



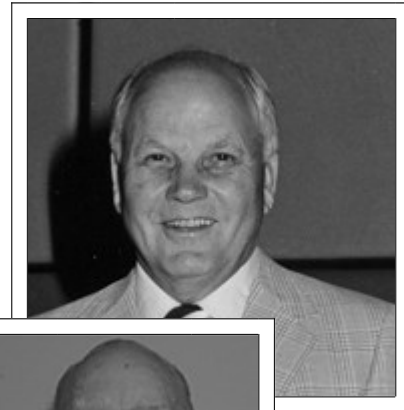
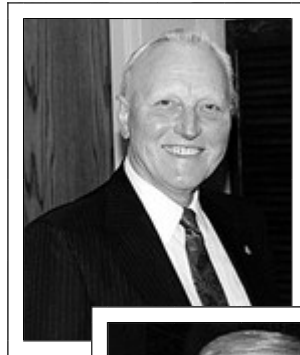
FORWARD IN AVIATION



Volume 3, Issue 1

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WAHF is 20-Years Old!



Some of the founding members of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame are pictured here. Top Left: Earl Pingel, who was instrumental in the creation of the WAHF Carl Guell Memorial Scholarship. Top Right: Carl Guell. Due to Guell's monumental research efforts, Wisconsin has a fine record of the aviation history in our state. Lower Left: Founding member Dave Duax, 2004. Lower Right: Charles Marotske is a founding board member who currently serves as Vice-President.

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WAHF Mission Statement:

To collect and preserve the history of aviation in Wisconsin, recognize those who made that history, inform others of it, and promote aviation education to future generations.

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2005 marks a very special year for the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame in that we are celebrating our 20th birthday. Back in 1985, the founding members incorporated the organization and then went about setting some lofty goals...among them collecting and preserving the aviation history in Wisconsin and honoring those who made that history. With a tape recorder in hand, Carl Guell began interviewing early aviators in Wisconsin. His exhaustive efforts led to a significant collection of memories, photographs and documents that formed the basis for a priceless Wisconsin aviation chronology. (More on pg. 8)

As the organization grew and the collection expanded, it became time to record the information in the form of a book. *Forward in Flight, the History of Aviation in Wisconsin*, was published in 1998. With the help of a dedicated book committee, over 3,500 of the book's 5,000 copies were distributed to libraries across Wisconsin at no charge. (Limited copies are still available, contact Michael Goc at 608-339-7191 for more information.)

Today, the organization continues to meet the goals set by Guell and his colleagues. To date, nearly 70 men and women have been recognized for their achievements. Three years ago, the first Carl Guell \$1000 Memorial Scholarship was given. Michael Goc publishes updates to the book, *Forward in Flight* with his annual, full color 6-page history newsletter. Nearly 2,000 *Forward in Aviation* newsletters are distributed annually. Membership benefits are increasing. You can read about the latest benefits on pages 2 and 11.

For twenty years the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame has been discovering and recording the aviation history in our state. With the backing of our members and all those who have supported us through the years, we can continue to do so in the future.

President's Message

— By Rose Dorcey

Words of encouragement mean a great deal to people, and it's no exception for the WAHF Officers and Board of Directors. In the past few months, several WAHF members have sent notes that express a common sentiment... you like what the WAHF board members are doing, and you want us to keep up the good work.

Here are a few comments from our members...

...Enjoyed your letter and annual report. It appears that the organization has come a long ways...congratulations to the board for a great job!

...Enjoyed the annual report and December newsletter. The board is doing a great job! Cheers!

For these and all the positive notes that we receive, thank you!

As you read on the front page, 2005 is a special year for the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame, as we mark the 20th anniversary of the organization. Late in 2003, the WAHF board members began discussing ways to celebrate this important milestone. We wanted to produce *something* that would highlight our inductees and others who have made or continue to make aviation contributions. We wanted it to show some of our archive collection, it had to be thoughtful, insightful; and we wanted it to showcase the varied people and places of aviation in Wisconsin. With all that in mind, we put together a 100-page book that accomplished all of those goals. A title was chosen,



WAHF Member Ed Colbert is a former Navy pilot who flew during WWII, and a retired teacher/administrator for the Madison, WI school district. Colbert shared his artistic talent on the back of an envelope addressed to WAHF.

