

# Golden Contrails

March



2023



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I've done some terrible things for money ...like getting up early to go to work.

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHICH PAGE OF THE BIBLE EXPLAINS HOW TO TURN WATER INTO WINE? ASKING FOR A FRIEND.

> To my children: Never make fun of having to help me with computer stuff.

I taught you how to use a spoon.

All past editions of the Golden Contrails are available at:

www.thegoldeneagles.org

**Golden Contrails Downloads** 

#### **Editor's Notes**

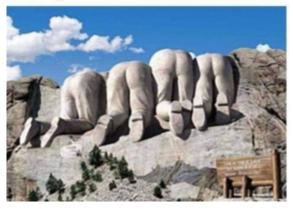
If you notice a few subtle changes in this publication of the Golden Contrails, it is because it has been written, compiled and basically edited in its entirety by Dave, with just a bit of software "IOE" by me. He has made the transition from the former Monthly Update in email format to a full "page layout" desktop publishing process and bringing some of his "cartoon" graphics along with it. Evidently, he has become the "mad scientist" toiling away in his laboratory.

Included in this edition are some touching tributes to our recently "departed", a myriad of links to aviation and industry news and other articles, member-contributed experiences and our usual "salting" of the pages with what we think is "humor".

Dave is constantly scouring the news for items of interest like our own little "search engine", but we continue to place the highest value on personal experiences related by our members. I have never known pilots to be shy about relating their conquests and experiences and first hand experience at reunions and other gatherings confirm that the "malarky" is still out there, so warm up those keyboards and send us some of your tall tales. If they're too unbelievable we'll probably use them anyway, but maybe with one of Dave's cartoon gestures.

#### Gary

You know, there are some things that you just never think of ....... like Mt. Rushmore from the Canadian side.



#### **Golden Eagles Email Contact:**

President (Gary Small):
Executive Vice President (Dave Newell):
Secretary (Dave Rossetter):
Treasurer (Bruce Sprague):
Travel Chairman (Jim Morehead):
Membership Chairman (Mark Sheprow)
Event Chairman (Lovd Robeson)

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#### **President's Message**

As we continue nibbling away at the pages of the 2023 calendar, Spring will soon be upon us with increased household projects, yard work and other distractions interfering with our more important goals of doing more fishing, playing golf and other activities best suited to our status of retired Sky Lords (and Ladies).

We continue to have an encouraging number of new members joining our ranks which keeps Bruce busy recording initial (one time) dues receipts and David dusting off his database skills with contact and other details for the rosters. Bruce is also hard at work fine tuning the website, which continues to be a top notch repository of memorabilia and other useful information. Actually, none of us are really working "that" hard while we are in contract negotiations for that extra bag of peanuts. Can anyone remember the last time we actually had this on the airplane? Pity future generations who will never know the variety of regular salted, dry or honey roast bags of "pilot pellets".

The Kingwood LAC (Bruce) group has scheduled a Houston "area" reunion for later in the year as you will see in the pages of this edition, and there may be other locally organized gathering events as determined by the members in the various localities. Although our "national" reunion plan is to return to Las Vegas in even numbered years, all members are welcome to attend any of the local events.

We continue to solicit members interested in volunteering to join our board of directors. The pay isn't very high since we've run out of peanuts, but you can take satisfaction helping keep "the blue side up".

Gary



#### Daughter to Dad ... TEXTING Communication in Today's Generation

Daddy, I am coming home to get married soon. Get out your check book.

I'm in love with a boy who is far away from me. I am in Australia, and he lives in Scotland. We met on a dating website, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on Whatsapp. He proposed to me on Skype, and now we've had two months of relationship through Viber.

My beloved and favorite Dad, "I need your blessing, good wishes, and a really big wedding." Lots of love and thanks,

Your favorite daughter, Lilly

Dad's reply ....also by texting

My Dear Lilly: Like Wow! Really? Cool!

Whatever...., I suggest you two get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon, and pay for it all through Paypal. And when you get fed up with this new husband, sell him on Ebay.

L.O.L. (lots of love),

#### **Vice President/Email Coordinator Report**

#### Greetings,

As you all know I have the dubious honor of announcing the sad news that our former pilots have flown West. We have had far too many sad reports lately and I know you are as saddened by receiving these notices as I am by sending them. The end of life is part of living, and I view the reporting of a former co-workers passing as a bitter-sweet honor.

I would like to request that when a member submits information about one of our former pilots passing, as much information be provided as possible so that the "initial" gone west notice can be as complete as possible. Obviously, initial information about someone's passing is often quite limited, but if members could make some effort to obtain and provide at least the deceased's airline status (Captain, FO, etc.) and whatever circumstances of the passing are available, such as the date and location, it would make my job a lot easier. Obviously an obituary and photo are always desired but I realize they are not always available, at least initially. I will always provide the obituary and photo when it is received even if a gone west notice has been previously provided.

Occasionally a notice is received for someone who was not a pilot or a pilot's spouse. Unfortunately it is our normal policy to **not** post a gone west notice for these individuals due to the time and effort involved in this process. As a reminder, gone west notices are normally provided when a Golden Eagles member provides the notice of passing and also when a member requests the notice for a spouse who has passed. As always, exceptions to this policy can be made depending on the circumstances.

On another note, it is hoped that this new format for the Golden Controls magazine is proving to be satisfactory to the membership. We still prefer to publish items from our members related to their experiences during their flying career and during retirement. The "Crew Room" on our website provides an excellent way to do this. More lengthy submissions which can be posted as an interesting article in the magazine are also welcome.

The Houston, Denver and Hill Country (San Antonio and Austin) Local Area Chapters of the Golden Eagles are actively providing a means for our members to get together for socializing, and it is hoped that more of our members who live in or close to these cities will take advantage of the opportunity provided to meet old and make new friends who share their Continental/Airline experience. Information on these groups is available on our website, <a href="https://www.thegoldeneagles.org">www.thegoldeneagles.org</a>, under the LAC heading.

In addition to the frequently scheduled gatherings of the LACs, an effort is being made to organize nationwide reunions at various locations. These events are open to all Golden Eagles members and their spouses and guests. Our current plans included having a reunion in Houston, TX on November 14<sup>th</sup> and a reunion in Las Vegas in 2024. These events are normally subsidized by the Golden Eagles by covering the expense of food and soft drinks. When a hospitality suite is included, as in Las Vegas, complimentary cocktails and snacks are provided. Watch for updates on these planned activities and make plans to attend. It is a worthwhile activity and provides a chance to see folks you haven't seen in a long time (and sadly, may not see again!). Getting to know some of the newer faces at Continental/United is a big bonus to attending these functions.

As long as the former Continental and United pilots continue to support the Golden Eagles, I think I can speak for the other volunteer officers that we will continue to attempt to provide a meaningful and useful connection for and among our members.

Dave

#### **Treasurer / Webmaster Update**

#### THE GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER / WEBMASTER UPDATE Bruce Sprague

HOME MEMBERSHIP LAC REUNIONS CARE TRAVEL CONTRAILS CART(0)

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season...now it is back to starting a brand new year.

Not much for me to report in this Golden Contrails issue.

On our website be sure to click on **REUNIONS** and then to "Houston 2023", showing you all the details of our major reunion later this year. *It is scheduled for November 14...so be sure to put this on your calendar and plan to attend!* With all the Gone West notices that we are getting, this might be your last hurrah to see all your buddies!

On the Golden Eagles finances front, our Bank of America checking account has (as of March 1, 2023) \$38,498 on the books, and all our bills are paid up. Our 2022 IRS tax return has been completed and we had \$0 in taxes. Our 2022 Financial Report is as follows:

#### INCOME:

Membership Fees \$1,995 Postage Donations \$ 35 TOTAL INCOME: **\$2,030** 

#### **EXPENSES:**

Credit Card Fees	\$ 79
Legal, Accounting Fees	\$ 80
Office Expenses	\$ 529
Reunions	\$5,550
Website Accounts	\$ 176
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$6,414

TOTALS: -\$4,384

Everyone have a great summer season! take care,

Bruce



www.thegoldeneagles.org email: brucesprague@mac.com

You don't need anger management. You need people to stop pissing you off.

Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

"On time" is, when you get there.

Even duct tape can't fix stupid - but it sure does muffle the sound.

It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free...and three sizes smaller.

Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house.

#### **Crew Room**

#### Roger Hill - What have you been up to?

Full time real estate broker - licensed since 1991. Enjoy hiking and traveling. Spend summers in the Colorado Rockies near Breckenridge.



#### Dave Newell - What have you been up to?

Had a tuneup on my ticker in the last few months. Three additional stents, a new Aortic Valve and a fourth catheter ablation. It looks like it might have worked....I do feel better and my heart is no longer in atrial fibrilation (afib). Hopefully this will get me to my next 10,000 mile checkup. Still living on the shores of Lake (now pond) Medina west of San Antonio and doing a rain dance every day. Having a severe drought which means I can't use my boat unless I want to drag it all the way to a lake that has water...if I can find one nearby! Come on rain!!



#### Rick Bullion - What Have You Been Up To?

Carolyn and I lost our home of 28 years in the Colorado Marshall Fire on December 30, 2021. I had collected airline memorabilia since I was a kid. We got out with one car, our suitcases, and one of two cats. Our many years of evacuation training really helped us focus on what was important. We are rebuilding on the same site and hope to move in next summer and move on to a new life.

