

# Aerie News

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

**Second Quarter 2020**

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Soaring Eagles Write

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Secretary	Judi Todd
Past President	John Davis

Advisors to the Board – Bill Leefe, Bob Knapp, Butch Schofield, Ran Natalie

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(276) 632-9941

Captain Joe Kernan

[Joekernandc9@yahoo.com](mailto:Joekernandc9@yahoo.com)

They say that hindsight is 2020. Personally, I will be happy to put 2020 as far behind me as possible. The Corona Virus Pandemic, the Peaceful protests high jacked by the violent rioters and anarchists, and the gut-wrenching decision to cancel what would have been our 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Soaring Eagles Reunion. At first, I thought “gut wrenching” was too strong a description, but it was “gut wrenching” so I stuck with it.

Thank God we have an excellent relationship with the management of Tampa Marriott Westshore, specifically Mr. Ralph Alderman, Director of Sales. Because of that relationship we were able to reschedule the event for October 22, 23, and 24, 2021. By committing to rescheduling the event we were able to avoid the payment of liquidated damages as spelled out in the contract that we executed at the end of the 2019 event. Those damages totaled nearly \$8500.00 dollars, so it was no small deal.

Since I have already given you the dates for 2021, now would be a good time to circle the dates on your calendars and avoid any potential conflicts. I will refrain from bugging you incessantly about attending, but I promise to do that in the first part of 2021.

One of the things that we were most disappointed about was the number of new members who were looking forward to the Reunion, who will now have to wait until next year. I know Judy Schmidt has something to say about that, so I will leave it at that.

Since one of the important things we do at the Reunion is to conduct elections, your board will be discussing various options as to how to accomplish that. When we arrive at a solution, you will be informed in a timely manner.

Family....Heritage.....Legacy

Joe

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(724) 378-7025

Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt  
Colbath

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

I know that Joe has already given you the details about why the board chose to cancel the Reunion for this year. Frankly, I was personally a holdout and had to be convinced that we could not pull it off. I had been in contact with a number Flight Attendants who were interested in attending, and others that were interested in joining The Soaring Eagles, so I really was torn, about canceling. When I considered that most of our members are in the at-risk category, and that many would simple not sign up for this year's reunion, I came to realize that canceling made the most sense for the majority of the members, and for the Soaring Eagles. This gives me almost a year and a half to bug the hell out of people to attend and believe me I am going to do it. And finally, do not forget my challenge to bring three new members to the reunion in 2021.

Judy Schmidt Colbath

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(330) 277-6233

Captain Alvahn Mondell

[captalvahn@aol.com](mailto:captalvahn@aol.com)

Good Morning USAir Soaring Eagles,

I hope this finds you all well and everything looking better and better!

I'm sure you feel as I do about the reunion being canceled this year due to the COVID-19 situation. Hopefully, we'll never have to deal with another problem like this in our lifetime!

All indications are that the virus issue seems to be less of a problem than it was originally predicted to be but, some still contend that we can't be sure of that at this time!

I know our President Joe Kernan has explained the situation with confirming hotel room reservations and plans for flights to TPA.

Let's plan on next year, FOR SURE!!!