Blue Sky Moments ~ a Collection of Wisconsin Aviation Memories.

The project was great fun to put together...especially in the area of choosing aviation quotes that correspond with the photos. As you enjoy your copy of the book, say a silent 'thank you' to our state's aviation greats, who have done so much to make aviation the great

adventure that it is today. *Blue Sky Moments* will be distributed at no charge to all of our *current* 2005 members, so if you haven't already renewed please do so, today! A limited number of extra *Blue Sky Moments* are available for a \$7 donation, please call me at 715-421-0055 or 608-836-9840 or send a check to our Middleton headquarters. With this new, 2005 membership benefit, now is also a perfect time to join the WI Aviation Hall of Fame.

Another project we're working on is the creation of a Wisconsin aviation history display... a display case that shows the many facets of aviation greatness in our state. Photos, artwork, Wisconsin airline memorabilia and other items will be displayed. Rich Morey has graciously promised display space in his sparkling new terminal in Middleton. We'll let you know more in the June issue. If you have items we can use, please let us know.



Rose Dorcey

In Retirement; Esse Still Teaching

— Physics Class visits his 'at-home' hangar

Students from the Physics II class at Waunakee High School visited WAHF Board Member Duane Esse's garage/hangar recently to learn the basics of flight. Esse helped the students understand the forces of lift, drag, weight



Esse's home backs the runway of the Waunakee Airport. Photos courtesy of Roger Hamilton, *The Waunakee Tribune*.

and thrust, and helped them calculate the length of runway an airplane would need to take off. An airline-transport rated pilot and certified flight instructor, Esse knows well the dynamics of teaching students the principles of flight from his days as a high school science teacher. Esse initiated aerial field trips to help students better visualize the concepts of geography and geology. He also developed a high school aviation course that provided students with actual flight experience, a program that was so popular, many adults took the course, many of whom eventually purchased aircraft. Esse also worked for the WI Bureau of Aeronautics and developed many programs that the bureau still utilizes today.

Pilot; Businessman honored by Hall of Fame

— Love of flying keeps Gaier aloft

Note: This article appeared in the Nov. 3, 2004, Clark County Press newspaper, just days before Duffy Gaier was inducted into the WI Aviation Hall of Fame. Reprinted with permission.

By Mick Kuzjak

To listen to Duffy Gaier tell his life story, it seems that he's done a bit of everything in his 74 years of life. But one thing for sure, he has done a lot to help get the aviation industry off the ground, not only in central Wisconsin, but throughout the entire state. And for that, Gaier is about to be inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.

Before his career in aviation first took off nearly 40-years ago, Duffy—his real name is Harold—Gaier was as earthbound in his labors as most of the other people in his hometown of Neillsville. He was a farm field hand during summer harvests, a railroad brakeman and a sales representative for an implement dealer before settling, for a time, on making a name in the construction business.

In 1960, he started in business as Gaier Construction, which opened the door for his chance meeting with his flying future. In 1965, Gaier and his construction crew happened to be building an addition onto a feed mill in Black River Falls. That's when the feed mill manager, John Dougherty, who having just received his flight instructor's license and looking for his first student, just happened to ask Gaier, "Why don't you learn how to fly?"

"Let's do that," Gaier replied, sounding almost nonchalant.

It turned out to be, however, love at first flight. A year later, Gaier had his license to fly and an old Piper airplane, a single-engine three-seater that he bought for \$1,200.

Gaier flew whenever he had the opportunity, both while at work and play. He piloted the plane to distant construction sites and took off to do some recreational flying whenever he got the chance.

Looking back, Gaier now admits wondering, everything considered, just how much fun the recreational flying actually turned out to be. With the opening of the Neillsville Municipal airport still 10-years away, the only landing area for miles around was a farm field along US Hwy. 10 east of Neillsville.

