On April 20, in concert with the spring Board of Directors meeting, the Aero Club visited the “Friends of Bellanca Airfield” Museum in New Castle, Delaware. Members were invited to peruse the museum and were offered a presentation by museum advocate Frank Ianni. Ianni, a retired Delaware National Guard adjutant general, is a New Castle native and tells great stories about G.M. Bellanca and his exploits. Ianni recalled his own youth growing up nearby and getting a ride at a very young age in one of Bellanca’s planes during an airshow. He also spoke proudly of the pioneering aircraft designs that Bellanca created, generating numerous air records over the years.

The museum is housed in the only remaining building from the original Bellanca Airfield. It was built in 1936 and today is one of the last of its type hangar still existing in the U.S., displaying the classic arched roof structure.

The Bellanca Aircraft Company produced over 3000 aircraft before closing in 1954. Bellancas achieved many endurance and efficiency records and his plane “Columbia” was Lindbergh’s first choice for his Trans-Atlantic crossing.

The museum offers open hours on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month and hosts special events such as car shows. They offer museum memberships and are always looking for volunteers. See their website at friendsofbellanca.org.

Flight School offers tailwheel instruction

Brandywine Flight School (BFS) at Brandywine Airport has acquired a Cessna 140A and Cessna 170A for providing taildragger training and rentals. Says BFS head pilot James Wawrzeniak, “It makes sense to offer flight training in a tailwheel airplane. A student aviator, training in proper tail wheel techniques will possess good directional control skills and rudder awareness.”

“We are excited to add the two Cessnas to our fleet. It is getting difficult to find a flight school where a student or trained pilot can receive instruction or rent a tailwheel aircraft,” added Stephen Richards, CEO/owner of Brandywine Flight School. “There are a lack of flight schools offering ‘old school’ training.
Summer is upon us and I just returned from Sun-n-Fun, my first visit to a great Fly-in and airshow. I saw lots of new equipment for certified airplanes from names that are traditionally found in experimental aircraft. This is going to be an exciting time as new options for instrumentation are rolling out at substantially lower cost. Everything from autopilots to ADS-B to PFDs were on display with prices in the very low four figures. Now I just have to get my plane partners lined up for a panel upgrade.

The Aero Club Scholarship Review Board has more than 18 applicants moving forward to the interview stage, the final step before being awarded a variety of scholarships from basic training to advanced certificates as well as A&P programs. This year’s Scholarship Award Dinner will be on June 15th at the Philadelphia Aviation Country Club (PACC). Come out and celebrate with us and enjoy the program and dinner. Check this newsletter or website for details. Our speakers will be recent award recipients who are now career pilots in the airline industry.

The Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) will speak following our Summer Board Meeting on July 20th at PACC, Wings Field (see inset for details).

The Aero Club will sponsor an interactive balloon history display at the Chester County Balloon Festival, June 23-25. Our goal is to highlight the rich history of ballooning in the Delaware Valley and raise awareness of the Aero Club. We need volunteers to assist Carris and Erik Kocher, Debbie Harding, Rob Dant and myself. Please let us know if you’d like to help for a few hours. Sign up on the website or email kochercj@verizon.net.

I spent a few minutes at the A&P shop today to look over our airplane, a Cessna 182, freshly out of annual, don’t ask... The new seat rails, repositioned instruments and new cylinder will make for a fun summer flying season. Now I have to get back up to speed, prep for my BFR and work with our CFI as he attempts to polish my skills. I took the Rusty Pilots course at Sebring, and got my medical refreshed. It is a good feeling to be getting back in the air.
SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

This year, our scholarship review board volunteers are American Airline Captain Alicia Sikes, Southwest Captain Tim Fields, and Comcast Corporate pilot Stacy Culton, who are joined by two new members, Flight Safety instructor Nancy Rohr, and Piedmont Air First Officer Steve Jordan, a past scholarship recipient. My heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers; it’s definitely a full hands-on effort.

