



# Aerie News

The Eagles Aerie News of the USAir Soaring Eagles

Fourth Quarter 2019

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| 1 <sup>st</sup> VP | Judy Schmidt   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> VP | Alvahn Mondell |
| Treasurer          | Paul Sturpe    |
| Secretary          | Judi Todd      |
| Past President     | John Davis     |

Advisors to the Board – Bill Leefe, Bob Knapp, Butch Schofield, Ran Natalie

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(276) 632-9941

Captain Joe Kernan

[Joekernandc9@yahoo.com](mailto:Joekernandc9@yahoo.com)

My father always said that the quality of a paint job was 90% preparation. If that concept can be applied to the recent Soaring Eagles Reunion, then my father was right. Clearly our success can be attributed to all of the preparation undertaken by your board in the months leading up to the 2019 Reunion.

Day one Friday:

Up early to go shopping with Paul Sturpe, and Judy Schmidt. Off to the local Sam's Club to shop for everything necessary for a large party. The list included everything from potato chips, to swizzle sticks. Paul Sturpe was on the shopping trip because he has the credit card, and we saved some money by using his SUV, and not renting a Van. This is the third year in a row that Paul has helped with this task; and we thank him for that. While Judy Schmidt Colbath was with us, Judi Todd manned the registration table in the hotel. On returning from shopping the ladies changed places with Judy Schmidt Colbath manning the registration table, and Judi Todd and her helpers set up the hospitality suite. By four PM it was time for the Meet & Greet around the pool. The weather in Tampa was quite warm, and it was a little muggy around the pool, muggy enough that some sought relief inside the hotel. I've already had discussions about the site for next year's Meet & Greet, and if the forecast is for high heat and humidity, we will move the event to an inside location where we can be more comfortable. The Hospitality Suite is normally open in between these scheduled events allowing ample time for members to socialize.

### Day two Saturday:

The buses were to be boarded at ten AM for the trip to the Channel Dockside where we were to board the Yacht Starship for the luncheon cruise. The Eagles were so prompt and orderly in the boarding process, that we arrived at the Dockside a little earlier than I had planned for, and the members had to kill some time before boarding the vessel. They boarded the buses faster than a bunch of Non Revs who've been told they have seats on a flight. By all accounts the cruise was a great success, and it was good to see the Allegheny and Mohawk tee shirts on display. There were also some nice USAir ball caps being worn. I'm working on some additional Lake Central shirts so that everyone can show their colors next year. I don't think we had any PSA, Piedmont, or America West members this year, but maybe we can take care of that next year.

On return from the cruise there were several hours to kill before the International Buffet at Seven PM, which allowed for more reminiscing in the Hospitality Suite. You may have gathered by now that the Hospitality Suite gets quite a bit of use during these events.

### Day three Sunday:

Up early again to get ready for the Business Meeting. The minutes of the Business Meeting have already been published, so I will not repeat them here. Sunday afternoon was spent putting the finishing touches on the banquet room. This year in addition to giving each attendee a USAir Challenge coin, each member received a USAir Soaring Eagles Lapel Pin at their place at the table. This year we put into practice something that our former long-time Treasurer Bill Leefe and I had discussed doing over the years, namely properly memorializing our deceased members. I read the names of approximately 30 deceased pilots who had passed in the last twenty-four months, and Judy Schmidt Colbath read a like number of deceased flight attendants. In one corner of the banquet hall one table was set with six empty chairs symbolizing the six major elements of the company. There was a Captain's Hat, Flight Attendant Scarf, a ball cap representing Maintenance, and empty chair for ground service, all office personnel, and final a chair for management. There was also a lit candle in front of each chair, and a Soaring Eagle Statuette that I had recently received. The Eagle Statuette was dedicated to the memory of all of our deceased fellow employees. I stated that although deceased, these members are still very much a part of our family.

After dinner our two former chairmen Mr. Edwin I Colodny and Seth "Butch" Schofield were introduced and took their seats in comfortable chairs on the raised platform. For the next hour and a half, they wowed the crowd with their relaxed, friendly answer to many of the group's questions. It was as though they were sitting in their living rooms talking to us. They were clearly two great men sharing their time with a great group of Eagles.

