

# CONTRAILS



ISSUE NO. 184

NOVEMBER 2012



END OF AN ERA: Shuttle Endeavor on its last "flight" over the Mojave Desert near Edwards AFB.

**RETIRED NORTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION**

# RNPA CONTRAILS



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**Each Member!**

The RNPA newsletter *Contrails* is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain the friendships and associations of the members, to promote their general welfare, and assist those active pilots who are approaching retirement with the problems relating thereto. Membership is \$40 annually for Regular Members (NWA pilots, active or retired) and \$30 for Affiliate Members.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 13, 2013: MSP Summer Cruise**

**Oct. 10–12, 2013: Lexington KY Reunion**

**Sept. 26–28, 2014: Sacramento CA Reunion**

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• LIMITED TO 160 GUESTS •

# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA SPRING LUNCHEON

• REGISTER EARLY •

*Less than 3 weeks to registration deadline!*

I've marked the calendar for March 4th at 1100 hours.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE/GUEST \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED: \$24 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ (INCLUDES GRATUITY)

**MENU CHOICES:** ① Grouper Oscar ② London Broil ③ Chicken Capri  
Entrées include salad, vegetable, potato, dessert and coffee or tea

**Registration Deadline February 20th, 2013**

MENU CHOICE:

① \_\_\_\_\_ ② \_\_\_\_\_ ③ \_\_\_\_\_

① \_\_\_\_\_ ② \_\_\_\_\_ ③ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to  
"Dino Oliva"  
and mail to:  
**Dino & Karen Oliva**  
3701 Bayou Louise Ln  
Sarasota FL 34242



Hitch up the team and head for  
Stillwater and the Summer Cruise

## JUNE 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Lunch and a three hour boat  
ride all for the price of

# \$30

Load aboard at 11:00 • Boat leaves the dock at *11:30 sharp* • Back at the dock at 2:30

**Reservation deadline: June 7<sup>th</sup>**

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

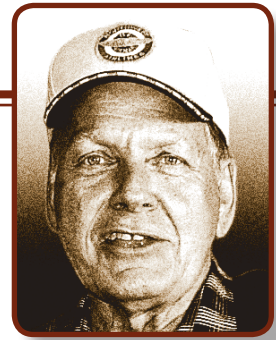
Phil Hallin  
17356 Hanson Ct.  
Eden Prairie, MN  
55347

**\$30** per person, checks payable to:  
"RNPA MSP Cruise"

Info:  
952.474.9111



## President's Report: Gary PISEL



Greetings and Happy New Year,

I trust the new year will treat you and yours with the best of health and well being. You have probably noticed that as we grow older time goes by so much faster. Seems like only yesterday I retired when it has actually been over 17 years. WOW

I ask that each of you keep in touch and informed of your fellow pilots. Notify RNPA when and if they are having problems with health. At our age lots of things creep up and catch us by surprise.

In this issue you will find an outstanding article about the upcoming Reunion to be held in Lexington, KY. K. C. Kohlbrand has done an outstanding job of setting this up. Ladies, get your hats ready, there will be a contest. Gentlemen, get your ties and sport coats out as there is a dress code. We have had many sign up before Jan 1 for the double tickets in the drawings.

TEDDY BEARS will again be on the agenda for the banquet. Lets see if you can outdo last year of 526.

These go to a worthy cause and are greatly appreciated by the recipients.

Plan to arrive early or stay late in the area. Barbara and I spent much time there last year and there is LOTS to do. Not the least of which is visiting all the bourbon distilleries near Bardstown. The horse estates are a marvel as are the historic buildings in Lexington and Louisville. The state also offers the Corvette museum and factory, the Louisville Slugger factory and the candy shop at Makers Mark with Bourbon Balls. The Largest cave, Mammoth is within easy driving distance. By the time of our reunion it will be over 600 miles of explored caverns.

Future sites under contract or consideration are: Sacramento (2014); Long Beach; Albuquerque; St Louis and Kansas City. If you have other ideas contact me.

I would like to issue a challenge to all members. Recruit a new member, get them to attend Lexington and become active in RNPA.



## Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA

This year, we delayed the mailing of the RNPA annual dues statement until after the first of the year so as to not be inundated with dues payments during the holiday season. On our membership roster we post the date that your dues are paid.

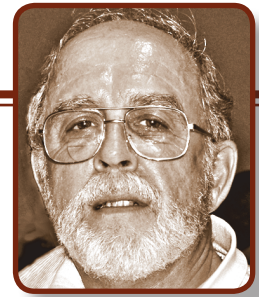
Interestingly, many that must have put aside their dues statement because of the holidays quite often forgot them. This year, many of those that were late in previous years have already sent in their dues in the first week. Thanks to all of you that have been so prompt.

For those of you that have forgotten, please remit them **before the Feb 28th deadline**. This will save me the time and effort of sending out reminder notices, and will save you the five dollar late payment penalty.

If for some reason you do not want to continue your membership please let me know by mail, e-mail or telephone and save me the time and cost of mailing out reminder notices.

### ADDRESS & PHONE CHANGES:

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#### ABOUT THE COVER

The final “flight” of the shuttle Endeavor was perhaps one of the most photographed events in recent history, since most everyone with a cell phone now has a camera.

But those people in the title block background made a real effort to get close to the action. The general predicted route was made public and they hiked up onto the ridge right above the Hollywood Sign. They are looking south just after the shuttle passed closely overhead.

#### NOT SO ORDINARY FLIGHTS

This issue features three articles describing high-stress emergencies and one of the “glad it was not me” variety:

- NWA Capt. John Hanson describes how he managed to get a 747-400 on the ground with a full hard-over lower rudder at altitude;
- Continental Capt. Jim Humphries deals with loss of all electricity in the dark of night;
- NWA Capt. Jim Mancini tells the story of his highjacking a month after the D. B. Cooper affair.

All three of those are stories that most of us are quite thankful we never had to face and congratulate each of them for a job really well done.

The “glad it was not me” story was probably not an actual emergency, but it could easily have become one:

- An unidentified Delta 767 captain on his very first trans-Pacific flight ever, arrived at top of descent into Narita just as the Fukushima earthquake struck.

And there is a story of my own that does not rise anywhere near those stress levels, but does qualify as a not so ordinary flight—the “Paris Bomb Flight.”

#### THE DANGER OF MAKING ASSUMPTIONS, or, TOO MANY GUYS NAMED JOHN

The link to the story on page 22 wound up in my inbox several weeks ago. It was titled “How I Saved A 747 From Crashing,” purportedly by John Hansen. It was one I had not heard before. I realized that no pilot I knew would have ever titled it that way, but the essence of the story seemed interesting and important.

Realizing that John Hansen (note the spelling), to

whom the article is attributed, had flown west in September of 2011, I decided to publish the story posthumously with the understanding that he probably had little to do with the actual writing. While trying to learn more about the story someone suggested that I contact John Doherty, since he had been actively involved at the time. I did, and suggested that he may be able to add some details for his column “The Way it Was” to coordinate with the story.

I got John Doherty’s column four days before this needed to go to press, and I learned at the same time that I had assumed the wrong Hanson (the correct spelling) all this time. John Hanson is alive and well in Northfield, Minnesota. Had I not already allocated the space for the internet article I probably would not have published it because of the duplication.

While there may be more words/pages than necessary, it’s worth reflecting on why skilled pilots are probably worth more than they are being paid. John and his crew possibly “earned” their entire lifetime incomes by managing this incident successfully.

#### THE LOSS OF A RNPA HONORED MEMBER

I cannot let this go to press without acknowledging the loss of my friend Dick Schlader. As you are all well aware, he was the prior editor of Contrails and is responsible for my involvement in same. His tenure was marked with a strong desire to make Contrails as interesting as possible with equally strong opinions about the content and its appearance. There were many, many weeks that he and I would be on the phone with each other almost daily—sometimes two or three times a day as I became involved as his assistant.

Now that we live a full continent away, I haven’t seen Dick as often as I would have liked. We did have a nice long conversation a couple weeks before his passing though.

My thoughts are frequently with Doni Jo and their family wishing them some comfort and peace. The full Flown West obituary is planned for the May issue.

Whatchabeenupto?



**K. C.  
KOHLBRAND**



## Lexington Reunion October 10-12, 2013

Dear RNPA members,

The 2013 Reunion is similar in nature to our previous 3 day format but is fundamentally different in that aviation is not our primary activity. I would say Lexington, KY equates to layover activities: historical interests (Lincoln, Henry Clay, Hunt Morgan); Golf Scramble, first day, open to all; Day at the Races, Keeneland Race Course and hat contest for the Ladies; Shopping; Bourbon Distillery Tours; Shaker Village; Kentucky Horse Park.

I would encourage all to visit [www.visitlex.com](http://www.visitlex.com) and start planning your visit to the Bluegrass State of Kentucky. Be sure to check out the video section to gain in-depth knowledge of particular historic sites. Remember, both Presidents during the Civil War were born in Kentucky.

RNPA has contracted for five motor coaches for our horse farm tour with guides on our way to Keeneland Race Course. One of the coaches will accommodate wheelchairs so please, everyone can attend and have a pleasant time together with your RNPA friends.

Sincerely,  
K. C. Kohlbrand

**GARY  
MCGAHUEY**



Gary,

The picture of the tearing down of Building F at MSP hit home with me. While visiting the Twin Cities, I went into the building to get my new Delta ID card. The inside were nearly empty, with only a skeleton staff on site. When I asked about getting the ID card, they said I would be the LAST one they made in the building! I got it done, then they packed up the equipment.

I took one last look around, quickly reminiscing over the many memories there. I sure remember when we moved from the basement of Building A... what an improvement!

The new simulators (I even got my nieces and nephews some sim time during Christmas one year-but don't tell anyone!). All the great people I met over the years there, from Andy and Ralph in Crew Schedules to Danny Sowa in meteorology, to all the instructors and support staff. Making out flight plans- remember the book of flight plans? Let's see, I need MSP to FAR, then FAR to BIL, etc.

I remembered watching a new flight attendant class get their pictures taken, then hearing a loud murmuring. Turns out they were asking for volunteers to deadhead to ORD and take Flight #3 to NRT, since the regular crew was unavailable. The lead flight attendant would have 2 months seniority!

I also remembered attending refresher class, when someone said turn on the regular TV, where we watched the Challenger explosion. So many memories too numerous to

relate, but all I have to do is look at my DELTA ID card and they tend to come back.

Gary McGahuey

**DICK  
SUHR**



Greetings Gary, Dino, and all the rest of the fine staff,

Cant believe how fast the time flies. We just arrived back in AZ from WA, later than usual because of an unexpected medical problem that really screwed up the Christmas holidays. It is hard enough driving from WA to AZ with three cats without being forced to fight the winter weather over the Siskiyou and Northern CA.

But all turned out well and I am now ready for some golf if I can find any geezers around to play with. Lefty Engleking is not in town yet, but he is good at organizing games. Needless to say, it is getting harder to find survivors around anymore.

Hope you all have a great new year,  
Dick Suhr

**TOM  
DUMMER**



Gary,

I really don't have much to report, but I do want to congratulate you on the excellence of the Contrails magazine. I always read it from cover to cover as soon as it arrives. Thank you to you and Dino and Gary Pisel for doing such a wonderful job and keeping us old buzzards so well informed.

Thanks again for doing a thankless job.

Tom Dummer

**DOUG  
WENBORG**



2012 Minneapolis  
RNPA Christmas Party

The headlines from the Minneapolis Star newspaper on Monday morning Dec. 11th, 2012 read "Welcome back, winter! Minnesota clobbered." This was the morning after our annual Christmas Party.

The final count on the guest list was 171 pilots, flight attendants, and their guests. Because of the snow storm, we had an actual count of 96 brave souls that were able to dig their way out of their driveways and safely drive to the Chart House.

Those of us that were able to make it had a really good time. The party was slightly different this year, in that our entertainment, and Terry Marsh, our gracious MC, couldn't make it. Terry lives in one of the areas hit by the most snow.

Even with the reduced number of guests, we were able to raise \$1295 toward the Paul Soderlind Scholarship Fund with our raffle of four cases of fine wine.

Doug Wenborg

**MARCINE  
POLLARD**



January, 2013

We all appreciate your publishing of the RNPA letters about NWA friends and coworkers.

I was hired in 1949 and retired in 1992, after working in 8 different jobs and surviving many strikes. My last 26 years were spent being the Branch Manager of the Seattle NWA Credit Union. My early years were spent as a stewardess, then various office jobs.

I now live in Escondido, CA near my children. I do miss seeing NWA acquaintances.

Marcine (Raish) Pollard  
phone 760-740-2486



SENT AS A JOKE, BUT IS IT FUNNY OR JUST SCARY?

A little silver-haired lady calls her neighbor and says, "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get started."

Her neighbor asks, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?"

The little silver haired lady says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a rooster."

Her neighbor decides to go over and help with the puzzle. She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table.

He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a rooster."

He takes her hand and says, "Secondly, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then," he said with a deep sigh. . .

"Let's put all the corn flakes back in the box."



DEAN  
JOHNSON



Many thanks to all of you gentlemen and ladies who labor for the good of RNPA. It's a superb accomplishment not the least of which is Contrails. Wonderful!

When you ask for a little feedback I think of the times all of us RNPA members have flown over this lovely state, Washington. It's my birthplace so of course you know what I'm going to say. Nevertheless, a picture (taken this Christmas Eve—2012) from the ground of the terrain you have been flying over might just impress you a little bit. We all know that fireworks shows and mountains (except for some notable exceptions like Mt. Rainier, Mt Everest, and the state of Alaska) just aren't quite so dramatic at 39,000 feet as standing beneath them. So, from my kitchen window, elevation 1650', in Leavenworth, elevation 1200', is a view of part of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area named The Enchantments. It's 25 miles west of Wenatchee (EAT). It shows on the left side of the picture and rises to 8000+ feet a couple of miles away. On the right is Icicle Ridge at about 6600'. Behind Icicle Ridge is Mt. Stuart, which undoubtedly some of you have climbed, at 9400', the highest non-volcanic peak in Washington.

Oh yeah. The backhoe. Just give me one pilot's name who isn't a do-it-yourselfer. I tried hiring someone to re-route my driveway on this hillside and soon realized I could save \$22.50 by getting my own backhoe.

Thinking of so many of you with fond memories of good times.

Dean Johnson  
Class of 1965



**PAUL  
LUDWIG**



Dear Contrails Editor,

The new-hire class that I belonged to, starting in October, 1958; was jokingly referred to—by one senior Captain I flew with—as the Superman Class; and I'll tell you why. NWA had not hired many new pilots between 1953 and late 1958; but when it was awarded the Miami route, it tried to set high standards in hiring new pilots. After my class was hired, NWA began hiring almost non-stop.

I don't recall all of the exact requirements that got me and my class hired, but height, experience and age were some of the requirements. None of us was a superman; and hiring continued through all of 1959. Hiring ceased until 1963.

I do recall that at the time my class was hired, NWA had approximately 400 pilots. My 1965 seniority list shows that my seniority number was 431.

I lost my 1958 or 1959 Pilots' System Seniority and Permanent Assignment List; but my 1965 list shows that—prior to 1958—the previous hiring spree had come in 1952 and 1953; then a very few men were hired in 1957 and 1958.

With the Miami route in hand, NWA bought Lockheed L-188 Electras—a type of plane which soldiers on in the Navy in another, more advanced, form known as the P-3; and NWA began Regal Imperial Service operations to Florida.

I don't recall the reason why, but when bidding began for those who wanted to fly the Electra, senior co-pilots avoided it; to wait and see how it played out, before jumping on the wagon. I bid for the right seat and got it and I flew with the most senior Captains on the best domestic routes. Then senior co-pilots began to like what they saw

of Electra ops and began bidding for it. I was shoved off the bottom of the Electra co-pilot list and went back to flying the DC-6 and DC-7C. Then came the 707-720; and another round of bidding and wait-and-see began. I passed my Flight Engineer exam the same day Tom O'Brien passed his; but he did not fly SO; I did. He flew co-pilot on the 720.

In seniority order, my class included Ron Gilbertson, Ken Taloff, Dave Nelson, Norm Anderson, Harry Bedrossian, Jr., Lee Bradshaw Jr., Dewey Lawrenson Jr., Stan Kegel, myself, Dave Monroe, Lee Butler, Jens Houby, Dick Bradford and V. G. Smith.

In those days, much of the NWA business side of flight operations was located in offices above the small hangar next to the old tower adjacent to unused Runway 18/36 at MSP; and there was no room to train us; so the company sent my class to ground school at a rented building still standing at 1885 University Avenue—half-way between downtown MSP and downtown St. Paul and they called it the GO Annex. Wentzell Frantzich (spelling?) taught us everything there. We learned all about the Douglas DC-4 which was a pretty big airplane for its day.

Last but not least, on my DC-4 orientation flight to observe the co-pilot on a trip to Billings, the Captain was Deke Delong and he was then nearing his 65th birthday. I was 24 at the time, and I was amazed that pilots flew at Deke's age; but he flew excellently. Sometime after Deke retired, the age limit was dropped to 60.

Paul Ludwig

**GARY  
PISEL**



For those planning to attend Lexington with an RV, the park of choice and actually the only park is:

Kentucky Horse Farm  
859-233-4303  
[tinyurl.com/kyhorserv](http://tinyurl.com/kyhorserv)

They have 260 sites and should not be full that time of year. It is just on the outskirts of Lexington.  
Gary Pisel

**JAMES  
MACKENZIE**



I retired in 2006 after spending my last spent 3 years as the Chairman of the R&I Committee. Worked with a great committee and we were able to save our defined benefit pension plan.

Following retirement, I worked for a Boeing subsidiary as a Captain instructor on the B-777/787 for a year then was hired by Uncle Sam as a Federal Mediator for the National Mediation Board. Just about to begin my fifth year.

Still living in Texas with my wife Sharal of 40+ years. Hi to all and hope everyone is enjoying good health and a happy retirement.

James Mackenzie



**YOUR EDITOR**



I liked the relative sizes of these two whales.

There are probably dozens of online websites where one can browse airplane photos. This one came from JETPHOTOS.NET. They expect that users will pay for the photographers work if a photo is used for a money-making endeavor.

Since we certainly don't qualify in that regard, I just "stole" it and left the watermark intact.

The image is copyrighted:  
©Anthony Jackson.

**AL SOVEREIGN**



Hi Everyone,

Hope you had a great holiday season and are well. We have been very busy with company. The high point was having Allan's son Mike and his wife and daughter visit us. Allan's granddaughter is finishing up Veterinary School and will be an official DVM in May. She was doing some internship at a clinic in Tucson, so we went down to get her and show her around, then the whole family came up to our house for the first time. It was wonderful. Allan's nephew and his girlfriend were there also. It's great to have family visit.

We went to Mexico, as usual, but this time we took a bus and rail tour of the Copper Canyon in Mexico. Ten days and it was very interesting. Before that we cruised around the Hawaiian Islands ending up on the big island where we stayed with Ina's friends from Samoa. We've been friends with these two families since 1974.

Our health has been good in spite of the fact that we're getting so old. Life is good and we are grateful.

It's been a wonderful year, and we hope you can say the same.

Love,  
Al 'n Ina Sovereign

**RICHARD WING**



My best to RNPA leaders and members. Although I sure miss the 747, life is good. Same house, same wife of 48 years, three daughters and six grand kids.

Retirement at age 60 sure has worked out in terms of health and activities. I just retired after 38 years with the Chanhassen Fire Department. I really enjoyed the activities and...adrenaline rush but, picking up frozen hose at 3 in the morning got old (as did I).

I have really enjoyed speaking to aviation groups around the country. My program is entitled: "39 Years as an Airline Pilot, What Did I learn?" Keeps this old boy in the loop. Another program: "Changes in Aviation" is a real eye opener. It's a new world out there which is leaving me in the dust.

Thanks again for Contrails,  
Richard Wing

**TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 26th  
Falcon Field, Mesa**

**Coffee at 10:00  
Eat at 12:00**

**Bring:**

- Meat to cook,
- Dish to pass (no dessert),
- Fellow pilot or Flight Attendant

**RON  
VANDERVORT**



Hi Gary and all,

Thanks Gary, to you and your fellow RNPA officers for contributing so much to keeping our fellow aviators connected. It is SO SPECIAL!

Let's to report... some of which needs to be under a separate article if I ever get around to it.

Silverdale WA; Apex Residential Airport continues to be my principal residence with 6 months in Goodyear AZ... 17 miles west of PHX... just south of Luke AFB for you blue suiters. They will be transitioning from F-16's to F-35's in the near future.