#### Kip and JoAnn Wintenburg - What have you been up to?

The Wintenburgs have been on another road trip and this time they did the Grand Canyon. With a bit of unexpected winter weather.... they encountered a snow storm that added some excitement to their trip.



#### Shoot the juice to `er Kip....



The Golden Contrails



Winter Wonderland

#### Gary Small - What have you been up to?

I've recently completed some travel with each of my adult "kids". In November, my son and I did a

short trip to Sweden to explore some Norse / Viking burial mounds near Uppsala. There are a large number of them scattered around the countryside near there, but some very substantial ones at a

Visitor's Center in that city. The (ticketed) trip was relatively uneventful except the travel home with a 2 and 1/2 hour delay in Stockholm (Delta) and a misconnect in JFK precipitating an unscheduled RON there. Although I had flown a few "turns" into JFK, I was



unprepared for what a dismal experience a couple of those terminals are. We never knew how good we had it at EWR.

In January, we flew to FRA and spent the first night at the Flughaven Sheraton. We took the short train ride to Mainz for dinner and were disappointed to learn that both Specht and "Rosies" appeared to be permanently closed. I was unable to learn the reasons but would assume that Covid may have

been involved as the lock-downs dealt a death knell to so many enterprises. The Ice Grub is still alive and well, so a few lagers and a schnitzel made a success of the evening.



The next day we flew to Krakow and spent a few days with a full day trip to Auschwitz for a sobering reminder of how power in the hands of evil men can have such a devastating effect on mankind. One can draw their own

parallels to current events and leaders. We also did a day trip to Warsaw, and spent a night in Wroclaw as we traveled by train to

Berlin. In Berlin, we visited the Stasi Museum along with some other cold war sights. German bakeries, combined with other regional fare and liquid refreshments made me serious about my diet on return...for a few days.

In mid February, I flew with my daughter to Osaka to spend a week in Kyoto and surrounding area. The flight from SFO



boarded 76 non revs (if I heard correctly), including a couple of our members. We did a day trip to Hiroshima to include the Peace Park and a side trip to Miyajima Island. I had been to the Peace Park once before in my Navy days and it continues to be a stark



illustration of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. The debate continues over the morality of the decision to use the

"bomb", but it is but yet one additional reminder of the consequences of mal-intentioned individuals holding the reigns of power in governments which start global or regional conflict. Although these trips were not "designed" to focus on WWII sights and events, it did add a dimension of historical interest in addition to modern day appreciation of current culture and ambiance. One would be hard pressed to determine whether Germany or Japan has the best train reliability. Both are generally on time to the second. Just imagine if we had those managements running our airlines!

The one disappointing aspect to all of this travel was...the hotels no longer feature the little bars of soap! I think trying to take those liquid soap dispensers home would be a bit messy...not to mention the harsh treatment of TSA since they exceed 100 ml.

- 1. The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't a robot.
- 2. When a kid says, "Daddy, I want mommy," that's the kid version of, "I'd like to speak to your supervisor."
- 3. It's weird being the same age as old people.
- 4. Just once I want a username and password prompt to say CLOSE ENOUGH.
- 5. If I am ever on life support unplug me and plug me back in and see if that works.
- 6. Do you ever wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and think... "That can't be accurate?!"
- 7. Last night the internet stopped working so I spent a few hours with my family. They seem like good people.
- 8. If Adam and Eve were Cajuns they would have eaten the snake instead of the apple and saved us all a lot of trouble.
- 9. We celebrated last night with a couple of adult beverages... Metamucil and Ensure.
- 10. You know you are getting old when "friends with benefits" means having someone who can drive at night.
- 11. Weight loss goal: To be able to clip my toenails and breathe at the same time.
- 12. After watching how some people wear their masks I understand why contraception fails.
- 13. Some of my friends exercise every day, meanwhile I am watching a show I don't like because the remote fell on the floor.
- 14. For those of you that don't want Alexa listening in on your conversation they are making a male version. It doesn't listen to anything.
- 15. I just got a present labeled, "From Mom and Dad," and you know darn well Dad has no idea what's inside.
- 16. Now that I have lived through a plague, I totally understand why Italian renaissance paintings are full of fat people lying on couches.
- 17. Now that we have everyone washing their hands correctly... next week... Turn Signals!

# Always follow your heart.....but take your brains with you. 69

#### **Magazine Articles and Misc**

#### War Eagles Air Museum

Retired Continental Captains Virg Hemphill and Jerry Dixon have been instrumental in developing the War Birds Museum in El Paso, TX. Retired Captain Jerry Hunsinger has provided this article on the museum. It is quite impressive and if you get a chance to visit it, you should do so. Here is a link to the article with complete information:

https://www.wareaglesairmuseum.com/about/

#### **Tribute to CAL Captain Sherman Smoot**

Golden Eagles member Captain John Berkstresser has provided this article about retired CAL Captain Sherman Smoot who tragically flew west Sept 2, 2022 as a result of an aircraft accident in Kern County California.



Captain John Berkstresser with Sherman Smoot's wife Laurie at the memorial service for Sherman

# LIVING FULL THRUTTLE

# Remembering Aviator Sherman Smoot

By Camille DeVaul and Christianna Marks

here are few people in this world who can be considered a legend. And for those who knew him, Sherman Smoot was the stuff of legends.

Sherman was a local aviator who lost his life in a plane accident in Kern County on Friday, September 2. He died while piloting his Yakovlev Yak-11, named "Czech Mate," in preparation for the Reno Air Races, held yearly in September.

Sherman was a consistent and familiar face at the STIHL National Championship Air Races. You could find him taking to the skies at speeds of 500 mph in the Unlimited Class, racing against, mostly, other stock or modified World War II fighters in "Czech Mate."

At the Air Race, he was constantly surrounded by his friends and family, who would come from near and far to watch him or race against him. After hours you could often find him in a hangar singing a rollicking karaoke version of the Eagles' hit "Hotel California" — usually more than once.

Sherman was also a long-time and dedicated member of the Estrella Warbirds Museum in Paso Robles and pilot for the nonprofit Honor Flights.

"A huge hole will be missing from the Paso Robles community, especially the museum there," said Sherman's friend and local aviation mechanic Marc Dart. "He was one of the few pilots that could fly a number of those airplanes out there and teach other people how to fly those aircraft."

Sherman was one of the primary pilots for



the county's famed 1944 World War II C-47, "Betsy's Biscuit Bomber." In 2019 Sherman and fellow friend and pilot Scott Stelzle flew Betsy to Normandy for a re-enactment of D-Day to celebrate the historical day's 75th anniversary.

Just a week prior to his untimely death, Sherman and the Gooney Birds flew 17 local veterans around San Luis Obispo County. The flight was an effort to thank and honor the veterans as they await their official Honor Flight Tour to the East Coast later this year. Following the mini-tour, Sherman spoke with emotion, thanking the veterans for their service.

President of Honor Flight Bear McGill was honored to have had Sherman pilot the veterans for the flight but was disheartened knowing they couldn't give Sherman his own Honor Flight.

"He was a wonderful man," Bear said.

"Whenever we needed anything, Sherm was there to give us a hand on things. We greatly appreciate all he has done for us."

A Vietnam veteran himself, Sherman excelled as a Navy Aviator, piloting F-4Js from the Ranger Aircraft carrier in the Tonkin Gulf. Some would say his life paralleled the likes of characters in "Top Gun" and "Top Gun: Maverick."

Following his Navy career, Sherman spent more than 30 years in commercial flying for Continential Aviation. By the end of his commercial career, Sherman earned high seniority as a 777 captain.

His travels around the world let him experience unique wine from various countries. This experience led him to open and build Bella Luna Estate Winery in Templeton with his high school friend Kevin Healey. The two played football together

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and graduated from Atascadero High School — Kevin as the quarterback and Sherman as the center.

Sherman was a beloved member of not only the aviation community but every aspect of life he touched.

"He just had that way of having a captive audience," Scott explained. "People were drawn to whatever he said or whatever he did. It was interesting ... it was absolutely natural."

After meeting Scott in the early 2000s, Sherman taught him how to fly the various warbirds at the Estrella Warbird Museum. Then in 2007, they formed the Gooney Birds and had the opportunity to purchase Betsy.

They would fly Betsy to air shows all over California, Nevada, or anywhere they wanted her. Through all of Sherman's lessons, Scott said The aviation community is tight-knit, unique, and full of characters. Through that community, Sherman was known for being a highly intelligent pilot, some saying the air was where Sherman was most at home.

Speaking to some of his talents, Jack Sinton of Sinton Helicopters says, "He was one of those guys who was extremely calm in a bad situation."

As if his talents in the sky weren't enough, Sherman's warm personality made him loved by all who met him.

"I don't think I ever met anyone who didn't totally love Sherm," said Mike Kelley. "He was a great guy. When he got in the cockpit, he was incredibly professional and over the top."

Adding to Sherman's praises, Marc said, "Sherm was always a happy guy. He pursued the things that he loved to do. Especially in aviation, he didn't let anything stop him from achieving those goals that he wanted to accomplish and fly ... he lived life to the fullest. He enjoyed what he did and pursued his passions."

