

Silver Eagles Newsletter

November 2011

Wow, it's like we had a membership drive! We have **four** new members this month. If you remember them, then get in touch! If not, get in touch anyway! You can never have too many friends! Use the attached contact list. I'm going to add a note at the end of this for those who, like me, are approaching the magic Medicare age of 65. I'll put it as an addendum because many of you have made that decision and others are not nearly that old.

New Members:

Butch Wilson – Aviation from Atlanta retired on Halloween! Scary for AS! He said, "I'm still in shock that I actually did it (retired). This came on suddenly I had not planned on retiring for several more years yet. But now that I have I will make the best of it." He mentioned problems with management that we've heard before from others. He also added, "However, my wife has managed to find plenty of honey does to keep me busy for awhile while we have this down time. Hopefully, within the next year or two I will find the time to make some plans." Get in touch and give him ideas!

Bill Hendricks – A pioneer aviation investigator with the Civil Aeronautics Board and then the NTSB when it inherited this function. He joined the FAA in the 1980's, and retired from there in the 1990s.

Jim LeBerte - retired on August 31st after 23 years with the Safety Board.

Ron Schleede - Head of major aviation accident investigations for many years.

Member News:

Elaine Weinstein just updated her email address and Stan Smith his home address. See the attached contact list.

"Just for chuckles, I attached a photo of an old grey-bearded guy studying the instruction sheets for flying his new toy.

The toy in question is a *second* glider that gleans askance from the old guy's spouse. It is a PIK-20E, manufactured by the Finns in 1981 and extensively restored by the immediately prior owner who upgraded. 40:1 glide ratio, with about 12:1 if you neglect to crank the motor down into its storage bay.

Old guy in question is **Michael Stockhill**, formerly of the Seattle office, and currently a snowbird between Polson, MT and Mesquite, NV." (Mike sent us a photo of himself and his glider. Check it out in the Silver Eagles photo gallery.)

Medicare dilemma: Okay, here is what I found out from many of you and from a recent Federal health fair in the neighborhood. Medicare part A isn't the problem. You get it and it cost nothing.

It takes care of your hospitalization. **Part B is the dilemma.** It currently costs about \$100 a month and it covers doctor's visits, etc – like your Federal health insurance. Several of you mentioned being on Blue Cross-Blue Shield and it works fine. However, I like my current insurance (Aetna) and believed that it would work as well. I talked to an Aetna rep at the fair and it does not work well with Medicare. The rep at the fair indicated that Part B is unnecessary, if I have Aetna. In fact, if you have both Aetna and Part B, then Part B becomes the primary and almost everything – except prescriptions – that is not covered by Part B will **NOT** be picked up by Aetna. She then nodded to the table on her right and said that you might want to talk to them (Blue Cross-Blue Shield). Before I go onto BC-BS, this makes no sense! Aetna no longer has to pay hospitalization for us (Big Bonus!) and won't reimburse what Part B doesn't pay? HUH?

Now Blue Cross-Blue Shield's standard option (the better of the two) will pay the Part B \$162 deductible, copayments and coinsurance amounts, except for prescription drugs – basically everything else! Their basic option is **limited to network providers** only and covers everything the same as the standard option. However, I don't read that it covers the \$162 deductible. Then again the basic option is \$140 a month cheaper for family coverage!

Sooooo, if you are happy with your current prescription health insurance and have no desire to change – and if you can predict that your insurance or some other equally convenient government insurance will be in your area for the rest of your life, then you may not need Part B. In fact, with plans like Aetna you'd be **paying for nothing**. This sounds stupid – even to me – but you may find it cheaper to drop Federal insurance and stick with Part B. **Maybe** AARP has an insurance package that works with Medicare for nearly the same cost. **That said I would not gamble that way!** The Federal insurance is a bene that very few people have and once you drop it you can't pick it up again. Better to not pick up Part B. **BUT**, if you don't pick up Part B in the 5 months surrounding your birthday (my birthday is in August so I have from June thru October) then each year past 65 that you don't pick it up it will cost you an additional 10%. With the current rate of about \$100 that means \$10 per month additional for every year that you delay.