The story I need to tell, under separate cover, is my trip to Roatan Honduras with my RV-6 in March 2009. A great time with a friend through Mexico over Guatemala and on to great SCUBA diving on the Island of Roatan... about 40 miles off the north coast of Honduras. I will try to put that article together for Contrails one of these days.

As some of you know, I lost my

wife in 94 to cancer and recently (3 years ago... that's recent for old folks anyway) took on a great replacement, Carol. We have many great interests to share and have done so with ease. This year we took our small Pleasure Way motorhome to Oshkosh for two weeks. Total volunteering the first week and part time during the show. I parked the vintage aircraft and Carol registered them. It was special to see all of those yellow Piper Cubs arrive en masse to help celebrate the Piper 75th anniversary.

In 2006 I had a TIA from a blocked carotid artery which grounded me for 2 years... too much ice cream, was my diagnosis. Lots... and a daily thing as a bachelor at the time. Am lucky and have my 3rd class medical back with only eye glasses for restrictions. Flying... whenever an excuse still, with Carol taking the Pinch Hitter course from me.

We keep in touch with the PHX gang in the winter months whenever we can. We try to catch the PHX picnic and we have about 7 couples

that get together at each other's homes in the West Valley from time to time as well.

Tennis, hiking, old cars, carving and the clarinet are my other distractions. This Saturday I am interviewing for volunteer work at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson... see you there and at Lexington Reunion in October.

Thanks to all of you for your letters... keep em coming.

Ron Vandervort

**DAVE  
ALBRECHT**



Dino:

We are still circulating between Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, and now our two sons live in Montana. So we have added Montana to our travels. Youngest son is a Freshman at the University of Montana, Missoula... Loves it!

Missoula now has 70,000 folks, it has really grown from the 727 "Whistle stop" of the '70s and '80s.

Very Best Regards to All,  
Dave Albrecht



Ever wonder why that FedEx package never arrived?

The massive foggy pileup along I-10 outside of Houston on Thanksgiving Day that claimed 140 vehicles and two lives.



# The Root Cellar



## TWO REASONS NOT TO GET COCKY

### REASON NUMBER ONE:

I sleep on a Tempur-Pedic mattress. For those who are not familiar, that's the one a person climbs atop and then sinks in around pressure points. Which is fine if you want to climb to get up.

For those who are not familiar, that's the one which equates to a Porsche or Mercedes in terms of quality and price. Which is fine if you have a lot of money.

So a reader may sense that I am boasting about my financial condition or am about to write about mattresses. Wrong! What follows is an attempt to have a little fun at the expense of my wife.

It should be noted that when a person has had his life saved by his wife, the relationship undergoes an instant and permanent change. From that point on, it's "Yes Dear," and "Okay Dear," and "Right away, Honey."

So, the Tempur-Pedic was a gift from my wonderful and competent wife. She is incredible, she is awesome and she saved my life, an action for which I am somewhat grateful. I have, however, reserved the right to continue to poke fun at myself, everyone else and even her.

Therefore, I return to mattresses. If you read a recent Contrails, you met Mulligan, our new puppy who did not like travelling in a motor home. Recently, I (literally) climbed out of bed to answer an early-ringing doorbell.

"Here's your new bed," said the UPS man.

"I already have a new bed."

"Well, if your name is Mulligan, you now have two."

Sure enough, we now have a Tempur-Pedic mattress and fancy bed for Mulligan-the-dog who will continue to sleep on my old and neuropic feet anyway. Mulligan's new Tempur-Pedic dog bed has her name on it twice. My name does not appear on my mattress. So far, the two cats are enjoying Mulligan's Tempur-Pedic more than she. None of the pets has, however, tried to balance a half-empty glass of wine on the new Tempur-Pedic. And I continue to wonder if a dog needs a "Cadillac" dog bed?

You now may think I am writing about dogs and dog beds. I am not. Recently, in our Minnesota home, the following conversation took place: (There were three of us present.)

Olde Bob: "We need a new driveway here."

Wife: "What in the world for?"

Olde Bob: "There are two large cracks in this driveway. I want to put in concrete this time.!"

Eldest son: "I believe you should not spend any more money on household projects. If you sell the house you can negotiate about things that need work."

Wife: "Rob is right! We are done with projects on this home. We will discuss things with a buyer."

Olde Bob: "Okay."

Two days later:

Wife: "I'm going to Lowe's. Want to come with?" (Minnesota talk for "would you like to accompany me?")

Olde Bob: "What are you after?"

Wife: "I'm looking for tile for behind our master bathroom sinks and a way to suspend the mirrors from the ceiling."

Olde Bob: "It's about that "no projects" deal we made the other day."

Wife: "This one has to be done."

Off we went to Lowe's. She found tiles she liked there, but not enough. We were in Shakopee, Minnesota. For additional tiles, we were directed to the nearest Lowe's which could be found in West St. Paul, Minnesota. Off we went. I was excited! All these years I have wondered how there could be a West St. Paul when directly west of St. Paul is Minneapolis. Once there, I realized I had been there many times, but thought I was in St. Paul. We found more tiles.

Eventually, these tiles were professionally installed. She now directed our attention to the mirrors. Two in number, one for each sink. They are round—approximately two and a half feet in diameter. She wanted to hang them from the ceiling with some sort of invisible cord or wire. Finding the correct material set the record for visits to various hardware stores, supply houses and craft outlets. Olde Bob eventually came up with a visit to a bait store where he purchased 50-pound fishing line leader which, when put into use, flunked because it stretched to different lengths after a day or two suspending mirrors. However, the problem was eventually cured with a hard-to-find tiny-but-strong chain. A discussion took place regarding the best method to suspend through ceiling wallboard.

Perhaps this would be a good point to emphasize the finer qualities of my magnificent spouse. For example, there was a time when she could walk from Chicago to Tokyo while pushing heavy carts most of the way. There was a time when she trained Miss Wisconsin, one of whom became Miss America. There was a time when she chaired, organized and managed parties for some 1800 guests. She has graduated from a wood-working school and made furniture. She creates things ceramicly, is a club president, wonderful grandparent, pet lover and, best of all, saved my life!

I now return to the above-mentioned discussion. I wanted to use a certain piece of hardware for wall anchors to suspend the mirrors through wallboard, she wanted a different one. Neither of us wanted to see our mirrors fall into ceramic sinks. The "discussion" turned into a "debate." After several minutes, I heard:

"So, just how many pieces of furniture have you made?"

It was time to retreat.

As the mirrors remained suspended for two days without falling, it was on to the next project. This one did not involve the home. Instead, it was the motorhome. My wife had a triangular-shaped three-legged table which fit nicely beside her right knee when she sat in the copilot's seat. However, the table's height resulted in whatever it was used for blocking the captain's view of the right side rear view mirror. It was determined to shorten the table. The method used to shorten the table would be to take out a few inches in the middle of each leg, drill holes in the ends of the remaining parts, insert a dowel in the hole, then reattach with wood glue. I went to the garage, got out my handy-dandy Black and Decker Workmate and cut the desired sections out of the three legs with my battery-powered saw. I found the wood to be quite soft.

Okay, folks, we are approaching the good part, the reason you read this far, the coup'd something, the finale. Does Pulitzer await?



After a break for lunch, I returned to the garage. Wife eats faster than I and was already drilling the holes, after changing the battery from saw to drill. I found a strong smell of wood smoke in said garage. I looked at the lady with the drill and saw smoke emitting from the bit area.

“Boy, this wood is really hard,” she said. “I’m having trouble getting a hole.”

I walked up to the handy-dandy Black and Decker Workmate, removed the drill from her hands, pushed the button in the middle of the drill which reverses the direction of turn for the bit, and replaced the drill in her hands.

“So, how many pieces of furniture have you built?” said I. Then I ran like hell into the far end of the house and laughed so hard for twenty minutes the neighbors reported they considered a 911 call.

#### REASON NUMBER TWO:

It was a day like all days—in Paradise. Actually, Surprise, Arizona. Seventy five and sunny. Twenty percent humidity.

He was involved in the regular morning routine, like breakfast and the crossword. His wife had plans for errands and was on her way out. Kisses and “bye’s.” Off she went, through the garage. He returned to trying to decipher “North American flycatcher.” (Willie Mays or Kirby Puckett didn’t fit.



Within two minutes, his wife returned. “The neighbor’s garage door is open,” she reported. “How will we close it?”

I pause here for background. The housing area under discussion here is an “active adult community,” meaning old folks and similar houses and strict rules like: Section 237, article 14.b of purchase agreement—“garage doors shall be closed at all times!” The neighbors referred to were brand new, unknown as yet, and far away in Wisconsin or someplace.

I return to my story. Some guys would ignore unknown neighbor’s garage doors. Some really good guys wouldn’t.

The late Frank Sinatra once crooned his way through life with something like: “When I was seventeen, it was a very good year.” When he was thirty-something, it was also a good year. What he never got around to was that when you are 73, your mind has dyslexia and thinks you are able to do things you did at 37.

I digress once more. Lately, I have been staying up late studying martial arts. That is, I have been watching strong guys try to maim one another on TV with aggressive techniques one can’t spell like jiu-jitsu and tai-kwan-do. I figured I have studied long enough to become quite good at it with my 37-year old body.

And so it was that the man decided to close the violating garage door with his newly developed move called the Oriental Iwakuni Maru Reverse Kicksaki. This is the move one uses to stand at the back of said garage, push the close button and run like hell for the opening, remembering to jump over the safety beam upon exiting—just like he did at age 37.

This photo depicts the success of this move. Actually, it depicts only one-fourth of the total victory achieved by the garage door. It shows not the five holes in the right hand which will prevent the grasping of a golf club for a long time, it shows not the swelling of the right knee which resembles a plump and rotten pumpkin and it fails to depict the condition of the pair of glasses being worn during the contest.

Recently, in the national news, a judge somewhere east of Arizona ruled that a lady who had passed a school bus in her SUV by driving on the sidewalk had to stand on said sidewalk for two days with a sign admitting that she was an idiot. The man’s wife is currently making him the same sign.

Alas. ✈



# A STABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**



## Mission to Maranello: Part Two



The distant yet piercing and angered scream of a woman in the early hours of an otherwise placid morning awoke and startled me. My body instinctively formed an immediate right angled “L” in the hotel bed, my tight, muscular six-pack torso automatically reacting in anticipation of some kind of action. OK, the six-pack thing is fiction but the rest is pretty much how the morning began as I hopped out of bed and slowly realized where I was and what the hour might be. We were in Maranello! For a motorsport, well, for an F1 enthusiast, this was it. There was a palpable feeling to be in the same neighborhood where Grand Prix greats had walked and where Enzo Ferrari, or *il Commendatore* as he was known, lived and died.

And I really knew it wasn't a woman at all doing the screaming—at least not a woman in the conventional sense. But the sound of a Ferrari Formula One engine is every bit a woman in the eyes of those who understand the similarities of finely tuned, high performance, high maintenance devices like women and cars. If you don't believe me just ask any Italian man in Maranello, or anywhere in Italy for that matter. If he's wearing one of the red jumpsuits of the Ferrari factory workers he may be no better at explaining women but I know he would understand the innards and workings of the 7000 odd Ferraris they produce yearly and agree. Language wouldn't matter, he would know for sure what I'm talking about.

The country might well be in an extended recession with an economy shrinking at nearly three percent

annually but some things never change. The demand for Ferrari automobiles appears to be one of those things seemingly resistant to a change in demand. Their allegiant worldwide clientele is economically able to continue to pursue the dream of the ownership of a car with the “*scudetto*” or Prancing Horse symbol on the fender. The Prancing Horse symbol, by the way, came from WW1 Italian ace Francesco Baracca's mother after his aerial combat death in 1918. She presented it to Enzo to display on his racing cars as good luck. It remains the Ferrari symbol to this day for both race and street cars.

Enabling the dream of owning one of these iconic examples started of course with Enzo Ferrari. He was a racer at a very young pre WWII age, as if racing had been wired into his DNA from birth. His unwavering goal and singular focus to support the race team—*Ferrari Scuderia*—and its prodigious need for capital led to the production of road cars in 1947. His passion for motorsport competition overrode his interest in the production of road cars and, in 1965 he allowed Fiat S.p.A to gain a financial stake which later, in 1988 became a majority. The key for Enzo was to be able to retain control of the Scuderia. Today Fiat, a sizable conglomerate, is the parent company of Ferrari. The history, scandal and stories—*this IS Italy you know*—of Ferrari are legend. Henry Ford's attempt at ownership and the Ford/Ferrari endurance race battles of the '60s are stories that will never again be repeated. It took an industry of US racing veterans to form the juggernaut which finally



managers and support people with budgets in the 300 to 400 million dollar range were competing for the driver and manufacturer world titles.

The major manufacturers Ferrari, Renault, Cosworth and Mercedes supply the engines to all entrants and I knew early that first morning the sound I was hearing could only be one thing. I pulled on my drawers and ran out of the room looking like a sixty year old punk rocker, shirtless with untied shoes and disheveled hair sticking straight up. The only thing missing were the tattoos. It was in a dead sprint for the cyclone fence boundary of *Fiorano di Pista* that I headed.

The private Ferrari owned and operated test track, across the street from the old factory entrance and adjacent to the Planet Hotel was 300 yards away. There were only a couple of spots where the topography, fencing and vegetation allow even a peek of the circuit and I was the first one there. It surprised me how quickly other *tifosi* gathered, each craning for a view of what we all knew just had to be a current year blood red Ferrari Formula One race car. A motorhome pulled up behind and people clambered to the roof to watch. It certainly appeared to be the F2012 Formula One racer that was deemed by those in the know to be nowhere near what Fernando Alonso, former two time world champion and number one driver for Ferrari, deserved. It made two circuits before disappearing into the on-site bowels of Scuderia Ferrari headquarters.

The display and associated orchestra of an eight cylinder 2.4 liter (146 cubic inch) engine running at 18,000 revolutions per minute and developing nearly 800 horsepower was barely describable but lasted for less than 90 seconds after I arrived. It didn't matter: this was Maranello and that was an F1 car. Even though I knew that customers of some reputation and a history of owning are allowed to buy certain Ferrari race equipment (at least two years old) and store them at Fiorano to run when conditions permit, I doubted this car had been driven by a mere customer.

The official Ferrari way of dealing with those who want to own and occasionally drive is called the Ferrari F1 Clienti programme. This is one of those "if you have to ask you can't afford it" arrangements that come with mechanics, transport and maintenance taken care of. My

enabled Ford to claim victories in the endurance sports car category over Ferrari at LeMans, Sebring and Daytona. It was of no matter to Enzo—he had the well established F1 team to run. The World Championships in 1975, 1977 and 1979 would be the last he would see before his 90 years of life ended in 1988. *Il Commendatore* is still revered as one of the all time racing greats and the culture at the Scuderia will always be reflected from his influence and legacy.

Of course Ferrari is so Italian it had to have an able successor to Enzo who was equally significant, if not even more flamboyant. Beginning in 1974 Ferrari passed the day to day operation of the sporting division to Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, the youngest son of the aristocratic family with a diverse and long history. Like many others in motorsport management, Montezemolo began his racing and automotive career driving—in his case a Fiat 500 rally car. Learning this later during our trip would be important counsel for me. His story, climbing to the chairmanship of Fiat and later taking control of all Ferrari operations, details why Ferrari Scuderia has been able to return to its standing among the top of F1 competitors.

With the knowledge of the long and intense history of both F1 and Ferrari it was a particular pleasure for me to be so close to the center of this activity. It was early July and the Scuderia was in a fight for the 2012 Championship.

Eleven teams of 300 to 400 engineers, fabricators, computer and electronic specialists, aerodynamicists, two race team drivers, at least that many test drivers,



## No G Suit

As pilots, we are all familiar both theoretically and viscerally with the concept of “G loads.” We have experienced those forces in a direction through “the seat of our pants.” But the lateral G loads that an automobile generates, as a result of changing direction, are different and are known as lateral loads. Its one thing to get scrunched into your seat in an airplane yet quite another to try and hold your head in the center for an hour and a half at the speeds and loads generated in an F1 car. The F1 guys are athletes.

The cornering force of an F1 car is one of the things that make them so interesting to watch and such a challenge to design and engineer. The cornering speeds and loads approach an order of magnitude higher than what most people, these days, feel is normal. Out for your typical “Sunday drive,” passenger cars seldom generate more than .25G laterally. The typical F1 car, out for its Sunday drive—at one of 19 circuits used in the annual chase for the World Championship—typically generates sustained lateral loads of 3 to 4Gs, depending on the track surface, camber and temperature. Acceleration and braking loads are similar but are aligned with the car’s longitudinal axis, and are less challenging to cope with. Aerodynamic downforce, highly developed suspension systems and sticky tires are obviously different from those on our street cars.

The research tool I use is a 2008, 505 horsepower Z06 Corvette “grocery getter” I own and drive. It has a factory installed HUD (heads up display) that displays a lateral G load meter on the windshield in front of the driver. Watching it is addictive but with it I have become aware of what passenger cars in general can do and have developed a basic reference standard for my fellow man:

- at 0.25G it is pretty common when driving around town for groceries,
- at 0.3G life is still pretty normal in most family cars,
- at 0.4G your wife will stop reading and look up,
- at 0.5G she will look over AT you, with “that look.”

If you persist:

- at 0.6G she will be in no mood to fix dinner, and,

- at 0.7G, a general limit for most sedans, you will probably find her sleeping on her side of the bed that evening.

If for some reason you need an excuse after demonstrating your cornering skill, there are some lines that might help: “I was practicing in case a middle school child jumped out in front of us” sometimes works. “What?” with a quizzical look on your face is another ploy you might try. And, for those of you who find yourselves with a girlfriend instead of a wife, I have done further research. Again, a generalization but you can add about .15G to the numbers if your passenger is a girlfriend. If she reacts according to the “married” g schedule above, it might be time for a replacement. The girlfriend, not the car.

The Z06 has a factory published and car magazine road test demonstrated lateral load limit of .98G, but like they say in the ads, “Your Mileage May Vary.” Well, if Chevrolet had engineered the rest of its fleet as well as they have the C6 version of the Z06 (sixth generation design), there would have been no need to bail them out during the financial crisis. This car corners, brakes and accelerates with numbers beaten only with recent vintage cars from Maranello, has been lauded by automotive journalists universally and from a distance looks nearly the same as a 599 Ferrari. Apparently the laws of aerodynamics are pretty much the same in Italy as they are in the US and both groups of engineers arrived at nearly the same design solution. I love owning and driving it, but to avoid confusion let me make one thing very clear: It is not a Ferrari and it never will be.

I was, however, elated one afternoon in near perfect conditions to record a sustained 1.17G reading. My girlfriend said she had her eyes closed. I must caution I had fresh tires, it was warm and there was more than probably a little favorable camber (banked in the direction of turn) involved in the road surface. But still, there was a general “disappreciation” (that’s not really a word but you get it) by the girlfriend despite the very high skill level required of the driver. Although she wasn’t impressed it did serve to educate and, since the reading was “off scale,” she’s still around. I still got dinner that night too. As has been said before, “YMMV.”

JBB

pragmatic brain flashed back to the baby blue Fiat 500 rental car parked in the garage. Oh well.

Looking back at our arrival late the previous afternoon, I was relieved to realize my partner wasn't affected with the same feeling as I when we entered the roundabout near the new main entrance of the factory with the wind tunnel located in front. Adult supervision would be required. As we progressed toward the hotel the *Il Cavallino Ristorante* came into view. Seen only in pictures before, I imagined the F1 greats who had walked these same sidewalks. Moments later the old main gate to the Ferrari Factory appeared just across the street. I knew there was no way we would be allowed to enter but I stopped the car right in front, got out and walked through the famed entrance before being shooed away by the security person rushing out from behind the glass wall. His look made me wonder what the Italian translation might be for, "What are you thinking dude?" I stared anyway, imagining and wondering if Enzo, who reportedly ate lunch at this restaurant nearly every day, in his own private dining room, walked across the street just like the rest of us might. I doubt it.

The Planet Hotel is juxtapositioned to both the factory and the restaurant and is where we were going to lodge for the weekend. The Scuderia, just beyond the rear parking lot, was visible behind a security fence that must have been imported from East Berlin at the end of the cold war. We were at the literal center of Ferrari. The lobby had scattered Ferrari memorabilia and paintings and the odd photograph of one of the drivers *il Commendatore* autocratically ruled. Every grand prix driver in history has wanted to sit in a Ferrari F1 and I began to see why.

Dinner at the *Il Cavallino* was good. Maybe the best we found in Maranello, but then how many other restaurants have 12 cylinder F1 engines in their entryway? The racing relics of past seasons were authentic and looking around the room, it was obvious the other patrons weren't there for any other reason than Ferrari. I doubted most of them would be leaving in a baby blue Fiat.

