

# Contact!

Leonard Rosen, Editor

## SEPTEMBER 2007 ISSUE

**Comments from the Editor...** Our next Reunion is scheduled for Saturday April 26, 2008 at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City, California. We are fortunate to have as our guest speaker R.E.G. (Ron) Davies. Ron is a prolific author specializing in airline and air transport history. He is presently the Curator of Air Transport at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. He will talk to us about "Directions of Air Transport in the 21st Century". Don't miss it. Mark the date on your calendar and watch for more information to follow in the next edition of CONTACT.

We are making progress, albeit slowly, with our display at the Burbank Airport. We have three more models on order that we expect in the next few weeks. These will be a Kerkorian DC-8, a Sorthun Martin 202 and a Mercer DC-2. We still need more material so we can keep the display interesting by changing things around on a regular basis. We need old flight-schedules, brochures, wings, hat pins and pictures. If you have any such material you would like to contribute or even loan, please contact me by e-mail at [lrosen@efs-nlsc.com](mailto:lrosen@efs-nlsc.com). Be sure to stop by and look at the display the next time you are at the airport.

Speaking of DC-2's, we read that Clay Lacy recently delivered a DC-2 to the Museum of Flight in Seattle following completion of a restoration that was begun 35 years ago in 1982. This particular DC-2 was originally delivered to Pan American in



1935, then transferred to Mexicana and finally on to Avianca in Guatemala where it operated until it was sold in 1953 to Johnson Flying Service of Missoula Montana. Johnson modified it into an aerial sprayer and platform to drop smoke jumpers near large

forest fires. In 1982 the DC-2 was donated to the Donald Douglas Museum and Library where it's long saga of restoration began. In 2001 the Seattle Museum of Flight acquired the aircraft and commissioned Clay Lacy to complete the restoration. This aircraft is one of only two DC-2's remaining in flying condition. The other is the former Mercer N39165, which is now owned by the National Dutch Aviation Museum.

**Down Memory Lane with PSA...** A young man by the name of Chris Laborde started collecting Pacific Southwest Airlines memorabilia as a hobby in 1990, which soon turned into an obsession to preserve a major part of aviation history for California. You can view some of his wonderful collection at [www.jetpsa.com](http://www.jetpsa.com).

**Actor John Travolta** has caught the ire of the London's Daily Mail and the retirees of Owl's Head, Maine, in recent days for his flying behavior. On the U.S. side of the pond, the folks in Owl's Head wish he would abide by the voluntary curfew at



Knox County Regional Airport. According to airport manager Jeff Northgreaves, only one airplane routinely busts the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, and that's Travolta's Gulfstream. "He has the loudest aircraft we see here," Northgreaves told the National Enquirer. "The area has a lot of little old ladies and retired people... Travolta should have some heart." When Travolta goes overseas, he breaks out the big iron, however, something that didn't escape the notice of the British media. On a recent trip to promote his latest movie, Wild Hogs, Travolta and his entourage took his Boeing

707, which is outfitted for a maximum of 34 passengers, each of whose carbon footprint for the trip would cover a city block courtesy of the 1960s-era kerosene guzzler. Travolta might have escaped notice for the contribution to global warming if he hadn't told reporters he believes everyone should "do their bit" to keep the polar ice caps frozen, while explaining that he needs his five aircraft because he's famous and it's a hassle flying commercial. But his environmental profile was likely the last thing on his mind on the trip home. Unspecified technical problems with the airplane forced an emergency landing in Ireland.

**COPE NOTE...**Just recently I took in a movie entitled "The Last King of Scotland." The movie dealt with the time and life of President for Life Idi Amin the "Butcher of Uganda: from 1970 until he sought refuge in Libya after being overthrown in 1978. This ruthless madman who killed over 500,000 Ugandans during his eight-year rule died in Saudi Arabia in 2003.

I was a bit confused by the movie as it didn't quite jibe with the Idi Amin I knew and the real history of the ruthless brutality of this really *really* bad man. One of the confusions was the softness the director choose to portray this murderer barely touching on his torture dungeons in the basement of his palace. Secondly, the director choose to portray the white confidant of Amin, Bob Astels, as a doctor which was contrary to the real Bob Astels that I had on several occasions the misfortune to meet.

I had a base at Entebbe consisting of a couple of mechanics, several pilots and several Cessna 206 aircraft and a DeHaviland Rapide. I used the Rapide to operate the shortest IATA route in the world. The route proceeded from Entebbe down the east side of Lake Victoria to Bukoba and thence Mwanza in Tanzania. Total length of the route 142 miles but it crossed an international border between Uganda and Tanzania. The old Rapide carried everything from chickens to pigs to people to dry goods to gold.

