

Aerie News

The Eagles Aerie News of the USAir

Second Quarter 2023

Soaring Eagles

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Messages from your Officers

Soaring Eagles Write

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(276) 632-9941

Captain Joe Kernan

JoeKernan9@yahoo.com

Plans are well under way for the 46th Annual Soaring Eagles Convention/Reunion. See the 2nd Vice President Andy Skiba's article on why you should consider joining us in Tampa the weekend of Oct. 27, 28, and 29. It sums up his and Betty's recent experience, and I'm sure if you take his advice, you will have a similar enjoyable time.

As I am writing this article on July 14, the numbers will have changed by the time you read it, but as of today we have booked 75% of the rooms that we contracted with the hotel for. If you have not already done so it is imperative that you make your hotel reservations while the discount is still available and avoid any last-minute problems. Last year we set a record for attendance, and it looks like we could break that record this year.

Once you get to the Hotel reservations page you will need to change the dates on the Check availability page to reflect checking in on Oct. 27th, and checking out on Oct.30th. If you encounter any difficulty, call me at: 276-632-9941. Please don't wait until the last minute.

[Book your group rate for Soaring Eagles of US Air Oct2023](#)

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 of US Air Oct2023

Start Date: Thursday, October 27, 2023

End Date: Monday, October 30, 2023

Last Day to Book: Thursday, October 5, 2023

Hotel(s) offering your special group rate:

· **Marriott Tampa Westshore for 130 USD - 180 USD per night**

[Book your group rate for Soaring Eagles of US Air Oct2023](#)

Current list of who's coming as of July 14th.

Janet & Gary Bachowski
Bob Brock
Anita & George Burke
MaryAnn Barnett & Rebecca Conger
Kathleen Cox & Sister Mary
Rusty Shelton & Pamela Dunlop
Jeannette Elliott
Laura Imrich
Steve & Karen Flom
Bob Flom & Carol Loxtercamp
John & Irvina Flood
Lorraine Genola
Barbara Gonzalez & Jodi DiMauro

Tammy Hansen & Bruce Elliotte
Jerry & Lissa Hostomsky
Lois Joyce
Tom & Nedra Jurewicz
Brad & Diane Kelly
Joe & Donna Kernan
Bob & Anne Klenke
Tom & Susan Creamer
Oz & Dyce Lamonds
Frank Landgraff & Mary Kelly
Susan Lee
Eric & Janice Litt
Mike & Denise Loxtercamp
Richard & Amy Lytle
John & Kathy Maynard
A.D. & Julie Medlin
Nancy Murray & daughter
John & Patti Nagy
Greg & Pat Papin
Larry Romjue
Bob & Debra Santolla
Judith (Schmidt) Colbath & guest
Andy & Betty Skiba
Diane Smyth
Paul & Suzanne Sturpe
Judi Todd
Janice & Stephen Wardyga
Leon Young
Patte Garofalo
Reba Armbruster

By the time you read this list other names will have no doubt been added. If your name is not on this list, and you've made your reservation let me know.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(724) 378-7025

Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt
Colbath

schonewalds64@aol.com

Hi everyone, I've been quite busy since Joe Kernan tasked me with making the food and beverage arrangements with the hotel for the 46th Soaring Eagles Convention/Reunion. I had to put my negotiator's hat back on in order to keep the costs down for not only for you the members, but for the Soaring Eagles as an organization. Since we already have had a sit-down dinner during the Saturday cruise, it was decided to have a buffet style dinner on Sunday night prior to the entertainment that is planned. I think everyone will be pleased with what I've done, at least, I hope so. Despite the increase in costs for everything, I have tried to lessen the impact on everyone's pocketbook. Despite the increase in food costs the Soaring Eagles are still subsidizing the Sunday night expenses by 25%, and the Friday Meet & Greet remains free of charge. Last year the cruise was no charge in recognition of the fact that we had to cancel in 2021, and 2022. Even though the cruise in 2023 will be a paid event this year the Soaring Eagles are providing a slight subsidy. All of these events will be laid out in the Convention/Reunion program, which is being finalized, and will be published by Captain Paull Sturpe when finished .

I am so looking forward to seeing all of you in Tampa, and I hope you will bring a friend or two.

