



# Contact!

JANUARY 2003 ISSUE

**REUNION:** Our next Reunion is scheduled for **Saturday, April 12, 2003** at the Sportsmen's Lodge. The Luncheon Reservation Form is enclosed. Please don't wait until the last minute to return it. Earlier is better. If you are coming in from out of town, and want to reserve a room at the Sportsmen's Lodge Hotel, call 800/821-8511 and identify yourself as an "Aviation Pioneer" to receive the preferred rate. After March 28, hotel reservations will be accepted on a space available basis only. The guest speaker this year will be **Bill Gibson** who can best be described as an author, photographer, adventurer, aerospace enthusiast, and an accomplished storyteller. Bill started his career as a World War II combat cameraman for the US Navy where he photographed the take off of Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders from the USS Hornet. He and his camera spent time with the US Air Force during the Korean conflict and on assignment as a civilian with the Marines in Vietnam. For more than half a century, Bill has covered US Presidents, other world leaders, aviation and space pioneers and international news events. We're lucky to have him with us. Be sure to save the date. This Reunion should be one of our best ever.

An organization called the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum is raising money to resurrect and restore the aircraft carrier **Midway**. They intend to make it into a world-class naval history museum, education complex and tourist attraction for visitors from around the world. For more information the organization can be contacted at (619) 702-7700 or [www.midway.org](http://www.midway.org).

Next time you are in Oklahoma City be sure to visit the 99s Museum of Women Pilots. The Ninety-Nines is an organization of women pilots founded in November 1929 at Curtiss Field, Valley Stream New York by **Amelia Earhart** and others and had a membership of 99 of the 117 licensed women pilots of the day. Thus the name Ninety-Nines. The organization today has a membership of over 6600 licensed women pilots from 35 countries. The

museum is located on the second floor of the organizations headquarters at Will Rogers World Airport and contains displays and artifacts focusing on the history of women in aviation. In addition, archives and other resources are maintained on site. For information contact (405) 685-7969 or [www.ninety-nines.org](http://www.ninety-nines.org).

If you happen to keep track of such things, please make note of our new address which is **Aviation Pioneers Association, Box 7031, Tarzana CA 91357-7031**. If you have a story, a tall tale or just a brief comment or even an old photograph (like the two on the back page ) you'd like to share with our readers, we would sure like to hear from you. So now that you have our new address, don't wait, send us something.

**Chairman's Message:** Good friends, this year, 2003, marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Wright Brothers** first manned, controlled, sustained, heavier-than-air, flight at Kitty Hawk. From that humble beginning by a couple of visionary bicycle mechanics, with an aircraft that was little more than a kite, we have progressed to passenger aircraft that can carry over 500 passengers and fighter aircraft that can travel at twice the speed of sound. Over this past century of flight many people have contributed to the progress in aviation. We can take pride in the contributions made by our industry and our efforts. We are looking forward to our next Reunion event and hope you can attend. We are saddened by the passing of **Stanley and Judy Dearborn** and extend our condolences to their loved ones. We are grateful to those of you who continue to support this organization with your dues and your generous donations. We are always looking for new members, so if you know anyone who would be interested, or might just enjoy the Reunion, please have them contact us. The Membership Application for 2003 is enclosed. Until next time, *God Bless!* - *Dave Simmons*

**HAL COPE REMEMBERS:** My first flying job was with Viking Airlines in 1948 as a third pilot on DC-3 aircraft between BUR and MKC. As third pilot, I made the flight legal on the westbound leg because the normal flight time MKC to BUR was 8 plus 10 or ten minutes over the legal limit of eight hours for a crew of two. I left Burbank sitting in the jump seat until the first fuel stop in Prescott, Arizona. I would disembark and stay in a cabin at the airport until the westbound flight stopped for me the next day at which time I would dutifully board the jump seat again, put my name of the flight log and proceed to Burbank. If I was lucky I was offered the right seat, but only after take off and before landing.

This routine of course left me a lot of idle time in Prescott. Having been raised in Cottonwood, just east of Prescott, I felt right at home except I became bored with nothing to do. There was an old Waco UPF-7 in the hanger at the airport. I became friends with the owner (who was afraid of the aircraft) and conned him into letting me exercise the UPF for the price of the fuel. Wow! Did I have fun or did I have fun? Another nice thing about the stop at Prescott was that the owner of the cafe always left the back door open for me so I could help myself to ice cream and pie after my arrival of about 23:30.

While idling my time away in Prescott, I met a guy who wanted to put an airstrip in Sedona. Having spent a lot of my childhood in Oak Creek Canyon I knew full well the only flat real estate large enough for an airstrip was the top of a mountain not far from Willard's store. In those days it was about the only store in Sedona. I went to Oak Creek with this guy and walked the top of the mesa and allowed as how one could get a fairly sizable strip capable of handling most light twins and singles of the day. Navy pilots would feel right at home landing on this mountain top carrier flight deck.