The sounds emanating from the Fiorano racetrack every day are accepted here as not only normal, but as a way of life. This town unashamedly is Ferrari and is obviously the center of the local economy. The sounds from Fiorano are welcome reminders that the secretive Scuderia is still chasing the championship and production continues as customers try out their newly purchased cars.

The nearby streets revealed several Ferrari accessory stores with all sorts of enthusiast books, clothing, some racing stuff and even a shop where the curious could drive the Ferrari of their choice complete with chaperon.

Located behind the hotel is the official Ferrari Museo which is well worth the visit. The assortment of cars is rotated semi-annually and it was our good fortune to have the main display populated with the F1 cars of recent history. We were able to arrange a highly controlled bus tour of the factory grounds. No cameras allowed! On display was a campus promoted by the tour guide to be as advanced as technology would allow and with pride taken in the "green" content and approach to both buildings and manufacturing processes. The building designs made this obvious. Passing the main design studio I prepared to bolt from the bus and break inside, but was physically restrained. It was good to have my girlfriend along on the trip; she wouldn't let me have my wallet or checkbook while we were there either.

The tour bus proceeded into the entrance of Fiorano and just ahead was the original house Enzo lived in. I had to laugh as we came around the corner to see the red Lockheed F104 Starfighter parked on a hardstand. The Italian Air Force presented it to Ferrari in 1989 to commemorate an earlier 1000 meter race between it and a Ferrari F1 car driven by the legendary Gilles Villeneuve. The airplane lost.

Maranello is where Ferraris come from. Enzo's influence and legacy are apparent. In carrying on his traditions, Luca di Montezemolo made it clear to Ferrari employees in a Christmas speech how each visit to the factory was a special experience for him personally. Having run Ferrari for over twenty years and restoring it to prominence in both the production of iconic street cars and in pursuit of the F1 title is a legacy he has well earned. I felt the excitement of their creation spanning 75 years in our visit and when we climbed into the baby blue Fiat to drive away I felt no shame. I was leaving in the same car Luca started in and I had experienced the feel of Ferrari. ✈





WAY



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CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY

## NORTHWEST EIGHTY FIVE

October 9, 2002: Northwest 85, a 747-400, was grinding its way westbound at FL 350 en route from DTW to NRT, almost but not quite keeping up with the also westbound sun. Frank Geib in the left seat and Mike Fagan in the right had recently taken over from John Hanson and Dave Smith who had gone on break. Geib and Fagan were preparing for the entry into Russian airspace as they crossed the Bering Sea. In other words, an evening in a cockpit in a big jet pretty much like the 1000 previous crossings—everything as it should be, another day, another dollar.

It came on suddenly, a powerful roll to the left overpowering the autopilot's puny effort to keep the wings level. Through 30, then 40 degrees and still rolling. Without having any indication of what was causing the roll, Geib grabbed the controls, disconnected the autopilot, and with full control deflection, slowly brought his plane back to wings level—doing exactly what needed to be done in just the way it needed to be done to avert disaster—and all of it in 3-5 seconds.

What was the down side if Geib hadn't acted promptly and accurately? China Airlines, a 747 classic Flight 006 from Taipei to Los Angeles gave a demonstration of "what" in 1985. The pilots didn't respond promptly and accurately to an unexpected roll (in this case caused by the failure of the number four engine)—the net result was a loss of altitude from FL 410 to 10,000 feet at descent rates up to 30,000 feet per minute and a G load of 5 Gs during the pullout, parts of the aircraft flying off and gear coming down uncommanded.

Geib, mindful of a recent accident caused by over-control of the rudder (AA 587 out of JFK November 2001) gingerly brought his plane back into a semblance of stable flight.

In the meantime Hanson (who was the senior captain), immediately aware that something was seriously wrong pulled on his uniform and with Smith returned to the cockpit, the call chime going off as they got

dressed underscoring the working crew's call for assistance.

Geib and Fagan recognizing the need for immediate divert asked ATC for a right turn back to ANC—right turn because they were concerned that a roll to the left would just keep on rolling. Essentially they skidded the airplane around to a heading for ANC.

What followed from there on was a clinic in CRM. Consider the situation: the only two indications the pilots had of what was wrong were a YAW DAMPER message and the flight control position indicator showing the lower rudder fully deflected to the left. The COM YAW DAMPER procedure offered nothing useful, and the flight controls abnormalities didn't seem to apply to their situation—and there was no other guidance, and the pilots had never been trained to manage their situation. And in fact, they didn't have any way of knowing what their situation was other than the knowledge that their airplane was barely flyable.

Hanson has been quoted as saying "I was thinking to myself, I'm the senior captain and I'm uncomfortable with the thought that when we get to Anchorage, if we're lucky enough to get to Anchorage, that it's very possible that we may have to bend this thing up, putting it back on the ground. Being the senior captain, bearing the responsibility, if anyone is going to scratch my airplane I want it to be me." And so Geib and Hanson came to a mutual agreement that Hanson would get back in the left seat.

His first concern was being close to a "coffin corner" situation given the aircraft altitude, gross weight, and the issue of controls being radically deflected into the slip-stream. They descended to FL 280.

What followed was a brainstorming and crew coordination exercise. Geib took over communication and coordination with the cabin crew—the decision having been made that they were calling this a "red emergency." Geib fully informed the flight attendants—and from

there, the passengers—of the seriousness of the situation.

The co-pilots were an integral part of all the operation—Fagan relieving Hanson of the strain of holding the controls in some semblance of controlled flight, Smith handling comm with the company and AARF and both a part of the decision making process.

Operationally, the crew concluded that the primary issue was the question of what flight characteristics would be as they dirtied up for the approach and landing. Would the airplane fly slower successfully? Would there be adequate flight control? Was the airplane maneuverable and manageable enough to line up with and to descend safely to the runway? Once on the runway would stopping be an issue?

They took the approach of being unintended test pilots—“let’s just start dirtying up and seeing how this thing is going to fly.” They requested a mid altitude from ATC and chose the Cook Inlet as being close to ANC and having no terrain below. Bit by careful bit they extended flaps and prepared for the approach.

They considered all the runways as possibilities (fortunately weather was not an issue)—noting in turn that there was some shortcoming with each runway—no ILS, drop-offs at the end, cliffs at the beginning, mountains on the missed approach end. They opted for 6R as being the best choice and started their approach.

Flight attendants had been briefed for a “red emergency” and calls from the cockpit and actions by the flight attendants had been reviewed; passengers were fully and accurately informed of the situation by Geib.

And while the decision making process was crew based, meaning each member contributed to the ideas and the brainstorming, the buck stopped with Hanson; the crew and Hanson understood this. Put somewhat differently, it was the CRM model of “Authority with Participation, Assertiveness with Respect.”

Hanson cast his net wide bringing not only all the pilots and all the resources in the cockpit fully into the decision making process, but flight attendants, ATC, dispatch, and flight operations (I was “on duty” for 747-400 flight ops that night and as such played my peripheral role with the NW 85 crew as they wore their test pilot hats.)

Still not knowing what was wrong with their airplane, they gingerly extend flaps adding 20 knots to the V speeds as a precaution; in position for the straight in approach, they extended the gear and the remaining flaps. There was not enough control to keep the wings level, so Hanson used asymmetric thrust to maintain the centerline. As they slowed, the rudder deflected further and further into the slipstream as it was designed to

do, ultimately being displaced over 30 degrees.

They touched down right at MLW and on the numbers not knowing if they would be able to maintain directional control—since that had been the issue all along. And it was an issue—with the plane pulling strongly to the left. Fortunately, the crew brought the airplane to a safe stop on the runway. And it was a crew effort as Hanson and Smith together managed rudder, differential reversers, brakes, and nosewheel steering while Geib managed communication with the cabin and Fagan communicated with AARF.

Once stopped, the crew—in a typical Hanson understatement—was “able to exhale.”

Hot brakes became the issue, and the crew taxied to a remote area. ANC Chief Pilot Sterling Bentsen was on the scene and described the brakes as “cherry red” yet none of the tires deflated.

Post flight inspection showed just what the problem was for the first time—the rudder was fully deflected and locked in the deflected position by a failed actuator. Part of the actuator had fractured relieving pressure on one side while the other side was fully pressurized. As the NTSB put it, “...the lower rudder power control module manifold fractured, allowing the yaw damper piston to travel beyond its normal position. This resulted in a full left command input to the main control valve hence driving the two actuators to the full left rudder position.”

Simple words about a simple failure, yet a failure having the potential for deadly results. That the result was close to a “non-event,” is directly attributable to the way Hanson and crew managed the failure.

#### *Post Script:*

*Some commentators have wondered if turning off the hydraulic system that was powering the “other side” of the rudder would have been effective. The Northwest (and Boeing) procedures are clear that hydraulic systems should not be disabled in an attempt to manage failed flight controls, part of the reasoning being that other controls needed to manage flight path would be disabled at the same time.*

*A documentary of the Northwest 85 incident was done in the TV series “Mayday.” In terms of accuracy one often sees in media treatments of flying, this one is a good job. Do a search on “Northwest 85” on YouTube to find the full program.*

*Boeing and FAA called for a system-wide inspection of the failed component.*

*In August 2003 the Northwest 85 crew was honored at that year’s ALPA Air Safety Awards Banquet for “Superior Airmanship.” ✈*

## John Hanson's response to John Doherty's column:

Thanks for recognizing that internet article as out of character for me! And that title—ARRRGGGH!

Your draft looks good, you've captured the mood perfectly. A few comments:

- I had always assumed that the turn back to ANC was a left turn, since we had great difficulty getting the plane to turn right (it took almost full deflection to just go straight ahead until I started to split the T/Ls). However, in the process of the video production, Mike told me that they forced the plane to turn RIGHT back towards ANC. This was to avoid a roll being started to the left that might continue in a nonrecoverable fashion, considering the control problems. Mike said they actually "skidded" the plane gradually to the right so they could keep the wings level. I was not in the cockpit yet as the turn was done, so I have to defer to Mike's memory here.
- The YouTube search criteria I've been giving folks for finding the video is "Mayday Turning Point."
- I think the main points that pilots should take away from this incident are the value of CRM, and the value of maintaining your hand flying skills. In this glass cockpit era, you never know when hand flying will save the day. It did for Flight 85. The time to find out your skills have gotten rusty is NOT on a dark night as the bank goes through 45 degrees!

### Answers to your questions:

- The landing weight was right at MLW (630K? I think that's what it was—how soon we forget...). We knew it was going to be close, and we had a discussion about whether to dump if it looked like we were going to be over. Consensus amongst us four in the cockpit was that the airplane was flying pretty crappy, but it WAS flying, and we didn't want to upset what might be a critical balance by jettisoning even a small amount of fuel. And besides, we were already an emergency aircraft, so basically had *carte blanche* on whatever we wanted to do. As it turned out, the landing weight was right on MLW at touchdown (re-



Receiving their award: Dave Smith, Frank Geib, ALPA President Duane Woerth, John Hanson, Mike Fagan

ally!), making it a moot point.

- Yes, several friends sent me the link on that article right after it first appeared. The casual conversational writing style immediately pegged it as NOT having been written by me, and it appeared to possibly be the transcript of the testimony I gave as an ALPA witness in the NWA bankruptcy hearings in New York (as you recall, ALPA sent me out there to relate the tale to the court as an example of what pilots really do for a living, and why our contract should not be trashed in the bankruptcy—that trip and court appearance was VERY interesting, but that's another story...). The internet article was presented as being told (written?) by me, so I was a little curious (OK, pissed). I found the guy who posted it, and asked him what the deal was. Turns out he was a reporter for the Detroit Free Press at the time of the bankruptcy hearings, and the Free Press had sent reporters to New York to cover the hearings. He was fascinated by the testimony and the incident, and took it upon himself to post the transcript of my testimony as that article on the internet—that explains the conversational style of the article. He was very nice, and said he hoped I didn't mind him doing that, to which I said it was OK since that transcript is a matter of public record in the bankruptcy hearing. I do wish he had sent it to me first, so I could have made the language a bit more formal and grammatically correct, but that's water over the dam. It is what it is, I guess. Incidentally, he's no longer with the Free Press—I believe he said he's doing a blog on the automotive industry now. ✈

N661US  
The actual  
aircraft

“Former Northwest Airlines Capt. John Hansen flew the airline’s Boeing 747 route from Detroit to Toyko for years. In 2002, the plane tried to kill him and 400 passengers. This is the story of how he saved them. Hansen told the story in a 2006 court hearing, and the version below is his own words edited from the transcript.”

*The quote above is from the introduction of the internet story originally titled “How I Saved A 747 From Crashing.” The explanation for why it is printed here can be found on the previous pages as well as my Editor’s Notes. – Ed.*

## SURVIVING A HARD-OVER RUDDER

I was just settling down with my book and I felt the airplane do a very odd maneuver. We could feel the airplane doing something very significant and abnormal. And, after about eight or ten seconds after they recovered from it, I knew this was not right. I got up and began putting my uniform on. (First Officer) Dave (Smith) did the same thing. And just then, we got the emergency crew call from the cockpit. There’s a chime that they can ring. And when the chime goes off, it means we need you right away.

And we heard the chime and Dave and I proceeded to the cockpit. When we got in the cockpit we saw Frank, the other captain—Capt. Gibe, fighting the controls. And he had the control wheel over about halfway, which is really odd at cruise. You never see that. And you could see his leg was straining on the rudder pedals.

Now one thing that’s important to point out: the 747 is built with an upper rudder and a lower rudder. They’re designed with two hydraulic systems powering each one. Normally, they operate together and, to an observer looking at that airplane from a distance, you couldn’t tell that it’s a split rudder.

Well, Capt. Gibe was holding full rudder pressure with his right leg; normally putting both of the rudders completely out to the right. On the lower computer screen in front of the pilots, we have a what we call a control position indicator which shows the position of all the primary controls on the airplane. The lower rudder had gone unexplainedly and quite suddenly out to the left. It was normally limited by the airplane to six degrees of rudder

throw at altitude, and the rudder had gone from zero to almost eighteen degrees in less than one second. We were at approximately 35,000 feet.

He was explaining this while he was fighting the controls and trying to fly the airplane. And he said that with the auto pilot on, the airplane had suddenly begun an uncommanded roll to the left. And it was about almost halfway to wings vertical before he realized that the auto pilot was not going to handle this, and snapped the auto pilot off.

The four of us proceeded to take the cockpit operating manual, which is a red manual that we have in the cockpit designed to cover all of the emergencies that you would think that you might expect to encounter. This was not in the manual.

We at this point had declared an emergency and we were proceeding back to Anchorage. We had done a left turn because that was the only direction the airplane would turn. I was sitting behind Frank thinking to myself that the outcome of this is most definitely in doubt.

I would have given a thousand dollars for a rearview mirror. The self-diagnostics of the airplane which normally are pretty good, in this case basically told us nothing. And the control position indicator was really the only indication that we had had that the rudder was malfunctioning. The tail could be coming apart for all we knew. And if it came apart, we probably would lose the airplane...We were just going to have to figure this out.

I was thinking to myself, I’m the senior captain and I’m uncomfortable with the thought that when

we get to Anchorage, if we're lucky enough to get to Anchorage, that it's very possible that we may have to bend this thing up, putting it back on the ground. Being the senior captain, bearing the responsibility, if anyone is going to scratch my airplane I want it to be me.

And I told Frank that he did a fabulous job with the initial recovery, was doing a fine job flying it, but that I was going to exercise my right to get back in the seat. Frank's reaction was, I have no problems with that.

Mike Fagan, the co-pilot, was handling the airplane. When I got in the (left) seat, he says, OK, are you ready? He gradually took the force off the controls as I gradually came in with the force. And I was pretty appalled at how poorly the airplane was handling. It was flying really lousy. But the point is it was flying. We didn't want to touch too many things right then because it may have been in a very delicate balance situation.

It took as much force as you could put into the rudder pedal to keep that upper rudder out to the right as far as it would go. And all that did was give you straight ahead. So you'd push as hard as you could with your leg, you could only do it for about ten minutes and then you'd have to switch with the co-pilot. So Mike and I took turns. We were about an hour and forty minutes west of Anchorage, about 500 miles.

The exchange of information among the four of us was really good. It's like the old phrase, "Love finds a way." And when you know you've got to communicate about something it's amazing how quickly those ideas flow back and forth, and I encouraged it. I said, if anyone has any ideas about anything, please speak up. It was obvious that the two things that were going to get this airplane on the ground were teamwork and good old-fashioned hand-flying, seat-of-the-pants flying.

Now we had some time to do some very important tasks. We had to communicate with the cabin and with the flight attendants and with the company, with air traffic control.

So we got the purser, which is the lead flight attendants, and the interpreter up to the cockpit and we had a meeting. And we told them exactly what the problem was, we were having trouble controlling the airplane and we were going to do our very best to get back and get it on the ground at Anchorage.

And we talked about how much we should tell the passengers. And we decided that this is not the time for warm, fuzzy announcements that we're

going to be late in Tokyo. We decided to tell them this is exactly the problem we're having, it's a problem with the controls on the airplane, please give the flight attendants your full and undivided attention, the case being your life may depend on it. We didn't say those exact words, but we wanted them to give the flight attendants their complete attention.

We also had a conference call with the company and we had to do this with a primitive radio called HF, which is like you saw Clark Gable doing in the movies in the 1940s. It's a very primitive radio. But it was the only thing that would work out over the Bering Sea.

And our main questions were does anyone know what could be wrong with this rudder? And the second question was, we see nothing in the book about how to get this airplane back on the ground.

And the answers that we got back... no, nobody has any idea what's wrong with your rudder, sorry, and, no, there's nothing in the literature, you're basically on your own. The one suggestion that we got from the training manager was add some extra speed on final.

Anchorage is kind of an odd airport in that every runway has something wrong with it as far as a situation like this. It's either got a complicated approach or, like Runway 32, has a cliff at one end, so if you go too long on the landing roll, you get to the end and it's game over.

Runways 6, 6 Left and 6 Right, were the best ones. Six Right is the one we chose. The only disadvantage to it was if you get down close to the runway and decide it doesn't look good and you're going to go around, you're headed right at a mountain range. And it's about—only about seven or eight miles off the end of the runway.

So the answer to that was, do it right the first time. Don't go around.

The airplane is designed to cruise at 500 or 600 miles an hour; it's designed to land at about 150 or 160 mph. We didn't know what was physically wrong with the airplane. And we were afraid that once we departed this delicate balance that we were operating in that we may lose control of the airplane again.

So the plan was to fly past that Alaska range of mountains and then descend to 14,000 feet, which is a nice intermediate altitude. It's low enough that the air is nice and thick, and it's high enough that if you do lose control you can make one good honest attempt at recovery before the water.

So one other thing we talked about: The rudder on the 747-400 sends electronic signals to the nose

wheel; it's designed to do that so that you can steer the airplane on the ground with the rudder pedal. So if you're taxiing and you want to take your hand off of what's called the tiller—very much like the steering wheel on your car, it's mounted over on the side wall—if you want to take your hand off the tiller and pick something up, papers or something, you can continue keeping the airplane on the taxiway with your feet through the rudder pedals.

However, we were afraid that those signals might be being sent to the nose wheel from a hard-over rudder, which means we might be touching down not just with a cocked rudder, but a fully cocked nose wheel, and once we lowered the nose to the runway, the airplane would head for the weeds.

We briefed that, and the point was well taken that the tiller mounted on the left cockpit wall, that steering wheel overrides those signals from the rudder to the nose wheel. So if I touched down on the touchdown spot and then lower the nose to the runway and the airplane tries to swerve, I was immediately going to let go of the control wheel and grab the tiller to steer the nose wheel, and Mike was going to grab the control lever.

I got it as stabilized as I possibly could, flew it down. We came across the fence at about 200 mph. And I put the airplane right on the touchdown spot, lowered the nose to the runway, and it tried to swerve.

I let go of the wheel, I said, Mike, you got it, I grabbed the tiller, and then I used reverse and braking. We had the brakes set at a very high auto-brake setting, because the airplane was still trying to swerve. The airplane was going to swerve all the way down to the point where we were slow enough where the rudder was no longer in effect.

We got it down to taxi speed, and you could hear all four pilots exhale at the same time.

The tower said that must have been quite a ride, when you get to the gate you're going to want to go back and look at that rudder.

As I parked the airplane, I looked down and here was Sterling Benson, the Anchorage chief pilot. He told me later that as we taxied up, it was a very impressive sight because the wheels and brakes were all cherry red they were so hot.

I said to Sterling, I'd like to go down and see that rudder. And he said, oh, sure, come on, I'll take you.