Alvahn Mondell

## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

(619) 417-7274

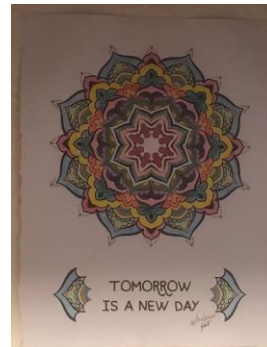
Flight Attendant Judi Todd

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

My turn to write a message to our membership and I have been sitting and sitting and sitting trying to think of something interesting to say to you all but since the 20th of March all I have been doing is sitting and sitting and sitting. Not a darn thing to do. I work several part-time jobs out here in San Diego: I check in people going on cruises to the Mexican Riviera, Hawaii, Panama Canal etc. ALL CANCELLED. I also work For the Convention Center checking in reunions (like the Soaring Eagles) and conventions ALL CANCELLED. Then for fun I usher at most of the theaters ALL CANCELLED. I also volunteer as an Ombudsman for Seniors in Skilled Nursing Facilities ALL LOCKED DOWN. So, you see my problem with interesting tidbits to share with you. So here goes ——— I bought an adult coloring book and a package of 50 colored pencils and am coloring. I also took up knitting scarves (which I don't use here in San Diego.). I do walk approximately 2 miles twice a day. So at least I am not gaining weight. That is the story of my "new" daily routine. Now that the country is opening up again, I bought a round trip ticket to Tampa for a much looked forward to Soaring Eagles reunion. You guessed it CANCELLED. So, I am looking forward to seeing you in 2021 instead of 2020. Hope to see you all then. In the meantime, keep safe and healthy.

Judi Todd, Secretary Soaring Eagles.

Judi's Quarantine Coloring



## TREASURER'S MESSAGE

(828) 478-1133

Captain Paul Sturpe

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

I have been keeping the Soaring Eagles Web Site up to date although that is not specifically a job for the treasurer. If anyone has web site skills they would like to employ for the good of the association, just let me or your president know. Check the Soaring Eagles web site often at <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.

Under the History Tab of the web site are spaces for the history of the airlines that formed USAir. We have sources for Allegheny, Lake Central and Mohawk. (Additional sources are always welcome.) The history is being added a few pages at a time. We would like to have history for PSA, Piedmont and America West. If you have appropriate history, please send it to me, or Captain Kernan.

And I would be remiss if I didn't include a reminder that dues are due, in fact past due if you haven't paid yet for 2020. Although dues are now due by January 31, we will not turn down any late comers!

So long until next quarter.

Paul Sturpe, Treasure

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

<https://usairsoaringeagles.org/>

### **The Great Ham Caper**

All of those that participated in this escapade are now in their nineties, so it is safe to assume the Statute of Limitations have expired. The year was 1952 or 53, and the three individuals involved were all aspiring Airline Pilots. All are still alive and have two given permission for their names for this little tale to be told. This story is being told because Joe Rahll would not give me a flying story for the Aerie.

Since Joe Rahll was the oldest, he will have to take the responsibility for those junior to him. Apparently, this little quartet had stopped at the Dixie Pig Barbecue in North Alexandria to pick up a case of beer to take to George Slaters, where they intended to consume it. Joe Rahll, and Ed Slattery were already flying as Co-pilots for All American Airways and the third member of this trio was a Flight Agent aspiring to become a co-pilot.

As they were leaving the Dixie Pig, the Flight Agent must have decided that ham would go well with the beer, so he picked up an entire ham from one of those racks that they use when carving portions from the main body. I guess he was so excited about his forward thinking that he forgot the formality of paying for said ham.

Off they go in the 1949 Chevy Coupe driven by none other than Ed Slattery. Apparently, they had been followed by a customer or employee of the Dixie Pig who had gotten the license tag number and phoned it into the Alexandria Police. It was not long before they were being followed / chased by an Alexandria Police Car. Ed Slattery tried his best to lose them, but it was not to be.

As the cop approached the car someone threw the ham under the car. The cop tells Slattery to "Get that ham out from under the car", to which Ed replied, "No sir you get it". Might not have been the best response, but hey I was in my twenties once too. A side note that may not have had anything to do with the case, was that the cop that finally caught the Banditos was married to an All-American Ground School Instructor, name unknown.

Next stop for the young aviators, the Alexandria City Jail where they were held overnight pending their appearances the next morning. Apparently Rahll had made himself quite comfortable and became perturbed that some guy was asking Slattery a bunch of questions about money and such mundane things. Joe says, "Who the hell is this guy who's disturbing our sleep"? Only to find out that it was the Bail Bondsmen, who said "I don't care if you all rot in here". Well the Flight Agent is about to wet his pants, as he can see his Airline Career going down like the ham under the car.

Apparently, the courtroom was on a floor just above the jail because Ed Slattery describes a ladder that you climbed up and came up right in the courtroom. The judge advised the trio that someone must take the rap, so Ed having access to a well-placed attorney named Jim Howe accepts the responsibility. Apparently, Jim Howe was effective, as I think everyone got off with a tongue lashing from the judge and a small fine.

