



# Aerie News

## **The Eagles Aerie News of the *USAir* Soaring Eagles**

**Third Quarter 2019**

### **TABLE of CONTENTS**

Messages from your Officers  
Flown West  
Hangar Flying  
Soaring Eagles Write  
Memorabilia

### **Board of Directors**

President	Joe Kernan
1st VP	Dan Friel
2nd VP	Judy Schmidt
Treasurer	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**

**[jockernandc9@yahoo.com](mailto:jockernandc9@yahoo.com)**

On May 28 the Soaring Eagles Board in accordance with the Constitution & By-Laws appointed Judi Todd to the position of Secretary vacated by Gerry Milburn's death. We welcome Judi to the board and look forward to working with her going forward.

You may notice a common theme in the articles from your officers, as we agreed to press home the point that we would like maximum attendance at this years reunion Oct. 25.26, and 27th In Tampa Fl. At this time we have a firm commitment from Chairman Schofield to attend, and we are waiting for Chairman Colodny to firm up his schedule. We are hopeful that Mr. Colodny will once again be able to join us.

We also extend a Special Invitation to those Mohawk members who previously met in Daytona each year to join us in Tampa this year. Many of this group are already Soaring Eagles, and for those that are not, we urge you to join. Everything you need to join, and or join the Soaring Eagles can be found at [Usairsoaringeagles.org](http://Usairsoaringeagles.org). By the time you read this the reunion will only be three months away. Be sure to make your hotel reservation by Sept. 26, to take advantage of the Soaring Eagles rate.

As previously reported the Soaring Eagles in conjunction with an anonymous donor are sponsoring an all expenses paid luncheon cruise on Tampa Bay Saturday Oct. 26th. This should really be a fun event for all hands to enjoy, and It is imperative that members sign up early for this event so that we can arrange adequate transportation to and from the dockside. Additionally we need to give the cruise company firm numbers about a month prior to the cruise.

The Annual Soaring Eagles Reunion is our Flagship event. Planning for this event occupies the bulk of the board's time during the year, and a good turnout is the best reward we could hope to receive for our efforts.

**Make your Hotel reservation and register with Paul Sturpe now. Cutoff date for the Soaring Eagles rate is Sept. 26, 2019. All of the documents you need can be found at**

**[Usairsoarigeagles.org](http://Usairsoarigeagles.org)**

Our family.....Our Heritage.....Our Legacy

Joe

***FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

**(703) 536-7397**

**Captain Dan Friel**

**[danfriel1938@gmail.com](mailto:danfriel1938@gmail.com)**

I'm still trying to get my head around the fact that Gerry Milburn is gone. I remember flying Co-pilot with him on the CV 580 in Washington. He was a gentleman, and a pleasure to fly with. I know that Gerry would want me to urge everyone to attend the Soaring Eagles Reunion in Tampa on October 25, 26 and 27. The free luncheon Cruise sounds like it should be fun, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Tampa.

As for me, I will be 81 soon. Health is good. I Need a walker most of the time but that's no problem, I'll be able to board the boat Sold my airplanes. Still drive. Have the girlfriend to keep me in line. Life is great.

Dan

***SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

**(724) 378-7025**

**Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt Colbath**

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

Congratulations to my friend Judi Todd on her recent appointment as Secretary of The Soaring Eagles. When I was actively representing flight attendants, Judi Todd served as my Vice Chair, and I'm confident that Judi will do a good job for the Eagles. Time seems to be flying by, and we are rapidly approaching the Soaring Eagles Reunion that will be held in October in Tampa. Your board works very hard to make sure that everyone has an enjoyable experience at the reunion, and we need the members to show up to make that happen.

Joe Kernan asked me to look over the menus for this year, and make changes where appropriate, and we have done some slight tweaking of the menus. We also reduced the meal expenses from \$55.00 to \$45.00 per person per event. Of course the Luncheon Cruise is free thanks to the anonymous donor and the Eagles Board. I urge all members to go to [Usairsoaringeagles.org](http://Usairsoaringeagles.org) to download the necessary documents for registration, and hotel reservations. Do it now and get it out of the way.

I'm still busy taking care of my dogs, but can always find time to take care of my Eagles

Judy

***SECRETARY'S MESSAGE***

**(619) 417-7274**

**Flight Attendant Judi Todd**

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

I was honored and gratified when the Soaring Eagles Board recently voted to appoint me to the position of Secretary to serve out the unexpired term of Gerry Milburn. Difficult as it may be, I will do my level best to serve in a manner that Gerry would be proud of. Of course I also want the membership to benefit from my service as well. I am also grateful to Joe Kernan, and Paul Sturpe who have promised to assist me as I get accustomed to the duties of Secretary.