Occasionally I visited my Uganda base as it did with my Mombassa and Dar es Salaam bases. One fine morning in 1965 during one of my visits to

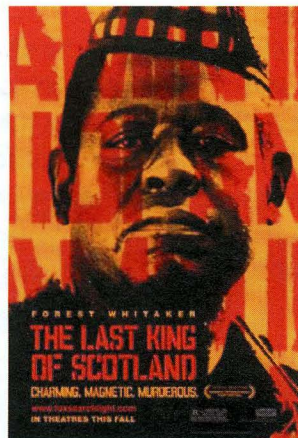
Entebbe, my chief pilot Paddy O'Reilly went out to open the hanger doors to start the day. Boy did we get a surprise. Standing in front of the hanger doors was Col. Amin and about 10 very mean and ugly looking soldiers from the Uganda Rifles. All wore very big and very dark sunglasses and all carried very big and vicious looking AK-47's with the safeties off. Col. Amin approached Paddy and I without a smile on his face, poked the AK in my



midriff and said "Mr. Cope, you are out of biz for at least the next 60 days and I am taking your Cessna 206 and your pilot Mr. O'Reilly. Both shall be returned to you and you can once more resume your normal activities after I am finished with the plane and pilot."

Not one to argue with an African in big dark sunglasses, I asked Col Amin if I would get my pilot and plane back in good condition. At that he smiled and said "Of course Mr. Cope." Paddy disappeared into the hanger with several AK's following him. Col. Amin escorted me back to the terminal building and said that I was free to return to Kenya and that I would be advised as to future developments. I cranked up my Cessna Skyknight and made a quick departure back over Lake Victoria to Nairobi. I immediately went to the American Embassy to advise them of the events.

Needless to say I didn't get my pilot and plane back in good condition. Col. Amin killed Paddy. The airplane was an absolute basket case so much so I had to have it ferried to Nairobi for heavy maintenance. Several days later I received word from the American Embassy that one of my Uganda directors, Daudi Ocheng, was arrested by Col. Amin taken to one of his torture chambers and beaten to death. I was never able to ascertain whether Daudi's death was related to the plane/pilot snatching or whether Daudi was of the wrong tribe, political affiliation or at the wrong place at the wrong time – or all of they above.



I never crossed paths with Idi Amin again. Once was enough. He was not a nice man. The movie brought back these memories even through the movie did not specifically deal with the 1965 era. I never found out what happened to Bob Astels after Idi sought refuge in Libya. He wasn't a very nice man either.

**Editors Note...**From time to time APA member Luther Johnson shares with me some of his favorite aviation stories, the following is one of them. It appeared on the Pilot Speak website in August 2007. The events took place a year earlier in August 2006. While it is a little longer than stories I usually use in the newsletter, I found it to be a great read, I hope you do too.

**Guam Approach Control: "Roger your emergency! How many Souls On Board?"**... I'm a Navy C-9 pilot, a Commander with 20 years in Navy Reserves, who spends the other half of his time flying with the airlines. Here is a riveting typhoon story from the Pacific I'd like to share with you.

We were tasked to fly from Atsugi, Japan to Thailand, stay overnight, then we would pick up a Navy SEAL platoon, and take them with us back to Thailand. Then after an overnight, we were scheduled to fly the SEALs to Guam. Flying to that fairly distant Pacific island was an unusually long-range mission for our military version of a DC-9. In terms of range, it was stretching it.

With the SEALs onboard, the mission went fine back to Thailand. However, on the Guam leg with



the load of SEALs with their combat gear and supplies, fuel would become an issue for the airplane. The cargo and passengers would cut our useable fuel onboard to only 30,000 pounds. And it reduce our time in the air to just four and one-half hours. Fine, if nothing went wrong. But of course things went wrong.

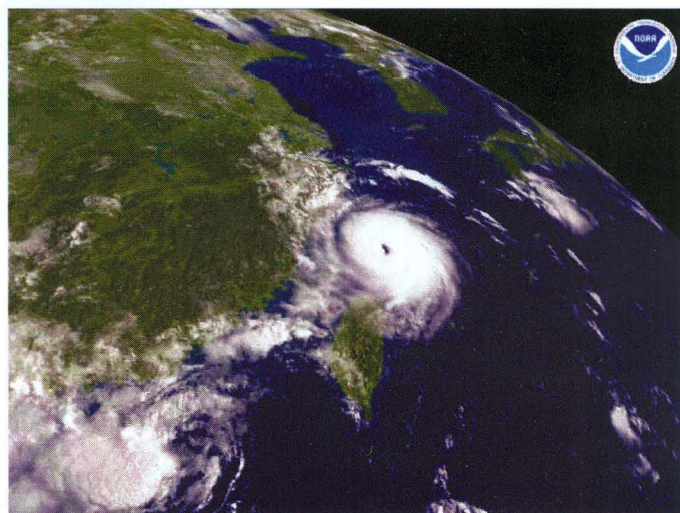
Three tropical depressions were beginning to stir things up in the Far East. One west of Korea wasn't a factor, but another was sitting on our side of the Philippines and it was slowly drifting toward our refueling point at Manila. The third, now given the

