



## Flying W Airport to close; Heritage has new owner

**Flying W Airport** in central New Jersey, just east of Philadelphia, will be sold for development of 380 homes. Originally a crop-dusting airstrip, the airport was developed as a resort fly-in by Bill Whitesell in the early 1960's and was home to Flying W Airways. The heart of the facility includes a hotel (now closed), a restaurant and air-plane-shaped pool. The development will take place in Medford Township on the southern half of the airport tract.

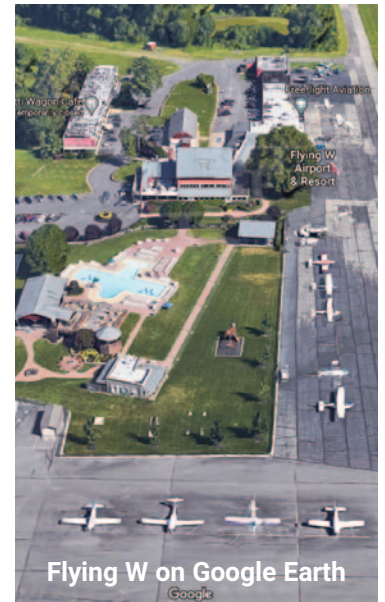
The development plan includes 290 age-restricted homes and 90 low-income family rental units. According to the development plan, "There is a decline in airport usage over time, due to competition from a neighboring airport and the obsolete size of the runways and facilities" and "Mandated

repairs for certification and continued operation of the existing airport infrastructure are cost-prohibitive."

**Heritage Airport** in Pottstown, formerly owned by Aero Club member John Desmond, now deceased, has been sold to David Pitcairn, also an Aero Club member. The sale is pending review by the FAA.

Known as Pottstown-Limerick Airport for most of its history, the field dates back to 1928 and received airport licensing from the state in 1931. In 1968, PECO acquired the airport due to its proximity to the planned Limerick nuclear generation plant. PECO contracted with PennAirways to manage the airport at that time and

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### George A. Spratt

Local engineer to be honored for his contributions to the Wrights and to aviation.

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### Amelia's ACPA Connection

Amelia has a connection to Philadelphia and to the Aero Club of Pennsylvania

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer! Time flies! I cannot believe we are this far into the year already. All the restraints of living with covid have just increased the effectiveness of the virtual world. I can honestly say that I appreciate the time saved by no long drives to meetings while still reaping the benefit of them virtually. Case in point, the recent Aero Club member presentation so generously arranged by long standing Aero Club member Michael Little with Dr. Eugene Richardson (Page 5); one of a handful of the 992 Tuskegee Airman still living today. Through our Zoom connection, I saw his excitement when he spoke about the P-40 he loved to fly. And the smile that came to his face when talking about the fun of gunnery practice and the com-

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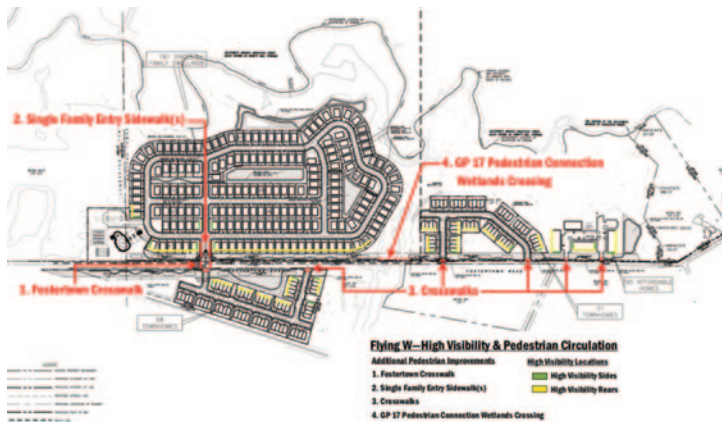
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# Airport News...