At the conclusion of the Q&A on behalf of the Soaring Eagles, I had the honor of presenting both Chairmen with identical framed posters commissioned by the Boeing Corporation depicting the history of the airline from the earliest days of the Air Mail Pickup until the name change to USAirways. Many of the aircraft flown by the various predecessor companies that made up USAir were depicted.

Day four:

Although we really don't have anything going on Monday after the reunion, it gives us time to clean out the hospitality suite and settle up with the hotel. I was up early to meet with Treasurer Paul Sturpe and Ralph Alderman the Director of Sales for the Westshore Marriott. I also had the opportunity to say goodbye to members as they checked out and left for the airport.

I had a chance meeting with Chairman Colodny Monday morning in the lobby and asked him where he wanted me to ship his poster. He placed his right hand on my shoulder, and looked me in the eye and said, "Joe I'm ninety-three years old. I don't have room in Chevy Chase Md. or Naples Florida to hang that beautiful poster." He went on to say that his son was putting a lot of his stuff in storage in California and he would really like to donate the poster to the Soaring Eagles so that I could auction it off. I learned a long time ago not to argue with the Chairmen, so here is what I propose to do. I will accept bids by US Mail or via the internet until December 31, 2019 at which time the poster will go to the highest bidder. The poster itself is probably valued at fifty dollars, but most of the value is in the framing. The minimum bid will be \$350.00 dollars. Once the successful bidder is known there will be a charge for shipping to that person's address. Since I am not inclined to have the framing disturbed, in lieu of having Mr. Colodny autograph the poster, I will see if I can have him pen a short note that can then be affixed to the back of the poster.

In closing I wish to thank both former Chairmen for their generosity of their time in contributing to the success of our reunion.

Finally, it was a special event made special by all of you that attended. I look forward to seeing all of you again next year.

Joe

**USAir Soaring Eagles Website is available with current daily information**

<https://usairsoaringeagles.org/>

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(724) 378-7025

Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt  
Colbath

[schonewalds64@aol.com](mailto:schonewalds64@aol.com)

Although I am gratified by your confidence in electing me to the position of First Vice President, I would have preferred to stay where I was, and have our departed friend Dan Friel remain with us and in that position. I was also gratified by the tremendous showing in the turnout by the Flight Attendant contingent, and the attendance of new faces, and new members. I am renewing the challenge I made at the Business Meeting, everyone should recruit three new members before we meet again in Tampa. The success of the recent reunion was all the reward your Board needed to verify that all of the preparation was worth it.

Meanwhile, I continue to show my dogs, and win more often than not.

See you in Tampa next year.

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(330) 277-6233

Captain Alvahn Mondell

[captalvahn@aol.com](mailto:captalvahn@aol.com)

Hello to all my Soaring Eagle friends!

I would like to thank very much, those that forwarded the pictures from the last reunion; it was great to see so many old friends that I remember from my Mohawk days as an agent in ROC and then as a flyer for Allegheny in PIT and DCA.

I also want to thank our President Captain Joe Kernan, for his work in what was, on all accounts, a fantastic reunion.

Seeing our presidents of years past, Mr. Ed Colodny and Mr. Seth Schofield, still there for us was a great honor.

Also, great to see the Flight Attendants have gotten on board; our thanks to Judy Schmidt and Judi Todd, and all those lovely young ladies that attended the reunion, it was a wonderful addition.

Unfortunately, I was unable to be there, but I'm sure looking forward to next year!