name Samoi, was spinning up northeast of our destination at Guam. And its projected track would carry it 200 miles north of the SEALs' deployment base.

Unknown to the forecasters, now tropical storm Samoi was accelerating into super-typhoon mode. And it would soon alter its track to a collision course with our ETA and churn-up Guam's darkness.

Phuket, Thailand, is a tourist resort area, so while overseas communication was expensive, not impossible. I was worried about the weather, I made long distance call to various weather agencies, then decided to press on. With one day to spare, we should win the race with the first tropical depression. With the Navy SEALs and all of their gear aboard, we departed Phuket early in the A.M.

About 200 miles into the flight, the first thunderstorms appeared and we switched on the C-9's weather radar. It had tested out fine on the



ground and tested fine after take-off, but now elected to die and not share details of the imbedded storms.

So we turned back to Phuket to get it fixed. We carried our own mechanics with us. And after we landed they found a broken wire. After simultaneously replacing the fuel we'd burned, we were off again. A couple of hours later than we'd planned.

The weather into Manila was dicey, but manageable. We used our radar to skirt the worst of the storms, landed, and took on replacement fuel. The leg had taken three hours and 40 minutes. And we had shut down with 6,500 pounds of fuel remaining just above our legal requirement. By flying East against the sun we had been losing daylight and we had landed at dusk. Again, I hauled

out my credit card and telephoned around to check the weather. The latest forecast indicated a chance of light rain later that evening in Guam. The forecast stated that we should not experience any weather problems. This final leg was projected to last three hours and twenty minutes. And we were confident we'd have fuel to spare.

Even though it is a small island, there are (2) two major airports on Guam. This was critically



important to a C-9, because almost every time we flew it to Guam, we don't have enough fuel to go anywhere else, just Guam. That was certainly true this night. But this planned leg appeared to be business as usual,

and it was legal by every naval aviation regulation. And at that point, I would have flown it with my family in the back.

We took off in the deepening twilight, and maneuvered to avoid the storms that our radar began picking up with increasing frequency. On an air-to-air common radio frequency, an airliner pilot told us he'd just taken off from Guam and he said we should have no problems. So oblivious to the havoc super-typhoon Samoi would unleash, we just pressed on.

We approached Guam at 10 o'clock that night. There was no ATIS informing us our air field had now closed due to worsening weather. But Approach Control was still up and running. And we arrived overhead with 7,500 pounds of gas. About what we'd expected.

On the other hand, it was certainly not enough to go anywhere else in the Pacific Ocean. Typhoon Samoi had turned south on us. It was now headed toward Guam. And on Samoi's backside, swirling bands of severe thunderstorms began filling in. Although its center was 150 miles north, its growing mass now encompassed 1,000 plus miles of ocean.

Both airports in Guam have long dual runways running from northeast to southwest. Huge cross wind problem down below, surface winds now roaring out of the back-filling thunder-storms were

almost straight out of the West and they were now gusting up to eighty knots.

There was no way to shoot an ILS with winds that far beyond the tail wind limits for an ILS precision approach. So we set up for the TACAN 24 for a Non-Precision Approach to nearby Anderson Air Force Base. Anderson's approach comes in over the ocean. Crosses over a cliff several hundred feet high, then touches down on the runway atop the cliff less than a half-mile from the cliff's edge, an eye-opener, even on a clear day. But factor in a significant, single vertical wind shear at the wrong time and not only will you not clear the edge of the cliff we might not even see it coming.

At 150 knots, we experienced a horizontal river of rain. We could not see three feet, let alone the half-mile visibility required to land. But we continued on the approach. Then, in less than three seconds, an upside wind shear boosted our airspeed from 150 knots to 230. Go-around was mandatory. On the second approach the radar was now showing nothing but red on the 30-mile scale. We don't even fly through red let alone land in the red. Another go-around.

