



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

CHAPTER CHATTER

Chapter Number 78

Flying Through History

Board Elects New President

The Chapter 78 Board of Directors elected Tom Russell as their new president. Rick Eggleston is now vice president and Harry Beard is permanent secretary. Otto Blavier will continue as treasurer.

The meeting was held Thursday evening (4-17-2008) at Wings Field. A profile of Tom will be in the May newsletter. The Board wishes Tom the very best as the chapter's new President.



The April Meeting will be held April 29 at Wings Field. Charlie Danila is bringing model airplane videos. The floor will be open to discuss "on going" projects and any other business. Any members who attended Sun and Fun are welcome to share their experiences.

Two Local Aviation Legends Passed Away This Month

Stephen Pitcairn 1925-2008

Stephen Pitcairn passed away Saturday, March 29, 2008, at Abington Memorial Hospital. He was 83. Born in Bryn Athyn, Pa., he was the fourth of nine children of aviation pioneer Harold F. Pitcairn and his wife, Clara D. Pitcairn

Mr. Pitcairn had many aviation accomplishments. He was hired on as a pilot for Eastern Airlines right out of high school. He served with the Civil Air Patrol during World War II searching for enemy submarines off the East Coast of the United States. (Due to a childhood illness he could not serve in the military.)



Mr. Pitcairn is on the Right

He honored his father's pioneering work in aviation by publishing the book "Legacy of Wings" and restoring and maintaining Pitcarin Mailwings and the Autogyro. Mr. Pitcarin loved promoting his vintage airplanes. He graciously hosted Chapter 78 visits as far back as the early 1970's. Members of the Chapter have been privileged over the years to enjoy his wonderful collection of airplanes located at his hangers at the Robbinsville Airport→

Robert Mills 1921 – 2008

. Robert "Bob" Mills, 87, died March 29 in Daytona Beach, Fla. Bob Mills learned to fly from his father as a teenager at the Philadelphia Seaplane Base on the Delaware River waterfront in Essington, PA. After high school, Bob went to work for Pan American Airlines in Miami as a mechanic's helper, servicing the great "Flying Boats" of the era that flew to South America. During World War II he flew TBF Avenger torpedo planes from the USS Santee, an escort carrier in the South Pacific. During the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines in October 1944, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his part in an attack on the mammoth Japanese battleship Yamato. Following the attack, Mr. Mills and another plane in his squadron were forced to ditch their aircraft in the ocean and spend two days on life rafts before being rescued. Following the war, Bob resumed operation of the seaplane base he inherited from his father. He remained in the Naval Reserve, rising to the rank of commander and becoming squadron commander of VF-934, based at Willow Grove Naval Air Station.



Bob and His Cub

Bob continued to run the family business full-time, serving as co-owner and operator of the seaplane base until his retirement in 2000, when he moved to Florida. During his career Bob amassed 20,000 hours of flying time in land and seaplanes. He was a commuter pilot, charter pilot, private family pilot and FAA Examiner. However, he will be best remembered for being a seaplane pilot instructor. In his lifetime he taught hundreds of pilots the art of flying a seaplane→
A complete obituary can be found at
<http://www.delcotimes.com/WebApp/appmanager>.

Flying in the Good Old Days #2 ***Another off-Airport Landing***

This adventure developed when my C-3 partner, Tom Smith and I conspired to insert an airborne leg into my monotonous one hour + drive home from Piasecki Helicopters, where we both worked. (Anything to get a little flying in.) The plan was that Smitty, who lived in Delaware County, would drive us to our base, Patco Airport. We chose Patco, located on Ridge Pike just outside of Conshohocken, because it was sort of half way between our widely separated homes. From there we would do a little fun flying culminating in my being dropped off, lunch kettle and all, at a private strip in Dreshertown where I would be picked up by wife Alice.



