



www.flyingtigerline.org

Flying Tiger Line Pilots Association

Pilots and employees of the Flying Tiger Line, dedicated to preserving the memory of a great airline and those who served in China and in World War II

Summer 2017

Hello Everyone,

Our 43rd Annual FTLPA Reunion in Portland was another huge success thanks to all who attended the event. The weather, always a variable for Oregon during May, was perfect allowing golfers a great round of golf on Thursday while others enjoyed strolling along the Columbia River throughout the weekend. A highlight was during the cocktail hour before our banquet began when we had a wonderful sunset view of both Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens.

Save the date! The 44th Annual FTLPA Reunion will be held next year in Palm Springs from May 2nd to May 6th, 2018 at the Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel, a beautiful venue located within a short distance of downtown. Details for reserving your hotel room and registering for the event will be included in the next newsletter due out on September 1st.

Are your dues current? I hate to keep harping on this subject in each newsletter, but as the one responsible for steering this Association into continued success in the future I'm compelled to do so. Please confirm that you are up to date on your \$20 yearly dues. If you're unsure then go to the Membership Roster section of our website (password is "paws" – all lower case) and use the search feature to find your name. The last year that you paid dues will be listed in the third column from the left under the label "YR." All members who do not bring their membership status up to date will be receiving an email this summer asking them to do so. Unfortunately those who show no interest in remaining members will be removed from the roster. Yearly dues of only \$20 per year are necessary for the proper planning of future events and to pay administrative and communication costs throughout the year. To renew your membership use the Membership Services tab and either pay by credit card or print up the renewal form and mail it with your renewal check. Only one (1) payment of \$20 for 2017 is required in order to bring yourself current. If you have any questions or concerns then email me or Peter Okicich and we'll be glad to get you squared away.

Jeanne and I hope you have a great summer and I'll be back in touch with you in September.

John Dickson
(208) 699-5909
president@flyingtigerline.org



In This Newsletter

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Very Important

It's imperative that all members add both of the two new FTLPA email addresses to your Contacts or your Address Book to identify them as safe and avoid spam filters that you might have.

email@flyingtigerline.org

president@flyingtigerline.org

We're utilizing a new email delivery program that allows for more efficient distribution of announcements concerning our group. If you haven't been receiving periodic updates then you must identify these addresses as Safe. We've had reports that some members have had to contact their Internet Service Providers (ISP's) with stricter Spam filters for assistance.

Please note that Peter Okicich will still be using his personal email address of paokicich@comcast.net for individual email messages. However group emails will no longer come from this address.

Portland Reunion Summary

A little over 250 members, family, and guests attended our reunion at the Red Lion Hotel by the River this year. The turnout was a little lighter than normal but we were glad to catch up with many whom we haven't seen in a while, or attended for the first time.

Below are some pictures and a recap of the various events we enjoyed. Many more pictures can be viewed by visiting the [Reunion Photos](#) section of our website. If you have any questions regarding downloading photos [contact Eliot](#).



2017 Poster by Susan Skinner
You can purchase this or any of Susan's earlier reunion posters.
[Contact John](#) for information on how to do so.



Cindy and Dave Barnwell
with Bob Strang



Danny Depauw and
Dennis Rustigan



Jay Cotting, John Binikos, and
John Henrichs



The Hospitality Suite wouldn't be
the same without Rudy's cart!



Peter Okicich with Jennifer and
Ann Royall

Golf on Thursday



(L to R) Mary Weeks, Robert Carona, John Englehardt,
Bill Thompson, Bob Cecchi, Winston Churchill, Bill Reid,
Paul Rebschar, Larry Weeks, and Gloria McComas

Ten Tigers and two guests, Bruce Carr & Glenn Brooks (*not pictured*), played the Huron Lake Golf Club on Thursday and enjoyed a beautiful day outside.

Bragging Rights

1st Place

Bruce Carr
Glenn Brooks
Larry Weeks
Bill Reid

2nd Place

Bob Cecchi
Winston Churchill
John Englehardt
Bill Thompson

3rd Place

Mary Weeks
Gloria McComa
Paul Rebscher
Robert Carona

Evergreen Museum Visit on Friday

Approximately 180 of us visited the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum for an opportunity to see the wonderful collection of aircraft on exhibit there, including the SR71, a P40, and the Spruce Goose. Our buffet dinner was held under the tail of the Goose surrounded by a B17, a P38, and a C47. At the end of our night a donation basket was passed around and over \$1,400 was contributed to the museum from personal donations.