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PennAirways manages the airport operations to this date. In 2009, the airport and PennAirways were acquired by local business man, avid pilot and vintage aircraft collector John K Desmond Jr. He changed the airport name to Heritage Field. Mr. Pitcairn was a longtime friend of Mr. Desmond and shares the same passion for vintage aircraft as John. The airport will hold an Antique Fly-In from May 21-May 23 for pre-1955 aircraft that includes camping, pancake breakfasts, and BBQ. See Page 7. See more airport news on Page 3.



Flying W housing plan



Pottstown Heritage Airport

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEBBIE HARDING

Continued from previous page...

petitions they held. And, the mysterious lack of posting first place Top Gun winners when their unit placed first. And I loved that he assigned homework to us! I purchased the Tuskegee book "Soaring to Glory," by his fellow airman Lt Col Harry T. Stewart Jr. I will loan it out if anyone is interested! Thank you, Dr. Richardson, for your continued commitment to this country and living representation of the Greatest Generation.

**"This area is not just the cradle of rotary wing aircraft"**

In February, which now seems quite long ago, I had the opportunity to spend some time looking at archives collected by early Vice President of the Aero Club, Paul Thomas, who was also the marketing director for Pitcairn Auto Gyros. Which leads me to a big Congratulations, David Pitcairn! Let us show a big round of support by attending the May 21 to 23rd event (Page 7)! Also in those archives were some letters of acknowledgement of Amelia Earhart's presentation to the club (Page 6) as well as her record-making flight in the Auto Gyro. And so great that George A. Spratt (Page 4) will be recognized locally for his contribution to the Wright brothers. This area is not just the cradle of rotary wing aircraft. We've got our fingers in the development of fixed wing craft as well! I read somewhere that Spratt was able to have long conversations with the "father of aviation" Octave Chanute. I wonder how he accomplished that as Chanute was based in Kansas and Spratt in Coatesville. And I wonder what they could have invented if they had Zoom.

And so, a perfect segue into the July 22 in-person BOD meeting at the Philadelphia Aviation Country Club. Mark your calendars for this live event! It will be different! We will still have a virtual component for those who can not make it. We are also in the planning stages of a virtual Scholarship Dinner scheduled for June 17th. From what Steve Jordan shared as scholarship chair, I am excited to meet this next generation of aviators, as I am quite sure that Covid has made their choice of an aviation career one based more on passion than practicality. So, I am looking forward to meeting this tenacious group of men and women.



**Aero Club of Pennsylvania**  
Promoting aviation in the Greater Delaware Valley  
PO Box 748, Blue Bell, PA 19422



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

## PENNSYLVANIA PILOT

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Roscoe Draper (Tuskegee)  
R. Anderson "Andy" Pew (AOPA)

The return of warm weather is welcomed by all, and it always signifies an exciting time of the year for the Scholarship Committee. While our normal routines of face-to-face interviews and celebratory awards dinners have yet to return, we are happy to continue our mission of helping aviators in our area achieve their goals and further the field of aviation.

**“We were very impressed with the high caliber of applicants”**

This year’s review board consists of returning members Alicia Sikes, Emily Lewis, and myself. New to the review board are Nick Althouse and

John Archer. Nick is a First Officer at Republic Airways, and serves in the Delaware Air National Guard flying C130s. John Archer is a Captain at Southwest Airlines, and is a past scholarship recipient himself – that makes three former scholarship recipients on the review board! I can’t thank these volunteers enough, as they truly make this program function.

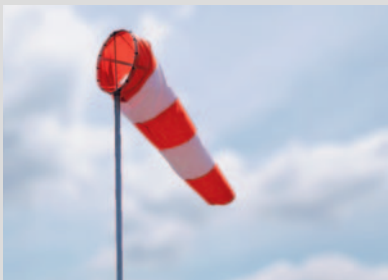
Through our online application portal Submittable, we have recently reviewed 28 completed applications. We were very impressed and encouraged with the high caliber of applicants, and invited 17 aviators to proceed to the zoom interview phase of the candidate selection process. On May 15th, we will interview the remaining candidates and decide who will receive an Aero Club of Pennsylvania scholarship.