Now at the time Joe Rahll was dating Vivian who would later become his wife. Vivian was living with her sister who did not care much for Joe. Not sure why that is important, but that is what Joe said. Anyway, Vivian tells her sister that SOB Joe was supposed to pick me up, he had better be in the hospital or jail. Well Joe was not in the hospital.

Eventually the Jailbirds ran into Tommy Kinchloe who was laughing his tail off, as he had read about the Ham Heist in the Alexandria Gazette. Joe Rahll says Harvey Thompson got a kick out of it as well. Must have been before he became Chief Pilot. I never had the pleasure of flying with Joe, but I did fly with Ed and the mystery man.

All Joe had to do was tell me a flying story and I would not have written this one, but maybe this one was more fun to read anyway.

Thanks to the contributors,

Joe Rahll, Ed Slattery, and the Mystery man

## **“FLOWN WEST”**

Thomas Allen Sierer, June 11, 2020

Danny B. Hamby, June 10, 2020

Charles H. "Charley" Hoffman, May 11, 2020

Martin M. Mylet, May 5, 2020

Shirley Kirby, wife of deceased pilot, Bill Kirby, April 17, 2020

Captain ED Rickard, March 31, 2020

Arlen Ingman

## “SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

### **Monte Jests**

Helen and I are still living the dream on our Mulberry Hill Airpark (6OK9) in Oklahoma. Helen had a bout with gall bladder last year but is fine now. I had CyberKnife on prostate Cancer after 10 years of “twigs, nuts and berries”. I have been very happy with the results of that treatment. Still rebuilding my Luscombe and flying an Experimental PA-11.

### **Aerie update for Captain Eugene “Gene” J. Schumacher, Retired USAir**

Hope this finds you all well! As Gene’s wife, I am writing this update on his behalf. Life during the lockdown was somewhat normal for the Schumachers.

Gene has been battling strokes, seizures, prostate cancer and treatments. And more heart issues have set him back again. He is a man like no other and he has a strong constitution. We have struggled over the years, especially the last three and we try not to complain as we treasure each day. Our challenges are many and met daily as Gene needs help with his care on a daily basis. Although I do most of it, I still work and have hired nurses to help him and me. We need me to work and will be completing another type rating in August. He is excited that I am continuing his legacy and it gives him great pleasure to hear of my work and the new aircraft.

I will NOT put him in a nursing home, as the doctors suggested. He is home and that is where he wants to be. He is as happy as he can be given all that he is going through. I still see that twinkle in his eyes and that smile that lights up a room! Some good days and some not so good. We still hug and give encouragement to one another. He has problems speaking, swallowing and gets around on a walker slowly and needs assistance from time to time, needs a lot of rest and we use a transport wheelchair when needed.

ENOUGH OF THE DOOM AND GLOOM. For all who know my brave aviator husband you then know he does not give up easily. He will be true to the end and we still hug, kiss and laugh as much as possible. We do shed some tears as well. It is fortunate that we have had 24 years together and we know each other well. It is taking a toll on us both and we are only human so, I would ask for all to please keep us in your thoughts and prayers! It would be most appreciated.

When we are able, we at least get out for a little drive or out to our covered patio for some fresh air. Know that Gene and I wish the BEST to all of you and he holds dear memories of his colleagues. Please feel free to call me, as Gene can’t express himself the way he wants but, he understands everything and I can use speaker phone to at least have him hear you and I can facilitate, 724-513-0765 cell. I know he would love to hear from you and can sometimes manage a few words. Leave a message if I don’t answer and I will call you back.

Captain Gene J. Schumacher, Retired USAir  
By Maureen R. Schumacher

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## **Captain Dick Mahoney update**

Dear Soaring Eagles - You may recall that Dick Mahoney developed a glioblastoma about a year ago. He has undergone chemo/radiation treatment which followed surgery to remove as much of the tumor as possible. The following is an update on Capt. Dick Mahoney from his wife, Trish, who said it was okay to distribute. It was forwarded to me from his friend and also former CAL pilot, Don Burrows.

Joe

Dick understands what is said to him but struggles with responding, and a lot of the time what he does say makes absolutely no sense at all. Tough to communicate with him.....that is heartbreaking.

