



# GOLDEN CONTRAILS

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

August 2005



**B-17 Flying Fortress 'Nine - 0 - Nine'**

• Fort Lauderdale, Florida • February 18-22, 2005 •

Thank You Captain James F. Minor from the Palliser Family © 2005

## **CAPTAIN'S CORNER**

The 33rd annual Golden Eagles Convention will be held on September 23rd & 24th at the Airport Marriott Hotel. We are looking forward to the convention and especially to our hospitality room with its excellent view of the airport operations.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:** The guarantee for the rooms and the room rate of \$ 74 plus tax will be held until September 16th. The Marriott Hotel toll-free number is 1-800-228-9290. Local number is 281-443-2310.

Charlie Starr will take your reservations for the banquet and remember there is a luncheon and meeting for the ladies as well.

Bob Shelton has found a great Golf Course (Lake Windcrest), which is only about 40 minutes from the hotel. Golf will be on September 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>. Make your room reservations to the hotel and send your golf reservations to Bob.

We have been able to get some simulator time for Saturday afternoon for those who might want to test their skills. A sign up sheet will be in the hospitality room.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

**GOLF-** Lake Windcrest Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>  
**Simulator rides** B777, B757 and B737 Sept 24<sup>th</sup>.

**HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS FOR REGISTRATION AT 1pm. SEPT. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

<b>ANNUAL BUSINESS METTING</b>	<b>10AM SEPT 24<sup>TH</sup></b>
<b>LADIES AUXILARY MEETING</b>	<b>10AM SEPT 24<sup>TH</sup></b>
<b>LADIES LUNCHEON</b>	<b>12PM SEPT 24<sup>TH</sup></b>
<b>ANNUAL BANQUET</b>	<b>6PM SEPT 24<sup>TH</sup></b>

We are honored to have CAL'S CHAIRMAN AND CEO, MR. LARRY KELLNER as our guest speaker.

Don Gentry and his gang have agreed to handle the raffle, so buy those tickets early.

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS AND THE FIRST TIMERS TO THE CONVENTION!**

**SEE YOU IN HOUSTON,**

**BEN MCKENZIE**



**Business Meeting Agenda**  
**Saturday, September 24, 2005**  
**10:00AM**

**Registration**

**Please sign in and check your dues status. In order to vote your dues must be current.**

**Call to Order .....Ben McKenzie**

**Reading of the 2004 minutes.....Butch Meier**

**Reports:**

**President.....Ben McKenzie**  
**President-elect..... Shaun Ryan**  
**Treasurer..... Charlie Starr**  
**Corporate Liaison.....Bud Battley**  
**Widow's Aid..... Don Griffin**  
**Golden Contrails..... Dick Grigsby**  
**Travel..... K.D. Thompson**  
**Webmaster..... Bertie Bertrand**  
**E-mail Liaison..... .. Ken Alrick**

**Old Business:**

**We Care Program**

**New Business:**

**Magazine only members**

**2006 Golden Eagles Convention**

**Member Nomination & Voting**

**Officer Nomination & Election:**

**President-elect & Secretary**

**Any other New Business**

**Announcements**

**Adjournment**



## Golden Eagles Scheduled Events

### Hospitality Room- Presidio Suite

*Friday, September 23rd, 2005*

*1:00pm to 10:00pm- Hospitality Room open*

*Saturday, Sept. 24th, 2004*

*7:30am - 9:00am - Hospitality Room*

*Coffee, juice, donuts & muffins*

*10:00am- 1130am- Golden Eagles Meeting- Victoria Room*

*10:00am - 11:30am- Ladies Auxillary Meeting- Matagorda Room*

*12:00pm - 1:00pm- Ladies Auxillary Luncheon- San Jacinto Room*

*12:00pm- 5:00pm - Hospitality Room opens*

*6:00am - 7:00pm - Pre- Banquet Reception- Ballroom  
- Cash Bar*

*7:00pm - 10:00pm- Eagles Banquet - Ballroom*

*10:00pm till whenever?? Hospitality Room open*

*Sunday, September 25, 2004*

*7:30am to 9:00am Hospitality Room- Coffee,  
Juice, etc.*

*11:00am - Guest checkout and departure*





## RESERVE CAPTAIN'S LETTER

As we head into the dog days of summer in Tucson, I am heading out to cooler climates. Linda and I have hooked up the travel trailer and are presently visiting with her folks in Carmel. We will be staying on the west coast for most of the summer and will not be back in Tucson until September.

I have just filled out my Convention dinner reservations and golf registration forms and I urge all of you that are planning to attend the Convention in Houston this September to get your forms into Charlie Starr and Bob Shelton as early as possible so they can firm up their plans.

I also suggest that you make your reservations at the Airport Marriott as early as possible. All the details for the Convention, Golf Tournament and hotel reservations are included in your latest issue of Golden Contrails and are also available online at our website, [www.thegoldeneagles.org](http://www.thegoldeneagles.org). It sounds like our president, Ben McKenzie has put together another great convention and as always, Bob Shelton will make sure that everyone will enjoy the golf tournament.

We had a great turnout in Las Vegas last year and had a large group of new members attending for the first time. If every active member could bring one new member, we could make this the most memorable Convention yet. Just get on the phone or e-mail and get that old pilot buddy of yours that you haven't seen for years and invite him (or her) to attend.

One last thought before I turn down the squelch - don't forget to send Charlie a donation for the Golden Eagles We Care Fund. It would really be great if we could present the company with an impressive check to help those employees that are in need of a little extra. It is fully tax deductible and all the funds go to the people who need them.

See you all in September!

Shaun



# LADIES AUXILIARY

*Dear Ladies,*

*Once again, our Houston Convention is just around the corner. It's always a wonderful opportunity for us to gather and solidify our special bond.*

*Our planning committee has been very busy behind the scenes. In keeping with the upcoming holiday season the ambience for the Hospitality Room, Ladies Luncheon and Banquet will be festive and celebratory. For our Banquet tables Ina Domengeaux has designed elegant centerpieces in silver and black with red accents. This color scheme continues throughout the convention.*

*Renelle Humphries is our Hospitality Coordinator so rest assured she will take very good care of this special room for your enjoyment. Thank you, Renelle.*

*After our Auxiliary business meeting on Saturday at 10:00 A.M. we will feast on Houston's finest chicken caesar salad at our Luncheon. This is a morning of fun and laughter, meeting new friends, and telling tales. This you don't want to miss!*

*Each year we ask for your help, and this one is no different. We tell you it's fun and the truth is, IT IS!! Just a little bit of your time helps the Golden Eagles Convention run smoothly. When you check in you will find a sign-up sheet where you can fill in the blanks; please?*

*Bud Battley works diligently to bring you the best items possible for the raffle. Actually, we can always use more. If you have anything to contribute please let Ben or me know as soon as possible.*

*Ina, Linda, Cynthia and I hope you find this Convention very exciting and memorable. We remain open for any/all questions, suggestions or comments.*

*Sincerely,*

*Judy Brown*

Judy Brown

judith11@mac.com



## **EDITORS' CORNER**



**FRONT COVER...** Pictured here is the Collings Foundation's B-17, painted to represent the famous WW II bomber named "909". Please read Captain Jim Minor's interesting "how to" article within.

**THIS ISSUE...** This issue is mainly concerned with plans for the September convention in Houston, once again with emphasis upon Golden Eagles' participation in the Continental Airlines "WE CARE" program.

### **ANOTHER RETIRED CONTINENTAL PILOT STILL FLYING...**

Captain Jim Minor has contributed a very interesting article on touring with the Collings Foundation's WW II bombers as well as a comprehensive outline of how to involve yourself in this project. Note black and white picture of Jim and Carmen on tour together.

**AM 43...** This is a re-print of Captain Rolla 'Tommy' Thompson's comic article featured in the *April, 1991* issue of *Golden Contrails*, as was the poem "I Picture You" by Linda Houghton Madsen. They are classic, sparkling reflections on the lives of two great contemporaries, friends who were always pleased to serve!