I intend to continue in my role as Chairperson of the Hospitality Committee, and request that anyone wishing to help out with making sure the hospitality suite functions smoothly contact me at: 619-417-7274 or [judiwtodd@gmail.com](mailto:judiwtodd@gmail.com). I'm told that volunteers always seem to come forward, but it would be good to have those people lined up ahead of time.

Meanwhile, please be patient with me as I learn to fly with my new Eagles Wings. I urge all of my brother and sister pilot and flight attendants friends to attend this year's reunion, as it is an opportunity to visit with old friends, and relive the good times we shared on the line.

See you in Tampa

Judi Todd

***TREASURER'S MESSAGE***

**(828) 478-1133**

**Captain Paul Sturpe**

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

As I mentioned last quarter, dues checks and PayPal payments are still coming in even though they were due by January 31. We are still happy to receive your dues anytime during the year in case you forgot about the change or just didn't get around to it. Oh yes, I said PayPal payments are now accepted. If you haven't heard before we can now accept PayPal for your dues. Have PayPal send them to [SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com](mailto:SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com) (not case sensitive.)

Your gang is busy preparing for the reunion in Tampa. Most of your officers and one former CEO have already made their reservations. We are looking forward to another good turn out this year. With the lowered cost of banquet meals and the free Yacht cruise (thanks to an anonymous donor and the Soaring Eagles treasury) why hesitate to send in your reservation. The earlier we get a count of the number who plan to attend, the easier it is for your board to make the necessary arrangements.

Don't forget to check the Soaring Eagles web site often. <https://usairsoaringeagles.org/> The latest news is always posted there and we add new content every week or so. Look for "UPD" on the top menu items to see if there are recent changes or additions to that particular section. Also, if you have any content that you think is appropriate to post on the web site, send it to Joe Kernan or myself.

So long until next quarter.

Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

**USAir Soaring Eagles Website is available with current daily information.**

**<https://usairsoaringeagles.org/>**

# FLOWN WEST

## CONDOLENCE FUND DONORS

### **Captain Roger Howie:**

*Roger passed away May 9, 2017. No further details.*

### **Captain Jack Burchfield:**

*Jack passed away April 4, 2018. No further details.*

### **F/A Peggy Palko:**

*Long time DCA based Flight Attendant Peggy Palko passed away in DCA September 2018.*

### **Captain Gerry Milburn**

*Gerry passed away February 24, 2019.*

### **Captain Clancy Taylor**

*Clancy passed away February 26, 2019. No further details*

### **Captain Ronald H Metzger**

*Ron passed away May 28, 2019, No further details*

### **Captain Anthony (Dave) Grieco**

*Dave passed away May 28, 2019. No further details*

## CONDOLENCE FUND DONORS

*Seth "Butch" & Diane Schofield  
Susan Ellsworth Shaw  
Gerald E. Milburn  
Loretta Daczkowski  
Joe Kernan  
Dave Engle  
Jack Semenko  
Marion Borek  
Bill Leefe  
John Gilbert  
William Mumford*

*Richard and Jean Volkwein  
Bob and Betty Jo Knapp  
John McCarthy  
Thomas Creamer  
Judith Schmidt  
Edward B. Cook  
Sali Burgard Dunkel  
John C. Farrell  
David C. Purcell  
Mike Cranson  
Gerald P Fenzel  
Dave & Cheryl Johnson*

## **BE ON THE LOOKOUT (BOLO)**

We do not have accurate address for the following people. If you know their contact information please forward to Captain Paul Sturpe, [Sturpe@gmail.com](mailto:Sturpe@gmail.com)

- Charles Forrester
- Atleah Grubb, Gary Grubb's widow
- Donald Greenfield
- Jean Budlong, Bert Budlong's widow

## ***"HANGAR FLYING"***

### **Night Flight**

As many of you know, my brother Charles known to most of you as Chubby started with All American Airways, the predecessor to USAirways in 1949 as a Flight Agent. Flight Agents were also referred to as Ball bearing Hostesses. By 1951, at the urging of the cockpit crews, Chubby started using his GI-Bill benefits to obtain the necessary ratings to become a pilot. There were various requirements, one of which was a given number of solo night flight hours. I was thirteen at the time.