My decision is complicated by the fact that my young wife is nine years from being eligible for Medicare so I must maintain my Federal insurance for her. So – Plan B – yes or no? With my wife's and my retirement I believe that we can make the additional payment of \$100 a month without skimping on too much fun. If so, then Blue Cross/Blue Shield would be the best insurance option. We will have to check with our medical providers to be sure that they are network providers. If so, then we can use the basic option at no extra cost from Aetna. If not, then we need to either change doctors or bite the bullet and pay an additional \$140 a month for standard option. That might cut into the fun... I wish this was easier – and cheaper...

If anyone has anything to add that will make this decision easier – PLEASE Email!

Happy Thanksgiving! YEAH!

October 2011

We have two new members this month. Again a personal favorite because I... (well, I guess that I can't say "recruited" because I didn't have that power) **strongly encouraged** to come to the Board. She'll be a real loss. The other is a highway investigator who will also be missed. If I remember correctly, he was on Highway's "A" team! At least when I was at a highway accident, he was there, too. Also, we have a second inside person now since Bob Benzon is talking about retiring in December. Karen Bury, formerly part of NTSB's legal team (including a stint as the Deputy GC), aviation's chief writer/editor and now the Senior Advisor to the Managing Director for Program Quality, but I most remember her as riding herd on Bernie Loeb in the Office of Research and Engineering. Does anyone know what happened to Bernie? Any contact info?

New Members:

Crystal Thomas (HazMat) I accepted a job offer with BP doing Gulf of Mexico offshore investigations, so I'll be moving to Houston and becoming a Texan! I can't actually believe that I'm doing it, since I really love my job here, but it's a good opportunity and I don't want to regret not giving it a try.

Chris Voeglie (Highway in Atlanta) retired this month.

Board News:

Bob MacIntosh retired without ceremony. His parting note: "It is time for me to put the landing gear up and fly off to a new destination. I started my aviation career 55 years ago with a Cessna 140 at Ohio State University. I've held a fairly steady course/track since then in commercial and government aviation activities, and the last 23 years we have traveled together at the NTSB. What a great experience and an opportunity to contribute this has been.

I'm heading off to added interests and family activities – knowing that all you NextGen thinkers will strive for even greater improvements to keep us old folks safer and safer!

On a serious note, I have the upmost respect and admiration for each and every NTSB employee – and the mission we so dearly pursue. You have my very best wishes for the future." (I sent an email to Bob inviting him to join, but didn't hear back. If any of you want to try. Feel free. I have his address.)

Crystal Thomas' parting note: "Wow, I honestly can't believe that today is my last day working at the NTSB. From the time I spent here as a co-op student while attending Penn State, to the nearly 6½ years that I've worked here full-time as a hazardous materials investigator, NTSB has been like a home to me. My experience here has been truly amazing and unforgettable. As a hazardous materials accident investigator, I've been fortunate to work with all of the modal offices. I have been involved in many types of accidents, looked into many safety issues, and like to think that I've helped to raise awareness and make the transportation of hazardous materials a little safer. Throughout my time here I have met and worked with a lot of great people, from whom I've learned a lot of valuable things, and in the process made a lot of fabulous friends! So I just wanted to say thank you for everything... I am so appreciative!!"

Chris Voeglie, Highway in Atlanta, retired, and his parting note: “To my NTSB family,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce my time with the Safety Board must come to an end. As of Friday, I will be retiring from Federal service, and I hope to pursue a long time personal challenge. In so, I hope to again have the opportunity to work with some of you in the future.

I'm proud to have served with the Safety Board and it was an honor to have served with such a distinct group of dedicated professionals. We perform an important and difficult role in the pursuit of the truth while also advancing transportation safety. I'm thankful to have contributed to such a worthy and important mission.

I will forever take pride in our accomplishments, for we have saved many lives through our individual and collective efforts.

My career at the Safety Board has been both exciting and challenging. The opportunity to develop the Office of Highway Safety's EDR program with the help of my OHS family was truly gratifying and I will miss with each and every one of you.

I would like to thank all everyone for all that you do to make the NTSB the most respected federal agency and to acknowledge the many friendships that will last for years to come.

As I depart, I will once again look upon you all with the same "awe" as the public, as we watch you launch to one major accident after another.

Please keep in touch and let me know what exciting new challenges you're facing.

I wish all the best!”

