rest of the year, please also plan to join us in Houston this Fall. I think you'll really enjoy it!



Roland Brown



RESERVE CAPTAIN CORNER



The 31st annual Golden Eagle Convention will be held on Oct 10th & 11th in Houston at the Airport Marriott Hotel. We are looking forward to getting together to share airline and personal stories. The Marriott offers a hospitality room with an excellent view of the airport and the operations of Continental.

Bob Shelton has put together a great golf outing at the Lake Windcrest Golf Club. Remember you do not have to be an accomplished golfer to play, just show up and plan to have fun.

This year Chris and I made a motorhome trip to Florida and we had the opportunity to stop in New Orleans where we visited the D-Day Museum, which is absolutely fabulous. The Museum contains the attack on Pearl Harbor and then goes through the entire campaign from the Islands to Japan. The museum is located in the center of New Orleans and is certainly recommended as a great place to visit.

As the world continues to change, the airline industry is going through some of the most difficult times that anyone can imagine. The prayer listed below probably sums up the airline industry.

AIRLINE PRAYER

Last Night While I lay sleeping,
I Died Or So It Seems.
Then I Went To Heaven,
But It Was Only In My Dreams,
But It Seems St. Peter Met Me,
There At The Pearly Gate.
He Said, "I Must Check Your Record,
So Stand Right Here And Wait
I See Where You Drank Alcohol,
And Swore Quite Often Too.
Fact Is You've Done Many Things
That A Good Person Shouldn't Do".
"We Can't Have People Like You Up Here,
Your Life Was Full Of Sin".
Then He Read The Last Of My Record,
Grasped My Hand And Said
"Come On In".
He Took Me To The Big Boss,
"Take Him And Please Treat Him Well,
He's Worked For An Airline, Sir.
He's Had His Share Of hell".

See ya'll in Houston for the convention. Bring a friend.



Ben McKenzie

EDITOR'S CORNER

FRONT COVER... This picture of Hal Ross' Ryan ST serves to illustrate his story of how he acquired it and ferried it home.

CONTINENTAL SERVICE TO TAOS... Thanks to "Casey" Cameron for this interesting "cover-up" story. Pictures of the Lockheed Vega and Douglas DC-7B recall vivid memories of those times.

"IT'S A FAMILY THING"... We are grateful to Chuck Bullard, MEC Staff Writer, for the comprehensive coverage of our unique family of Pleggenkuhles, and to Jim Moody, Editor of the Continental MEC Report for permission to copy these memorable articles.

THE WRIGHT WAY... Once again we are indebted to T. J. Zalar for the follow-up on the Wright Brothers Centennial celebration, including pictures to accompany his article.

BACK COVER... Pictured here are Hal and Jane Ross in their Ryan ST-A along with a picture of Ted Rutherford; Kellee, Clifford, and Pleggie, snapped by Roland Brown upon the arrival in HOU of Cliff's retirement flight from Paris; and a copy of the original painting by Continental's own Jonathan Frank of L.L. Walker flying his "homebuilt" in 1910.

GOLDEN EAGLES LADIES AUXILIARY

Dear Friends,

Convention plans have been finalized for the Houston Airport Marriott for October. This is a new location for our meeting and the management is pleased to have us. They have been most cooperative in every way. Our Hospitality room is quite large and definitely a "room with a view."

The Golden Eagles Ladies Auxiliary is a vital part of the Continental Golden Eagles. They have many responsibilities: the ladies luncheon, assisting in registration and in the purchasing of supplies the food for the hospitality room, manning the hospitality room during the convention and decorating for the banquet.

Many of you do not attend the convention each year thinking it's all for the men. Please try to come this year and join in the fun at our ladies luncheon. The retirement stories get better every year. We need volunteers to help in the hospitality room from Thursday until Saturday morning. This is a great way to meet the wives.

Also, we will need raffle gifts in addition to what the Battley's get from the Continental company store. If you have something to offer for the raffle, let me know.

Sincerely,

Chris McKenzie

Chris McKenzie

936-582-2325

cmcke45385@aol.com



MY RYAN ST-A

by Hal Ross

Ever since I was old enough to know that I wanted to fly, I admired the Ryan ST aircraft. As a boy I made models of this aircraft, and dreamed of having one someday. Last summer my dream came true when I purchased this one from a gentleman (Glen Cawley) at South Prarie Airport near Seattle. He has his own grass airport and about a dozen other antique airplanes.

At one time I expressed to my son Alex that I would like to own a Ryan, and a few days later he located this one on the web and sent pictures and details. I contacted the owner, so Jane and I flew to Seattle to have a look. Upon landing we rented a car and drove about 30 miles southeast to South Prarie Airport and met Glen.

He showed us the Ryan— it was beautiful... and several more of his old airplanes. He then took me for a ride, which I enjoyed very much. I haven't done any rolls in a long time, or flown from a grass strip since I was an Air Cadet in Primary flying the PT.17. I have owned small aircraft of many types since 1946. Many were tail-draggers. It has been awhile since I've been in an open cockpit, however.

This flight was almost as big a thrill as my first solo, my instruction periods with "Red" Stubben in the Boeing 707 in 1959, and my experiences in my R22 helicopter. The Ryan flew beautifully, as I expected, as it was completely rebuilt, and was the Oshkosh winner in 1985. There aren't many Ryans in this condition flying today. This one is number 248 and was built in 1941 by the same company which built Lindberg's "Spirit of St. Louis."

I asked Glen how much he wanted for the Ryan and he answered by saying how he hated to sell it, but he couldn't fly all his airplanes enough... that it was worth more than he could get, but thought it was worth the cost of a new C-152. I said we would give him an offer, but I would need to have a starter. He advised me that they are hard to find, but he would locate one if he could. I also need a helmet, goggles, and scarf... "that is no problem, it comes with."

Jane and I returned to Palm Springs, and after two weeks he called and said they couldn't find a starter. I located one with the help of some friends, and took it to Seattle and purchased the Ryan in August. We installed the starter, battery, wiring, etc. This took three days. Then he gave me three take-offs and landings for a check-out and I was on my way to Palm Springs. It didn't take me long to discover that the Ryan handles a little different on hard surfaced runways. I learned to use rudders again.

The Ryan holds 24 gallons of gas and burns 8 gal/hr. That means I land every 21/2 hours. It also uses about 2 quarts of oil because of the inverted engine. The

airspeed is 100 to 110 mph. Everything on the Ryan is original. The engine is a Menasco, inverted and supercharged, with 159 h.p... lots of power... with a wood prop. It didn't have any navigation equipment, so I just pointed it with the magnetic compass to 170 degrees, just dead reckoning and pilotage like the "good old days."

My first stop was Portland for fuel and oil. The next was Montague Yreka Airport near Mt. Shasta, where I spent the night. Next morning early, I was on my way to Sacramento and landed at Watts Woodland Airport, just west of the class C area. I had a good radio, but no transponder... not required because it doesn't have an electrical system, according to FAA.

Got gas and oil, then on to Visalia for another fuel stop. The next leg was to Tehachapi for an overnight with Ted Rutherford and of course, fuel and oil. The flight from Sacramento was easy as I just followed I-5 to Visalia, then to Bakersfield and direct to Tehachapi. So far I haven't been lost, but I *did* lose a map once.

Ted met me at the airport and we had dinner with all his airport pilot friends with his usual hospitality. I stayed with Ted and Lori at their beautiful ranch, had breakfast, and Ted took me back to the airport in the morning for the last leg home. Ted also has a small aircraft called a Rocket, that he built... a lot faster than the Ryan.

The last leg to Palm Springs was uneventful and I landed at Palm Springs Airport. They were expecting me, and cleared me into the class D area with no problem, as Jane advised them I would be arriving at noon.

Everywhere I landed the Ryan attracted a lot of attention. The entire flight only took 12 hours.

I am very pleased with the little Ryan and enjoy working with and taking care of it. It now shares a hangar with a Beech D-18, Duke, T-28, and a L-39 Jet.

We are not planning any long x-countrys, just short flights to antique fly-ins and local flying. Also, keeping it clean and beautiful. The Ryan is *FANTASTIC!*

FLYING IS GREAT!

Hal Ross

CONTINENTAL SERVICE TO TAOS NM?

G. M. "Casey" Cameron Dec 2002

In 1964 Continental Airlines celebrated its 30th year as a scheduled airline. Continental first inaugurated service as Varney Air Transport from El Paso TX through Albuquerque, Santa Fe and terminated in Pueblo CO on July 15, 1934. This route was flown utilizing a modern (for its day) Lockheed Vega, a 4 passenger high wing monoplane powered by a 300 hp P & W Wasp Jr. Engine. The Vega had a top speed of 160 mph with a cruising speed of about 125 mph, which was quite adequate for the times.