The pencil sketch illustrating Tommy's first venture into the field of passenger airline operations was provided by Jack and Jean Alley's son, J. D.

Graybeards will recall that Continental's original Airmail Routes were designated AM 43 from Denver to Tulsa, AM 29 Denver to El Paso (and later San Antonio), and AM 60 Denver to Kansas City, all flown extensively by both Captain "Hank" Houghton and Captain "Tommy" Thompson.

**BACK COVER...** WOW! What a fantastic picture of Jim and Mark Minor with B-24 and 1948 Buick on Collings Foundation "Wings of Freedom Tour"! The picture was provided by Alex B. Taylor, Allison Park, PA and was taken at Anderson, SC November 7, 2002.



# GOLF GOLF GOLF GOLF GOLF



## ATTENTION GOLDEN EAGLES GOLFERS

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS AUGUST 22, 2005

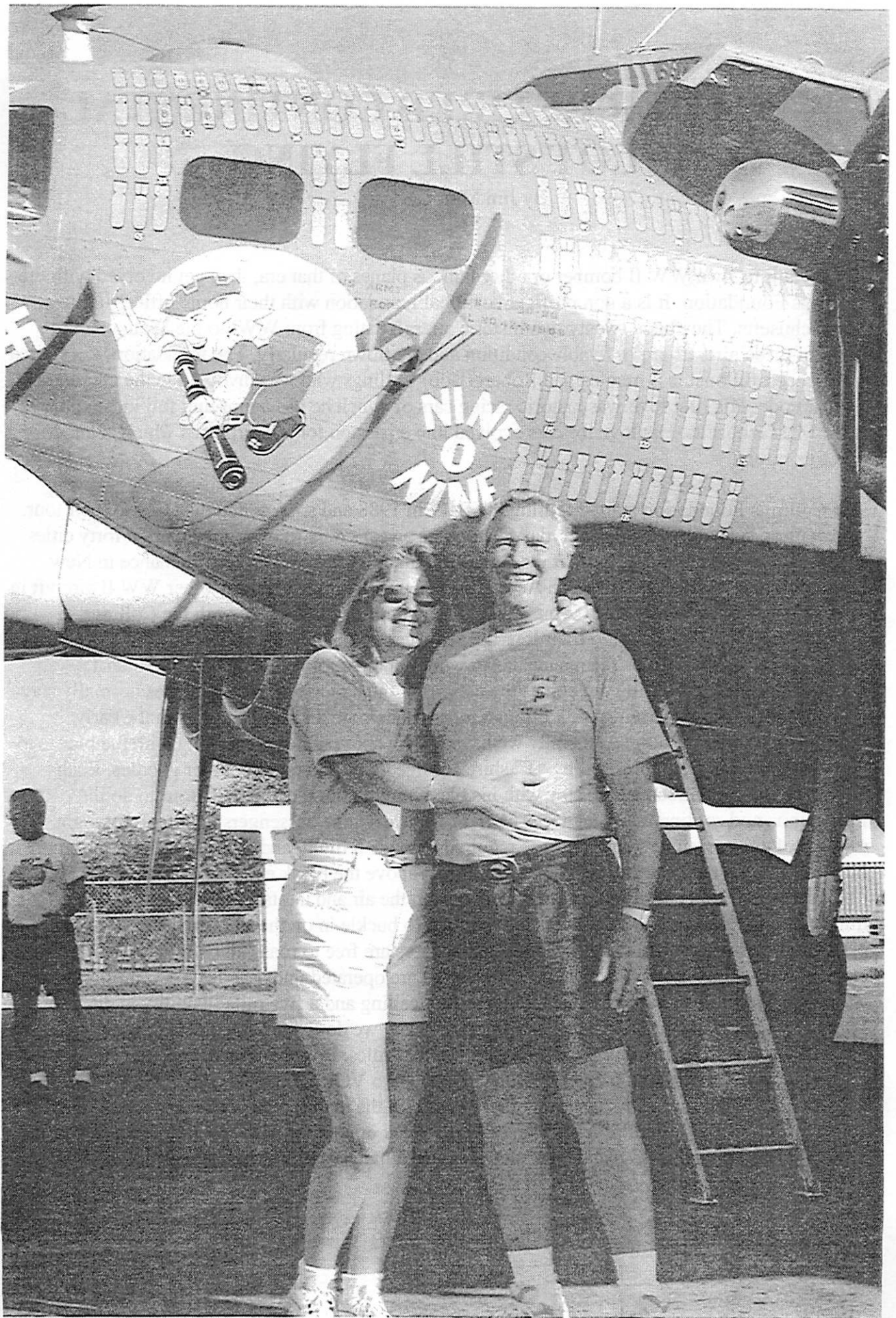
- DATES: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND TEE TIME 12:00P.M.  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD TEE TIME 8:30A.M.
- WHERE: LAKE WINDCREST GOLF CLUB, MAGNOLIA, TX.
- FORMAT: MIXED SCRAMBLE- ANY OR NO HANDICAP CAN PLAY
- AWARDS: LONGEST DRIVE, LONGEST PUTT, CLOSEST TO THE PIN,  
LOWEST SCORE AND SHOWING UP
- HOTELS: MAKE YOUR OWN ROOM RESERVATIONS. ROOMS ARE HELD  
AT THE AIRPORT MARRIOTT.  
OTHER HOTELS: COMFORT INN, WOODLANDS, 800-228-5150  
QUALITY INN, AIRPORT, 281-446-9131  
COUNTRY INN, WOODLANDS, 936-321-0447
- COST: GOLF ONLY \$120.00 PER PLAYER. INCLUDES GOLF, CART  
RANGE BALLS AND A HAMBURGER MEAL ON FRIDAY

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RETURN THIS PORTION TO

BOB SHELTON  
171 CLUB ISLAND WAY  
MONTGOMERY, TX 77356  
PHONE: 936-597-8130 (EMAIL: [bshltn@consolidated.net](mailto:bshltn@consolidated.net))

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ HANDICAP \_\_\_\_\_



# **ANOTHER RETIRED CONTINENTAL PILOT STILL FLYING**

By Jim Minor

If you want to fly a WW II bomber or other famous planes of that era, then get involved with the Collings Foundation. It is a non profit educational foundation with their home offices in Stow, Massachusetts. They have twenty two historic aircraft dating from WWI to the Vietnam era. Most of these aircraft are in flyable condition and are flown regularly. The foundation was started by a successful business man named Robert (Bob) Collings who was involved in the creation of the bar code. His first love was historic racing cars of which he has a museum full located in Stow Massachusetts. His love for cars evolved into a passion for old airplanes which is good for all of us pilots.

The Collings Foundation started touring the B-17 in 1988 and soon added the B-24 to their tour. Today these two airplanes fly everyday ten months a year going to over one hundred forty cities in that period. The two months that they are not flying they are in heavy maintenance in New Smyrna Beach, Florida at American Aero. These planes fly more than any other WW II aircraft in the world, so that is why I say, if you want to fly a bomber get involved with the Collings Foundation. The airplanes start their tour the last week of January for about six weeks known as the Florida tour. This gives them a chance to work out any problems after coming out of maintenance before heading out across the nation for the national tour. The planes normally stay two nights in each city giving walk through tours inside both aircraft and rides in the early morning and late afternoon. Generally we have four to six volunteers traveling with the planes to work the gate and PX tables selling "T" shirts, coffee mugs and other bomber goodies. Each airplane has a paid mechanic to stay with his plane throughout the complete tour to do the inspections and routine maintenance. The B-17 can carry nine passengers and the B-24 eight. A minimum of six passengers per plane are required to make a flight, and since the planes burn two hundred gallons per hour the six passengers is just above the break even on operating expense. The flights are from twenty five to thirty minutes in the air and a total of forty to forty five minutes on the plane. The passengers are required to buckle in on the floor in the back of the planes but as soon as they are airborne the passengers are free to roam all over the aircraft experiencing all the positions of battle. The planes are operated under an FAA Exemption letter which requires a minimum of fifteen hundred foot ceiling and a five mile visibility in daylight hours only. When we move the planes from city to city we do fly at night and IFR when necessary as they are operating under normal FAR 91 rules. Both bombers are equipped with the new Garmin 830 moving map GPS with "T" cad, two VOR's / ILS's and one ADF. "T" cad is the poor man's "T" cass which shows other aircraft on the map screen with their altitude either above or below your aircraft. When I go out for a week or so I normally take my Garmin 295 to make the B-17 a dual GPS plane. We have installed a hard wire electrical connection in the B-17 so 295 GPS does not have run off batteries.



