

# Aerie News

**The Eagles Aerie News of the USAir Soaring Eagles**

**Third Quarter 2021**

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Soaring Eagles Write

**Board of Directors**

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(276) 632-9941

Captain Joe Kernan

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

It pleases me to announce that everything in the paragraph below that I copied from my original email re: cancellation of the 2021 Convention is operative, with one notable exception. We were able to get the hotel to grant the same rate in 2022 as we would have paid in 2021, \$119.00 per night. I believe that this is a testament to the very good relationship that we have with the hotel management, especially the Director of Sales Ralph Alderman. Obviously, they want our business, but it's not just about the money.

On August 31, during a telephone conference call the Soaring Eagles board voted unanimously, and reluctantly to cancel this year's convention, and to reschedule it for next October. The tentative date is the weekend of Oct. 28, 29, and 30, 2022. The Meet & Greet would be on Friday Oct. 28, and the cruise would be on Saturday evening the 29th. The Banquet would be on Sunday evening the 30th.. All the rules that applied this year are unchanged with one notable exception. The board voted to subsidize a portion of the banquet expense, by reducing the charge to dues paying members to \$25.00 instead of the normal charge of \$45.00. This is in recognition of the fact that once again you paid your dues, and we had no convention. Guests and others would pay the normal rate of \$45.00.

Save the date. Oct 28, 29, and 30 2022. As soon as I get the green light from the hotel that we can begin the reservation process, rest assured I will begin bugging you to get it done early. This year we had a few members who didn't understand the importance of reserving early to take advantage of the group rate \$119.00, and we had to do some last minute negotiating to get them the rate.

I hope everyone will maintain the enthusiasm that we had this year, and make a commitment to attend next year.

Finally , I am advised that some members have received messages from the hotel advising that their reservations have been cancelled, but I have not been so advised regarding several that I made in my name. Until I can determine the status it might be a good idea to call 888-236-2427 to verify that your reservation has in fact been cancelled.

Check your email frequently, including your spam folder as sometimes that's where our messages end up.

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## What I would have done

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If we had not had to cancel the 2021 Soaring Eagles Convention the following is a description of what I would have done at the Banquet.

After the guests had completed their meal, I would have introduced our newest members in the order that that they submitted their applications to Treasurer Paul Sturpe.

Lela F. Mullins was hired by Allegheny Airlines, the Mother Airline on 3-11-60 and retired from USAirways on 10-01-04. Lela's first trip was with Toby West and went DCA-HAR-AOO-JST-PIT. Lela's most memorable flying experience was throwing up into a coffee cup in the cockpit of a DC 3 and being cussed out by First Officer Dick Lamont. I would have thought that First Officer Lamont would have thanked Lela for having the good sense to throw up into a cup, and not down his back. You just can't please some pilots.

Ellie Zalesky was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 4-4-69 and she is still working. Ellie's first trip was with Captain Jerry Hurst and was from Utica to Plattsburg. Ellie's most memorable flying experience was taking the troops to Kuwait (14) trips and 2 loads home knowing they would be going back. Ellie recently flew 3 flights of Afghan refugees.

Kathy (Tanner) Rasimas was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 7-28-67 and retired on 1-10-03. Kathy's first flight was with Jim Golden from Utica to LGA. Kathy reports that in 36 years there were too many memorable experiences to remember.

Evelyn (Take me to Havana) Thornton was hired by Lake Central Airlines on 3-05-62 and retired from USAirways on 6-01-00. Evelyn did not report who her first flight was with, but her most memorable flight would be difficult to forget as it was with Captain Johnny Harkin when the aircraft was hijacked to Havana Cuba. The hijacker was talked out of going to Cairo, and Cuba was suggested as a more doable option. At one point the hijacker held a knife to Evelyn's throat.

J. Peter Schuetz was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 10-9-65 and retired from USAirways on 6-01-02. Peters's most memorable trip was a familiarization trip with the late Jack Mozian. (See bio below).