It is worth mentioning that none of this is possible without the generous donations the Aero Club receives every year. Without our donors, none of this would be possible. For those of you who have contributed, please know that you have made a great impact on the lives of aspiring aviators. Both the club and past recipients are very thankful, and we can’t wait to help the next generation of aviators take to the skies. Join us on June 17 for an online ceremony to celebrate these candidates.

I hope everyone stays happy and healthy, and we can all get together to celebrate in person soon!

## Airport Highlights

*by Elaine Farashian & Rob Dant*



### PHILADELPHIA INTL

Philadelphia International will receive approximately \$115 million in relief funding from the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus stimulus package. A \$35 Million project to refurbish an airport apron is using “foamed glass aggregate”

made from recycled bottles as a fill instead of typical fill material. The material saves construction time and simplifies drainage.

### NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA [PNE]

Northeast Philadelphia Airport (PNE) will receive \$148,000 in relief funding from the American Rescue Plan.

### BRANDYWINE REGIONAL [OQN]

Brandywine Aviation & Maintenance is the new tenant in the maintenance hangar. It offers advanced flight training as well as maintenance. The airport is continuing tree removal and is planning runway lighting replacement. In Spring of 2022, 4 new corporate hangars may be expected. Presidential TFR flight plans are required when the President is home in nearby Delaware.

### CHESTER COUNTY [MQS]

The airport will be acquiring two new pieces of equipment with a PENNDOT-BOA grant. Construction will begin for the West End Apron Rehab project. Pending are two other projects: airport perimeter fencing and West End Corporate Taxi-lane rehab.

### DOYLESTOWN [DYL]

The airport is presently involved with a runway rehab project.

### ESSINGTON SEAPLANE BASE [9N2]

A 2021 “splash-in” is being planned for August 7.

### HERITAGE FIELD [PTW]

The airport is being sold to David Pitcairn, but the manage-

ment will remain the same. Ownership transferal will be approved by FAA. Enterprise car rental is available at the airport, and ramp space is available to transient aircraft.

### NEW GARDEN FLYING FIELD [N57]

The airport, being only 8.5 miles from President Biden’s residence, is within the 12 mile NO FLY ring of the TFR. NOTAMs and TFRs have to be viewed before flying. Arrangements have been made with neighboring airports for ramp space as needed for temporary aircraft relocation. RNAV approaches have been published for runway 24/6. Future projects include: Airport Way waterline extension connecting to existing water system, new underground primary electrical service, installation of PAPI & REILS, removal of runway 24 obstruction dwelling. Only 1 60’x60’ hangar left for sale. EAA Chapter 240 and Brandywine Soaring Assn. for gliders are also operating at the airport.

### SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL [VAY]

Completed is Phase 2 of environmental study for end of runway 26 obstruction removal. Removing obstructions of runway 26 involve tree removal and DEP restrictions may prolong project from April through September. Design work for runway 8/26 widening and relocation of parallel taxiway is in progress. Consultant has received task order and work has started for environmental study and permit for wildlife fence installation. Hangar door replacement is expected by the end of March.

### TRENTON-MERCER [TTN]

The airport is waiting for closeout documents for phase 2 of Taxiway H,B, F rehab/construction. Taxiway D reconstruction and Taxiway G rehab project will end once invoice is paid. Taxiway A design is in progress. Taxiway F relocation/construction is complete.

### WINGS FIELD [KLOM]

Bids for a new 200’x60’ hangar are being evaluated in the next 3 weeks. State and federal funds will allow for initial planning of a proposed new itinerant apron west of taxiway B, the taxiway leading from the terminal to the runway. It will be similar to the apron on taxiway B east.

