

# Aerie News

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

First Quarter 2022

## TABLE of CONTENTS

Messages from your Officers  
Soaring Eagles Write

### Board of Directors

President	Joe Kernan
1 <sup>st</sup> VP	Judy Schmidt
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP	Alvahn Mondell
Treasurer	Paul Sturpe
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)

### A Milestone:

By the time you read this Captain John J. "Joe" Rahll will have celebrated his 100th birthday. The Soaring Eagles were well represented at this event that was held at The Pompano Beach American Legion Post 142. There were approximately 70 American Legion Members present, and they were joined by First Vice President Judy Schmidt Colbath, Joanne Trihey, Judy Beaupre, Captain Andy Skiba, and his wife Betty and their son Chris. Also present were Phylis McCoy, widow of Jim McCoy, and Lynda Davis, widow of Don Davis.

Judy Schmidt Colbath presented Joe with a plaque that described his career beginning in April of 1950, with All American Airways and concluding in 1982 with USAir. I presented Joe with a framed photograph of him as a copilot in 1950 standing on the steps of a DC3 that I have published earlier. Additionally, I gave him an Allegheny tee shirt with the Martin on the front, a USAir Soaring Eagles ball cap, a lapel pin, and a Soaring Eagles commemorative coin.

I was pleased that I had the opportunity to tell Joe that despite any differences in style that each of us may have brought to the representation of pilots, I both appreciated, and respected the significant contribution that he had made to the pilot group during his tenure as MEC Chairman from 1961 until 1979. In the annals of ALPA history, eighteen years as MEC Chairman is unprecedented, Thanks, Joe!



### **Are we going to have a Convention in 2022?**

Lately, I have been getting quite a few questions about whether we are going to have a Convention this year or not. The answer is an emphatic **Yes!** If I have to go to jail, the answer is Yes! Save the dates, Oct. 28, 29, and 30. Tampa Westshore Marriott When we had to cancel the 2021 Convention, it was the second year in a row that we had to make that difficult decision, and I'll go out on a limb and state, "Not this year". The last decision was especially difficult as we had nearly 25 new members who were looking forward to attending their first

Convention, not to mention the members who were looking forward to attending, and meeting the new members. Captain Paul Sturpe had over 100 individuals signed up for the Dinner Cruise which would have set a record for attendance. In an effort to recapture the enthusiasm that we had for the most recently canceled Convention, I am providing a direct link to the Tampa Westshore Marriott reservations center for ease in reserving your rooms.

Thank you for choosing to have your Event with us!

Here's your reservation link your guests can use to make reservations:

**[Book your group rate for SOARING EAGLES](#)**

You will find the information for your online reservation link below. If you have questions or need help with the link, please do not hesitate to ask. We appreciate your business and look forward to a successful event.

**Event Summary:**

**SOARING EAGLES**

**Start Date: Thursday, October 27, 2022**

**End Date: Monday, October 31, 2022**

**Last Day to Book: Monday, October 3, 2022**

**Hotel(s) offering your special group rate:**

- **Marriott Tampa Westshore for 119 USD per night**

**[Book your group rate for SOARING EAGLES](#)**

If you attempted to make the same reservation today without the benefit of the Group Rate it would be \$209.00 dollars per night. You can do the math, and see that it behooves members to make their reservations as soon as possible. Don't wait until we run out of rooms at the attractive group rate.

Last year approximately ten members didn't grasp the importance of making reservations early in order to get the Soaring Eagles rate, as a consequence at the last minute I had to

negotiate with the hotel to accommodate them. The fact that the Tampa Bay Bucs were at home that weekend made the negotiations a little more difficult, as the hotel would have had no problem moving the rooms at an increased rate. So if everyone will use the reservations link as I have just done, we can put that issue to bed, and get on with the Dinner Cruise planning, and other issues. If you have any issues with making your reservations let me know so that I can bring it to the attention of my contact at the hotel Dealing with the front desk can be problematic.

### **Membership Cards:**

Below is a list of names of members who are awaiting their membership cards, and since it costs the same to run one card as it does twenty-five cards, I need a complete list. If you have paid your dues for 2022, and your name is not on the list below, please contact me with your name so I can add it to the list.