I started in the Airline Industry in 1965 with Mohawk Airlines as a Customer Service Agent at JFK Airport. After obtaining my Dispatchers certificate at Ferris School of dispatching in Jamaica, NY. Mohawk Airlines needed Assistant Dispatchers in Utica, NY in 1968 and I transferred to Utica, NY. Assistant Dispatcher with Mohawk till the merger with Allegheny Airlines in 1972. I continued as a dispatcher with Allegheny Airlines after the merger. After the name change from Allegheny Airlines to USAIR, I was a Dispatcher, Unit Coordinator, and international Dispatcher for several years and did the Flight planning and dispatching of our first Flight from Pittsburgh to Frankfurt, Germany. I spend the last 15 years as operations manager at the OCC and oversaw the operation of almost 400 Airplanes daily, including September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. I retired in 2002.

The Board conferred honorary membership on Peter during its May teleconference meeting.

Barbara Jo (BJ) Hale Johnson was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 6-09-59 no retirement date listed and flew her first trip with Captain Ed Slattery, and Johnny Gilbert. Although she doesn't list a memorable flight, she was married to deceased Captain Phil Jones prior to his death in 1995.

Robby Swicegood was hired by Mohawk on 7-27-67 and retired from USAirways on 4-05-05. Robby's first trip was with Captain Jack Mayer between UCA-JFK. Robby reports that there were too many memorable flights to recall, but that she had a very enjoyable 38-year career.

Jan Bachowski was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 11-30-72 and is still flying. Her first flight was with Captain Jerry Clark from DCA-Utica. Her most memorable flight was to (TLV) Tel Aviv She was acting as the purser when bombs were flying 2018-2019. She was contacted by the State Department and told to evacuate, and get the aircraft out in thirty minutes, along with 16 Delta Flight Crew members.

Joyce Gallagher was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 7-25-69 and retired from American Airlines on 4-30-21 she was based in Pittsburgh but does not list a first flight or captain. Her most memorable trip was being diverted to Gander Newfoundland on 9-11-2001 while returning from Rome Italy.

Anita Burke was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 10-6-67 and she is still flying (54 years). Her first flight was with Bill Wolfe between Utica and Newark. Anita's most memorable flying experiences include flying trips with lifelong friends, ordering Buffalo Chicken Wings from the Airways, and having them delivered to the aircraft. The aroma of the hot sauce permeated the airplane cabin. Using Eastern Airlines passes, always in first class. On one such occasion, she went EWR-MIA-SJU-MIA-SJU-MIA-EWR. Many of her trips were with Lydia Otto. On Sept. 11, 2001, walking with my crew down the Main Street of St. John's Canada. The lovely citizens offered their condolences and provided us with whatever we needed. Our passengers singing patriotic songs as we flew from St. John's to Charlotte. Finally working 5-day trips to Tel Aviv and Debrovnik with

lifelong friends of fifty years, going to beaches, shopping, and eating plentifully. Reaping the rewards of our long-term careers.

Pamela Orbe was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 10-02-70 and her first flight was between EWR-BOS with an unnamed Captain. Pamela lists as her most memorable experiences, Goodlife, lifelong friend, apparently having Frankie Valle, The Four Seasons, HoBo, and Kiss on some of her flights.

Linda Friend was hired by Mohawk Airlines on 1-02-70 and retired from USAirways on 6-01-08. Linda's first flight was between Utica\_LGA but claims memory loss as to the captain. As for memorable flights Linda reports "Hours of boredom followed by moments of stark terror"

Carol (Goody) Baker was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 8-24-62 and retired in June 2003. She was known as my brother Chubby's Airline Wife, so I guess that makes her my Airline sister-in-law. Carol doesn't list a first trip or Captain but did say she was lucky she was hired at all. Apparently, on the way to New Hire training, the aircraft filled up and they put her in the lavatory where an FAA inspector found her. He said he had too many other issues to deal with, and for her not to do that again. One of Carol's enduring memories is having the Naval Academy Glee Club singing while holding over London.