A new historical marker in West Brandywine Township, PA, will honor a Coatesville doctor, who was a good friend of the Wright brothers and helped them to understand the physics of lift and drag. George Alexander Spratt (1870-1934) was a local farmer and medical doctor with a penchant for engineering and a fascination with the possibility of flight. He performed many aeronautical experiments to understand the movement of the center of pressure on a curved surface and had designed a device for measuring the lift on airfoils.

From 1898-1910, Spratt exchanged letters with civil engineer Octave Chanute and he was with the Wrights at Kitty Hawk during 1901, 1902 and 1903. Amongst other work, he helped construct the sixty-foot monorail to be used for launching the Flyer.

Later, Spratt built his own airplanes with simplified control surfaces and controls that made an airplane "as simple to fly as a car is to drive."

The marker will be placed at the location of Spratt's farm where the barn shown in a 1908 photograph of Spratt's glider still stands today.

The impetus of this story has many connections:

In a 2013 conversation, **Debbie Harding**, Aero Club President spoke with **Lorain Lucas** about offering a charity hot air balloon ride. The conversation turned to an article in the Chester County Day Magazine on George Spratt, friend to her grandfather **Charles E. Lucas Sr.** Lorain provided some compelling photos to Deb to use in a future article.

**Loraine Lucas** is granddaughter of Charles E. Lucas Sr., an inventor and machinist from West Chester, PA, who had a machine shop and later Lucas Tag Company. Loraine's records indicate that Spratt paid Lucas to machine parts for Spratt's airplanes.

In 2021, **Carris Kocher**, Aero Club Board noticed an article in DELCO.TODAY about a new historical marker that referenced an article in the Phoenixville Patch.

**Marlene Lang** of the Phoenixville Patch reported in March of the



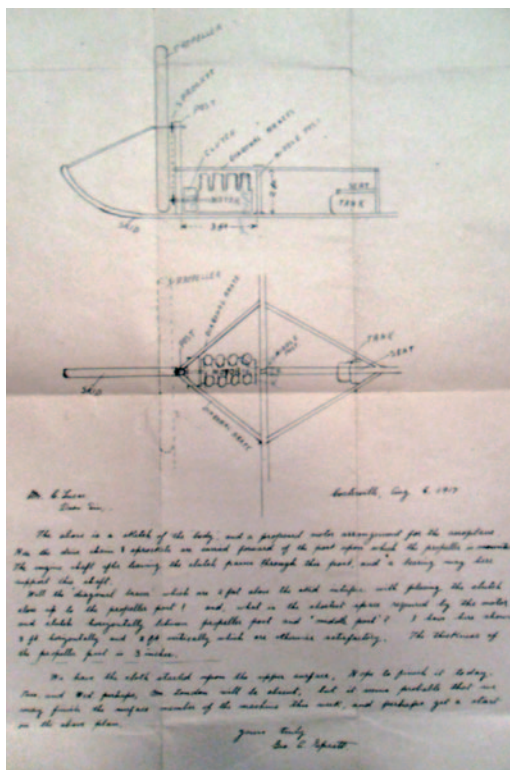
George Spratt aeroplane

plans for a new historical marker. The marker will read: "George Alexander Spratt (1870-1934), West Brandywine Township. Early aviation design pioneer whose research was instrumental in the Wright brothers' first flight. He performed countless experiments to understand the forces that would keep aircraft aloft. His innovative use of a wind tunnel led to greater understanding of the effect of lift, drag, and the center of pressure on a curved wing."

Marlene references a story written by Dr. Richard Stimson and an article by EAA Chapter 334 of Groton, CT.

**Dr. Richard Stimson** wrote a detailed story in wrightstories.com about the details of Spratt's work and about the on and off relationship between George Spratt and the Wright brothers. Spratt believed that the Wright's control system was unsafe. He wanted to design a machine that was automatically stable. Spratt later complained that Orville and Wilbur didn't show interest in his ideas and did not give him credit for his measurements of the lift/drag ratio.