As part of the 30 year celebration of the origin of the airline, Continental traded an obsolete DC-7B to the Tallmantz Corp of Orange County for the use of its Vega to be used for a promotional tour of the Continental System. This Vega was "decked out" in Continental colors and was flown by Frank Tallman to all of the major CAL stations.

On the day that the Vega was scheduled to arrive in Denver, I was flying a segment from COS to DEN in a Viscount. As we approached DEN, the tower informed us that we would have to extend our downwind leg to allow a Lockheed Vega to make an approach and landing. After extending almost to the city of Brighton, we were advised that we might now turn on final. Despite the extended pattern, we still almost overran the landing Vega but fortunately, he was able to turn off shortly after touch down and we were allowed to land without "going around".

We parked at the south temporary wing of the old DEN terminal and the Vega finally taxied up and parked next to us. Since I had some time before turn around, I used the opportunity to look over the Vega and also take some pictures. While standing next to the fence, a middle aged spectator said to me "I flew in one of those once". I continued taking pictures and he further stated that he had landed in Taos NM. He appeared rather inebriated so I was not paying much attention to him until he made that statement. I immediately informed him that CAL never served Taos NM. He adamantly retorted, "They did that day!". My curiosity was aroused at this point so I asked him how it came about. He informed me that he had a ticket from Pueblo to Santa Fe but that he really needed to go to a place just south of Taos NM and be there by noon. If he had to go on to Santa Fe and then hire a driver to take him back to Taos, he would miss his appointment. Since he was the only passenger on board, he informed the pilot of his problem & pleaded with him to land at Taos and let him out so that he could make this important meeting on time. It seemed that there was an adequate (for a Vega) landing strip just outside of Taos so the pilot proceeded to land and let him deplane. Then the Vega took off and continued on, probably with no record being made of the unscheduled stop.

I neglected to get the Taos passenger's name and address for a follow up of his story so I rather put the incident out of my mind until sometime later when I was talking with "Ted" Haueter, CAL VP of Operations. Out of curiosity, I asked "Ted", "During the Vega days on CAL, how come you let that passenger off in Taos NM?" He immediately replied "Who told you about that?", a response that was almost a "dead give-away" in my way of thinking. I tried to pry more out of "Ted" about the incident but no amount of questioning brought forth any further response from him. Perhaps "Ted" was not the pilot on that flight but his response indicated that if he were not the pilot on that trip, at least he had some knowledge of the happening.

To this day, I wonder if this "Continental Service to Taos NM" really took place. I believe that it is quite possible as other irregular landings of the Vega on highways etc. are fairly well documented. If it did actually take place, who was the pilot?



This aircraft (N8210) was ferried to the Orange County Museum (TalMantz) 5-2-64.

It's a Family Thing

By Chuck Bullard, CAL MEC Staff Writer

At least one Cliff Pleggenkuhle has been flying for Continental Airlines since 1939. Continental hired Cliff Pleggenkuhle Sr. that year and his son, Cliff Pleggenkuhle Jr., joined the airline in 1964. The younger Cliff Pleggenkuhle will retire in February 2003, ending the Pleggenkuhle era at Continental after 64 years.

Pleggenkuhle, better known to his many friends as Pleggie Jr. or simply Pleggie, is No. 1 on the Continental seniority list. Nobody on the current list has flown longer than Pleggie's 38 years. But even though he is Continental's most senior pilot, Pleggie Jr. has to take a back seat to his father, Cliff Pleggenkuhle Sr. Pleggie Sr., as he was known during his 31-year career at Continental, recently received a pin from Texas Gov. Rick Perry for 63 years of service to ALPA. The governor also presented an ALPA pin to Pleggie Jr. but his pin was "only" for 38 years of service. Pleggie Sr., who is 91, flew for Continental from 1939 to 1970 and has maintained his union membership since retirement.

There still will be Pleggenkuhles working for Continental when Pleggie Jr. lands for the last time. His wife, Kellee Pleggenkuhle, is a Continental flight attendant who plans to continue working after her husband's mandatory retirement at age 60. His daughter, Anne Pleggenkuhle Davis, also is a Continental flight attendant and her husband, Greg Davis, is a Continental B-737 first officer. His sister, Ann Pleggenkuhle Park, is a former Continental flight attendant and her daughter, Laura Park, who soloed in 1997, wants to follow in her uncle's footsteps and become a Continental pilot.

So much for the Continental policy that Cliff Pleggenkuhle Jr. thought would prevent him from becoming a Continental pilot like his father.

"I didn't think I'd get a job with Continental because they had a nepotism policy" in 1964, Pleggie Jr. recalled.

It was almost a foregone conclusion that Pleggie Jr. would become a commercial pilot like his dad but neither

thought he could work for Continental.

"I kind of grew up in the business," said Pleggie Jr. "I always liked flying. I started flying when I was 16 years old. Then I had to quit for a couple of years because I had a football injury that wouldn't let me fly. I tried a few other things but always kept coming back to flying."

While attending California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, he was a flight instructor and charter pilot and also flew skydivers. Continental did not have its own flight engineer's school so Pleggie Jr. enrolled in one in Burbank, Calif. After passing his flight engineer's written, his instructor suggested he ignore Continental's nepotism policy and apply there anyway.

"I didn't even tell my dad," Pleggie Jr. recalled. "I just went and applied and pretty soon I was talking to the assistant chief pilot and then I was talking to the chief pilot and I was going up into the vice presidents' offices and talking to them. I spent all day there and they offered me a job."

"So I went to Denver and took a check ride on the DC-3 and they asked me if I could come to work next week and all of a sudden I was employed at Continental. It happened that quickly."

"My dad didn't even know it. I came back and he had been out on a trip and I told him. He about fell over."

Pleggie Jr. believes Robert Six, the legendary head of Continental at the time, waived the nepotism policy so he could be hired.

"I'm sure Mr. Six approved it," he said.

It was 1964 and Pleggie Jr. was 21 years old. The Vietnam War was heating up and the airlines, which had furloughed pilots earlier in the decade, recalled their furlougees and started hiring again.

"The Vietnam War started getting hot and heavy and that's when a lot of the airlines started flying the troops over there," he said. "That's when Continental started hiring again. So I just walked in the door the right day."

Although Pleggie had his flight engineer's rating, he never served as a second officer. Instead, he was given the chance to be a first officer on the Vickers Viscount, a four-engine turboprop, and he jumped at the opportunity because he wanted to fly right away.

"When the second officer positions became available, they were on the [Boeing 707] jet and that was a much more desirable position for some people," Pleggie recalled. "But I wanted to fly the airplane. You just rode as a second officer until you could move up to the right seat. So I went to Dallas on the Viscount, which was a two-man airplane with just a captain and a first officer. We flew all the little runs, the little hops."

Continental was still a small airline when Pleggie Jr. joined it.

"When I came to work, there were only 313 pilots and everybody kind of knew everybody," he said. "You would fly into these little stations and you knew all the guys who worked on the ground after awhile."

"Now we're so big and impersonal. I don't even know everybody who flies the Triple 7. There was a time when I think I knew every pilot on the airline."

Of course, when Continental welcomed Pleggie Jr. in 1964, it was huge compared to when Pleggie Sr. arrived in 1938.

"There were only 13 pilots when he came to work," Pleggie Jr. said of his dad, "and probably 150 employees

so it was a pretty close group."

Continental's rapid expansion made rapid advancement possible. After two years as a first officer on the Viscount, Pleggie Jr. became a first officer on the B-707.

"I flew that as a co-pilot for a year and then in 1967, checked out as a captain on the 707 and 727. I flew the 707 until we got rid of them. Then I flew the 727 until 1983 when the strike came down and I went on strike."

The 1983 strike was a dark time for the pilot group but Pleggie stuck to his guns and refused to cross the picket lines.

"Eighty-three through '86 wasn't a very good time," he said. "We didn't know what was going to happen to the airline. Things were tough. You lost a lot of friends because we were on opposite sides of the picket line. Then when we did come back to work, it wasn't a very desirable place to work for anybody. They even filed bankruptcy again. You never knew if you were going to have a job."

Pleggie Jr. was able to ride out the strike by flying 707s for Buffalo Airways, a worldwide charter outfit.

But when the strike ended, Continental downgraded him to first officer.

"As part of our punishment, we had to fly co-pilot for awhile until we could fly captain again," he said.

Pleggie Jr. was a 727 captain until Continental swallowed People Express and its fleet of B-747s in 1987. He became a 747 captain and flew the jumbo jets until 1995. Next came a six-month stint in the B-757 and then he flew DC-10s until upgrading to the B-777 about three years ago.

He and his wife frequently fly together and because his wife speaks French, they often staff flights from Houston to Paris.