Finally, thanks for the confidence that you've shown in me by electing me Second Vice President

**SECRETARY'S MESSAGE**

(619) 417-7274

Flight Attendant Judi Todd

[judiwtodd@gmail.com](mailto:judiwtodd@gmail.com)

Wow!!! Halloween is over, by the time you read this, Thanksgiving will have been gone and around the corner the Holiday season will be in full swing, Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. I remember when I was growing up, I would say to my Mom, "I can't wait until my birthday, Christmas, outings, etc. and she would say to me "Stop wishing your life away. When you are much older (such as now) time will seem to be flying away (very appropriate wording) and she was right. Of course, it didn't/doesn't help because I still can't wait for what's up next in my life. I'm adding a can't wait until the next Soaring Eagles reunion so I can again rekindle new and old friendships. Hope to see a lot more of you next year. Judi

**TREASURER'S MESSAGE**

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Captain Paul Sturpe

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Suzanne and I just recently returned from the Soaring Eagles reunion where we had a great time. There is and was a lot of work that goes into planning a reunion. Captain Kernan deserves a lot of thanks for doing most of the heavy lifting! Thanks, Joe. Joe is already planning for the 2020 reunion and we hope to see everyone back along with a friend or two. As I mentioned last quarter, PayPal payments are now accepted. If you want to pay your dues via PayPal send them to [SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com](mailto:SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com) (not case sensitive.) 2020 dues are due by January 31. Your treasurer now has access to our group email program. I have already used it to notify you if your dues have not been paid for 2019. I also plan to use it to notify you that your dues HAVE been paid for the year. Expect that email about mid-December. I think this is an important use of the program since we no longer send out birthday reminders. A reminder once again to check the Soaring Eagles web site often at <https://usairsoaringeagles.org/> The latest news is always posted there and we add new content every week or so. Look for "UPD" on the top menu items to see if there are recent changes or additions to that particular section. Also, if you have any content that you think is appropriate to post on the web site, send it to Joe Kernan or myself.

So long until next quarter.  
Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

**FLOWN WEST**

**2019 Condolence Fund Donors**

Sara L Burgard  
Gerald P Fenzel  
Cheryl Johnson  
John M Davis  
Tony Garofalo  
Janet Challis Grieco

## **“HANGER FLYING”**

### **The Story of Stinson Reliant NC18496 (Save Our Stinson)**

By M. Charles ‘Gomer’ Pyles

I’m proud to have been selected an Honorary member of the Soaring Eagles thanks to my friend Gerry Milburn. Thank you for your support.

I was honored to be an Associate member of the AM 49er’s club, thanks to Captain Frank Petee. Frank had brought his fearful Flyers program to CVG early on and learned of my interest in company history. He invited me (I don’t recall the year) to attend their yearly gathering at Pittsburgh as an Associate member sometime between the 1968 merger with Lake Central Airlines and 1973. I still have my 1973 membership card.

I was fascinated with the Air Pick-Up operation because I had witnessed it as a boy in my hometown of Elkins, West Virginia. Coincidentally, Representative Jennings Randolph from my hometown of Elkins was proud to be known as the Legislative Father of the Air Mail Pick-up. I had an opportunity to meet him and talk with him on two separate occasions. He was a friend of my family. Sadly, Senator Randolph passed away in May 1998.

Through the years I met and became friends with many of the pilots, flying mechanics and even corporate people like Harry Stringer. I even met Richard C. DuPont’s widow Allaire. I met Charlie Wendt who had been a close financial advisor to DuPont. I became friends with Victor Yesulaites who had been with Lytle S. Adams from the outset with his Tri-State Aviation Corporation delivering packages from Wheeling, WV down to Morgantown and points between. Vic had invented a way to replace the loop used to absorb the shock of a pick-up using a n invention he referred to as “Monkey Fists” which worked on the same premise as a Chinese finger puzzle. When the hook grabbed the rope, Vic’s invention caused tension that absorbed the shock.

In 1984, Karl Striedieck (a record setting glider pilot) had organized the Air Mail Flyers Fly-in. Frank Petee invited me to be a part of this one-day affair. I flew to Pit, hooked up with Frank and continued on a commuter flight to PSB Airport where we were met by Striedieck. He loaded us in a Cessna 180 and flew to nearby Eagle Field airport on Bald Eagle Mountain. Kip Barraclough and his wife Margo had already arrived in his Cessna 180. Another fellow had a Stinson V-77. Striedieck had arranged to set up a Pick-Up station and 49er’s favorite Millie Albertson (affectionately known as Station 13) was there along with Johnny Harkin and his wife. The station was set up and the Gull Wing Stinson flew between the poles simulating a pick-up. We all got in the airplanes there and flew to a grass strip near State College and did it all over. We did this at about 3 other airports ending at Lock Haven. It was a fun event that I’ll never forget.

