



PENNSYLVANIA

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Vol 31 No 2

PILOT

Summer 2020

Local aviation endeavors to get past Corona virus

Although the FAA imposed no restrictions on air travel, General Aviation activity in the area was severely curtailed by COVID-19. Most flight schools ceased operations and FBOs closed terminals. Fuel sales and maintenance, considered to be essential, continued at many locations.



that continued to operate. Chris says, "It has not been easy. We ask our guys to work five hour shifts while we pay for a full day. We have a Medevac crew here 24 hours a day, and we make sure they have everything they need to stay operational. Our spirits are up, and we are hopeful."

At **New Garden Flying Field**, manager Jon Martin reported that the flight school was closed in April, though there were no restrictions on airport or hangar access. Solo flight rentals resumed at the beginning of May. Public access to the "Aviation Center" was restricted to maintain a clean environment for staff. The maintenance shop continued operations, but additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures were put in place. AVGAS sales continued at less than \$4.00 per gallon. The June SummerFest airshow event is rescheduled for August.

At **Brandywine Airport**, the terminal was closed to visitors with the exception of the restrooms. Full service fuel sales continued as did airport maintenance activities. The flight training ceased during April and into May.

At **Pottstown Heritage Field**, manager Christopher Jordan reported that they have cut hours of operations down to 7AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday, and the FBO is closed on weekends. On call service was available for corporate customers, and self-serve AVGAS is open 24 hrs. Sales are down 90%, but maintenance of the facilities and fuel farm continued. There are three maintenance shops and a charter service on the field

At **Smoketown Airport**, self-serve fuel was available, though the office and FBO were closed. Lancaster Aero continued to offer aircraft maintenance, and Smoketown Helicopters was in operation, though flight instruction was halted.

Angel Flight delivering medical supplies



At **Angel Flight East**, flight missions were suspended for passengers in need of medical treatment far from home. However, mission pilots started to fly medical supplies to areas in need. In early April, four volunteer pilots flew from Muncie, Indiana to Bedford, Massachusetts to transport 12,000 face shields to healthcare workers on the front line.

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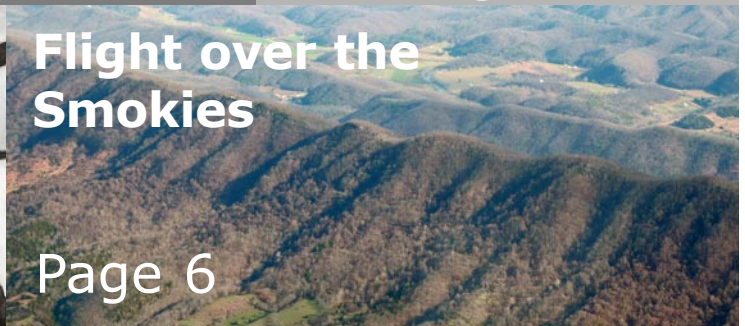
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Berlin Airlift



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Flight over the Smokies



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Debbie Harding

I have been on more webinars, zoom meetings, conference calls and social media sites since the pandemic, but through these exchanges I am constantly encouraged to hear stories like the adventures of Alicia Sikes flying for Angel Flight East delivering PPE, Daher aviation repurposing their plant to manufacture ventilators and some local balloon pilots and their wives making masks for health care workers and first responders. I love to see the hashtag #togetherstrong and the unity that is being brought forward.

I am also happy to read about the pre-pandemic events that Rob shared on page 3 and page 6. Special thanks to Rob and Southwest Captain and past scholarship recipient and now scholarship contributor, John Archer. Thanks to both of you and John's wife Alyse and welcome to the club. Rob's second article may point to the new normal, post-pandemic rise in general aviation.

We had our first virtual board meeting that Mike Dunleavy so graciously organized. It was fun to see board members' faces in their own offices and living spaces. Although not the same as meeting in person, it did give a little more depth in feeling connected with everyone. Thanks, Mike, for setting it up!