"I have my own interpreter when I get to Paris," he said.

Pleggie Jr. isn't ready to retire.

"I'm dreading it," he said. "I'd like to go about five more years. You're at the top of the heap and making the most money you've made. I think 60 is too young to quit if you're in good health and what not."

Because he doesn't want to give up the controls, each remaining flight is bittersweet.

"I'm savoring every trip," he said. "We don't get that many landings on internationals so I kind of savor every one of those that we get to make because they're getting fewer and fewer."

"I don't want to retire but there's nothing I can do about it. You've just got to accept it."

Pleggie Jr. says his dad went through the same thing at the end of his career.

"My dad didn't want to retire when he had to and he was in good enough shape that he probably could have



Cliff Pleggenkuhle Jr. and Sr. pose with CAL MEC Chairman John Prater.

flown 10 more years," said Pleggie Jr.

While captaining 747s and DC-10s, Pleggie Jr. often flew with second officers who were over 60 and was glad to have that experience in the cockpit.

"I flew with a lot of those guys and they were in excellent shape and they did excellent jobs back there," he said. "You have a lot of experience in that cockpit with those guys around. Several of them were 70 years old and still doing it."

"I know the young guys want us all gone and I was young once too and wanted all the old guys gone. Well, pretty soon, you're the old guy."

Pleggie Jr. says the most fun he had was flying for Air Micronesia in the days before the island airstrips were paved.

"That was a challenge," he said. "I did that in the '70s when we were still landing on the coral strips out there. You were on your own and that was kind of like barnstorming. You were your own boss."

Some of the coral strips were only 4,200 feet long and weren't particularly smooth.

"When you'd go into reverse, you'd hear the rocks and stones," he said. "We had gravel kits on the airplanes and deflectors and stuff like that to protect them."

Flying 747s to Australia and New Zealand was almost as much fun, according to Pleggie.

"That was the best flying I thought we did other than Air Micronesia because it wasn't very crowded and they were long-haul routes and you were going to some pretty nice places," he said.

Pleggie says "an airplane is an airplane" but the difference between the Viscounts he flew in 1964 and the B-777s he flies today is dramatic.

"The technology has changed so much since I started in 1964," he said. "You were dealing with turboprop engines and the instruments were all round dials. The autopilots weren't as good as they are now. You move up to the technology of the Triple 7 with the all-glass cockpit. The navigation is down to feet instead of miles.

"They've made the airplanes fly so nice. The Triple 7 is all hydraulically controlled so it's like power steering where the Viscount was controlled by cables so you had to use a little more muscle to fly the thing.

"We used to have to manually fill out all the flight plans and figure all the fuel burns and figure all this stuff out and now we go there and the computer figures it out. I push a button and it loads my whole flight plan right into the computer automatically. All I have to do is check it."

Despite all the technological advances, Pleggie says flying is no easier now than it was in 1964 because of the tremendous increase in air traffic.

"Now you have so much congestion everywhere you go," he said. "Your workload is cut down with the computers and stuff but I think the stress level is still there just from listening to the radio coming into these high density places and having to pay so much attention. You just don't let your mind wander. You have to keep paying attention the whole time because somebody's jabbering at you the whole time."

Pleggie doesn't know what he's going to do after retirement. He has a 200-acre cattle ranch near Huffman, Texas, but even though he does everything himself, that isn't enough to keep him busy. So he says he'll look for another flying job because normal retirement pursuits such as golf and fishing don't appeal to him.

"I'd rather dig a ditch one day and fill it back up the next," he said.

He says the thing he'll miss most after retirement is the give and take with his fellow pilots.

"I've enjoyed the comradery and the people you get to fly with," he said. "You get to know people pretty good sitting up there 8 or 10 hours at a whack."

Even though times were tough back in the 1980s when Frank Lorenzo got his hands on Continental, Pleggie says he has no regrets.

"I could have gone to work at different places but I'm glad I went to work for Continental," he said. "I got to fly captain a lot sooner and do things a lot sooner because our airline was smaller so it all kind of balances out.

"All the airlines have had some problems so you just kind of take what you've been dealt and live with it."

Even though their careers overlapped for six years, the only time father and son ever shared a cockpit was on Pleggie Sr.'s last flight in 1970.

"I flew with him on that," said Pleggie Jr. "My sister was the flight attendant and she worked the flight. We went from LA to Houston and back because he was based in Los Angeles."

Pleggie Jr. said he is proud to have followed in his father's footsteps.

"I think I was very fortunate to get to come to work here with him because he was highly respected and he's always been my hero. It was a great honor to fly his last trip with him."



Pleggie Sr. and Pleggie Jr. are joined by family as Texas Gov. Rick Perry congratulates them both on a job well done.

PRESENT from the Beginning

By Chuck Bullard, CAL MEC Staff Writer

At 91, Cliff Pleggenkuhle Sr. has watched commercial aviation progress from tri-motor Fords to Boeing 777s.

Pleggenkuhle, who was inspired to leave his Iowa farm by the legendary flying feats of Charles Lindbergh, was there during the infancy of Continental Airlines, first as a mechanic and later as a pilot. He flew the first Continental jet airliners and the first Military Air Command flights during the Vietnam War. Pleggenkuhle retired as a Continental Boeing 707 captain in 1970 but maintained his membership in ALPA and recently was awarded an ALPA pin for 63 years of service by Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

His son, Cliff Pleggenkuhle Jr., joined Continental as a pilot in 1964 and currently is No. 1 on the Continental seniority list. Their careers overlapped from 1964 until 1970 and they became known as Pleggie Sr. and Pleggie Jr. In February 2003, Pleggie Jr. will reach his 60th birthday and mandatory retirement, ending 64 years of Pleggenkuhles in Continental cockpits.

God willing, Pleggie Sr. will be a passenger on his son's last flight just as his son was the co-pilot on Pleggie Sr.'s last flight in 1970.

It will be a bittersweet day for both.

As a boy growing up on an Iowa farm, Pleggie Sr. dreamed of becoming an aviator like Lindbergh. He took his first airplane ride in 1928 at age 17 and was forever hooked.

Pleggie Sr. spotted an ad for a master mechanic's course offered by Curtiss-Wright Flying Services at Grand Central Airport in Glendale, Calif. The tuition was \$600 and he had only \$400 so he sold bootleg liquor at dances to earn the rest.

After graduating with his A&E License in 1931, TWA offered him a job as an apprentice mechanic at \$60 a month. Pleggie Sr. accepted, of course, but he wanted to be a pilot like Lindbergh so he took flying



1941 with first wings and ALPA pin.

lessons in his spare time and soloed in 1932 at age 21.

"I was on the swing shift so that gave me lots of day time to build up my flying time," he said.

While at TWA, Pleggie Sr. witnessed a transcontinental speed record in 1934. TWA had just taken delivery of its first Douglas DC-1 and wanted to demonstrate the airliner's capabilities. With TWA Vice President Jack Frye and Eastern Airlines Vice President Eddie Rickenbacker – the World War I flying ace – at the controls, the DC-1 flew the 3,000 miles from Glendale, Calif. to Newark, N.J. in the record-breaking time of 13-hours and 4-minutes.

After being turned down for a pilot's job at TWA, Pleggie Sr. went to work for the fledgling Continental Airlines in 1938, again as a mechanic. But he was told he could check out as a co-pilot when he had 1,000 hours and an instrument rating. Pleggie Sr.'s first scheduled airline flight as a Continental co-pilot was in 1939 from Denver to El Paso.

"With the approval of Continental President Robert F. Six, my dream had come true," he said. "I was a co-pilot on America's 'fastest scheduled airline.'"

Pleggie Sr. checked out as a captain on the Lockheed Lodestar in 1942. After World War II, Continental operated a fleet of Douglas DC-3s. In 1948, the airline took delivery of the "advanced" Convair 240, which had a pressurized cabin, heated wings, auto feathering, reversing propellers and a nose gear.

In 1951, Pleggie Sr. moved to El Paso to fly Douglas DC-6s and was there for Continental's entrance into the Houston market. The CAB had decreed that American would fly from Los Angeles to El Paso, Continental would fly from El Paso to San Antonio and Braniff would fly from San Antonio to Houston. Braniff didn't want the San Antonio to Houston leg so Continental took it and began serving Houston for the first time.

In 1958, Pleggie Sr. moved to Los Angeles to fly DC-7s and was a part of Continental's entrance into the jet age. He was in the first group of Continental pilots to fly the revolutionary Boeing 707 in 1959.

