

## Silver Eagles Newsletter

September 2012

No new member, yet, but I have a few feelers out--and one more person got back to me on my request for life-events or was Ted a volunteer? I'll keep trying! Oh, and Kay's Mathematical Equivalence table in the last newsletter got rave reviews from several Silver Eagles. A couple of you wanted to use it in training!

**New Members: None**

**Board News:**

**Jim Cash - Winner of Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal** - As the National Transportation Safety Board's chief expert on cockpit voice recorders, James Cash has spent nearly 30 years painstakingly examining evidence to help pinpoint the causes of airline disasters and other transportation accidents.

His work has helped to develop a new generation of recording devices, led to aviation reforms and resulted in greater safety for the traveling public, colleagues said.

On Thursday, Cash is being awarded with the 2012 Service to America Career Achievement Medal. The Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals, or "Sammies," are considered among the most prestigious awards for U.S. civil servants.

But Cash, a 60-year-old Purcellville resident, considers his accomplishments modest in comparison to other federal employees being honored. This year's winners include researchers battling AIDS and bone marrow disease, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent who helped convict a notorious arms trafficker and officials helping combat amputees and fighting homelessness among veterans.

"Some of these people are doing incredible stuff," said Cash, chief technical adviser for the NTSB's Office of Research and Engineering. "I don't consider myself in their category, so it's kind of humbling."

Cash, a former Air Force F-4 fighter pilot, said the awards are useful reminders of the work being done by federal workers, "especially in these times, when everybody's fed bashing, from presidential candidates on down."

That view is echoed by Max Stier, president and chief executive of the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service, which sponsors the awards.

In this political season, we see people again and again tearing down our government," Stier said. "We will never get what we want out of our government if we focus solely on its shortcomings and fail to celebrate its successes."

Stier said the medals take on additional meaning in the wake of the killings of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans in Libya on Tuesday. "This is a reminder that our civil service puts itself in harm's way," he said. "You look at Jim Cash and Chris Stevens, and these are amazing people, and the American people, by and large, don't know their stories," Stier said.

**Jim Arena** - Dear colleagues, as of Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, I am retiring from the federal government and will no longer be able to be reached at this work email.

A BIG THANKS and best wishes to all I have worked with over the past 18 years. It's been a great ride☺

Future Plans: A few weeks to regroup, then on Monday, October 1, I will report to my new full-time position as "Chief of Ad Hoc Operations" where my big boss Ines Arena, "Director of Volunteers", is eagerly waiting and ready with a list of projects.

**Nora Marshall** – is also retiring. I hope that the party announcement made it to all of you while we were travelling in the great Northwest! Washington, Oregon and Victoria, BC were wonderful!

### **Member News:**

**Ted Lopatkiewicz** - Fellow Silver Eagle Ron Battocchi and I and our wives recently enjoyed a two-week driving vacation together that featured a week of hiking in South Dakota.

My wife, Drucie Andersen (also an NTSB alumna), and Ron and his wife Mary Bell (an attorney for the Department of Veterans Affairs -- someone has to work for a living) first drove to Collegeville, Minnesota, where we got a private tour at St. John's University of the St. John's Bible, a 21st century seven-volume masterpiece written and illustrated on velum in the manner of medieval monks, using the same materials that were available to them. However, the beautiful illustrations in the 11-year project are very contemporary. For example, one of the gold-leafed works of art contains a depiction of the Twin Towers, another uses a stylized depiction of the leprosy virus as a background. Drucie interested us in this work of art through her membership in the Washington Calligraphers Guild. Pages from this Bible are displayed from time to time around the country so if you ever have the opportunity to see it, you should

From Minnesota, it was on to Mitchell, South Dakota and the world-famous Corn Palace, and then on to Rapid City to meet up with a group organized through New England Hiking Holidays. There were 12 of us hikers led by two guides. Other hikers were from Maryland, Ohio, Colorado and California. We spent the week hiking through the Badlands, the Black Hills and Devils Tower in Wyoming. The final morning of the hike was spent at Mount Rushmore National Monument.

The four of us then drove down to Scottsbluff, Nebraska, one of the most recognizable milestones for hundreds of thousands of pioneers along the Oregon Trail, before we headed for home.

We clocked almost 3,900 miles on our Subaru Forester. We had gotten a lot of curious looks from people when we told them we were going to hike in South Dakota, but the topography in western South Dakota is varied and beautiful (one mountain we climbed was over 7,000 feet high). That area of the country is quite far for many of us but it is well worth the trip. And, best of all, the four of us are still friends. (Check the Silver Eagles photo gallery for pictures from the trip.)

Please, I'll be contacting six more members for input. Thanks!

One new member and one more person got back to me on my request for life-events ->and two volunteers. YEAH! (*see who responded below*) I'll keep trying!