Well done Tigers. The Spirit Lives On!



Dinner under the gigantic tail of the Hercules



Guest of Honor, Ilse Shilling
with Lydia Rossi, both wives
of original AVG pilots



Rudi Kohlbacher at the controls
of the Spruce Goose.
(A very scary thought!)



Ellestad, Johnsen, Jorgenson,
Drake, and VanHerbruggen in
front of former FTL N748FT



Up close with the SR71 in the Space
Building of the museum



Julie & Bill Helbig taking a break
with Norah O'Neill

Business Meeting Saturday Morning

The following items were discussed and decided upon during the regular business meeting:

- Acknowledgment and a moment of silence of those who have Flown West since the last reunion (see below)
- Recognition for the Life Members in attendance in lieu of their late husbands who have Flown West – Lydia Rossi, Ann Royal, and Gloria McComas.
- Details regarding upcoming reunions in Palm Springs (2018) and Long Beach (2019)
- Discussion for the location of the 2020 reunion. Consideration and costs were discussed over San Diego, Scottsdale, San Antonio, or Austin. In the end, the overwhelming sentiment among the group seemed to favor a return to Texas where we might possibly consider another joint reunion with our brothers and sisters at SPAR.

At the end of the meeting Wayne Koide and Winston Churchill, both FedEx Captains, were nominated and confirmed for membership as Honorary Tigers per our bylaws and by the members in attendance. An exception was permitted to allow the use of next year's slot in order to accommodate both nomination requests.

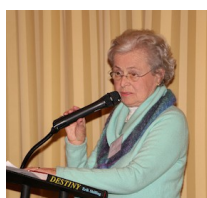


Dickson congratulating Wayne Koide with sponsor, Phil John



Dickson congratulating Winston Churchill with sponsor, Frank Maquire.

Following the meeting we enjoyed the following presentations:



Ilse Shilling

Our Guest of Honor was Ilse Shilling, wife of famed AVG pilot Eric Shilling. She gave an eloquent account of her life with him from the first day they met until his death. She came with some of the very last copies of his book, *Destiny*, which was made available to our members. A wonderful woman, we hope she will consider joining us for many future reunions to come.



Charles Kennedy and Guy VanHerbruggen

Aviation historians and authors, Charles Kennedy and Guy Van Herbruggen presented details surrounding the creation of their two new books, *Tiger 747* and *The Story of the MD11*. They will return for our Palm Springs reunion with an ample supply of books. In the mean time all three books are available through the following link - www.theairlineboutique.com.



Lydia Rossi

Lydia Rossi presented a 15 minute video titled *A Brief History of The American Volunteer Group Flying Tigers* created and first shown by her at the AVG Reunion in Kumming last year. It was extremely informative and heart warming, especially at the end when pictures of all original AVG pilots from the three original squadrons were shown.

Banquet & Dance Saturday Night

Our reunion was capped off with our traditional Banquet and Dance.



Guy Van Herbruggen with Tom and Menalee Pierchala



Denis and Mary Cesarz with Karen and Jack Haggerty



Mary and Larry Weeks during the door prize break



Steve and Kat Andrade with Trevor Lewis and Kim Zirllinden



Entertainment by Cheri Adams

The following were winners of the door prize and raffle contest:

Joe Wight's wonderful rendition of a 747 *on the checkerboard* to Hong Kong went to Robert Carona

A die-cast model of a DC-8 went to Al Evens

The Stan Stokes litho, *Flying Tigers*, went to Scott Mergle

The Tiger Wine Holder went to last year's Honorary Tiger, Bob Cecchi.

Winners of the 50/50 contest went to Louise (Keenan) Busler and John Goldhawke (guest of the Cartmills) who each took a little over \$200 back home with them.

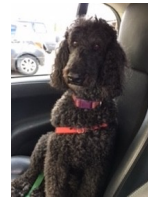
Pets

A handful of attendees brought their favorite friends to our event this year. The same old stories we tell every year seemed even better with a drink in one hand and our pets in the other!

The Tigers definitely went to the dogs this year!



Kodi
(John & Linda Beaty)



Cosette
(Larry & Holly Drake)



Shima
(John & Jeanne Dickson)

Cabin Crew Corner



Joyce Daniels
Flight Attendant Representative

I want to thank everyone for their help at the Portland reunion and participation at the F/A meeting. This is what makes for a successful reunion. In particular, I'd like to give a big thanks to Jeanne Dickson and Mary Weeks for their endless hours of work in the Hangar. I couldn't have done it without them.