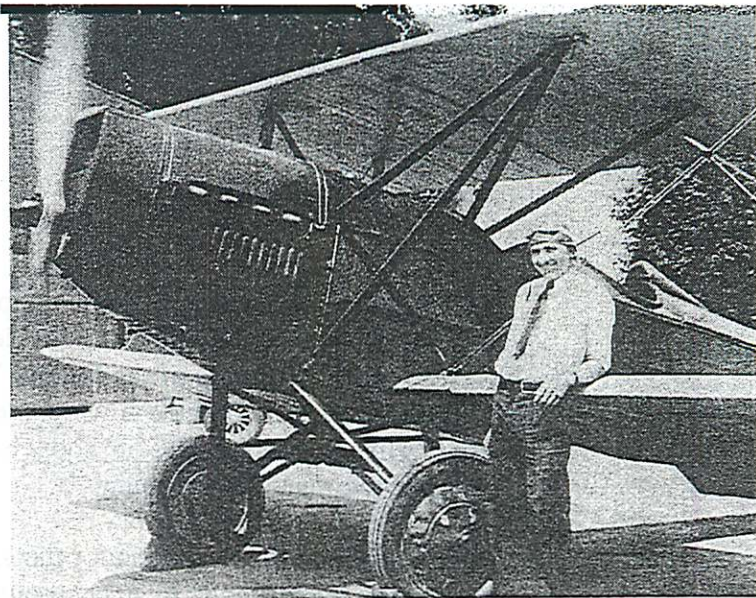
"They put the fear of God in all of us," he recalls, "but after a couple of months, we found you could fly one of these propellerless airplanes about like any airplane."

Pleggie Sr. captained all the 707 series until 1964 when Continental was awarded the Military Air Command contract to fly troops and cargo to Vietnam. Pleggie Sr. was assigned to the MAC operation, which utilized 13 Boeing 707-320-Cs. These planes could take off with a gross weight of 336,000 pounds and stay in the air for 12 hours.

He captained one of the five crews on the proving flight, which left Los Angeles on Aug. 31, 1964.

"My crew was assigned the leg from Guam to Honolulu," said Pleggie Sr. "This was a 7-hour and 10-minute flight and was the first Continental plane to land at Honolulu Airport. We were greeted by pretty Honolulu girls covered with leis doing the hula-hula."

Pleggie Sr. stayed on the MAC run until his retirement in 1970 and has some scary stories to tell about close calls and narrow escapes.



Pleggie Sr. with an OX5 Commandaire. Photo taken at Wilson Airport sometime in 1935–2 miles west of air terminal, Burbank, Calif.

There was the time he blew two tires during takeoff from Los Angeles and had to land at Wake Island, where they had tires. And the time when maintenance discovered a 50-caliber bullet hole in the tail section of a 707 he had flew into Da Nang the night before. Then there was the time Typhoon Sarah hit Wake Island in 1967. His crew was one of three Continental crews laying over there.

Normally, the crews stayed in bunkhouses but were moved to the homes of Pan Am employees that were supposed to be typhoon proof because they had heavy cables over the roof. When the eye of the typhoon arrived, Pleggie Sr. walked outside to survey the damage and heard a loud rumbling noise. It was a tidal wave so he ran to higher ground and watched as it smashed all the furniture in the house and washed his crew bag out to sea.

The bunkhouses they were supposed to staying in were flattened.

Pleggie Sr. flew his last MAC flight Sept 17, 1970, and was offered any domestic trip in the Continental system as his retirement flight.

With his son as his co-pilot, his daughter as one of the flight attendants and his wife, daughter-in-law and granddaughter as passengers, Pleggie Sr. flew off into the sunset on a Los Angeles to Houston to Los Angeles run Sept. 21, 1970.

"That last flight as an airline captain is hard to describe," he said. "You have to be thankful you made it to that magic number of 60. But I had this feeling I could go another five years or so but the FAA said you are too old."

"One day you can fly the best equipment on the airline and the next day you can't hold the string to a kite."

So Pleggie Sr. retired to his avocado ranch in Fallbrook, Calif.

Except for some leg problems, his son says the 91-year-old still enjoys good health.

"He can't walk as good as he wants to," said Pleggie Jr. "He loves to walk but the circulation in his feet doesn't work too good. If his legs were better, he could probably still run a marathon." ➤

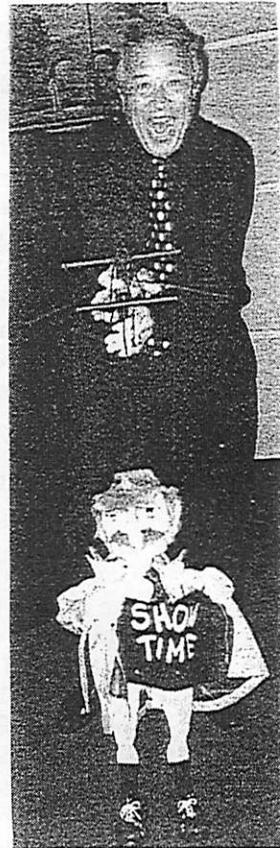
PUPPETS AFTER DARK

Jim Gamble, internationally known puppeteer and Golden Eagle will present PUPPETS AFTER DARK, his cleverly intimate, cabaret-style marionette show for the fall gathering of the Eagles. With 50 years experience in professional puppetry Gamble is widely recognized for his marionette artistry. His miniature burlesque show is often said to be "more fun and more revealing than the real thing! "

For retirees and their significant others, sidesplitting cameo performances are turned in by a lecherous D.O.M. (Dirty Old Man) in trench coat, a sensually-designed and multi-talented strip-teaser, a top-heavy belly dancer, macho crooner Tom Jones and, for the ladies, a Chippendale's male exotic dancer. These decadent characters and others trip through their paces to tease and please their audience for 30 fun-filled minutes, pausing only to flirt with the front row of consenting adults.

Gamble and his company are in frequent demand for their repertoire of programs. As director of his private production company, Gamble has been commissioned to build puppets for Disney, commercials and video projects for corporate and governments. The company has also produced 10 videos distributed worldwide. The company provides music education and cultural enrichment programs for schools and theaters under sponsorship of the LA Music Center, Orange County Performing Arts Center, and California Arts Council. During the past few years, Gamble has performed for theater and puppet festivals in many countries including France, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Belarus, Italy, Bulgaria & Israel. In 1998, he was the first American invited to perform in Iran in 20 years, and in Sept. 2001, he was the only American invited to perform in Moscow for a Puppetry Festival honoring 100 years of Russian puppetry.

A multi-faceted artist, Jim Gamble brings a variety of skills and humor to his performances from earlier professions as an engineer, an Air Force Officer, and a pilot for Continental. Under his direction, his company turns in over a thousand performances annually. Gamble and his wife, Marty are looking forward to seeing many retired friends from the pilot ranks.
www.jimgamble.comgamble



GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURERS REPORT 11/05/02 – 03/17/032

Our New Members

Larry Bailey
Newt Ball
Ralph Bellerue
Denny Cleveland
Bruce Coffin
Ron DeCurtins
Gary Gavagan

Bobby Glau
Larry Hartman
William "Bill" Henry, Jr.
John Houser
Richard "Rick" Hundley
Forrest "Frosty" Leef
Murray Lindberg

Ron May
Jim McGhee
Lew Rich
Joe Sherwin
Gary "Bing" Spence
A. Scott Tomlinson
T. J. "Thomas" Zalar

While most members are current in their dues status, we ask that you to look at your envelope's address label, and specifically at the **RED** numbers following your name on this label. This **RED NUMBER** indicates the year through which your dues have been paid. If your number is a year less than 2003, records indicate that you are in arrears. Members more than two years in arrears are subject to removal from the mailing list – something that we very much do not wish to do. So, please, don't throw that envelope away - take a moment to look at the **RED NUMBER** on your address label. If that number is less than 2003, why not bring your membership current, and assure your continued delivery of *Golden Contrails* along with all other membership privileges. If this dues record is in error, please let me know. Some of you will notice that in place of a RED NUMBER on the mailing label there are letters. "W" indicates a dues-exempt widow of a member; "CT" indicates a subscriber only to the magazine, while "Life" and "Honorary" are dues exempt.

