

Business Meeting Minutes of the 46th Soaring Eagles Convention  
(Oct 29, 2023)

After the group recited the Pledge of Allegiance, the President gavelled the meeting to order at 10:15 AM. The President then announced that he would defer his comments until after the board elections had been concluded.

The First Vice President Judy (Schmidt) Colbath was called upon for a report, and Judy discussed how she had attempted to keep the costs of the food and beverages down, as she had been tasked with making those arrangements with the hotel. Through an oversight the site selection for next year was overlooked. The board will deal with that. Judy was thanked for her efforts.

The second Vice President Andy Skiba was thanked for his work in making up the identification badges, and getting the envelopes prepared for registration.

The Treasurer Capt. Paul Sturpe gave a comprehensive report on the fiscal state of the organization and took questions from the floor. He was then thanked by the President for his outstanding work over the last six plus years as Treasurer/Webmaster. A copy of the Treasurer's report is available on request.

The Secretary/Editor Judi Todd had nothing to report, but she was thanked for her work in getting the Aerie published in a timely manner.

The President then read the report from the Nominating committee chaired Captain Bill Leefe which contained the names of those individuals that had expressed their desire to be candidates for the various offices.

The President then called for nominations from the floor for each of the open positions, except for Secretary/Editor, which is not up for re-election until the 2024 Convention. There being no nominations from the floor, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations. The motion carried, and the slate presented by the nominating committee was elected by voice vote.

Those elected to the board for 2024 are:

Joe Kernan, President

Judy (Schmidt) Colbath, First Vice President

Steven Flom, Second Vice President

Andy Skiba, Treasurer

Paul Sturpe, Webmaster (New Board position)

The President then gave his report on the State of the organization which he judges to be good and suggested that we continue our recruiting efforts to grow the organization. The President stated that we had welcomed fourteen new members during 2023. A copy of the President's statement is printed below.

There being no other business before the board the meeting was adjourned at 11:15AM.

Judi Todd Secretary/Editor

## The State of the Organization

In my view the State of the Organization is good. We continue to make good use of our two main communications tools in keeping our members up to date on current events, and items of special interest. Our webmaster Paul Sturpe has done a superb job of transforming the website that we inherited from Gerry Milburn into a state-of-the-art website. Many of these improvements took place while Paul was also serving as our Treasurer. We thank Paul for his nearly seven years of service as Treasurer, and we look forward to ongoing improvements to the website under Paul's leadership.

In the election that we have just concluded, we elected the first, second generation pilot to the board with the election of Steve Flom as Second Vice President. Steve's father Bob Flom served as Soaring Eagles President in 1996, and again in 2009. Kevin Flom is our newest member, so it looks like the "Flying Flom's" are coming back. Congratulations Steve on your election, and welcome to Kevin.

Speaking of new members, I have had the pleasure during the last year to welcome fourteen new members to the Soaring Eagles and nearly half of them were pilots. Of course, we welcome all new members be they pilots or flight attendants, but we just want to keep a nice balance.

With Paul Sturpe stepping down as Treasurer, we congratulate Andy Skiba on his election to Treasurer, and we wish him well in taking on one of the most important functions on our board. He is obviously well qualified, and I look forward to working closely with him in keeping us fiscally strong and being responsible stewards of the funds entrusted to us.

Most of our members have already retired, but from time to time I am called upon to assist widows or spouses of members with retirement and insurance issues with American Airlines. I am disappointed to report that my go to person at American for assistance in these matters was hired away from American by Southwest Airlines. Misty Hambright was the Director of Benefits Administration at American, and all I had to do was call her and describe the problem to her, after which she would assign the

issue to a subordinate who would usually resolve the issue. Apparently, she was too employee/retiree friendly as she is no longer at American. If you call the number advertised as American Airlines Benefits you are not talking to an employee of American Airlines, but to a third party that has been hired by American to administer the benefits. When I return from this Convention, I intend to write a narrative of how one of our widows has been treated shabbily by the so-called American Airlines Benefits Department. To put it mildly she has been batted around like a ping pong ball in a Chinese table tennis match. We were so fortunate for work for the company when we did, when you were treated like a family member, and not just a number.

Congratulations to Judy (Schmidt) Colbath who has once again been elected to the First Vice President's position.

Judi Todd continues to get the Aerie out in electronic form which saves considerable resources. Thanks Judi. Judi is not up for election until next year.

We have a good strong board and I look forward to working with the entire board in growing this organization into the future.

As a prudent organization should, I hope that everyone will be looking forward to the time when a leadership change at the President's level should take place. Sooner or later the baton must be passed to others, and I hope whenever that takes place the person that succeeds me has the determination to preserve our Family, Heritage, and Legacy as described on our commemorative coin.

Joe