Approach Control then told us we'd been right over the runway approach end. Twice. But none of us had seen any runway lights just torrent-flooded dark windshields. Fuel was now 5,000 pounds. I was ready to start bending the rules. I had to get closer to the ground to have any chance to get us down. I opted for an ILS landing in the other direction with a quartering 80 knot, shear-lined cross-wind off our tail. Despite the out-of-limit tail winds, we began the approach with Autopilot locked on ILS. The GPS was showing a 40-knot tailwind ( the limit is 10 knots ). But I was out of ideas.

At around 250 feet, we experienced a problem that usually gets you in the flight simulator. The minus 40-knot vertical wind shear when you instantly lose most airflow over your wings. And there is nothing you can do about it. Our airspeed fell to just over 100 knots. At 95 we would have all died. I simultaneously clicked off the autopilot, SLAMMED the throttles to their stops, while trying to initiate the textbook wind shear recovery on control's feather edge. I glimpsed runway lights. Tempting. Intuitively, however, I knew ' going for the lights ' with that wind shear, marginal airspeed and near quite zero visibility combination would have crashed us.

We went around again. I asked for and received clearance to Guam International just 20 miles away. Our fuel was down to 4,400 pounds. We declared minimum fuel. Approach Control inquired : " How many SOULS on board ?" We knew that was to inform the rescue teams how many bodies to look for.

The controller also said his radar was showing the weather was now getting worse and he cleared us for our 4th approach, a VOR/TACAN 24 (another non- precision approach) to Guam International. So far, all the approaches had been backed up by my copilot using homemade Global Position Satellite (GPS) approaches, and he had been calling out centerline deviations. I had been flying real instruments, not computer-generated ones.

Approach called the position of the actual terrain obstructions and gave us unofficial help for centerline although they did not actually have 'precision radar' and could not 'legally' do it. I recognized the controller's calls for what they were and I started cheating 50 to 100 feet on the minimum descent altitudes. We still couldn't see anything forward. We went around again.

The TACAN distance measuring (DME) went out of service during the go-around, so we were cleared for the non-directional beacon (NDB) using best approximate approach to runway 24, the only one left for us to use. The fuel gauge read 2,800 pounds. Because the C-9's deck angle can cause its engines to flame out, 'going around' is not recommended with gauges reading LESS than 1,500 pounds. We turned on all the fuel-tank pumps, to include supposedly empty tanks then opened all of the fuel cross-feeds. Although we had been over the approach end of the runway each time, we just hadn't been able to see anything. So we went around again for number five.

I tried to decide what I needed to say into the airplane's voice recorder, right before we crashed. As we asked for early turn-in vectors to the NDB, our crew chief (whose birthday was that day) asked over my shoulder : "OK guys. What are we going to do? "

Although unauthorized and untested, I decided to couple up the NBD with GPS computer and autopilot. It would allow the computer to fly the aircraft without any visual reference from me. On autopilot-altitude hold, I flew to 100 feet below approved minimums, allowing me to look outside without concentrating on flying the instruments.

We drove in and caught our first break, a gap between the dark waves of thunderstorm cells rolling across the island. We saw the ground. And for the first time saw the runway lights less than three-quarters of a mile in moderate rain. I immediately clicked off the autopilot and dove down 100 feet to avoid any possibility of going back into the clouds. In close, as I pushed down to the runway threshold, a vertical wind shear tried to head us back up. I was willing to have it ' hit ' if necessary so I shoved against it and managed to level out at . . JUST ( 5 ) F-I-V-E F-E-E-T !

Incredibly we ended up with a smooth touch down! As we hydroplaned on the rain-soaked runway, the anti-skid brakes released several times. No other airplanes in that sky, we stopped on the runway's centerline with 3,000 feet of runway remaining. We sat there for a minute. Each of us thinking our own thoughts, and I noticed the fuel gauges were reading 2,000 pounds. Just as torrential



rains closed back in. Too heavy to even taxi. We didn't. Riotous applause erupted from the SEALS in the back. They had known we were in trouble,

but only three of us up front knew how much gas we had left. One more pass...Maybe.

Thirteen' fuel fat ' inbound civilian airliners also received the same weather report as we did that night. All had started out expecting to land at Guam. But each easily diverted to Tokyo, Manila or Okinawa. We were the only aircraft who made it in that night or for the next 24 hours.

Around midnight, as we pulled into the gate, our crew chief gazed around the cockpit and said, flatly: "Well, it looks like I survived another birthday!" We parked it with 1,700 pounds of fuel. Then our onboard (APU) power source flamed out . The fuel gauges had been inaccurate. Reading too high when measured with a dip stick. On touch down, we'd actually had fewer than 500 pounds of usable fuel.