It's hard to envision how big that lower rudder really is. But when you consider that the wing span of this airplane is a couple hundred feet, you can imagine that's a huge rudder. And it was impressive.

It was hard over to the left thirty-one and a half degrees by the time we landed. And there was hydraulic fluid running down the bottom of the airplane and pooling on the ramp beneath it.

We went up in the jetway afterward, and a group of 20 passengers was getting off. This one woman saw me there with my uniform on and she said, are you the pilot who landed this plane? And I said, yes, ma'am. And she said, oh, I could just kiss you. And I said, well, you can kiss me. And she threw her arms around me and gave me a great big kiss on the cheek and thanked me.

As pilots, we tend to think of the responsibility as just a general thing. We know that there's passengers down there and we think, yes, we're responsible, but inside we're just thinking of flying the airplane and this is what we do. We know the responsibility is there, but it never has a personal face. But on this day, it did. And there were 400 people on that airplane that were just like her. ✈







# Minneapolis Christmas Party



Pete & Ann Brown, Jim & Diane Kary, Doug & Sherry Wenborg, Ray & Kittie Alexander, Ken & Sharon Kreutzmann, Kathleen Palmen, Bob Lillyblad

Photos: Ray Alexander



Ray & Kittie Alexander



Steve Lillyblad, Pastor Bob White



Sue & Tom Ebner



Bev & Pat Watson



Jerry & Linda Wortman



Tom Dummer



Joe Sutula



Sara & Nick Modders



Don & Jeanne Wiedner



Gene & Diane Tveit



Beverly & Art Bein



Milt & Mary Eiteim



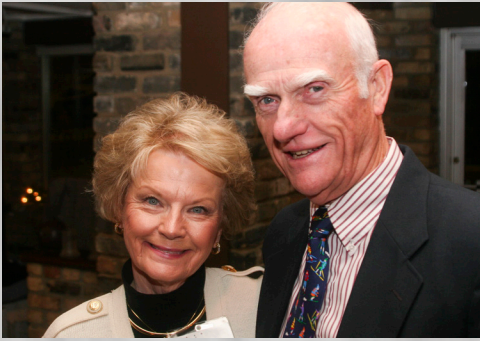
Sherry Wenborg, Sharon Kreutzmann



Marilyn & Tim Olson



Hal Hockett



Kathleen Palmen, Ned Stephens



Les & Julie McNamee



Mike & Mickey Garrison



Loran & Lucie Gruman



Tom & Mary Linda White



Skip & Judy Felton



Chuck & Jody Bartlett



Sam McGlone & Lois Ring



Beverly & Max Kroll



Norma & Jim Driver



Mary & Fred Raiche



Barbara & John Vivian



Don & Jane Chadwick



Sherry & Steve Carr



Connie Thompson, Kathleen Palmen



Sherry & Doug Wenborg



Ann & Bob Turner



Ken & Sharon Kreutzmann



Marty & Dave Roth



Wendy & Pete Schenck



Barbara & Dick Erlandson



Joyce & Dan Farkas



Jim & Diane Kary



Steve Carr, Tim Olson



Above: Lois Ring & Sam McGlone, Renae Wolle, T. J. Mannion, Connie Thompson



Above: Jody Bartlett, Mickey Garrison, Julie McNamee



Left: Sherry Wenborg, Kathleen Palmen, Kittie Alexander

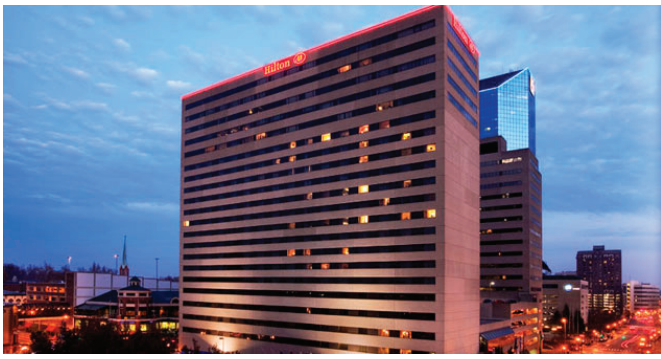


# Lexington Reunion

Horses,  
Hats,  
Hooch,  
History,  
Hackers



October 10-12, 2013



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**gets you (2) two chances**

**Before April 1st, 2013**  
**gets you (1) one chance**

Read more details from K. C. Kohlbrand  
 in the "Letters" section.

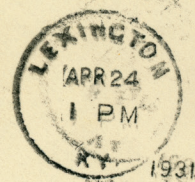


- MEAL CHOICES**
1. Rosemary rack of pork loin
  2. Honey roasted pecan salmon
  3. Vegetarian



**Golf Scramble**  
**October 10th, 9am-2pm**

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 Gold Canyon AZ 85118-5872



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meal	Golf
Choice	Outing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to "RNPA"

**Firm registration deadline is May 31st, 2013**



© Gary Ferguson

*Don't get left behind!*

## Horses & Hats Friday, October 11th



Start your day at a leisurely pace with breakfast at the Hilton or other close-by choices and then prepare for your "Day at the Races" with your coat and tie selection and be especially helpful with your lady's hat in anticipation of the ensuing hat contest at Keeneland Race Course.

We will begin pickup at 9:30 am with the first two motor coaches departing at 9:45 for their escorted, narrated tour with professional guides of 1-2 horse farms. The other motor coaches will depart in sequence due to space loading limitations and all will meet at 11:30 for admission to Keeneland.



We will make our way upstairs to the Clubhouse section and be seated in the Lexington Room, four to a table. Programs and room admission labels will be provided, buffet lunch starts serving at "High Noon." Please make your horse selections and bets for the first race before lunch, that way you won't be shut out from losing your money. Races start at 1:00 PM. I will have a few selections for you to consider, my betting tip is to make "show" bets until you cash two (2) tickets in a row then you can step up and bet one to "win".

We will be able to watch the races from our tables and numerous TV monitors throughout the room. The ladies hat judging will be ongoing throughout the day in the Lexington Room. Prizes will be awarded the night of the Banquet for; Win = \$100, Place = \$50, Show = \$25. Please wear your RNPA name tag so that the judges can identify you as well as your fellow members.



The races will be completed by 6:00 p.m. as we depart for the Lexington downtown Hilton. Hopefully everyone has some reserve funds available for their evening meal on your own. You have numerous first class dining choices within walking distance; the Hilton and Hyatt are both excellent, with many others within a few blocks of the hotel.

K. C. Kohlbrand

## Saturday; Hooch & History



“Statistically, this is never supposed to happen.”

By Chuck Bullard  
CAL MEC Staff Writer

It was unprecedented. It could never happen. The odds were one in a billion. But Capt. Jim Humphreys was facing the unimaginable—a 30-minute countdown to almost certain catastrophe.

It was almost like a James Bond movie where the villain flips the switch on the time bomb and the intrepid secret agent has 30 minutes to free himself and save the world. In this case, Humphreys had 30 minutes to save his passengers, his crew and himself.

He was flying a Continental B-757 red eye from Anchorage to Seattle on Aug. 12, 2000, and all of the redundant electrical generating systems failed one by one. That’s right, all the layers of protection peeled away—the Integrated Drive Generators (IDGs), the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) and the Hydraulic Motor Generator (HMG). It was 3:55 a.m. and for the first time in the history of the 757, one was flying on battery power. Humphreys knew he had 30 minutes to get it on the ground before the juice in the ship’s battery was gone—and he was

37,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean about 100 nautical miles south-southwest of Ketchikan.

“It’s one of the most serious events that we’ve had in recent history,” said Toby Carroll, Continental Director of Safety Investigations. “If the links in the chain hadn’t been broken, we probably would have wound up with an accident.”

Although the incident happened [years] ago, it’s important to examine it because of the lessons it can teach.

Humphreys had never landed at Ketchikan, an uncontrolled airfield on a small island surrounded by mountainous terrain, and he had only four standby flight instruments, one dim cockpit light and basic navigational equipment, including a directional gyro, a VOR receiver and one ILS receiver. There was so little electricity available that even the transponder stopped transmitting, so Continental Flight 120 disappeared from air traffic control screens in Anchorage.

Even if Humphreys could dead reckon his way to the tiny island in the dark and stay away from the nearby mountains, he had to guide the unlit jetliner with 150 passengers on board through a cloud deck of unknown



depth with only the standby artificial horizon to save him from disorientation.

And he had to do it without any help from ATC or autopilots or on-board computers or global positioning satellites or any of the other technology modern pilots depend on but which don't work when there's no electricity.

"This is about the worst you're ever going to face," said Capt. Mike Hynes of the Continental Central Air Safety Committee.

If Flight 120 had not made it, no one would have known what happened because the Flight Data Recorder stopped recording to save precious electrical power. Investigators could have recovered data recorded before the electrical generating systems failed but no data would have been available after the ship's battery took over. The fact that there would have been no record of Flight 120's last moments shows that no one ever contemplated a scenario that included a complete power failure on a 757.

"Statistically, this is never supposed to happen," Hynes said.

That's why Hynes has such high praise for the crew—Capt. Jim Humphreys and First Officer Susan Shaw.

"You couldn't have asked for any better job than they did," said Hynes. "Everything was textbook, everything you would expect out of a professional crew. They really did an excellent job."

Capt. Nancy Novaes, chairwoman of the Pilot Assistance Committee, seconded that praise and was especially complimentary of the job done by Humphreys, so much so that she presented him with a model of a Continental 757 with two batteries taped to it.

"I'm not sure everyone could have done that," Novaes said of the safe diversion to Ketchikan. "A pilot like Jim makes an emergency like that look easy."

Ketchikan is a particularly difficult airport with a tricky approach, especially in the dark for a pilot who has never landed there, said Novaes.

"His performance was about as flawless as it could be," she said. "His cool was such that he was able to carry this off."

So how did Humphreys overcome almost insurmountable odds to save the lives of his passengers and crew? By thinking outside the box. He was not lulled into a false sense of security by modern technology and practiced old-fashioned airmanship on the flight from Anchorage to Seattle, which paid off when all the high-tech gear failed and he had to fly by the seat of his pants.

"The airplane can lead you very easily into becoming a very cavalier aviator," said Humphreys. "The system redundancy is so good and the navigational capabilities

are so complete that there is no need to review systems as much as you would have flying a 727 or some of the older model 747s and DC-10s.

"The airplane itself will lead you into becoming more and more relaxed about your job and it takes a lot more discipline to keep your charts ready, to think about your alternates. The seemingly unimaginable can happen. It's built by human beings and human beings make errors and there is no fool proof system."

Flight 120 proved that.

"The incident was the result of a combination of unique failures that had the potential of resulting in an accident," said Carroll.

The string of failures turned the routine redeye from Anchorage to Seattle into a nightmare. The right Integrated Drive Generator (IDG) was not operating when the 757 was dispatched. It was placarded for an input bearing failure. But that wasn't a major problem because the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) could provide electricity to power the right side of the plane.

Then at 3:35 a.m., an hour and 27 minutes into the flight, the left IDG failed. There was a brief power interruption while the APU assumed the entire load but power was quickly restored to the flight deck because the APU already was running. Twenty minutes later, while the flight crew still was evaluating alternatives with Continental personnel in Houston, the APU overheated and automatically shutdown.

There was still one line of defense—the Hydraulic Motor Generator (HMG). The HMG is designed to assume the electrical load when the aircraft AC bus is unpowered but it didn't.

The aircraft reverted to ship's battery and the flight data recorder stopped recording, the transponder stopped transmitting and radio contact with Houston ended. The crew was on its own over the Pacific Ocean at night flying on battery power.

"This is the thing that pilots fear the most—being in a remote area like Alaska in a mountainous area unfamiliar to you at night and losing electrical," said Carroll. "This is a pretty scary event."

"The entire airplane went dark," Humphreys recalled. "The autopilot drops off. All the screens go blank. Every instrument other than the standby instruments and one light inside the cockpit go out. So you've got four basic flight instruments in front of you—a standby attitude indicator, a standby airspeed indicator, a standby altimeter and a standby engine instrument. The entire communications system is unplugged. The only one that's left is the number one comm radio."

His reaction?

"My heart came up into my throat," said Humphreys.

Like the old pro that he is, Humphreys had been maintaining an “ongoing diversion mindset” since he left Seattle to fly to Anchorage and back because the 757’s right IDG was inoperative and had been MELED.

“I felt reasonably safe making this trip but I definitely was concerned because it’s a non-normal operation,” he said.

Humphreys said he was more concerned than he would have been in the lower 48 because he was flying along the rugged coastline of Alaska and western Canada.

“It’s a place where you really have to be on your toes,” he said.

So all the way to Anchorage and on the abbreviated trip back, he was constantly thinking about what he would do and where he would divert if another problem developed.

“That was the genesis of doing the research on the way up as to where I was going to go [in an emergency],” said Humphreys. “I think that is the mark of us professional pilots is that when we’re put in a situation like that, we’re aware of the additional risks that are involved.”

On the way up, Humphreys and Shaw were treated to a spectacular aurora borealis display.

“That was a particularly entertaining night for northern lights, as wild as I’ve ever seen it, just absolutely magnificent,” Humphreys recalled. But that didn’t stop him from preparing for the worst.

“I reviewed the approaches of the two primary airports—Ketchikan and Juneau—I was looking at as diversion airports, if I had another problem,” he said. “I was monitoring the weather. I was getting hourly updates on the weather and I was reading and looking at the approaches and just sizing it up as I was going up.

“Coming back down, I was doing the same thing. You’re just running this ongoing diversion mindset.”

On the way up, Humphreys also closely monitored the performance of the APU and noticed the oil quantity gauge was flickering back and forth between full and three-quarters full.

“I wrote up the APU for an oil quantity indication,” he said.

A contract maintenance technician in Anchorage checked the APU.

“We shut the APU down and he went up there and looked at it,” Humphreys recalled. “I believe it took a quart of oil. He was reasonably confident that the APU was going to continue to operate and he assured me of that.”

But Humphreys was uneasy and continued to be on guard during the return trip. So he had a snapshot of the Ketchikan approach in his mind when the left IDG quit.

“When the left generator went off line, Ketchikan was about 120 miles off my 9:00 o’clock position,” he said. “As we were dealing with this problem, I had that approach in my head. I knew what I had to do and I was sizing up exactly where I was going to fly.

“When the APU quit, we just brought the power back and threw the speed brakes out and did this diving turn down to the approach and it worked out really well.”

During the 20 minutes between the failure of the IDG and the failure of the APU, Humphreys and Shaw ran checklists but weren’t able to bring the generator back online. So they asked Continental experts in Houston for help.

“The APU quit as I was talking to the company,” said Humphreys. “That’s when the adventure started. I said some expletive like where the bleep is the [HMG]. I don’t know how long I waited for it, less than a minute. I’m physically holding the yoke, keeping the airplane level on standby instruments, waiting for the [HMG] to kick in. But I didn’t hear anything, feel anything, sense anything. It was just dark.”

So Humphreys began issuing instructions to Shaw.

“I said, ‘Declare an emergency. Tell them we’re diverting into Ketchikan.’ She said that and then she said, ‘We’d like a vector to Ketchikan.’ Anchorage Center’s response was, ‘We’ve lost radar contact.’ We disappeared off Anchorage Center’s radar screen so they couldn’t give us a vector. They couldn’t give us anything but moral support.”

But Humphreys had a pretty good idea where they were in relation to Ketchikan.

“I had been watching it keenly as we were going through this 20 minutes and I knew where it was and I was fortunate to have kept it in my mind’s eye,” he said. “I deployed the speed brakes and made a turn over towards the direction where I knew the airport was.”

He also knew the Ketchikan airport was unmanned and he knew it would be very difficult to land there (“Nobody wants to land on an island in the Pacific at night uncontrolled without any training”) but Humphreys rejected the idea of trying to make it to Vancouver where he would have had ATC and emergency equipment.

Vancouver was more than 500 miles away, he said, and “that was just way too long to go on battery power.”

No one really knows what would happen to a 757 if the ship’s battery went dead. Would it continue to fly and, if it did, would a pilot be able to land it with no instruments and no communications and navigational equipment.

“It wasn’t something I wanted to explore, that’s for sure,” said Humphreys.

He wanted to land ASAP and he knew Ketchikan



## KETCHICAN, ALASKA

was about 30 minutes away, assuming he could find his way there in the dark with only basic navigational aids and land on the first try.

“It was time to get the airplane on the ground,” he said. “It was a no-brainer at that point.”

After getting over the initial shock, Humphreys was calm. His heart didn’t race. His adrenaline didn’t surge.

“I’m not saying I’ve got ice water running through my veins but I wasn’t having any problem thinking clearly,” he recalled. “I knew what I had to do. It was really obvious where I needed to put the airplane, how I had to get it there and that time was of the essence. I knew I had 30 minutes to get the airplane on the ground.”

Despite all the bad luck, Humphreys said it was fortunate the APU shut down when it did because “if it had quit halfway between Ketchikan and Vancouver, the outcome would have been different.”

With only 30 minutes of battery power, Humphreys knew he had no margin for error. If he couldn’t find the

airport in the dark or if he missed the approach and had to go around, the battery could go dead.

So Humphreys thought outside the box. He knew the APU had its own battery but he knew trying to restart the APU could drain that battery and possibly drain the ship’s battery, too. However, he knew a working APU would provide enough electricity to power the 757’s glass cockpit and give him more time to land safely.

So he decided to take the risk.

“He felt that he had nothing to lose and the situation was of such urgency that he felt that he would try it,” said Carroll. “He did what had to be done and you can’t argue with success.”

Humphreys said he knew he was taking a chance when he tried to restart the APU.

“At that point, it was a risk I wanted to take,” he said. “It was a gamble I took. Fortunately, it started, thank God.”

Humphreys felt like he’d won the lottery.

“It just energized me,” he said.

At 4:04 a.m., the Flight Data Recorder resumed operation, indicating restoration of power to the main aircraft AC busses. Nine long minutes had elapsed and Flight 120 had descended to 17,000 feet.

“Everything came right back up almost the way it was,” said Humphreys. “With minimal switching, we were able to bring the airplane right back to where it was.”

The first thing Humphreys and Shaw did was confirm their position.

“When we got the airplane’s power back up, we were able to access the FMC to get the information out,” said Humphreys. “The arrival to Ketchikan is in there. We pulled it up and put Ketchikan as the destination for the aircraft.”

“Now we were able to see where we were and, after going 100 miles, we were 4 1/2 miles off to the west of the initial approach segment. With a 5-degree course change, we got right on course.”

When Humphreys and Shaw confirmed their position, they were 4 1/2 miles from the VOR on Annette Island.

“It’s a downwind approach,” Humphreys recalled. “You go from the VOR on top of Annette Island, which is to the southwest, and you would fly out 35 miles or so from this VOR and, at that point, you make a very sharp right 90-degree turn and descend down on the glide slope onto the island.”

But there was one more hurdle. The airport was dark. In the dim cockpit, Humphreys and Shaw had missed the note that said the airport lighting was pilot controlled.

“I don’t think there’s an airport that I’ve flown to as a commercial airline pilot that I’ve ever used pilot-controlled lighting,” Humphreys said. “We would have broken out of the clouds and there would have been no airport. Fortunately enough, Anchorage Center said, ‘Oh, by the way, be sure to turn the airport lights on.’”

When Flight 120 exited the clouds at 3,500 feet, Humphreys and Shaw could see the brightly lit airfield surrounded by a sea of darkness. The lights of Ketchikan are hidden behind a mountain so the airport really stands out.

“It was a very welcome sight,” said Humphreys.

But he remained hyper vigilant because of the nearby mountains.

“I didn’t feel real comfortable,” he said, “until we were on the ground.”

Humphreys said the actual landing was “absolutely normal” but the airport was deserted. The control tower

and terminal were dark. No emergency vehicles met them.

It was 4:25 a.m.—exactly 30 minutes after the APU shut down.

“There’s nobody there,” Humphreys recalled. “I come to a stop with all the aircraft lights on and there’s not a soul, nobody, nothing, pitch black outside. So we just sat there and finally a guy came out on the Unicom frequency and said, ‘How are you guys doing? I’m the guy down in the pickup truck below you. What brings you here?’ So we talked with him until 5:15 a.m. when the first ferry came over and the lights started going on in the terminal.”

During the emergency, there was no time to address the passengers so Humphreys updated them after he parked the 757. This was before Sept. 11 so he opened the cockpit door before speaking and an almost magical scene unfolded.

“I turn around and I look and just about every head all the way back down the aisle is looking at me and I’m looking back at them and I wave and they all wave at me but no one says anything,” Humphreys reported. “It was almost kind of a surreal thing.”