Mary Ann Barnett was first hired by Allegheny Airlines in March of 1962, and then again in March of 1982. During that twenty-year span of time, she married former Flight Agent and Ground School instructor Ron Barnett. They had two children who are both pilots. Her son is a Delta Captain, and her daughter is an American Captain. Her first flight was PIT-PHL with an unnamed Captain. Her most memorable flight experience was getting to Portugal. She loved international flying.

Roberta (Bobbi) Shaw was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 4-13-70 and retired in 2005. Bobbi's first flight was with Captain Tom Dailey between BOS-PHL-PIT. Bobbi's most memorable flight experience was graduating from the Convair 580, to the B727, to international flying.

Judy Aarnes was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 6-3-68 and retired on 12-13-2003. Judy was sent to IND on the day of the Lake Central merger and can't remember who she flew with or where she flew, but she does remember that it was a Nord. Judy's most memorable experience was meeting her husband on a flight.

Capt. Rick Aarnes was hired by USAir on 5-11-81 and retired on 7-02-14. Rick did not list his first flight or who the captain was, but his most memorable flight experience was meeting his wife Judy on a Denver trip. Sounds familiar

Tammy Hansen was hired by USAir on 3-23-81 and retired on 5-1-20. Although Tammy was based in DCA she was sent to PIT to fly a three day, and she doesn't remember the sequence or the captain. Her most memorable flight experience was flying a block with her father Jack Hansen, and her stepmother Lois Hansen. Tammy

also flew frequently with her friend Martha Embrey. Tammy was based in DCA for her entire career and states that DCA is the best of the best.

Martha K. Embrey was hired by USAir on 3-23-81 and retired on 11-21-19. Martha's first trip like her friend Tammy Hansen was DCA-PIT to fly out of base. Captain unknown. Martha's most memorable flight experience was hitting a flock of Seagulls departing Daytona Beach with Captain Scott Summerfield and being able to go home.

Brian Lindsay, AKA Flying Brian was hired by USAir on 7-02-82 and is still flying. Brian lists his first trip as BOS-PIT with Captain no name. Brian's most memorable flying experience was flying his first international trip in 2005 from PHL to Glasgow Scotland. He loves international flying.

Rebecca Deuben was hired by Mohawk on 2-11-72 and retires on 4-30-22. Rebecca's first trip was BOS-SYR with Captain no name. Boy that Captain gets around. Her most memorable flight experience was anything before American. Enough said.

Jeanne Pierce was hired by Mohawk on 4-07-70 and she retired 4-01-2005. Jeanne's first flight was with Jim Geary and Dave Reynolds who she described as gentlemen. Having grown up in Massachusetts Jeanne thought crew scheduling was kidding when they told her she would be overnighing in Worcester Mass. She says it got better after that, Thank God!

Maureen (Miller) Adamcik was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 06-04-70 and she retired on 10-01-12. Maureen flew her first trip with "Stormin Norman Kerns" While closing the door on the Convair the handle flew back and injured her hand. Although Norm wanted to send her to the hospital, she refused out of fear of being fired. Her most memorable flight experience was flying the CRAF charters to the middle east.

JoEllen Zerilla was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 11-12-70 and retired in October 1993. Joellen's first flight was with Al Mondell between PIT-PHL. JoEllen lists her most memorable flight experience as getting from A to B and back.

Eric Jordan was hired by USAir on 12-14-82 and is currently flying the B777 out of Dallas and has about a year left before retirement. Captain Jordan's first trip was as an engineer on the B727 with Dick Burdick. Eric lists his most memorable flight experience as being a new DC9 Captain and having his father on his jump seat. His Dad was an Avionics Mechanic for Lake Central in IND, and Eric used to accompany him to the airport when his dad was working.

Robert (Bob) Sauer was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 7-25-79 and will retire on 10-26-21. Captain Sauer flew his first trip as an engineer for Irv Galle between BOS-SYR, and his first trip as F/O for his father Robert R. Sauer. Bob's most memorable trip(s) were his first F/O trip with his dad in 1980, and then flying his dad's retirement flight in 1982.