Judy

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(239) 693-9285

aeskiba@cs.com

Captain Andy Skiba

To All our inactive and newer Soaring Eagles members:

As many of you know or have read the articles by our Soaring Eagles President Joe Kernan, room reservations for our next reunion are filling up fast. There is still plenty of time to get your hotel reservations booked before the rooms at the discount price are filled up.

In my previous article in the Aerie I pointed out that it was my first reunion attendance and what a great time my wife and I had. Since then, we have been eagerly looking forward to a bigger and more fun filled event this October. Our cat is booked into the Pet Paradise kennel while we will be at the convention and I've resurrected many of my old Allegheny T-shirts that only pilots or flight attendants from our former airlines can appreciate. I also will be modeling a new Allegheny shirt that I found online that I think will be a hit as a fashion accessory.

I really would like our younger members to seriously plan on attending our next reunion in October and also encourage you to recruit a new member or more to join our unique organization of former pilots and flight attendants.

We all share that unique history of our careers with our former Airline. It is hard to believe how that is recaptured when we join with those forgotten friends and fellow employees and relive the memories and experience of those days.

Looking forward to meeting old friends and making new ones this year.

Andy Skiba

2nd VP Soaring Eagles

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

(619) 417-7274

Flight Attendant Judi Todd

judiwtodd@gmail.com

Can you believe it!! 2023 is half over and guess what? Our Soaring Eagles reunion/convention is less than 4 months away. (I'm getting ready to start packing). We have lots of great plans and activities (and of course The Hospitality Suite) just waiting for all of us to begin enjoying seeing each other and talking over the old times and adventures we had (and maybe some new ones we're planning on having) I'm up for any new suggestions that you would like to share (and help) me with the Hospitality Suite. I've already added coffee to our selections as a result of a request. Hopefully I'll see you all soon. Judi

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

(828) 478-1133

Captain Paul Sturpe

sturpe@gmail.com

Last quarter's plea for dues from those who have not paid for at least 3 years has been moderately successful. Thank you to those who have responded.

I am issuing one last reminder. You want to get up to date, especially if you have not paid since 2020 because I will be purging our members' database for those who have not paid in the last three years.

If you still need to pay dues, just go to our web site <https://usairsoaringeagles.org/> and click on the "Pay Dues" button. Clicking on that button will show you the option to pay your dues via PayPal or credit card. Of course, you can still send a check if you prefer, made out to "Soaring Eagles" at:

Soaring Eagles
8860 Peninsula Dr.
Terrell, NC 28682

I am hoping to see a lot of new faces in Tampa in October.

So long until next quarter.
Paul Sturpe, Treasurer/Web Master

“SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

The Passing of a legend

On June 17, 2023, John J. “Joe” RahlI flew west after being on this earth for 101 years and eighty-eight days. A Celebration of Life was held at the Pompano Beach American Legion Post #142 on Sunday July 2, 2023. I regret that I was unable to attend but I was pleased to learn that Cookie Knuth, and John Nagy attended along with Joe’s daughter “Cookie”and many of Joe’s American Legion friends. Had I been able to attend, I would have briefly described my relationship with Joe.

Now some Pilots are legends in their own minds, but Joe RahlI was a real legend. Joe started his career in 1950 as a co-pilot on an All American Airways DC3, and I met him as a twelve-year-old when he relinquished his seat so I could fly the airplane for about twenty minutes. The statute of limitations has run out, and I’m the only one alive who was on that airplane for that flight. When I was hired by Allegheny in 1967 I became reacquainted with Joe. Although Joe would never admit it to me, I suspect that he put in a good word for me with Harvey Thompson at the behest of my friend and mentor Ed Slattery, of course it didn’t hurt having my brother Chubby as one of his buddies too. Perhaps Joe had second thoughts about the good word. In any event our relationship could be described as having an undercurrent of resentment from the mid 70’s forward. As I got a little older, I began to better understand and accept why that resentment existed.