Even under the best of summertime conditions, the sod airstrip, actually about 1500 feet of mowed grass, made for take-offs and landings that were an adventure. In the winter, with the strip covered in with snow-drifts, flying could very much be a chore. As a pre-flight ritual, Gaier would often get out on the windy strip with an old John Deere tractor and snow plow. He still chuckles of having to pay his dues for his flying fun. "I would spend four hours clearing snow for just one hour of flying," he said.

Gaier soon saw that flying could have a serious business side to

it, as well. In 1972, he began by becoming a flight instructor, giving lessons to a growing number of flying enthusiasts.



Duffy with his 1946 Piper PA12, similar to the first plane he owned.

But, in addition to the construction firm, Gaier had other business interests at the time, including running a beef farm. "Something had to give," Gaier decided back then.

In 1975, he made the difficult decision of parting with the successful construction business, selling his interest in the firm to his twin brother, Gerald "Tuffy" Gaier.

Gaier soon found that, with some imagination and daring, the business opportunities in aviation were almost as limitless as the sky. In the years to come, Gaier bought a twin engine plane so he could provide a charter flight service, conducted aerial photography for the Farm Services Agency, and began getting more and more involved in the business of leasing and selling airplanes to private customers.

Over the years, Gaier's list of personal achievements in the cockpit grew as well. He would become a pilot examiner, testing pilots for new ratings. He certified over 3,000 pilots over the years and personally logged more than 13,000 hours in the air.

When the city of Neillsville decided 30-years ago that it was time to build an airport of its own, Gaier was there to lend guidance and expertise. He was involved in both the planning and construction of the Neillsville airport. The airport's only manager since it opened in 1975, Gaier still owns the terminal and hangar.

In 1986, Gaier also became the manager of the Marshfield Airport. These days he still lives in rural Neillsville but spends most of his time in Marshfield, which also serves as the base for Duffy's Sales and Leasing. With 30 or so airplanes at any one time, it is one of the largest such businesses in the state.

As the air miles have accumulated for Gaier over the years, so have the personal milestones. Those have included the Wisconsin Flying Farmers recognizing him as the organization's "Man of the Year." Gaier has also been honored with the Wisconsin Aviation Conference Lifetime Achievement Award. But, pure and simple, it's the love of flying that keeps Gaier aloft.

It's a love shared by a family of fliers, including his wife, Alice.

(Continued on page 5)

Making Friends with the Flying Farmers At AOPA Expo

By Rose Dorcey

I have never had more fun talking with any group of pilots than I did with the members of the International Flying Farmers at AOPA Expo 2004. Within moments of making our introductions, I felt like I had known Jack and Elsie all my life. That might be due to the sweet story they told me, about how Jack's mother had been bitten by a pig on her right thigh. Several years later, Jack met Elsie, and as they shared stories from down on the farm, Elsie mentioned that she had once been bitten by a pig... on her right thigh. It was a match made in heaven.

Jack and Elsie Fry, turkey farmers from Chow Chilla, California, endeared themselves to me immediately, and also provided an opportunity to finally learn what the International Flying Farmers are all about. It turns out, they're an active group of pilots that, when they can find someone to tend to the farm duties back home, are doing a whole lot of good in the world of general aviation.

Jack and Elsie introduced me to Sheldon Kongable of Winfield, Iowa. Sheldon is a past president of the Flying Farmers, and he is as jovial and lovable as the Fry's. A retired farmer of oats, soybeans, cattle and hogs, Sheldon is the proud owner of two airplanes, a Cessna 182 and a unique Aeronca. (That's another story.) Again, within minutes of meeting, we were like long-lost friends, and it wasn't long and I had myself an invitation to stay at Sheldon's farm, if I promised to come to their International Flying Farmers Fly-In. The event takes place in Bettendorf, Iowa, in August.

Kongable explained who the Flying Farmers are. "We love to fly. Many of us are farmers who have strips right on our farms. The Flying Farmers are involved in many programs, such as the promotion of flight safety, tours, conventions, and legislative representation. We have scholarships for our teen members. Students may receive as much as \$2000."