"We are family"

Nancy Windingland was hired by Allegheny Airlines on 7-7-69 (see BIO below)

I was hired on 7/7/69 to work in the Tax Department In 1971 I transferred to the Legal Department to work in the Economic Research Department. At this time Mr. Colodny was Vice President of Legal Affairs. In January of 1973, I transferred to the Flight Department and went to work for Captain Henry Nash. During my tenure with the Chief Pilots office, I worked for Captain Henry Nash Captain Bob Frutchey, Captain Frank Gingerich, Captain Jim Sullivan, Captain Ron Korn, and Captain Art Lunney.

In 1997 I once again transferred, this time to Customer Service where I worked as an agent, first at IAD and then retired from DCA on 9/1/2001.

I had a great career.

During the May teleconference meeting when we conferred Honorary Membership on Peter Schuetz, we also extended the same Honorary Membership on Nancy Windingland, at my request we were keeping her membership under wraps so that I could surprise her at the convention. As I was tracking who was signed up for the convention, I became aware that Nancy was not registered. Since it would be impossible to surprise her if she were absent, I had to do something to get her there.

I called Nancy and told her I needed her at the Convention to make a presentation to Ed Colodny at the banquet. That was enough to set the hook, and she registered to attend. I had already enlisted Mr. Colodny in on the ruse which would have worked like this. During dinner I would give Nancy a plain white envelope, which she would give to Mr. Colodny after I called her up to the dias. She would simply say Joe and the board wanted b me to present this to you. Mr. Colodny would then open the envelope and say, "Actually Nancy Joe and the Board wanted me to give you this membership card, and to tell you that you were made an Honorary Member back in May. Welcome aboard.

As you can see the majority of our New Members are current or former Flight Attendants, but we did get several pilots along with Peter Schuetz, and Brian Lindsay. Andy Skiba joined in 2020, and an article by him can be found elsewhere in the Aerie. Much of our success in attracting new members can be attributed to Judy Schmidt Colbath, and her outreach through her network. Thanks Judy.

It would have been great if this could all have been done in person, but now you can see why I was so terribly disappointed that the Board and I had to make the decision to cancel.

Joe

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**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)

Disappointed does not come anywhere close to describing how I felt when the Board had to cancel our 2021 Convention. Once was bad enough, but twice is a little too much. Although I know we made the correct decision based on the information we had, it was sad to see all the planning for what was to be a record-setting convention seem to go to waste.

I have tried to maintain a positive attitude as we move forward, realizing that we can simply move the event to the last weekend in October of 2022 because we have such a good relationship with the hotel and the cruise company. It also helps my attitude to know that my efforts at recruiting new members may be paying off. Joe Kernan advises me that he recently communicated with 27 new members, and I will claim credit for at least some of them. Spread the word to your friends, if they are not members of the Soaring Eagles, they should be. It's an excellent way to stay in touch with old friends, with whom we share good memories and a common heritage.

Meanwhile, as we prepare for the 2022 convention, I continue to show my Pugs, and recently took first place in a show.

Circle the date now. Oct. 28, 29, and 30, 2022 Tampa Westshore Marriott. Tampa Fl.

See you there,

Judy

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(330) 277-6233

Captain Alvahn Mondell

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

Well, another perfectly wonderful get-together down in flames. It looked good for a while but then, another wave of covid. Let's not give up and plan for an even better year in 2022.

I would sure think we'd have a handle on this covid thing by then! Everyone stay well; I look forward to seeing everyone next year!

**SECRETARY'S MESSAGE**

(619) 417-7274

Flight Attendant Judi Todd

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

Well!!!! Another year and another cancellation. I am so sad that we couldn't get together for our reunion. Was looking forward to seeing old and new members after a year and a half of "vegetating."

I guess I am back to square one on traveling to the East Coast. If any of you happen to be in San Diego, you have my email, and I would love to visit with you here.

Hope all is well with you, and I really am looking forward to being with you in Tampa in October of 2022. Miss you all.