Joe RahlI began his career with All American Airways one year after the company began passenger service after transitioning for the Air Mail Pickup days. Roughly ten years after that Joe became involved in Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) work and served as the MEC Chairman for an unprecedented seventeen years. Unprecedented on the airline, and as far as I know no other Airline has ever had an MEC Chairman with that long a tenure as MEC Chairman. During that seventeen-year span, Joe, along with men like Carl Colbath, Don Ruppert and others negotiated some of the best contracts in the industry and at the time were the envy of other carriers, including the large carriers. Joe and these men accomplished these things during a period that

could be described as when the airline was in its early childhood. By the time I was hired in 1967 the airline was now a teenager and was about to merge with Lake Central in 1968. The expansion into the New England Market along with the Mohawk Merger was about to change the makeup of the airline in ways no one would have imagined. Two mergers in four years and the hiring surge necessary to service the new routes caused the pilot group to be much younger than in the past. There was now a tension between the junior members, and the more senior members as they viewed new issues through different lenses. What worked in the 50's and 60's no longer was acceptable in the 70's, hence the tension and resentment. How dare these ungrateful young pilots come in here and tell us what we've done isn't good enough or question our judgment. Well, we did, and I was involved in a group that lobbied for a change in leadership, and Joe resented it. Would I have resented it? Gotta be honest, I think I would. So, as I said earlier, I got older and have a better understanding why the resentment.

About ten years ago when I became more involved with the Soaring Eagles I began to reach out to Joe by phone and our conversations were cordial, and he never hung up on me. I kept Joe informed about who had flown west, who was sick, and generally what was going on. When we began publishing the "Aerie" electronically I would copy it and send it to him, as he didn't have a computer. Sometimes I would make a three way call and put him on the line with Ed Slattery, or Henry Nash since all three of them had been involved in "The Great Ham Caper" He seemed to really enjoy it, and I was pleased to be a facilitator. Sometimes we discussed the issues surrounding his leaving the MEC Chairmanship and younger men like me taking over. I took the opportunity to tell Joe, that regardless of our differences, that I had written, and stated publicly that I respected and appreciated what he had done for the pilot group. I don't think he believed me as he said, "Well you damn sure didn't say it then", I responded with, " Joe we all grow up and eventually figure this stuff out" I started to say, "Joe life is too short to hold a grudge", but how do you say that to someone over 100 years old? Judy Schmidt Colbath used to tell me , you know Joe Rahll doesn't like you.

My response to Judy was, "Whether Joe Rahll likes me or not doesn't matter, I like him".

To the extent that I was successful in doing any good in representing the pilots as MEC Chairman. I have John J. "Joe" Rahl to thank for laying the foundation, or building the platform if you will for me to stand on.

I had the privilege of speaking to Joe just days before he Flew West, and as difficult as it was for him to speak, I felt that we parted on good terms. God is good.

Finally, I want to thank Captain John Nagy for attending Joe's Celebration of Life and reading the poem on a plaque that Donna and I had made for Cookie.

Indeed, a legend has passed but will not soon be forgotten.

Rest In Peace my friend and Captain. Blue skies, and tailwinds, and thanks for the DC3 right seat time.

The other Joe





Time seems to have accelerated since my retirement from US Airways 16 years ago.

Since I missed the amended age 65 retirement by 5 months, I elected to work for an Afghan Airline that hired only pilots from Europe and North America. I was based in Kabul creating career bookends, beginning in Viet Nam with the Air Force and essentially ending in another combat zone as a civilian pilot in Afghanistan. I decided to wind down my flying adventures in Bangladesh as a Line Instructor pilot operating the B-767-300.

After a three year instructor pilot tour at Higher Power Aviation in Dallas, Texas, I received a call from Boeing Korea. After more than seven years I continue to commute to Incheon, Korea from Missoula, Montana as a B-737 instructor pilot and flight examiner for Korean Air and Jin Air.

One never knows where a farm boy from rural North Dakota may someday hang his hat. Lol

Kind regards,

Courtney Brye

B-767/B757 retiree from US Airways

P.S. My dues are in the mail.

Summer Time Fun

It was the summer of 1980 and I had been flying as a reserve Captain on the DC-9, based in PIT. After 14 ½ years as a F/O I had finally gotten a Captain bid and got checked out and turned loose to be a Skygod.

I shared a commuter pad in Pittsburgh with two other pilots but we seldom were in the pad together. Our reserve system in those years required us to be on call 5 days a week. Most of the time we were lucky to be flying and not hanging around the commuter apartment.