Of the 53 requests for applications from eligible candidates living in the Delaware Valley region, 33 draft applications were started and 25 submitted for review. During a two-hour review board meeting, 18 applicants were chosen for interviews or the final leg in the selection process.

Word is out that there is a shortage of commercial pilots and I would say almost the entire group of applicants are pursuing a career in the airline industry as commercial pilots. Good news, most applicants are aware of this program from our flight schools and our own members (see charts compiled by Tim Fields). Disappointing is that we had few applicants from New Jersey and Northern Delaware as we have had in the past.

The Aero Club has been able to remain true to its commitment of awarding 100% of scholarship fund donations and corporate matching donations from Boeing and Sikorsky (through Chester County Aviation). This year, for the third year in row, there is almost $40,000 in award money available for these “applicant driven” awards.

What does “applicant driven” mean? The review board looks carefully at each application, considering the wide spectrum of available awards from pre- and post-solo flight training, tail-wheel training, ATP, and related aviation training (mechanic, ATC, Airport manager etc.). Add to that, everything from age to grade point average is weighed, and although awards are not specifically based on financial need, that too is considered. Also considered are the specific applicant achievements that portend a successful career as an airline pilot, flight instruction, A&P, or other aeronautical position.

What this boils down to is choosing applicants that can best illustrate that they will use award money wisely to reach their career goal. At the same time, we try to encourage those who were not chosen, to try again next year. It is not an easy task to choose winners, and the task is not taken lightly. We hope the application process is a practice run and a real world learning experience for all. The future of the scholarship program lies in the hands of those that are able to demonstrate that successful use of award monies and that are willing to pay it forward.

Be inspired and join the Scholarship dinner on June 15th. Steve Jordan and Chris DeAugustine, recent airline pilots who have already begun to pay it forward, will share their experiences with us. You will meet the new stars of the show, our 2017 scholarship recipients! And don’t forget to sponsor a dinner for one of these aspiring aviators when you sign up at www.aeroclubpa.org.

Board of Directors Report

The Board of Directors met at the Friends of Bellanca Museum in New Castle, DE, on April 20. President Michael Dunleavy opened the meeting. The group approved the minutes from the previous meeting and discussed the financials, the scholarship program, the newsletter and membership. Ideas were discussed about shoring up club membership. The Scholarship Review Board has chosen 18 candidates for in-person interviews on May 20. The Special Events committee discussed ideas for future speakers at board meetings and the Wright Brothers Dinner in December. Future board meetings may be held at local aviation museums. The meeting adjourned for dinner and a presentation by Frank Ianni from the Bellanca Museum who spoke about Giuseppe Bellanca.
Eleanor Vadala was indeed a 20th century pioneer in ballooning. She was introduced to the “sport” by Anthony “Tony” Fairbanks whom she met while volunteering at the Franklin Institute. Tony asked if she would be interested in joining the Balloon Club of America (BCA) in their aerial adventures, and the rest is history. The BCA was formed in Swarthmore, PA in 1952 by Tony Fairbanks, Don Piccard and Peter Wood. Several BCA members were also members of the Aero Club of Pennsylvania.

Recently I had the privilege of joining Debbie Harding for a visit with Eleanor at her home in Montgomery County. We were accompanied by Michael Fairbanks, son of Tony Fairbanks and a long-time friend of Eleanor’s. What a delightful lady, still full of adventure! She was truly a 20th century pioneer in ballooning, and we thoroughly enjoyed her journey down Memory Lane.

Eleanor’s first gas balloon flight was with Don Piccard in 1959 and is one of her most cherished memories. “In some ways,” she said, “your first flight is like your first love - the most memorable.” The flight took place in New York “on a brisk wintry day. We had a lovely breeze that carried us.” It started to gently snow. Finding a small clearing amongst trees, a small pasture in which to land, “we drifted down like one of the snowflakes. We touched down and landed so softly that the deer didn’t even move - such a quiet serenity with the snow coming down so gently.” The deer ran off only after someone in the basket rustled.

