

# Aerie News

The Eagles Aerie News of the **USAir**

Second Quarter 2024

**Soaring Eagles**

## **TABLE of CONTENTS**

Messages from your Officers

Soaring Eagles Write

## **Board of Directors**

President

Joe Kernan

1<sup>st</sup> VP

Judy Schmidt

2<sup>nd</sup> VP

Steve Flom

Treasurer

Andy Skiba

Webmaster

Paul Sturpe

Secretary

Judi Todd

Past President

John Davis

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

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(276) 632-9941

Captain Joe Kernan

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

Plans are well underway for the 47th Annual Soaring Eagles Convention/Reunion. As has been previously reported the Friday Meet & Greet is being replaced with Recurrent Training to be held in the Recurrent Training Room which is actually the hospitality suite that we have become accustomed to over the years. That room is located at the end of the hall and will revert to the Hospitality suite after Friday evenings activities.

On Saturday evening after returning from the cruise an auction will be held there, and again on Sunday morning at 10:00AM the Annual Business Meeting will be held there as well. One of the most important things we do during the Convention is to elect officers. This year we will be electing a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Secretary /Editor. The Treasurer, and Webmaster were both elected last year to two-year terms and will be up for election in 2025.

ARTICLE V – NOMINATION AND ELECTION SECTION 1. All candidates for office shall be nominated and elected as provided in this Article. SECTION 2. The nominating committee shall consist of 3 members appointed by the President, (each a Past President). Nominations for any office shall not be considered without the consent of the nominee. Additional nominations may be made by any member present at the annual meeting,

provided prior consent of the nominee has been secured. SECTION 3. Each year at the annual meeting a President, a First Vice President and a Second Vice President shall be elected for one-year terms by a majority vote of those members present. The Recording Secretary and Webmaster shall be elected for 2-year terms in even numbered years by a majority vote of members present. The Treasurer shall be elected for a 2-year term in odd numbered years by a majority vote of members present. The outgoing Treasurer shall maintain the position until the end of the year when and if there is a change, allowing the outgoing Treasurer to collect/maintain proper documentation required to file Soaring Eagles Annual Tax returns. The Immediate Past President is expected to be present at all Executive Board meetings as a participating member and shall vote in the event of a tie vote of the Executive Board. However, He/She shall not be counted as part of the Three (3) member quorum requirement to conduct an official meeting. The Executive Board may, by a majority vote, remove any Officer for good cause. Should an office of the Executive Board be vacated for any reason after the adjournment of the annual meeting, the remaining officers shall be responsible for appointing another member to complete the remaining term of such vacated office, according to their own dictates. SECTION 4. Membership meeting votes shall be cast by a show of hands or by secret ballot if requested by any member present at the annual meeting. REGULAR and qualified HONORARY members are authorized to vote. SECTION 5. The duly elected slate of Officers, except the Treasurer, shall assume their duties each year as the last function of the banquet held as part of the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is normally held at the Annual Convention. EXCEPTION: The Treasurer shall assume the duties January 1st when there is a change.

Any member that has a desire to make themselves available for any of these open positions should notify one of the following.

Captain Bill Leefe: [wleefe1158@outlook.com](mailto:wleefe1158@outlook.com)

Captain Bob Flom: [flyrlf@aol.com](mailto:flyrlf@aol.com)

Captain Bob Knapp: [summitgus@aol.com](mailto:summitgus@aol.com)

Captain Joe Kernan: [Pres@usairsoaringeagles.org](mailto:Pres@usairsoaringeagles.org)

Good pay, and excellent working conditions.

Having all of these activities in the Recurrent training/Hospitality suite is intended to save the Soaring Eagles some of your dues' money. Speaking of dues, back on April 17, Treasurer Andy Skiba reminded everyone that dues were payable on the last day in February. While I realize that summer with all of its myriad activities can pose many distractions, we need everyone who wishes to remain active to pay their dues.

