

AVIATION PIONEERS ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 1991 NEWSLETTER

The Aviation Pioneers Association held its first Annual Reunion on May 18, 1991, at the Burbank Hilton Hotel, Burbank, California. The Burbank Hilton went all out to help the organizers make the event a huge success. Their Director of Catering was in attendance, thus assuring the smooth operation.

Approximately 365 people attended the luncheon on Saturday and reception in a Hospitality Room off the main lobby which the Hilton provided between 6:00 and 8:00 P.M. on the evening of Friday, May 17. Locals who were unable to make Saturday's function, and a large number of out-of-towners, arrived to renew acquaintance and exclaim over the youthful appearance of all. These included Bob Blake (North American/USOA); Stan Dearborn (Skycoach); Jack O'Brian and wife (TIA); Ruby Mercer (Mercer Air); Fred Atkins (Central Air Transport); Jack Pedesky (FAA-HNL and GLA); Paul Marable and wife (GLA); Matthew "Bud" Wilson and his wife Marge (GLA); Audrey Glore (GLA); Rush Hughes (GLA/Cal Hawaiian, Trans America) to name a few. Greeters included Dave Simmons, Ruby Mercer, George and Nancy Anton, Terry Dickason, and Ida Hermann.

THANK YOU to all those who helped at the luncheon. Your assistance with the check-in, parking validation and raffle ticket distribution is greatly appreciated. The morning of the reunion, people attending the 11:00 A.M. event began to gather in the lobby at 8:30 A.M. Soon cries of joy and laughter overtook the scene. The bars opened about 10:00 A.M. and conviviality reigned. Each person received a check-in envelope of tickets, information and souvenirs. The luncheon room was opened a little early to accommodate the happy crowd and Directors assisted event coordinator Nancy Anton in seating those involved with the program. Ida Hermann's table included George and Joan Patterson (GLA/CAP/Great Northern); Ed Smith (Trans-Alaskan); Ed Jaeger (Jaeger USA) who donated the "Warbird Fan" door prize; Richard Keatinge, our Legal Eagle mentor and LA senior partner of Fulbright & Jaworski); Jaeger and Keatinge each received a big hand when introduced. Unfortunately, Larry Armstrong (Ed's partner) was too ill to attend. Naomi Henion (Tillie) suffered a car failure and Ed Smith's wife was ill.

Ruby Morgan Mercer and sister J. P. Morgan sat with Dave Simmons (former airport manager and president of Lockheed Air Terminal. Terry Dickason was seated with Dick Rossi (AVG/Flying Tiger Air); Tom Fydell (FAA); James Grey (Flight Crews International); Tony Rias and friends.

Others attending from the FAA included John Day, with Mrs. Day, and Mae Winder (John L. "Bud" Winder's widow).

Leonard Rosen (Skycoach Bur) and Fred Atkins were also with old friends.

More names you will recognize are Dr. Ralph Cox (USOA); Dar Kindred (Air America and Kindred Aviation); Lee Cameron (Allied Aircraft); Baxter Pond, friend to aviation and insurance expert; Doug Hofman (Standard/TOA). Dutch Durringer (Slick); Don McKey (NAA); Jim Hart (NAA); Heide Hart, Red Hart's widow (NAA); Ed and Lynn Hogan (Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays); Charlie Linza (Cal Central); John Treher (USOA/GLA/CAC); Russ Mandanici, Buffalo, NY; Clark Gathercole (NAA); Walt Brand (TIA); Mary Lou Paulson (USOA).

We were delighted to meet Bob Prescott's (Flying Tigers) two lovely daughters--French and Kirchy Prescott--who arrived at the reunion hoping to meet people who had known their parents, Bob and Helen Ruth (both deceased). They were introduced to Nancy Anton and sister Eileen Chambers (husband Lowell/Admiral Air). Peter Prescott, their brother who so tragically died in a Palm Springs plane crash at age 11-12, attended Campbell Hall school with the sons and daughters of Nancy and Eileen. If you recall, Bob was on board the flight en route around the world, pole-to-pole, and was contacted to leave the flight in Honolulu. Peter's Boy Scout troop acted as Honorary Pall bearers for him. The girls were very young at the time and were overwhelmed to meet people who knew Peter and their parents.