Next year's reunion will be our Flight Attendant Recognition Banquet. Friday night will entail a costume theme of Freedom Bird Flights at the Palm Springs Museum. So be thinking of what you'd like to wear. We can even have a contest! Who looks like Hot Lips the best? (Johns' thinking of coming as Klinger!) Wear your old in-flight uniform or make a new one. Be creative. I've been looking for the Tiger pettipants we used to wear. If anyone knows of a source for them please let me know. We did wear our skirts pretty short back then!

We are looking at a couple of nice specialty clothing items for the Palm Springs reunion. So I can get an idea of how many to order please submit a Ladies size so I have a rough idea of how many to order. This can also be done on the F/A Face book page. There is no obligation to purchase.

I would like to produce a special pamphlet of memories for everyone of the following:

- Let me know when and how you were hired
- What story would you like to share? Someone who made your flying memorable, a funny story, a naughty story! I won't use your name if you don't want. We had some good times and some scary ones!

As people contemplate coming to the Palm Springs reunion, please submit your name and email/phone so we can compile a roommate wanted list.

See you in Palm Springs.

Joyce Daniels
Joyce_Danielsen@yahoo.com
(509) 899-1731



Portland Hangar



Hangar Gals

Joyce Daniels
Mary Weeks
Jeanne Dickson

Museum Memorabilia Need

A tremendous amount of items were donated to our association by friends and family of former Tiger crew members. Most of this was put on display in the FedEx Crew Room from 2012 to 2015.

On the way to Portland, John Dickson transported these items to the Palm Springs Air Museum in preparation for a dedicated exhibit showcasing The Flying Tiger Line. Plans are to have the exhibit complete by our reunion next year when we visit the museum on Friday night.

Even though there is a good amount of quality items for display, the exhibit is in need of more museum quality artifacts (wings, models, pictures, etc.). If you have an interest in donating items that you possess please contact John Dickson for coordination on this. He will put you in touch with the right person to ship them to.

Squawk Ident



Steve Eckert, 1975

Who's That Tiger Photo Contest

For the first time since this contest began everyone was finally stumped and nobody identified the photo from the last newsletter as that of a young Steve Eckert.

We need pictures for next years contest! If you have an ancient shot of yourself, preferably in uniform, please scan and email it to John at president@flyingtigerline.org

Future Reunions

Details regarding registration and hotel reservations for our reunion next year will be made available in the Fall Newsletter due out on September 1st. For now be sure to save the dates for 2018 and 2019



Renaissance Hotel – Palm Springs

2018

Flight Attendant Recognition Banquet

Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel

888 E Tahquitz Canyon Way

Palm Springs, CA 92262

May 2nd to May 6th, 2018

Friday night at the Palm Springs Air Museum



P40 at the Palm Springs Air Museum

FTLPA donated \$2500 to the PSAM last year.
To view letter of gratitude
[Click Here](#)



Flying Tiger Line room
in the Flight Path Museum

2019

45-Year Anniversary Reunion

Renaissance Long Beach Hotel

111 East Ocean Boulevard

Long Beach, CA 90802

May 1st to May 5th, 2019

Visits to Flight Path Museum at LAX
and California Science Center in L.A.



OV-105 Endeavour
at the California Science Center

2020

There was a real interest in returning to Texas for our 46th Annual Reunion, possibly Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, or a return to San Antonio where our 1999 reunion was held. Sandy White will be working on the viability of these cities, hotel prices, etc. We have been in discussion with new SPAR President, Dan Duffy, regarding the possibility of another joint FTLPA/SPAR event. Initially we both think it's a great idea and will be working on it.

During the business meeting there were many suggestions to keep it as close as possible to the Pacific War Museum located in Fredericksburg, TX, approximately 75 miles from both Austin and San Antonio. More information about this museum can be found at the following link - <http://www.pacificwarmuseum.org>

Joe Wight Prints Now Available



A Tiger 747 on the "Checkerboard Approach" to Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong

Contact Joe Wight at
twilightxmail@yahoo.com

Once again, Joe Wight was amazing with his rendition of a Tiger 747 on the IGS approach to Kai Tak Airport. Copies of this painting, or any of his previous works, are now available for purchase. Email Joe directly and he'll answer any questions and provide sizes and prices for any of his former paintings. The word is that he's working on a painting of the FTL B707 Polecat for Palm Springs, which will be part of the door prize raffle next year.