The B-17 is painted to represent a famous WW II bomber which was named the "909". The original "909" crew was not too innovative so they named it the "909" which was the last three numbers of its serial number 231909. It has a picture of Christopher Columbus straddling a bomb going down through the air for its nose art. It turned out to be a very lucky bomber because the real "909" flew 140 missions without an abort and never having a casualty of any of its crew members. It went through five crews during its tour with the Eighth Air Force in England. The Collings Foundation Boeing B-17G is not a Boeing at all, as it was manufactured in Long Beach, California by Douglas Aircraft in April 1945. Being built so late in the war it never made it to Europe. After the war it was converted from its battle ready configuration to an air/sea rescue aircraft to patrol the coasts of the USA. It had boat attached to the bottom of the fuselage that could be dropped for water rescue. After that assignment it was sent to the desert to participate in the atomic test that were conducted after WW II. In the late 1960's it was purchased and converted to a water bomber for forest fires. The Collings Foundation purchased it in the early 1980's and started its restoration back to the original battlefield configuration. Since it was a water bomber and not a chemical bomber combined with its long stay in the desert the condition of the plane was above average. The auto pilot and formation stick have been removed so we do all hand flying. Many of the old radios are still in the radio room but the navigation radios and instruments are updated to meet the requirements for the modern day air traffic control procedures. Since we seldom fly above 10,000 feet the oxygen system and turbo systems have been deactivated. The guns, oxygen bottles and turbos are still on the airplane but the turbo ducking, boots and waste gate controls have been removed. The waste gate selector is still in the cockpit and looks as if it is still active. This B-17 does not have the wing tanks so the fuel capacity is the standard 1700 gallons.

The Collings Foundation B-24J is a real WW II veteran. It was manufactured by Consolidated Aircraft at Ft. Worth, Texas in 1943 and sent to England. It served with the RAF for some time then reassigned to England's colony of India. There it fought the Japanese in the Pacific theater for the remainder of the war. After the war England gave India their independence along with their fleet of B-24s to the newly formed Indian Air Force. In 1982 this B-24 was purchased by an English man as a basket case and Bob Collings purchased it in 1985 having it shipped to the USA for restoration. After being restored back to the original battlefield condition it flew again in 1989 and soon joined the B-17 on the national tour. It has had several paint schemes in its Collings Foundation career but is now painted as the famous B-24 named "Witchcraft" of the Eighth Air Force operating out of England during WW II. Like the "909", "Witchcraft" flew 130 missions without a mechanical abort or casualty.

At the beginning of WW II Germany was far ahead of the Allied Powers in technology with their BF-109, FW-190 and later the ME-262 and ME-163. We did not have a fighter that could keep up with these aircraft until the P-51 came on the scene in 1944 and then not even the early models of the P-51 were their equal. The one thing that Germany did not have in their fleet was a long range high altitude bomber like the B-17 and B-24. The US built 12,731 B-17s and over 18,000 B-24s in the history of these aircraft. As many of you know, the Allied Powers did not have a ground war to any extent in Europe until "D Day", June 6, 1944, but we had been bombing Germany since 1942 with these two aircraft. The B-17 and B-24 and the brave young airmen that flew them throughout WW II are what really brought the German war machine to its

knees. Every month they would go deeper into Germany forcing them to keep moving their factories that produced their war materials. We American's owe that generation of airmen a great debt for their bravery. I feel very honored to fly one of these famous aircraft that is so important to America's history. While out with the bombers I have met so many WW II airmen and listened to their stories of battle, being shot down, being captured, escaping or making it back to base on two engines. We have even had the "Rosie the Riveters", who built these planes come out to see, walk through and ride on the them. One "Rosie the Riveter" checked her work records and she actually built the nose section of "909". Her signature with her works dates at Douglas are now in the nose section next to the navigator's table.

I first got involved with the Collings Foundation through a Northwest pilot friend of mine, Mark Pinsky, who was flying both the B-17 and B-24. In April 1992 he called me and said that they needed a B-17 pilot and was I interested. Of course I said yes and made my way to Huntsville, Alabama as they were doing an air show there for three days. The next three days John Rising, who was running the bomber tour for the foundation, and I preformed fly-bys and simulated bombing runs. Day four we moved them to Memphis, Tennessee where on arrival he and I shot several approached on three and two engines. The next day John brought in an American Airlines pilot who was an FAA B-17 designee and I took my rating ride. I could not believe that in five days I had a B-17 rating. The flying was not so hard but getting use to the "H" type throttles in the B-17 was very difficult. The fact that I many hours as a DC-3 pilot I feel may have contributed to me getting qualified. At this time in 1992 John Rising, the pilot, one copilot/mechanic and a manager of supplies were the only paid employees of the Collings Foundation. All other pilots and operation people were volunteers of which the foundation paid all their expenses of rooms, food and transportation. Ninety nine percent of the pilots that John used were airline pilots from the airlines in the U.S. Because of the professionalism of the airline pilots I contribute this to the excellent safety record the Collings Foundation has in regards to accidents or incidents. The only incident the foundation has had was when the left landing drag strut broke on extension. Several other aviation organizations in the US and the world have crashed many historic aircraft with fatalities and they fly many less hours than the Collings Foundation. John Rising has now moved on and is an Airbus A-320 captain for Jet Blue. Rob Collings, a pilot himself and Bob Colling's son, now runs the flight operations for all aircraft in the Collings Foundation, which now includes a B-25 that sometimes tours with the B-17 & B-24. At this time we have several active Continental pilots flying various aircraft for the foundation. To fly the bombers you must first attend a bomber ground school which is held in New Smyrna Beach, Florida every January. When you are assigned a flight slot you will then receive some training and a one year co-pilot position is required before upgrade. Captains are required to take a PC every year and like the airlines, upgrades are only when needed. I only fly the B-17 and I think I will stay with that plane. My son, Mark Minor, a US Airways captain, flies both the B-17 and B-24 and he says that the B-24 is much more difficult to handle both on the ground and in the air. When I tell my wife, Carmen, I need to get my "Big Airplane" fix, she often volunteers to work as a volunteer if she has the time off and there is an opening for her. Making it a family affair is much more fun. I encourage everyone to come and visit the bombers when they are in your area. Anyone interested in volunteering or getting involved with the Collings Foundation go to the web under: [www.collingsfoundation.org](http://www.collingsfoundation.org), to get the details on the complete organization and the schedule of all their aircraft.