The Scholarship trustees have been doing their due diligence and have opted to keep pre-pandemic fund allocation for this years' scholarship awards even though our investments took a plunge in March, and with optimism that we can pull together some additional contributions this coming year for 2021. Scholarship Chair Steve Jordan has organized virtual scholarship interviews. Awards will be made available as usual in June. Flight schools are opening

presently, however extensions for award usage will be accepted upon request with good reason. We have opted to postpone the scholarship dinner scheduled for June, with plans to acknowledge the recipients in some way in the future.

I am excited to report that we will be giving out a named scholarship award in honor of Bob Mills this year, largely due to the receipt of Lou Fitzpatrick's pledged contribution from his estate. Not only was Lou a great friend of Bob Mills, he also loved paying his passion for aviation forward through the Aero Club of PA Memorial Scholarship Fund. He played a major role in our scholarship investment strategy, as well as the design of the payout formula that has served us so well to date. His spirit continues to live through these and his many other life contributions to his family, friends, and community.

I am grateful for the health and well-being of our board members and for the health of my 93-year-old father and the care he is being given at his independent living facility, and for my 97 year old fellow balloon pilot still managing her own home. Please, if any of our members are currently experiencing undue hardship due to the current conditions, feel free to contact the club via email or phone call for support. Or, if all is safe, maybe it is time to write those newsletter stories that you have not had time to do or one about your present experiences during these unprecedented times.

I cannot wait to be above it all once again!
This too shall pass!

Debbie Harding, 484 753 2598
deb@air-ventures.com



**I love to see the unity
that is being brought
forward**



PO Box 748, Blue Bell, PA 19422
www.aeroclubpa.org
www.facebook.com/AeroClubOfPa
mailbox@aeroclubpa.org

Organized December 17, 1909 to promote aviation in the Greater Delaware Valley. We are a social and civic organization which awards scholarships, plans field trips, holds an annual dinner, sponsors presentations, and produces this newsletter.

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Contributors: James Kilduff
Walter Ellis
Photos: Rob Dant
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With warming weather and blue skies, spring is always an exciting time for the aviators in our area. For the Aero Club, this time is especially exciting as we usher in yet another year of scholarship applications. While this year is different for everyone as a result of COVID 19, I have to say that it is nice to find some normalcy in this process. It's always extremely rewarding to help aviators pursue their dreams, and no pandemic can squash that.

While we are still pressing forward with our goal of promoting aviation in the greater Delaware Valley area through scholarships, some changes have had to be made. Rather than conducting in-person interviews, we have scheduled video chat sessions

with applicants and our review board. We are feeling our way through these unprecedented times, but are as determined as ever to select the best applicants and help them through their aviation journey.

This year, we had 23 completed applications, which was slightly lower than 2019. The applicants range in age from sixteen to fifty, and reside all over the Delaware Valley. Their experience level varies, from never having flown to seasoned instructors.

This year's review board consists of Jeff Bennett, Alicia Sikes, Emily Lewis, and myself. We are extremely happy to welcome Emily to her first year of scholarship review. Many of you will rec-

ognize her name as a past scholarship recipient, and her father John Lewis as a very active member in our club. We have currently reviewed and scored digital applications and are eagerly awaiting digital interviews on May 16th.

As always, none of this would be possible without the generous contributions from many donors both within and outside of the Aero Club. With the cost of flight and mechanic training always on the rise, these scholarships truly make a large difference in the lives of many. For those of you who have contributed, please know that you have made a great impact on the lives of aspiring aviators, and both the club and past recipients are very thankful.

Inspiring high school students

By Robert Dant

Eric Yoon and Jeffrey Lee, both students at Souderton Area High School, contacted the Aero Club about the opportunity to engage in an aviation mentorship activity as part of their career planning projects.

I offered to fly both students on a "breakfast mission," and I helped to coordinate a career session with John Archer, current airline pilot, past scholarship recipient and a recent donor to the Aero Club scholarship fund.