After a rather "hairy" situation, while flying,

The Smoot/Zanoli family released a statement to *Paso Magazine* regarding the loss of Sherman Smoot:

Sherman had an incredible impact on the community here in North County with his work at the Estrella Warbirds Museum and as an owner of Bella Luna Estate Winery, and an even broader impact as an aviator — a navy fighter pilot, airline pilot, and a race pilot at the Reno Air Races.

But, for us, his family, his impact extends beyond measure. We cherish the more personal side of Captain Smoot, from his love of dancing and singing at nearly every family party, the joy he had in bringing people together at the table over good food and wine, and his belly laugh and warm hugs. We know that, as fearless as he was, he would want everyone to have the most fun and squeeze everything out of life.

So for him, we live boldly, and though we miss him here on the ground, we know he is in the skies, where he always loved to be.

The family has asked, in lieu of flowers or gifts, to please donate in Smoot's name to Estrella Warbirds Museum. In the memo, add "Youth Aviation Scholarship" or "Gooneybird Group Incorporated."

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#### Flying In Night Skies

We knew much of the world by its night skies flying 707s and 727s in the 60s through 90s. South America's towering CBs and Saint Elmo's fire, North Atlantic auroras, North America's continent-spanning squall lines, and Europe's icy winters were as familiar to us as the roads and towns commuting to work. This is about those nights and the crews of that time.

Six hours out of New York's JFK on a Pan Am 707 eleven hour all-nighter to Buenos Aires, we threaded between towering CBs. Ahead amid the radar precip returns, Manaus was just a bright spot on a bend in the Amazon River. Instrument lights were dimmed for better night vision. Still, we couldn't peer ahead because the night sky was blocked by Saint Elmo's fire sparking across the windscreen. It was the late 1960s and a familiar neighborhood to junior copilots like me who alternately spelled the captain and first officer on those long flights. In those days my log was filled with long hauls to Europe and South America.



Thunderstorms at night are beautiful—and frightening. Over the Amazon rain forest, air from the hemispheres converges, billowing into towering CBs and bulging the troposphere—sometimes to FL500. The 707's Doppler ground speed and drift displays told us there was no wind; true airspeed matched groundspeed and drift was zero. Passing through cirrus layers, tiny supercooled ice droplets took on a charge, hissing and flashing as they scrubbed across the windscreen. Navaids defined our position but the thermal bumps and hissing Saint Elmo's fire also told us we were transiting the intertropical convergence zone.

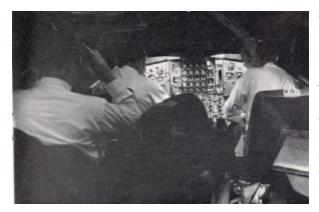
One night as we entered a particularly sparky cirrus patch, a steward came forward with a tray of snacks. Startled by the windshield flashes, he blurted: "What's that?" The old skipper in his late 50s (at least from my perspective as a 27-year old new hire), whose early Pan Am years dated to Connies, DC-6s, DC-7s, and Boeing 377 Stratocruisers, slowly turned around and said, "What do ya think? We're on fire!"

In the 40s and 50s, when the skipper was a first officer, Stratocruisers plied Atlantic, Pacific, and South American routes commonly cruising in the teens without radar, their pilots peering ahead, dodging buildups as best they could. Engine shut-downs were part of life but Boeing 377 crews were likely more wary than their DC-6, DC-7, and Connie brothers. Strats, as they were called, were pulled along by four monster, 4360 cubic inch, four row, 28-cylinder, eight foot long, 3490 pound, turbocharged radial engines, each turning four shatter-prone 17-foot diameter hollow bladed props filled with rubber. The Hamilton Standard propeller hub and blades weighed 761 pounds and when a propeller blade separated, the imbalance could tear an engine off the wing and take the plane down as well. I'd sometimes hear old time Pan Am and American Overseas Airlines Strat pilots and flight engineers talk of those troublesome 4360 radials and their failure prone props and prop governors. Strat crashes and ditchings, mostly from mechanical failures, were frequent in the 50s. One was in the Amazon jungle on April 29,1952, several hundred miles from our track that night, when a Pan Am Stratocuiser en route from Rio de Janeiro to Port of Spain went down—most likely from a propeller and engine separation. The number two engine and propeller were missing from the wreckage and was never recovered.

Those recip trips were distant memories to the skipper, who back in the day teamed with the flight engineer to deal with a forest of throttles, fuel/air mixture controls, and prop pitch levers. On our flight, managing thrust was much simpler: the four thrust levers were just periodically eased back to keep the Mach number from creeping up as we burned off fuel.

Passing south of the the intertropical convergence zone, skies cleared and the air smoothed out. Soon the first officer would come forward after his rest break and I'd switch to the left seat so the captain could take his break and be fresh for the descent and landing. Buenos Aires was still hours away. Later, the first slivers of dawn would light the east horizon. Flight attendants would get busy in

the galley, turning up cabin lights and readying the cabin for breakfast. We'd shake off the cobwebs of the night, get our arrival and approach charts out, listen for the ATIS, and get ready to land. Eastbound North Atlantic night crossings in the 60s were busier than the long JFK to Rio and Buenos Aires flights—and mostly black—but sometimes there were spectacular light shows. We didn't have inertial and GPS. They were still in the future. Our 707's two Doppler nav systems were state of the art for long range, overwater navigation when Pan Am bought the planes in the mid and late 60s. But they weren't always dead on and sometimes needed updating. And the busy work of taking fixes, computing winds, and making position reports kept our eyes inside a lot of the time. Outside, for those who cared to look and knew where to look, there was the Big Dipper, Polaris, and Orion.



The cockpit of a 707 over the North Atlantic at night can be a lonely place.

Met reports were transmitted on HF along with position reports at every 10 degrees of longitude. To take a fix, we'd sort through loran sky and ground waves on the 707's pedestal cathode ray tube display, and plot two or three LORAN lines of position on North Atlantic plotting charts. If LORAN reception was spotty, we'd count Consol dots and dashes, plotting the count on Consol arcs printed on plotting charts for an additional line of position. To compute wind on circular Jepp CR-3 computers, commonly referred to as "wheels," we'd integrate drift

angle and groundspeed from the Doppler's displays with true airspeed, applying magnetic variation from the plotting chart's isogonic lines.

Deep lows and 120+ knot jet streams came with the territory. At long range cruise, about .80 Mach, ten degrees of drift and 50 to 100+ knot tailwind components were common. When the most advantageous tailwinds took us to higher latitudes, brilliant auroras sometimes put on a show. Passengers most likely missed the oscillating light curtains. By then meals had been served, cabin lights dimmed, and most had nodded off to catch a few winks before the sun burst over the horizon approaching Ireland.

Typically, time zone differences between Europe and North America had us arriving on overseas flights in the morning and departing the following morning or early afternoon. It was different for Berlin-based Pan Am Inter German Service (IGS) pilots. They flew day and night from their Tegel base in West Berlin.

My winter temporary IGS assignments in the 80s flying 727s, connecting Berlin to Western Europe, were memories of what I didn't see. It seemed a place of perpetual low ceilings, fog, and ice, all overlayed by Cold War politics. The sun came up late and set early, and CAT I and II approaches to minimums were the order of the day. On some flights our last sight of the ground on departure was at rotation and the next was within about 20 seconds of touchdown.

Russians, through their East German vassals, restricted Berlin's air access to three 20-mile wide, 10,000-foot high corridors—regardless of weather. The northern corridor spoked out from Berlin toward Hamburg, Bremen, and Northern Europe; the center toward Hanover, Dusseldorf, Cologne/Bonn, and Western Europe; and the southern toward Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, Nuremberg, and Southern Europe.

The center corridor was the shortest and the preferred jet route that minimized uneconomical and sometimes speed-restricted low altitude cruising. Still, in winter it often meant flying in freezing rain and heavy icing. Cruising with wing and engine anti-ice systems on was the norm. Then and now window heat is on regardless of weather on jet transports, not only to keep the windshield clear of ice but also to provide more glass flexibility in the event of a bird strike. Yet with such copious precipitation, the edges of the windshield still iced up. It just went with the territory. At night, with the center of the windshield mostly clear and the edges shedding ice, there was just the glare of landing lights ahead as we descended toward minimums. With the autopilot tenaciously tracking the glideslope and localizer, the radio altimeter pointer swept through 200 feet, sometimes lower, before the sequenced flashers pierced the fog. Then the approach lights and touchdown zone lights burst into view. The autopilot was pickled off and another par for the course winter night arrival was logged. All in a night's work for an IGS crew.

North America has every kind of weather but the lines of evening summer thunderstorms pushing east from Texas to the Great Lakes were for me the most dramatic. A DFW-JFK 727 trip in the mid '90s defined those nights.



Flight engineers on the 727 came in two distinct varieties. Climbing north out of DFW, twilight was fading in the west and looking east, continuous lightning lit a wall of towering cells. Bright orange and red filled the right side of our radar. With no soft spots to squeeze through, we headed north, paralleling the line. Many flights were deflected the same way and ATC chatter was near continuous. Dic (that's the way he spelled his nickname) was our flight engineer.

Back then, there were two groups of flight engineers: the young and the (relatively) old. The young new hires, usually in their 20s or 30s, worked the panel, putting in

their time before moving up to a first officer's slot. They often referred to themselves as "plumbers," as in, "I'm plumbing on the 727." The ROPEs, short for retired old pilot engineer, were over 60, the mandatory pilot retirement age back then, and for various reasons continued flying. Asked about their cockpit position, they'd say they were, "ROPEing on the the 727." Most accepted their fate and unremarkably went about their work. Others were more memorable, because of some incident or their personality.