**EAA Chapter 334** of Groton, CT, reports that one of their past members was George G. Spratt, son of George A Spratt. His father pursued designing a safe airplane that would not stall. Spratt died in 1934, but his son, spent his life improving his father's control-wing airplane design. He was an EAA member in good standing and was often seen with his flying boat control-wing aircraft on Long Island Sound in Connecticut.



1917 Letter from George Spratt to Charles Lucas explaining the proposed construction of his aircraft



On April 22, 2021, the Aviation Club of the Union League of Philadelphia sponsored an evening ZOOM discussion with **Dr. Eugene Richardson, Jr.** Invitees included members of the Aero Club of Pennsylvania, EAA Chapter 240, and Angel Flight East. About 40 participants listened in and

asked Dr. Richardson about his Tuskegee experience.

## To what do you attribute the recent accolades for Tuskegee pilots?

The movies. George Lucas spent \$93 million of his own money to make the movie Red Tails. For the script, they used our mission logs as references.

## When were you first inspired about aviation?

In about 1932, when I was 5 and we were living in Mansfield, Ohio, I was able to attend an air circus. Nothing seemed so fantastic as seeing people, especially colored people, climbing out of these machines that were flying through the air.

## Tell us about your military aviation training. What airplanes did you fly?

Our orientation flight was in a Piper Cub in 1944. Then we started out in the basic trainer, the Vultee Vibrator and then moved onto the advanced trainer AT-6 that had flaps and retractable gear.

## How many hours did it take you to solo?

8 hours.

## What is your favorite airplane to fly?

The P-40. It was very maneuverable.

## How many pilots were in your training class?

Our class had 38 guys, of which 25 advanced.

## When did you leave the service?

I left when the military told me to. I separated from the service in 1946.

## What was your most memorable flight?

Well, flying out of Waterboro Army Air Field, South Carolina, we were a flight of four, and about 40 minutes into the flight, I noticed the oil temp going up. P47's were sort of known for that. I saw the oil temperature in the red and knew I had to turn back to the airport. Now

back in those days we did circular landings. We flew over the numbers and circled 270 degrees to land. The tower gave me clearance to land runway 29, but instead of doing a circular landing I just flew straight in and taxied to the ramp. The mechanic used a double-handle screwdriver to check for oil and found almost nothing there.

## What was the most fun thing you did in your training?

I enjoyed gunnery. The AT-6 had wing guns and a gun through the prop. We did air to ground and air to air.

## What other aircraft did Tuskegee fly?

The Tuskegee flew P-40, P-47, P-39, P-51

## What was the biggest impact Tuskegee had on the military?

Prior to 1948, whites could not take orders from black officers. That limited the opportunities for black officers. In 1948, as a result of the Tuskegee success, President Truman realized that it resulted in a huge waste of manpower, and he issued executive order 9981 to integrate the armed forces.

## What did you do after service?

I used the G.I. Bill to go to college at Temple for a doctorate in education. I became a teacher of math and science and eventually principal of a middle school in Philadelphia.

## What kind of flying have you done recently?

Well, before my son retired from American Airlines, I got to fly jumpseat with him in the 777.

## What's the Tuskegee book you are holding in your hand?

"Soaring to Glory"

## Name a person you respected greatly?

General Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. Go read about him.

## What's your message to young people today?

Education is the elevator to success.

*Dr Richardson is a member of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen. He and his colleagues were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2006. "The fantastic functioning of black pilots in World War II inspired desegregation," Richardson said. "That's what it says on my medal."*



Alabama 2021 Quarter honors Tuskegee



Tuskegee Class 45-A-SE 3/11/1945. Richardson, 0841261 Camden, NJ, Top Left

Amelia Earhart is known world-wide. During her somewhat brief flying career, some would argue that she was a better self-promoter than a pilot. And she is, of course, best remembered for her last flight. So much has been written about her—both her early aviation career and the efforts to locate her Lockheed Electra since the day she went missing—that it seems rather redundant to write yet another article for our readers.