Eleanor graduated from Julianna College in Huntington, PA in 1947 with a degree in nutrition and a minor in Chemistry. She worked full time at Chemistry. She worked full time at Philadelphia Naval Yard to host a balloon launching for a grand commemoration of their 50th anniversary celebration in 1967. As a member of the BCA, Eleanor was entitled to use the famous club balloon “La Coquette,” the brightly painted balloon used in Mike Todd’s movie “Around the World in 80 Days.” Though Tony Fairbanks accompanied Eleanor, she was the pilot-in-command. In Eleanor’s words it was “a lady flying a lady.”

Eleanor told of one flight with Tony Fairbanks where they landed in a freshly manured field. The owner came out with a shotgun, furious, and wouldn’t let the crew out of the basket. He ranted about “the idle rich!” Eleanor recounted thinking, “Idle rich?! I saved for this flight!” She said Tony, “the peacemaker,” patched things up with the farmer, and they were able to proceed. On another occasion she landed in the middle of an Italian wedding being held in an arboretum!

Eleanor’s ballooning was not confined to the United States. She also had the thrill of being “at the controls” in
some international gas balloon competitions held by special invitation in Europe. She recalled one particular flight with Francis Shields and Pete Pellegrino where they launched from Germany. They waited and waited for the fog to lift, and were finally told to go for it as it was clear at 1000 feet. As they lifted through the clouds the fog became even heavier at 1000 feet! No one said a word. It was so dense that all she could see was her teammates’ heads “suspended in the mist” with no bodies! The fog didn’t clear until they reached 2000 feet. Visibility wasn’t an issue on their landing in Zurich.

Eleanor flew in several international races. She noted how different it was to fly in Europe. In Europe ballooning was not for ordinary people, but rather for the elite, and “a woman doing ballooning was nearly unheard of!” Also, “in the U.S. you feel free to go anywhere, but in there, they’re so concerned about things like border crossings and controlled air space.” It was much more formal with a “Balloon Meister” in charge on the ground. She recalled how they played the national anthem for each balloon crew as they went aloft. “It’s very stirring.”

In one of the European races from St. Nicholas, Belgium, Alfred Eckert, a famous German pilot, served her some cognac to celebrate their landing. On an empty stomach in the early morning, it made her sick! They teased her because she couldn’t keep it down, and she remembers hearing “Die Frau is Krank!” They dubbed her Princess Von Satsammosergert!

Eleanor did some flights with Connie Wolf, the second female in the U.S. to get her balloon license, and remembered her as “a generous bon vivant” who liked to throw big parties at her home near Wings Field. Eleanor had a few joint ventures with the dirigible people in the LTA division of Goodyear. She remembers flying with Augie O’Neil, whose airship pilot’s license was signed by Orville Wright!

Eleanor told us of only one flight in which she was truly afraid. The BCA was hired to do an advertising flight with DJ Doug Arthur from radio station WCAU. Rain and winds delayed the scheduled weekend flight for two weeks. On the third weekend, with forecast afternoon rain, the radio station begged for an early morning flight. But the storms came earlier also. Eleanor remembers seeing the biggest and darkest cloud approaching them. They flew from Valley Forge Airport to Royersford mostly just over trees, making the first available landing in a cemetery just seconds before the storm broke. The DJ wanted to get out of the basket immediately, but Eleanor said, “Oh, no! You can’t go! If you go out, we go back up!” The radio station folks were picked up and taken back to the station, leaving the few remaining club members to pack up in the pouring rain.

Through Connie Wolf’s arrangement with a local gas company at Wings Field, “gas bag” flights were fairly regular, but with the gas crunch in the late 1960s, gas ballooning became nearly extinct. Using gas to fill an 80,000 cu. ft. balloon for sport was not considered appropriate.