Dic, age 61, was a ROPE. Years earlier in the Navy he was a strapping hot stick F-8 driver with hundreds of day and night carrier landings in his logbook. At 6'2" he barely wedged into the Crusader's cockpit. Now, heavier with the passing years, he ambled about more slowly with an air of someone who had been around the block a few times, doing the job almost on his terms. That included ranking landings, particularly when some hapless pilot thumped one on.

He was a personification of the feast or famine airline business. Lucky pilots get hired by a major airline, never get furloughed and ascend smoothly up the equipment and pay scale. The less less fortunate struggle through recessions, layoffs, bankruptcies, mergers, and seniority integrations. An extreme example was Pan Am in 1969. Boeing 747s would soon start arriving and displacing 707s just as a decade-long recession hit. Less than a year of seniority separated pilots who continued with uninterrupted employment and those who were furloughed 17 years!

For the hardy souls at Pan Am who returned, there was more to come: an airline merger, seniority integration, bankruptcy, a route buyout, and another seniority integration. As a 1968 new hire, Dic was caught in that maelstrom. The age 60 mandatory pilot retirement rule further capped his upward mobility to a first officer's slot and now he was ROPEing on our 727.

That night, headed north on vectors over Arkansas, twilight faded to dark except for the lightning-defined wall of CBs to the east. We were in moderate chop, seat belt sign on, flight attendants told to stay seated, passengers reminded over the PA to stay seated and keep their seat belts fastened. It was just one of those North American mid-continent summer nights. And Dic at the flight engineer's panel at random intervals was singing the latest in his repertoire of advertising jingles. This night it was "R-E-C-OL-A," a cough drop ad prominent on New York radio stations.

Had he been a "plumber" new hire, we would have told him to shut up. But in deference to his age and career scars, we simply endured it along with the chop and unrelenting lightning as we headed north. About 200 miles south of Chicago, the cells thinned out. Chicago Center turned us east and we traversed the line into clear, calm skies. Dic lapsed into silence, flicking on fuel boost pumps and resetting crossfeed valves from center tank feed to tank-to-engine.

Today, at major US airlines, planes with flight engineer stations exist mainly in the memories of today's senior captains who back in the day were bright eyed plumbers starting their careers, "living the dream" as they sometimes put it. And alas, there are no ROPEs behind them to grade their landings.

#### **Around The World in 8 Days**



From before dawn on June 23, 1931, until sunset on July 1, 1931, Wiley Post and navigator Harold Gatty flew a single-engine Lockheed Vega 5C known as Winnie Mae around the world without navaids, radios, an autopilot, or life jackets or a raft, into unknown weather, at remote and unimproved grass fields with questionable fuel and oil availability. Their track was meticulously drawn in pencil on maps of dubious accuracy with rivers and railroads and sun and moon shots as their guides. This is their story.

#### Winnie Mae'

The Lockheed Vega 5C was a proven workhorse aircraft with a monocoque fuselage, high wing, and plywood and metal fittings. Post flattened the angle of the aircraft's wing for speed and cut four inches from the tailskid to prevent the tail from bouncing during cocked-up, 80-mph landings.

The Pratt & Whitney R-1340 Wasp engine with a supercharger developed 510 horsepower, cruised at 160 miles per hour, and drank 22 gallons per hour. The aircraft's 500-plus gallons of fuel were carried behind the cockpit, separating pilot from navigator. Post and Gatty communicated through a ship-like speaking tube.

Gatty sat at a fixed table in a chair that he moved back and forth within a two-foot range—fore during takeoff and aft during landing. Post flew from his favorite armchair—16-hour flight legs necessitate comfort and some room to squirm.

Winnie Mae was outfitted with 1930s state-of-the-art IFR/night instruments—a bank-and-turn indicator, a rate of climb meter, an artificial gyroscopic horizon, and an aperiodic compass. Two navigation hatches were cut into Winnie Mae, one in the roof to shoot latitude and longitude, and one in the floor to calculate drift and ground speed.

#### **Harold Gatty**

From his native Tasmania in Australia, Gatty fell in love with the sea and plied his trade as an officer on merchant ships sailing to the most remote parts of the South Pacific. Gatty passed on being an engineer, keeping his eyes to the skies—their romance, rotation, and navigation.

By the time Gatty was 25 in 1928, he was living in southern California with his wife and child, and had opened an aviation navigation school. However, in the United States, aviation was the buzz, not navigation. Even military pilots flew by map, looking at the ground. Gatty's exacting aviation navigation school and his development of the best navigation tools of the day attracted the smartest and most influential aviators. When Post sought him out in the fall 1930 to fly around the world, Gatty was the best navigator in the air.

#### **Wiley Post**

Post was no schoolboy. Machines and their workings made him tick. Post saw his first airplane as a youth and was destined for the sky. To make ends meet, he rough-necked on Texas oil rigs. Post then barnstormed Oklahoma after World War I, saving every nickel. Piloting and parachuting paid well, but by early 1925, the money had run dry.

He returned to supervising oil rig drilling. An iron bolt was being hammered when a chip of metal spit out and struck and permanently blinded his left eye. Workman's comp bought him a \$240 JN–4 Canuck, a Canadian version of the Curtiss JN–3 Jenny, with an OX-5 engine. He trained his right eye to gauge distance better than when he had both and for the next two years, he owned the skies above Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas.

In 1928, a patriarchal wildcatter named F.C. Hall hired Post as his personal pilot and fellow adventurer. Hall wanted the best aircraft available, so he bought a Lockheed Vega 5C and named it Winnie Mae after his daughter. During a brief economic downturn, Hall sold the aircraft, but as soon as the oil business rebounded, he had Lockheed build another, financing the modifications Post prescribed, and also named it Winnie Mae.

#### The flight

Legacies are born from rainy pre-dawn launches. On June 23, 1931, Post and Gatty took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island and flew six hours and 45 minutes over New England to Harbour Grace, Newfoundland. The two were on a quest in Winnie Mae: Fuel and go.

The Atlantic crossing was foul and dirty. Post flew low, under fog and through steady rain, to see the water and to calculate speed and drift. He could see the needle and ball, and a dimly lit heading. The crew continued ahead at 160 miles per hour, for hour after hour. In improving weather, Post climbed to be able to see the moon so that Gatty could get a fix on their position. Gatty had 15 preset positions on their track, spaced 200 miles apart, from which to make corrections.

They made it to England and the Sealand Airfield of the Royal Air Force near Liverpool. After enjoying some roast beef, they pressed on to Berlin in clear air. In less than an hour, they arrived at the famous Tempelhof Airport, 22 hours and 30 minutes after departing Roosevelt Field.

One-third of the circumnavigation was over the Soviet Union. Broad rivers, desolate mountains, the of Siberia, and the Trans-Siberian Railroad guided the crew east to Moscow, Novosibirsk, Blagoveshchensk, and Khabarovsk, all in frequently blinding rain. When they stopped in Moscow, a young Russian woman, a graduate of Hunter College in New York City, wrote instructions for fueling and the like for future, non-English-speaking ground crew to follow—a blessing.

Four hours after taking off from Khabarovsk, Post and Gatty crossed Sakhalin Island. It was go/no go to Alaska. "Only" 13 hours to go. They pressed on in black rain, fog, and hail, flying between layers to find an opening (to get a fix) and eventually land on the beach at Cape Nome, Alaska, 129 miles southeast of the Bering Strait. The flight leg lasted 16 hours and 52 minutes.

Winnie Mae took on 100 gallons of fuel; however, when preparing for takeoff, Winnie Mae dug into the sand and pitched forward, both propeller tips smacking the sand. Post hammered the bent tips back into shape and continued to Fairbanks, where Alaska Airlines crewmembers gave Winnie Mae the spa treatment, including a new propeller. "Only" 3,100 miles to go.

Over the Rockies to Edmonton in Alberta, Canada. But Edmonton's sloggy, saturated grass strip made takeoff impossible. No worries, eh? Winnie Mae was towed to the main street in town. Post took off down the main street and flew over the Hotel Macdonald, maître d' and staff saluting from the rooftop. Next stop: New York.

That New York skyline! After landing, Post and Gatty hugged their wives and Hall, and celebrated ticker tape parade No. 38 with Mayor Jimmie Walker.

#### Debrief

In 1932, Post acquired Winnie Mae, and in the summer of 1933, he was the first to fly solo steppes around the world, 21 hours faster than his flight with Gatty in 1931! Post developed the first practical pressure suit and, by taking Winnie Mae to 50,000 feet, is credited with verifying the jet stream. In August 1935, Post and good friend Will Rogers were exploring Alaska when the aircraft Post had built from parts of other airplanes experienced an engine failure and crashed into a lake shortly after takeoff. Both were killed instantly.

Gatty returned to his beloved South Seas. He formed the South Seas Commercial Co., whose regional air services were bought by Pan Am. During World War II, Gatty was a captain in the Royal Australian Air Force and developed survival kits for Australian and U.S. air crewmembers downed or ditched at sea. After World War II, he moved to Fiji with his second wife and founded Fiji Airways. Gatty died in 1957 of a stroke and is buried in Fiji.