What you may not know, however, is that she had quite a connection to the Philadelphia area and, more interestingly, to the Aero Club of Pennsylvania! She was a member, having been approved for membership by Aero Club President W.L. Saunders who served in that office from 1928 to 1933. At the time of her application, Amelia listed her current connection to the Club as serving on the Contest Committee for the National Aeronautical Association (the Aero Club of Pennsylvania being an early “chapter” of the NAA). She also listed her business connection as Vice President of New York-Philadelphia-Washington Airways and Assistant General Manager of TAT-MAD-DUX. She recorded her residence at 353 West 57 Street in New York City—within 2 blocks of Central Park.

Ms. Earhart and Orville Wright attended the dedication of the Franklin Institute’s Hall of Aviation on the 30th anniversary of the first flight on December 17, 1933. She learned and practiced her flying skills at Wings Field in Blue Bell in a PCA-2 (an autogyro) which was manufactured locally. So she was somewhat of a local aviation celebrity in those early years.

Certainly her most famous connection was her attempt to achieve an altitude record in the Pitcairn-Cierva autogyro at Willow Grove’s Pitcairn Field on April 8, 1931. This new, curious-looking, flying machine was designed to take off and land from a small piece of real estate the length of a tennis court. At the time, this was truly a great achievement. The gyroplane of 1930 was cutting edge aviation technology. The autogyro was capable of flying at very controllable slow speeds without the risk of stalling the aircraft and yet was about as fast as any fixed wing air-

craft of that era. Amelia set that record, making two attempts in one day to climb first to 18,415 feet, and then to approximately 19,300 feet on the second attempt. The latter flight battled 60 mph winds at 12,000 feet, resulting in Amelia’s opinion that she could have gone even higher in calmer weather. The flights were a delicate balance between weight—how much fuel she needed to get to altitude with enough to return safely—and climbing ability. Too much fuel might negatively influence the altitude achieved; too little and she might not get there and back. Remember, too, that much of these decisions were based on the rudimentary science and instruments that were available at the time. Many times, they took their best guesses and took off literally on a wing and a prayer!



Amelia's Aero Club Membership Card

Courtesy of Mary Voss

Amelia wrote two articles about this experience that the Evening Bulletin published the next day, so it was quite the talk about town. Because of her responsibilities as Vice President of the New York-Philadelphia-Washington Air-

ways, and her connection to Ludington Lines, she was hopeful that this attempt would generate more public interest in using aircraft for regular transportation. According to Wikipedia, Ludington Airline was an airline in the northeastern United States in the 1930s. It was unique as it was the first airline that carried passengers only and was not supported by government revenue from air-mail service contracts that all other airlines depended on. It was the first successful airline that had flights every hour on the hour as a regularly scheduled service.

Say what you will about Amelia Earhart, she was an early and strong proponent of women in general and women pilots in particular. She was

driven to achieve notoriety in her many attempts at world aviation records. She had great courage and confidence. She was a powerful role model. While she might be mostly remembered for having disappeared over the Pacific in her final attempt to add another record to her repertoire, her other achievements contributed greatly to making flying a commonplace occurrence, and we are all the beneficiaries of her efforts.