“Then I pick the PA up and I say, ‘Welcome to Ketchikan. We had an electrical anomaly and we thought it was prudent to put the airplane on the ground until we figure out what it is and now that I’m down here on the ground, I’m glad I’m here because it’s something that needs to be fixed before the airplane can go anywhere. We’re all safe. We’re on an island. This is Ketchikan. I’ve got a guy out here in a pickup truck I’m talking to and he tells me the ferry is going to be here in 45 minutes so let’s just all sit back and relax and as soon as they get here, we’ll figure out how we’re going to get you out of the airplane.’”

The passengers were calm because they had no idea anything was wrong other than the fact the in-flight movie stopped and the cabin lights went out except for the emergency exit lights and the aisle path lights, which have their own batteries. To them, everything seemed normal other than the darkened cabin.

“There was no sense of what the danger was,” said Humphreys. “There was no radical movement of the airplane at all. The autopilot clicked off cleanly. We didn’t have any problem maintaining control. The airplane handled beautifully.”

“I focused on keeping the platform as absolutely stable as possible. In retrospect, I think that helped because they never felt the airplane do anything at all. We just made a left turn and then a right turn and put the gear out and landed. From their viewpoint, it took no longer

than a normal arrival. It usually takes 30 minutes to get the airplane down from altitude no matter if you're landing in Seattle or Ketchikan."

"There was a little bump and the lights started to flicker a little bit," Timothy Fallen, a passenger from Puyallup, Washington, told the Ketchikan Daily News. "The video screens went up and down. Later, the lights went off and the emergency lights came on."

"We really didn't know what was going on," Hayne Hamilton, a passenger from Eagle River, Alaska, told the newspaper.

However, Hamilton said it was "really calm" on board Flight 120 and the landing was smooth.

"It was like flying on a glider," she said. "The landing was like a feather."

The Daily News reported the passengers applauded when the plane touched down.

Getting the passengers off the 757 was another matter. The largest planes that land at Ketchikan are Alaska Airlines B-737s so the jetways and steps were too low for the 757.

Alaska Airlines personnel had to fabricate extra steps and use cargo straps to secure them to the top of some portable 737 stairs so the 150 passengers could deplane.

The Alaska Airlines employees made the Continental passengers comfortable and coordinated the Continental rescue flight from Seattle. Then they shifted cargo out of one of their 737 combi aircraft and installed seats to airlift the rest of the Continental passengers to Seattle. The next day, they pumped 6,800 gallons of fuel into the 757 while standing on a forklift.

"The people at Alaska Airlines were marvelous," he said.

Humphreys had nothing but praise for the Alaska Airlines workers and wrote a glowing letter of thanks to the airline.

"From the very first moment I contacted your operations that morning, we were treated as if we were part of your company," he wrote. "Your company helped us when we were truly in need, and provided Continental Airlines, our crew, and our passengers the means to work through a very serious situation. Thank you."

All of the Continental passengers reached Seattle later the same day but Humphreys and Shaw stayed behind while the 757 was being repaired.

"The next day, I had this unusual sense of calm," Humphreys remembered. "It was clear in my mind that I didn't do anything to contribute to the initial problem and didn't muck anything up that had kept us from being safe in the outcome."

"I had this enormous sense of calm come over me that I haven't experienced since then. It was a feeling of

supreme gratitude to be alive. It was a really wonderful feeling."

Despite being named Continental's pilot of the quarter and receiving a recognition plaque and tickets to a hockey game, Humphreys said he doesn't feel deserving of special recognition.

"I don't feel I'm a hero because this was just a matter of managing a really uncomfortable situation to a safe outcome," he said.

During the emergency, he thought back to his days as a primary flight instructor in small planes with limited instrumentation.

"I just kind of deferred back to those times and assured myself that the outcome could be safe and that there was definitely hope and there was a place to get down to and it was just a matter of getting the airplane down through the overcast. I didn't consider it to be as big a deal during the process."

Humphreys added: "I consider myself a professional and that's what we do. What I was doing is what they pay me to do. We're trained to do this and handle situations like this. I did what I hope all of the other professional pilots would do in the situation."

Because he had been involved in a critical incident, Humphreys was contacted by a SAFE (Support Assistance for Employees) volunteer, Capt. Jim Owen, a Continental pilot trained to debrief fellow pilots who have experienced close calls. Owen also is trained to help his fellow pilots deal with the psychological and physiological aftermath of critical incidents.

Humphreys said talking to a peer with Critical Incident Response Program training was therapeutic.

"I found it effective to share that with somebody," he said. "It didn't even occur to me until I was talking to him how potentially dangerous it could have been. So it was good to go through that process with him."

Despite the psychological first aid from a trained peer, reliving the incident still can dredge up the powerful emotions Humphreys experienced at the time. When Capt. Nancy Novaes presented him with the 757 model at a party at her home, Humphreys told the assembled pilots about the incident.

"That was the first time I had really told the story in public and it was, for me, very emotional because of just the gratitude I have of having pushed through it," he said.

There were some tears shed, he admits, "Tears of gratitude, absolute tears of gratitude." ✈

*This was forwarded to Contrails by Dick Dodge. I had never heard the story and can only assume many of you haven't either. I considered editing some of the later part for space, but decided to leave it as written. – Ed.*

# North Puget Sound C



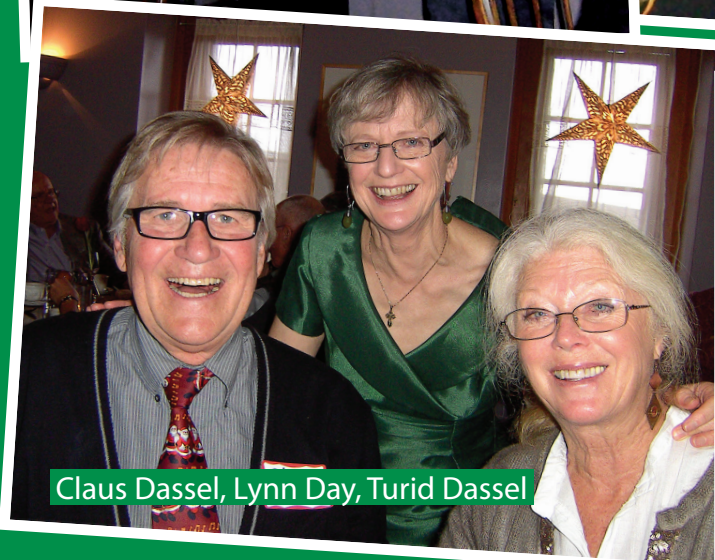
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Nadine Bentsen, Jeanine Smith



Bill Day, Frank Orr

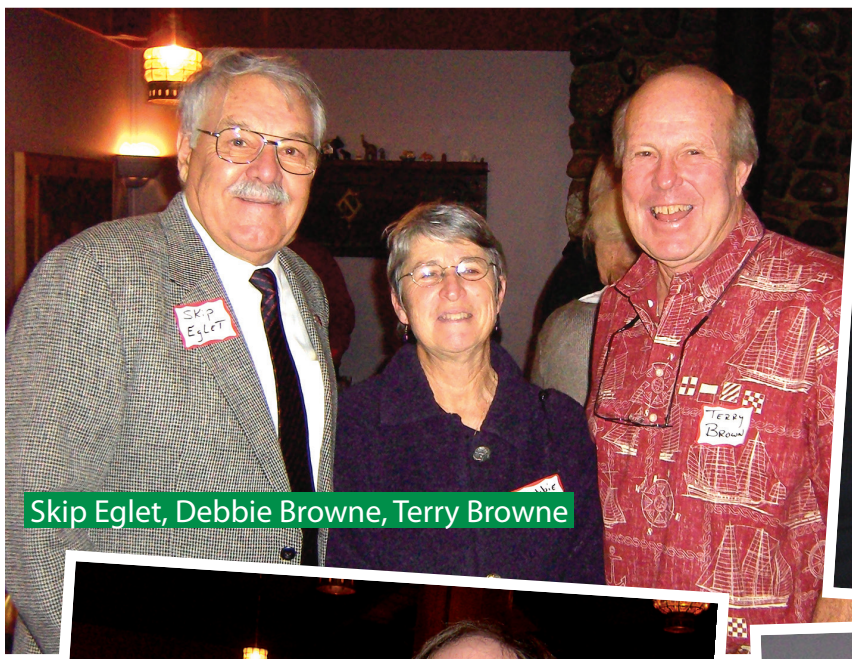


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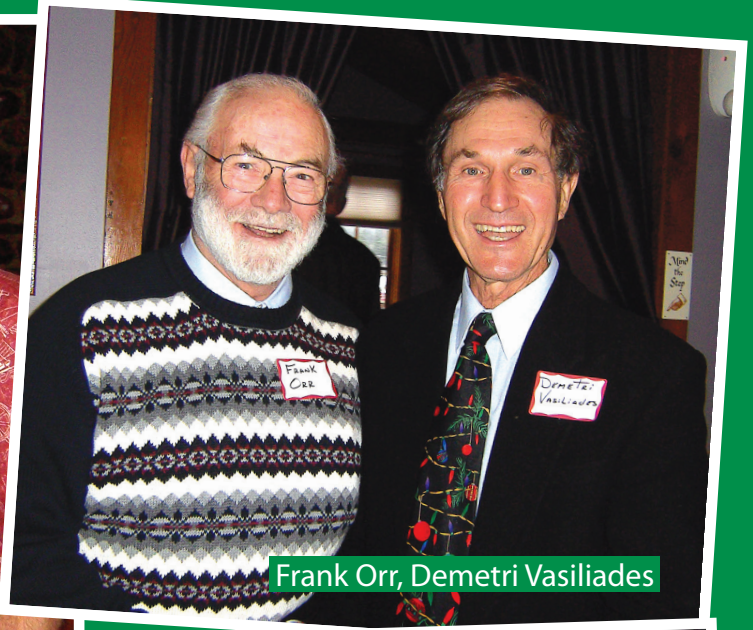


Kent & Marion Sawyer, Pat & George Groth

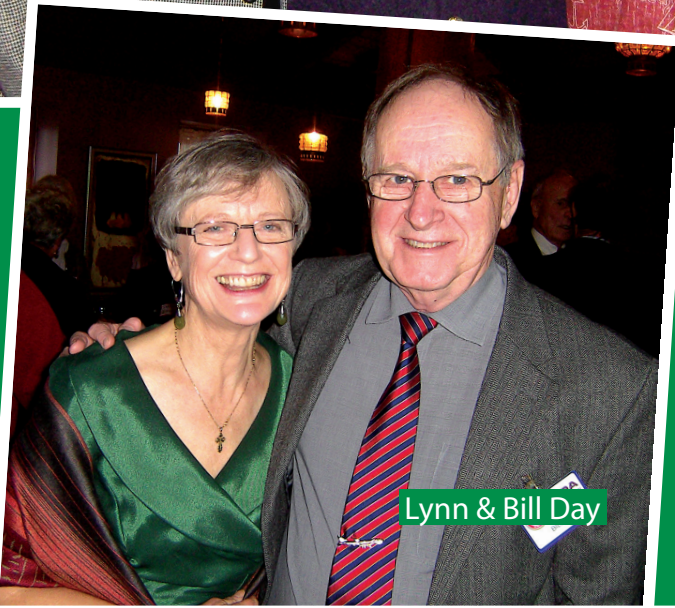
# Christmas Luncheon



Skip Eglet, Debbie Browne, Terry Browne



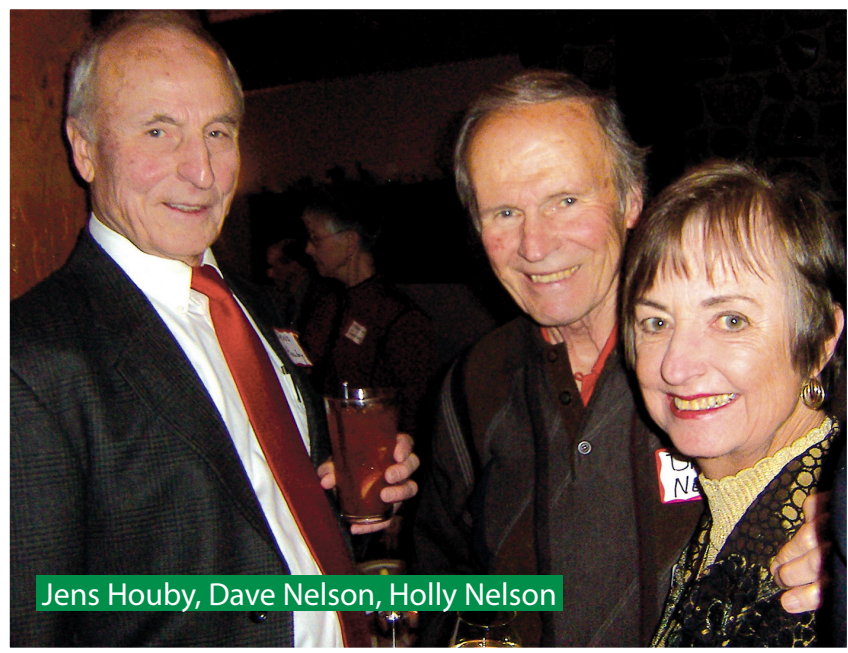
Frank Orr, Demetri Vasiliades



Lynn & Bill Day



Gordon Crowe, Lowell Schroeder, George Groth



Jens Houby, Dave Nelson, Holly Nelson



Connie Bowen

# Christmas Eve 1971

By Jim Mancini

With the encouragement of the Editor, I'm finally putting to paper a story I've told a number of times in the past forty years. Thanksgiving having just past, Christmas before us, it seems an appropriate time to capture the memories of my 1971 hijacking experience. Although it was on Christmas Eve, I've always felt the event began November 24, 1971 with the D.B. Cooper hijacking of Northwest flight 305.

As most will recall, D.B. Cooper picked the evening before Thanksgiving 1971 to change the pattern of hijackings from the standard flight to Cuba, to a demand for money and the desire to exit the airplane in flight. That evening I along with group of fellow crewmembers had gathered around a TV to watch the Cooper hijacking unfold. I recall making the comment that in thirty days there would be another hijacking. Little did I know that in thirty days I would be the one at the wrong end of a 38 caliber revolver and that the hijacker behind the gun would have in his pocket a copy of the Time Magazine article describing the D.B. Cooper hijacking.

Christmas Eve 1971 started as a beautiful day in Minneapolis. The weather forecast for our trip to Miami, with an intermediate stop in Chicago, was excellent. Flight 734 was scheduled to depart the Twin Cities at 3pm with an en-route time of one hour and five minutes for the first leg. Bruce Armstrong and Mickey Neal would join me in the cockpit. Three flight attendants were in the cabin with Greta Creffall being the lead. The aircraft was ship 372 a Boeing 707-320.

Having flown with Bruce before, and believing it was his turn to fly, I offered him the first leg to Chicago. Shortly before departure Bruce, experiencing the symptoms of a cold, alluded to the fact that he had considered calling in sick. We departed the gate on schedule and were off the ground without delay. Departure and climb out were normal until we leveled at flight level 290. Just as we were crossing the Nodine VOR the calm was interrupted by the sound of two gunshots fired somewhere in the vicinity of the forward main cabin door. Denial quickly overcame reality, even given the scent of gunpowder in the air. I looked at Bruce and Mickey and remember saying, "Sounds like something blew up in the galley." I then followed up by asking Mickey to take a look through the peephole and see what had happened.

Mickey was about to get up from his seat when the cockpit door flew open, and a hysterical, and very convincing Greta, was pushed into the cockpit saying, "He



Killed a Passenger!" Before she could say anything else she was pulled from the cockpit followed by the entry of the hijacker shouting his demands; "I want to go to Chicago and I want \$300,000!" His demands somewhat eased the initial fear and stress, as I now knew he wanted more than to fly east and shoot the crew as had been the case on a previous Eastern Airlines Hijacking.

At this point with the gun pointed directly at my head he emphasized that the briefcase he was carrying in his left hand contained a bomb and that the wire coming out of it, wrapped around his wrist, was a device that would set it off should he be forced to drop it. This first of numerous periods of interaction was brief, as his stress level would rise quickly with each exchange of demands, questions and the answer I would give him. At what was obviously his limit of tolerance for stress he would leave the cockpit slamming the door closed and returning a few minutes later having emotionally settled down.

What we in the cockpit weren't aware of is that right after takeoff, a passenger named Everett Holt, traveling in First Class, confronted Greta and the other First Class passengers moving them at gunpoint to coach. He then,



in the vicinity of the first class galley, forced Greta to constantly repeat, "He Killed a Passenger" with the threat of killing her if she wasn't convincing. When he was convinced she was ready he fired two rounds next to her head, fortunately they were both blanks, unfortunately for us the other 4 rounds were live.

From the moment Holt pulled Greta out of the cockpit until the termination of the event some five hours later we no longer had the ability to communicate with the cabin crew. Holt's entries and exits to the cockpit were numerous in the ensuing two hours and forty-five minutes in the air and another two on the ground. Upon exiting, as I've stated before, he would slam the cockpit door closed, upon entering he would position himself next to or on the jump seat pointing the gun at my head and occasionally at Mickey and Bruce. The more I would talk to him and try to answer his questions the more nervous he would get. The gun would begin to shake in his hand and on several occasions he pulled the hammer back at which time he would get up and leave the cockpit. It goes without saying that I was scared but I sometimes think he was more scared than me.

With each absence of Holt from the cockpit Bruce, Mickey and I would have a few minutes to gather our thoughts and try and make sense of our predicament. Holt wouldn't let us leave the cockpit, as I tried by asking at one time to go to the lavatory. He refused my request but about an hour later offered to let me go at which time when I said, "I didn't have to." It seemed to peak his stress level. When I asked Holt if we could get something to drink, he denied our request to call the flight attendants. As I recall, the three of us sipped on the same cup of coffee that Bruce brought to the cockpit before departure. Talk about dry mouth.

Over time Bruce, Mickey and I started to form the opinion that if he had killed a passenger it was more out of fear and not a premeditated act. Although we were subjected to his threats for longer than I want to think about, we began to grow convinced that he would only hurt us out of fear. Also discussed in his absence was the training we had recently received in General Refresher. In the most recent training session, an emphasis on creating delays with the intent of wearing the hijacker down was discussed at length along with once on the ground try to stay on the ground. It was sometime during these conversations, and after he advised that he wanted Mickey to board the money from the aft main door, that I suggested if we could get him to let the passengers off at the same time the money was boarded Bruce and I could leave the airplane by the cockpit windows and prevent the airplane from departing again. Bruce and Mickey both agreed with the idea, even though Mickey knew he

and the flight attendants would remain on the aircraft.

One of Holt's demands was to stay in the air until the money was delivered to the airport. In 1971 fuel was relatively inexpensive allowing us to tanker enough fuel to fly to our next destination Miami, and then some. As we held west of Chicago, using a discreet frequency, answering Holt's questions and looking to get on the ground, I finally convinced him that we were running short of fuel and needed to land. I'm glad he couldn't read the fuel gauges or had the slightest understanding of how the aircraft and its systems functioned. His lack of aircraft knowledge showed when I answered his question of, "How many of the doors on the airplane can be opened from the outside." My reply was, "All of them," an answer he did not anticipate as the panic in Holt's voice and his almost immediate departure from the cockpit exemplified the stress he had put himself under.

After being in the air for two hours and forty-five minutes we finally shut down all four engines in the 14R penalty box directly across from the NWA hangar. An external power cart was connected and I recall persuading the mechanic who brought it up to the aircraft to stay with the cart. The next two hours were a continuation of the inflight experience with Holt entering and exiting the cockpit in cycles. It was obvious the stress was building on him. He seemed to be growing increasingly unstable as we continued to make excuses for the delayed fueling and the money supposedly not yet delivered to the airport. At the point I thought he was going to break, I advised the people supporting us on the ground that we needed to board the money.

Truck stairs were brought up to the rear of the aircraft and as previously discussed he asked Mickey to walk aft with him and board the money. Upon boarding the money Mickey asked him to let the passengers go, a question he had earlier said he would consider. After a brief hesitation he ordered all passengers off. Pointing the gun at Mickey he followed with, "Get off my &\*\$%ing airplane." Mickey responded with, "You need me." To which Holt shouted, "Get off my &\*\$%ing airplane." With that Mickey departed the airplane. Mickey later said that he believed he was ordered off the airplane because Holt realized that Mickey now knew that he, Holt, had not killed a passenger. Obviously no body was to be seen as they walked from the cockpit to the aft cabin door.

Having left the cockpit door open, Bruce and I could see the passengers getting off. Believing Mickey was still on with the flight attendants Bruce and I proceeded as we had previously agreed to open the cockpit windows. From the left seat and looking aft out the window I could see the last of the passengers departing the truck stairs.