During the years leading up to the Company’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989, Jim Thompson (another historian) and I became very good friends with Junius ‘Toby’ West. Along with Toby, we studied the possibility of acquiring a Stinson SR-10C and recreating the Pick-up all during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of 1989. We came very near to making an agreement with the Virginia Aviation Museum who had one painted in American Airline colors. We enlisted my friend Dale Gustafson (former Lake Central Pilot) who was the chief antique judge at The Oshkosh Air Show gathering. ‘Gus’ helped us determine the cost and we approached Ed Colodny who explained to us the Company couldn’t support an expense like this. We had to drop the idea, but Jim and I were younger and thought maybe down the road we could do this to celebrate another anniversary.

During this period, I also became friends with many of the other '49'ers including Tommy Kincheloe, Pete Opar, Len Naser, Millard Lossing Dick Bazley, Kip Barraclough, Mike 'Bernie' Cain, and others including Ray 'Red' Garcia.

All of these people, particularly after the 1984 Fly-in caused me to become insanely interested in the Air Pick-Up. I knew them well enough to pick up the phone and call them every so often. Now, advancing forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a young man named Scott Woods had heard about me through social media and called me to be an intermediary arranging interviews for him with Kip Barraclough and others. I did this for him after he told me he had acquired one of the original Stinson SR-10C Reliants NC18496 s/n 3-5829 and he intended to restore it as a Pick-up plane again. The airplane in its lifetime had been registered as HP-224 in Panama before returning to the States as N3BU which registration it is today. The airplane was in Faribault, MN with Rare Aircraft, Ltd. who would do the actual restoration.

Some time went by and now it's late 2010. Young Scott Woods decided that the proposition was going to be too expensive to complete since he also had an SR-9F being rebuilt by Rare. He decided to sell N3BU which had by now been disassembled. Apparently, some of the parts were used to restore the SR-9F. He advertised it for sale for a long time and one day I saw it advertised on the web site Barnstormers where Scott had made the statement if he couldn't sell it for this price (\$45,000.00) he was going to donate it to his favorite museum. When I saw this, I immediately called him because I had him on speed dial already. I asked him if my museum was his favorite museum. He said yes and that I should go to Faribault to get it.

Scott was able to get a professional appraiser to provide him a satisfactory write-off amount. I helped Scott pay for the appraisal with my personal donation. The Museum being a 501c3 non-profit wasn't allowed to place value on artifacts. Once all the paperwork was in order and the airplane signed over to Cincinnati Aviation Heritage Society. I was talking to my Friend and 'Soaring Eagle' Captain Mike Solensky and he wanted to see the airplane in my hands. Mike and I had been in touch for many years and he shared my passion.

When I told him the Stinson would be donated, he sent me a check for \$1,000.00 to cover the expense of going after the airplane. My brother-in-law Dr. Chuck Beetz and I flew to Minneapolis; rented a 26-foot truck whereupon we drove down to Faribault where the Redman family who own Rare helped us stuff the big Stinson in the truck. We drove to Cincinnati and found hangar space to store it. This was in November 2012.

The airplane has been stored by the CAHS since then, partially assembled and displayed on several occasions in hopes we'd find a passionate benefactor to help us restore it. So far, we're headed in to 2020 without that benefactor. We solicit friends and family through social media constantly attempting to raise money a little at a time.

Thanks to you Soaring Eagles for organizing a Save Our Stinson Campaign. We still have a long road before us to see this Stinson restored. Checks may be mailed to Cincinnati Aviation Heritage Society, 262 Wilmer Avenue #26, Cincinnati, OH 45226. Many people have yearly Required Minimum Distribution and I'd like to encourage you to remember CAHS with yours. Donations will be properly documented (you'll receive a receipt for IRS purposes) as earmarked for the Save Our Stinson Account. You may follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/cahsorg](http://www.facebook.com/cahsorg).