On a cold Sunday morning in March, Eric and Jeffrey arrived at Wings Field with their families. After discussing the flight, doing a thorough preflight and saying farewell, we launched for a flight to Cape May. I frequently fly right seat in my Cessna 172, so I gave Eric, the senior, the left seat and offered a pseudo flight lesson, though I am not a CFI. I guided Eric through startup, taxi and takeoff procedures, and using mostly simple pilotage, I provided navigation instructions to Cape May. Eric is a natural pilot, and I barely touched the controls until it was time to land.

Due to forecast crosswinds back at Wings, I flew left seat on the way back, giving the junior, Jeffrey, as much stick time as possible. His only request was that we fly over the city on the way back. A friendly call on 119.75 to Philadelphia Approach was all it took to give us a birds-eye



view of Philly International and downtown Philadelphia at 3000 feet, direct to Wings Field.

Back at the terminal at Wings, John Archer met up with us and spoke for about an hour. John provided insights about the airline industry and recommendations about working hard, being on time, and interestingly, keeping a clean digital footprint so that past transgressions don't come back to haunt in job interviews. John also emphasized the importance of getting an education that offers alternatives in the case that personal or industry situations change.

It is encouraging to know that young students are thinking about aviation as a career and have the courage to reach out to organizations such as ours for mentoring and assistance.



As our country is today under siege from a hidden viral enemy, I am reminded of a city that was under siege by a very visible enemy.

A few years back, Pat Sheves donated an entire library of aviation books to the Aero Club to sell and raise funds for the scholarship fund. Every so often, I peruse through the leftovers (there are a lot of them) and I came across the book "Bridge Across the Sky" by Richard Collier (McGraw Hill 1978). The book recounts the story of the formation of the forces for the Berlin Airlift and the hardships that Germans endured for the 11 months of the surface blockade of Berlin. This is a very interesting, factual account of this unlikely solution to Russian intransigence, and it is an account that has a particularly personal connection.

In 1945, the Russians from the east and the western allies France, the British and the US raced towards each other to defeat and occupy Germany. By controversial agreements and facts on the ground, Germany was divided into four parts occupied by the Allies, US, UK, France and Russia. Each country had a sector and very quickly, it evolved into the Russian vs the other 3. The capital, Berlin, was in the Russian sector, though all four occupying powers were entitled to access Berlin.

The Russians had been allies, but after 1946, when Winston Churchill gave his Iron Curtain speech, it was

obvious to those close to the problem that the Russians were no longer allies but competitors for world domination. Yet the United States was war weary and in no mood or condition to fight another war. The vast machinery of war, men and equipment had been returned to civilian life.

In 1946, my father was posted to a state department position in Berlin and took his family to the occupied city. I was 3 years old. Berlin was well into the Russian held part of Germany, a fact

central to the Collier book. Berlin, being 200 miles from Hamburg and very near the Polish border, supplying the western allies meant a long trip by train or truck through the

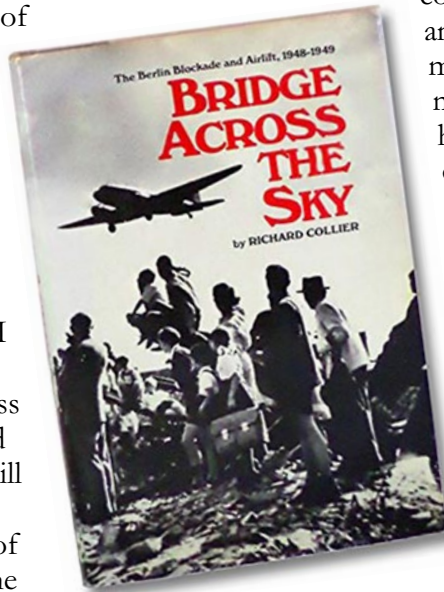
effort to get the economies of Germany, France and England restored and functioning again after the destruction of the war. The Russians perceived this plan as counter to their aims. Two months later, the Russians used petty bureaucracy as a cover for isolating Berlin, and reducing its population to poverty. They also started a gambit of forbidding rail and truck traffic through its sector to Berlin. That included rail shipments of coal used to produce electricity.