Winnie Mae is polished and on display at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia, near Washington Dulles International Airport.

-By John D. Parce

#### "HELP....I'M GOING TO CRASH....!

Golden Eagles member Captain Dan Edwards has provided an article about Golden Eagles member Captain Kim Jost, who was instrumental in assisting a distressed student pilot to locate a suitable airport and to land his aircraft after being disoriented. The article was in an edition of "Air Facts", an online journal concerned with private flying. The article describes, in Kim's words, how he became aware of the student pilot's predicament and the steps he took to facilitate the pilot's safe landing. Well done Captain Jost!

Click on the link below to access the complete article:

https://airfactsjournal.com/2023/02/im-going-to-crash-helping-a-pilot-in-distress/

#### **HEAR YE, HEAR YE!**



#### **Golden Eagles Nationwide Reunion**

#### PLANNED IN HOUSTON NOVEMBER 14, 2023

A reunion will be held in Houston for all Golden Eagles members and their spouses and guests on November 14, 2023 from 5PM to about midnight. The venue will be the Sawyer Park Ice House in Spring, TX just north of The Woodlands. A complimentary BBQ buffet will be provided with all food and non-alcoholic drinks on the house. A discounted cash bar will also be available. Lots of affordable hotels close by.

Here is a link to all the details on the Golden Eagles website.

https://www.thegoldeneagles.org/houston-2023.html

Mark your calendar and plan on attending this reunion. It should be a great event with an opportunity to visit with old friends and to make many new ones.



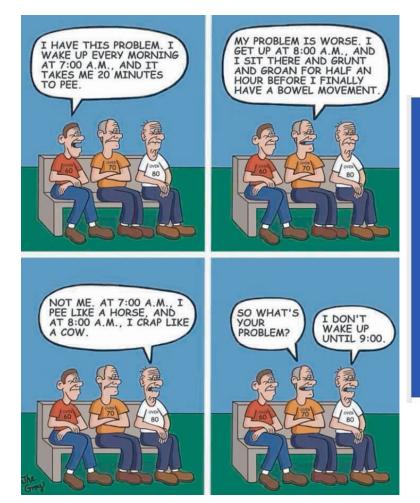


#### **Revised rosters**

The revised rosters have been uploaded to the Golden Eagles website, www.thegoldeneagles. org, under the Roster Download heading of the Membership section. Check your data and advise if any corrections are needed by using the Roster Update form in this section. The rosters will now be updated quarterly along with the publication of the quarterly Golden Contrails magazine which will be published in March, June, September and December around the first of the month in an email format. If you have not sent us a passport size photo of yourself, please send one to smallqd@outlook.com.

#### **Password**

The current password for accessing the member rosters will remain in effect until the end of the year and will be changed at the beginning of each new year. The new password will remain in effect for one year, and **the replacement will be announced in a designated email to the membership prior to the changeover.** The password will be required to access the Member Rosters and the Officer's documents but not the Golden Contrails Magazine or the Archived Blast Emails.



Never seen anyone jogging and smiling, so that's all I need to know about that.

#### **Airline News**

United Airlines Places Biggest Widebody Order In US History For Up To 200 Boeing 787s The Boeing 787s are joined by 100 more 737 MAX commitments.

Click on the link below to access the complete article

https://simpleflying.com/united-airlines-orders-100-boeing-787s/?utm source=SF-DL&utm medium=newsletter

Federal Judge Dismisses Boeing 737 MAX Pilot Lawsuit
Although pilots were right to be concerned, the court case did not hold water.
Click on the link below to access the complete article
https://simpleflying.com/federal-judge-dismisses-boeing-737-max-lawsuit/

United CEO: It is "Blindingly Obvious" that Southwest and Frontier can't grow in 2023 Click on the link below to access the complete article https://liveandletsfly.com/united-airlines-ceo-southwest-frontier-growth/

United Airlines Plans 34 Domestic Widebody Routes This Summer There's an average of 65 daily flights, including Washington Dulles-San Diego for the first time.

Click on the link below for access to the complete article https://simpleflying.com/united-airlines-domestic-widebody-flights-summer-2023/

United Airlines flight plunged to within 800 feet of Pacific Ocean after takeoff, data shows Click on the link below to access the complete article.

https://theaircurrent.com/aviation-safety/united-maui-dive-ua1722-close-call/?fbclid=lwAR3M\_6fLASKnwxtl7uoZXhLR8cv9-Ya9hNiF3gG8w4oo4hshjQ92QwD7jKA

UNITED AIRLINES ADDS NEW COMPLIMENTARY SNACKS IN ECONOMY CLASS Click on the link below for access to the complete article https://liveandletsfly.com/united-airlines-economy-snacks/



The cuddling was nice. The spooning went well. The ear nibbling...not so good.

#### **Aviation Articles of Interest**

#### **Boeing Builds Final 747**

Click on the link below to access complete article

https://thepointsguy.com/news/boeing-builds-final-747/?utm\_medium=social&utm\_source=facebook&fbclid=lwAR0qyZWDsRokBkk7wb0qXltSh14yQA711Hrse6jsn0sbDgxYYIRaHQHfnyk

## French, U.S. Investigators: Ethiopian 737 MAX Accident Report Downplays Human Factors Issues

#### Click on the link below to access complete article:

https://aviationweek.com/air-transport/safety-ops-regulation/french-us-investigators-ethiopian-737-max-accident-report?utm\_rid=CPEN1000003240214&utm\_campaign=36092&utm\_medium=email&elq2=0af1c515cd364d0fa2ee5ab23ec2b5f8&utm\_emailname=AW\_News\_AirTransport\_20230105&sp\_

eh=dfbf163d4176a09ec3f01a0312faa8c3f52dc4be0eed51c7f6fedac4e1e4fb81

# American Pilots Rebuff Investigators` Request For Recorded Interview, Prompting Subpoena

Click on the link below to access the complete article <a href="https://liveandletsfly.com/american-airlines-pilots-recorded-interview/">https://liveandletsfly.com/american-airlines-pilots-recorded-interview/</a>

3 Years Since The 1st Flight: What's Happening With The Boeing 777X? Click on the link below for access to the complete article https://simpleflying.com/boeing-777x-3-year-update/

## FAA Implements Changes To Prevent Further Notam Meltdowns Click on the link below to access the complete article

https://simpleflying.com/faa-implements-changes-prevent-notam-meltdown/?utmsource=SF-DL&utm\_medium=newsletter

DUTY POSITION	FIRST OFFICER	FIRST OFFICER	FIRST OFFICER	FIRST OFFICER	FIRST OFFICER	FIRST OFFICER	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
YEARS OF SERVICE AIRCRAFT	1 SMALLEST	2 SMALLEST	3 MID	4 MID	5 Largest	6 Largest	10 SMALLEST	15 MID	MAX
ALASKA - New	\$8,000				\$14,900	\$15,344	\$24,062	\$24,480	\$24,480
AMERICAN	\$7,456	\$7,456	\$13,226	\$13,546	\$17,923	\$18,375	\$14,603	\$24,054	\$29,508
ALLEGIANT	\$4,613	\$8,246	\$8,858	\$9,359	\$9,885	\$10,339	\$17,699	\$18,558	\$18,558
DELTA - TA	\$8,667	\$8,667	\$15,525	\$15,973	\$20,287	\$20,801	\$16,975	\$26,811	\$33,403
FRONTIER	\$6,375	\$9,798	\$10,526	\$11,122	\$11,798	\$12,285	\$21,032	\$22,287	\$22,287
HAWAIIAN - New	\$6,480	\$10,470	\$13,992	\$14,846	\$18,423	\$19,317	\$22,299	\$26,320	\$31,360
JETBLUE - New	\$8,250	\$10,252	\$11,873	\$14,818	\$15,412	\$15,871	\$19,162	\$25,320	\$25,320
SOUTHWEST	\$7,400	\$10,700	\$11,913	\$13,151	\$14,405	\$15,034	\$23,472	\$23,991	\$23,991
SPIRIT	\$7,441	\$10,918	\$12,214	\$13,176	\$13,531	\$13,659	\$22,740	\$23,868	\$23,868
UNITED	\$7,304	\$10,747	\$13,117	\$13,808	\$17,096	\$17,528	\$21,399	\$23,476	\$28,149
PASSENGER AVERAGE/MO.	\$7,199	\$9,914	\$12,501	\$13,413	\$15,366	\$15,855	\$20,344	\$23,917	\$26,092
PAX AVERAGE PAY/YR.	\$86,384	\$118,967	\$150,007	\$160,951	\$184,393	\$190,265	\$244,132	\$286,998	\$313,108
	Source: KitDarby.com, Atlanta GA, Copyright 2023						0-1		2/1/23

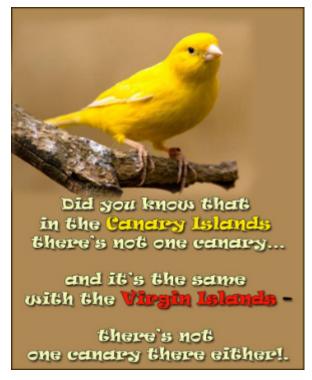
Mesa Airlines Launches Direct-Entry Captain Position To United Airlines On completion of training, new pilots will receive a sign-on bonus of \$110,000. Click on the link below to access complete article <a href="https://simpleflying.com/mesa-airlines-direct-entry-captain-united-airlines/">https://simpleflying.com/mesa-airlines-direct-entry-captain-united-airlines/</a>

Southwest Airlines Lowers Minimum Hour Requirement For Pilots
Click on the link below to access the complete article
https://simpleflying.com/southwest-airlines-lowers-minimum-hour-requirement-hours/

2/27/1995: Denver Stapleton Airport's Final Flight Click on the link below to access the complete article

https://airwaysmag.com/denver-stapleton-airports-final-flight/?fbclid=lwAR11jAB3o5lYt2O4g53KelSPpR6XVIU07IT7 2XvvM51oSz2NPPKrSn2AQE





#### Pass Travel

In order to avoid incorrect or conflicting information, it is suggested that you refer to the Flying Together website for official, company provided answers to your Pass/Travel questions. It is strongly suggested that you become familiar with the new and improved Travel Section of the Flying Together website if you have not already done so.