Caring for Dick is all consuming. He needs help with everything.....showering, dressing, bathroom, shaving, clipping nails, etc. He really can't be out of sight unless he is sleeping and even then I have to be aware of noises because he does get up and starts walking without his walker.....not good. He has had some falls to prove this true.

Not complaining here.....happy to be healthy and strong enough to be able to do what is needed for Dick for as long as I can handle it. There will be a time when I will have to have help.

Hope you both are doing well. □ Trish

## **Captain Bob Mueller**

In a recent conversation with Joe Rahll, who is 98, I think we were discussing some of the Old Timers, and Captain Bob Mueller's name came up. I flew with Captain Bob on the DC 9 out of DCA in the seventies and eighties before checking out myself. Captain Mueller was fun to fly with and was a professional in every sense of the word. Captain Mueller will turn 100 years old on January 27, 2021.

In 1953 Captain Bob was #30 on the Pilot Seniority List right behind all of the Air Mail Pick up Pilots. Although Bob still owns an automobile, he no longer drives, but otherwise sounds as sharp as ever. It was nice reminiscing with him and discussing all the of good times we had on the line/

Captain Bob sends his regards to all of his friends from the Allegheny/USAir day.

mccaptrom@aol.com

Joe



## Susan E. Shaw

The fifth man I loved and missed on Father's Day was Colin Franklin Shaw, Jr. I married Capt. Colin Shaw on Aug. 3rd, 1977 after a long and eventful courtship. We were 25 and 29 when we met at a single's dance for college grads that I attended with my coworker at the DC Welfare Dept. Colin asked me to dance over and over. I didn't believe his line about being an airline pilot newly transferred to the DC area for a minute. For one thing, he had a round baby face that proved he was probably younger than me. I did believe the part of his story about being from MA because of his Boston accent. He was persistent, so I gave him my work phone number. Several days later, my secretary said a Colin Shaw was on the phone for me. I thought his name was Colin Sharp! He decided the best way to get around my skepticism was to take me flying in his Aeronca Chief that he kept at Davis Field in Olney. To my surprise, he was an accomplished pilot and little planes were great fun. I continued to fly with him for the next 19 years. Fly, we did! We flew all over. I was in a horrible motorcycle accident at age 26. He not only stuck around but spent most days when he wasn't flying Convair 580's for Allegheny Airlines at Holy Cross Hospital with me. The near brush with death pushed him to decide that he would stick around permanently, despite his long-range plans to never marry. In December, after I turned 27, he bought an old farmhouse on Sheckells Road in Huntingtown, MD. It was a definite "fixer upper" with good bones. We moved in December 6th after he had rehabbed the master bedroom and closet so we could sleep and have clean clothes in a house under renovation. That home renovation was still going on when I was 43 and he was 48. Our son, Devin Franklin Shaw, arrived on the ides of March, 1979, after I experienced the 3rd near death event in my life, HELP Syndrome, with liver and kidney failure, a skyrocketing BP, and no platelets when I went into labor at 36 weeks. Our Sheckells Road neighbors became our family as they literally took us all under their wing including [Peggy Granlund](#), [Jim Granlund](#), [Ronald Howard](#), Barbara and Denny Gaetano, John Crowe, Myra Gowans Crowe, [Joanne Tregoe](#) and Roger Tregoe, [Kathleen Banfield Hammond](#), [Mike Hammond](#), Suzanne Rice and many others. Colin was never the same after Devin's close-call birth. He was a devoted father who adored his clone of him son. We flew together as a family. We bought the Bay Runner, a 34' 1964 Hatteras convertible boat with a shallow draw that allowed us to explore creeks all over Southern MD, often surprising Creek homeowners when such a big boat came calling. We survived Devin's metabolic problems, which, once diagnosed, allowed him to thrive at the Calverton School, as a Cub Scout, as a soccer player and a wrestler. Colin bought the car he always wanted—a bright red Porsche 911 Targa—used, of course. □ We bought a Cessna Sky Hawk to keep at Lower Marlboro Airport, because it's greater speed would allow us to travel farther. The plane was based in Sacramento, CA. Colin and I flew it back to MD at low altitudes over the Grand Canyon, over the Balloon Festival in Albuquerque, NM, continuing across America. By this time, Shaw's Aerial Photo was quite successful. Colin had a plan for retirement from USAir when the time came. He would fly for our own thriving little business. Life was full and mostly happy. I was the Clinical Director of a large group Psychiatric Practice based in Waldorf, a busy Hospice volunteer social worker, and a joyous parent of a son we both centered our lives around. On February 2nd, a Saturday, Devin was supposed to go skiing with his HUMC youth group. Skiing and cross-country skiing were sports Colin and Devin enjoyed together. On Friday night, Feb. 1st, Colin was flying for USAirways. Devin and I attended Michael Edwards' wedding. When I got home from the wedding, Devin and the Granlund's were fixated on the tv watching a USAirways jet burn on a runway at LAX Airport. Devin asked, "Is Dad on that plane?" He was. He was 48. Devin was 11. Colin had lived an extremely full 48 years filled with adventures. He had myriad interests and projects. He was a small, wiry man who weighed between 136 and 143 lbs. his whole life, but whose presence filled any room. He never met a stranger. He started his aviation career by soloing on his 16th birthday with money saved from mowing lawns, shoveling snow, delivering papers. He was already the