The American Forces began an audacious plan to supply Berlin through air corridors from Allied sectors in the West to airports in the allied sections of Berlin. A very notable achievement was to supply Berlin with coal for electric power. Coal was placed in 100-pound knapsacks and transported to Berlin by air. I recall that electricity for lights came on only well after sunset during the winter of '48-49. Over that winter, I remember the house being in the dark from afternoon until dinner. There was no electricity during those hours, thus no light.

None other than Gen. Curtis Lemay commanded the operation, using DC-3's(C-47) and DC 4's(C-54). The total flights numbered 278,000 and tons transported totaled 2.3 million.

Collier's book recounts that as time went on, there were developed effective means of combining weight and volume for maximum loading efficiency. Elaborate scheduling routines meant that the freighters were quickly unloaded and returned to the west for additional loads. In

addition, as part of Berlin's economic rebirth, the city exported manufactured goods to the west, using the otherwise deadhead return legs of the supply flights.



Russian held sector of Germany, known later as East Germany.

In April of 1948, the US passed the Marshall plan, a comprehensive

REGIONAL AIRPORT REPORT

by Elaine Farashian

MARCH 2020 (DATES MAY HAVE CHANGED DUE TO CORONA)

PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL [PHL]

The projects along Departures Road involve improving drainage and providing structural integrity to the barrier wall running the entire length of the road. Terminal A-West has experienced demolition of the existing baggage-handling system and construction of a new 2,500 sq. ft. Checked Baggage Resolution Area (CBRA) with the addition of 3 upgraded explosive detection machines. A-West is the first of new vestibule projects leading to the same in the other terminals. Due to increased foot traffic, pedestrian safety enhancements have been made in 3 phases between Arrivals Road and North and South Commercial Roads. Solar panels with LED flashing pedestrian-crossing sign system are being installed with bollards on both sides of the crosswalks. The LED lights will continuously flash providing additional cues to drivers and pedestrians.

NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA [PNE]

This is a reliever airport for PHL and of the 2 runways, 6/24 accounts for 60% of the traffic. Runway 6/24 pavement investigation revealed distresses in the asphalt layers and poor sub-grade conditions. The pavement required strengthening to serve B737 and A319 aircraft. The project included re-configuring the geometry of taxiway L and how it connects to the runway. The work will spill over to spring 2020.

BRANDYWINE REGIONAL [OQN]

Once obstructions are removed from runway 9, a request will be made through the flight procedures, GATEWAY, to have night minimums of both runways flown by Flight Check. Construction phase of runway widening will begin when the airport gains access from adjacent property owners. The airport is expecting a grant soon, permitting the hangar project to continue being done in the spring. A meeting is planned with the Township Engineer to address the concern that an elementary school is being proposed 1 1/2 miles from airport center.

DOYLESTOWN [DYL]

The paving of grass tiedowns and construction of bypass taxiways are 50% completed. Completion may occur by the end of April. Design of runway 5/23 rehab is almost finished. Construction may be completed in the fall 2020. The airport is working with PennDOT to update the Airport Layout Plan.

HERITAGE FIELD [PTW]

Obstruction removal continues on the south side of runway 10. Taxiway rehab bids were received. The airport is trying to get a construction grant in order to start work mid-April. Design for hangar development has begun and may take a year to complete.

NEW GARDEN [N57]

Site preparation for the west hangar construction project is about 50% completed. Work may begin in May and should take 3-4 months to finish. GPS approaches to both runways are programmed in the IFP Gateway, but the publication dates keep getting pushed out and are currently on the schedule for 5/21/20. The BOA advised the airport to write a formal letter to Tony McCloskey (of BOA) to expedite functioning of the out-of-service VOR and the delayed RNAV GPS. 2020 events include: Future Aviators Jamboree May 18, 5K Runway Run May 30, Summerfest June 13-14, Future Aviators Camp July 6-10 and August 3-7.

QUAKERTOWN [UKT]

Phase 4 design for obstruction removal is ongoing with construction anticipated in fall 2020. The airport purchased the Bernebei property last fall in order to remove tree obstructions. Construction is to begin late March and end mid-April. The \$110,000 grant will help protect runway approaches.

SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL [VAY]

The airport is working with DOT and DEP in its environmental study for obstruction removal, phase 2. The airport is also awaiting a permit so that tree cutting can occur between the end of Oct. and the beginning of May. The design for runway 8/26 widening as well as the design for relocation of parallel taxiway are projects being circulated within DOT for approval.

TRENTON MERCER [TTN]

The closing of the security fence project is in progress. The construction of new Delta taxiway is completed. The airport is working with FAA to produce a final environmental assessment for design of the new passenger terminal. Concerning runway protection zone obstruction, an appraiser is being sought to conduct appraisals for property and easement procurement.

WINGS [LOM]

The airport is anticipating grants for: phase 2 construction of west itinerant apron, phase 2 construction of west hangar site development, phase 2 of runway 24 obstruction removal and phase 1 of parallel taxiway rehab.

WFH: Working from hangar



Isolating at airplane hangar at Brandywine Airport

In early January, long before our recent national isolation and empty airline flights, I had planned to visit my ailing mother, who at the time was being cared for by my sister and her family in Chattanooga, TN.

Wintertime, being less than ideal weather conditions for flying myself a long distance over the Smoky Mountains, single-pilot, IFR in cold weather, I reserved seat 10A on flight American Airlines flight 4718, departing at 9:30, the only daily direct flight from Philadelphia to Lovell Field. I planned to stay for a long weekend.

Arriving at airport parking around 7:30AM, the shuttle driver asked for my departure gate. I struggled to find the gate through my airline app, so I just declared that I was on an American domestic flight. The nice driver dropped me off at the A-gates and I proceeded to the ticket counter.

Typically, I am particular about double checking my reservations, so I was rather taken aback when the young gentleman behind the counter congratulated me for being plenty early for my 9:30PM flight. I knew right away it was likely my mistake. Dejected, I asked “can you get me on an earlier flight?” “Let me check on that for you, sir.”

After looking in his system for a while, he informed me that the next available flight to Chattanooga would get me in late in the evening, but he could get me an earlier flight into Atlanta for the opportunity to rent a car for the 2-hour drive to just across the Tennessee border. The change fee plus the fare difference would only be around \$1200! “Gah.” I

thanked him and found an airport bench nearby to gather my thoughts.

First, I checked Southwest Airlines for a flight. They had nothing into



Chattanooga, but I could get into Atlanta around 6PM and rent a car. The cost was around \$700 plus maybe \$150 for a car. That would still get me in after 9PM. I really did want to get to my destination much earlier than the airlines were offering me. I was confounded.

My what a beautiful sunny day I noticed outside. I could drive, I sup-

ramp fees at Chattanooga. But, by saving airport parking fees at KPHL that might be a wash. 30 minutes drive back to Brandywine Airport, pre-flight, and I'd be off in about an hour. It would be six hours, including a fuel stop, putting me into Chattanooga around 4PM, hours ahead of the big boys. And, the four-day forecast was exceptional, promising good weather for a return on Monday.

It didn't take me long at that point to focus on my new mission. I launched by 10AM and had a severe clear flight with a slight tailwind and minimal turbulence in the mountains, except for the descent into Greenbriar, WV for fuel and a quick snack. The second leg into Chattanooga was a scenic, 6000-foot leg over West Virginia, the Tri-Cities, and Knoxville. My sister picked me up at Wilson Air Center, a very nice FBO at Lovell Field. I had a very nice, if sad, visit with my sick mother, who at 90 years old was likely within months of passing away.



My return flight promised to be pleasant, but I would have to depart IFR to get to VFR-over-the-top so that I fly direct to Farmville, VA, just at my comfortable fuel range. I made Farmville easily and the return flight to Pennsylvania was uneventful, if not sad, thinking of family.

This journey, executed without a hiccup, was a very personal General Aviation flight

that demonstrated the possibilities of having access to one's own aircraft, on one's own schedule, to travel to the thousands of convenient GA airports throughout the county. And, it sure is nice to one-up the airlines now and then.

