



Silver Eagles Newsletter

December 2013

Silver Eagles,

No luck from Bernie, so new members this month. It looks like the Board's work won't be threatened for a while... I received lots of news from our members. Jack Drake came through with a great letter about his time at the Board and life afterwards. To save space, I have attached the letter and provided selected portions below. Last in was Edith Brown and I've decided to save her for next month, but she did say, "Hope everybody is healthy and have a wonderful and blessed holiday season!" Also, there is another individual from the Canadian Mayday/Air Crash Investigations trying to locate William (Bill) Stevens. Let me know if you have any contact info for him. I won't send the contact info back to the show, but I'll ask Bill directly (or ask you to ask him) if he wishes to be contacted.

New Member: None

Board News: None – except that they are working!

Member News:

Bridget Serchak -

Just a little bit to share. I was furloughed the entire 16 days (not deemed one of the essential folks at DoD), so I had a chance meet up with **Ted Lopatkiewicz** for lunch in McLean. I went out to CA during the second half of the furlough on an already planned holiday to see my sister in the Bay Area and went up to Sonoma to stay one night with **Nora Marshall** and her husband John. They are really enjoying retirement – and who wouldn't in a lovely place like Wine Country.

My job as chief, public affairs at the DoD Inspector General continues to be challenging. So different from NTSB. The following article is a little old, but thought it would provide a window into my current world:

http://e-ring.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/01/14/thankless_dod_inspector_general_routinely_ignored

My team and I did get recognized by GSA in its first "best week ever in social media" blog, so that was gratifying: <http://blog.howto.gov/2013/09/30/best-week-ever-in-socialgov-week-2/>. As I think I mentioned in an earlier item, **Bob Benzon** did do some work with DoD IG on an assessment on an F-22 accident in Anchorage in 2010. http://www.avweb.com/avwebflash/news/inspector_general_ig_report_f22_air_force_crash_lack

[ing_208169-1.html](#) Although he's turned in his DoD IG badge and computer for now. Here's hoping we'll be able to bring him back for a future project!

I'm still busy trying to visit all the national park units (current lifetime total is 255 out of 401 in the system) – this past week I was down in Louisiana for a friend's 25th wedding anniversary celebration and visited the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park (all six units across the state), Cane River Creole National Historical Park (up near Natchitoches, LA in the NW corner – town where “Steel Magnolias” was filmed), Cane River National Heritage Area, El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park and Gulf Islands National Seashore over in Biloxi, MS – a very different venue from the last time I was in Mississippi. Back in November 2007, I traveled with Member Sumwalt and the RPH team to my “training accident” to a pipeline explosion in Carmichael, MS. I know I sound like one of those BP ads, but if you have never been to the MS part of the Gulf Coast or have not been there in years, I recommend it. Warm, beautiful and absolutely empty! I can't wait to go back!

One other info note: I got a LinkedIn notice that **Lauren Peduzzi** just landed a new job a couple of months ago. She's now Director of Communications at SRA International in Fairfax, VA. Congratulations Lauren!

Al Dickinson

– I am waiting for a representative from Norwich University to call that he is approaching my place as I am going to meet with him over a few beers and perhaps some dinner downtown as I only live a few blocks from some good places to eat and drink. They even have an open house tomorrow which I hope to attend as there are some pretty good buys and most places have snacks and wine to offer....to get you in the mood...

Last April/May I went with my younger son on a cruise across the pond. We started in Galveston and ended 15 days later in Barcelona. We then stayed another week there and while Ross had to fly back to get back to work for Pixar, a friend of mine flew in and we went on another cruise around the Med but this time only a week before flying home. I would recommend the transatlantic cruises as they are inexpensive and have good food and great entertainment. I hope to do some kind of cruise next year with my older son.

I just returned from a weekend in Palm Springs staying at a couple's house there. It was lots of fun and believe it or not they have a great aviation museum there and we even attended a lecture about the forerunner to TWA, called TAT. Some of us also got a tour through a B-25 and were amazed at how thin the skin is on them and learned how the average number of missions was 5 before being shot down in WW2. Anyway, the museum is worth touring.

July a year ago I finally got a full knee replacement. It seems to work but I am a little disappointed in that I am no taller and cannot block VB shots any better than before the surgery.

Enough for now with the boring things that keep me going as the guy is getting close. Keep up the good work...

Jack Drake

- First, I want to thank you for giving a group of old guys and girls a way to stay in touch and to reminisce with good friends about the great work we did (sometimes just in our own eyes) and the dedication we all had at NTSB to improve transportation safety. It's good to be an NTSB “Silver

Eagle” and it was great to have had the opportunity to serve at the Board. I was motivated to write long ago but thought your member list would be more interested in hearing from the earlier retirees first. Then, some of those people started flying west - and some never adapted to those newfangled computers and email. So, although I still like to think of myself as one of the young ones, I’m rationalizing that it’s my turn (13 years after I “retired”). I also wanted to let all the eagles know that there is plenty to do after NTSB that goes well beyond reading, the garden, and the grandkids (I love my grandkids too but will brag about them offline, except for one picture I’ll include). For those who may not remember me or never knew me, I’ll give you a brief recap. I was hired by NTSB in 1973 as an ASI-analyst; worked 10 years as an ASI in the Seattle, Dulles, and Atlanta field offices (when we used to have 10 field offices); was an aviation go-team IIC for three years; and a division chief for 13 years (10 years in AS-40).

[[Click here to read the entire letter from Jack](#). In the letter, he praises many people that he worked with at the Board. He talks about life after the Board including: working as Operations Safety Director at America West Airlines and Safety Director at the Helicopter Association International.]

He ends with ...

just in time for me to pursue golf more aggressively, while I still have the wheels and the physical ability to improve. It’s an on-going effort, but that, the grandkids, Navy football, photography, bridge, and world travel currently have my interest. Sue and I have done cruises and tours in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, Hawaii, Alaska, the interior of Europe, and a variety of national parks. We make frequent trips to New York and Florida, and to visit kids and grandkids. We still have a long bucket list, so please let us know if any Silver Eagles would like to join us in future travels.

I’m attaching two photos: first, the happy couple in 2009 (we still look the same – just a little more grey hair); and second (2 pictures), my granddaughter Charlie, soloing on her first flight at age 2. Charlie “carrier-qualified” (that’s a Navy term; Dick Rodriguez will understand) at the conclusion of the same flight. The proof is in the pictures. (See attached photos)

I’m in Annapolis, if anyone is passing through or wants to play golf. Please use my email if you’d like to contact me. (His email is on the attached contact list)





Misc:

It is a pleasure to have to start spacing out my goodies into another month, but that doesn't mean that I don't need more than one tidbit! ;-)

Don't forget the Silver Eagle Website: www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.htm

Merry Christmas to you all, and may all of your Holidays be wonder-filled!

Jim Henderson