Canadair CL-44
(Monterey, 2012)



Lockheed Super Connie
(San Diego, 2013)



Douglas DC-8
(Seattle, 2014)

New Books Available

TWO NEW BOOKS FROM THE TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU DC-8 & THE FLYING TIGER LINE

Tiger 747 tells the story of the Boeing 747 in service with the Flying Tiger Line, Seaboard World, and Federal Express, with an individual history of the thirty-four jumbos operated, and two in-depth historical essays, charting the evolution of Flying Tigers and Seaboard and the story of the Boeing 747. It also includes technical information and descriptions, pilot and crew memories, and a special history of Flying Tigers' flight attendants.
A worthwhile sequel to the DC-8 & FTL book.



The Story of the MD-11's 288 pages include a series of epic historical essays covering the design, development, test flying, and airline service up to and beyond the end of MD-11 production; detailed individual airframe histories of every one of the 200 MD-11s built; fascinating technical drawings and descriptions. The story of a pilots' favorite up to the present day.

still available: **DC-8 & The Flying Tiger Line**, a pioneering airline and a historically significant aircraft that together changed the world of air commerce forever



Aviation historian, Guy Van Herbruggen and journalist, Charles Kennedy, attended our reunion after once again collaborating to write two new books relevant to most within our group. We were introduced to them at the New Orleans Reunion shortly after their book, **DC-8 & The Flying Tiger Line**, was released to the public. Since then Charles and Guy were our guests in Napa where they were presented with a plaque honoring our airline's founder, Robert Prescott. The brass plaque will be attached to our former DC8 simulator, now partially restored and on display at the museum in Saint-Ghislain, Belgium through their coordinated efforts.

Tiger 747 highlights the history of the Boeing 747 with specific reference to all of the the aircraft used by the Flying Tiger Line, Seaboard World Airways, Metro Airways, and ultimately Federal Express. The pages include the individual aircraft histories of 34 airframes, flight deck and simulator descriptions, passenger operations, charter missions, and sections devoted to memories from those that were lucky enough to fly this magnificent aircraft.

Their second book, **The Story of the MD-11**, will surely be of interest to all who made it through the merger and eventually checked out on the *MadDog*.

Guy & Charles will return for our Palm Springs reunion with an ample supply of books. In the mean time all three books are available to order from www.theairlineboutique.com.

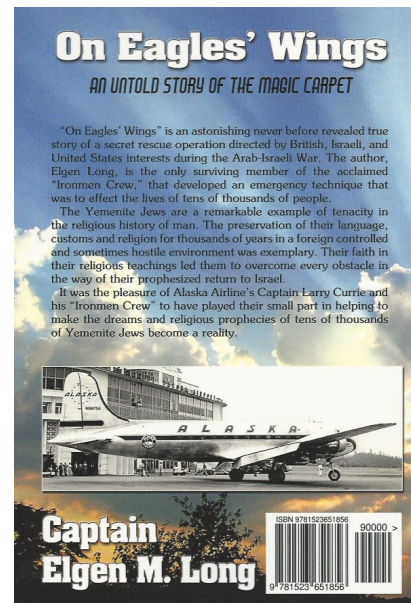
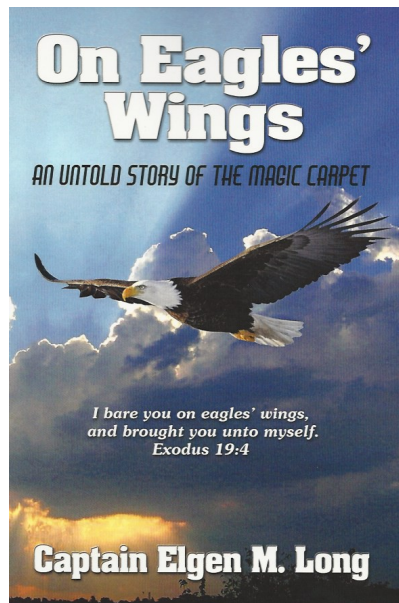
(Right) Norah O'Neill autographing her book, *Flying Tigeress*, for her fellow authors.



Elgen Long has written another fantastic book that was made available fresh off the presses at the Portland reunion last month. This paperback volume chronicles the never before revealed true story of a secret rescue operation during the Arab-Israeli War. Captain Long is the only surviving member of the "Ironmen Crew" which developed an emergency technique that effected the lives of tens of thousands of people.