Timothy A. Borson died May 9, 2011 in Largo, Florida. As a teenager, Tim developed a love for flying. This passion was only matched by his love for cars. He could usually be found hanging out at the old Reese Airport in Selma, Indiana, or covered in paint or car grease while restoring antique cars. Tim was able to take a car apart or a jet engine with the precision of a surgeon. The restoration of a classic 57' Corvette, a source of great pride, was driven by his need to create, achieve, and excel.

His concern for others led him to develop SafePath, a patented safety device used on older model cars, creating under bumper lighting, and greater visibility. Always aware of those in need, he developed the program VOWHONOR FLIGHT. This program, still in the development stage, was to provide WW II veterans an opportunity to visit the national monument free of charge.

After graduating from Wapahani High School Tim received a BS degree in Aeronautics, Master Degree in Aeronautics and Space, and a Doctorate in Aero Safety Systems and Engineering at Oklahoma State University. He was a test pilot, and worked for the **NTSB (National Safety and**

Transportation Board) in Washington D.C. His career with the NTSB spanned twenty-three years. During that time, he held several offices. He served as NTSB Catastrophic Investigator, Operations Group Chairman, Field Chief for the state of Alaska, and NTSB Regional Director of the South Central U.S. After leaving the NTSB, he authored a textbook on aeronautic systems and safety, and taught aeronautics at Oklahoma State University. Tim was the son of the late Sondo Borson and his mother, Micci; Lara, his daughter, (husband, Lloyd); sisters, Sonia Main (husband, Thamar), Cynthia Downham (husband, Mike), Diana Borson; an uncle, Earl Borson; and many nieces and nephews will miss him forever. Despite illness and suffering, Tim seldom complained. He understood hope and courage are stronger than despair, laughter and imagination more powerful than grief and love more powerful than death. [This came from **Ron Battocchi**.]

Member News:

Dick Rodriguez and **Carol Roberts** have both changed their email address. See the attached contact list.

This suggestion from **Jean Bernstein** because she is looking for a new doctor in the Reston/Great Falls, VA area: “**I suggest that our Silver Eagles start a list of doctor recommendations in the area where they live.**” (I personally use Dr. Marc Eisenbaum in Fairfax, VA, and believe that he is fantastic, but my wife thinks he treats men with more respect than women. Not sure what that means...)

Linda Jones had similar suggestions, “How about adding a section to the newsletter where people could ask questions of the members? I think there are a number of us living in more rural areas where we don't have great access to the little things that sometimes need answers. What a great amount of corporate knowledge we could draw from. Also, another thing might be if someone were looking for a retired Board employee. There's bound to be someone out there who knows how to get in touch with them.” (On the latter, I've had several requests from the Board for retired Board employee info. I've asked the member before I passed it on.)

Jim Henderson: My thoughts are that this is your group. I'm just initiator. I would graciously accept and forward any thoughts, experiences, questions from each and every one of you! Sometimes it is hard putting together a monthly newsletter because no one is stepping up – and sometimes I've had to save a message for next month's newsletter so as not to overwhelm. Please participate as much as you want! It will only make this group more vibrant! Do we have a group activity coordinator that wants to step up? -or a poet laureate? – a comedian or cartoonist? An offer to collect doctor's information for everyone? There is plenty of room to participate! Likely our group would not have succeeded if **Robert Moore** hadn't put together the website.

BTW – my question on which medical plan works well with Medicare seemed to be answered that all Federal plans work well. The question as to whether you need Medicare Part B when you have and plan to keep a Federal plan is less clear. It seems that it will not do you any good because your Federal plan duplicates it so it doesn't really do anything, but if you later choose to drop your Federal plan then you're screwed because each year after you turn 65 that you delay picking up Part B results in a percent increase in the cost... Apparently the same is not true for Part D, the prescriptions plan. Who knew turning 65 would be such a pain!

Miscellaneous:

I hope this poem has the same effect on you as it did on me - then my forwarding it will be worth the effort. Walk with me by the water.

- *worth* *the* *read...*

A BEAUTIFUL POEM ABOUT GROWING OLDER:

**Crap...
I forgot the words....**

I was going to credit the person who sent this, but I forgot who did, yikes! [This is an example of a submission that was saved for a future newsletter.]

Autumn is starting! Cool temps with beautiful trees. YEAH!