## “SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

Well I'm back on the line with 2.5 years to go. I was off for 15 months due to torn meniscus in my left and right knees, prostate cancer and AFib. Surgery for all three issues. Guys, stay on top of your PSA blood tests. I've been watching mine for 20 years, so the cancer diagnosis was no surprise. The AFib however WAS a surprise! Thank goodness for my 900 hour sick bank. I burned it down to 8 hours and did not end up on the dreaded AA LTD. I've been flying mostly Hawaii recently. No offense to my east coast pals, but it sure beats TPA, MIA, RSW and JAX!

Hardly any PSA guys left. I think I'm the only one in LAX.

Fly safe.

JEFF DIERCKSMEIERS

Hi Joe,

My big news is that my 17-year-old granddaughter, Brynne Barr, just earned her FAA's Private Pilot's license. Last Sept, on her 16th birthday she got her pilot's license. She wants to become a commercial pilot. Looks like she has Bill's genes. 😊

All else is good. I just had hip replacement last May, so hoping to be back to normal soon.

Always so interested to hear from you. Best wishes to all.

Cindy Barr ❤️

Don Burrows

Moving is just about wrapped up. Never again. Very draining in every regard! Makes big time sense to the \$\$\$ aspect of the time in our lives for the time we have left. Now about that "murder/suicide" pact!!!.....

Joe, Bob Thompson here, didn't know where you wanted these short lines, so I am sending this. I am going on 89, use a walker full time as I have developed a complete loss of balance, without hands on something firm I will fall, completely out of control, as I have done several times in the past year or so. I have a broken nose, several stitches and staples in my head, broke off 2 front teeth. If we're going out, I go in a wheelchair now. Wish I could make some of the reunions, but I do not travel at all anymore. Otherwise my health is fairly good. Hello to all from US Air that read this.

Bob

From Chairman Schofield

One again, the annual Soaring Eagles Reunion was a smashing success! While the cruise and dinner were extremely well attended, the highlight was once again the camaraderie and memories shared by fellow employees during each of the events.

I would strongly suggest that each of you make a concerted effort to attend the 2020 event. I would also like to congratulate the Eagle officers and especially Joe Kerman for all the planning and hard work that made the reunion a great success.

Seth Butch Schofield

From Lou Roth

A wasted summer this year because of a bad back — one that seem to disregard numerous procedures short of major surgery. I still work at a golf course but unable to play. There are no flyers in the family — other involvements. One grandson college graduation in Dec with his sister close behind as a junior. The other grandson is making his way thru the teenage years. My wife has been doing some early work for the Census Dept. besides taking care of me. I will send my dues off shortly — my email is [rothlou@gmail.com](mailto:rothlou@gmail.com).

## THANK YOU

The Soaring Eagles would like to extend a big thank you to Oz Lamonds for the contribution of all of the memorabilia he has contributed.

## Memory Lane

### **The Great Escape, by Joe Kernan**

The year was 1957, and I was employed by Allegheny Airlines as a Cargo Agent, more affectionately known as a Ramp Rat`. I can't recall the exact date, but the weather was still pleasant in Washington D. C. At the time Allegheny had an agreement with Piedmont Airlines to handle all of Piedmont's operations at Washington National Airport. Even with the combined Allegheny/Piedmont schedule there were quite a few gaps when there were no flights to work, yet at other times it got quite hectic.

Earlier in the morning of this incident, we had worked a Piedmont DC3 that was probably bound for Charlottesville and other points south. I say we because it would have involved one of the Bartnek brothers Leroy or Jerry, and probably a young man named Butch Schofield, who at the time was classified as an Operations Agent...a step up from a ramp rat.

Later in the morning we had an Allegheny DC3 bound for Altoona. The right engine was running, and we were holding our flight for a young mother with two children who was already on our flight but

waiting for luggage from her inbound flight. In 1957 all baggage with the exception of American was routed through a very large room in the bowels of the terminal under the ticket counters in the main terminal. I was given the bag tags and instructed to get to the bag room and retrieve those bags as quickly as possible. (Note) in the interest of an efficient operation, our mechanics had made slight adjustments to the governors on our tugs, which made them the fastest on the airport.