Historical American flags loaned by Ida Hermann, which carried out the patriotic theme of the event, were hung about the room. Ruby Mercer chose the beautiful red, white and blue floral arrangements, which also contained small American flags.

The reunion started almost on nonschedule (sic). Luncheon was baked chicken. George Batchelor generously underwrote the bar vouchers which were distributed with the meal ticket envelopes. (No tickee, no seatee, no eatee, no drinkee, no refundee). Russ Mandanici asked if something other than chicken might be served since some people--himself included--are not chicken aficionados. So I checked--a local "In n Out" (a So. Calif. burger chain) is but a few blocks away--OR--we can have Larry Galluccio set up a box lunch program, 1950's flight style!

David Simmons, Chairman of the Board of APA, was the official MC by unanimous vote of the Board. Terry Dickason had pleaded sore throat which he tried to lubricate with medicinal scotch. Successfully, we understand. It should be noted that, without Terry's persistant, continual and

productive efforts over the past 15 years to create these events for the nonsked industry, there would not have been a reunion--now formalized into the Aviation Pioneers Association.

During the program, APA Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Richard Leigh Dickason (Terry) and Naomi Thompson Henion (Tillie). Ida Hermann, presented the awards and related Terry's vast aviation experience and read the certificate, approved by the Board and signed by its Chairman, David Simmons. Unfortunately, Tillie was grounded in La Jolla by engine failure and could not attend; her certificate was mailed to her. She plans to be with us at next year's event and looks forward to auld lang syne.

Some facts about the history of the reunion should be mentioned here--along with a nod of acknowledgement to the people who contributed so much to make it possible: In 1977, personnel from Great Lakes Airlines put together a well-attended (275) reunion at the Sportsman's Lodge in Studio City, CA. They extended invitations to include all others of the Burbank and California based carriers. Participants avowed it was a smashing party and voted to hold another in future.

D.W. "Poddy" Mercer and Ruby, his wife, companion and buddy, hosted a great brunch party at the Beverly Hills Friars Club in the late 70's. It was held in December and was repeated for several years thereafter, until the Mercers became more involved with Wyoming living. Some attendees were Tom Fydell; John L. Winder*; Don Duffy*; Fritz Hutcheson; Dick Neumann; Harold Cope; Dar Kindred; Baxter Pond; Red Hart*; Jim Hart; Kirk Kerkorian; Terry Dickason; John Day; Ed Hogan, and Chuck Graffy. (*Deceased). Terry undertook the subsequent contacts and work to attempt to hold together a nucleus of the nonsked industry in Southern California and secured financial help, generously provided by Kirk Kerkorian, (LAAS/TIA/WAL/MGM); George Batchelor (Arrow/SSW/IAM/Batchair) and Fred Benninger (FTL/WAL). From these earlier gatherings we now arrive at the Hilton Hotel in Burbank, California, on May 18, 1991. Hoorah!!

MC Dave Simmons, in a brief presentation, outlined the history, success, energy, innovations, experience and qualifications of the nonsked industry and its dramatic tenure in bringing free enterprise to the field of commercial air transportation, thus creating the greatest revolution in aviation since Air Mail--LOW COST AIRCOACH--offering affordable air fares to the general public. The nonskeds subsequent destruction appears to have been politically initiated by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy via the CAB. Dave Simmons, speaking from personal experience, covered all the nonsked bases very thoroughly, with excellent analysis. Dave agreed to commit his comments

to writing; many people have asked for a copy. We are waiting, Dave.

Music was provided by a small group of musicians under the sponsorship of Ruby Mercer. They did an excellent job in recalling the rhythms and mood of the 50's and 60's music. A talented singer from the nonsked industry, Dolly Melvin, performed many songs from the era and they all received a great ovation.