I was home in NJ on my days off and due to be back in PIT and available for Saturday duty. I thought that I might be able to call crew scheduling and beg off being in PIT until Saturday afternoon which would give me another night at home. I called up crew scheduling and explained my plan which resulted in not only a big NO but that they would need me to fly something on Saturday since they were short of crews as usual. I told them to just assign me whatever flight they needed me on and I would catch a flight to PIT and check with crew scheduling when I arrived to see what I was flying the next day.

Since it was summer time and my uniform was in my pad in Pittsburgh I was traveling in the latest of cool looking clothes. A Madras sport coat with tan slacks, a flowery pattern tie and white tasseled loafers to complete my ensemble.

Once I arrived at PIT I went to the crew room to check with crew scheduling and see what trip I had for the next day. They said that they had nothing for the next day but needed me to fly a quick round trip to Baltimore and the flight was waiting at the gate right now with the passengers already on board and they were trying to round up a full crew to get the flight on its way.

I told the crew scheduler that my uniform was over in my apartment and they said never mind the uniform, just go the way I was since the flight had already

been delayed and they were still trying to round up the other crew members as we speak. We needed a F/O and three flight attendants.

A good friend of mine who was still flying as a first officer had just finished his trip and overheard the scheduler and he volunteered to be my F/O. A flight attendant who also heard that they were looking for a crew and she volunteered for the trip. Since the trip was an easy round trip from Pit to BAL and return, it paid 4 hours for a quick and easy 1 ½ hours flying. I asked the crew scheduler if they had the last two flight attendants yet and Rich, the scheduler, had two brand new flight attendants who had just graduated from training that afternoon on their way to the airport.

Since the flight was already late, my crew minus the last two flight attendants boarded the airplane and since I was not in uniform but got into the left seat in the cockpit I certainly must have looked suspicious to the full load of passengers.

I got on the PA and made one of my marvelous announcements and assured them that I really was a qualified Captain and as soon as our last two flight attendants arrived we would be on our way to Baltimore. Normal protocol was for the flight attendants to stop up to the cockpit and introduce themselves to the pilots if they hadn't had a chance to meet in operations. Since we were already to go as soon as our last two girls got on board we closed the entry door and pushed back and got underway to BAL.

It was a beautiful clear summer evening and our flight to BAL was routine and uneventful. Once all the passengers deplaned in BAL, our two new girls, Betty Sue and Bambi, (not their real names) came up to the cockpit to introduce themselves to the Pilots. Their eyes were somewhat surprised when they looked into the left seat and saw me there with my paisley tie, tan slacks and size 12 white tasseled loafers propped up on the foot rest on the bottom of the instrument panel. I'm sure they must have noticed my Madras Sport coat hanging in the cockpit coat rack as they came up front.

As the two girls turned to me to introduce themselves I thought this was too good an opportunity to miss. I told the girls who were still excited after working their first trip on the same day they graduated. I said I was glad to meet them and my name was Andy Skiba. I asked them to write up a good report for me when we got back to Pittsburgh since I was trying to get a job on the airline and they asked me to fly this short trip to Baltimore and back to determine if I might be worth hiring as a new pilot. My friend Les, who was in the right seat and in uniform, picked right up on the game and told the girls that he was a check pilot and just riding along to show me some of the airline's procedures. I told the girls that I really was hoping to get a job with Allegheny Airlines and would really appreciate a great write-up from them when we got to PIT.

As the girls left the cockpit I know they were scratching their heads and wondering why they were never told about having to evaluate a pilot looking for a job on the airline.

The station loaded up our passengers for the return flight to PIT. We buttoned up and started our return trip to PIT. About halfway back to PIT our senior flight attendant came up to the cockpit and asked what kind of BS did we tell those new girls about getting an evaluation for the pilot trying to get a job.

She said it was a great joke but she asked those girls if they thought the company just let anyone fly their airplanes who were not already trained and working for the airline? Of course they were so new that they never had a clue that we were having a good laugh on them.

Once we arrived at PIT and the passengers were deplaned I did apologize to the girls and offered to buy them a drink. They quickly told me that their rest of the evening plans did not include anything with me. (Only kidding).

I don't know if I ever flew with those two girls again but they probably wouldn't recognize me in a uniform anyway.

Andy Skiba