**TREASURER'S MESSAGE**

(828) 478-1133

Captain Paul Sturpe

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

What a disappointment that we had to cancel the convention for the second year in a row. But the good news is that we have a head start on 2022, Joe is giving you the details in his report.

All the convention refunds should have been received by now. If you paid for the convention and have not received your refund, let me know (hotel refunds, if due are done directly by the hotel.)

So long until next quarter.  
Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

**“SOARING EAGLES WRITE”**

**Retired Captain Sharon L. Menear**

When I retired early from US Airways, after a few aimless years, I took a stab at writing novels. I now have 10 published novels written under my author name S.L. Menear. I had to use my initials to trick men into buying my books.

I have five action thrillers about a woman airline pilot in my Samantha Starr Series. A new publisher changed my titles and covers. I guess they knew what they were doing because the first book in the series, retitled *Flight to Redemption* was a #1 best seller on Amazon last year. Yay! The rest of the titles are *Flight to Destiny*, *Triple Threat*, *Stranded*, and *Vanished*. I also have 2 children's novels, a cozy mystery, and an anthology book of short stories.

I've been pretty much locked away since the pandemic started, so it's a good thing I have writing to keep me busy. I started a new series, and the first book in the Jett Jorgensen Mysteries, *Dead Silent*, was just released two weeks ago. It's the first in a series of suspenseful mysteries with baffling crimes that lead three female sleuths to surprising discoveries and shocking resolutions. And, of course, there are airplanes in the stories. I'm almost finished with the second book, *Dropped Dead*. Then I'll write a third one for the mystery series before I write the sixth Samantha Starr thriller. Busy, busy.

I hope everyone is staying safe and doing well.

## **Dave Johnson**

After retiring I flew the Sheriff's Huey and Astar helicopters a couple of years and trained some officers to operate and use the hoist during entry and extraction operations.



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## **A Co-pilots most memorial trip Andy Skiba**

My second trip as a new hire first officer would make me wonder if the decision to have an Air Line career was a big mistake.

My background as a low time, general aviation pilot still got me hired with a large regional airline during the mid-60's airline hiring boom. My buddies worked for the same carrier, so I felt pretty good about going to work for this airline. The decision to give up my white-collar job as a technician in the electronics industry and start flying full time as a flight instructor and air taxi pilot seemed to pay off. I had given myself a two-year envelope in general aviation to get an airline pilot job. If at the end of my two-year, self-imposed deadline I was not successful it would be back to the electronics job and forget about a glamor career flying big airplanes.

After three interviews with three major airlines and being told that my experience level compared to the other applicants they were getting was too low, a good friend of mine who had just been hired with the regional airline told me that the chief pilot had told his new hire class that the airline would be hiring a second class that year and if any friends they knew was interested in being a part of that class to call up, get in an application and they would see if they would be considered for employment as a pilot. Since my initial application with that airline had been totally ignored, I made a phone call to the personnel office. This was before the days of the HR designation. I added 200 hours to my existing application and received a telegram the next day with authorization to travel to their operations headquarters and take a series of tests and be interviewed.

Fast forward about three months. I completed training and after a second training flight in a Convair 440, an airplane with two big piston engines, and training with the chief pilot as our instructor, I asked him when did he want me and my fellow training partner to show up for our next training flight? He replied, "Go Tell crew scheduling you're ready to fly". So much for the glamor graduation ceremony.

My first trip with the airline was a short flight to DCA (Washington National) and back to my new home base. About an hour and a one-half round trip. Like all new hire copilots, we would be given via word of mouth, the names of Captains that were the less desirable ones to fly with. I believe the description of these Captains was a little more graphic than that. Armed with my "Bad Boy" Captain mental list I arrived for my first trip and was fortunate to get one of the "Good Guys". We flew the trip with my being overwhelmed by the fast pace of the flight and with me struggling to stay on top of my duties.