In closing the program, Dick Neumann and Clark Gathercole shared the task of presenting door prizes. Prizes awarded were: 1) an all-expense weekend for two at one of his Palm Springs resorts (donated by Ed Hogan/Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays; 2 and 3) copies of the most recent book, "Adventures in Aviation", by author Kim Scribner, (a former chief pilot with Pan Am, consultant to USOA and director at Embry Riddle Aviation School). This book details, with photos, the recovery of USOA's C-54 that crash-landed on Hudson Bay ice during the DEW Line operation, and the successful efforts to save it, as performed by Dr. Cox of USOA, assisted by Amos Heacock (ACTA and Aviation Corp of Seattle). You can purchase the book for \$15 by contacting Kim Scribner at 2828 N. Atlantic, Daytona Beach, FL 32018 (telephone 904/677-0251); 4) A Warbird (ceiling) Fan, manufactured and donated by Jaeger USA, 19000 Wyandotte St., Reseda, CA 91335 (Telephone 818/708-1500). This fan is designed in the shape of the shark nose of a P-40 WWII fighter plane (AVG). It was an instant hit. 5, 6 and 7) Three silk-screen art prints by artist David Halperin, brother-in-law of Ida Hermann and Nancy Anton. Titles were "JUMBO JET" a head-on look at a 747 aircraft; "A WINTER'S MORN" from a pilots view and concept; and "VIEW FROM A SIDE WINDOW". David (now deceased), a retired TWA 747 pilot and commander in US Naval Aviation, held a degree in aeronautical engineering from NY University Guggenheim Aeronautical Institute. He attended Kansas City Art Institute for seven years, between flight schedules. His art work has won many awards and was displayed in TWA's NY terminal for many years. Ida Hermann donated these prints and advises she will give more next year.

Although not everyone won a door prize, we were able to provide souvenirs for each person attending. Lockheed donated colored posters of the Stealth Fighter, and cartoonist Paul Carlson, of Mr. Magoo fame, drew a cartoon of Magoo flying along under a message to all Aviation Pioneers Association members, wishing us a happy May, 1991 reunion. We were able to reproduce the cartoon so that everyone attending received a print and we also used the cartoon on the cover of the day's program.

There were many "notables" in attendance, including R.E.G. "Ron" Davies, of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, who

made the trip from Washington DC to join us. He has a consuming interest in our particular history and has written a related book on the subject, entitled "Rebels and Reformers of the Airways". He was very excited to be able to meet some of the people he has heard and read about and considers our era to be very fascinating.

Following the reunion, in early June, I (Dick Newmann), made a 6-day trip to the Chicago area on business. While there, I was able to contact former industry people William "Bill" Mather, Bill McCann and Dave Hopper, and of course, William "Bob" Arndt, who accompanied me to look over a B-17E/C-108 basket case for possible restoration. There are many more people out there who are unaware of the development of a group of nonskeds (us) into an association. Your efforts are needed for us to contact them or vice versa.

As you know, one of our aims is to work toward establishing a museum to commemorate the contributions made to aviation by Supplemental Air Carriers. Others are striving to do the same, such as R. C. "Chappy" Czapiewski, who would like to see an Air and Space Museum at Lockheed, Burbank, using the land and buildings available. The OX5 Aviation Pioneers, located in Pittsburgh, PA, also encourage the establishment and operation of air museums as one of its objectives. Chino, CA is the home of The Air Museum/Planes of Fame. They have collected 80 aircraft.

BAGATELLE

ITEM -- Do you remember "Lord Buckley" who traveled BUR-CHI on many GLA flights, then entertained us at Christmas parties? He always greeted the owners as "Lord and Lady Hermann.

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ITEM -- Rush Hughes (Cal Central/Cal Hawaiian/Trans America/GLA) is the adopted son of Rupert Hughes, Howard's uncle, and thus was a Howard Hughes heir. He is also a superlative pilot.

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ITEM -- Jaeger USA advises they are accepting orders for their Warbird Fans; they are awaiting final approval (imminent) from UL-Labs inspection.

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ITEM -- Did you know Dr. Norman Kessler, who owned and operated BUR based Robin Airlines, had a wonderful idea and put it into effect? We have all threatened the same action but he DID it--installed a pay phone in his office. (His airline was named for his two-year old daughter, who was nominal president.)

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ITEM -- Fritz Hutcheson (US Aircoach, BUR) is credited with coining the famous Daily Question -- "How many we got -- live ones or in the freezer?"

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ITEM -- Dar Kindred (Air America/Kindred Aviation) and his student walked away unharmed from a training flight crash (March '91). Damage to plane but not to them, thankfully. The following description of the event was submitted by Dar:

THE SATURDAY BATH -- "You all probably know of Whitman Airport, one of the few remaining old time airports--short, narrow runway with no place to go off either end if trouble develops.