See Andy's message of April 17, 2024

Treasurer comments:

Unlike many organizations The Soaring Eagles only has one meeting and membership convention/reunion per year. While our annual membership dues were never meant to pay for the costs involved in putting on the annual reunion, they do to a small extent help pay for the operating costs involved in running your organization. As Joe Kernan, our president, has stated in his recent message to the membership he pointed out the need to adjust and increase the cost to attend our next reunion event this fall. I would be remiss if I did not bring to your attention the shortfall we are experiencing in this year's annual membership dues.

We currently have 999 members shown on our database but due to the different categories of member status such as life members, exempt members, and various other categories of non-dues paying members we show a total of 539 Soaring Eagles members who fall into the dues paying category. Of this number, 457 are pilots and 82 are flight attendants.

All of our members were reminded that dues were due to be paid by the end of February. As of this date April 15, 2024, we have only 160 members paid up.

An important part of our financial picture is that membership dues while not offsetting the costs that our treasury pays to supplement the expense of our annual convention/reunion meeting, your dues are vital to helping to keep our organization fiscally sound and to minimize the impact of rising costs to running any organization, even with an all-volunteer board of officers.

I can only ask that if you have not paid your annual dues, please send those dues in so that we can continue to carry you as an active member of your Soaring Eagles retired pilot and flight attendant organization.

Perhaps you are still under the impression that your dues were payable on your birthday. That policy was changed by the membership several years ago, which changed the due date to the last day of February.

We thank those of you that have already taken care of this important obligation, and I look forward to processing the payments from those who have not yet paid.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our convention/ reunion this fall in TAMPA. I guarantee that you will have a wonderful time.

Please go to <https://usairsoaringeagles.org/>, where you will find instructions on how to pay. By check or Paypal The choice is yours.

Thanks in advance,

Andy Skiba

Soaring Eagles Treasurer

Andrew Skiba

Soaring Eagles

6761 Circle Dr

Fort Myers, FL 33905

Despite this message back in April we still have less than 50% of our members who have paid their dues. That is not a sustainable number.

We are introducing a new wrinkle this year which we hope will generate an increased interest in the History of all of the Airlines that made up USAir prior to the American merger. We are compiling an unknown number of questions about our history that should be easily answered if one simply takes the time to visit our website to do the requisite reading for the correct answers. Between now and the Convention/Reunion the questions will be provided, and the papers will be graded at the Recurrent Training on Friday night Oct. 25, 2024. Anyone who participates in selecting the questions, will not be allowed to participate in the test. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will be presented.

Many of the early birds have already made their hotel reservations, and registered with Any Skiba, and I urge those that have not yet done so to act now and make our planning job so much easier. All of the necessary information regarding these two tasks is available under the Conventions Tab at <https://usairsoaringeagles.org>. Do it today and avoid any problems down the road.

As reported earlier I was reluctant to commit to a firm number to the cruise company until I had a better handle on the number planning to sign up for the cruise. In order to preserve the same room on the Yacht Starship that we've utilized in the past, I committed to 70 folks signing up. Since I guaranteed 70, that's what we pay for. The number can be increased, but not decreased. Obviously if less than 70 sign up, The Soaring Eagles take a hit, and I look stupid. I am relying on you to make sure the Soaring Eagles don't take a hit, as for me looking stupid, some things can't be changed. Seriously, please help us make our minimum number.

The hospitality suite will be a busy place this year and will be under the direction of our Secretary Judi Todd. Although many members have stepped up to help in the past, it might be helpful if Judi had a list of members ahead of time that are willing to join her team. If you're willing to help out, you can send a message to [Judiltodd@gmail.com](mailto:Judiltodd@gmail.com).

I look forward to seeing many of you in Tampa the last week in October. Meanwhile, please take care of dues, hotel reservations, and Reunion Registration.

Joe

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(724) 378-7025

Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt  
Colbath

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

Fellow Eagles,

When I wrote my article for the 1st quarter "Aerie" I talked about not being too excited by the thought of emergency evacuations, and the other stuff we used to do in recurrent training. Once I got to training though I really enjoyed seeing Guys and Gals that I had flown with, but also seeing Guys and Gals from other bases that I knew but didn't fly with regularly.