Looking aft in the cabin and seeing an empty aisle Bruce and I then departed the aircraft exiting through the open windows. I immediately walked up to the mechanic I had asked to stay with the power cart. Upon asking him to pull the power and drive us to the hangar his response was, "Who are you?" My answer of course was, "The captain." At which point he said, "No you aren't, the captain is in the cockpit." To this day I still wonder how he missed Bruce descending almost directly on him as he exited the right cockpit window. Confusion aside, Bruce and I were given a ride to the NWA hangar directly behind the aircraft, the same location Mickey and the passengers were taken to.

What Bruce and I didn't realize is that Holt had singled out two male passengers along with the three flight attendants and retained them on the airplane. As the auxiliary power was removed, the dimly lit cabin was suddenly brightened by the emergency lights. The change in lighting prompted Holt to order one of the flight attendants to go forward and have the pilots turn the lights off. She returned advising him the pilots were gone. He immediately ran forward to an empty cockpit and was observed grabbing a microphone. Holt could then be heard shouting several times, in a state of panic, "Get me pilots!" Exiting the cockpit he proceeded to where he had seated the two passengers and flight attendants now telling them, "They are all dead." He then returned to the first class cabin rummaging through the overhead bin in search of his personal belongings then entering the forward lavatory. The flight attendants and two male passengers having observed him enter the lavatory and not immediately exiting, then proceeded to the aft entry door and off the aircraft with the assistance of the FBI Agents who had remained near the door. Using bullhorns, the airplane now enveloped in floodlights, they announced that the aircraft was surrounded and that his only option was to give himself up.

Once in the forward lavatory Holt proceeded to shave off his beard and change from the suit he was wearing to his normal street attire. He then walked aft to the open cabin door, picked up the two satchels of money and jumped off the aircraft into the waiting arms of the FBI. I was later told that the beard was his mask, grown to hide his identity and shame for his failures in life. Having accomplished what he set out to do, that is emulate D.B. Cooper by hijacking us, Holt, believing he

was successful, now wanted to be recognized by those who knew him, by shaving the beard and changing clothes.

The first in a number of debriefings was held in the main terminal that evening. I can still recall walking through the terminal and seeing the headlines in the newspapers, "Passenger Shot." The Press had obviously listened to our communications and headlined my first report to ATC and the company. During the debriefing the FBI agent asked what color his tie was. My response was a hand gesture elaborating the size of the barrel of his gun and the 4 pieces of lead in the cylinders which overshadowed the fact that he was even wearing a tie.

With a smile the FBI Agent looked at me and said, "You're normal."

That evening we returned to Minneapolis on another Northwest 707 that had joined us in flight with the intent of tailing us wherever we would go. Aboard were a number of FBI sharpshooters that had flown down to Chicago with the intent of preventing our departure if need be. In the limited exchanges that I was able to have with those on the ground I was queried and was aware that there was consideration of putting someone in the lower forty one or EE compartment if we were going to depart Chicago. Upon arrival in Minneapolis, a brief amount of time was again spent debriefing followed by a press briefing the next day. Finally it was time to decompress.

Catching up with my thoughts was probably the hardest part. I knew I had initiated a controversial move by leaving the cockpit, yet I also knew that the success of the event would change things forever. As the months following passed by, with a building anxiety capturing my emotions, I began to want to get away. In my mind was a song from an album I had received a few weeks prior to the hijacking that had captured my thoughts even before the event. The title was, "What Are You Doing The Rest of Your Life." I finally asked for a medical leave, which was granted by the company, following a psychological evaluation by Mayo Clinic. Mayo's evaluation was that I indeed was experiencing anxiety and some time away would probably be helpful.

I now set out to sell our house in Burnsville and move my family east. The house sold quickly and we were off to New Jersey, familiar territory. A number of months passed. I was feeling good as long as I didn't have to think about getting on an airplane. The last



thing on my mind was returning to work. A call from Bill Hochbrun, asking me when I was coming back and offering the company's assistance in getting me to return started the process that to this day has been one of the best learning experiences of my life.

Bill asked if I would be interested in getting together with Dr. David Hubbard, a psychiatrist from Dallas, Texas. Dr. Hubbard had done extensive research into hijackings and the motivation driving hijackers. Interestingly, he had advised the FAA and the industry that hijackings would evolve to a demand for money, and someone eventually wanting to jump out of the airplane, a year or so before the D.B. Cooper event. He had written a book on the subject, interviewed fifty four skyjackers by the time we had first met, and had established a research center dedicated to helping the industry deal with the growing problem. Having first met and been interviewed by Dr. Hubbard right after the hijacking I responded that I would definitely be interested. Within a couple of days and a few drinks before boarding, to erase the anxiety, I was on my way to Dallas.

Arriving in Dallas I was met at the terminal by Dr. Hubbard. His first comment to me was that he had been told to get me back to work at all cost. Dinner at his home that evening and breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the next two days, along with meetings between patients was what I guess you can call compressed analysis.

The real lesson was in getting to listen to the more than two hours of taped interview time that Dr. Hubbard had recorded with Holt. It started with his saying that his life had been a failure and he had decided that if he didn't straighten his life out by his 25th birthday he would dive off the highest building in town, Indianapolis, and crash through the earth to come out the other side a new man. Just short of his birthday he read about D.B. Cooper in Time magazine and felt it was like a messenger that if he could do that he wouldn't have to kill himself.

This set in motion his plan. Although D.B. Cooper only had a briefcase in which he claimed to have explosives, Holt decided to add a gun to the act allowing him to create a hoax of killing a passenger so the cockpit crew would know he meant business. He initially bought blanks for the gun however when pointing the gun at a mirror it didn't look real to him so he bought standard 38 caliber rounds for visual effect. Planning to fire the gun in the aircraft he loaded the gun so that the first two rounds were blanks. He picked NWA because it was the same airline that D.B. Cooper hijacked. Upon arrival in MSP he went hunting for a parachute, purchasing one in St Paul. When examined after the event it was noted to be well beyond the required inspection date. Wrapped

as a Christmas gift, he carried the parachute on along with his briefcase, a few ropes and a change of clothes. Asked if he planned to jump he just said, "Maybe." Asked about the ropes, he said he brought them along in case he climbed out.

During the interview he had stated that at times he had put his back to me hoping I had a gun and would end his life. I recall his back to me several times as he exited the cockpit and wishing I had a weapon. At the time, had I a gun I would have used it without reservation. Several times during the interview he emphasized that he did not want to hurt us. His only intent was to scare us into believing he would.

After the two and a half days Dr. Hubbard looked at me and said, "Jim, the pent up emotion you still have to harm the hijacker is causing your subconscious to protect you. Your subconscious, by creating an anxiety of getting on the airplane, is trying to prevent you from possibly acting irrationally should you be put in the same position again thereby hurting yourself and the others that may be with you." It was like a light bulb turning on in my head. I left Dallas, without having a drink before boarding the aircraft, ready to return to work. Hubbard had also suggested that since I was living in New Jersey a follow up with a friend of his practicing in New York City would be to my advantage. A few days later I was off to Mayo Clinic for another evaluation. I was issued a First Class medical and on my way to training to re-qualify on the 727. As to the follow up with the psychiatrist in New York, after two visits his recommendation was that he didn't see any need for me to continue but wanted me to know that I could call him if I ever felt the need. Fortunately the need never arose. I was on my own, or at least I thought I was. A few years back my wife told me that for a number of years afterwards both Dr. Hubbard and the psychiatrist in New York would call her after any hijacking event hit the news to see how I was reacting.

I'm a better person for the experience. I'm often asked what happened to Everett Holt. To be honest I never followed up. For a period of time after the hijacking I wanted to destroy him, but as time passed the passion turned to pity. My career at NWA spanned another 31 years. There will always be supporters and critics of the events of that day, I've accepted full responsibility for the decisions that were made and have no regrets. I try not to Monday morning quarterback realizing the view in life is different from every seat.

As a side note, I never caught Bruce's cold. The one he said he was almost going to call in sick for. This came to mind as I recalled Mickey and me sharing Bruce's cup of coffee. ✈



## NEW CAPTAIN AND ALMOST A LEGEND

As you probably know, there are events in your life that are thrilling and sometimes awe inspiring, at least to yourself. A winning touchdown in high school (a fluke), first girlfriend, marriage, newborns, first solo, some exciting military flying and, of course, becoming an EAL captain. The captain thing, however, keeps on giving! I can't tell you how "puffed up" I was those first few weeks. Even though I was on the bottom of the barrel with flying assignments (mostly shuttle standby), it was a joy to stride out and take command of a short flight to BOS or DCA.

The day finally came, however, when I got a "real" trip with a layover and the whole shebang. I was out in the system with the big guys. "It" happened in W. Palm Beach! Just after takeoff the fire warning bell and lights came on. I don't know if it's possible to wake the dead, but if anything could, it would be the fire warning bell on the Lockheed Electra. We all looked at each other for a second in disbelief, then silenced the bell (the dead could now go back to sleep) and did like a simulator drill and shut down #3, feathered the prop and activated the fire extinguisher. Now we waited for the light to go out, which is like waiting for popcorn to pop, but the light did go out and we began to breath again.

We hadn't wandered too far from the field and came back, landed and hoped our passengers would be accommodated to their destinations. We called crew schedules and got the snappy reply that we had done enough damage for one day and we should deadhead to NY via ATL.

While waiting for our flight to ATL, the agent took me aside and asked if I wouldn't mind escorting an older lady to ATL and make sure she got her connection to MSP. Why not? I just saved a whole planeload of folk from a possible disaster, and another little tweak couldn't hurt my bugeoning legend!

It turned out that the nice old lady had some sort of dementia. We sat in first class and just ahead of us was a world famous news commentator. After takeoff my

seatmate took out her giant carpet bag and proceeded to display its contents. She had a very loud voice. I only remember some of treasures she hauled out. There were lots of pictures with frames of family, animals and scenery, a 10W40 can of oil, a giant plastic plate, a black doll with curly hair, some silverware, a pillow and a YMCA towel, etc. Everyone within four or five seat rows knew as much about her treasures as I did. She stuffed all of her loot back into her bag and almost instantly went to sleep.

During our descent in ATL we ran into a little ripple of turbulence. BANG! My seatmate was wide awake and literally screamed, "Harry stop shaking the bed." Since there was no place to hide, all I could do was to sit there and imagine the news commentator using this nugget for a laugh, and, of course this episode catching fire around the system and me becoming a "legend" known as the bed shaker.

At ATL the flight attendants and several passengers couldn't help but admonish me for shaking the poor old lady's bed. I handed off my charge to an agent who steered my seatmate to the MSP gate.

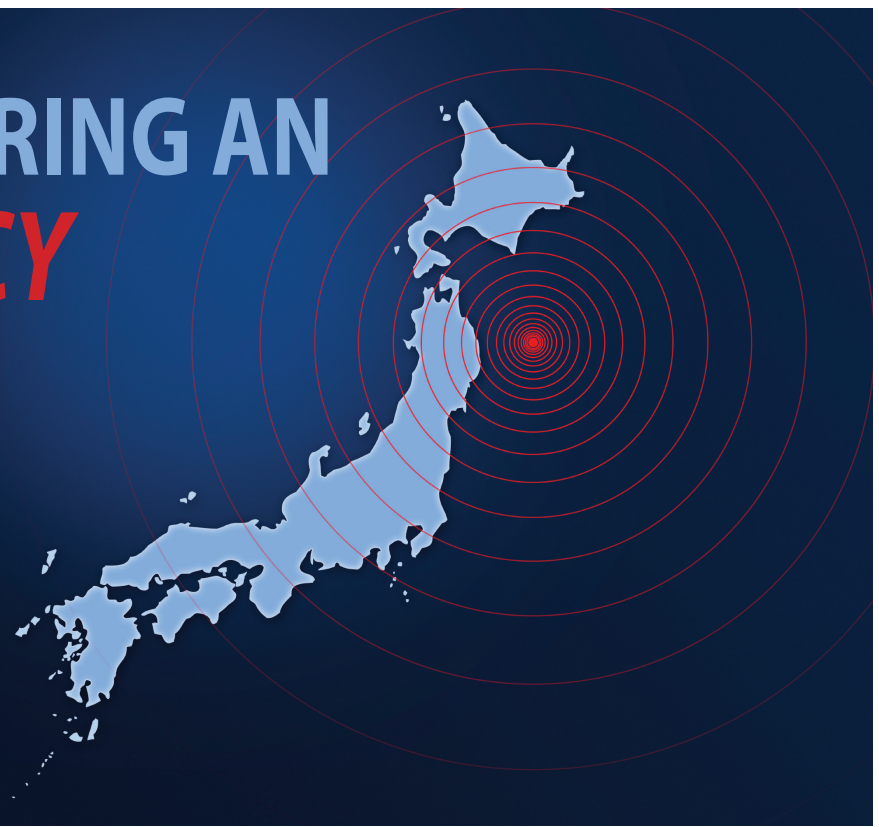
Luckily the "Captain Who Shook the Old Lady's Bed" didn't catch on and I was spared from becoming a legend in my own time. (Thank the gods that control such things.)

When I got home, my wife wanted to know how the trip went. I could only say, "It was the most unusual day of my life," wondering what the next trip could possibly be like. Well, there were twenty more years of this wonderful adventure and almost every trip did have some interesting highlights. But those first days as a new captain stand out above the rest. (Thankfully I didn't become a legend in my own time.)

Thanks Eastern, for letting me play in your system.  
 Captain Curt Osborne

*Neal Henderson, a friend and former USMC squadron mate of Curt Osborne, forwarded this to me. It is reprinted here by permission of the author. - Ed.*

# WHY DECLARING AN **EMERGENCY** IS A GOOD THING!



## How would you have liked to deal with this on your first ever trans-Pac? – Ed.

I'm currently still in one piece, writing from my room in the Narita crew hotel. It's 8am. This is my inaugural trans-pacific trip as a brand new, recently checked out, international 767 Captain and it has been interesting, to say the least, so far. I've crossed the Atlantic three times so far, so the ocean crossing procedures were familiar.

By the way, stunning scenery flying over the Aleutian Islands. Everything was going fine until 100 miles out from Tokyo and in the descent for arrival. The first indication of any trouble was that Japan air traffic control started putting everyone into holding patterns. At first we thought it was usual congestion on arrival. Then we got a company data link message advising about the earthquake, followed by another stating Narita airport was temporarily closed for inspection and expected to open shortly (the company is always so positive).

From our perspective things were obviously looking a little different. The Japanese controller's anxiety level seemed quite high and he said expect "indefinite" holding time. No one would commit to a time frame on that, so I got my copilot and relief pilot busy looking at divert stations and our fuel situation, which, after an ocean crossing is typically low.

It wasn't long, maybe ten minutes, before the first pilots started requesting diversions to other airports. Air Canada, American, United, etc. all reporting minimal fuel situations. I still had enough fuel for 1.5 to 2.0 hours of holding. Needless to say, the divers starts complicating the situation.

Japan air traffic control then announced Narita was closed indefinitely due to damage. Planes immediately started requesting arrivals into Haneda, near Tokyo, a half dozen JAL and western planes got clearance in that direction but then ATC announced Haneda had just closed. Uh oh! Now instead of just holding, we all had to start looking at more distant alternatives like Osaka, or Nagoya.

One bad thing about a large airliner is that you can't just be-bop into any little airport. We generally need lots of runway. With more planes piling in from both east and west, all needing a place to land and several now fuel critical ATC was getting overwhelmed. In the scramble, and without waiting for my fuel to get critical, I got my flight a clearance to head for Nagoya, fuel situation still okay. So far so good. A few minutes into heading that way, I was "ordered" by ATC to reverse course. Nagoya was saturated with traffic and unable to handle more planes (read: airport full). Ditto for Osaka.



# LOOKING BACK



## A BOMB THREAT FOILED



By Gary Ferguson

*Although this incident was widely reported both before and after, what wasn't reported were the details of the threats because the FBI and CIA were still trying desperately to identify the terrorists. After twenty three years it's a safe bet that isn't going to happen. I am not aware that the details of the threats have ever been published before.*

### A RIGHT TO KNOW

Sometime in mid-December of 1989, a small Swedish newspaper published a story announcing that one of Northwest's planes had been targeted for a bombing. It was to have been in retaliation for two Palestinians who had been sentenced to life in prison for a string of bombings of airline city ticket offices throughout Europe, including one in Copenhagen, where one person died and twenty more were injured.

I first heard of the newspaper's story from one of the NWA managers in Copenhagen. It was a short story on an inside page of the paper. It is interesting that I heard of the article several days before Northwest went public with the threat against our Flight 51/30Dec CDG(Charles de Gaulle)-DTW, a DC-10.

December 21st of 1989 marked the one year anniversary of the downing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The security folks in Europe were nervous that month, and there seemed to have been a constant background rumble about the possibility of more planes being blown up.

Pan Am had been roundly criticized, you will no doubt remember, for not notifying the public of the threat to Pan Am 103 that they were well aware of. It is a fact of life for airlines that they receive more than 300 "bomb threats" every year. It then becomes the job of each airline's security team to analyze each threat and respond accordingly. It's not exactly a science, but their methods have worked fairly well—Pan Am 103 being a notable exception.

*"You should be very careful of Northwest Flight 51 in Paris on Saturday. My brother and our cousin are going to blow it up with a suitcase bomb and I don't want my brother to die."*

*– Unknown male caller*

Northwest decided to go public with the threat with much fanfare to avoid suffering the same criticism that Pan Am received, declaring that the public had a right to know. The company later confirmed that they did not originally intend to go public, intending instead to advise the passengers of the threat at check-in and allow them to change flights if they wished. But the story was out there and would have been known soon. Exactly how the Swedish newspaper learned of the threat was never reported.

Back then, when CNN Headline News could still be called a news station, they were broadcasting the story that our flight was being threatened. This persisted every half hour beginning that Thursday morning prior to the scheduled flight. It's no exaggeration to say that the world's media were intensely focussed on our Flight 51 that Saturday.

#### THE SHORT STRAW

Late Thursday morning some of us were in our "crash pad" on the 18th floor of the Devonshire Apartments in downtown Boston, waiting for our next flights that evening to various cities in Europe. Mine was heading to London Gatwick.

While listening to my second exposure to the report on CNN something began to sound familiar. Sure enough, after checking my schedule I confirmed that I had drawn the short straw. The schedule had the three of us flying to LGW and then catching a British puddle-jumper across the channel to CDG for a layover and then fly Flt 51/30Dec back to DTW. I would learn shortly that our cabin crew was already in Paris on an extended layover.

My reaction, after a few expletives, was that I needed more information. Glen Winn was Northwest's Director-Security. I managed to get his phone number and gave him a call.

He, along with the FBI, the CIA, the FAA, the State Department, several European agencies and probably several more agencies with acronyms for names had been working this event for several days by then. He gave me a very detailed, extensive briefing covering what they knew and how they were responding.

My next call was to Pete Dodge, ALPA MEC Chairman. (Pete and his roomie and me and my roomie once shared a bathroom in the motel-like cadet barracks at NAS Meridian, Mississippi.) It seems silly now, but for some reason at this early part of my involvement, I began to wonder if we were going to be used as "bait" somehow. That makes no sense of course, but it's the kind of crap

that oozes into one's brain when trying to process vague threats. Mostly though, I just wanted to make sure I had all of the information that was available.

Pete had already been briefed when I called him. It wasn't until later that I wondered why no one had bothered to *call me!*

If you will recall, the late '80s was a time of considerable turmoil at NWA. We had merged with Republic, Messrs. Checci and Wilson were in the process of raiding the corporate cookie jar and senior management seemed to be in a constant state of flux. Although Tim Thornton's title was Executive Vice-President and General Counsel, he was, in fact, running Northwest Airlines' day-to-day operations.

Pete suggested that we get on a conference call with Mr. Thornton, which we did. Tim then gave me a briefing which was exactly, precisely the same as that of Glen Winn's. No added adjectives or adverbs—nothing but the facts. Their professionalism was comforting.

Tim was quite satisfied that sufficient security was in place and that we had, "No business operating an airline if we can't manage threats like this." He made it quite clear that the final decision whether the flight would operate was mine alone. And he was adamant that any of the rest of the crew understand that they could decline the trip with no repercussions.

Northwest was to conduct a briefing over dinner at the layover hotel with the entire crew and an equal number of security and regulatory agencies in attendance on the evening of the 29th.

#### FIRST STOP LONDON

First Officer Ray Bodnar and Second Officer Tim Sullivan were the other two pilots. They had both been apprised of the situation prior to their arrival at check in. Ray was a man of good humor and seemed to be willing to take this on as a challenge and trusting in our security folks.