I still have flyitis so I teach there a couple of days a week.

On takeoff the first Saturday of last March in a Cessna 182, with a student for instrument training, at 200 feet the engine didn't cough or bark--it just quietly died!

After flying the oceans of the world for several years, all I had available was a small muddy reservoir of water drainage off the San Gabriel mountains--but it was welcome as there was nowhere else to go. After splash down in three feet of water and one foot of mud, the two of us made a hasty exit to dry land. I went home, got some dry clothes, came back, and finished my day of flying.

I haven't seen the student since. I guess he didn't like the watery addition to the instrument curriculum.

As for me, I prefer a warmer Saturday bath as that water sure was cold!"

ITEM -- The above mentioned Whitman Airport in Pacoima, CA, is to be the subject of a massive construction project with a 20-year master plan to widen the existing runway, add a new one, new parking areas and hangars. The plan calls for development of 26 acres. Currently there is a 700-pilot waiting list (four years) for 260 hangars. "Whitman (past, present and future) will essentially serve the aeronautical needs of the personal, recreational and small business aircraft user." (LA Times 8/14/91). Scheduled to start soon, the first 5 years of projected work will include the new runway and 100 additional airplane hangars.

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ITEM -- The Hawaiian company called Wreckfinders (sells parts only) has sought permission from the U.S. Forest Service to remove old aircraft wrecks from the National Forests in Southern California. They are particularly interested in warplanes. The company plans to sell old parts to preservationists for use in planes still flying. Some people object, but the Forest Service is receptive, LA County Supervisors have approved, so the wheels are grinding. Among the known wrecks are the tail section of a BT-13 WWII trainer and a P-51 Mustang, flown in the ETO.

Members of the Confederated Air Force, a national organization dedicated to preserving warplanes of the 1939-1945 era, say it is very difficult to find vintage plane parts and an engine could cost \$30,000 or more. They also carry their search for parts to So. America. (LA Times 8/91). So if you have any old plane parts, they're looking for you, kids.

ITEM -- Do you recall the advice from someone who learned the hard way to scan every contract with a magnifying glass for hidden "whatevers" and not to overlook the watermark or analysis of the ink for disappearing qualities?

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ITEM -- Remember the great sales slogan -- "Fly Now-Pay Later"? Delayed flights brought critical comments from witty passengers -- "Don't you mean "Pay Now-Fly Later"?"

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ITEM -- Would you like a songfest at the next reunion? Some have suggested it. Maybe we will write our own song. We'll work on it. Suggestions welcome.

ITEM -- There is another new book entitled "Barons of the Sky" by Wayne Biddle, recently published by Simon & Schuster--\$22.95. The book covers "From Early Flight to Strategic Warfare: The Story of the American Aerospace Industry". Washington reporter Biddle tells the story of the men themselves and the behemoth they created. Your reporter read a review and found it fascinating. The creators of Lockheed, Northrop and Douglas were as "quirky" as the entrepreneurs who founded the nonskeds. There were many parallels in the two industries.

ITEM -- Does anyone know the whereabouts of CAA (FAA) Joe Hornsby's (wife Dorothy) children - or anything about a book on aviation that he was writing some 25-35 years past? At least one daughter was a talented musician.

ITEM -- In addition to those mentioned above, there were some who had to cancel on the day of the reunion:

Jack Vilsack (Skycoach BUR ticket counter) and his wife Betty, who was advised early on the morning of the reunion that she was seriously ill.

Joe Kristof (Skycoach BUR) had an emergency appendectomy a few days prior to the reunion, so he and wife Fran were not able to attend. Next year, Joe, NO EXCUSES.

John Loustau (Standard/NAA/fixed base operator) and his wife, Lillian, were at the airport on the morning of the reunion ready to board their flight to Burbank when Lillian suffered a severe nose bleed which they could not stop. She had to be taken to the hospital.

Kim Scribner had to leave on an early 5/18 flight where he had been erroneously booked by a travel agent. He sent his regrets.

Glen St. George missed the party because he arrived at the hotel for a "dinner reunion". He misunderstood the time but was able to chat with some of those who stayed late.