Your pass travel volunteer officers will continue to respond to your questions in their limited capacity in the event you are not able to resolve your pass travel issues by using the United resources available.

Useful phone numbers for contacting the pass travel department to resolve pass and sign on issues are available on the Golden Eagles website, <a href="https://www.thegoldeneagles.org">www.thegoldeneagles.org</a>, in the Travel, Retiree Info section.

Information on using the new Help Hub is available in the Employee Services/Tools and Resources section on the Flying Together website and on the Home Page of the Travel Section located as the first item under the Top Hits section in the Travel Section of the United Flying Together website. This resource works well and can provide answers to pass travel and other questions in a timely manner via email.

Here is a link that will take you to the Log On page on the Flying Together website: http://ft.ual.com

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste in your browser.

#### Q & A

- Q. Can my enrolled friends buy a ticket now for travel in January, even though I am taking them off of my list in a few weeks? Will they still be able to use that discount ticket?

  A. Yes, as long as they are on your pass travel at the time of purchase, they can use it later. However it must be flown as ticketed. Any changes will reprice the ticket without the discount.
- Q. Still confused after all these years.... I'm a retiree. I have a spouse and my 2 adult children are on my profile as Enrolled friends. I recent made a change and removed my daughter as an enrolled friend and added my son's girlfriend. When on go on my travel profile it says that I added this person as my enrolled friend. It also says I deactivated my daughter as an enrolled friend. Then why is it when I go to list my new enrolled friend, her name is no where and my daughter is still on. Is there something else I need to do? I can't find my son's girlfriend name to list her on a flight but the DMS ( dependent Management System shows her name as a new enrolled friend UGH Help Please.

A. Her name will only show January 1 and your daughter is still a E F until midnight Dec 31. You can't list your sons girlfriend yet.

- Q. I am trying to pay my enrolled friend travel tax and there does not seem to be a tile to do that on YBR even though that is what it tells me to do. Honestly, why is this so difficult? Anyone know the process?
- A. I looked last night on YBR as well and no link to click to pay under "Quick links, view all" Somebody mentioned that the link to pay is only available if you owe something. Is that true? Yes!
- Q. Can my enrolled friends fly Polaris internationally if I am not with them? (a 17 year old and his Dad)

A. Yes

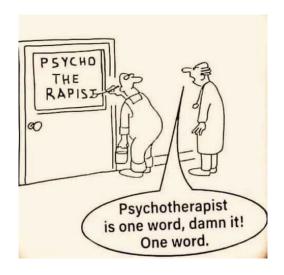
- Q. What's the rule on changing from a regular pass to a vacation pass. I know it used to be if you already checked in you couldn't change to a vacation pass, but I think it's changed and can't seem to locate where it states that.
- **A**. Pass riders are required to declare the boarding priority they are using at time of check-in. Once checked in, pass riders may not change their boarding priority to obtain a higher or lower priority on the standby list within one hour prior to domestic flights and within two hours prior to international flights.

**PASSPORTS**: I was informed that starting today, we can expect processing times of 8-11 weeks for routine passport processing and 5-7 weeks for expedited processing of passports. If you're going somewhere abroad this summer, check your passport expiration dates and get them renewed NOW! If you don't have a passport and are traveling this summer, ORDER IT NOW!

- Q. I believe there is away to view your enrolled friends travel charges on FT but for the life of me I can't find it! Any help would be appreciated!
- A . It's under My Info in FT... "pass travel report" I believe it's called. Setting the dates for it to search can be tricky and also remember that they sometimes don't post for a month or two.
- Q. How does standby work on a thru flight?
- A. Works just like the first flight, all seniority and pass based.

Standby per leg no through flts for non rev make sure you list for each leg

An elderly man thinking his wife was losing her hearing went about 20' behind her and asked "Can you hear me sweetheart?' No reply. Moved to 10' and inquired again. No reply. 5' and not a word. A few inches behind ear, he asked "Can you hear me now honey"? His wife said "For the fourth time, yes."



Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say .........

CLOSE ENOUGH.

#### **LAC News**

# Hill Country LAC (San Antonio/Austin) Dave Newell

The Hill Country LAC meets for lunch quarterly at the Pecan Street Brewing Co. in Johnson City, TX, normally on the third Thursday of the month in Jan, April, July and Oct at 1130.

The January luncheon was held on Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at the Pecan St. Brewing Company Restaurant. We had 10 attendees and 2 of the spouses, Kay Newell and Mary Booth, came along for their private lunch in the nice part of the restaurant away from the guy stuff in the back section.



Gene Villanueva, Ray Booth, Don Gentry, Dave Newell, Lee Meyners, Wayman Curry



Bruce Harris, Jerry Greenamyer, Bob Shelton, Dave Judson

**Looking ahead**, **the next Hill Country LAC event** is tentatively set to be a "co ed" cocktail/social hour followed by a sit down dinner in the event section of the Pecan Street Brewery. Meals can be ordered from the excellent menu and the bar will of course be available for us to purchase beverages. We have tentatively set the time as 4 pm on Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup>. This date will allow folks to drive home after the festivities during daylight hours.

Members, spouses and guests are all welcome. Dress will of course be cowboy casual as usual. The restaurant has good AC so it should be nice inside. Stay tuned for any modifications to this plan. Reminders and final details will be provided..

Looking a bit further ahead, Ray and Mary Booth have again invited the group to their party barn in Spicewood, TX on Lake Travis for a BBQ dinner sometime in October or November....stay turned.

Since some have inquired about another Vegas reunion, we are tentatively planning that for Spring of 2024. Stay tuned for those details as well.

### **DEN LAC (Denver) Dennis McDonald**

#### After Action Report for breakfast meet 14 Dec, 2022

Once again the upcoming breakfast dates -

For your planning - Breakfasts are always the second Wed of every other month. These are the dates you can mark up your new 2023 calendars with -

2023 - 8 Feb, 12 Apr, 14 June, 9 Aug, 11 Oct, 13 Dec

#### **The Perfect Landing Restaurant.**

A reminder email will be sent prior to the event. As always dates, wives or friends are invited. If any of you GE`rs do not get my emails and want to be on the info list, drop me a note.

There were eighteen in attendance at the Perfect Landing today for a nice breakfast and some great camaraderie. Those attending were Bob Boozel, Tom Frieling, John Taylor, Paul Sciera, Brent Domeny, Jim Anstett, John Leahy, Ric Ross, Fred Buhl, Tom Young, Jim Moore, Dennis Lonneman, Chris Dyer, Frank Freeman, Spike Christensen, Norm Edson and Dennis McDonald.



Brent Domeny and Dennis McDonald



Jim Moore and Jim Anstett



Dennis Lonneman, Paul Sciera,
Norm Edson and Spike Christensen



Paul Scierra, Norm Edson, Spike Christensen, Chris Dyer

**The Denver LAC** had their Feburary breakfast at the Perfect Landing Restaurant on Wednesday, February 8. There were 9 in attendance; their photos are posted below, sans Dennis who is camera shy!



Paul Sciera, Don Riebe, Fred Buhl, Ed Stapleton



Chip Barnes, Jim Moore, Lonnie Blilie, Sam Chips



John and Debra Glen

#### **Dennis**



777MAN@COMCAST.NET

# KINGWOOD and HOUSTON LACS Bill Chambers and Bruce Sprague

#### Kingwood LAC

The Kingwood LAC meets **every Tuesday morning** for breakfast at La Madeleines, in Town Center of Kingwood, Texas (**4570 Kingwood Dr, Kingwood, TX 77345**.). Find more information and photos of all our members on our Golden Eagles website **(www.thegoldeneagles.org):** go to "LAC" menu tab, then select "Kingwood, TX".

#### **Houston LAC**

Two times a year, the Kingwood and Woodlands / Conroe LAC pilots meet for our **semi-annual Houston area lunch**. Typically 30 to 50 pilots show up. **We have a NEW lunch venue....the Sawyer Park Icehouse near The Woodlands (see below)**. We meet about <u>11:30 am</u> Find more information and photos of our Houston area lunch on our Golden Eagles website (**www.thegoldeneagles.org**): go to "LAC" menu tab, then select "HOUSTON AREA". Put this **DATE** on your calendar: **Monday, April 3, 2023** 

for the next Houston area lunch.

#### Sawyer Park Icehouse (https://sawyerpark.com)

314 Pruitt Road, Spring TX 77380, just south of The Woodlands off of I-45 put the address in your phone GPS!

The Kingwood pilots and wives attended the 2022 Christmas dinner at Tin Roof BBQ on Dec 13, 2022. About 45 folks showed up. Photos below.