First trip under my belt, I was assigned my second trip. A Boston RON. Remain Over Night. That was the good part. Since I was living in a "commuter pad" with a fellow new hire pilot who was one number senior to me, any trip assignment that got me flying generated a dollar an hour away from base per diem pay. My family was living 500 miles away from me so flying was my reward and escape from the "Pad" and boredom. When I got to the airport and checked in for my trip with the local crew scheduler, I discovered why I had been given the nice Boston overnight trip. My Captain was "Captain BOB", the number one guy on the copilot list of "Bad Guys".

Pilots and flight attendants were all required to sign in with the local crew scheduler at least one hour before the start of their trip. As a new copilot on the second trip of my career I was at the airport and signed in at least two hours before departure time. Of course, Captain Bob had not been signed in yet.

I started gathering all the paperwork required for the trip, weather, flight release, etc., and started doing my flight plan which I was sure would win an award in any aviation contest but might be chewed up and spit out by Captain Bob. Once I had the flight plan completed it was time to find Captain Bob and get him to review and sign it. No one had seen Captain Bob in the crew room, so I checked with the local crew scheduler to see if he had signed in yet for the trip. The crew scheduler told me that Captain Bob is notorious for being late and if I do not find him before it is time to get out to the airplane just bring the paperwork with me and he will sign it then. About 30 minutes before departure, I figured it was time to head for the airplane and start doing my copilot duties. After I completed the walk around inspection I headed for the cockpit and completed the one hundred plus items on the originating check list. Twenty minutes before departure the passengers started boarding the airplane. Still no Captain Bob. I was starting to get really nervous. Finally, Captain Bob comes bounding up the aircraft stairs and jumps into the left seat. He snarls at me for the flight plan and scribbles his signature where required and calls the flight attendant up, hands her the flight plan and tells her to give it to the agent when he comes up for the final passenger count and to give us our weight and balance slip.

Finally, Captain Bob is ready to be the master of our ship. I am sitting in the right seat with the originating checklist in my hands, ready to show Captain Bob how well I have completed my copilot duties. The originating checklist is a plastic laminated piece about the size of a dinner place mat. Captain Bob looks at me and says "Put that damn thing away. If I want anything from you, I'll ask for it"! WOW. This is going to be a fun trip. In those days, all our flights were prefilled with the FAA so one of the copilot duties was to ask the captain if he wanted to go VFR or IFR. Visual or Instrument flight rules. If the weather was good, most Captains would go VFR. Under VFR rules we would not be required to be in radio contact with air traffic control once we were outside the airport control zone. After our departure from our home base, Pittsburgh, Captain Bob flew the whole time as we worked our way to my first overnight in Boston

I did all the required radio contacts and never used any checklists during any portion of the flight. This trip was not going like my first trip at all. Once we got to Boston and took the crew limousine into town and our hotel my final duty of the day was to sign in all the crew with the hotel and distribute the room keys. Once that was done, Captain Bob told me to meet in the hotel lobby in ten minutes. Maybe Captain Bob isn't as bad as they say. Of course, this invitation did not include our flight attendants. Ten minutes later me and Captain Bob were headed about three blocks away to a restaurant favored by all the overnighting company crews. Once in the restaurant Captain Bob recognized several pilots who were there, and we hooked up with them to share dinner and a few drinks. We would be legal to have a couple brews since our departure the next day was not until early afternoon. As I looked around the restaurant, I spotted two well-known actors from big TV shows. They were sitting a few tables away from us and having dinner. They were in town doing an off-Broadway production of some stage play. They both looked better in person than on screen. I thought to myself, "This is going to be some career". Dining in fine restaurants with showbusiness people and other flight crews sharing that comradery. The next day as we were in the crew room at Boston, Captain Bob was starting to be a little more civil to me. Since we all had to ride together from the hotel to the airport, we arrived in plenty of time to do our paperwork and get on the airplane well before they started boarding the passengers. Once again, Captain Bob, who I was allowed to call him by his first name "Captain". Only kidding. He did allow us to use first names in the cockpit. Checklists were all accomplished by memory by "Bob" and were not verbalized. I guess Bob was showing me how real pilots operated. Bob flew the first leg of our three-leg trip back to PIT. He told me that I would fly the airplane on the second leg of the trip. It was a short 30-minute flight to our intermediate stop.