Civil Air Patrol Commander in Nashua, NH. The day he graduated from high school in Worcester, MA, he joined the Air Force. His vision precluded him from becoming a pilot, so he became an Air Traffic Controller at RAF Bentwaters in Ipswich, England, where he developed his love for British cars and beer. By the time I met him, he was almost 30, an experienced Commercial Airline Pilot with his own plane and his little red convertible living in a community house of Mennonite conscientious objectors in Wheaton, MD. What a ride we had!! □ I will always love Colin Shaw, Jr. Father's Days are particularly days of remembrance as Devin is the man of which his Dad dreamed. Colin Triton Shaw, his namesake who is sooooo like him, and Brynley Carrera Shaw will carry on his essence. Capt. Colin F. Shaw at the party to celebrate turning 40 and becoming a USAirways 737 Captain.



Hi Paul

This is my dues for 2020.

I finally retired on September of last year. My last flight was on a 757 carrying the Colorado Rockies on their last flight of the season.

My wife Midge and I celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

in December.

We are waiting out ~~over~~ the corona virus at our condo in Melbourne Beach Florida.

Glen Kane

Captain John R. Covey  
17021 Upriver Dr. #29  
North Fort Myers, FL 33917  
[john@johncovey.com](mailto:john@johncovey.com)

Capt. Paul Sturpe, Treasurer  
8860 Peninsula Dr  
Terrell, NC 28682

Hi Paul,  
Enclosed is my check for \$40.00. I hope you and your family are doing well.

We have been settled in North Fort Myers, FL for the past few years. We winter here and summer on Lake Erie, near Westfield, NY. In the winter, I work at Home Depot and Lowes to supplement my \$217.00 retirement income. In the summer, we manage a campground on the shores of Lake Erie. It is a Moose Club campground, so you have to be a Moose member somewhere to stay here. My oldest daughter is an instructor Captain for Jet Blue, based in JFK. Right now, she is enjoying her time off, due to the virus. Other daughter is a lawyer (don't hurt me, not my idea) for the state of Florida. We invite everyone to come up to the lake this summer and enjoy the cool breezes and delightful water. You can check us out at [moosebeaches.com](http://moosebeaches.com).

Take care, everyone.

John Covey    [moosebeaches.com](http://moosebeaches.com)

## “Thank You”

Dear Misty,

The enclosed plaque is a meager attempt to say Thank You for all of the times that you have readily responded to my request for help, mostly for widows facing troubling questions about their insurance coverage after the death of their spouse.

It is a personal comfort to me to know that there is someone to turn to and get prompt attention for folks who are hurting and confused about how to approach these issues in a very difficult time for them.

I hope that you will be able to display this plaque so that you will be constantly reminded that The Soaring Eagles and I greatly value your contribution to our wellbeing and peace of mind

Thanks again,

Joe Kernan for The Soaring Eagles