Most if not all of Chubby's training took place at Beacon Field, south of Alexandria on old #1 Highway. The GI Bill rules did not allow anyone to accompany the pilot using the benefit, with the exception of one receiving instruction. The office building at Beacon Field sat well off of #1 Highway, at the end of a long driveway. There were slight depressions on either side of the driveway that served as drainage ditches. One night when I was around 12 or 13, Uncle Chubby asked me if I wanted to go flying. Of course I jumped at the chance, as I knew there was a possibility he would let me drive his car, and I was beginning to be interested in flying, as I was already flying gas powered models. Because of the GI Bill rule stated above, I was instructed to crouch down in the drainage ditch or depression and wait for the distinctive Yellow/Red Bottom Aeronca Champ to taxi out. Since all of Beacon's Aeroncas fit this description, I was told to wait for the one that would flash a light toward me before I entered the aircraft from the rear so as to avoid the spinning prop.

It was cold this particular night, and the sky was clear as a bell. These little airplanes didn't have much in the way of cabin heat systems, but after awhile we sort of warmed up. At the time the airspace around Washington, D.C. was not nearly as congested as it is today, nor were the rules for flight very stringent. You were not required to be in radio contact with anyone, and you were pretty well on your own. Washington looked like a giant diamond from my vantage point in that little airplane, and I would view many other cities like that during my eventual career as an Airline Pilot. I'm sure we probably flew over the northwest section of the city, and Chubby probably pointed out our home to me, although I probably wasn't able to pinpoint it. I probably could recognize prominent landmarks like Tenley Circle and such. At some point we were over the College Park area, and both had developed a very strong urge to urinate. As we were in technical violation of the GI Bill Rules, and Beacon Fields Rules, Uncle Chubby didn't want to land at an airport that could report either infraction to Beacon Field, or the government. Picky, picky, picky. Anyway Uncle Chubby remembered that the old U.S. Dept. Of Agriculture Airfield at Beltsville had recently been de-commissioned, and the runways were still very usable.

We / Chubby landed and shut the Aeronca engine down (65 HP) four cylinder engine. We answered the call of nature, and only then did Chubby realize that he had overlooked several things. One the Airport Operator could tell by the amount of fuel burned whether the airplane had been in constant flight, or had been landed somewhere. Secondly, and probably more significant was the fact that these airplanes do not have automatic starters, and there is a particular way to hand start the airplane. The procedure is called hand propping, and requires some expertise in accomplishing it. Since I was not at all familiar with the procedure, and Chubby had minimal experience with the procedure we had a dilemma. It was decided that I would hold the brakes, and manage the controls in the cockpit, as Chubby spun the prop by hand, (talk about trust). We used every cushion in the airplane to put behind my back to make sure I could press on the brakes hard enough to hold the airplane when it started. I forgot to mention that since the fuel burn off was an issue, Chubby drained an amount

of fuel under the carburetor commensurate with how much we would have burned if we had been in constant flight. Chubby yelled, "Crack the throttle 1/4 inch" which I did, next he yelled, contact which was the signal that would turn on the magneto which would allow the engine to start. Then came the command, "brakes" which I pressed so hard I thought my feet would go through the floorboards. This process was repeated a couple of times before the little 65hp engine sprang to life, a nice sound as I recall. After we rearranged the cushions, and Chubby got back in we were ready to return to Beacon Field. We were soooo! relieved in more ways than one. In retrospect I think it might have been better to just wet our pants, if we weren't able to hold it.

Within 3 or 4 years I had soloed an airplane like this one at Beacon Field on Dec.6, 1955. Later on I owned two Aeroncas, one of which will be featured in a future story. I have since learned the technique of hand propping an airplane, but not without incident which be described in a later installment of, "You can't make this Sh-t up" or "Joe learns to Fly".

When I was finally hired as pilot with Allegheny Airlines, I always thought about that cold winter night whenever we flew near Beltsville. You could still see the outline of the runways. You could almost imagine three wet spots on the tarmac. One was where the fuel was drained, and the other two were.....well you know.

Joe

## *“Soaring Eagles Write”*

Paul, as I sit here today writing this it occurred to me that today is my 88th birthday. Anyway, hope they keep up the good work with the e-mails about USAir and all.

Bob Thompson

Cheers to the Soaring Eagles! Thanks to some insurance \$ and some retirement \$, we have a stronger home after Hurricane Michael. I'm running out of excuses to learning how to surf fish! My corporate pilot career landed pretty unceremoniously with a severely broken ankle in New York, But I'm pretty much healed. Carol and I wish you'all the best and thanks to our leaders for all their efforts.

Joe&Carol Hall, Port At Joe Fl.

Hi Joe and all. Just checking in and wanted to express my thanks for all your efforts to keep our past and all it represents alive and meaningful for so many of us. I am shocked to read that only about half your emails are opened but I know those who are on board with you like myself greatly appreciate the time and personal resources you devote to this important task.