Pamela Orbe, Bob Sauer, Eric Jordan, Ron Swicegood, Brian Lindsay, Judy Aarnes, Rick Aarnes, JoEllen Zerilla, Pamela Orbe.

The 2022 dues were due on Jan 31, 2022. If you are younger than eighty (80) the dues are \$40.00, and if you were eighty before Jan. 31, 2022, your obligation is \$25.00. Why is this important you ask? Because the Soaring Eagles are picking up the cost of the dinner cruise for dues paid up members.

By mail to:

Soaring Eagles

8860 Peninsula Dr.

Terrell, NC 28682

Via PayPal to:

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

### **Monday Morning Stories:**

Although the Monday Morning Story feature seems to be popular, it requires your stories in order to continue. I have a limited supply of personal stories, and I am sure that everyone has a good story or two that they could share with the group. Please consider submitting a story that I can publish to the group at some point in the future.

Joe



**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(724) 378-7025

Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt  
Colbath

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

As a newly hired Flight Attendant in 1959, I had the opportunity to fly with Joe Rahll out of Cleveland, and later he and my late husband Carl Colbath would work together to negotiate some of the early good contracts for the Pilots. I was so excited and looked forward to being able to attend Joe's one-hundredth birthday in Pompano Beach.

I had not non revved in quite a while but was pleasantly surprised at how well Joanne Trihey and I were treated by the gate, agents, and Flight Attendants on our flights to Florida. By the way, in 1959 we were not referred to as Flight Attendant, but rather Stewardess, or Hostess. Anyway, they treated a couple of Old Hostesses very well.

Once in Florida Judy Beaupre, widow of Bob Beaupre, treated us like Royalty, picking us up at the airport, giving us a place to stay, and transporting us to the Birthday Bash. It was nice to see some old friends from the good old days for a guy that's one hundred years old, Joe Rahll is holding his own. Actually, he may be holding someone else's because every time I looked around there was a different woman hanging on to him.

I know that Joe Kernan has mentioned the upcoming Convention to you, and I urge you to make your reservation early as he suggested. I just made mine using the link, and look forward to seeing you all in October in Tampa, especially the new members.

Come on down to Tampa, and make it one to remember.

Judy

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

(330) 277-6233

Captain Alvahn Mondell

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

Good morning Eagles and Eaglets,

Well, here we are again, looking forward to our annual gathering. Hopefully, this year will go as planned!

We still have some hurdles to overcome but hopefully, this year will be the beginning of many , future gatherings!

Alvahn

**SECRETARY'S MESSAGE**

(619) 417-7274

Flight Attendant Judi Todd

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

Well! Two years have passed and I really have nothing to show for it. Basically everything is the same. I really want to get together and see you all in Tampa at the reunion and pray that we have one this year. Things start off good and then another Covid variant comes around. Let's all hope for healthy days ahead and be able to see each other for a few wonderful reunion days in Tampa.

Fingers crossed 🙏

Judi

**TREASURER'S MESSAGE**

(828) 478-1133

Captain Paul Sturpe

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

When you read this message, your dues are late if you have not sent them in yet. Thank you to those who have already remitted the dues.

Here is a recap of the dues structure.

- \$40.00 if you were 79 or younger on January 1, 2022
- \$25.00 if you were 80 or older on January 1, 2022
- Zero if you were 80 before January 1, 2017 because you are "grandfathered" however many still pay the \$25.00 dues
- Zero if you are an honorary member
- Zero if you are a Lifetime member (spouse of a deceased member)

I can accept dues as follows:

- Check, money order etc to:
  - o Soaring Eagles
  - o 8860 Peninsula Dr
  - o Terrell, NC 28682
- PayPal or Zelle to [SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com](mailto:SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com)

So long until next quarter and hope to see you in Tampa.

Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

## “SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

Captain Sharon Menear - DC-9 Incident – Myrtle Beach International Airport

I was a new DC-9 captain on a layover in Myrtle Beach in February. We were scheduled for a dawn departure, and the weather was unusually cold that morning. The DC-9's wings were covered with frost. Back then (1980s), there was no jetway. Passengers walked across the ramp and up the portable boarding stairs. We boarded the passengers, secured the entry door, and waited for the ground crew to de-ice the wings, something they rarely did in MYR.