On January 20, 2020, Clare Louise Dant, a wonderful mother of eleven children passed away peacefully with family at her side.

pose. The drive is 12 hours. 8PM arrival. You might be thinking what I am thinking, but it took me awhile to ponder it. Typically, given the 600NM distance, it was rarely cost or time efficient to fly myself. Could it be this time?

I didn't have my E6B handy, so I did some calculations with my iPad. My operational cost in Cessna Skyhawk would be around \$600, not including

Blue Angels and Thunderbirds salute Philadelphia first responders

by Robert Dant

Delayed once due to weather, the US Navy Blue Angels and US Air Force Thunderbirds jointly flew formations of six F/A-18C/D Hornets and six F-16C/D Fighting Falcons over Trenton and Philadelphia on the beautiful Tuesday afternoon of April 28. The flights are a collaborative salute to healthcare workers, first responders, military, and essential personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The flyover lasted about 30 minutes.

Similar such flights are planned over cities throughout the country. The idea of the flights came about as an alternative way for formation teams to maintain their skills during a time when they are unable to fly due to airshow cancellations.

The flights began at Joint Base McGuire, flew over Trenton, south over the Delaware River, Ben Franklin Bridge with multiple circles over the city of Philadelphia. They exited the downtown Philadelphia Area and followed the river past Philadelphia International Airport towards Wilmington, Delaware. Walt Ellis was able to capture a photo from his New Jersey vantage point.



Photo by Walt Ellis



Fueling the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds

by Debbie Harding

I missed seeing the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds fly over, but I am sharing some photos sent to me by a young balloon pilot that flew as a contract pilot for me in 2012. He was just starting his career in the Air Force and had some free time. Major Ryan Lowenstein, USAF is a KC-10 tanker pilot stationed at Joint Base McGuire. He was just as excited as I was about the event, but for better reason; he got to fuel the formation flyers over the homeland rather than the usual overseas operations far from home. He is also scheduled to fly this year at the Chester County Balloon Festival rescheduled to the fall. I, of course had to ask him why he still flies balloons, and his answer was that he finds flying balloons "more challenging," albeit so much "less technical." It made me chuckle for sure!



Photos courtesy Major Ryan Lowenstein



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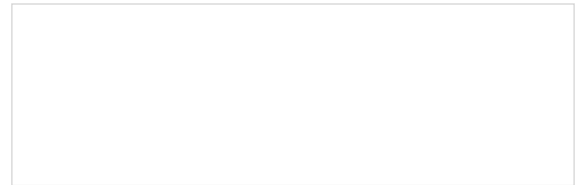
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FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE
REQUIRED



AVIATION EVENT CALENDAR



Cancellations/Delays due to COVID

Massey Chilifest Fly-in, Massey, May,
Cancelled

Reading WWII Weekend, June,
Postponed

Antique Aero Squadron Fly-in, Massey, June,
Cancelled

Ninety-Nines 2020 Intl Conference, July,
Cancelled

EAA AirVenture Oshkosh,
Cancelled

Chester County Balloon Festival,
Rescheduled to September 11, 12, 13

New Garden Summerfest Airshow,
Rescheduled August

Aero Club Scholarship Awards Ceremony,
Rescheduled tentatively to July 16

Atlantic City "Thunder over the Boardwalk",
August 26, 2020

Board of Directors Report

By Carris Kocher

The Aero Club Board of Directors held a virtual board meeting on April 16. President Deb Harding opened the meeting via a Zoom video call.

Treasurer John O'Toole presented financial results. Our club expenses are on par with previous years at about break even, with the newsletter being our biggest expense. The scholarship funds have fallen with the markets, but we still anticipate generous funds being available for awards this year.

Steve Jordan spoke about the status of scholarship applications. We had good interest with a week left in the application period. Interviews will be held online. The June 18 scholarship dinner date was debated.

Rob Morrow discussed our membership numbers. Included paid and complimentary memberships, we are steady at 220. Discussion ensued about ways to encourage renewals and new memberships.

Rob Dant reported on the preparation of this newsletter and the prospects for getting it printed.

The events committee spoke about opportunities for online and in-person events this summer.

The board adjourned. The next board meeting is scheduled for July 16.