Regrettably I have not been so faithful in keeping my dues current. Yet still your emails come. I could make some lame excuses about grand children, travel, minor medical issues and all the other “business” that getting older and retired encompasses. But the truth is I really just owe you a big apology along with my dues. If you could kindly send me an update on what I owe and an address to send it to I'll move it to the top of my priority list. Thanks again Joe.

Best Mike Hoffman

Good morning Captain. I believe I did receive a card . Should be on my desk in my “card file”. I'll let you know if I didn't though. Sending my dues along shortly. Nice rainy day here at the lake for attending to such things. Address that you have is correct BTW.

So since you're always asking, here's a little of what's going on in our world.

Still sailing our old sail boat out of Marblehead Ma. during the beautiful New England summer . Mostly to head down east during late July and August. Still love the Maine coast. We have landlocked salmon in the back yard to fish for and loons to serenade us at nite here on our lake in New Hampshire. Fun to be able to tie a new fly pattern in the evening and see it in a bright salmon's jaws the next day without even leaving home.

Still flying a little. Renting a nice new glass panel 172 from the local FBO. But I miss my beautiful 180J on floats and wheels I had for so many years. Lost to an unfortunate wake encounter three years ago that found me unexpectedly upside down in it right here on my home lake. Insured but impossible to replace .

The FAA was pretty good about it . There was a little paper work . Mostly just a statement of what happened. An inspector came out and interviewed me . Nice guy actually. Said he was glad the only thing hurt was probably my pride.

In the end the guy handling it at the Local FSDO called me and requested I have an hour session with another seaplane instructor and friend of mine who was a Fast team member to discuss what happened and share the experience. “ Ya know if you fly these things long enough “.....( I was going on 56 years and around 29000 hours with 20 years in sea planes by then with fortunately a clean slate). .....“ something's liable to happen” was his parting comment over the phone.

Messing around on the beautiful New Hampshire roads with an old Sunbeam Alpine I bought back in 1966 but never got rid of along with a little shooting at the local fish and game club in town helps keep



me from being too depressed about growing old and observing all the great guys we knew and flew with now heading West.

That beautiful stewardesses I married 47 years ago is still hanging out with me.

I make it a point to take her to Florida for the worst of the winter every year now. If you get near Venice during Feb. or March we'd love to see ya.

Our kids a son and daughter are doing just fine . Wonderful to see them in the prime of adult life. And of course the grandchildren (3) as anyone lucky enough to have em will tell you are something special. That's about it really.

Around here we like to say " no greater gift then an ordinary day "

Captain Paul Kinack now "gone west" and one of my favorite guys to fly with back in the long ago used to quip " It's a great life if you don't weaken "

Still trying to follow his advice . I'll leave you with that thought Joe.

Best wishes from here old friend.

Mike Hoffman

As I sit here I am mindful of the many wonderful memories I have of my Soaring Eagles friends. I am not sure at what age memories become important but I do know that at 90 years of age they are very important to me. Things have changed so much in the airline industry since I started in 1951 – most of the changes for the better but a few we could have been done without. This is why I think it is so important to have an organization like "The Soaring Eagles" to keep us in touch with those wonderful people that we worked with over the years. Sadly, so many of those that I started with have flown west but their memories linger on and the tales get better at each reunion. This is why it is so important for those that are able, attend the reunions and pay homage to those folks who made our airline and the industry what it is today.

If you have never attended a Soaring Eagles Reunion you have missed an important part of your airline career. Between the stories and the fellowship the three day reunion does not seem long enough and there always seems to be a contest to see who can tell the most interesting and exciting stories. Aside from all of the stories one of the important things at the reunions is to pay our respects to those who have gone before us.

Your elected Board works very hard to make the reunions interesting – memorable – exciting (not too exciting for our age) and affordable. Do yourself and your friends a favor by attending and reliving your airline life.

For those living on the "dangerous side of life" you might even consider running for an office in the Soaring Eagles. Elections are held at the annual business meeting during the reunion and nominations are accepted from the floor. The pay is not great but the personal satisfaction of serving your fellow workers is gratifying,

The Soaring Eagles offer each an opportunity to once again be a part of a great family and to honor those who have gone "West".