This little known strip was used by an A&P during the late '40s and at one time he had a small twin in there. Probably a Cessna Bobcat. Anyway the strip wasn't used much after the PA Turnpike cut off the east end of it. It looked plenty big enough for the C-3 so Smitty made his approach. As he flared and began to settle into the tall weeds all sorts of nature's debris came boiling into the cockpit along with doubts about our wisdom. But we were down now. I disembarked, brushed myself off and stood back to watch the take-off.. Picture this, the belly of the C-3 is only inches off the ground and Smitty could just see over the vegetation. But the valiant old bird was not to be denied and soon struggled back into her element and was last seen silhouetted against the setting sun→
Gordon White

Minutes of the March 25, 2008 Chapter Meeting

Rick Eggleston called the meeting to order and announced that our featured speaker, Robert Lacovara would be asked to precede our routine Chapter matters with his presentation.

The room had been prepared for a presentation with a large screen obscuring the row of vending machines and the seating turned aft to face the screen. Mr. Lacovara provided his own computer, projector, slides and action clips. He was possessed with a staggering array of information, speaking without notes. He began with several examples of scientific predications gone awry, such as the one proclaimed by an engineer upon the launch of the Boeing 247 (in the 1930, s), “There will never be a larger airplane built, than this!” Then Bob produced a slide showing the 247 dwarfed by a Boeing 747. He took us quickly through the age of “aluminum” aircraft and reminded us that even some of our composite,



Bob Lacovara

Stealth aircraft are becoming obsolete... He said that the USAF F-117 fighters are almost all retired from service or soon will be (see below). He attributed this to the newly discovered method of detecting them via radar by “painting” a radar void. Bob had many slides of gliders as well as manufacturing facilities producing them. He told of visiting many of the manufacturing facilities, presumably in his line of work, which gives him access to state of the art products and processes. He mentioned that Space Ship 1 is a craft that our members are capable of constructing; the genius is

the design, rather than the marvel of its manufacture.

He spoke with the ease of an expert and fielded questions as he nudged us along the pathway of the latest technology and materials into the future. He spoke of nano-technology and explained its possible future application in aircraft structures, and showed us film clips of wings that could be altered in camber and incidence, thereby eliminating the need for control surfaces.

Several members commented to me that this was one of the best; if not the best presentation we have had in recent years.

Following Bob’s presentation, Rick recognized members, Bob McAuliffe and Tom Russell, who were subsequently voted to the Chapter 78 Board of Directors as Board Members, class of 2008. A brief discussion followed concerning a listing of current board members, and it was decided that research into the matter will be conducted prior to the April Chapter meeting→ Harry Beard

Harry Beard, Acting Secretary.

The Real Villain—One Opinion



These past few weeks one has watched one of our most important government agencies fumble the ball. Books will be written

about how a lack of leadership at the corporate level of a U S airline, the Congress and the Executive Branch of our government let a transportation nightmare happen. The most visible culprit in this story is the FAA. What they have done to American Airlines and the traveling public is inexcusable.

The media would have you believe that American Airlines is the evil doer here. But this writer places the blame squarely on the FAA for two reasons. First, the FAA assumes that when an airplane operator submits paperwork on a completed task, it has been done to the FAA’s satisfaction. The FAA sees their main job as auditor of the paperwork. Field inspections are secondary. So consequently, it appears no one from the FAA physically inspected the initial group of modified MD-80’s. If they had this mess could have

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been prevented. Clearly this policy of lassies-faire (self-policing) is not working.

Secondly the FAA's reaction to American's AD deficiencies was wrong. Because a tie-rip is going in the wrong direction and/or that the tie-rip's spacing is a quarter of an inch off is reason enough to ground three hundred airplanes? AA has lost tens of millions of dollars and a quarter of million passenger's flights were disrupted, for what? One can only guess at the personal hardships that have been endured because of FAA shortsightedness.