A dues renewal and membership update form is provided below for your convenience. Using this form to update or change any of your information when needed or when making a dues payment is gratefully appreciated. Remember, the postoffice will only forward your mail for a short period - please send us any changes or updates. Please print, since my old eyes can't function like they did in past years! Remember, dues for years prior to 2003 are \$20.00 per year; dues beginning in 2003 (due in January) will be \$30 per year. If making more than a year's dues payment, please indicate how you wish it allocated. Why not take a moment to make your dues payment right now?

cut or  tear

Dues Renewal or Information Update Form (Please Print)

Dues are \$20 per year through 2002 and \$30 per year beginning in Jan., 2003

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M.I. _____

Spouse Name _____ Phone No. (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

City _____ St. _____ ZIP+ _____ - _____

E-Mail _____ Other Info _____

If making a dues payment or postage fund donation, please make checks payable to **GOLDEN EAGLES**, mail form to:

GOLDEN EAGLES
C/O CHARLIE STARR, TREASURER
4328 SUNSET BEACH CIRCLE
NICEVILLE, FL 32578-4820

phone: 805 897-0898

E-mail cws1932@cox.net

GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURERS REPORT (Continued) 11/5/02 – 3/17/03

Balance from 11/05/02 (incl. Cash)	\$ 9,657.68
Income 11/05/02 - 3/17/03	
Dues Received	5,980.00
Postage Fund Contributions	778.00
TOTAL INCOME this period	\$ 6,758.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 16,415.68
Disbursements 11/05/02 - 3/17/03	
Golden Contrails Winter Publication	\$ 3579.75
Convention Banquet Refunds	50.00
Convention Hospitality Room Food and Snacks	87.88
Convention Final Tropicana Expenses	327.31
Web Site Maintenance	59.50
Remembrance Fund Donations	50.00
Refundable Golf Deposit	200.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS this period	\$ 4,354.44
BALANCE 3/17/03	\$ 12,061.24

Postage Fund Contributors - Continued

Max Meinen
 Raymond Melberg
 Norman Meyer
 Dick Mills
 Merrill Moore
 David Moran
 James J. Morin
 Lynn Mullins
 George Murphy
 Ralph Musser
 Wayne Nakagawa
 Phil Nash
 Jerry Navarro
 Larry Nelson
 Tom Neubert
 Gene Newman
 L.E. (Doc) O'Brien
 Joe O'Neill
 Ed O'Quinn
 Ligea Painter
 John Painter
 Robert Pearse
 Richard Pehrul
 Cliff Pleggenkuhle, Sr.
 Cliff Pleggenkuhle, Jr.
 Robert Rawls
 Frank Rhodes
 Henrietta Rogers
 Hal Ross
 Shaun Ryan
 Paul Sanwick

Jerry Schofield
 Miriam Taylor
 Eddie Jean Scott-Simmons
 George Seifert
 Paul Shelton
 Bob Shelton
 Christopher Sheppard
 Samuel Shirck
 Mary Esther Simmons
 S. Lee Smith
 Gordon Smith
 John Solomon
 Harold Spores
 Pat Starke-Brown
 Charlie Starr
 Jessica Stearns
 Delbert (Kelly) Steele
 Loren Steinbrink
 Don Straight
 R.E. "Tommy" Thompson
 Jack Thompson
 Moffitt Tinsley
 John Wall, Jr.
 Robert Warner
 James Waters
 Mary Wenholz
 Wesley Westcott
 Roger Williams
 Gary Wilsey
 Hap Wilson
 R.B. Wilson
 Joel "J" Worley

Postage Fund Contributors

Due to a computer problem that erased several names, we are listing postage contributors from both the fall and winter months, to give proper credit to all making contributions. If you made a donation and your name is missing, please let me know so that you can be acknowledged.

Dick Adams
 Pat Adams
 Sid Alexander
 Jack Alley
 Dave Anderson
 Bob Appleton
 Bill Arcamuzi
 Robert Babos
 Don Ballard
 Roger Bartel
 A.J.(Bud) Battley
 Ron Bauer
 Mike Bender
 Ronald Bennett
 Roland Brown
 Jim Bryant
 Tom Buckley
 Walt Bybee
 G. M. "Casey" Cameron
 Harold Cameron
 John Campbell
 Amous Cann
 Guy Casey
 Darryl Christian
 Denny Cleveland
 Dave Clough
 Annette Collins
 Ray Combest
 James "Jet" Conger
 Mike Conlin
 Russ Coonley
 Edward Cox
 Larry Coy
 George Cramp
 Louis Cuthbertson
 Richard Dahse
 Jack Daniel
 Joseph Dentz
 Jerry Donevant
 Dan Dowling
 Ken Duncan
 Ray Durden
 William Eaton
 Jim Farrow
 Martin Fedigan
 Evans Ferris
 Dick Floreani
 Tom Folwell

Thomas Frazier
 Gene Freeman
 Dave Gildart
 Fredianne Gray
 Dan Greco
 Tom Green
 Gomo Greer
 Richard Grigsby
 Stephen Grimes
 Paul Grover
 Thomas Guetz
 Dick Hague
 Harold Hall
 Bernie Hallee
 Pam Hart
 Virgil Hemphill
 Roy Henderson
 Art Henriksen
 William Henry, Jr.
 A. J. High
 John Hodge
 Tom Holder
 Walt Honan
 Jerry Hunsinger
 Bette Ireson
 Ernie Islava
 Keith Jaeger
 Jim James
 Jehlik
 Ken Johnson
 Wally Jolivet
 Russ Kincaid
 Robert Kinsey
 Larry Knowles
 Doug Krick
 Kenneth Lakes
 Dick Lane
 D.J. Lehman
 Ron Lemon
 Don Leseberg
 Peter Linzmaier
 Tom Long
 Eddie Lynn
 Lawrence Marinelli
 Monroe Mathias
 Hershel McAllister
 James McNulty
 Butch Meier

The Wright Way

By T.J. Zalar, Curator 1940 Air Terminal Museum

As was discussed in the last issue of *Golden Contrails* the Centennial of Aviation has begun with most aviation related museums gearing up with exhibits, special events and celebrations. Last month I attended the annual Mutual Concerns of Air and Space Museums conference in Washington, D.C. Of course, the Wright special events and research took center stage beginning with a very interesting keynote address by Marianne Hudec, grandniece of the Wright brothers. In addition, Dr. Tom Crouch, senior curator of aeronautics at the National Air and Space Museum and author of two books about the Wrights helped Ms. Hudec fill in some of the more technical voids in her recollections. As a child she spent many memorable hours in the home of her uncle "Orv." From her fond memories we were offered a wonderful, rare look at the life of her uncles.

Orville and Wilbur were very private individuals whose dealings with people in the community were rarely social. Their lives were spent on research and development of flight. Their letters to family members while away from home were eloquently descriptive of their activities and frequently had an air of homesickness. Regrettably, these personal letters from the brothers to their family contain most of the technical data pertaining to their inventions. When Paul Glenshaw, director of The Wright Experience began the tedious job of researching, reconstructing, testing, analyzing, and documenting authentic full-scale reproductions of the Wright Brothers' developmental aircraft and engines very few pages of original technical data existed. It has been a long, tedious journey trying to develop working plans from notes, photographs, letters and simple drawings. When the glider was completed, Glenshaw developed a computer simulation for pilot training. Some of the finest pilots came from across the country to try out to be selected as the one to actually test the glider, and perhaps even the 1903 Flyer scheduled for flight on December 17, 2003. Glenshaw frustratingly commented after repeatedly crashing the simulations that the design of the aircraft makes it almost impossible to fly in the contemporary sense of flight. One afternoon he allowed his eight-year-old son, who possessed absolutely no working knowledge of flying an airplane to strap himself into the simulator for the purpose of entertainment before heading home for supper. Much to his amazement, the youngun' took off, flew level and landed the craft without so much as a grunt. Glenshaw chalked up the success to either his son sticking his little tongue out to the side in just the right way, or pure unadulterated, beginner's luck. It was neither. Success had come easily for the child because he lacked important credentials. It had been the education and experience factor that had kept trained pilots from successfully flying the Wright's inventions! Developing a working reproduction of the aircraft without technical data was burdening enough; the boys also neglected to mention *how* to fly their aircraft. Remember, nobody had done it yet, so practical application of any data was still up in the air (so to speak).

Why did the Wrights forget to properly document their wind tunnel and general stress related tests, theories and application information? Why did they choose one of the most

isolated parts of the U.S. for testing? They wanted to protect their invention from those who they believed would readily steal it. After the historic flight, Orville sent the following Western Union Telegram message to his father, Bishop Wright.

Kitty Hawk N.C. Dec. 17

Success four flights Thursday morning all against twenty one mile wind started from level with engine power alone average speed through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform press home Christmas.

I can understand that the climax that occurs following so long an effort may result in somewhat of a matter-of-fact attitude on paper, but most of us would have managed at least a "You ain't even gonna believe this one, Dad!" or a quiet, "hotdamn" while slapping one's knee. Thank you, but no tickertape, no lights, no pesky reporters – just a quick mention on page four in the lower left-hand corner, if it isn't too much trouble. That sums up the attitude of the Wrights then, and the Wright family today.