Eleanor went on to do a couple of flights in hot air balloons with Bob Sparks, a later member of the BCA. Then, in 1961, when the Balloon Club of America joined with the National Lighter Than Air Society of Akron, Ohio to form the Balloon Federation of America (BFA), Eleanor Vadala was their first Secretary!

Eleanor also gave presentations to youth groups and school classes about her experiences, and in her later years she taught English as a Second Language classes to immigrants. At the age of 63, she married Edgar Bailey (now deceased), an astronomer for the Franklin Institute. Why didn’t she marry earlier? “Well,” she said, “I was just too busy and I liked my life as it was!”

When asked if she would go up again for a balloon flight, Eleanor did not hesitate, “Yes! Just give me a hand and a push from the back!”

Chemist, engineer, artist, balloonist – a remarkable lady, Eleanor is a modern woman indeed!

Chester County Balloon Festival scheduled in June

You can meet Eleanor Vadala at the upcoming Chester County Balloon Festival at New Garden Flying Field, on June 23-25. Eleanor is making plans to join Michael Fairbanks and Bob Sparks at the festival on Saturday, June 24. The Aero Club will help set up a display of the history of ballooning in the Delaware Valley. This will be a great opportunity to learn about ballooning and talk with three accomplished balloonists who have had many remarkable experiences.

The 3-day festival features food, helicopter and monster truck rides, kite show, firetruck parade, fireworks, and a “Kid Zone”. Over 25 balloonists are expected to participate in morning and evening balloon launches. There will be daytime displays, tethered balloon rides, evening “special shapes” inflation and “night glow.” See the balloon festival website at:

www.ccballoonfest.com
MARCH 2017

PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL
Alaska Airlines will begin non-stop service August 31 between PHL and SFO, San Francisco. The airline acquired Virgin America earlier this year and for the 9th year in a row, was rated highest in customer satisfaction. American Express will open Centurion Lounge (a signature lounge) in Terminal A later this year. According to Speedtest by Ookla, PHL ranked 2nd to Denver for fastest Wi-Fi download speed.

NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA [PNE]
Greg Waldman, a planner with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, reported that The Far Northeast Districts Plan will make recommendations for zoning changes for city-owned land and facilities including the Philadelphia Northeast Airport. The website for comment is www.phila2035.org.

BRANDYWINE [OQN]
Tree obstruction removal continues as does the LPV Approach Feasibility Study for runway 9/27. For the last 2 years, the application for construction of 4 nested box hangars was not accepted by DCED and PennDOT; therefore, the Board is refraining from further participation in multimodal programs because recent funds have been allocated primarily to non-GA airports. A Bureau of Aviation grant is expected for the runway-widening project since the Tentative Allocation requirements have been met.

DOYLESTOWN [DYL]
The airport has been offered a Capital Budget Grant for land acquisition and is currently completing property appraisals around it and an offer to a landowner could be made soon. Runway 5/23 obstruction removal project should be completed in May. June bids and September construction are planned for grass tiedown paving and bypass taxiway construction.

HERITAGE FIELD [PTW]
The airport is working on tree obstruction removal on the south side of runway 10. It plans to accept bids for the crack seal and marking project. It also would like to acquire some new snow removal equipment before next winter.

NEW GARDEN [N57]
Phase 2 of runway widening and reconstruction project has been in a winter shutdown. Some project changes are expected before work resumes. A grant as well as tentative allocation is anticipated to conduct aeronautical survey LPV approaches. 2017 events include Fly the Ford – EAA Tri-Motor, EAA Pancake Breakfasts, Chester County Balloon Festival in June, Future Aviator Camps in July and August 7-11. Aug 20th is Run the Runway 5K Race to raise funds to offer 4 scholarships for the July and August camps. The Festival of Flight Air and Car Show will take place Aug 19-20.

