



## Silver Eagles Newsletter

March 2016

**Silver Eagles,**

**Silver Eagles,**

We have no new members this month. The Board has a new retiree, Mike provided some fun news and Nancy some odd facts about horse anatomy! No contact info for Roger Cox, yet. Our group helped a couple of different members contact other retirees! On the Awards Ceremony, I will put my comments on the end of the newsletter with the exception of one of my colleagues (my newsletter, my rules!).

**New Members: None**

**Board News:**

**Paul Stancil** had just finished HazMat investigation training as I retired. He won the **Dr. John K. Lauber Science and Engineering Award**. My proudest moment at the Board was winning that chair. Admittedly, in my tiny home office it is constantly getting in the way or being used as a stepstool. Horrors!

**Gibert Phyllis:** Goodbye. It has been a real pleasure to work with such amazing people for over 15 years. I will forever treasure the time that I have spent serving those in the NTSB community. I wish you all the very best. I am not celebrating this departure as it is a very sad day for me. This is not the way that I planned to end my NTSB journey, but I go out on my terms. My CFO management has been aware that I was seeking other employment since November and of the final date for at least a month, so this is not a surprise.

I can be found on many other forms of social media, if you wish to be touch.

I wish you peace - always. [*I sent an email to her at NTSB, but no reply.*]

One odd note: **Lisa Kleiner** retired and came back to work in Personnel.

## Member News:

**Michael L. Stockhill** - Following is a note I sent to some friends about my participation in the Mesquite (Nevada) Senior Games Bicycle Time Trials. Feel free to extract part of it if you wish.

We continue to winter in Mesquite, and spend summers in Polson, Montana, where I spend time and pennies on my Hoffman Dimona motorglider and self-launching PIK20E

Mesquite Senior Games:

So yesterday went well, although I think I overtrained, actually peaking out a couple weeks ago.

I took the Gold overall (for all ages) on the 3 mile short Bicycle Time Trial, coming in at 9:51. The highlight of that is that I set a new course record for the short TT, knocking about 25 seconds off.

Fortunately, the pro who rode last year only competed on the long TT, as he'd surely have knocked a couple minutes off my time on the short course (he was in his forties and even had sponsors).

I also took the gold for the long course for my age group. I came in at 22:16, but was beat for the overall by a 60ish guy, who did it in 21:06. I had done one practice run at 21:30 a few weeks back

One wonderful part of the experience is that one of the competitors is 85 and he did the long TT, which has two brutal hills. An amazing performance on his part.

There is one nuance of fast cycling--the upstroke of the pedal, using the upper thigh (muscles on top or front of the thigh), is part of generating power. When I am conscious of doing so, I pick up at least one mph in my speed. I had obviously overtrained on that--my upper thighs were whipped before the start. For the race, instead of taking advantage of that, I just jammed all the way using the down power stroke. Mostly out of control all the way. No complaints....

I finished a first draft of a novel Thursday, also. Not a bad week all in all. If I can finish my IRS tax return, everything will be perfect.

We anticipate leaving Mesquite about the 20th or so.

The attached photo came from **Bernie Moffett**: He wanted you to guess at who the participants are. So let me know! (photo NTSB 3 musketeers)



In the search for Matt McCormick discussed in the last newsletter, Mike O'Rourke said he found Matt and had a long talk, and Chris Julius sent this:

"I saw that ship on the floor at NASMA in mid-March just before they raised it ... it was pristine inside and out. Would love to see the pictures of Matt in the Sound."

**Misc:**

**From Nancy Mason:**

**Railroad Tracks**

The U.S. Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches.

That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the U.S. Railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

So, who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.

Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

In other words, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification, procedure, or process, and wonder, 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.

Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, you will notice that there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank.

These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah.

The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit larger, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably

the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important! Now you know, Horses' Asses control almost everything.

Explains a whole lot of stuff, doesn't it?

*(This also explains a lot about the current political campaigns. Right from the horse's... um?...-mouth!)*

**50<sup>th</sup> Celebration:** I went to the NTSB Awards Ceremony and got a commitment from Susan Kantrowitz, the new Director, Office of Administration, and got an assurance that there will be a 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration next year!!! Start thinking about it and see if we can get a bunch of the Silver Eagles back. I'll pass on all information that I receive. I would appreciate someone volunteering to plan a get together for us either before or after.

You see news that doesn't always have to be about your adventures – BUT I know that we all would benefit from your sharing. It might give others some fun new ideas to experiment with!

Have a wonderful – um May Day! Break out the ribbons and dance around a pole!

Don't forget the Silver Eagle Website: [www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html](http://www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html)

Jim Henderson

## **NTSB AWARDS CEREMONY**

(Don't fault me on spelling. Someone was supposed to forward me the names.)

The event started with a great video. I wish that all of you could have been there to enjoy it!

Employee Peer	Catherine Janis
Distinguished Employee	Debbie Stocker/ Catherine Janis
EEO	Dr. Lisandra Garay-Vega
Distinguished Investigative Service	Luke Schiada
Dr. John K. Lauber Science and Engineering Award – Paul Stancil	
Managing Director's Award	Dr. Kristan Poland
Chairman's Award	Tom Roth-Roffy

Teams Recognized:

Spaceshiptwo (SS2) Investigation of commercial spaceship accidents

GC-101 Investigations training for parties' attorneys

STEM (Science, Technology and Engineering M?) “On Ramps” outreach training

WMATA Team

Mary Arnold (Another RPH veteran)

Tracy White (GC)

Also, recognized:

Presidential Rank Award

Sharon Bryson

Jim Henderson