Off I go with just the tug. Since there were only two bags, I didn't take a bag cart, as it would only have slowed me down. I was on a mission. Got to the bag room without a problem, got the bags and stacked them to my right on the tug seat.

There is a tunnel which runs from the north end of the terminal near the bag room all the way to the south end of the terminal where the old post office was located. The doors to this tunnel were pneumatically operated by pulling down on a rope with a handle at the end of the rope. If you don't pull the rope the door doesn't open.....at least it doesn't open on its own. As I approached these doors, I had my left hand on the steering wheel, and my right hand securing the bags beside me. As I made the right turn to exit the tunnel, the tug tilted up on the left wheels and I missed the rope and blasted through the doors. Apparently, my exit onto the ramp drew the attention of an older WNA Policeman that was one of three older, 60 seemed older at the time, who patrolled the ramp area, and the tunnel. There was a Capital Viscount on the ramp with all four Dart Rolls Royce engines screaming, which I went behind and made my way to our flight, unloaded the bags, and congratulated myself on a job well done. Apparently, the Guard wanted to talk to me, and claimed that he was blowing his police whistle, and waving for me to stop. He also claimed that I flipped him the bird. Are you kidding me you can't hear a police whistle over the whine of a Roll Royce engine, and when I saw him waving, I simply waved back with my index finger extended indicating that Allegheny was number one.

As I said before we often had pretty long breaks between flights, and it was during one of these breaks that the other ramp rats and I were in operations shooting the bull, and congratulating ourselves for getting the Altoona Flight out minimum delay, and with mother and children together with their luggage. Someone of the group, could have been Schofield says, "Uh oh here come the cops." In operations there was large counter that ran almost the entire width of the room; behind the counter were a number of open areas for document and supplies to be stored. Sensing trouble, I simply slid into one of those compartments to await further developments. The Police Officer announces very emphatically that they are looking for the "Little Guy" with the Allegheny coveralls on. Thank God I was little, otherwise I would have been found out then and there. Someone says, "he may have gone up to the hangar #12". That is where all of Allegheny's heavy maintenance took place, and the parts department and tool room were located.

Back in 1957 there were two ways to get between operations and the hangar. You could drive north up a vehicle road which paralleled the taxiway to runway 15 or you could drive north on the roadside of the hangars. The police Based on the information given to them left for hangar 12 using the ramp side vehicle lane. About a half an hour later a call came into operations from Tony Bodine who ran the parts department indicating that the police were coming back to operations, and further stated that the were coming down the street side roadway. At that time, I left operations and proceeded to the hangar using the ramp side access road. I wasn't at the hangar long before a call came in from operations telling me that the police where on the way coming up the ramp side. You guessed it I came

back to operations down the street side. This back and forth continued until early afternoon, when I finally had to discontinue the little game of cat and mouse to work a flight.

I had two bag carts full of bags in the bag room where I was transferring the bags to their connecting airlines that included Capital, Colonial, Southern, National, United, Delta, and Northwest While leaning over the cart, I felt the log arms of the law, there were eight of them, as the they were attached to four policeman who were taking me into custody. I wish you could have heard the catcalls from all of the other ramp rats as they yelled out ‘better call for reinforcements,” “looks pretty violent to us”, “do you need any help?”

Yes, they had a jail at Washington National Airport, and I spent the next seven hours there. Being a bit of a Smart ass at the time (some things never change) once in my cell (no cellphones back then) I took off my coveralls which were worn over street clothes folded them up to make pillow and went to sleep, following short nap, I was awakened by a very nice Sergeant who appear in the book “Captain Charlie” who advised that I was entitled to a meal while I was their guest. This nice man brought me a cheeseburger and a coke. Around 7:00 PM that night I was released after negotiations between a longtime friend who was a D.C. Policeman, who had friends on the force at Washington National Airport. As it turns out my seven-hour stay was to have taught me a lesson. I no longer had a WNA driver’s license so my employment at Allegheny was terminated. I sure am glad Harvey Thompson didn’t ask any questions about this little affair when I was fortunate enough to return to Allegheny in 1967 as a pilot.

This is my story and I’m sticking to it.