QUAKERTOWN [UKT]
The airport is working to acquire easements for the properties under runway 11 and 29 approaches to allow access for the obstruction removal projects. It is also planning to renovate the existing Quonset hut equipment storage building. Bids are expected mid-April and work would begin in June. The pilots continue to hold Young Eagles Day at the airport on a monthly basis.

SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL [VAY]
The project for drainage improvement around T-hangars is still on hold. Only punch list items remain for project closure of the main tie down apron. An application for a second grant for required extra work and increased costs is being submitted to the FAA for the project of obstruction removal. The project of telephone pole removal and utility line burial should be completed by early summer. Fieldwork is in progress and should be completed by year end for the environmental determination for runway widening and taxiway relocation.

TRENTON-MERCER [TTN]
The project for drainage improvement around T-hangars is still on hold. Only punch list items remain for project closure of the main tie down apron. An application for a second grant for required extra work and increased costs is being submitted to the FAA for the project of obstruction removal. The project of telephone pole removal and utility line burial should be completed by early summer. Fieldwork is in progress and should be completed by year end for the environmental determination for runway widening and taxiway relocation.

VAN SANT [9N1]
Dinner & movie nights will be announced.

WINGS [LOM]
Phase 2 construction of terminal apron rehab should be completed by the end of April. Bids for crack seal and remarking of runway 6/24 are to be received soon and bids for obstruction mitigation on 6/24 approaches were due in April. Wings N’ Wheels is scheduled for September 9th.

Splash-in scheduled for August
On August 5, the Aero Club will host a small seaplane “splash-in” and aviator picnic at the Philadelphia Seaplane base from 10AM-2PM. Rain date Aug 6.

Construction will begin soon on the long anticipated Stockton Aviation Research and Technology Park at Atlantic City International. Adjacent to the FAA Technical Center, the Research Park hopes to facilitate advanced aviation research between public and private aviation organizations, scientists, engineers, and end users.
Scholarship Awards Dinner

Presented by the Aero Club of Pennsylvania Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Ninety Nines

Thursday, June 15, 2017
Philadelphia Aviation Country Club
Wings Field, Blue Bell, PA

6 PM: Cash Bar, 7 PM: Dinner
$45.00 per person

Note that a portion of your payment will help provide complimentary dinners for our scholarship recipients.

As always, seating is limited at PACC, so get your reservations in early.

RESERVE ONLINE
at www.aeroclubpa.org or use form below.

Please send check to arrive by June 10.
We regret that we cannot accept phone reservations or walk-ins.

Reserve ONLINE, or send this form with payment by June 10 to:
Aero Club PA Scholarship Fund, PO Box 748; Blue Bell, PA 19422

NAME: ________________________ Number Attending: ____ x $45 = $__________
ADDRESS: ________________________ Sponsor a Recipient: ____ x $45 = $__________
CITY/STATE: ________________________ Scholarship Contribution:$__________
PHONE: ________________________ Total Enclosed: $__________
E-Mail: ________________________

Please list names of attendees...

ATTENDEES: ________________________, ________________________, ________________________, ________________________
July Board Meeting  
Thursday, July 20, 2017, 6-9PM

The Aero Club will hold its next quarterly Board Meeting on July 20 at the Philadelphia Aviation Country Club at Wings Field. Following the board meeting at 6PM, we will have dinner and a presentation by representatives from the Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF). The RAF preserves, maintains and creates back country airstrips for recreational access.

Members and guests are welcome to attend our presentations. Dinner (optional) begins at 7PM and the presentation begins around 8PM. A very nice dinner is available at around $40 per person, not including drinks. Attire at PACC is business casual.

Check the website for updates. Occasionally, we change the venue if interest is high. You can RSVP on the website to let us know if you’d like to have dinner or would prefer to just attend the presentation.

www.aeroclubpa.org/rsvp

Duxford England Visit, September, 2017

Some Aero Club members are planning a trip to England in September. See more details at our website: www.aeroclubpa.org