I guess I did OK since he didn't offer any criticism or comments when I flew. So far, the weather for the entire trip had been fine VFR conditions so we did not go via instrument flying rules. Our last leg of the trip was about 50 minutes, and the weather was starting to develop with various layers of clouds and rain. It was still within our VFR conditions for landing at PIT, but we would probably encounter some rain and scud (low clouds) while in route. Since Pittsburgh was a company maintenance base, we were required to do some inflight checks of the fire detection system and an inflight magneto check. We were once again VFR but now running into light rain and scattered clouds. Bob did the magneto checks on both engines which were within limits. Bob did the fire detect checks on the right engine. The lights and bell for the system checked normal on the right side

and Bob started to check the left side system. Since we were now running in light rain I wondered if Bob would want me to get an inflight IFR clearance the rest of this leg into Pittsburgh. Before I had a chance to ask him, the firelights and bell started to ring intermittently for the right-side fire system which we had just checked. In ground school, we were told that the fire detection loops were prone to give false warnings when wet. The bell and lights for the right side now became a steady ring with both loops for the right-side steady red. Bob, who was a chain cigarette smoker had one lit in his fingers. When the fire lights became steady, he asked me to look out the right window at the engine and tell him if I spotted any smoke or fire coming out of the engine. I looked and could only see the front portion of the engine which looked normal. While all this was going on Bob did not silence the fire bell which could be silenced with a cutoff switch. He was running the throttle for the right engine up and down which I'm sure was very unsettling to the flight attendant and passengers. Bob directed me to go into the cabin and see if any smoke or fire was coming from the engine exhaust which we couldn't see from the cockpit. As I was trying to be careful not to snag my brand-new uniform pants on any of the sharp portions of the cockpit seat Bob looked at me and said "Get Your Ass Moving". As I got to the cockpit door and tried to open it, I found that the door had been locked by the flight attendant and I had no key. As I was rattling the door, the flight attendant opened the door from her side, and I almost fell into the aisle in front of all the passengers. At this point Captain Bob yelled at me to get back into my seat and he told the flight attendant to get one of our company Captains who was riding in the cabin as a passenger to come up to the cockpit. The captain, who was one of my high school buddies and one of the reasons I applied to this airline, came up and told Bob that all looked normal on the exhaust of the engine.

Bob told me to get in contact with Cleveland center ATC and get us a priority clearance to PIT but not to declare an emergency. Bob finally silenced the fire detection bell, but we still had both loop lights on steady. While all this was going on, Bob was muttering to himself, "I don't want to feather it, I don't want to feather it." As I started to ask Cleveland Air Traffic Control for a clearance Bob grabbed the microphone from my hand and told Cleveland that he had an intermitted fire warning light, but he thought it might be a false warning. He requested a priority clearance into PIT and ATC gave us a heading for a straight in approach and we would be number one to the airport. Of course, our radio conversation was heard by every other flight on the frequency at the same time. By now we had entered the clouds and were flying on instruments. As we were heading direct to the airport, I think Bob had about four or five cigarettes going at the same time so we were almost IFR in the cockpit. We intercepted the localizer signal for the approach to PIT and started down the glide slope. About 4 miles from the runway the fire detection lights for the right engine went out. We were also out of the rain, so I guess the system had time to either dry out or burn out.

The change in Bob's personality when the lights went out was magical. I think he was whistling the tune from the movie "The High and the Mighty". Maybe it was my imagination. Anyway, we landed and taxied to our arrival gate, and everyone deplaned. For the flight crew, it was the end of the trip, so Captain BOB and our lone flight attendant got off the airplane and headed for Ops to check out. I gathered up all my stuff which was scattered all over my side of the cockpit. I think I needed the extra time to reflect on

this entire experience. As I exited the airplane I was thinking “I’ve got a whole new career to put up with this”? As I slide down the steps like the flattened character Wiley Coyote in the cartoons after the roadrunner makes a fool of him, my classmate, who was one number junior to me was waiting at the bottom of the steps. “How was it?” he asked. He was on another flight that had landed just before us and heard the whole radio communications. I told him “You wouldn’t believe it if I told you but if the rest of the career looks like this you may gain a number on the seniority list”.