Elgen will be bringing copies to Palm Springs to sell for \$15 each.

For information on how to obtain a book earlier you can email him at graybrow1@yahoo.com



Flown West

Unfortunately we lost three former Tiger pilots just prior to our reunion.



Jim Nezgoda
1940 - 2017

Captain Jim Nezgoda passed away May 7th, 2017. Jim and Marie Rowan, his love and partner in life, finally married earlier this year. Marie reports that Jim had requested there no be no service for him. Instead, his daughter, Crystal, will carry his ashes along the Pacific Crest Trail next year, a journey they began a few years back and will finally finish together.

Garry Duff visited Jim shortly before his death and wishes to relay the following sentiments about his good friend.

I'm saddened to have to report that our friend Jimmy Nezgoda died two weeks ago after a struggle with lung cancer. I knew Jim well having been hired with him in the same new-hire class in 1965. Jim and I lived together in those early years and generally hung around together for our whole careers and into retirement. As young Connie captains in EWR, we got the same letter from the FAA warning us not to fly Hackensack float planes under the George Washington bridge.

Different from the United's and Delta's, and except for the Ermet brothers, no two Tigers were alike, giving part of the reason for the colorful Tiger reputation. And so Jim was unique, and had a reputation as a "good stick" but not very communicative in the cockpit. "Gear up" and "Gear down" could be the bulk of the conversation even on a 12-hour block-to-block. I think I can explain.

Jim always had a very big "bucket list". He and his kid brother climbed K-2 in the Himalayas. He built and raced motor cycles. He flew and raced high-performance gliders, and a Yak-3 warbird. He bred and raced Arabian horses along with his neighbor and famous Tiger, Catfish Raines. He owned classic airplanes such as the Bellanca, a Cessna 195, a Twin Bonanza, and his last one a SeaBea. He enjoyed motor-homing and vacation homes in Mexico and Washington State. So in there you unlock the mystery - Jim was constantly planning, theorizing, or studying his current or next adventure. If you weren't part of that plan, any conversation with you was a distraction! He meant no offense, in fact during a visit, just days before he died, Jim specifically asked me to tell you how much he really enjoyed your friendship and appreciated what you contributed to his time at Tigers even when it may have seemed like he was "on another frequency". It was his way of sending his love.

Jim married Marie Rowan, a beloved member of our Tiger family in her own right, and who would have been here with us if Jim's passing had not been so badly timed. She sends her love too. I miss Jim; some of our color "went west", but I shall remember him fondly. May it be so with each of you.



Larry Luccio
1922 - 2017

Captain Larry "Dad" Luccio passed away May 10, 2017. Larry's son and fellow Tiger, Gary Luccio, relays that his father was cremated and his ashes will be placed next to his wife in New Jersey this September.



Barney Manley
1937 - 2017

Captain Barney Manley passed away on May 17th, 2017. A memorial service was held at noon on Sunday, May 28th, at McCormick & Sons in Laguna Hills, CA. To read more and to post your thoughts about our friend and fellow Tiger visit

<http://www.mccormickandson.com/obituaries/Bernard-Manley/#!/Obituary>



*To fly west, my
friend, is a flight we
all must take for a
final check*

Author unknown

In addition the following former Flying Tigers have also made their final flight since our last 2016 reunion in Napa. More information might be found in the ***Flown West*** section of our website or in the FTLPA ***Discussion Forum***.

*# **Art Jacobs** – November 3, 2012
Ernie Rice – September 8, 2013
Hal Ewing – April 25, 2016
Greg Beckman – May 9, 2016
Gail Vikse – June 2, 2016
Thomas Mitchel – June 30, 2016
Bob Kelley – July 1, 2016
Scott Cutler – August 1, 2016
Merle Kleen – August 18, 2016
Don McComas – October 19, 2016

Karl Krout – October 20, 2016
Brad Bowers – November 4, 2016
Jim Carey – November 20, 2016
*# **Suzie Clikeman** – Unknown Date
Ralph Grella – February 10, 2017
*# **Fred Thorp** – March 18, 2017
*# **Dick Sundermann** – April 3, 2017
* **Tom "Moose" Nelson** – April 22, 2017
*Added since last newsletter
Former SWA F/A

Video Library

Click on the various links below for some interesting videos from websites that pertain to our heritage at the Flying Tiger Line.