Jim Henderson

September 2011

Two new members this month. A voice from my personal past and a voice from my “personnel” past.

New Members:

Cliff Zimmerman – A neighbor and occasional carpooler from NTSB’s Pipeline and HazMat Division. We ran into each other biking on Burke Centre’s bike paths to and from the farmer’s market. Not literally! He is currently working with DOT’s Office of Pipeline Safety.

Bob Pyle – He was in NTSB personnel for about 20 years. “I now live at Innisbrook Golf Resort about a mile from the Gulf of Mexico in Palm Harbor, Florida...kind of a strange Florida location in that it has real rolling hills for about 5 miles kinda like No Virginia...it is near Clearwater...been in Tampa Bay area since 1999...

I left NTSB at a very bad time for me as my wife was very sick and I did not like the direction and activities of the NTSB leadership in 1998/9, but for her health and mine time to go...I did not get to say the good-bye to everyone I would have liked as they were so special to me having been at NTSB for over 20 years...but, I am happy to say my wife has recovered well from her illness back then although she still has it and I am in pretty good health for a 68 year old guy...my wife and I met at NTSB... [Georgette Conneen/Terembes] worked there for about a year, and have been married 25 years this October...”

He also mentioned getting in touch with Hector to get information on cruises for his 25th wedding anniversary. His address is in the contact list.

Miscellaneous:

Jay Kivowitz’s ashes were placed at Horseshoe Curve near Altoona, PA. Following is the photo of Jay, who passed away in February, on the cab of ex-PRR Steam Locomotive No. 1361 (Class K-4s). Taken April 12, 1987, Tyrone, PA. The locomotive engineer is William Withuhn, who, at that time, was Director of the Transportation Smithsonian, in Wash. D.C. The locomotive operated 1987-1988 and was later sidelined for mechanical problems. It is now under restoration by Railroader's Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA.

Photo by David Seidel.

One quick question for my near future decision: Turning 65 next August and will begin Medicare. Do any of you know which government medical insurance plans work exceptionally well with – or exceptionally badly with – Medicare? Any advice???

Autumn is starting! Out of the frying pan and into cooler weather!

Jim Henderson

August 2011

One new member this month. Oh, and Ludwig (last month’s new member had me correct his last name “Benner.” – I’ll have to check with Chip, but I’d swear that the office called our HazMat founder “Brenner.” My mistake!

New Member:

Mitch Garber – Board Doctor extraordinaire! He said that he left the Board to work in the private sector. His address is in the contact list.

Board News:

Jim Prichart at the training facility has offered to let us attend courses for free. Admittedly, it is only specific courses that he schedules and not the pricey ones offered to the outside agencies. I've suggested that I don't really need certifications for all courses and asked if I could sit at the back of the room and audit some of the pricey ones. He said that he'd take it under advisement.

I took HazWoper and Confined Space recertification with a fun group of current Board Employees and our new member, Ludwig Benner, attended the Advanced Composite Materials training.

Member News:

Michael P. O'Neill: I'm the safety manager for Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC). I was hired as a consultant for 6 months until they officially close in Sept. In that time, I have seen the worse that can happen to our young wounded warriors in combat. I saw a lot of things while working on accidents at the Board but this experience at WRAMC has changed my life. When you actually sit down and talk to these young soldiers, we really have nothing to complain about. They've already spent their time in hell. Take Care!

Miscellaneous:

Here is an apparently true story from a high school friend of mine:

A plane flying from Seattle to San Francisco was unexpectedly diverted to Sacramento. The flight attendant explained that there would be a delay, and if the passengers wanted to get off the aircraft, the plane would re-board in 50 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one lady who was blind and had her seeing-eye dog, Buddy, lying quietly underneath the seats in front of her.

She had apparently been on this flight before because the pilot approached her after landing and said, "Kathy, we are in Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?" The blind lady replied: "No thanks, but maybe Buddy would like to stretch his legs."

Now **picture** **this:**

All the people in the gate area came to a complete standstill when they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with a Seeing Eye dog. The pilot was even wearing sunglasses. People scattered. They not only tried to change planes, but they were trying to change airlines!

True story... Have a great day and remember...

THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THEY APPEAR.

Enjoy the Summer! It's been a toasty one!

Jim Henderson

July 2011