## **I Picture You**

**I picture you with wings of light and soaring free  
my loving pilot father,  
in loop-the-loops and barrel rolls of ecstasy  
above the sun-bright clouds.**

**I picture you free of your failing heart,  
with crisp new ears that savor every sound--  
the warbling of the tiniest bird,  
the softness of a violin.**

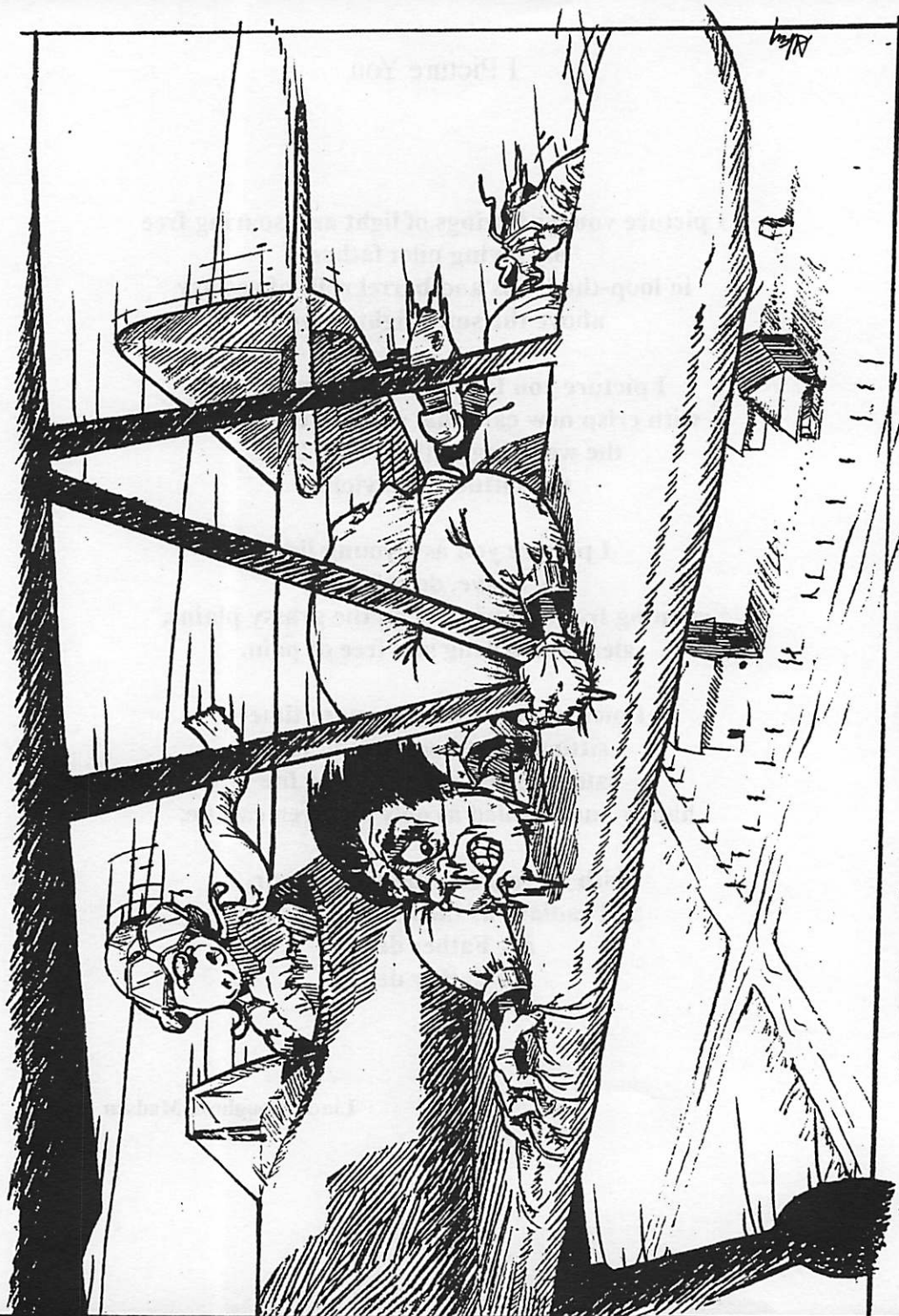
**I picture you as a young lion,  
my brave, dear father,  
running free and healthy on the grassy plains,  
alert and strong and free of pain.**

**I picture you--just one more time--  
sitting right here next to me,  
laughing, laughing, loving life  
happy and fulfilled as only children can be,**

**with no regrets, and free of fear,  
and radiant as the laughing dawn,  
my Father dear,  
my Father dear.**

**Linda Houghton Madsen**





FIXING "COACH" WITH TOMMY THOMPSON — KANSAS 1949

A recollection of Captain Rolla E. (Tommy) Thompson, retired  
Continental Air Lines pilot --

It was January or February of 1949 and I was working out of a little airport down in Wichita, Kansas. During the summers we did quite a bit of crop dusting and spraying, mostly the spraying of insecticides and herbicides. Come winter we had a little operation going where we used the airplane to sow lespedeza seed over the snow on the flint hills east of El Dorado, Kansas.

On one Saturday morning I'd taken the airplane through clear, choppy air up to Hays, Kansas, to have some work done on the hopper. It was cold, very cold, especially in the open cockpit of that Stearman.

I hung around the airport all day while they worked on the airplane. Toward late afternoon I was itching to get back to Wichita before dark because we didn't have landing lights at the Wichita airport, only a couple of flarepots. Whenever I'd get home after dark I'd more or less buzz the airport and the boss would come out with his car and point the headlights in the direction I was to land. I never did like that procedure, however, so I always tried to get back to the field before dark.

Anyway, it was late afternoon before they finished the work on the airplane, and I was just gassing up when a big young guy walked out to where I was parked. Up there near Hays there were quite a few people of Russian-German descent and they all seemed to grow big. This one was really big. He said that he had a date in Wichita that night, but that he had missed his bus. He said that he would give me the bus fare if I would let him fly with me to Wichita. The bus fare was a dollar eighty.

Well, I had visions of sticking this dude in the hopper of the Stearman and snapping up that dollar eighty, but when I tried to fit him into the hopper, I couldn't -- he was just too wide and also too tall.

He then suggested that he sit in the cockpit and I sit on his lap. We tried that, but, after I got on his lap, the cockpit

was just too full of feet and knees, and I was sitting up so high that I knew that I wouldn't be able to fly the airplane from up there. I decided that that wasn't a good idea either.

Next he suggested that he sit on my lap while I flew, but I knew without trying that that couldn't possibly work -- he was much too big and much too heavy.

I was about to give back his dollar eighty when he said, "How about me just hanging on the wing?" I thought, "Hell, that's alright!" and helped him crawl up on the wing where he took a position lying down on the wing and hanging onto a strut with his feet hanging over the trailing edge of the wing.

When I pushed the throttle forward he had to hold his knees and feet up a little to keep his feet from dragging in the snow, but we did get airborne and in just a minute or so we were bumping along about four or five hundred feet above the ground and headed for Wichita. Man! It was cold!!

As I flew I could look over and watch that poor guy hanging on the wing. The first thing he did wrong after takeoff was to try to blow his nose. In doing so he lost the glove on one hand. He then tried to keep that bare hand warm and didn't do any more nose-blowing. Meanwhile, the stuff from his nose was running over his chin and onto the front of his coat.

He was wearing an old sheepskin coat and that cold wind was going down through the back of his collar and out through both of his pants legs. The coat and pants were both ballooned out so I knew that he was well ventilated.

As I looked at him lying there it seemed that the stuff was coming out of his ears and eyes as well as his nose. I began to wonder if he would be able to hang on for the hour and twenty minutes from Hays to Wichita. I then began to wonder about what would happen if he fell off. I knew what would happen to him, but I was getting scared wondering what the authorities would do to me if he fell off. Then I got to thinking of what the boss would do to me when I landed in Wichita and he came up in his car to find me with that half-frozen guy hanging on the wing. Either way I had a problem.

We bumped along for a while longer, and a lot of things were running through my mind as I kept lookin out at my passenger. He

really looked mournful.

Finally, we were passing a small town -- I think it was Mount Hope, just southeast of Hutchinson and not far from Wichita -- and it was getting dark when my passenger started using one hand to motion for me to land. He also kept mouthing the word "down".

I'd done a lot of spraying up and down the Arkansas River valley and knew most of the fields through there so I dropped the old Stearman into the nearest field and touched down as softly as possible so as not to break my passenger's hold on the wing strut.

That poor guy was so cold that I had to help him off the wing of the airplane. He was stiff and shaking and really in bad shape.

I felt bad about not getting him all of the way to Wichita, so I gave him back the eighty cents and I kept the dollar.

I then got back into the airplane and flew home to Wichita.



ROLLA E. THOMPSON (TOMMY)  
June 5, 1951

*Grandpa, are you old?  
Yes, Sonny, I'm old, and I intend to get older!  
Why, Grandpa, why?  
I just want to see what else can happen!*



July 18, 2005

Greeting Members:

It has come to our attention that we may have been a little lax in providing information to the general membership regarding travel privileges, etc. for retirees.

For the benefit of our newer members I feel we should once again state our position on certain matters where there is a possibility for some kind of misunderstanding or misconception.