The Flying Tiger Line

Flying Tigers "Can Do" Spirit (35:08)
Tribute to the Flying Tiger Line (4:05)
The True Story of the Flying Tigers (43:17)
The Flying Tigers Cargo Company (9:56)
Tribute to Bob Prescott (PDF)
Elephant Arrival in Burbank (12:56)
Flying Tigers 747 Blown Tires ANC (18:35)

The Flying Tiger Line (1945-1989)

The P40 Warhawk

How to Fly the P40 Warhawk (28:18)
WW2: Curtiss P-40 Warhawk (46:00)
P40, Warbirds of WWII (45:17)
P-40 Warhawk Vs. Japanese Zero (4:52)
P-40 Cockpit Tour (6:01)
Pearl Harbor P40 Boys (5:58)
Amazing WWII Color Pictures

American Volunteer Group

Wings Over China –The Story of the Flying Tigers (47:44)
Flying Tigers: "The Story of the Fourteenth Air Force" (39:50)
The Flying Tigers (7:11)
The Flying Tigers – Famous Dogfights (43:59)
Dick Rossi Interview, 1999 (41:18)
Flying Tigers Bite Back (4:33)

History, Books, and Art
Discussion Forum

Miscellaneous

Boeing 707 Barrel Roll (4:31)
Douglas DC-8 - The Birth of a Jet (13:16)
Lockheed Constellation Story (10:39)
Classic Airliners - "Freight Dogs" - 1973 (10:14)
Airlines of the 1980's (SWA & FTL at about 4 minutes)

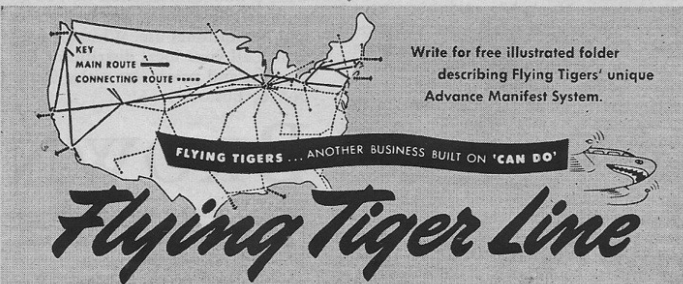
JOE CRECCA VIDEOS

New Orleans Presentation (1:17:09)
Fox13 News Never Give Up (7:24)
Vietnam War Commemoration Oral History Project (3:47)

Vintage FTL Advertisement #12

*I was amazed at the
low cost of
Flying Tiger Airfreight!*

SAYS RALPH RUNNE, PLANTS MGR.
HICKOK MFG. CO.
ROCHESTER, N. Y.



OFFICES IN PRINCIPAL CITIES • GENERAL OFFICES: LOCKHEED AIR TERMINAL, BURBANK 8, CALIFORNIA • CABLE: FLYTIGER

102

Time Magazine, June 15, 1953

News & Announcements

Attention ALPA Members

SEE YOU AT
EAA AIRVENTURE OSHKOSH
JULY 24-30 2017
Look for us at Booth #C21

ATTENDING OSHKOSH THIS SUMMER?
Be sure to stop by the ALPA exhibit booth in the Education and Career Center within Aviation Gateway Park. Also look for nightly themed activities and ALPA participation in other EAA AirVenture Oshkosh events.
For more information, contact us at ALPAOshkosh@alpa.org.
For information about Oshkosh 2017, visit www.eaa.org/en/airventure.

Fellow Tiger Needs Help

We've just learned that Kristy Peake, daughter of Capt. Jack Bliss and wife of Roger Peake is in dire need of a liver transplant. Kristy's mother, Patty Bliss, also flew for Flying Tigers as a Flight Attendant.



Click on the following link to support Kristi Peake's Journey to Health organized by Tonia Starr Winkle

<https://www.gofundme.com/kristis-journey-to-health>

Officer Change at SPAR

Lou Furlong and Paul Cellec have both stepped down from their positions at the Seaboard Pilots Association Retirees. Captain Dan Duffy has accepted the position of President. More information about their association can be found by visiting the link below

<http://www.seaboardairlines.org/spar>

Got News?

Let us know and we'll include it in the next edition

Say Again?

The natural function of the wing is to soar upwards and carry that which is heavy up to the place where dwells the race of gods. More than any other thing that pertains to the body it partakes of the nature of the divine.

-Plato, Phaedrus

Contact Us

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