Last weekend I was in Sedona celebrating my 77th and decided to go to the now thriving Sedona Municipal Airport and see what I wrought so many years ago. Was I surprised? You bet! The Sedona Airport is a thriving small airport serving the community of Sedona and surrounding Oak Creek Canyon. I was reading one of the Sedona magazine publications when I discovered an article on the history of the airport. Evidently the first strip was constructed about six years after I walked the top of the mountain. I hunted down the airport manager and filled in the blank spot on the early beginnings of the airport. He was pleased to get the information.

While at the Sedona field, I had a chance to look at the NEW Waco, which was plying the wild blue yonder taking passengers (two in the front cockpit) on flips over beautiful Oak Creek Canyon and beautiful downtown Sedona. Who would have thought that my pacing off the top of a mountain in 1949 would be the birthing of a totally modern airport serving Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon some fifty some years later.

**FROM DICK NEUMANN:** A recent trip to Moab brought back memories of when we ran some charter flights up there for uranium prospectors with a DC-3. In 1953 it was merely a dirt strip south of town and no facilities to speak of except some drum gas. Today it is abandoned and there's not even drum gas, now there is a new airport 35 miles north of town with longer runways. But back in late 1953 or early 1954 Norm Kessler thought it would be a great market and with Jim Brummet they started Navajo Airlines with a Lockheed 10A. They ran from Burbank to Cortez Colorado, Moab and Monticello for about a month. Traffic wasn't there and most of the prospectors didn't have enough money to buy food, let alone tickets. I think Henry Price ended up with that Lockheed 10A. Henry later piled it up in a landing accident at Del Mar, running people down to the races. I'm reasonably sure it was put back together again to continue its career. They don't build them like that any more. Testimony to Lockheed's early dedication to tough fast machines. There was also Claude Monahan, a Frenchman or French Canadian, who operated a sole C-46 for the Wall Street Journal as California Air Freight. On a trip south out of Oakland, the C-46 hit a mountain top not far from San Luis Obispo. The FAA suggested the crew fell asleep. The Finn Twins used to bum rides south with Claude out of SFO. He was, as were most of the Burbank operators, operating on short dollars and stretching everything to the limits. Sometimes they went beyond the limits and ended up in the obit column. Many times there wasn't anything left but what was in the obit column.

Fred Atkins and A.J. "Bert" Baumann owned Central Air Transport in the mid 1950s. Central was having a hard time surviving on military CAM flights. In some cases a crew and C-54 would be out for 6 or 8 weeks and might generate 6000 miles of flying. Since pay was based on mileage, and per diem barely provided survival hotel rooms, life could get quickly complicated and distorted. Eight people to a motel bed sleeping in shifts so they could afford a bar bill. Crazy card games that lasted for weeks with players coming and going and traveling from Kansas City to Chicago, to New York, to Columbia, SC. Central was leasing the C-54 from George Batchelor and George was chasing Atkins and Baumann for his money at Burbank and they were doing everything possible to avoid him.

They had to move the C-54 around to keep it from George Batchelor's repo gang, who were looking for it all over the Eastern US (where they knew it had to be). As Bruce Smeltzer, who was flying for Central at the time, related to me, they had a CAM into

Washington National and landed while major thunder storms were battering the area. They were there to pick up a group of army personnel headed for Fort Bliss, Texas. As they rolled into the military charter area, the rain was coming down so hard they could barely see

where to park. Then Bruce saw an aerostand being rolled out to his side of the aircraft and someone on the stand making motions to him to open the window, which he did. It was George B in person taking his airplane back. It was of course Central Air Transport's last flight. Bruce told George the crew had no funds and would be stranded there. George kicked in enough for them to get a hotel for the night and tickets to NY La Guardia so they could hitch a ride on North American or Skycoach back to Burbank or Oakland. Not sure where Bruce Smeltzer went after that, but I believe he worked with **Charlie Rector** for a while flying water bombers. Sadly most of them are gone. **McClanahan**, the Chief pilot, ended up selling commercial real estate. Bert Baumann became a Chevy salesman in Burbank until he suffered a major heart attack in the 1980's. Fred Atkins worked with Aerospacelines in Santa Barbara and for George Batchelor for a while. Later he spent free time with **Red Hart** and **Terry Dickason** at Hart Videos services chewing over and rehashing the "old days". Fred also appeared at the 1976 Congressional hearings into the CAB's handling of the Supplemental air carrier industry which directly led to passage of the airline deregulation bill and signing of it by **President Jimmy Carter** in 1978.