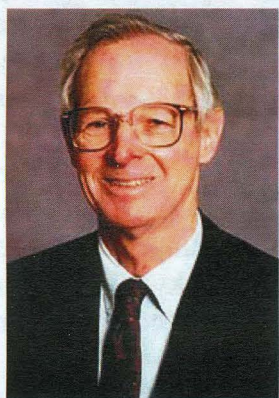
Will I ever fly around the Far East with the Navy again? Absolutely. Will I ever fly to an island destination that has a tropical depression nearby? Not on your life. Sometimes even your best might not be good enough...by Cmdr. Dave DeLance

**Think you're having a bad day?...A passenger taking her first ride in a 1959 Piper TriPacer jumped from the cockpit as it bounced down the runway during the third emergency landing of the day, the Modesto (Calif.) Bee reported on Monday. Witnesses told the Bee that pilot William Supan, 57, landed at Modesto Airport on Saturday afternoon with smoke curling from beneath the cowling, and fire trucks responded. Supan reportedly went to**



**Wal-Mart to buy a clamp, installed it on the airplane, and took off. Smoke now poured from the cowling, and he immediately came around and landed again. The fire trucks returned, Supan replaced part of the exhaust hose, and launched yet again. When he landed for the third time, hard, the wings were wobbling, smoke trailed from the bouncing fuselage, and passenger Jinhua Lin, 43, alarmed by the intensity of heat radiating through the floorboards, jumped. The airplane ran off the runway, the pilot escaped, the fuselage caught fire, and the flames were put out by firefighters.**

**Obituary...Paul MacCready known as the "father of human-powered flight" has died at the age of 81. From the age of 12 he built model aeroplanes and**

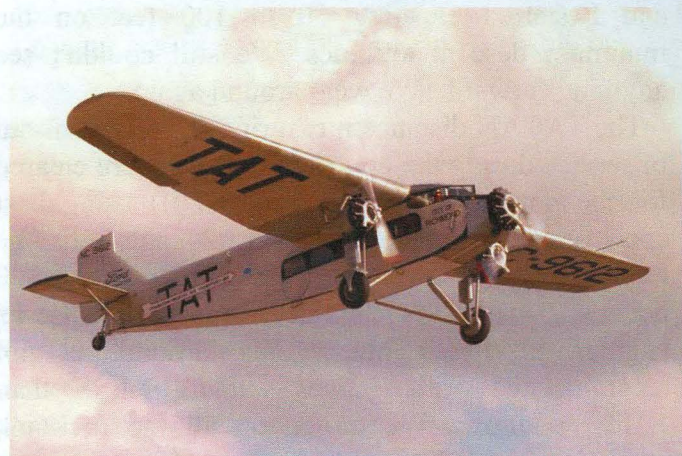


**gliders, and at 16 he qualified as a pilot. After the war, during which he flew with the US Navy, MacCready took a degree in Physics at Yale and a doctorate in Aeronautical Engineering from the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena. At the same time he took up gliding, winning the American championship in 1948, 1949 and 1953, and represented the United States in international competitions on four occasions. Among his many inventions, MacCready created the Gossamer Penguin, the world's first successful completely solar-powered aeroplane. In 1981 an improved version, Solar Challenger, flew from Paris to Canterbury, a distance of 163 miles, attaining an altitude of 11,000ft. In 1991 MacCready was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame. He also founded**

**AeroVironment, a firm which acts as consultants on environmental issues and wind power; it also designs remote-controlled electric planes, both as toys and as reconnaissance tools for the American military. He retired as chairman of AeroVironment due to ill health on August 20, eight days before his death.**



**For Sale...Here's a rare opportunity to own a 1929 Ford 4-AT-E Tri-Motor restored to an extraordinarily high standard. This Tri-Motor, registered NC 9612, has a unique history. In 1929 it was delivered as a new passenger plane to Mamer Flying Service in Spokane, Washington. It was later sold to K-T Flying Service of Honolulu and was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Brought back to the mainland in 1946 by a private owner, it was leased by TWA for their 1949 20th anniversary celebration. It then went to an agricultural operator**



**in Idaho and was modified as a sprayer and also as one of the pioneer forest fire fighting air tankers. Johnson Flying Service in Montana flew it for several years to drop Smoke Jumpers and supplies to fire fighters. Since 1969 the plane has been privately owned by Dolph Overton who funded its restoration. It afterward became part of his Wings and Wheels museum collection. The restoration has been completed with authentic markings for TAT as a tribute to the historic first air-rail route across the United States by Transcontinental Air Transport in 1929. Currently hangared at Petersburg-Dinwiddie Airport in central Virginia, it is available for viewing and inspection by appointment only. Asking price \$3,000,000.00.**