The Golden Eagles was established strictly as a social group and for the sole purpose of maintaining old friendships, memories and good times and to make no Political commitments. We have no bargaining or negotiating power with the company, nor do we want any. We do and have maintained a good rapport with the company and with that we, along with the ARECA Group, the Association of Retired Employee's of Continental Airlines, endeavor to make suggestions for small changes in company policy for the benefit of all retirees. I might add that the company has on occasion even invited us to attend and participate in meetings in Houston as they pertain to company policy and retirees.

Some the of items for which we have petitioned for in the past are:

- 1). Better pass classification for retirees. We were originally SA-4P.  
We petitioned for SA-3R. They gave SA-4R.
- 2). Fee waived pass charges for coach travel. Granted.  
Used to be a \$10 service charge for coach travel.
- 3). Free upgrade to 1<sup>st</sup> Class after 25 years service, seats available. Denied
- 4). Buddy/Companion passes privileges for retirees. Denied.
- 5). Purchasing discounted tickets with positive space confirmation. Denied.

Just this May we once more approached the company about the possibility of providing Buddy/Companion passes for retirees and date of hire on SA-4R. It was respectfully denied for accounting and company policy reasons.

In closing I believe I can say that although we may not have as good as some carriers, including United, I feel we are better than most and of course the most important thing that our airline will be a survivor and what privileges we do have will continue in the future.

And yes, in order to be a survivor we have to put up with full airplanes and we can't get on anyway!!!

K. D. Thompson  
Travel Liaison

# GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER REPORT



3/11/05 - 7/13/05

From Your Treasurer - *Charlie Starr*

Balance from 3/10/05 (Checking)	\$ 13,917.88
Income 3/11/05 - 7/13/05	
Dues Received	\$ 5,755.00
Postage Fund Contributions	670.00
Banquet & Luncheon Reservations	857.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME THIS PERIOD</b>	<b>\$ 7,282.00</b>
Disbursements 3/11/05 - 7/13/05	
Memorial Donations	\$ 100.00
Postage/Printing/Office Supplies - Misc.	81.00
Golden Contrails Printing/Postage	2,747.70
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS THIS PERIOD</b>	<b>\$ 2,928.70</b>

<b>BALANCE (CHECKING) 7/13/05</b>	<b>\$18,271.18</b>
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Golden Eagles Care Fund Balance 3/10/05	\$ 2,319.76
Donations received this period	355.00
Interest Income	5.32
<b>BALANCE (Golden Eagles Cares Fund) 7/13/05</b>	<b>\$ 2,680.08</b>

## A VERY SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Keith Bruce  
Jim Caldwell  
Chuck Cooper  
Jim Davis

Tom Horne  
Jack McGowan  
Diane Myers  
Jon Wright

## NOTES FROM YOUR TREASURER

You'll note from the balance sheet above that, even with the increases in costs of printing and postage - with thanks to the generous members who contributed to our postage fund, that our accounts are in reasonably good shape. This means that we will continue to be able to put on a quality reunion-convention again this year; providing all of the little extras that make it so enjoyable to those attending. It also means that we can continue to publish a quality magazine, Golden Contrails.

Let's revisit the subject of annual DUES, once again. I know this may sound repetitious, but many still have a problem with just when annual dues should be sent. Dues are for a calendar year; that is due on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. While most members send in their dues after seeing my annual **REMINDER** in the winter issue of *Golden Contrails*, there are still many that let this slip by. I recently mailed a courtesy reminder to those who were in arrears. To those of you who received this notice and responded - a big thank you. For those still in arrears, please take a moment to send in your dues and bring your membership current. So.... how can you tell your status? It's easy. Just look at the mailing label on the envelope that this magazine came in. Go ahead and dig it out of the trash where you threw it. Your dues status is the number printed after your name. It shows the year through which you are paid. 2005 means you are paid through the end of this year; 2006 means that you are paid up through the end of next year - you're really ahead of the game! 2003 or 2004 means that you are behind! To make it even easier for you - if your dues number is in blue, you are current; but if it's in red, you are behind. Of course there are those who have some special status; such a "W" instead of a number, which means that you are the surviving spouse of a member and that no dues are necessary. HON stand for an honorary member and again no dues are necessary. Lifetime members are also not required to pay dues, though most do so anyway. Your by-laws state that members more than two years in arrears will be removed from the mailing list. We really don't want to lose one single member!

When you send in a dues payment, please fill out the renewal form - and please print - it gets harder and harder for my tired old eyes to decipher some of the writing. And remember to send me an update anytime you move, change phone numbers or e-mail addresses. The post office will only forward mail for a short time and e-mail must have a correct address or it is rejected. If you know your zip + four (that's the four numbers after your normal zip code) please include them on your form. And.... please don't make your checks payable to me, it's too tempting to buy a new "toy". Make them payable to "Golden Eagles".

And for those wishing to donate to the tax-deductible "GOLDEN EAGLES CARES" program, make your check payable to GOLDEN EAGLES CARES.

## YOUR TREASURERS REPORT - CONTINUED

### A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS POSTAGE FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Your donations to the postage fund go a long way in helping with the ever increasing costs of mailing the Golden Contrails magazine and other important notices. Our sincere thanks to all members who have donated. My apologies for anyone I have omitted, hurricane Dennis made some records impossible to read.

Jack Alley	Jim Evans	Bob Hulse	Martin Savinsky
Ken Alrick	Jim Farrow	Ernie Islava	Paul Shelton
Ron Alverson	Martin Fedigan	Max Jacoby	Neil Smith
Peter Anderson	Bill Ferree	Kay Johnson	Keith Spencer
Bill Berkley	Tom FolwellThomas	Dr. Lawrence Marinelli	Harold Spores
Dick Boudreau	Frazier	Joseph Masini	Charlie Starr
Bill Brennan	Don Griffin	Chuck McKay	Jessica Stearns
John Brier	Richard Grigsby	Norman Meyer	Jim Stephens
Harold Burton	Stephen Grimes	Hans Muller	Bob Sykes
Wes Chowen	Paul Grover	Phil Nash	Kathy Allen Thompson
Russ Coonley	Herb Gullaksen	Ed O'Quinn	Jack Thompson
Wesley Coss	Mil Harr	Robert Pearse	Marilyn Walker
Louis Cuthbertson	Larry Hartman	Stan Poynor	Andrew Whittlesey
Jerry Dixon	Kathleen Smagacz-Harvey	Dave Randolph	Joel "J" Worley
Gale Doyel	Roy Henderson	Mike Roche	
Ken Duncan	Bill Hill	Shaun Ryan	
Bob English			

cut or  tear

### **Dues Renewal or Information Update Form**

**Dues are \$30 per year and are payable in January of each year**  
**Associate members - Contrails magazine only - \$15.00 per year**

#### **PLEASE PRINT**

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**, if making a contribution to **GOLDEN EAGLES CARES** please make a separate check payable to **Golden Eagles Cares** and mail 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](mailto:cws1932@cox.net)

### **GONE WEST:**

**MONTE DEAN DOYLE** died at home on December 3, 2004. His edited obituary follows: Born Aug. 14, 1938 in Hollis, Oklahoma, MONTE moved with his mother and brother to Albuquerque in 1951. He lettered in three sports in High School, and he was a champion as a pole vaulter at the University of New Mexico. Immediately after graduating MONTE accepted a five year commission in the U.S. Marine Corps. as a naval aviator.

After two tours flying the A-4E Skyhawk in Viet-Nam, MONTE joined Continental Airlines, and ended his 34 years of service, as Captain, flying the DC-10 on Pacific and Atlantic routes. Even though MONTE's last eight years of his life were spent battling melanoma he managed to live his life with spirit and bravery.

Golf was important to MONTE, and he liked to say that, "he loved his wife and children, slightly more than the game of golf".

In addition to golf, MONTE was an avid reader of Southwestern history and Indian lore, and a successful adobe layer and gardener. He also had a keen appreciation of opera and classical music.