Dr. Crouch related another story that further explains the Wright attitude. He contacted the family for help while trying desperately to find information on the cloth covering of the Wright 1902 glider. Explaining his dilemma to family members was unproductive at best. Several frustrating days later (and only a few hairs left on his head) a Federal Express plastic bag was delivered to him. The contents included a piece of stained, wadded up fabric with a note that simply described the contents as the original cloth of the Wright's 1902 glider. Apparently one of the family members had coincidentally ran across it while tidying up the basement. Even after transferring a truckload of boxes of files, letters, and other items used by the Wright brothers to the Smithsonian Institution much still remains in the basements of several Wright family members. They are very protective of their investment in history, and are obsessively selective of those who want information.

While "pecking" your way through the internet in search of information about the Centennial of Flight, try the following website:

- U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission – centennialofflight.gov
- The Wright Experience – wrightexperience.com
- The Franklin Institute – <http://sln.fi.edu/>

If you find "pecking" isn't as fun as "thumbing," pick up a copy or two of *Air & Space* magazine. It is NASM's Centennial Edition and well worth the money. In particular, Roger Bilstein's article on the development of commercial aviation is very well done. Dr. Bilstein is on the 1940 Air Terminal Museum advisory board, and author of several books dedicated to our aviation heritage. If you want a more in-depth look at general American aviation and the Wrights, try *A Dream of Wings, Americans and the Airplane 1875-1905* by Tom Crouch.

While visiting other parts of the United States, or in deed the world, remember that any aviation related museum will have a special exhibit honoring the Wright brothers. As

Americans we are very proud of so many of our inventions that have made such a strong impact on the world. No matter how the political winds blow this year, the United States will be showing off perhaps the one event that has had the most impact on the twentieth century, launching so many dreams and fulfilling so many destinies – the birth of manned flight.

The 1940 Air Terminal Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization dedicated to our commercial aviation heritage. For further information about membership, special events and volunteer opportunities with the Museum, visit our website at www.1940airterminal.org, or contact us at 281 367-7732.

The 1903 Wright Flyer will be on special exhibit through 2004 at the National Air & Space Museum where visitors will be able to see the aircraft at ground level.

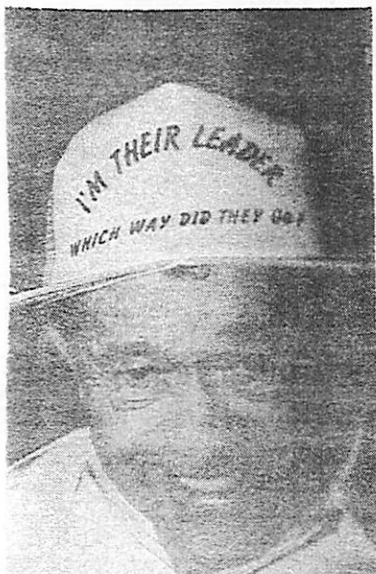
L.L. Walker, the “patron saint” of the EAA lifts his homebuilt into history near Houston, Texas in November, 1910, only seven years after the Wright’s historic flight.
Original painting by Jonathan Frank, member of the American Society of Aviation Artists and pilot for Continental Airlines.

See picture (back cover)



GONE WEST:

JOHN W. (BILL) HIMMELREICH died in the summer of 2001, according to an e-mail from DAVE STREIT to DICK GRIGSBY, dated 1/10/2003. DAVE wrote,



"I recently learned from Phyllis Himmelreich that Bill had passed away about a year and a half ago in Spokane, where they have been living for some time. We got a card from Phyllis this year and so we called her to see how things were going. Bill had been ill for some time and the last time we saw

him in Spokane he was in pretty bad shape. After that it was a couple of years where there was no news of them at all. Anyhow, Phyllis is living in Spokane with her sister. Her eldest son "Flip" also lives in Spokane. He has or did have a travel agency there. I have not been in contact with him personally. Phyllis is getting along very well, she says, playing lots of bridge and enjoying being with her sister. I thought you might be interested in this news, late as it is, because there are a lot of us old geezers who have fond memories of Bill. Hope to see you at the next get together." Dave Streit.

Many of us greatly enjoyed flying with BILL....DICK GRIGSBY wrote, "BILL had a wonderful sense of humor and he was an excellent co-pilot. We were together on DC-3s, Convairs, DC-6s, and B707/720s. I remember when he had his first trip on the 720B. It was a cool, clear night. We were taking off, lightly loaded, for MKC. It was short taxi to RW 25R, and I was pushing

him to finish the checklist before I opened up those wonderfully powerful engines for takeoff. We made an immediate left turn out, and as we crossed over LGB at 17,000 ft. Bill piped up with, "Well, I'm ready for takeoff!"....and there were so many more like that!

GENE NEWMAN also enjoyed flying in those 40's and 50's airplanes with BILL. About 1958, GENE and BILL were flying a DC-6 from SAT to ELP. Over the ELP VOR the tower reported one mile visibility in blowing dust, due to 40 mile per hour winds from the North. (It was the date of PHYLLIS' and BILL'S anniversary.) BILL said, "I can see the airport better from my side", so GENE gave BILL the controls, and BILL flew an excellent right base leg, landed smoothly on Runway 35, and made it home for his anniversary!

Editor's Note: BILL published a ring-bound book, entitled, "What's Up Bill?" Near the beginning of the book, Bill tells about how his father obtained his release from jail, when he was a teenager, because he was arrested for recklessly driving his motorcycle! It's a great book!!!

HAROLD B. HALL died January 31, 2003. Born in Appleton City, Mo. in 1915, HALL served in the Army Air Corps from 1935 to 1938, and then instructed for the civilian pilot training program in Brownwood, Texas. While there he married



WANDA , and later began flying for Pioneer Airlines, and after the merger, for Continental. **HAROLD** learned to fly in open cockpit airplanes, and he ended his career flying jet DC-10s and Boeing 747's.

After retiring, in 1975, **HALL** enjoyed flying, golf, and traveling. **WANDA** wrote that **HAROLD** celebrated his 87th birthday by playing 18 holes of golf, and that he took no medication, and felt great, until cancer struck.... **WANDA**'s silver medal will be featured later in this column....

BILL MOSELY, died December 12, 2002. **BILL** flew for Trans Texas 1965, later for Texas International, and then for Continental Airlines. He had twenty years of airline flying before his high blood pressure led to taking medical disability in 1983. **BILL** was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease in November of 2001, which caused his death just 13 months later. **BILL** and **FAYE** had been married for about 38 years.....

e-mail from **LARRY SHEEHAN** (via **KEN ALRICK**), dated 11/22/20002: Ken, I just thought some people might like to know... Captain Wes Westcott's wife, Jan, who was known and loved by many of our older pilots and their families, passed away this morning. Larry Sheehan.."

"LUDDY" STUBBEN: Luddy passed away February 19, 2003 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. She was born in Nebraska on October 16, 1927. She is survived by her husband of 53 years, C.M. "Red" Stubben, sons Mark, Larry, and David, a grandson and two granddaughters. A private burial at sea was held February 28.

ILLNESSES/SURGERY

e-mail from **LARRY SHEEHAN** via **KEN**

ALRICK, dated 11/22/2002: "Wes Wescott has been declared legally blind from Macular Degeneration. Wes will need all of the Love and support anyone cares to provide. Larry Sheehan. "

An e-mail from a navy buddy of **WES WESCOTT**, dated 12/17/2003 adds: Wesley's daughter, Marlene, was taking him to see the doctor.....He cannot recognize people unless they are very close to his eyes. His new address is 75 Schooner Bay Landing, Kimberling City, MO 95686, (and) phone # (417) 73 9-1109."

e-mail from **JIM MICHAELS**, via **KEN ALRICK**, dated 1/17/2003: Retired pilot George Vermef fell off his deck Dec. 27th, and is currently paralyzed from the waist down. He is in Harborview Hospital in Seattle. I'm sure he would appreciate hearing from all his CAL friends..... Bedside hospital phone at Harborview 206-731-4110, 6EH room 167."

e-mail from **JOHN PRATER**, dated 1/10/2003: "He (George Vermef) has begun therapy that he says is basic boot camp. He has a positive attitude and is committed to work hard to get use of his legs back. Expects to be in hospital till end of Jan....The phone number is not correct but got thru on main number for the hospital..."

e-mail from **KEN ALRICK**, dated 12/19/02: "I received a letter from Walt Loflin, in which he expressed concern for our long time friend and associate, Captain Glen Eads. The following is an excerpt from that letter. We would hope that many of his friends would act on this.

This is my request regarding Capt. Glen Eads who has been in the Western Hills Healthcare Center for many years. Glen will be 88 years old this coming January. Glen does have his better days, but has no problems remembering and talking about

all of his Continental Airlines (Pioneer Airlines) pilot friends.