Amelia Earhart joined at her left by Camden Mayor Roy R. Stewart, at right, Richard Gimbel, and far right, Joseph Dodge, during her 1932 visit to Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA RECORD PHOTOGRAPH / VIA THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA



**ANTIQUUE FLY-IN**  
**MAY 21ST - 23RD 2021**  
PRE-1955 AIRCRAFT FREE ADMISSION  
POST-1955 \$25 ADMISSION  
BRING YOUR OWN TIE-DOWN



## HERITAGE FIELD AIRPORT KPTW – Limerick PA

Friday

Arrival ~ Sizzle Grille Cookout ~ Beer Garden ~ Fire-pits

Saturday

Golden Age Air Museum Fly-Out  
JJ Ratigan BBQ ~ Beer Garden ~ Axe Throwing  
Games and Fun for Kids too

Saturday 8am & Sunday 8am

Pancake Breakfast to support PAOP \$10 Adults/\$5 Children

On-Site Camping Welcome Please RSVP (No Showers)

Hotel Accommodations: Hampton Inn Limerick (610)495-6999

Rental Cars: Enterprise (610)327-3635

Camping RSVP or Questions Please Call:

Chris Jordan, Airport Manager (610)495-7000

UNICOM: 122.7 ASOS: 119.425

Line Crew - (610)500-3023



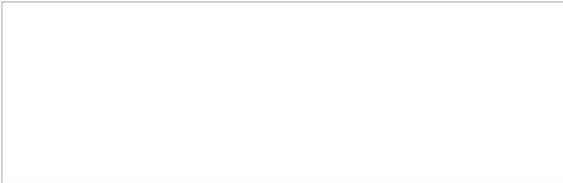


FIRST CLASS  
POSTAGE  
REQUIRED

Organized December 17, 1909; Chartered May 10, 1910  
**Aero Club of Pennsylvania**  
PO Box 748, Blue Bell, PA 19422

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## 2021 Summer Calendar

### MAY

- 21-23** Antique Fly-In & Camping, Heritage (PTW)
- 22** EAA 855 Poker Run (69N) Facebook: Chapter 855
- 30** EAA 426 Breakfast (CBE)

### JUNE

- 4-6** Reading WWII Weekend, Reading, PA (RDG)
- 5-6** Gettysburg Wings & Wheels, Breakfast (W05)
- 5** EAA 769 Lunch, Sunbury, PA (71N)
- 17** **Annual Scholarship Dinner**, Thursday, 6PM ZOOM
- 18-20** Golden Age Air Museum Biplane, Bands & Cruise In
- 22-26** Sentimental Journey, Lock Haven, PA (LHV)
- 27** EAA 426 Breakfast (CBE)

### JULY

- 3** EAA 769 Lunch, Sunbury, PA (71N)
- 22** **Board of Directors Mtg**, Thursday, 6PM
- 23-25** New Jersey Festival of Ballooning
- 26-1** EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI
- 25** EAA 426 Breakfast (CBE)

### AUGUST

- 7** Splash-in at Philadelphia Seaplane Base, 11AM-3PM
- 18** Atlantic City Airshow "Thunder over the Boardwalk"
- 21-22** Pocono Raceway Airshow
- 29** EAA 426 Breakfast (CBE)

### SEPTEMBER

- 10-12** Chester County Balloon Festival ([ccbaloontfest.com](http://ccbaloontfest.com))

## Board of Directors Report

By Elaine Farashian

The Board of Directors met via ZOOM on April 22. Attendance was 18 for the board meeting. President Debbie Harding opened the meeting.

Treasurer John O'Toole reported on financials and Steve Jordan followed with a Scholarship Report. The 2021 Scholarship application ended in April with 28 applications submitted. 17 applicants were asked to be interviewed via Zoom in May for further consideration for awards. Additional effort may be taken in the future to encourage more mechanic-related applications.

Rob Morrow reported on membership and Rob Dant reported about the Newsletter.

New board member Emily Daniel discussed efforts to improve the Aero Club's social media presence on both Facebook and Instagram, including posting the latest events and sharing stories from the newsletter.

The Scholarship dinner will be held in June, as is typical, but this time via Zoom, on Thursday, June 17.

The meeting was adjourned at 7PM for an interview with Dr. Eugene Richardson, Tuskegee Airman. The next meeting is scheduled for July 22.