On Friday evening Oct 25, 2024, we hope to do more of the fun part of recurrent training, only this time we will renew acquaintances, and make new ones. I am also excited to hear that there is going to an Airline History test as part of the recurrent training at the reunion. I have been told that if I plan to participate in the test that I cannot be involved in compiling any of the questions. Since I started in 1959 and want to participate in this test of Airline History, I'm going to start reading up on the history section of our website so that I can make a good showing. Someone else can come up with the questions.

This sounds like a good time to me, so I urge you to make your hotel, and Soaring Eagles registrations now. Everything you need is at [usairsoaringeagles.org](http://usairsoaringeagles.org) under the convention tab.

Now do your homework,

See you in Tampa,

Judy

**SECOND VICE  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Captain Steve Flom

[stevav8or@aol.com](mailto:stevav8or@aol.com)

Dear members, As I am sitting here thinking about our upcoming convention, I was multitasking looking at FaceBook. Posted was an old picture of Captain Scott Summerfield standing in ops in DCA (probably 1982). There was a handwritten poster on the wall talking about what to do with your bags. It reminded me about how simple things were back in the golden days of our careers. I don't think I appreciated how great and simple it was. We had handwritten flight plans. I had to keep our flight times for pay on a pad with the crew's payroll numbers on it. A big responsibility to turn it in at the end of the trip so everyone got paid (ask me what happened when I mixed up Sue Genola's payroll number, that girl is fast!). The BAC111, the DC-9, the B727 and 737 all had cables going from control wheel to flight controls. Simple and reliable. When I retired you had to tell a computer what you wanted to do and it might just move a control for you, if it approved. Now before I keep sounding like an 'old fart' this is where I'm going with this. It really makes me appreciate our convention. A simple get together with old friends and new. Finding simple ways to enjoy drinks and food and entertainment. Well, Joe may not think it's so simple sometimes. Anyway, let's keep finding simple and easy ways to have fun and enjoy each other's stories and friendship. See you at the Convention

Steve Flom 2ND VP

**SECRETARY'S MESSAGE**

(619) 417-7274

Flight Attendant Judi Todd

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

Again I am sitting here with my two kitties (Bonnie & Clyde) on my lap, thinking about our upcoming convention/reunion at the end of October. Time does move fast the older I get. The board members are trying to make a few changes in our itinerary to keep the expenses down and the fun and excitement up. Since I am in charge of the "Hospitality Suite" and we have moved the "Meet & Greet" get together into that suite, I would like to invite any and anyone to "help me host" this venue. Wanted to make sure you all know that Everything is gratis in the Hospital Suite (except for the Auction (and we want you to save your money for that)! It's really fun to tend bar and get to talk and visit with all of you so anyone can check with me and we can work a fun "help schedule". Looking forward to seeing you guys in October.

Judi

**WEBMASTER'S MESSAGE**

(828) 478-1133

Captain Paul Sturpe

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

From your Webmaster

Did you know? There is an extensive history of Allegheny, Lake Central, Mohawk, PSA, Piedmont and America West Airlines on our web site. Just go to <http://usairsoaringeagles.org> then click on the "Aviation History" button. Next you select the airline (or Industry) history that you are interested in.

I would love to have any additions or corrections that you might be aware of. Just send them to the email address listed below.

So long until next quarter.

Paul Sturpe, Webmaster

[webmaster@usairsoaringeagles.com](mailto:webmaster@usairsoaringeagles.com)

**TREASURER'S MESSAGE**

(239) 693-9285

Captain Andy Skiba

[aeskiba@cs.com](mailto:aeskiba@cs.com)

From the treasurer's desk:

October is closer than we realize so get those hotel reservations made and get those forms and checks sent to me for your registration to attend our annual conference/reunion.

As of now I have 14 members signed up.

Our president, Joe Kernan will be adding his reminder about dues obligations.

We are starting to see new members added to our Soaring Eagles rolls but the majority of our members are still Senior Citizens by any definition.

We need our second generation members to recruit from their ranks to keep the Soaring Eagles alive and relevant.

In today's world of mega airlines it is easy to forget that it was carriers such as Allegheny, Mohawk, Lake Central, Piedmont, Empire, and PSA airlines who helped create the current giant airlines that now dominate the skies.