MONTE is survived by his wife, **GALE WILLIAMS DOYLE**, and three children, **ASHLEY MOSSMAN**, **STEPHANIE BRINKLEY**, and **JOHN M. DOYLE**.

**ROGER LEE CRANMER** died April 22, 2005. ROGER and his wife, **CAROL**, were traveling in Annapolis, Maryland, when ROGER suddenly, and unexpectedly died of cardiac arrest...

ROGER's obituary follows: ROGER was born on January 8, 1939 in Wellington, Kansas, the oldest of two children. His mother describes him as a delightful, independent, but bashful child, who ironically, had a fear of heights. Growing up in a small Kansas farm gave him the opportunity to slop hogs, milk cows, and show livestock at 4-H events. As a High School student he excelled at academics

and sports, especially basketball.

As a student at Kansas State University **ROGER** was recruited by a fraternity, partly because of his softball pitching. He worked in the fraternity kitchen to support his education, and he graduated in 1961.

After college, **ROGER** entered the Air Force, and trained as a pilot, graduating first in his class at Reese

Air Force Base. He served as a flight instructor for four years.

In 1967 **ROGER** joined Continental Airlines. However, his Airline career was interrupted by the Vietnam War, when **ROGER** flew F-100 fighters. On returning to Continental, **ROGER** completed 32 years as a pilot, flying the DC-9 and Boeing 727 aircraft —serving 11 of those years as a check pilot.

**ROGER** married **JUDITH McALISTER** in 1960. They had three children, **KRISTAN**, **KATE**, and **MARK**. Later, in 1989, **ROGER** and **CAROL** married, sharing 15 ½ years of love and joy.

**ROGER** was an avid golfer, an accomplished chef, and a wonderful host. His adventuresome spirit led to extensive travel, including his favorite —"Cruises with Carol". Family and friends will hold the memory of a welcoming man who shared his laughter with all.

To share your memories, and reflect on good times, please go to [www.mem.com](http://www.mem.com) to visit the Roger Cranmer Memorial Page and Photo Gallery.





**ROD McGONAGLE** died June 2, 2005. An e-mail from his widow, **LUANN McGONAGLE**, dated 07/08/05 follows: Don (Griffith): I have been trying to reach you for more than one month, but have been unsuccessful in my attempts. I am sad to tell you that my wonderful husband, Rod McGonagle, passed away suddenly on June 2. He had a massive bleeding stroke. Please pass this sad message on to all the Continental folks who knew him.

He was the world's greatest guy, and I am lost without him. Do you know how to reach Doug Hill? We sent him an e-mail which came back as undeliverable.

Also please remove **ROD's** name from your e-mail distribution list. **Luann**

**HAROLD E. ROSS** passed away at his home in Palm Desert, on July 1, 2005. **HAROLD** was born February 9, 1926 to Ralph and Margarette Midyett of St. Joseph, Missouri. He married **JENNIE LEE ROSS** in Chickasha, Oklahoma, on

March 30, 1945, and he assumed her maiden name on January 5, 1962.

**HAROLD** joined the U.S. Air Force in 1943, flew the B-25, and was honorably discharged in 1945. After his military service **HAROLD** flew as a flight instructor, and in 1948 he was

hired by Continental Airlines

During his career with Continental, **HAL** flew the Douglas DC-3, DC-6, DC-7, DC-9, DC-10, and DC 10-30; the Convair 240-340, and 440, and the Boeing 707, 720, 727, and Boeing 707-320.

In 1959, **HAROLD** became one of the youngest pilots in the U.S. to be certified as pilot-in-command of an Airline Jet (Boeing 707). After

getting his jet rating and in addition to flying a full schedule, **HAL** finished building a single engine B D-5 in 1975, and a Scorpion helicopter in 1977. **JENNIE** died in 1980, and **HAL** retired at age 60 on Feb. 2, 1986.



After retirement, **HAL** didn't stop flying, as he was a Corporate Pilot for the Schwartz Corp., the Hofmann Co., and the Sinatra Family. His logbook shows over 40,000 hours of flight! On his last flight **HAL** was delighted to deliver, in person, his beloved 1940 Ryan ST, to the Palm Springs Air Museum, for all to enjoy for years to come.

**HAL** is survived by Jane, his wife of 7 years, two sons, Alex and Danny Ross, and four grandchildren. Cards of condolence may be addressed to: P.O. Box 3202, Idyllwild, CA 92549. Tel: 760-880-1952

**MAT BOMIS** died July 7, 2005. A very short e-mail from **KEN ALRICK**, dated 07/14/2005 follows: I received this from Jim Farrow a couple of days ago, but was not sure who it referred to. I have since verified it was indeed Mat Bomis.

Dear Jim and Carolyn: I'm writing to tell you that Mat passed away July 7. At the moment I'm living with Laila and her family in Las Vegas. Bruno flew in to handle the affairs. Mat's wishes had always been to be cremated and scattered in the Pacific. We are considering a memorial in LA.



Hope you both are well. Vineta

Another e-mail, dated 07/16/2005: Hi All:  
I spoke to Vineta Bomis this morning. Mat passed away July 7. He was 69. There will be a memorial service for Mat at Nellis AFB, Monday, July 25, at 1000.....Vineta is temporarily living with her daughter, Laila Spiegel; 2396 Grassy Spring Pl., Las Vegas, NV 89135: 702 255-6521 Jo Allen  
---end---

### **ILLNESSES/SURGERY**

E-mail from Ken Alrick, 12/28/2004: Hi Ken, I visited Gene (Hersche) this morning a Vista Del Sol Hospital. He's in pretty tough shape. He has no use of his right side and he will not talk (the hospital people think he can't talk, but he did say a few words to me). It's apparent that he's terribly worried. He will look at you for a while, and then turn away into his own world. He's got a good grip with his left hand and they have his blood pressure under control. He still has his old sense of humor—I told him I wanted to hear him say bull S... before I left and he actually chuckled out loud. Walt (Honan)

E-mail from Ken Alrick, dated 6/22/2005: A week ago last Saturday, Marian Hersche suffered a severe stroke (much worse than Gene's) Sadly, she passed away this past Monday morning. She and Gene were sharing the same room in a major care home. Gene is not any better and is taking this very hard.

Wish I had some good news.

Walt (Honan)

E-mail from Maureen Ingram Collier, dated 05/23/2005: Mom (Dottie Ingram) is doing great! Sometime in early March she woke up and came out of a 3 ½ year depression. Mom doesn't remember much about what happened in the past few years, and has asked me several times to explain everything to her. I guess that's a good thing: to have no recollection of the bad stuff... Anyway, she is doing better emotionally and mentally than I have seen her in years. Her personality is back and she is very happy, talkative, and participating in everything at Grace

House. She is working with a physical therapist twice a week, and is walking with a walker, short distances. She gets winded easily and needs to build her strength back. She had a goal to be able to get strong enough to get in my car and come to my house for a day visit. That may be a ways off, but I am so grateful to God for this wonderful change in my mom! It's good to have her back!  
Maureen Ingram Collier

In a related e-mail, dated, 05/27/2005, Dave Moran wrote that he endorsed Maureen's diagnosis, and that he knew Dottie would love to hear from you—send a card or an e-mail. Dave Moran and Owen, the Wonder Dog.

Ken Alrick relayed the following e-mail from Phil Nash, dated 06/18/2005: The time has come for us to help Kenna and Moffit (Tinsley)!!! Kenna's roommate from the early 60's, Sheridan Reeder Melnick,, who is in contact with Kenna, shares sad news about their health situations.

Kenna has MORE cancer and Moffet is having his problems. She has retired from the airline, and is covered under Moffett's CAL pilot bridge medical agreement until 65—we all know about this. However, the BILLS are pouring in, and it appears that Moffet is trying to pay them, forgetting about the insurance. In short, some Samaritan friends of M & K hopefully could go see them and offer to help straighten out the insurance and the payments. Kenna is too sick, and Moffet, I guess, is "too out of it."

Kenna continues to be hopeful in terms of treatment. Since Moffit is no longer able to drive, she is in dire need of transportation for her medical care. Maybe here is where some of her F/A friends could be of aid and comfort???