Mention should be made that many of the people in the Bay area that worked for **Orvis Nelson's** Transocean Airlines hold an annual get together and barbecue or steak fry. It has been held for several years, but few Transocean people seem to be associated with the Aviation Pioneers Association and it might be time, in view of the dwindling numbers of people who worked in the nonsked industry, to be in touch with that group who also have many stories to tell. Transocean was one of the stand out airlines of the nonsked era among the many pioneering companies that fell before the Government's and the CAB axe. Fortunately many of the pioneers are long lived with excellent memories and even better files and documents.

The **Poor Sailor's Airline PSA = Pacific Southwest Airlines**. A book by **Gary Kissel** just released by Paragon Press in Washington, DC. R.E.G. "Ron" Davies, who is a curator at the National Air & Space Museum, sent me a copy. The story is accurate, well illustrated and some of the MBA managers of the major airlines would do well to read it and learn how a good airline can and should function.

Unfortunately for the public consumer of air transportation, most major airline CEOs' can't or don't read anything except the latest quarter's balance sheet. It is well written. You can get your own copy by contacting Gary Kissel at PO Box 1495, Banning, CA, 92220 or PoorSailorsAir@aol.com.

**HUMOR?...**Blue water Navy truism; There are more planes in the ocean than there are submarines in the sky.

- Navy carrier pilots to Air Force pilots: Flaring is like squatting to pee.
- When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.
- Advice given to RAF pilots during W.W.II. When a prang seems inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slowly and gently as possible.
- The three best things in life are a good landing, a good orgasm, and a good bowel movement. A night carrier landing is one of the few opportunities in life where you get to experience all three at the same time.

**Obituaries:** Our sincere condolences to the families of our deceased members, friends and aviation enthusiasts.

**Joe Foss**, a World War II Medal of Honor winning fighter pilot who served as governor of South Dakota and became the influential first commissioner of the old American Football League has died in Scottsdale, Arizona on January 1, 2003. He was 87. As a Marine Corps pilot based on Guadalcanal, Foss shot down 26 enemy planes from October 1942 to January 1943, becoming the first pilot to match the record of World War I ace, Eddie Rickenbacker.

George Carroll reports the passing of his long time friend, **Bill Hodson**. Bill worked with North American and the Flying Tigers. Bill was an APA member and attended many of our Reunions.

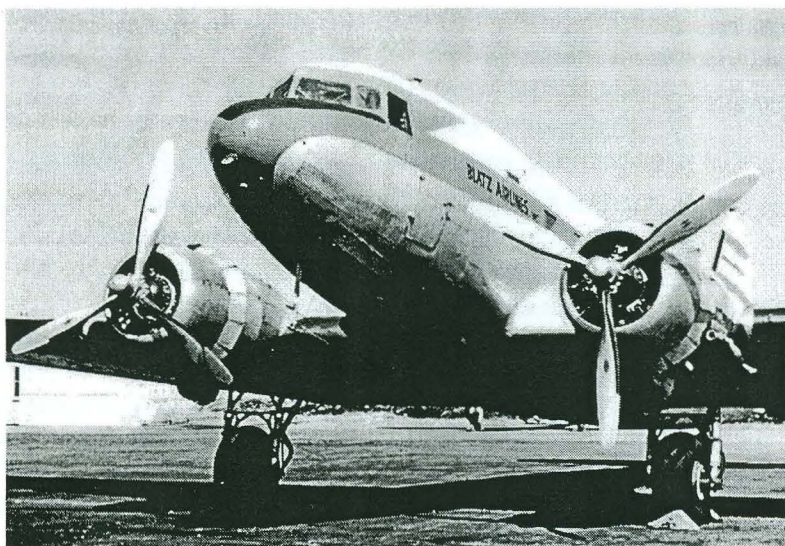
**Stanley and Judy Dearborn** passed away together in a tragic auto accident on Sunday December 1, 2002. Stanley is survived by his sister Shirley and his four sons, Doug, Scott, Greg and Jeffrey. Judy is survived by her three children, Carl, Alex and Jamie. The Dearborn's were charter APA members and were regulars at the APA Reunions. Stanley was best known for the many years he spent as National Sales Manager for the Skycoach Group (anybody remember "Call Stanley 72626, we know why you're smiling, that's Skycoach you're dialing..."). Stanley came to Skycoach via the Flying Irishman, who also sold automobiles as the Smiling Irishman. After the demise of Skycoach and the non-skeds, Stanley returned to his first love, selling automobiles which he was doing up until his untimely demise.

**SAVE THE DATE...**

**Reunion**

**• April 12, 2003 •**

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BLATZ AIRLINES, DC-3

GREAT LAKES AIRLINES, DC-4