Tim's situation was a little more delicate. Not only did he have five children at home and another on the way, but his father-in-law had been a passenger on the Aloha Airlines flight whose fuselage had blown open over the Pacific Ocean a year before. His wife professed calm, but I'm sure she was concerned. It goes without saying that all of our families were.

Somewhere over the mid-Atlantic I learned that Kevin Whalen, Northwest's Director of Corporate Communications, was travelling with us to handle the PR and would attend the dinner briefing.



I invited him to the cockpit in the hope of gathering more information. His understanding was almost to the word exactly what I had heard from Glen Winn and Tim Thornton. I was very much liking that I was getting consistent information.

He and I were still talking at the top of descent into Gatwick so I asked him to stay on the jump seat for the landing. Those petty rules seemed not so important then, and I wanted to stay on friendly terms with anyone who had information to share.

#### DID SOMEONE SAY THREAT?

This was not a threat per se, it was a warning. Semantics aside, it was a threat that was taken very seriously.

One day early in that week a U. S. Congressman's office in Detroit had received a call from a male voice with a "Middle Eastern accent" stating, "You should be very careful of Northwest Flight 51 in Paris on Saturday. My brother and our cousin are going to blow it up with a suitcase bomb and I don't want my brother to die." An almost identical message had been delivered to our reservation center in Michigan that same day.

Two days later the same message was delivered once again to both the congressman's office and the same res center, for a total of four separate calls.

We would later learn that the FBI had set up phone taps in the res center after the latter two calls, but were very concerned that any future warning call would be shunted off to some other res center. The unknown man never called again.

By then the security forces on both sides of the Atlantic were on full alert. Beginning Thursday the media were frothing at the mouth hoping to be there if this were to be a repeat of Lockerbie, even though they were unaware of the specific threat details.

#### DINING AT THE HOTEL NIKKO

The flight attendants had been on a two-day layover at the Hotel Nikko in Paris by the time we arrived. Since the only English-speaking TV station in the hotel was CNN Headline News, they had been bombarded every half hour for two days with the news that their flight was a terrorist target. To say that they were emotionally wound up tight was an understatement, but certainly understandable.

The company had set up free phone access to anyone the crew wished to call. But the flight attendants were simply told by their supervisors that they would be thoroughly briefed at the dinner meeting. That did little to assuage their anxiety, but the

#### THE REST OF THE CREW

Flight Attendants:	Bill McCabe and John Usher volunteered and were flown in the day before, but did not attend the dinner.
Pat Rohn - Lead	
Angie Harpole	
Cheryl Blum	
Prudence Ingram	
Robbie Carey	

company, and particularly the FBI, did not want the specifics known to the public.

Doug Laird, Northwest's Manager-Security, had been sent to Paris sometime mid-week to meet and coordinate with French security forces and to conduct the dinner briefing.

Bob Francis was the FAA's chief in Europe, stationed in the U. S. Embassy in Paris. He proved to be helpful in that evening's briefing and very helpful in everything we did the next morning as well. If the name is familiar, it's because he was later head of the NTSB's TWA800 investigation until the FBI wrested it from him.

It probably seems difficult to understand how we could spend four hours over dinner discussing everything, but we would have been longer if the wait staff hadn't asked us to leave. Several of the flight attendants had to talk themselves down from the hammering from CNN and the fact that no one would tell them what to expect until then. Most of them were getting pressure from their families not to go. One was there with her husband. Should they both get on this flight with children at home?

I said at the time that this would probably be the safest flight leaving Europe that day. That seemed to register with some, realizing that they would have to ride home on another flight if they didn't go with us.

Initially a couple of the flight attendants were raging at the company not just for not telling them what was going on, but for actual or perceived grievances of the past. I think it was Pat Rohn who coined the phrase "fear masquerading as rage" to help understand what was happening. But the fear was real—fear of the unknown.

Once the security measures in place were explained, questioned, re-explained and amplified, the fear was gradually replaced with good old-fashioned fatigue. But that took time and a couple glasses of wine. Two of the NWA European country managers present were getting impatient that it was taking so long, but of course they had full knowledge of what was going on from the beginning.

As the meeting concluded we did not know whether we would have a cabin crew in the morning. It was understood that we would proceed with whomever showed up for pickup in the morning.

One flight attendant chose not to go because she had promised her father she wouldn't, and another had been the victim of a violent rape a few months prior and just wasn't emotionally up to it.

#### FOGGY NEXT MORNING

French law did not allow citizens to be searched without cause. To get around that, the jetway was declared international territory and each passenger's carry-on was searched not once but twice, by different inspectors, including the entire crew.

The airport was covered in thick fog—right at takeoff minimums of RVR 175 meters. The company very much wanted the flight to operate on time, since so much of the world was watching.

Flight planning required a car ride to a small building well away from the terminals. It was accomplished on a contract basis by a tall Frenchman named Jacques Pierre Foliot, a great guy who always had everything completed, including charting the North Atlantic tracks, to the point that little was required of the crew except verification and a signature. While there, the French equivalent of our FBI visited me to ask if I was uncomfortable with any of the preparations or if I had any further questions. I think I detected the very slightest beginnings of smiles on those stoic faces when I said I couldn't imagine what else needed to be done.

But, while riding back to the terminal in the thick fog it occurred to me that I would like to have some armed accompaniment during taxi-out. When we got there I asked Doug Laird if he could arrange that with French security. I should have known that it had already been in the plans.

#### ANOTHER THREAT? REALLY?

We were all set to go within a few minutes of scheduled departure time when Doug rushed into the cockpit and announced that an account cashier, one Mme. Dominique Ferrand, had taken a phone call that sounded like we were being threatened with missiles. I remarked to Doug, only partly joking, that if we were going to war I'd just as soon go back to the hotel.

We learned that Mme. Ferrand had taken the call from somewhere in the terminal complex. I asked Doug if we could interview her in our gate area, since he had not spoken with her either. I told

the passengers that the weather had deteriorated and that there would be a delay and used that as an excuse for the four of us to return to the gate area.

While waiting twenty minutes for her arrival I asked Jacques Pierre, who had re-joined us along with Bob Francis, if he could arrange an opposite direction takeoff (no wind in the fog), and to change our call sign to 148NW (our ship number, but pronounced November Whiskey) with the understanding we would change it back to NW51 before we entered the North Atlantic Track System. Within minutes he had that approval from the tower and I had an OK from Bob sans paperwork.

After talking with Mme. Ferrand at length we all came to the conclusion that the caller had just muddied the water by telling her, in broken English, something like, "You should be careful that they don't try to shoot you down with missiles." But initially there were enough translation issues to question the content of his message. But we all also agreed that she was correct in reporting it.

All that preparation for wrong direction takeoff, etc. seemed more than a little melodramatic once we decided there was little threat, but extra insurance never hurt and didn't cost anything. I guess there *could* have been missiles.

Back aboard I gathered the flight attendants in the aft galley (all twenty-two passengers were in First Class) and explained what had happened, answering their questions about the new threat until they were satisfied with our assessment. I then gave a not-too-specific briefing to the passengers to assure them we intended to operate the flight safely. There were three reporters aboard whom I did not want to know any specifics.

It should be noted that some parents apparently agreed with my "safest flight" theory; two unaccompanied minors were aboard.

#### HOMEWARD BOUND

Early in the boarding process I had made a deal with Kevin Whalen. I told him that if he could promise to keep the press away from me on arrival I would let him watch a minimum-visibility takeoff from the jumpseat. He couldn't get to a phone fast enough!

We eventually departed two hours late. A good part of that delay was due to the visibility dropping below minimums from time to time. We did have to sit in position on the runway for several minutes until the tower had readings of 175 meters on all three RVRs. Then we were on our way.

**DTW DELTA 2016Z**  
Sky partially obscured  
M4 ⊕ vis 1 S- F  
27/25 090/07 30.03  
ILS Rwy 3L & 3R  
9-27 closed  
Braking action advisory  
in effect  
Light rime icing reported  
below 1000' by a DC-9  
at 2015Z

DTW ATIS (Automatic Terminal Information Service) for our arrival

The three of us found a little psychological effect interesting. While we were cruising at FL310 near the oceanic tracks, Shanwick asked if we would like a higher altitude. We were, after all, very light. I looked at the other two and asked an unusual question, “What do you think?”

In unison they both said, “Naw, this is OK.”

I agreed, “That’s what I was thinking, too.”

We all laughed. All that stuff still had us each thinking about barometric bomb initiators, even when we *knew* that nobody could have gotten a stowaway mouse on that airplane.

The DTW forecast wasn’t all that bad at departure time, but the actual weather was deteriorating gradually as we got closer. With the whole world watching we had no desire to land anywhere else, nor did the company want us to. On final approach the tower reported braking action poor due to ice and the light snow falling. They had a little of every kind of winter weather in the hours before—rain, freezing rain and snow. Being as light as we were helped, but the braking turned out to be not quite as bad as reported.

Dick Edwards, DTW Chief Pilot, had been worrying all afternoon that they would close the airport before we made it.

Once on the ground we were directed to the “penalty box” where it became obvious it was to be our permanent parking spot. My guess at the time was that they might still be concerned about a bomb. That turned out to not be a very good guess,

since we soon were surrounded by many different vehicles, including a bus.

We then witnessed something I had never seen before and never saw or heard of for the ten remaining years of my career: U. S. Customs came aboard to clear the crew right on the aircraft! That’s when I realized that Kevin had made good on his promise to keep me away from the press.

The passengers were taken to the International Terminal to clear customs, meet family and friends and deal with what was described as hordes of press. But Dick Edwards drove the three of us to the old “F” terminal and provided us with must-ride F1 passes to wherever we wished to go. The company had replaced any of the crew having immediate schedules for the next few days, including myself, for which we were paid.

#### THE COLLECTIVE EXHALE

Two weeks later, when I was in Paris next, Jacques Pierre told me that he had gone to the tower for our takeoff in the fog. He told how the radar had painted us for one sweep after liftoff, but that there was no return at all for the next three sweeps. He said that when the fourth sweep finally painted us again the collective exhale was audible and that everyone there had been visibly shaken.

#### POSTSCRIPTS

The FAA’s Bob Francis was a gem, and we got along very well. There was another young FAA fellow at the dinner, whose name I have forgotten. Just as well. Bob and I were standing talking after dinner when this guy came up to me, apparently to demonstrate his authority but more likely to impress his boss, and said, “Just remember, tomorrow’s going to be white glove.” I just nodded, thought better of saying anything, and couldn’t help noticing the scowl on Bob’s face. Said FAA guy was not at the airport next morning.

Tim Thornton gathered more than forty people who were directly involved in this incident three weeks later to see if anything could be learned about how we might have done things better. Two FBI agents were there to explain exactly how the threat was delivered and their frustration at not being able to identify the caller.

All things considered, I think the company did just about everything right handling the whole incident and said so, both at the meeting and in an interview with *Northwest Passages* right after that meeting. ✈

Art & Bonnie  
Daniels  
**FATHERS' DAY  
GATHERING**

Food, Friends, Fun,  
Music and Beer

Fishtail, MT

June 17th, 2012



Art & Bonnie's family





**Right:**  
 John Schell, Jill Christ,  
 Camille Herbst  
**Below:**  
 Jack Herbst, Ralph Christ,  
 John Schell  
**Other RNPA members present:**  
 Chuck Hinz, Bill & Lynn Day,  
 Doug & Shirley Parrott and  
 Kaylee Offerle



Submitted by John Schell

# 'First lady of firsts' set a slew of speed records in air, on land

*Submitted to Contrails*  
by Bill Layton

From The Washington Post,  
September 4, 2011

By Matt Schudel

Betty Skelton, a daredevil pilot who was a three-time national aerobatics champion and became known as the “fastest woman on Earth” when she set speed records in airplanes and automobiles, died Aug. 31 at her home in The Villages, Fla. She was 85.

She had cancer, said Dorothy S. Cochrane, a friend and the curator of general aviation at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

Ms. Skelton, a 5-foot-2 spitfire, made her first solo flight—illegally—at age 12. She went on to become a pioneering and charismatic pilot in the days of propellers and open cockpits. She gave her first aerobatics performance when she was 19, appearing in the same show in Jacksonville, Fla., in which the Navy's precision flight team, the Blue Angels, made its debut in 1946.

In her brightly painted Pitts Special biplane, the Little Stinker, Ms. Skelton performed awe-inspiring feats of airborne daring. She was the first woman to attempt the “inverted ribbon cut,” in which she would fly upside down only 10 feet off the ground, slicing a ribbon with her propeller.

The first time Ms. Skelton attempted the stunt, Cochrane said, her engine died. She calmly righted her plane and landed on the wheels. She then started it up and went back into the air.



Betty Skelton bought “Little Stinker”—a nickname inspired by the plane's tendency to make a ground loop on landing—in 1948, the same year she won her first international aerobatics championship. The single-seat, open-cockpit plane was only 4 inches taller than the 5-foot-2 Skelton.

“She enjoyed challenges, she enjoyed speed, she enjoyed technology,” Cochrane said.

From 1949 through 1951, when she retired from competitive flying, Ms. Skelton was the international women's aerobatics champion. Years later, she donated her biplane to the National Air and Space Museum. Restored and repainted in its original red-and-white pattern, the Little Stinker now hangs in the entrance of the museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles International Airport.

When she wasn't astonishing crowds at air shows, Ms. Skelton pursued the outer limits of what airplanes—and pilots—could accomplish. She twice set light-plane altitude records, reaching a maximum height of 29,050 feet in a Piper Cub in 1951—higher than Mount Everest. At that altitude, the temperature outside her airplane was 53 degrees below zero.

“I usually fly bare-footed,” Ms. Skelton said in 1999 interview for a NASA oral history project, “and my feet darn near froze to death.”

She set an unofficial women's air speed record of 421 mph in a P-51 Mustang, but the engine exploded in mid-flight, and she had to guide the plane back to the ground at an Air Force base in Florida. She did not get credit for the record because she did not land where she took off.

Nevertheless, Ms. Skelton broke so many barriers in the air and on land that she became known as the "first lady of firsts."

In 1954, she became the first woman to be a test driver for the auto industry. She was the first female boat jumper in the United States, memorably flying a boat over a Dodge sedan in a publicity stunt in 1955.

As an advertising executive in the 1950s and 1960s, she worked on the Corvette account as a test driver and as a spokeswoman at auto shows. In 1957, driving a translucent, custom-made gold Corvette, she became the first woman to drive a pace car at the Daytona 500.

She was the first woman to drive an Indy car and, in the 1950s, repeatedly set records for speed and acceleration at race-tracks, on the sands of Daytona Beach, Fla., and on the Bonneville Salt Flats of Utah.

In 1956, Ms. Skelton broke a transcontinental speed record, driving from New York to Los Angeles, covering 2,913 miles in 56 hours, 58 minutes. Two years later, she crossed South America from Buenos Aires to Valparaiso, Chile, in 41 hours, 14 minutes. A mechanic was along for the ride on both trips, but she drove every mile of the way.

When NASA was training the first cadre of astronauts in 1959, *Look* magazine asked Ms. Skelton to undergo the same rigorous physical and psychological training. She passed every test and won the respect of the Mercury Seven astronauts, who nicknamed her "7 1/2."



played with model airplanes instead of dolls.

She began taking flying lessons at 10, had a private license at 16 and was a flight instructor at 18.

During World War II, she wanted to be part of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, but the program ended before she was old enough to join. The military and commercial aviation were closed to women, so she turned to showmanship.

"I wanted very much to fly in the Navy," she told the Associated Press in 2008, "but all they would do is laugh when I asked."

She set her final major land-speed record in 1965, when she topped 315 mph during one run at Bonneville, driving a jet-powered car and wearing no more protective gear than an open-faced helmet and a windbreaker.

That year, she married TV director and advertising executive Donald A. Frankman. He died in 2001.

She married Allan Erde, a retired Navy doctor, in 2005. He is her sole survivor.

Ms. Skelton, who owned a real estate company in Florida in the 1970s and 1980s, was named to no fewer than 11 halls of fame, including the National Aviation Hall of Fame and the Motorsports Hall of Fame.

She drove a red Corvette until her death.

"I just like to go fast," she said in 2008. "I enjoy it, I really do." ✨

Wearing a spacesuit, she appeared on the Feb. 2, 1960, cover of *Look* with the headline, "Should a Girl Be First in Space?"

Betty Skelton was born June 28, 1926, in Pensacola, Fla., and grew up watching airplanes flying above a nearby naval air station. As a girl, she





**“Brad” Larson**  
1915 ~ 2012

**Bradley “Brad” Larson**, age 97, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain formerly of Minneapolis, “Flew West” for a final check on Tuesday, September 4, 2012 in Viroqua, Wisconsin.

Brad’s airline carrier began as a mechanic for Pennsylvania Central Airlines in Detroit’s City Airport. He worked on Boeing 247s, Stinson Tri-motors and DC3s in the day, and did high-speed taxi tests at night. Brad’s maintenance shop boss asked, “Brad, you have your pilots license, why don’t you try to get a flying job?” He said he would like to, but could not afford an instrument rating. His boss said, “Go ahead and get the rating, I’ll loan you the money. Pay me back when you can spare the change.” He trained in a Fairchild 24 and soon got the instrument ticket. Pennsylvania Central was not hiring, but Northwest Airlines was and he reported for training on March 11, 1942. During his Northwest career Brad flew: the Cessna Bobcat (Bamboo Bomber) for route qualification; Lockheed 10 and L-188 Electra’s; Curtiss C-46; Douglas DC-3, DC-4, DC-6, and DC-7; Boeing’s 247 (first modern airliner), 377 Stratocruiser, 707-320 and 747; and Martin’s 202. Brad’s favorites were Boeing’s Stratocruiser and the 747.

His son Glenn said, “Dad loved to talk about the old days flying the DC-3s and an occasional Lockheed 10 for the Air Transport Command Northern Region.”

Glenn still has Brad’s “short snorter” with the signatures of many NWA pilots that flew during the war years.

Brad’s first airplane restoration was in 1932 while he was still in high school. It was a 1925 Dormoy and it had won two awards at the 1925 Cleveland Air Races. The favorite airplane he owned was the 1938 Ryan SCW he bought from Lee Fairbrother in 1952 and finished restoring in 1962. His last restoration was a Red 1939 Cessna C-165 “Airmaster” he found in 1969. He completed restoration on it in 1989, and fitted it with Amphibious floats in 2002.

Brad enjoyed fly-ins in the Ryan and the Cessna, and usually brought home an award. In later years, he often asked that his airplane not be judged to give other “well deserving airplanes” a better chance for recognition. Brad did 99% of the restoration work himself, engine and airframe. His sons Paul and Glenn (Retired NWA 747-400 pilots) currently enjoy

flying both of their dad’s restored airplanes.

Northwest pilots expressed these sentiments: Bill Halverson: an exceptional and dedicated airline pilot and check airman... a true craftsman of vintage airplanes... enjoyed my visits with him at his hanger. Doug Parrott: A really great check pilot who could pass on good training as well as checks. Siri Poehls: Brad was one of my husband’s (Art Poehls) favorite captains. Keith Maxwell: My father Ken Maxwell (Maxwell Aircraft, Crystal Airport) and Brad were good friends and highly respected each other. Brad was a mentor, taught me a lot to help my career at Northwest Airlines. Larry Daudt: One of the best guys to be a copilot for. Keep that Ryan SC in the air. Vic Britt: As a s/o instructor on the 707 and 747 I learned about instructing and flying watching Brad work “up front.” An above average pilot, he was professional and an excellent instructor. Brad worked hard with pilots who came prepared, but had difficulty making it happen. He had no problem telling unprepared pilots that flying a 747 was very expensive, and if they did not show more personal effort they should expect to return to what they had been flying.

Bradley Larson was preceded in death by his wife Mary Larson and sister Ruth Gembarski. Surviving are his sons Paul and Glenn, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren. (– Vic Britt)





**“Pete” Patzke**  
**1925 2012**

**Henry Vennemann “Pete” Patzke**, age 87, a longtime employee of Northwest Airlines, former President and Chairman of the Board of Northwest Airlines Federal Credit Union, and instrumental in formation of the Northwest Airlines History Centre, died on October 20, 2012, the 10th anniversary of the History Centre. Pete was born at his family home in White Bear Lake, Minnesota on August 29, 1925 to Joseph B. and Rosalie (Vennemann) Patzke. He grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota attending St. Mark’s parish, Nazareth Hall, St. Agnes, and the College of St. Thomas.