A quick look at their website told me more. The International Flying Farmers were organized in 1945 in Oklahoma, as the National Flying Farmers. The organization grew, and soon chapters were set up in Canada. The group changed its name to International Flying Farmers in 1961. Their objectives are impressive: number one on its list is to "reduce unnecessary



Elsie and Jack Fry, turkey farmers from Chow Chilla, California, are members of the International Flying Farmers.

regulations for general aviation." Other objectives include... the encouragement of close-in landing strips for towns and cities, encouraging conservation of soil and water, insisting that aviation gasoline taxes be used for the development of aviation, and developing public acceptance of light aircraft.

The group has something for everyone. While membership is comprised mainly of farmers, the organization is open to all. Members come from all backgrounds – doctors, secretaries, bank officers and

construction managers, young and old alike. The common thread is the love of flying.

The IFF also has a teen program (IFFT) that "allows teens from one area of North America to learn about other areas while living with Flying Farmer families." The formal purpose of the IFFT program, according to their website, is to help construct a desirable program for the teens at the annual international convention; to aid teen members in forming lasting and constructive associations with the members of other regions; and to promote the interest and participation of young people in the areas of agriculture and aviation.

*"We love to fly.
Many of us are
farmers who have
strips right on our
farms."*

Awards are available for adult members of the organization. Recurrent training and flight safety are promoted, and certificates are given when members upgrade their licenses. Non-flying members are encouraged to participate in Teledyne Continental Motor's "Landit" program, for people who land a plane for the first time without the assistance (but under the watchful eye) of a flight instructor. These awards, and the presentation of scholarships, are among the highlights of the annual IFF convention.

The organization is also proud to have in its membership the oldest living pilot, Cole Kugel. Still flying at 102, Kugel, a Longmont, Colorado resident, is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest pilot in the world, a distinction gained back when he was 98.

The Flying Farmers are folks who draw you in with warm smiles and down-home hospitality. Spend some time with them and you will find that laughter is common and friendships are true. Their invitations are sincere; their goals are lofty. They are promoting and supporting the issues that are important to general aviation today, and accomplishing things that all of us, as pilots, can be proud of.

For information on the Wisconsin Flying Farmers, contact Ann Grahl at 920-477-5423 or Carl Ebner at 262-862-6004.



The Fry's with Sheldon Kongable

VersaTrue Makes Mounting a GPS Easy — Wisconsin Company Develops Mounting Systems

Aircraft owners need look no further if they are hoping to find a mounting system for their portable GPS units. Gamber-Johnson Company, a Stevens Point (WI) based manufacturer of vehicle mounting systems, recently introduced the VersaTrue mounting systems. The VersaTrue mounting system is designed to provide a sleek and reliable way to mount GPS units and other small devices to their vehicles.

These new ball and socket mounts position GPS units in virtually any airplane, and they look good, too. The strong, yet appealing design includes a simple cam lever for easy adjustments, rubber balls for shock/vibration suppression and a built-in security component.

VersaTrue mounting systems are a popular item, according to Rebecca Garski, product manager. She said sales and interest in the product are high.

“Our customers are looking for a sleek mounting application, with mounts that are easy to adjust and install. We are a consumer friendly company, we ship most orders in one – two business days.”

The ISO 9001:2000-certified company, in business since 1984, has a cool website where you can build and order your system. In a short series of questions, you’ll be asked what you are mounting (GPS unit, cell phone, small computers) and what you are mounting it to (airplane, ATV, boat). Once the vehicle is selected, you choose from various makes and models. Seconds later, the site provides the recommended mounting system



Looking for a mounting system for your GPS unit? VersaTrue has for your needs. Many systems can be purchased for around \$100.

Quality materials are used on these versatile units. Stainless steel shafts, cam lever and hardware offer maximum support and corrosion resistance. Powder-coated paint weathers tough environments. Aluminum device mounts are lightweight and match hole patterns for most GPS handheld receivers.

Check out www.versatrue.com or call 1-877-478-8510.