**Penny and Jerry Rivard** 



Lynn and Tom Walsh



**Bob and Claudia Mabesoone** 



Beth and John Downey



Jack Roth



Lynn and Ken Duncan



Mike and Martha Machemehl



Bob Macaluso and Mike Machemehl



Nelda and Jim Northington



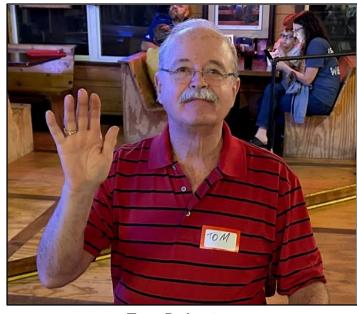
Rick Bixby and Tony Cuartano



Lynda and Rick Bixby



Jeannie and Rick McDonald



Tom Doherty



Steve and Barbara Cady

Jim and Darlene Mundel



Lois and Dave Atteberry



Ok Su and Bruce Sprague



Bill and Anne Bella



Jill and Rich Bulger



Gail and Mike Snowden
Judy and Steve Brown



Kent, Pattie and Laura Muhlberger



Jerry Rivard and Roger Olmstead



Pat Wilcox and "Tim".....?



Tom Doherty and Jim Mundell



.....and the fat lady has sung at another Christmas Party in Kingwood, Texas.....



dear WINE,
we had a deal.
you were to make
me funnier, sexier,
smarter and a
better dancer.
I saw the video.
ve need to talk.

The Golden Contrails

The Kingwood pilots gave to the La Madeleine employees their annual Christmas gifts for 2022 today! Naya and Kim each received \$100 and the rest of the employees split about \$365. Santa Tom Walsh and his elf Steve Cady passed out the cash envelopes.

Merry Christmas!







The Kingwood LAC's breakfast on Jan 31. Left to right: Joe Hearn, Bill Vaughn, Mike Snowden, Rick Bixby, Bill Chambers, Jim Northington, Steve Brown, Steve Cady, Bruce Sprague, Tom Walsh. Photo by Pete Ramsey, ExCon Social Group organizer.



The first Kingwood breakfast without Steve Cady.....February 14, 2023 Left to right: Ken Duncan, Rick McDonald, Bill Vaughn, Mike Snowden, Steve Brown, John Downey, Jim Northington, Kent Muhlberger, Tom Walsh, Mike Stevens, Bill Chambers, Bruce Sprague, Jim Davis, Rick Bixby.



Bbob7045@gmail.com



brucesprague@mac.com

#### **New Members**

John Hancock
Dan Stokes
Pedro (Pete) Diaz
Robert (Mike) Hanzel
Carl (Chris) Christensen
David Butler
Michael Absten
Paul Nicks

### **Welcome Aboard**

Fellas, If The relationship fails, don't blame only her. It takes 2 people to mess up a relationship. Blame her and her mother



I've been using this as a water bottle for about a month now. I kinda love the judging eyes it gets me at the gym





The Golden Contrails

### The Lighter Side

" .......Trouble knocked at the door, but, hearing laughter, hurried away."



#### Last will and testament ...

Steve lived all his life in the Florida Keys and is on his deathbed and knows the end is near. His nurse, his wife, his daughter and two sons are with him. He asks for two witnesses to be present, and a camcorder be in place to record his last wishes, and when all is ready, he begins to speak:

"My son, Doug, I want you to take the Ocean Reef houses"

My daughter Kelly, you take the apartments between mile markers 100 and Tavernier." My son, Kevin, I want you to take the offices over in the Marathon Government Center."

Cathy, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the bay side on Blackwater Sound."

The nurse and witnesses are blown away as they did not realize his extensive holdings, and as Steve slips away, the nurse says, "Your husband must have been such a hard-working man to have accumulated all this property."

The wife replies, "The jerk had a paper route."

Remember, next time you hate your life, it's all about perspective. I know someone who reads 2-3 books a week, works out twice a day, and has people who want to have sex with him all the time, yet complains about how much he hates prison!



A woman awakes during the night to find that her husband is not in bed. She puts on her robe and goes downstairs to look for him. She finds him sitting at the kitchen table with a hot cup of coffee in front of him. He appears to be in deep thought, just staring at the wall. She watches as he wipes a tear from his eye and takes a sip of his coffee.

'What's the matter, dear' she whispers as she steps into the room, 'Why are you down here

at this time of night

The husband looks up from his coffee, 'It's the 20th Anniversary of the day we met'.

She can't believe he has remembered and starts to tear up.
The husband continues, 'Do you remember 20 years ago when we started dating, I was 18 and you were only 16,' he says solemnly.

Once again, the wife is touched to tears. 'Yes, I do' she replies.

The husband pauses The words were not coming easily. 'Do you remember when your father caught us in the back seat of my car'

'Yes, I remember' said the wife, lowering herself into the chair beside him.

The husband continued. 'Do you remember when he shoved the shotgun in my face and said,

"Either you marry my daughter or I will send you to prison for 20 years' 'I remember that, too' she replied softly.

He wiped another tear from his cheek and said "I would have gotten out today."

A circus owner runs an ad for a lion tamer and two people show up. One is a retired pilot in his late sixties and the other is a gorgeous blonde in her mid-twenties. The circus owner tells them, "I'm not going to sugar coat this. He is one ferocious lion who attacked and ate my last tamer, so you two had better be good or you're history. Here's your equipment -- a chair, whip and a gun. Who wants to try out first?" The girl says, "I'll go first." She walks past the chair, the whip and the gun and steps right into the lion's cage. The lion starts to snarl and pant and begins to charge her. About halfway there, she throws open her coat revealing her beautiful naked body. The lion stops dead in his tracks, sheepishly crawls up to her and starts licking her feet, ankles and legs. He continues to lick and kiss her entire body for several minutes and then rests his head at her feet.

The circus owner's jaw is on the floor. He says, "I've never seen a display like that in my life." He then turns to the retired pilot and asks, "Can you top that?"

The tough old pilot replies, "No problem ... just get that lion out of there."

A woman gets home from work early and hears strange noises coming from the bedroom. She rushes upstairs only to find her husband naked lying on the bed, sweating and panting. "What's going on?" she asks. "I think I'm having a heart attack," cries the husband. The lady rushes downstairs to grab the phone, but just as she's dialing, her four-year-old son comes up and says, "Mommy, Mommy, Aunty Shirley is hiding in the wardrobe, and she has no clothes on." The lady slams the phone down and storms back upstairs into the bedroom right past her husband. Rips open the wardrobe door and sure enough, there is her sister, totally naked and cowering on the floor. "You rotten sister", she screams. "My husband's having a heart attack, and you're running around naked, playing hide and seek with the kids?!"

Paddy and Shane are two Irishmen working at the local sawmill. One day, Shane slips and his Arm gets caught and severed by the big bench saw. Paddy quickly puts the limb in a plastic bag and rushes it and Shane to the local hospital. Next day, Paddy goes to the hospital and asks After Shane. The nurse says, "Oh he's out in rehab exercising." Paddy couldn't believe it, but there's Shane out in the back exercising his now re-attached arm. The very next day he's back at work at the saw mill. A couple of days go by, and then Shane slips and severs his leg on another bloody big saw. So Paddy puts the limb in a plastic bag and rushes it and Shane off to the hospital. Next day he calls in to see him and asks the nurse how he is. The nurse replies, "He's out in the rehab again exercising." And sure enough, there's Shane out there doing some serious work on the treadmill. And very soon Shane comes back to work. But, as usual, within a couple of days he has another accident and severs his head. Wearily Paddy puts the head in a plastic bag and transports it and Shane to the hospital. Next day he goes in and asks the nurse how Shane is. The nurse breaks down and cries and says, "He's dead." Paddy is shocked, but not surprised. "I suppose the saw finally did him in."

"No", says the nurse, "Some idiot put his head in a plastic bag and he suffocated."

A young couple were on their honeymoon. The husband was sitting in the bathroom on the edge of the bathtub saying to himself, "Now how can I tell my wife that I've got really smelly feet and that my socks absolutely stink? I've managed to keep it from her while we were dating, but she's bound to find out sooner or later that my feet stink. Now how do I tell her? "Meanwhile, the wife was sitting in the bed saying to herself, "Now how do I tell my husband that I've really bad breath? I've been very lucky to keep it from him while we were courting, but as soon as he's lived with me for a week, he's bound to find out. Now how do I tell him gently? " The husband finally plucks up enough courage to tell his wife and so he walks into the bedroom. He walks over to the bed, climbs over to his wife, puts his arm around her neck, moves his face close to hers and says, "Darling, I've a confession to make." And she says, "So have I love." To which he replies, "Don't tell me, you've eaten my socks."

## Lexophiles

- ■I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.
- ■This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.

- ■I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

  ■A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

  ■When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U.C.L.A.

  ■I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.

  ■A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- A will is a dead giveaway.