Andy Skiba

## “SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

### Monday Morning Story

I was flying as F/O on a DC-9 with one of the Good Guy Captains and we were doing one of the Chicago (ORD) flights on a beautiful summer day. I had flown the segment into O’Hare and it was the Captain's leg to fly back to PIT.

As usual, the O’Hare traffic was non-stop and they were using multiple runways for both take offs and landings. Our taxi route out had us on the way to runway 22L. The control tower was giving constant clearances to all departing flights pretty much without a break in their transmissions to all flights. As we fell into the lineup of aircraft departing our assigned runway we only had a few flights ahead of us. Once we were in the number one position for takeoff, the tower cleared us for POSITION AND HOLD on runway 22L. Since it was the Captain's leg to fly and he advanced the throttles to move into position I acknowledged the tower POSITION AND HOLD with our flight number.

As we moved into our spot for takeoff the Captain just continued to advance THE POWER TO THE Takeoff EPRs and we started blasting down the runway before I realized that we were not stopping and holding as instructed by the tower controller. I decided to not to shout to John, our Captain, that we were not cleared for the takeoff and cause us to abort the takeoff and have to start writing letters for the reason for the aborted takeoff.

The Tower air traffic controller cleared us for takeoff as if we were still in position on the runway. I answered with the response “ROGER FLIGHT 235 on the ROLL. Of course by this time we were over 1000 feet in the air. The controller switched us over to departure control and I checked in with him and reported us climbing out of 2500 feet. The departure controller noted that we were really climbing and I just said “Yes, we have a light load this afternoon”. Once we were established enroute back to PIT I told John that we were never cleared for takeoff when he rolled down the runway. Our arrival in PIT was routine and no one was waiting for us to explain why we took off from Chicago without the proper clearance.

The next few days I was waiting for the phone call from our base chief pilot to let us know that we were facing an FAA violation but the call never came.

I guess we dodged the bullet on that one by me just giving the departure controller the right response when he asked us why we were climbing so high when we checked in on his frequency.

We had the right stuff on that day.

Andy Skiba



## New Members

Fellow Soaring Eagles,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our five newest Soaring Eagles.

Captain Kevin Ayala was hired by USAir on Oct. 13, 1980, and retired from American Airlines on Nov. 16, 2021. Although Kevin doesn't list the captain, his first trip was as an F/E from BOS to MSP. One of his most memorable trips was flying from Seattle to London and being able to observe the Northern Lights for more than two hours. Also listed as memorable was his remarkable 41-year career.

Captain A. J. Gode was hired by Allegheny Airlines in January 1973 and flew his first trip between PIT and ISP with Captain Tom Somerville. Rather than accepting furlough in the mid-seventies Captain Gode chose to fly in the M-298 program. Captain Gode retired in December 2003.

Captain Fred Hobbs was hired by USAir on January 14, 1982, and flew his first trip with Captain Dick Burdick as an F/E. I don't know if he impressed Captain Burdick, but he must have impressed Flight Attendant Debbie Dean later that year, as he describes flying a three-day trip as F/E and being invited home by Debbie. They married in 1984, and they are still together today, Captain Hobbs retired in February 2015.

Captain Bill Stotlar was hired by USAir on January 14, 1986, and flew his first trip with Captain Larry Dull from PIT to SFO as a F/E. Captain Stotlar lists as his most memorable experience as flying into Las Vegas as a F/O on the B757 at night and watching the lights of Sin City grow brighter by the minute, Captain Stotlar moved around a bit during his career having been based in PIT-PHL-CLT-ORD-DFW-LAX. Captain Stotlar retired May of 2023.

Captain Tim Sullivan was hired by USAir on June 13, 1983, and flew his first trip with Captain Bennett Chamberlin on a BAC 111 between DCA and HFD, Captain Sullivan retired on June 12, 2022. Tim lists that his most memorable flight was his retirement flight from PHL to DUB on a B787 with his entire family along with him, and the memories of the great people he flew with during his career. Captain Sullivan retired in June of 2022.

Welcome to all of these Captains, we hope to see you all at the upcoming Convention/ Reunion to be held in Tampa Oct. 25, 26, 27.