Bill Leefe



From New Member Doug Burke

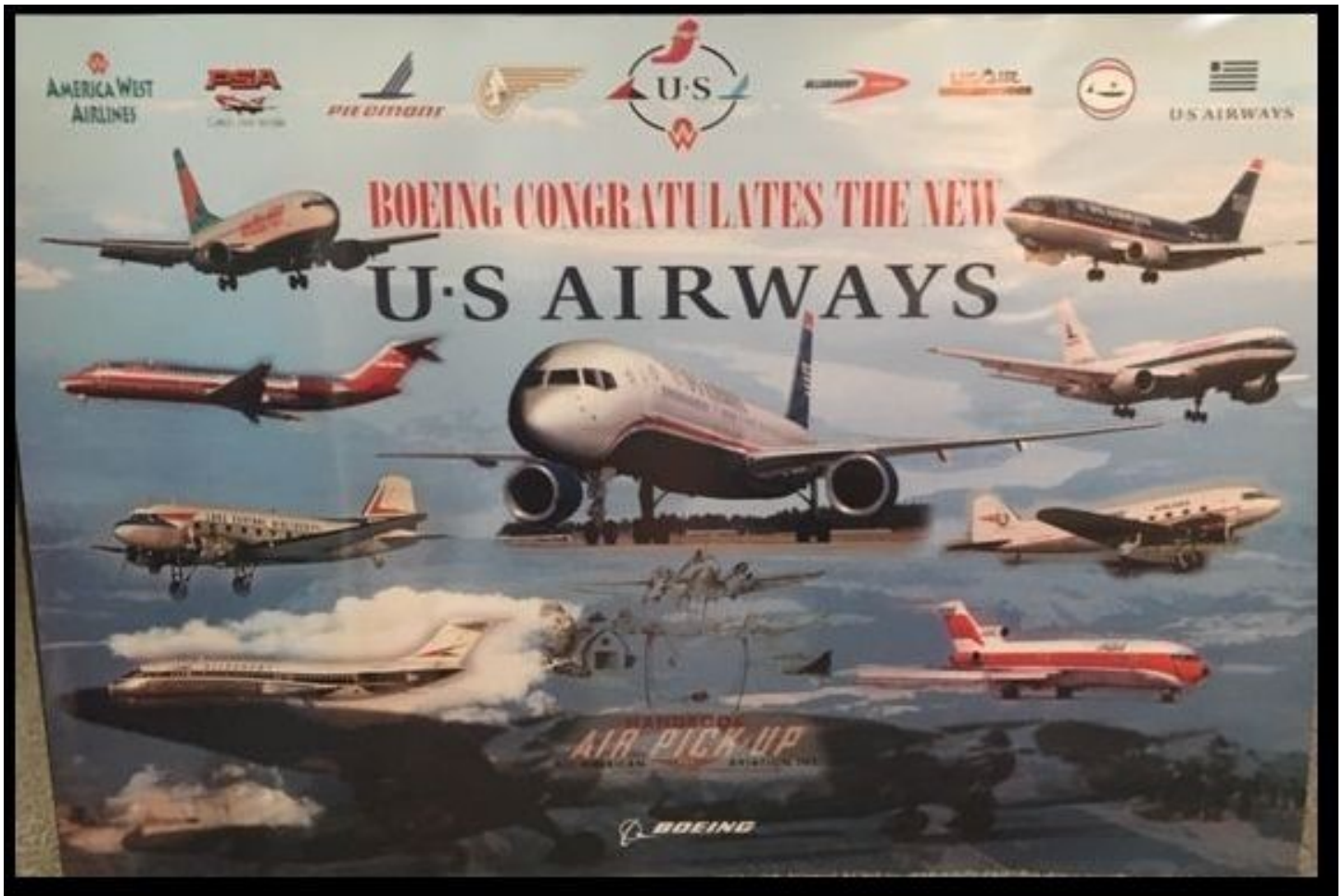
My Most Memorable Experience:

My first trip was with Joe Haycraft BWI-JFK-ALB-JFK\_BWI. On the first takeoff we lost an engine with the Minnesota Twins as passengers,. After new equipment we took two passengers on an airplane ride BWI-ALB - BWI since we overflowed JFK twice.

Also flying with my father Captain Ed Burke as Captain. He started with All American in 1950. I was lucky enough to fly with him before he retired.

When Captain Red Leazenby checked into "Flown West" Operations, I'm sure that Harvey Thompson, Mac McGreggor, Dick Bazley, and all of the icons on the seniority list who preceded him met him with open arms. It was my privilege to know Red and his wife Dee when I was a young first officer trying to fly underneath Harvey's radar. Red was a fantastic captain to fly with, and was credit to the profession. His humor and unique way of communicating verbally were well known. Red and I flew together for many months on the same block. A testimonial to Red's popularity was that the same crewmembers would bid his block of trips month after month. On my first captain upgrade on the B-727, it was an honor to have Check Captain Leazenby on my IOE.

John Nagy



Can you identify the two pilots and the aircraft in this photograph from the Harold-Dispatch which was taken on July 31, 1962?



## SOME WHO CONTRIBUTED