So, Ken, I guess what I am suggesting is that you please send this information to



as many Golden Eagles as might be willing to step up the the plate and help one of ours in dire need.

(Phil Nash)

E-mail from Ken Alrick, dated 07/04/2005:

Hi Ken: You were asking about my health problems, well---Mother Nature hasn't been very kind to me this past year. The Doctor said I had a very strong heart, but after an angiogram they discovered that I had very rusty pipes. They inserted two stints, and then a month later they put in two more...

After that I was diagnosed as having MDS, Myelodysplastic Syndrome. They gave me 6 weeks of Procrit, a chemotherapy, trying to stimulate the bone marrow, but I got only the side effects, which were very sore joints. It has been so painful and so bad, that I could not shave or comb my hair. But I could still wipe my ass!

The only treatment for the MDS is through transfusions (and) I have had 3 pints so far. Now they are also treating me for Polymyalgia with prednisone, and they tell me that the treatment could last for 2 years before that will clear up... After a month of treatment I am doing better. Laverne operates a very good convalescent home. That is how everything stands now. I will go to another blood check on Monday, to see if I need more blood. Hope all is well with you.

Amous Cann.

An e-mail from Ken Alrick, dated 07/04/2005 follows: Floyd Lawrence was involved in a serious car accident at the (Highway) 101 and Wendy Drive, in Newbury Park. Various broken bones, skin grafts, etc. Floyd is at Los Robles (Hospital) in Thousand Oaks, and is expected to be there for 3 months.

Jim Michaels

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, Pattie (Powers) Baxter told your Associate Editor that her mother, Alice Powers, was in a hospital, after suffering a heart attack. Alice now has a pacemaker, and was expected to be home soon. Meanwhile either daughter Pattie or Linda has been staying in her home, and visiting her daily.

**READERS ARE INVITED TO SEND  
NOTES OF SYMPATHY,  
CONDOLENCE, ETC.**

**THIS'N THAT:**

During a phone call with CLIFF PLEGGENKUHLE, Sr. CLIFF mentioned that he and FLORA plan to attend our Annual Convention in Houston this September, even though they are not moving too fast, and even though they are nearing 95 and 94 years of age....

RAY MELBERG said he wasn't able to help with getting the "Golden Contrails" April issue ready for mailing anymore. Fortunately C.M. (Red) STUBBEN and BOB STUKARD joined the volunteers, including DICK GRIGSBY, BILL CHILDRESS, BARNEY BARNWELL, BIM RICHARDS, and GENE NEWMAN; and the work was completed in record time!

FREDDIANNE GRAY sent DICK and SUE GRIGSBY a Valentine Card, saying "It's been wonderful speaking with you both! I wish you a special Valentine's Day. Give each other a hug for me! Love,"

Freddianne

In a phone conversation with PATTIE (POWERS) BAXTER (who was in California caring for her mother, ALICE POWERS), PATTIE mentioned that she left her husband LARRY BAXTER (retired Continental Captain) with lots of work, taking care of their beef cattle on their 200 acre pasture and timber ranch.

Lewiston, Idaho, is the city nearest to their ranch, so they have a Cessna 210 to fly to visit one daughter who lives in Albuquerque or the other daughter who lives in Denver, or to fly to Alaska to go fishing in their own boat!

**BIRDIE BERTRAND** sent an e-mail, dated 03/24/2005 as follows:

**Gents:**

I have completed a new web site - it is in basic blue as per some requests, essentially made and designed from basic template that I found on the WEB for FREE. It is NOT a so called "DYNAMIC" site (animated graphics)—that will be for another time.....

1. I have deliberately left off the contents of the Golden Contrails as Dick will be coming out shortly with his new magazine material and I will update when it arrives. If you all want it up with the old stuff will do so if and when I hear back from you.
2. I have included all the hyperlinks for .pdf files except for the Contrails, as noted above. One of the links is in MS Word as Adobe will not copy the Word file for some unknown, scientific, technical, bullshit reason. I AM CONSIDERING PUTTING ALL THE HYPRLINKS IN MS WORD WHERE THERE ARE NO GRAPHICS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PAGE - LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA. As you know not everyone uses MS Word, but newer versions of other programs convert to Word.
3. I have also deliberately left off the hyperlink on the wives page - "Past Presidents Letter" AND the "Links" on the travel page, as I don't know if they are current or not, and no time or inclination to check them.
4. Please take a look at the site for errors etc. - content - layout - as I am so close to the process that I don't see all the errors, if any, made while putting it together.

**Birdie**

In May a group of Aviation leaders met in Washington, DC to protest the 45-year-old FAA regulation that forces Part 121 pilots to retire at age 60.

In an article in the July issue of "Aviation International News," current and former airline pilots joined CEO Herb Kelleher of Southwest Airlines, and Robert Land of JetBlue Airways, Senator James Inhofe (R. Okla.), and Rep. Jim Gibbons (Nev.) in drumming up support for two bills (H.R. 65, and S. 65) in Congress that would

raise the mandatory retirement age to the Social Security retirement age.

The article stated that the Southwest Airline Pilots Association and the Airline Pilots against Age Discrimination sponsored the gathering. It also mentions that historically, ALPA has resisted changing the rule, but that now about 50% of their members are in favor of a change.

**LETTER TO BEN MCKENZIE**

**April 18,**

**2005**

**Dear Captain Ben:**

I just recently received and read every word in the latest issue of the **GOLDEN CONTRAILS**. As usual, it brought back many, many fond memories of the greatest era of my life.

The wonderful, wonderful times with Continental Airlines from 1943 to 1978. Days enriched by many flight crews and their great cooperation with the Customer Service agents. Those mentioned in the current issue of the **GOLDEN CONTRAILS** are so very special. Many others not mentioned are also very, very special in Marge and my lives.

What a nice article about you and your "RON" in GBD and good old HUT. There were quite a few rabbits around at that time weren't there? The names of Captains Jack Weiler, Norm Meyers, Ken Alrick, Cliff Pleggenkuhle (and Flora), Tommy Frazier, Pete Petterson, Harold Spores, Gene Hersche, Don Straight, Bob Wampler, Dick Grigsby, Paul Sanwick, Hal Wrightson, Freddie Gray, and then there were those two great guys you could never know what they might be up to—Harry Taneyhill, and Zeke Bullock.

Marge and I treasure the times we had the flight crews we had for dinner when flights were canceled out of HUT because of a holiday. The watermelon days when in La Junta and Evert "The Blonde Bear



of the Rockies" (world champion wrestler) opened his fields of watermelons to Marge and I so we could take care of our good friends when they were flying Flight 66 and 67. When it came to loading cargo (aka watermelons) some of those Captains and other flight crew members were the best cargo handlers I ever worked with.

The days of my involvement with ARECA (Association Retired Employees Continental Airlines) are also cherished. What an honor it was to work closely with your very, very fine organization—GOLDEN EAGLES. The finest!!!

Marge and I are still in fairly good physical condition..She has Alzheimers most noticeable in short term memory. It has been my pleasure to care and have her with me. The Good Lord willing, we will celebrate 65 years together on August 18.

I am doing ok for a guy chugging toward his big nine-oh. Please tell good ole Capt. Hal it wold be appreciated if he could include me on his autopilot at least until 2/24/06.

It is a great honor to be an AM member of the GOLDEN EAGLES. Many, many thanks to all of you great guys and gals.

Most sincerely, Charlie (Brooks)

**BEN McKENZIE's REPLY**

May 4, 2005

Dear Charlie and Marge,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and donation to the Golden Eagles. It is the great people like you and your wife who have made the Golden Eagles stand proud.

The memories of the years past and the great fellowship we had with all are things that no one can take away. Each year as we get together for our annual convention we always seem to find new and exciting stories to share. It is hard to believe that we can all remember what happened thirty years ago as it was yesterday, but we cannot find our car keys today.

I think we all agree that we were able to live and participate in the greatest airline era ever. With the changing world, the economy and the airline industry changes, I can only hope that the airline people of today will have the same

excitement about flying as we did.