■With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

- ■Police were summoned to a daycare center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- A bicycle can't stand alone; it's just two tired.
- The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine last week is now fully recovered.
- ■He had a photographic memory but it was never fully developed.
- ■When she saw her first strands of gray hair she thought she'd dye.
- ■Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.
- I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- ■Did you hear about the crossed-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- ■When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- ■When chemists die, they barium.
- ■I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.
- ■I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down

#### BOB HOPE . . . Oh: the memories.

On his deathbed they asked him where he wanted to be buried... Bob Hope replied: "Surprise me."...

I had forgotten that he lived to be 100, and also didn't realize it has been over 18 years since he died.

#### **BOB HOPE IN HEAVEN**

For those of you too young to remember Bob Hope, ask your grandparents and thanks for the memories.

#### WHAT A WONDERFUL E-MAIL.

I HOPE THIS WILL PUT A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND IN YOUR HEART.

This is a tribute to a man who DID make a difference

ON TURNING 70 - "I still chase women, but only downhill."

ON TURNING 80 - "That's the time of your life when even your birthday suit needs pressing."

ON TURNING 90 - "You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake."

ON TURNING 100 - "I don't feel old. In fact, I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap."

ON GIVING UP HIS EARLY CAREER (BOXING) - "I ruined my hands in the ring. The referee kept stepping on them."

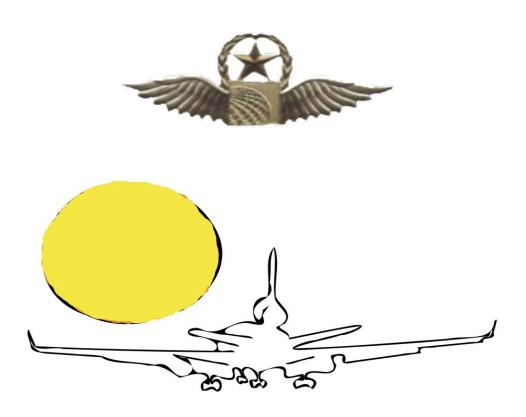
ON GOLF - "Golf is my profession. Show business is just to pay the green fees."

ON PRESIDENTS - "I have performed for 12 presidents but entertained only six."

ON WHY HE CHOOSE SHOWBIZ FOR HIS CAREER - "When I was born, the doctor said to my mother, congratulations, you have an eight pound ham."

ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL - "I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it."

#### **Gone West**



High Flight

by John Gillespie Magee Jr.

"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth, And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;

Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of, wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.

Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.

"Up, up the long delirious burning blue

I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace, where never lark, or even eagle, flew; and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod the high un-trespassed sanctity of space, put out my hand and touched the face of God."

### Gone West In 2023

# Names in red denote gone west announced since last update

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<b>Denotes Golden</b>	Eagles	Member
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Denotes Golden Lagie		
Dick Walton	Feb 2, <b>2021</b>	delayed report of passing
Mike Sines	Jan, <b>2021</b>	delayed report of passing
Dale Lutz	Nov 17, 2022	
Bill Lykins	Nov 25, 2022	
Bill Steele	Dec 11, 2022	
Terry Warner	Dec 13, 2022	
Larry Goldman	Jan 22, 2023	
*		
Pete Krueger	Jan 24, 2023	
Mike Burke	Jan 27, 2023	
Ned Fortuna	Sept 10, 2022	delayed report of passing
*		
Steve Cady	Feb 7, 2023	
Greg Garber	Feb 7. 2023	
Louis Bigos	Feb 7, 2023	
James Manfredi	Feb 8, 2023	
Curtis Landry	Feb 11, 2023	
our do Euriar y	1 00 11, 2020	

#### **Tributes:**

#### For Craig Hutain:

This is an obituary for Captain Craig Hutain just received. Here is a link to the obituary for those who wish to see it.

https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/conroe-tx/craig-hutain-11025584

#### For Bill Steele:

I often flew with "Blue Steel" in the Viscount from Denver to our daily 13 landings.... '66 '67.... Always an enjoyable experience.

From Steve Cady

#### For Bill Lykins:

Bill Lykins, a real good guy. *From Jerry Hunsinger* 

#### For Pete Kruger:

Sad. Pete was a cool dude! Lot's of laughs with Pete. Peace and prayers. Andy *From Andy Cashetta* 

News like this is very disheartening.... Pete was a great guy... From Steve Cady

He was a fun guy to be around. He will be missed! *From Jim Farrow* 

I had the privilege of flying A-4's with Pete during the early '70's. He was truly a "Pilot's Pilot". I would look forward to drill weekends just to hear his stories. Semper Fidelis. **From Don Keown** 

Although, I flew with Him several times, I was unaware of such an interesting and hard working life, except for the Tora, Tora, business. He was a good guy and a real patriot. He shall be missed. *From Cass Zabinski* 

Thanks for forwarding the obit for Pete Krueger provided by Jerry Dixon - thanks Jerry. What a terrific history the man had! Pete was a great guy and consummate professional pilot. I can't add much from personal experience because we never flew together, but we had lots of laughs and drank a beer or two together, if that counts. I especially appreciate the annual effort made by Pete and Phil Nash to get all of us old guys together at the Pinehurst Country Club, west of Denver every year. It's the only way we got to see one another. I wish Pete smooth air and clear skies on his flight west. *From Jerry Hunsinger* 

Pete was one of the good guys!!! From Walt Olsen

#### For Steve Cady:

Steve was one of the best. We will all miss him. *From Jim Caldwell* 

He was a treat to fly with, old school with empathy. *From Wes Zimmerman* 

Yes he was the best of the best. Always looked forward to seeing him. When I wasn't there I would get a weekly e mail from Steve always asking me how things were in paradise. Always asking how is Gloria? He would always ask me if I had any pictures to send him. He would always tell me how much he enjoyed the pictures of what we were doing here in the Florida Keys. I'm going to miss my weekly email to him. Actually I sent one to him yesterday saying goodbye and how much Gloria and I are going to miss him hoping he will get it where ever he is now. God be with you good buddy. *From Phil and Gloria Lindner* 

Outstanding guy to fly with. He gave me one of my IOE flights to Tokyo. *From Dave Atteberry* 

Jamie and I are so saddened by this news. We both held Steve in very high regard. Our sympathies to Barbara and all of his family. *From Tom Doherty* 

What a great guy. Thoughts and prayers to all his many close friends and family. RIP **From Pete Ramsey** 

Wow I'm in shock! Steve was a wonderful gentleman and I always enjoyed time spent with him. God Bless and smooth sailing on your journey west.

From Tip Fuller

I am so sorry to hear. May Steve Rest in Peace and May his family find peace... From Bill Bella

Wow! I was really surprised to hear of Steve's passing. I knew He had a triple by-pass several years ago and doing well the last time we talked. Sorry, to see Him go. He was a good guy. We had a good relationship with Steve and his wife Barbara in Kingwood.

From Cass Zabinski

Steve was a very friendly, caring and open superlative guy. Was a leading member of the Tuesday morning gathering and will leave a void that can't be filled. We all need to be ready for that last departure! God Bless Barbara and family!

#### From Harold Burton

Wow....this is a real gut puncher....Steve is gone. Over the years we have all been numbed by the never ending monthly "Gone West" notices....but this really hits home, especially for our Kingwood group. Steve was the lynch pin of our group....always one of the earliest to our weekly Tuesday breakfast. Always with a smile, was on top of current events, and what a great sense of humor (O The Laughs We All Had). Steve was known as our "SRO" (Senior Ranking Officer), which was well deserved. Two days ago, Steve left the breakfast group, and presumably passed away only two hours later. At least his last moments on this earth were with his buddies. Our weekly event will never be the same without Steve...he has "Gone West"...we will dearly miss him.

From Bruce Sprague

#### Below is the list of Gone West pilots for 2022:

Tom Russell 2021 Notice received August, 2022

Bob Roney \* Jan 6, 2022 Tom Root Feb 3, 2022 David Klaue Feb. 2022 Jack Sherer Feb 9, 2022 Ed "Bud" Cox Feb 16, 2022 Mar 7, 2022 Harry Cameron\* Apr, 2022 Larry Nelson \* William Saefke **April 2022** 

Martin Black May 9, 2022 delayed notification
Steve Sewell May 25, 2022 delayed notification
Joe Second June, 2022 delayed notification

Marty Shupp July, 2022 Kenneth Ashby July 5, 2022

Robert "Bobby" Glau July 29, 2022 delayed notification

John Winter\* Aug, 2022

Bill Fuqua\* Aug25, 2022 delayed notification

James Killen \* Aug 26,2022 Ed Nash Aug 26, 2022 Pete Dennis Sept 1, 2022 Sept 2, 2022 Sherman Smoot Sept 7, 2022 James Lewis Sept 10, 2022 Bill Nixon \* Ned Fortuna Sept 10, 2022 Sept 21, 2022 Paul Prestera Bob Campbell\* Oct 24, 2022 Will Shaw Nov 3, 2022 Nov 4, 2022 Rick Masterson \* Craig Hutain Nov 12, 2022 George Hemminger \* Nov 12, 2022 Dale Lutz Nov 17, 2022 Bill Lykins Nov 25, 2022 Bill Steele Dec 11, 2022

A list of previous Gone West pilots from 2009 through 2021 can be accessed on the Golden Eagles website, www.thegoldeneagles.org, in the Membership section under the Gone West heading.

Dec 13, 2022



Terry Warner

# That's it for this issue folks. We'll see you again with another heart-stopping review of everything Golden Eagles plus other stuff in June, 2023.



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# Golden Contrails

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