A tug pulled a spray tower around the jet, first spraying the left wing and then the right one. The unit pulled away, and an agent standing in front of the nose gave me the engine start signal. Before we started the second engine, the airplane shook so violently I would have been thrown from my seat if not for my seat harness. The extreme shuddering continued, and we had no idea what was causing it. The agent in front of the airplane had a panicked look and vigorously gave me the cut engine signal. While this was happening, one of our flight attendants told the passengers we were experiencing an earthquake.

The violent movements finally stopped, the boarding stairs were put in place, and the forward entry door was opened. Before a F/A could stop him, a passenger rushed out and ran away. We never found him.

The ground crew explained that when the tug driver pulled away behind the right wing, he forgot he was pulling a high tower and drove under the tail. The impact with the outer leading edge of the horizontal stabilizer threw him out of the tug, and the gas pedal stuck. The tower kept ramming the tail over and over until the driver managed to climb back in the tug and stop it.

The collisions left a large dent, but I was also concerned there might be damage to the bolts that attach the tail to the fuselage. I called the maintenance base in PIT and explained the situation. As usual, I wasn't taken seriously because I'm a woman.

The mechanic said, "Don't you worry, little missy. We'll fly down there with a piece of sheet metal and have you on your way in no time."

I decided to get a second opinion, so I called my husband, who was also a captain with US Airways, but more importantly he was an experienced aircraft mechanic, builder, and restorer.

He said, "The twisting motion caused by the repeated blows have most likely sheared the bolts that attach the tail to the fuselage. If you fly that airplane, the tail will come off and kill everyone on board."

I cancelled the flight, sent the crew back to the hotel, and waited for the mechanics. They arrived three hours later, all smiles, carrying a piece of sheet metal and a toolbox. When they saw the damaged tail, their jaws dropped, and their faces turned white. I smiled, thanked them for coming, and returned to the hotel.

It took them two weeks to repair the DC-9 enough to safely ferry it back to PIT.



Judy Schmidt & Phyliss McCoy



Please find my 2022 dues.

17021 Upriver Dr. #29  
North Fort Myers, FL 33917  
716-224-3001  
[john@johncovey.com](mailto:john@johncovey.com)

Not much to report here. Working at Basspro as a firearms specialist in the winter and being a camp host at a KOA campground in Westfield, NY in the summer.

Lanie and I are in reasonably good health. We hope to stay that way. If anyone comes down this way or swings by our NY campground, give us a shout.

John Covey

C/O Peter F. Acquaro, Ret.  
13 Joy Road Selden, New York 11784

Soaring Eagles  
8860 Peninsula Dr  
Terrel, North Carolina 28682  
Att. C/O Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

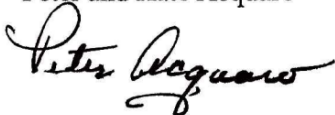
To Paul, and all of my acquaintances from US Air and Piedmont,

I apologize for the late remittance of my dues. In October, I experienced a major debilitating medical problem and have been hospitalized on and off for the past four months. The foundation of the medical problem stems from my tending to my USAF Active-Duty assignment at the World Trade Center on Sept 11, 2001. New York City.

I will be returning to the hospital in two weeks for another 28-day cycle of therapy with the hopes that the infliction goes into remission, and I can once again resume my dedication and duties as a Catholic Deacon. Rumor has it that my Parishioners at St Frances RCC, Coram, NY miss me...don't know if its because of my short sermons (don't think so) or my sensitivity to only sharing clean jokes with them.

God Bless, Stay safe  
Hopefully I will be able to make the next reunion

Peter and Kate Acquaro



604 Spring House Court  
Brentwood TN 37027-4305  
January 19, 2022

Soaring Eagles  
8860 Peninsula Dr  
Terrell NC 28682

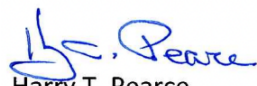
RE: 20220 dues.

Dear Captain Paul Sturpe

Enclosed, please find my dues for 2022. My date of birth is 22 August 1940. I am 81 years old.

I hope all is well in at your house – no Covid or any other maladies of this time of life. We are fine, hunkered down and being good.

Sincerely,



Harry T. Pearce

Dear Paul,

Enclosed find my 2022 due's , check #1130.