Ironically, a few years later when I was flying on the DC-9 aircraft, Bob and I would fly together on a regular basis and got along very well. He was still a bit squirrely, but I was used to him and ignored that as being part of his personality. He still chewed up and spit out new copilots when they flew with him but as I was now a fairly senior copilot, I became a real part of the crew with Bob.

## **Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award**

### **Eric Litt**

A few weeks ago, August thirty-first was my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Twenty years since I retired. I had stopped flying about seven or eight years ago. After fifty plus years or so flying wasn’t the fun it used to be, so I decided to do something else.

Since I was no longer in demand as a leading man in Adult Films, I fell back to being an airplane mechanic. I still had my Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics license as well as my Inspection Authorization. I worked at Manassas Airport, 30 minutes from home and traffic always going in the opposite direction. This kept me off the streets and falling into company with unsavory characters.

So, on the thirty first, I was inspecting an aircraft and about noon, the young lady (I can call her that as she is 55 years younger than me.) that is the “Jack of all trades” for the company asked me to come into the conference room in the hanger as there was a problem with something. I followed her and came into the room. Wow, in the room was over 50 people. My wife, son, and daughters, all the folks that worked in that hanger, many friends that I had not seen in years and the FAA from the Washington District Office. There was a catered lunch, then. I was presented with the “Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.”

From the Award Certificate, The Wright Brother’s “Master Pilot” Award is the most prestigious award the FAA issues to pilots certified under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61. This award is named after the Wright brothers, the first US pilots, to recognize individuals who have exhibited professionalism, skill, and aviation expertise for at least 50 years while piloting aircraft as “Master Pilots”.

In addition to being licensed for 50 years, letters of recommendation from at least three other pilots as to professionalism and flying experience.

I guess somehow, I made the grade. I had no idea this was happening. My family had dug through old logbooks and found my first one with my first flight on May 11, 1958, in a J-3 Cub. I received my Private February 12, 1959, and the rest is history. I was told afterwards that the application process was going on for over six months to get everything and not let me know this was happening. They did well.

Janice and I are doing well, married for 47 years living in the same house for 45 years, along with 4 horses 2 donkeys, 2 dogs, (No, the animals live in the barn) and 8 grandkids. Not bad for marrying the Chief Pilot's daughter.

I hope to see all next year when we can get together.

pn3'

### **New Soaring Eagle Bob Sauer**

I haven't been able to verify this, but I believe Bob Mueller may be the oldest living former All-American Airways pilot. Bob turned 100 years old last January. He was hired in March of 1949 to fly DC-3's as the airline transitioned from airmail pick-up to passenger service. Bob retired in 1981 flying the DC-9.

I never had the opportunity to fly with Bob, but my dad—another Bob--flew with him as a first officer in the late 1950's and early '60's. I did however get to fly with my dad as a first officer when he decided to retire early in 1982. I officially retire the end of October and I feel fortunate to have gotten to know and to have flown with many of the original pilots who flew for the several airlines that eventually comprised USAirways, now part of American Airlines.

Bob currently lives with his son, Chris, in Middleburg, VA. If you would like to contact him, I'm sure he would be happy to hear from you. Unfortunately, Bob doesn't do email and a telephone conversation may be difficult with him because he suffers from the same hearing issues that most of us seem to suffer from as well. So, a letter or note may be the best way to reach him. His address is: 6484 Wildwood Ln. Middleburg, VA 20117.

I intended to take this picture with Bob on his birthday last January, but because of Covid concerns, we were only recently able to do this.



## Bob Kyle

One of my Grandsons, Thomas Kyle, is a senior at the Air Force academy and he is the leader of their parachute demonstration team. Picture attached. They recently did an air show with the Blue Angles.