Glen doesn't get very many visits from friends, so a great morale booster would be a hello note or a Christmas Card from so many of his friends that he still remembers and talks about." *Western Hills Healthcare Center, c/o Capped Glen Ears, Room 219B, 1625 Carr Street, Lakewood, CO 80215.*

LA VERNE THORNBURY missed the Golden Eagle Convention and the ARECA Fall Fling due to pneumonia, and now she has just been released from a hospital, due to heart stress and grief, following the death of her sister.

Christmas Card from KEN ALRICK: (Written by LUVERNE) To All My Friends and Family: "As many of you know, I have been on the sick list for most of the past year. Of course, I feel totally useless! My trouble is in my back. It is because of the sciatic nerve on my right side. I did have surgery 16 years ago. It was a "bilateral laminectomy". I guess it is a different problem this time.

Ken has been my wonderful nurse. I seem to be able to eat and sleep well. Ken has learned all about cooking and shopping, and everything in between. We also have hired a lady to help with the housecleaning.

Our kids come as often as their work permits. Last time Jeannie stayed a whole week, and was a great help. She lives in Sacramento. Carol and Bob also come by when they can. I am making progress, and hope to be able to get out, and see all of you again as in the past. I am grateful to all of you for your interest and support.

*Happy Holidays To All Of You!!!
Luverne*

READERS ARE INVITED TO SEND

NOTES OF SYMPATHY, CONDOLENCE, ETC.

THIS' THAT:

MICKEY BENDER displayed a large variety of JOHN BENDER's photographs, flight paraphinilia, military jackets, etc. at the Playa Del Rey Women's Club on Nov. 21st. The "Celebration of Life", included snacks and drinks, provided by AMY and BILL CHILDRESS, with MIRIAM TAYLOR acting as a fine Mistress of Ceremony, who coaxed other attendees to tell about their fond memories of JOHN.

In addition to the above, those attending were BARNEY BARNWELL, WALT and ALICE BYBEE, DICK GRIGSBY, LARRY and JOAN MARINELLI, GENE NEWMAN, BIM RICHARDS, and RED STUBBEN.

e-mail about our Web Site, from BIRDIE BERTRAND (via KEN ALRICK), dated 1/26/2003: "I have just uploaded the revised web site. The address remains the same—<http://www.thegoldeneagles.org>

I added a page (page 3) - "Notices, News, and Presidents Message. On that page, I have given instructions about ADOBE and added a form to the travel page just in case some people don't have company Login ID's and Passwords. Actually I duplicated that form on MSWord. And on page 3, I editorialized a bit about ADOBE and what it can do for web surfers beyond our web site.

All the info has been updated as per Roland's desires or at least as I understood his instructions - I've gone over the site several times, that said, no one is perfect and there may still be minor mistakes so feel free to ask for changes or critique as modifications can be done relatively easy."

e-mail from CHARLIE STARR, to the

Golden Eagle Officers and Editors, dated 12/13/2002: "I want to echo Roland's words of praise for the December magazine. Well done!

We are beginning to see dues come in (though some simply are getting like me, where they do not read as well as they used to, as a few are sending the old \$20.00 amount, rather than the new \$30.00. I'm heartened that we have even had a number who have responded to the envelope stickers - bringing their dues up to date.

I might also suggest (as Roland wrote) that we continue putting these stickers on the next mailing for those who are still delinquent....The longer that delinquency goes on, the less likely the person is to "catch up" since the dollar amount will make membership seem less of a value and more of a cost (just human nature).....

Charlie Starr"

e-mail from VIRG HEMPHILL, via KEN ULRIC dated 1/05/2003: (Explanation by KEN) Breakfast gathering. Wish I could be there.... "Hello all: Wed. Jan. 8, Elmer's on Montana! (ELP) 9 A.M. Hope to see you there. Regards, Virg"

e-mail from PATTI TRACHTA to KEN ALRICK, dated 1/21/2003: "Hi Ken! I'm a former flight attendant that you may remember. I'm looking for Tiger Matthews. I've tried her old phone number and address in Golden, CO but no luck. Can you help me out? Jim Michaels gave me your email address to try. Thanks! Cheers~ Patti Trachta"

e-mail response dated 1/22/2003: "Hey, I didn't do this right. If you can help Patti here is her address—antigpatti@cox.net"

Note to DICK GRIGSBY, dated Feb. 23, 2003: "Dear Dick,

Perhaps you have heard from someone else by now. We wanted to send this along

to you in case you haven't.

It was as wonderful party and truly a surprise for Tommy (Green). How Fara and Richard Green were able to accomplish it all was a great surprise for all of us, too! No easy matter, with 35 or more people in attendance, including the Jack Alleys & Amous Canns from California.

Our very best to you and Susan.

Yours truly, Jeane and Harold Spores"

Editor's Note: Tommy's 90th birthday was celebrated at BILLY CREWS RESTAURANT, 1200 Country Club Road, Santa Teresa, New Mexico, on Saturday, February 8, 2003, at 8:00 P.M.

In January, Peter M. Anderson, called this Editor and advised that his dad PETER S. ANDERSON, (age 93) resides in "assisted living housing" in Las Vegas, NV, and that his dad would greatly enjoy calls from his airline friends, as his vision is very poor, and mostly he moves about in a wheel-chair, but uses a walker occasionally to keep his leg muscles active.

Your editor called PETE and both enjoyed recalling their flights together, and other memories. When BIM RICHARDS was advised, he called PETE and they also had an enjoyable chat. Just in the past week, BIM visited PETE's facility, noted that PETE could watch TV with some difficulty, and was very impressed with PETE's excellent accommodations.

PETE's address follows: Peter S. Anderson, C/O Seville Terrace #227, 2000 N. Rampart, Las Vegas, NV 89128-7616.

Phone # 702-743-3950.

WANDA HALL, (wife of recently deceased HAROLD HALL), won a silver medal at the National Senior Olympic Games. A lengthy article in her local "Picayune" Newspaper, sent to us by PAM MEYNERS, (summarized) follows:

When the HALLS moved to California, they lived "across the street from the



Wanda Hall might have been the most senior woman in the 2002 Spring East 5K Fun Run but she challenged everyone to live life to the fullest. Photo by Daniel Clifton.

Ocean", and when WANDA and her friend decided to run up and down the beach, she was "hooked", and running became "as much a part of her life, as breathing".

Along with running WANDA did a lot of mountain climbing, with the result that she was in excellent physical shape, ending in a spot at the National Senior Olympic Games for the past ten years.

"The competition begins as a regional level, progress to the state level, and then hopefully you arrive at the national competition, she said".

WANDA has run a marathon once, but now just runs 5 or 6 miles one day each week. She is entered in the May-June, 2003 Olympics, (80 year old age group) which will be held in Hampton Roads, Virginia. "WANDA has two sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, living in Colorado and Texas. She shared her philosophy. I'm going to keep this up for as long as I can, she said. The key is to never stop once you get going. It is truly amazing what you can do if you just keep at it."

Now for a continuation of Fishing Stories!

This one by WES COSS.....

I received a commercial fishing license on my 41 ft. boat in 1980 and put a 30 ft.

plank on the bow to fish swordfish. Sam Bickford was my "harpooner" and we had many trips the summer of 80 and 81. We weren't very successful catching swordfish but had a good time. We usually were in Dana Pont or Avalon or anchored at Santa Barbara Island overnight. The fishing was boring but the layovers were great. Without the support of an air spotter plane we were at a disadvantage and after a second season I took the plank off and turned to bottom fishing.

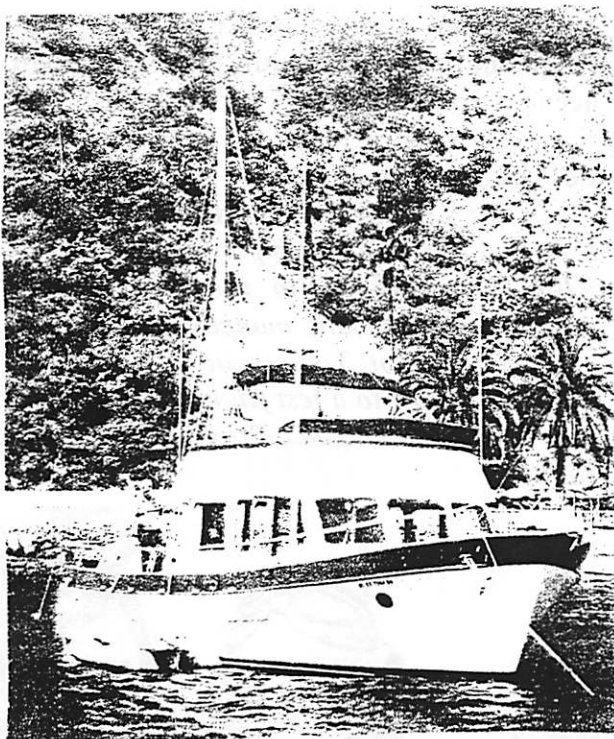
We fished the Tanner bank—some 70 miles southwest of Redondo, and did very well in 1983, after I retired from the airline in May of 83. In one trip we brought in a ton of rock-fish, but on most trips we were content with a thousand pounds or so. This was hand fishing, — it took about 8 hours to get on the fishing bank and we always traveled at night. We would usually stay out, weather permitting, for three days of fishing. We had a 24 ft. Emergency parachute we rigged as a sea anchor, and it kept us into the wind quite well, as we would drift with the current with the wind being a minimal factor. We would cruise up current while we were eating dinner with the hope that when we woke in the morning, after a night on the sea anchor, that we would be near the fishing bank.