This year was not only a frustrating year dealing with COVID-19, but I went through the most difficult time in my life, baring all the check rides, fowl weather, and time away from home, I lost my wonderful wife of 55 years, and the mother of our four kids. She held the fort down, during all the time I was out to sea, in the Navy, and away on trips flying commercially. No one could have done it better, and am so grateful for all the wonderful happy years we had together. She was my first love, and flying was my second. I'm still flying my Aeronca Champ off of our farm, here in Western PA., and hope to be able to keep flying, for a few more years.

Thank you for keeping things running, and to all the staff,  
"Happy New Year"

Best regards,



Capt. Bill "Ole" Oehlbeck Jr. US Airways (Ret.)

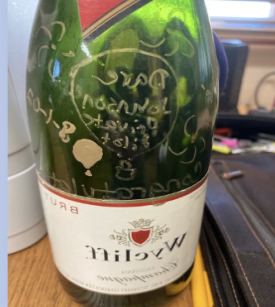
03-11-2022

Hi Joe,

Since I am basically an aircraft junkie, I didn't know if you knew about my two lighter-than-air experiences.

In the year of 2000, I began learning to fly a Hot Air Balloon in ABQ in a Cameron C80. In June of 2002 I got a phone call saying I won a Hot Air Balloon – the caller said “don't hang up, this is not a scam and I am not selling anything.”

He also said I will send you the paperwork- giving title to the balloon. And sure enough- in a few days I received the paperwork. I discovered I won an Aerostar S53A- a red/white/blue, leather-seat balloon. Now I have my private lighter-than-air rating. (08-01-02)(After taking my ~~checkride~~ they surprised me with a Cold bottle of Champagne (on my head!)



And then...I found another mode of transportation- but it wasn't going my way! Drove to Smyrna TN a few years back and flew the blimp "Fruit of the Loom" for 4-hours November 6, 2019. Would like to obtain a lighter-than-air Airship rating but no one provides instruction for a rating unless you work for a company like Air Sign or Goodyear. |



Dave Johnson  
505-385-3288



## **Great Company to Work For**

It was early to mid-eighties, and I had been flying Captain for a couple of years. We were on a PVD overnight, and the crew and I had gone out for dinner at the Great House at least that's what I think it was called. As we returned to the hotel it was sweater weather, we had an early departure the next morning hence it was a short night.

On waking the next morning, we were greeted with five inches of wet snow covering everything. One of those late winter early spring storms had arrived during the night. By the time we were ready for departure all the ramp areas, taxiways, and runways had been plowed and were in good shape.

As we taxied out, I used old an old trick I learned from Ed Slattery. Since I didn't know when the engine plugs had been put into the cowlings, I did a rolling run up, which involved advancing each engine to about 60% epr and checking for instrument regularities. None found, we were cleared for takeoff on runway 5L. As we crossed the intersection of runway 34 the left engine began to compressor stall, along with the left epr gauge that was erratic. Since we were on at about 80 knots the abort was not very severe. For a split second, I considered going back to the run-up block but quickly abandoned that idea.

I called PVD and verified that maintenance was still there and requested that MTC meet the aircraft at the gate. I asked the mechanic who I knew to drop the cowlings on the left engine to check it out. About five minutes later he returned to the cockpit, and his face was ghost white. He said, "Damn Joe, I'm sure glad you came back to the gate." I asked why is that? He replied, "We found a hole in the stator vanes as big as your fist, and the turbine blades were damaged as well." I said, "Well hell, I'm kind of glad I came back as too." The mechanic surmised that we might have made it to Quonset Point before we would have experienced a catastrophic engine failure. The mechanic also advised that they had found a six-inch length of chain that apparently came from one of the snowplows and it had been spit into the left engine when the left landing gear ran over it.

There was another DC9 at PVD that wasn't due out until later in the day, and everything was transferred to that aircraft, and we departed PVD about one hour late for points south.

Later in the day, I received a message via ACARS to call mister Schofield from the next stop which I recall, as being Orlando. When he came on the line his voice was very stern when he said, "Well Captain, I guess you know that you cost us a quarter of a million dollars this morning at PVD." I said, no sir I didn't know that, but have you calculated how much I saved you"? He replied in a much more normal voice for Butch, "No I haven't but good job Captain."

That's how it was to work for a great airline, with great employees, and great managers.

Joe