We were recently notified of the death of Sue Biermann (GLA/Bur) in Colfax, CA, of complications from emphysema and pneumonia. Sue's health did not permit her to attend the reunion, although correspondence (and a donation) from her confirmed that she was with us in spirit. Surviving are daughters Lisa and Tina and one grandson. Sue was a lovely woman of great humor, charm and spiritual depth. She will be mourned by family and friends.

Also received is the sad news that Jim Hewitt (Flying Tiger Air/US Air Force/MATS control team/Berlin Airlift), died at age 72 on July 5. Memorial services were held at the Travis Air Force Base Chapel in Fairfield. Jim lived in Yuba City and is survived by his wife Coyla, two daughters, three sons and four grandchildren.

We were not aware of the death of Falcon Batchelor, George's wonderful son. Our deepest condolence to you, George, and to Ruth and your family. All those long years of always smiling though your heart was breaking--we raise a silent toast to you and to Falcon. What a good guy he was.

The eulogy which follows is from Falcon's memorial service, conducted by Minister Douglas E. Batchelor, his brother.

G. FALCON BATCHELOR
1954 - 1990

Falcon was born in Burbank, California, December 7, 1954. Though he was born with cystic fibrosis, a terminal disease with a life expectancy of 15, he refused to be pampered or distracted with self pity. He attended schools in California, New York and Miami and received his degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Falcon worked with his father in the aircraft business as often as his health permitted. In 1979, he founded the Sunny Shores Sea Camp for children with cystic fibrosis in Key Largo, Florida. A large percentage of his time and energy was dedicated to the camp and cystic fibrosis children. During his 35 years of life, he was a source of inspiration and role model to hundreds of C.F. children around the world, teaching them how to improve the quality and quantity of life. One week before his death, though he was very weak, he left the hospital so he could attend the Sunny Shore Sea Camp graduation. His courage, determination, generosity, kindness and love will be

remembered and missed by all. He was a devoted husband; in 1980 he married Anne (Sandy) O'Neill in Miami Beach, Florida. He is survived by father George E. Batchelor, mother Ruth Kory, and brother Douglas E. Batchelor.

We are already working on next year's reunion which will be held on SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1992, AT THE BURBANK HILTON HOTEL. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW. And in anticipation of an even larger crowd, we will move from the Ballrooms where the 1991 reunion was held to the Hotel's Convention Center in order to provide even more comfortable space.

THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE REUNION EACH RECEIVED AN OFFICIAL APA MEMBERSHIP FORM TO BE FILLED OUT FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION. DUES ARE \$15.00 PER FAMILY PER YEAR. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER, YOU MUST FILL OUT A MEMBERSHIP FORM AND PAY YOUR YEARLY DUES. WE ARE INCLUDING A FORM IN THIS NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MIGHT NEED ONE. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY JOINED, PLEASE PASS THE MEMBERSHIP FORM ALONG TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THE ASSOCIATION.

WE EXPECT OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS TO BE READY SOON. ALL MEMBERS JOINING THE ASSOCIATION IN OUR FOUNDING YEAR OF 1991 WILL BE DESIGNATED AS CHARTER, OR FOUNDING MEMBERS.

AND, THANKS TO LEONARD ROSEN (SKYCOACH/BUR), WE HAVE HAD AN OFFICIAL LOGO DESIGNED FOR MEMBERSHIP CARDS, STATIONERY, ETC. ALSO, AS SOON AS FINANCIALLY POSSIBLE, WE WILL HAVE A LAPEL PIN FOR MEMBERS.

TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE FOUNDING OF OUR ASSOCIATION BY SENDING DONATIONS IN ADDITION TO THEIR LUNCHEON AND MEMBERSHIP FEES, A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU.

AND WHILE WE ARE EXPRESSING THANKS, LET'S NOT FORGET THOSE ORGANIZERS WHO MADE DONATIONS TO GET OUR ASSOCIATION IN THE AIR. WITHOUT THEM WE WOULD STILL BE GROUNDED.

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Please keep in touch with us--if you have an article or item you would like to contribute to future letters, don't hesitate to send it. And don't forget to inform us if your address changes.

SEE YOU NEXT MAY 2ND AT THE BURBANK AIRPORT HILTON!