By 1985 the bottom fishing had pretty well been fished out and I decided to try shark long line fishing. We put out about a half mile of line with a baited hook on wire leaders, every seventy feet. About every two hundred yards we would have a buoy with a flag attached. We would set the line and let it soak for a couple of hours. We usually could tell if we were in a good spot for shark by watching the buoy flags as they were tugged out of line by the sharks we hooked. We were fishing for Mako shark and the first year we did very well. We would shoot the shark with a 10 gauge

shotgun before bringing the shark aboard. The second year the sharks were smaller and it was apparent that they were rapidly being fished out. Fish and Game restricted the shark fishing to only six licenses in Southern California in 1987, and I was unable to qualify.

I took the boat to the boatyard in 1988, and completely refinished it with lots of patching and sanding where it had gotten "dinged" from the commercial fishing. It took a lot of time and work but it came out of the yards better than new. We never fished the boat again. My wife, Annette, and I cruised the boat, trying to spend a week aboard every month. We used it much like one would use a motor home and had many great cruises up and down the coast. After Annette could no longer go aboard for health reasons, we decided to sell the boat in 1991. I think that Annette misses the boat more than I do.

Wes Coss



SEA WHISKERS is a 41 ft. Fiberglass Twin Diesel Trawler, with a 13 ft. Beam. Weight

30,000 lbs., with Radar, Auto-pilot, Loran, and a good Fish Finder.

TED HERBERT'S Fishing Story...

"The best I can come up with right now is a story about five retired Continental pilots that I think you might have heard of...In June of 2001, Ed O'Quinn arranged for Dave Streit, Bud Battley, and me, to meet him in Seattle, and from there we went to Craig, Alaska, to visit Keith and Selena Jaeger for a few days of fishing. I would tell you how to get there, but since it involves airlines, ferrys, sea-planes, four wheel drive vehicles, etc., I have come to the conclusion that the Jaegers found a place so remote, that they probably don't want anybody to find them anyway.

We did find them though, so they have the heart to send us packing back to where we started. Since Keith has been living there long enough to have gotten his Captain's license, and bought a boat that they named "Bottom Line", well, they figured the only way to get rid of us was to take us fishing. I'm not saying that the four of us know much about fishing, but to put it the way O'Quinn did, I can remember what he said to Keith one day out in the boat, it was "you're the only fisherman on this boat, Jaeger", and Ed was dead right about me. I'm happy just riding around on the boat and listening to country-western music, and if we catch fish, that's just a bonus. Keith told us in order to catch the Salmon, you fish a little above the bottom, and if you fish on the bottom you will only catch Halibut. It was apparent that I didn't know where the bottom was, because all I kept doing was tangling my line and catching an occasional Halibut, and they didn't believe me when I said I liked Halibut better than Salmon. Dave Streit caught the biggest Salmon, and then Bud and I ate all of it (except what Dave saved to take home).

I guess that's why they didn't believe I liked Halibut the best.

I'm enclosing a photo of the five of us on "Bottom Line", just to prove we did find the Jaeger's (and that we're all still alive and kicking). Selena was great, putting up with the five of us, and listening to the same old stories that she has heard a hundred times. I guess it's true that old people continually repeat themselves, but the stories get better every year! Selena also fixed us a feast, all you could eat, Salmon, Shrimp, Crab, and Halibut. Like I said, the Halibut was my favorite. I can't wait to go back and throw that hook in the water, but with my luck, the Jaeger's will have found a more remote place, or if I do find them, Keith will probably throw me in the water. That's my most recent fish story, and I hope it will help you fill a couple of paragraphs until I set out on my next journey to beautiful, scenic, Craig, Alaska. Aloha,
Ted Herbert June, 2001



Back Row: Ted Herbert Keith Jaeger
Front: Bud Battley Dave Streit Ed O'Quinn

GENE FREEMAN'S FISHING STORY

Well, first, to give you a little background about our venerable leader—in the early 70's Benny McKenzie and I strapped on my 1953 Cessna 180, and flew to Black Lake in Northern Saskatchewan,

Canada.

We had a wonderful time,—caught dozens of Pike, Walleye, & Lake Trout. On the last day, we brought five Northern Pike back to camp. The five fish weighed just a little over 100 pounds. As usual, I had caught the heaviest fish, — 21 pounds. Benny's (biggest) weighed 20 ½ pounds. I went to get my camera and when I came back Benny's fish weighed 21 ½ pounds. Since this is very unusual to witness the growth of a fish, hanging on the scale, I investigated and determined that Benny's fish had caught a rock, while hanging on the scales. And after removal of the rock, the case of beer was returned to its rightful owner!

Benny and I have had a lot of other wonderful times fishing—always intensely competitive. We'll be fishing on the Green River, below the Flaming Gorge Reservoir the last few days of March. I have to give Benny the best spot on the river for I need him to tie my 22 fly on a 7 X Leader. (On the phone) Sorry I couldn't find a photo to accompany this story.)

Gene Freeman

Editor's Note:

After Tommy Green retired he built at least two open cockpit biplanes for his son, RICHARD GREEN, to use in practicing professional aerobatic maneuvers. Below is a photograph of Tommy in one of those airplanes, prior to a test flight to make sure that he had built a good airplane for his son, Richard.



LA VERNE THORNBURY NOTES

The D-FW PENGUINS, loving the snow, braved the weather to gather at PENNY SCHUCHAT's lovely home for a wonderful luncheon-business meeting. Keeping up with the JONESES, PENNY & TOM joined JOAN & HERB for a trip to Lisbon the following morning. We are anxious to hear all about this wonderful trip upon their return; also who is in charge of the newest addition to the JONES Family, HERB's little Fox Terrier, Pepper.

A 'Farewell to the Wings' party was held in honor of Captain CLIFF M. 'Scooter' PLEGGENKUHLE, Jr. at the Marriott in Houston. Captain CLIFF, Jr. was greeted at his retirement party by about 250 guests to celebrate his 60. After ending his final flight as 'Captain of his ship with Continental,' SCOOTER was welcomed with joy by other members of the 'Club.'

Fourteen family members, including Captain CLIFF's parents, our own FLORA & CLIFF, Sr., were on the Houston-Paris flight. Some of the family members were on Captain CLIFF, SR.'s retirement flight, and some had not been born at that time. Although the return flight was oversold, the family did get on, so all arrived to join in the celebration.

Captain CLIFF M. 'Pleggie' PLEGGENKUHLE, Sr. flew his last official trip with Continental, landing his Boeing 707 at L. A. Airport on Monday, November 21, 1970. Aboard the L.A. -Houston flight were FLORA, CLIFF, Jr., a captain and daughter, ANN, a hostess with Continental.

There were some illnesses (following) the Paris-Houston return flight. After the party FLORA was hospitalized in Houston with some infections and pneumonia. She & PLEGGIE remained in Houston with SCOOTER's family until she was able to travel—SCOOTER accompanied them home. FLORA is now doing well; they had a wonderful time and are happy to be home.

DAVE MORAN shared an e-mail from DOTTIE INGRAM's daughter, giving an update on DOTTIE's condition. (*Dottie Ingram was the former Secretary/Office Administrator of the Dallas Pilot Base*) "Last week, Mom told the staff at the Grace house she wanted to get out of the wheelchair. She has been able to move from the wheelchair to a regular chair or her bed, with the help of one person, instead of two. She has also been pushing herself around the halls in the wheelchair or pulling herself around the walls. She will start some physical therapy this week. She had refused physical therapy last September, and has not had any since. She eats very well and has been getting stronger. She has even been watching the news on TV and asking a question or two about what she is hearing and seeing. Since Mom hasn't focused on TV or books in months, I feel this is great news!

I attribute this progress to all the prayers all of you have been sending up on Mom's behalf. I think the cards and sweet notes you all have been sending have been a real encouragement to her. I have read every word of them to her. My thanks go out to all of you! Truly, the power of love is greater than we can calculate!

I will keep you updated as her progress continues.

Maureen Ingram Collier"

—— end ——