Pete joined the US Army in WW II and was trained as a Medic. In January 1944 he was a ship’s Medic on a U.S. Army ship supporting troops that landed on the beach at Anzio, Italy. After discharge in 1946, he returned to St. Paul and took a “temporary 90 day position” at Northwest Airlines, taking a passenger survey. He went on to the St. Paul Overhaul base, Property Records, Flight Crew Paymaster, Flight Operations Scheduling, and to the Northwest Airlines Credit Union, retiring from Northwest in 1977. His “temporary” job had lasted thirty-one years, and he was connected with the NWACU almost from its inception. In the early years the NWA Credit Union was a branch of the Airline. Pete was Treasurer for many years, and

a member of the Board of Directors for almost twenty years. Pete’s daughter Liz remembered: “Dad said “Don Nyrop was the most impressive of all the executives he had ever met or known, and Don Nyrop never bought a plane he could not pay for with cash.”

When Pete retired from Northwest Airlines he accepted a position as vice-president at the Summit Bank of Richfield, and resigned as a Board Member of the NWACU. He later left the Summit Bank, and the NWACU Board asked Pete to rejoin the NWACU Board. Pete agreed to return to the Board in 1990 and remained there for the next nine years until he retired for good in 1999. At retirement Pete was President and Chairman of the Board of Northwest Airlines Federal Credit Union, now Wings Financial.

Pete was instrumental in realizing the long ago dream of a NWA Museum. He said the first time he heard an NWA Museum discussed was in the old “University Avenue GO” in the 1950’s. There was no money, no space, and no building to put one in, but several thought it was a good idea. The idea lay dormant for almost 40 years until Pete had a meeting with other NWA employees with an interest in a Museum after he retired. Pete opened an account, put \$500 in it, and hired an attorney to draw up papers for a non-profit NWA History Centre. The NWACU Board offered temporary space in the basement of its Headquarters on 34th Avenue South, and the History Centre opened on October 7, 2002. It is still there, and the first board of directors consisted of Pete Patzke President and treasurer, travel agency executive Hay Harrington vice-president, credit union officer Jerry Nielsen secretary, active pilot Dru Dunwoody and former NWA flight steward and public relations representative Bob Johnson. Volunteer NWA retirees and former employees staff the History Centre, a “labor of love” by a loyal group of dedicated former Northwest Airlines Employees. NWA donated many items before the Delta “merger”, and after the Delta “buyout” Delta Airlines donated many important and interesting exhibits to the History Centre.

A member of the Mahtomedi Lions, St. Jude of the Lake, and past mayor of Mahtomedi. Pete was devastated by the loss of his son Gregory in 1997. He is survived by his wife of 60 years Dolores (Schesel), daughter Liz (Chuck), grandchildren JP (Megan), Sarah (Jake) and Steve. Pete was also blessed with two great-grandchildren, Henry and Aurora. (– Vic Britt)



**“Jim” McLaughlin**  
1932 ~ 2012

**James L. “Jim” McLaughlin**, age 79, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain of Burnsville, Minnesota, “Flew West” peacefully at home in the early hours of Saturday June 9, 2012.

“And God’s Finger Touched Him and He Slept.”

Jim had battled courageously against Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, and then Lymphoma for twelve years.

Jim was born in Mankato, Minnesota in 1932 and graduated from Mankato High School in 1950. He attended the University of Minnesota from 1950 to 1954, and graduated with a degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. Towards the end of his senior year of college, he met a Navy recruiter who asked him what he was going to do after graduation? He stated that he would probably be drafted into the Army. The recruiter asked Jim if he would like to go up for a plane ride, and he said yes, and thoroughly enjoyed the ride. The recruiter told him he should join the Navy, as it would be much better than the Army. But Jim wanted to get a job with the DNR, and flying had not been on his agenda. Just before graduation the recruiter called again and asked Jim to come out for another plane ride. Up he went again, and afterwards decided that he would join the Navy and become a Naval Aviator.

Jim joined the U.S. Navy’s Aviation Officer Candidate program the summer of 1954 and reported to NAS Pensacola for Pre-Flight Training. After graduation from Pre-Flight and flight training, he was commissioned as an Ensign and received his Naval Aviator

Wings in Corpus Christi, Texas. He reported to the fleet and joined the VA-125 “Rough Raiders” in 1956, where he flew the Douglas AD-7 Skyraider (“Spad”) aboard the USS LEXINGTON (CV-16). He served a total of 12 years between active duty and the reserves, and left the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander.

In February 1958 Jim began his over thirty-four-year career with Northwest Airlines, retiring as a Boeing 747 Captain in 1992. It was not the career Jim thought he would have with the DNR, but the hours and pay were much better. He flew as a first officer on several aircraft before promotion to Boeing 727 Captain in 1966. He held airline transport ratings for the DC-6, DC-7, DC-10, B-727 and B-747, Multi-engine land and Commercial-single engine land, Flight Engineer-Reciprocal and Turbo Power.

Jim was a member of ALPA, MASAC, RNPA and the ALPA Noise Abatement Committee. He served as Chairman of the ALPA Noise Abatement Committee in 1978. Jim logged 1650 hours in Military aircraft, 36 hours in light single-engine aircraft, and 18,062 hours commercial flight time, and flew Craft Flights during Operation Desert Shield. Jim enjoyed his long career with Northwest Airlines and formed many lifelong friendships with both pilots and flight attendants. He was able to travel the world and get paid to do so at the same time. After retirement, he enjoyed nearly 20 more years of summers spent at the family’s cabin on Roosevelt Lake, where he liked to fish and play golf.

Jim is survived by Diane, his wife of over 36 years, and by sons David (Wendy, step-daughter, Donna), Steven, Kevin, and Mark (Stephanie), and sister Marcia Chalgren.

The family thanks everyone for their cards, emails, thoughts and support after Jim’s passing. (– Vic Britt)





### “Hal” Balin 1931 ~ 2012

**Harold Edward “Hal” Balin**, age 81, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain departed on his final flight heading “West” for the last roundup of his life. Hal passed peacefully of natural causes on his boat with wife Nancy and dog Juli, Monday August 27, 2012 in Anacortes, Washington. Harold Edward (Hesser) Balin was born March 9, 1931 in Los Angeles County, California, to Edward A. Hesser and Ethel Belle Young. His father died in 1934 at an early age and Hal and his mother moved from New Mexico to Klamath Falls, Oregon. Ethel married Otto Balin, a prominent rancher and Hal was adopted by Otto, and the family resided on the Balin Ranch. Hal attended Henley High School, graduating in 1949 as an accomplished athlete. He moved to Corvallis to attend Oregon State College, graduating in 1953 with a degree in Agriculture Engineering. While in college Hal met Joan Louise Paine (Staunton), and they married in 1954 in Junction City, Oregon and had 3 children, Deborah (Debbie), Kirk, and Scott Balin.

While in college Hal was a member of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity and the Air Force ROTC. Upon graduation he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the United States Air Force and stationed at Kirkland Air Force Base, New Mexico for pilot training. After completing pilot training he flew at Eniwetok Atoll, in the Marshall Islands during nuclear tests. Upon his release from the Air Force in 1957, Hal became a pilot for Northwest Airlines and retired as a Captain after 34 years, flying many aircraft including DC-3s Boeing 707s, 747s and the DC-10. He retired from Northwest and commercial flying in 1991, but continued his love of flying up to his death in his favorite aircraft a Beechcraft “V” tail Bonanza. On September 9, 1991 Hal married Nancy McManus from Sacramento, Calif.

Northwest pilot friends remembered the good times: Dave Hall: Started at NWA in the same class in 1957, a friend, a great pilot... always trained together. Doug Fee: Flew with a lot of good guys over 35 years... Hal was a real standout... fine aviator and great gentleman. Jay Jorgensen: Flew with Hal on many occasions, enjoyed each and every time. Doug Parrott: Hal was a Spokane Base veteran... enjoyed having Hal as a co-pilot... fun discussing ranching with Hal, Oregon vs Montana. Milt Eitrem: Met Hal in 1958 at Spokane base... good guy and good pilot... we shared a love of rural living. Jack Herbst: I respected no man more for his flying talents or his warm friendship. Harry Bedrossian: One of a kind. All pilots knew he was a solid citizen you could depend on... man of his word... someone you could count on in bad situations. Pat Donlan: Great guy to fly with... great stories about the nuclear tests at Eniwetok Atoll. Vic Allen: One of the finest Pilots I ever flew with, and a great gentleman. Charlie Huffaker: joined Hal and Nancy on their Bayliner in 1996 for a ten-week cruise of the “Inside Passage” to Alaska, and they were “friends forever.”

Bill Huff and Hal were best friends and loved playing pranks on each other. Both had Beechcraft “V” tail Bonanzas and loved to fly their planes. Every March for Hal’s birthday Bill would ride Amtrak to Klamath Falls, and Hal would ride to Eugene to meet him. They then rode to Klamath Falls together, entertaining those around them with great tales of flying and fishing, and time spent on the ranch. Bill flew to Klamath for the funeral in his Bonanza, and coordinated a missing man flyover as Hal was laid to rest with military honors, in a beautiful spot looking out over the ranch.



Hal loved to fly, and although he flew many places around the world during his military and airline career his roots were always planted in the beauty of the Klamath Basin on the family ranch. The Balin ranch was recently recognized as a Century Ranch, and will be continued on by son Scott Balin. Hal will be missed by many who loved him and his spirited demeanor. Hal treasured his heritage of ranching and loved to listen to the old cowboy ballads of The Sons of the Pioneers. We know he would say: "So long ole pals its time your tears are dry, I'm heading for the last roundup." Hal is survived by his wife Nancy Balin; Daughter Debbie Heim; Sons Kirk and Scott Balin; Eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren. (- Vic Britt)



**"Cy" Cole**  
1914 ~ 2012

Cyrus John 'Cy' Cole, age 97, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain of Silverdale, Washington, "Flew West" for a final check on Monday, December 2, 2012. Cyrus was born in Cataldo, Idaho on December 27, 1914, a son to Astoria and Arthur Cole. On March 11, 1940, Cryus and Viola Penhallick married and lived in Spokane, Washington where their three children were born: Billy, Charyl, and Charlene. The family moved to Seattle in 1949 and built a home in Normandy Park in 1950. In 1968, Cy married Helen Collier and they lived together in the house in Normandy Park until 2005, when they moved to Silverdale. Helen and Cy first met at Felts Field, Spokane, Washington in early 1944. He was her first flight instructor.

Cy had started his flying career as a flight instructor at Felts Field in Spokane, Washington, before Northwest Airlines hired him as a pilot on July 1,

1944. Cyrus flew everything from DC-3's to Boeing 747's at Northwest, and retired after a thirty-year career in 1974. Pilot's at Northwest held Cy in high regard and expressed their thoughts in the on-line GuestBook: Doug Parrott; One of my favorite Captains in the DC-3 and DC-4 across Montana... A great Check Pilot... you always learned a lot... wonderful DC-4 trips into Sheyma... always a challenge and he handled it well. We became very good friends. He sponsored me in QB's... all who knew Cy will miss him. Clint Viebrock; I knew him as a gentleman, and feel a loss as each of these pioneers takes that flight West... proud to have known Cy Cole. Gary McGahuey; Flew with Cy early in my career in 1968... truly a gentleman and a good pilot. On a B-707 flight from Seattle to Tokyo he talked to his daughter on Kodiak Island, Alaska, something I never forgot... a second officer, he treated me great. I'm sure he did everyone. I'll miss him. Dot Thrall; Lyle, my husband, is in a nursing rehab residence... told of Cy's passing he remembered Cy as one fine pilot and a fine gentleman. As a former stewardess, I remember Cy the same way, always a fine gentleman. Cy was a long time member of the Quiet Birdmen Association, the Lunch Bunch, and the Retired Northwest Pilots Association, RNPA.

Cy's son Billy Cole was also a Northwest Airlines 747 Captain. Billy died much too soon after retirement on March 16, 2006. Cy is survived by Helen his wife; Children Charyl (Leland) and Charlene; daughter in law Judy Cole; 9 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He has "Gone West" now and will be sorely missed, but remembered as a person whose door was always open to family and friends. Oh Dad, you will be dearly missed. May you rest in eternal peace. (- Vic Britt)



**Michael Harron**  
1940 ~ 2012

**Michael O. Harron**, age 72, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain and resident of Dunwoody, Georgia, “Flew West” for a final check on September 21, 2012 in Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, as a result of injuries sustained in a fall at a grandson’s football game. Mike was born on April 12th, 1940, in Toledo, Ohio and was co-captain of the St. Francis de Sales basketball and football teams his junior and senior years, captain of the golf team his junior and senior years, president of his junior and senior classes, and salutatorian of his 1958 graduating class. Francis X. Gorman, a retired judge said: “He was my best friend in high school, and set the standard for everybody who came after him at St. Francis. He was my hero.” Mike McCarthy, another high school friend said: “Mike never changed as he aged, and remained just like the guy we admired at St. Francis de Salle, smart, athletic and popular,” and that “Mike’s greatest legacy is the family of which he was so proud.” Mike learned before his death that he was to be inducted into the St. Francis hall of fame, and his sons Michael and Brian attended the ceremony in his honor.

Mike graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1963 with degrees in English and Aeronautical Engineering. After graduation he joined the U.S. Navy as an Aviation Officer Candidate and reported to NAS Pensacola, Florida in November 1963 for training with Pre-Flight Class 40-63. After receiving his Naval Aviator Wings at Beeville, Texas in June 1964 he received training in the Douglas A4 ‘Skyhawk’ at NAS Lemoore, California. After completion of training in the A4 he was assigned to Navy Squadron VA-155 and served aboard the USS Coral Sea, flying off Yankee Station in strikes against heavily defended targets in North Vietnam. He flew ninety-nine combat missions in Viet Nam and was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, ten Air Medals, and five Navy Commendation Medals.

Mike joined Northwest Airlines in December 1968 and flew as a line pilot for thirty two years. In the 1970’s, he was assigned to the Northwest Airlines Flight Operations Test and Ferry group to retrieve aircraft with engine problems from outlying stations, and return them to MSP for engine changes (often with the “bad” engine shut down). He flew the Boeing 707, 727, 757 and DC-10 on the line, and was flying as Captain on international routes on the Boeing 747 when he retired at age 60 in 2000.

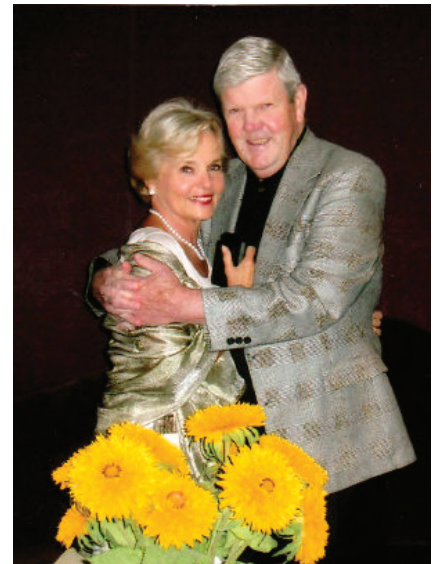
Northwest pilots expressed sentiments in his guest book that reflected the esteem in which they held him: Hank Castle: Met Mike in flight school at Pensacola... a privilege to know him and saddened by his passing. John Doherty: Navy flight school with Mike in the 60s... in the same photo as we began our jet training in mid-1964... Mike [was] cheerful and optimistic in his laid back, easy going way. Under that was a sincere and caring man. Ed Sprenkle: Classmate of Mike’s in Navy training and a fellow pilot at NWA... a person to whom all who knew him looked up. Pete and Stephanie Dodge: [We are] saddened to hear about Mike’s passing. We have such wonderful memories of Mike, flying in the Navy, the Inverness Paint Service, the Fearsome Foursome on the links, and some very special times with the Harron Family. Anonymous: One of the greatest pilots I’ve ever known... a true war hero in Vietnam on the USS Coral Sea... Special Forces material before there was Special Forces... a flight instructor as well as an international captain for Northwest Airlines. The only thing he loved more than flying was his beautiful wife Theresa and his three boys Sean, Michael, and Brian... Truly a man’s man



and will be sorely missed. When God made him he broke the mold! We need more heroes like Captain Mike! God bless the Harron family. Tom Wondergem: Tom reflected on his and Mike's friendship and said, "Mike was one of the best and a true gentleman. I miss him very much."

Mike's wife Theresa, said, "He loved flying and his friends at Northwest Airlines, and it was a wonderful life. But when Mike got home from a trip, he was home. And he didn't think about the airline again until it was time to suit up and commute to work."

Mike will be remembered most for his love and devotion to his wife, Theresa, whom he met at Notre Dame in 1963 and married in August 1965. He felt his greatest achievement was raising three wonderful sons who were his pride and joy. Faith and family were the most important things in his life. Mike is survived by his wife of forty-seven years, Theresa, their three sons, Sean (Andrea), Michael (Jessica), Brian (Colleen), and grandchildren, Lauren, Quinn, Caitlin, Catherine, Aidan, Sean Patrick, Emma, and Madeline. (- Vic Britt)



**Herman Peterson**  
1932 ~ 2011

**Herman Norin Peterson**, age 79, of Bloomington, Minnesota, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain "Flew West" for a final check with loved ones by his side at his home on May 5, 2011. Herman had heart surgery December 24, 2008 and one month later discovered that he had cancer in his small bowel and had surgery for that on January 23, 2009. Herman grew up on a farm near Frederick, South Dakota and farming was always dear to his heart. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a Tech Sgt during the Korean War, and married Marjorie Ann Krage on June 23, 1951 at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. First officers and second officers enjoyed working with Herman, and he was about as nice a guy to work with as any on the airline. He was employed by Northwest Airlines for 28 years, and retired as a Captain on the Boeing 727.

Herman was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Lucille; and brothers, Ervin and Henry. Survived by his wife, Margorie; five children; Michael, Wayne, Cindy, Dr. Pamela and Paul; grandchildren: Matthew, Heidi and Lydia; greatgrandchildren: Kennedy, Finnley, and Karina; stepgrandchildren: John and Vincent; brother, Charles and nieces and nephews. (- Vic Britt)

"Life is short, Break the Rules.  
Forgive quickly, Kiss SLOWLY.  
Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably  
And never regret ANYTHING  
That makes you smile."

-Mark Twain



# Membership Application and Change of Address Form

**NAME**

**SPOUSE'S NAME**

**PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS**

**STREET**

**CITY**

**STATE**   **ZIP+4**   **PHONE**

**EMAIL\***  
Leave this blank if you do not wish to receive RNPA email news. (See note)

**SECOND OR SEASONAL ADDRESS (for RNPA annual directory only)**

**STREET**

**CITY**

**STATE**   **ZIP+4**   **PHONE**

**DATE OF BIRTH** (Optional for affiliate member)

DATE OF FIRST EMPLOYMENT WITH  NWA  DELTA AS:

**AN EMPLOYEE**   **A PILOT**

DATE OF RETIREMENT FROM  NWA  DELTA AS:

**AN EMPLOYEE**   **A PILOT**

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY DELTA INDICATE:

**BASE**   **POSITION**

**IF RETIRED, WAS IT "NORMAL"** (Age 60/65 for pilots)?   **YES** \_\_\_   **NO** \_\_\_

**IF NOT, INDICATE TYPE OF RETIREMENT:**   **MEDICAL** \_\_\_   **EARLY** \_\_\_   **RESIGNED** \_\_\_

**APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS LOGGED**

**AIRLINE AIRCRAFT TYPES FLOWN AS PILOT**

**REMARKS:** Affiliates please include information as to profession, employer, department, positions held, and other relevant info:

**CHANGE:** This is a change of address or status only

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE**

**REGULAR (NR) \$40**  
Pilots: Retired NWA, post-merger retired Delta, or Active Delta

**AFFILIATE (AF) \$30**  
Spouse or widow of RNPA member, pre-merger Delta retired pilots, other NWA or Delta employees, a friend, or a pilot from another airline

**PAYMENT**

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
**"RNPA"**  
AND MAIL TO:  
**Retired NWA Pilots' Assn.**  
**Dino Oliva**  
**3701 Bayou Louise Lane**  
**Sarasota FL 34242-1105**

**MAILING NOTES**

**U. S. POSTAL SERVICE:** We are unable to change mailing addresses seasonally. Instead, Contrails and all other mail is sent First Class to your permanent mailing address, which provides for forwarding, unlike our previous mailing system. If desired, please arrange forwarding through the U. S. Postal Service.

**\*EMAIL NOTE:** To protect email addresses they have been removed from the RNPA website (www.rnpa.org). To request a member's email address or to **change your own** please contact Phil Hallin at:  
**RNPAnews@bhi.com**

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**FIRST CLASS**



Dick Carl took this beautiful shot aboard the USS Midway in San Diego.