Your donation to the Golden Eagles will be used to support the WE CARE PROGRAM of Continental Airlines. We have been able to help support some 400 CAL families that had physical or financial hardship.

Goood luck to you and Marge and am sure we can encourage Good ole Hal to keep that autopilot on a true course. We will all celebrate 2/24/2006.

Sincerely,

Ben McKenzie,

President, Golden Eagles

—end—

## **MEMORABLE FLIGHTS**

From Rex Buchanan

### **The Acorn Days**

By Denham S. Scott

Reprinted from North American Aviation  
Retirees Bulletin, Summer 2001

How many of you know that in 1910 the mighty Martin Marietta Company got it's start in an abandoned church in Santa Ana, CA? That's where the late Glenn L. Martin with his mother "Minta" Martin, and a mechanic named Roy Beal, built a fragile contraption with which Glenn taught himself to fly.

It has often been told how the Douglas Company started operations in 1920 by renting the rear of a barbershop on Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles. The barbershop is still there. The Lockheed Company built its first Vega in 1927 in what is now the Victory Cleaners and Dryers at 1040 Sycamore Avenue in Hollywood. Claude Ryan who at 24, held a reserve commission as a flyer, had his hair cut in San Diego one day in 1922. The barber told him how the town aviator was in jail for smuggling Chinese across the border. Claude investigated and stayed on in San Diego to rent the old airfield from the city at fifty dollars a

month and replace the guy in the pokey. He agreed to fly North instead of South.

In 1928 the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company, Transcontinental Air Transport (now TWA) and the Douglas Company chipped in enough money to start North American Aviation, a holding company. The present company bearing the Northrop name came into being in a small hotel in Hawthorne. The hotel was conveniently vacant and available because the police had raided it, found that steady residents were a passel of money minded gals who entertained transitory male guests.

After Glenn Martin built his airplane in the church, he moved to a vacant apricot cannery in Santa Ana and built two more. In 1912, he moved to 9<sup>th</sup> and Los Angeles Streets in downtown Los Angeles. Glenn Martin was then running a three-ring circus. Foremost, he was a showman who traveled the circuit of county fairs and air meets as an exhibitionist aviator, secondly, he was an airplane manufacturer. He met his payroll, and bought his lumber, linen, and bailing wire from the proceeds of his precision exhibition flying. His mother "Minta" and two men ran the factory when Glenn was risking his neck and gadding about the country. One of these was 22-year old Donald Douglas who was the whole of his engineering department and the other was a Santa Monica boy named Larry Bell who ran the shop.

The third circus ring was a flying school. It had a land plane operation in Griffith Park and later at Bennett's Farm in Inglewood, and a hydroplane operation at a place that is now part of the Watts District. A stunt flyer named Floyd Smith ran it. One of his first pupils was Eric Springer, who later became an instructor and then Martin's test pilot, still later the test plot for the early Douglas Company, and then a Division Manager.

Between Eric and Floyd, they taught a rich young man named Bill Boeing to fly. Having mastered the art, Boeing bought a Martin biplane, hired Ross Stem, Glenn's personal mechanic, and shipped the airplane to Seattle. Later, when it crashed into the lake and Boeing set about to repair it, he ordered some spare parts from Martin in Los Angeles.

Martin, remembering the proselytizing incident

with Ross Stem, decided to take his sweet time and let Boeing stew. Bill Boeing said "To Hell with Him", and told Ross Stem to get busy and build one of their own. Boeing had a friend named Westerfelt and they decided to form a company and build two airplanes. These two BW airplanes bore a remarkable resemblance to the Martin airplane which, in turn had been copied from Glenn Curtiss. There seems to be a moral about customer relations and product support mixed up in this episode.

During WWI a bunch of sharpies from Wall Street in New York got control of the Wright Company in Dayton and the Martin Company in Los Angeles. They merged the two companies into the Wright-Martin Company. They sent a young man named Chance Vought to be their Chief Engineer. Donald Douglas lost no time in quitting and went to work for the U.S. Signal Corp.

The Wright-Martin Company started building obsolete Standard biplanes and Hispano-Suiza engines, with the latter under a license agreement with the French Government. Martin told them what they could do with them, and took off for Cleveland, taking Larry Bell and Eric Springer with him. Having the backing of a baseball mogul to build a new factory, he was soon joined by Donald Douglas who went to work and came up with the design of the Martin Bomber. It came out too late to see service in WWI, but showed its superiority when General Billy Mitchell made everyone mad at him by sinking the captured German battlefleet. The death blow to the allegedly dreadnaught "Osfriesland" was delivered by the Douglas designed Martin Bomber.

At Cleveland, a young fellow called "Dutch" Kindelberger joined the Martin Company as an engineer. Also a veteran Army pilot from WWI named Carl Squier became Sales Manager. His name

was to become one of the most venerable names in Lockheed history. Back in 1920, Donald Douglas had saved \$600.00 and struck out on his own. He returned to Los Angeles, found a backer, David Davis, rented the rear of a barbershop, and some space in the loft of a carpenter's shop, where they built a passenger airplane called "The Cloudster".

Claude Ryan bought this a couple years later, which made daily flight between San Diego and Los Angeles. This gives Ryan the distinction of being the owner and operator of the first Douglas Commercial Transport, and certainly a claim to be among the original airline passenger operators.

In 1922 Donald Douglas was awarded a contract to build three torpedo planes for the U.S. Navy. Douglas lived in Santa Monica, but worked in Los Angeles. Way out in the wilderness at what is now 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica, there was an abandoned barn-like movie studio. One day Douglas stopped his roadster and prowled around to investigate. The studio became the first real home of the Douglas Aircraft Company.

With the \$120,000 Navy contract, Donald Douglas needed and could afford one or two engineers. He hired my brother Gordon Scott, newly over from serving an apprenticeship to the Martinside and the Fairey Aviation Companies in England. Gordon was well schooled in the little known science of Aviation by 1923.

My first association with some of the early pioneers occurred when I visited my brother Gordon at the barn at 25<sup>th</sup> Street. I found him outside on a ladder, washing windows. They were dirty, and he was the youngest engineer. There were no janitorial services at the Douglas Company in those days.

.....*To be continued in the next Issue.....*

## **LAVERNE THORNBERRY NOTES**

From the Golden Tale

*Editor's Note: LaVerne Thornberry was in a hospital in May, due to heart-related problems. She was well enough to resume publishing her column in The Golden Tale in the June issue.....*

LIN WRIGHT continues to play king in The Promise. (February issue) The regular season has ended, but there are many requests for the cast to

do versions of the play at times in other cities. With medication, Martha does all right at home, but she cannot travel too well, so does not go with Lin, especially long distances.

Address change: P.O. Box 784, County Road 2010 #1541, Glen Rose, TX 76043.

NORM MCGOWAN has been diagnosed with lung cancer. He is responding well to chemo and radiation. (April issue)

NINA ANDERSON is not feeling too well, and is scheduled for surgery. (April issue)

DAVE MORAN and his guide dog, Cole, returned to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Palmetto, FL., for "Puppy College"; Cole was ready to begin formal training as a future guide dog for the blind. Dave handed Cole to the trainer and he never looked back at Dave on his walk to the kennel.....After wiping the tears, he picked up his new puppy, Owen. He is a Goldador, a Golden retriever and Black Lab mix. Owen is sponsored by the Delta F/A who sponsored Cole.....(June issue)

BETTY and LEON GREEN have returned to Dallas from their wonderful lake home. The children helped them decide it was time to be back near the families....Betty and Leon are happily settled at 4242 Loma Alto #536, Dallas 75219, phone 214/ 520/8232. (June)

I was delighted to have a nice phone visit with LENORA CORBETT..... Lenora has taken a small apartment which fits her needs. She has had two hip surgeries and has some problems; also, she has much difficulty using her arms. She no longer participates in her favorite life hobbies, bridge and golf.....She would enjoy hearing from her friends. Phone 760/341/8674. Address 72-201 Country Club Dr., Rancho Mirage, CA 92270.

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