Yes, the tie-raps should be corrected to the AD's specifications. But was one of these planes going to fall out of the sky if the corrections were done over a thirty day period? How long did the MD 80's fly with the original deficiency? Some came from the factory with plus six inch spacing. The airlines had eighteen months to complete the original AD. So would another thirty day extension have hurt anyone? Could it be just coincidental that the same FAA office in Dallas, in hot water with Congress over Southwest's problems, over reacted a bit?

Don't assume that this is just an airline problem. Talk to your local A&P's about FAA paperwork auditing. They will surely relate their own FAA paperwork horror stories → *Ron Gray*



MD-80 Aux Hydraulic Pump Wiring Harness

Calendar

May 3-4-EAA Fly-In Breakfast Cross Keys Airport (17N) "Best" Pancakes on East Coast-- 8am to 11 am
May 10-New Garden Apt Pancake Breakfast 8-12AM
May 18-- Warwick, NY—Fly-In Trophies, Contests and Food. Sponsored by EAA Chapter 501

May 25 — Mount Pocono, PA. Pocono Mts. Municipal Airport (MPO). Fly-In Drive-In Breakfast. Rotary Members preparing and serving Pancakes, Eggs, Sausage,

May 31—Grimes Barnstormer Days

Jun 6 – 8 ----Reading, PA

Mid Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend.

Jun 7--- Sky Manor Airport Fly-In 9am-4pm

Jun 14 — Pottsville, PA. Joe Zerby (ZER). Top of the Mountain Fly In. Pancake breakfast and Young Eagles Rally .Rain date June 15, 2008. Contact John Hess, 717-865-4642;

Jun 21--- Cardinal East Coast Fly-In KLNS

bmwtimpilot@aol.com

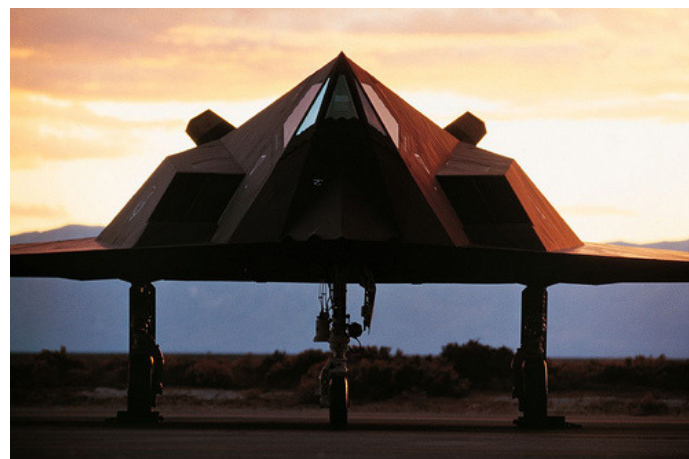
July 12-13-Grimes (8N1) Wings Extravaganza Fly-In

July 28 – August 3---Oshkosh, WI

See EAA Calendar Website for details.

<http://eaa.org/calendar>

B-117 Retiring This Month



Lockheed B-117

The F-117 was developed in utter secrecy during the late 1970s and early 1980s and was not made public until 1988. Shortly thereafter, the Nighthawk made its combat debut over Panama during the ousting of Dictator Manuel Noriega. The F-117 saved its greatest performance for Operation Desert Storm when 42 aircraft flew only 2% of the combat sorties against Iraq yet accounted for 40% of the strategic targets attacked. The only combat loss of a Stealth Fighter occurred early in the Kosovo conflict when poor mission planning allowed a Serbian missile battery to predict when an F-117 would fly through its defense zone. The improved stealth technology built into the F-22 and F-35 (coming on line soon) has made the B-117 obsolete →



PA-22 1932 84hp Pobjoy Cararact Experimental wingless with a three-blade, foldable rotor system. Side-by-side cabin; width: 7'10". First road able autogyro built→



Mr. Pitcairn's Restored Waco *Courtesy Gordon White*



What Is It? Next Month

Editor.....*Ron Gray*

Publisher.....*Dave Grebe*