Gaier, from page 3

For the Gaier, flying has also developed into a family business. Alice is the bookkeeper for Duffy’s Sales and Service. One of his sons, Bob, is an aircraft mechanic at the Marshfield Airport. Another son, Jeff, is the assistant manager there.

As much as Gaier has loved the aviation business, he admits it hasn’t been easy. “We survived,” he said of staying in the black as others have gone out of business.

Gaier gives credit to city officials in both Neillsville and Marshfield for their support in running the airports. “They’ve been behind me 100%,” he said.

For all he’s tried and done in life, Gaier has no regrets for reaching for success in aviation. “I enjoy going to work. If you enjoy what you’re doing, why not do it?” he said.

Gaier said he is both humbled and honored by his induction into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.



*Alice and Duffy Gaier
November 6, 2004*



*Many of Alice and Duffy
Gaier’s family members,
friends and colleagues
celebrated Duffy’s induction
into the Wisconsin
Aviation Hall of Fame at
the November 6, 2004
ceremony in Oshkosh.*

On the Road with WAHF — From Sparta to Elroy

Saturday, February 19 was a perfect day to celebrate the rich and vibrant history of aviation in Wisconsin, particularly in Juneau and Monroe counties. Representatives of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame were invited to two fantastic events—the first to celebrate the completion of a beautiful Pietenpol project in Sparta; the second to attend the memorial dinner of Juneau County aviator Harvey Brandau.

Not long ago, Don Campbell, Chicago, Illinois, walked into the Deke Slayton Memorial Space and Bike Museum in Sparta, Wisconsin and casually mentioned to Museum Director Kay Bender that he owns two Pietenpol airplanes, similar to a model he saw hanging there. Bender, always on the lookout for additions to the museum, half-jokingly said to Campbell, “Well, if you have two, you can give one to the museum.” Campbell departed without giving a commitment, but in the weeks that followed, he began to hear more about the meaningful educational programs that the museum offers to both students and adults. It wasn’t long before Campbell followed up with Kay, and soon arrangements were being made to have the Pietenpol partially disassembled and shipped to Sparta.

Under the direction of Jim Reisinger of the Monroe County Aviators, the project saw fast progress. Plans were made to travel to the Brodhead, Wisconsin hangar where the Pietenpol was stored. On a sunny November day, but more important, a windless day, the plane arrived outside the museum at 200 West Main Street. Sparta Mayor John Gomez operated the crane that lifted the 30-foot wide wing to a second floor window that had been removed to make the wing fit. A dozen or so volunteers helped squeeze it into the building, while another dozen or so brought the fuselage up the stairs, around the corners, and through the museum’s narrow foyer.

The result of this tremendous effort is something you must see. The Pietenpol is shiny, fire-engine red with a sparkling white wing. It looks absolutely gorgeous and is a grand showpiece in the expanding museum.

Keynote Speaker Tom Thomas, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Aeronautics, was one that celebrates “fantastic teamwork while preserving an important piece of aviation history.” The Pietenpol Open House was standing-room only; nearly 150 people attended the event.

...On to the Elroy Legion Hall to join EAA Chapter 1365 for their annual Harvey Brandau Memorial Dinner. Brandau was a Navy flier and respected flight instructor in Juneau County until his death in 2001. Brandau initiated annual dinners to recognize his students, and the EAA Chapter, under the direction of Tom Chudy and Steve Mesner, has resurrected the annual dinner in tribute to Brandau.



Don Campbell donated a never-flown Pietenpol to the Deke Slayton Memorial Space and Bike Museum in Sparta, WI. Campbell is shown here with Museum Director Kay Bender.

The chapter also gave its inaugural Member of the Year award to Lorna Mesner. We met dozens of enthusiastic flyers at the event, from quite diverse flying backgrounds. Chapter members will host a fly-in breakfast and lunch at the Mauston/New Lisbon Union Airport (82C) on September 3. It’s an event we hope to attend, and we encourage you to do the same.



WAHF Member Tom Chudy with Rose Dorsey. Chudy is President of EAA Chapter 1365, New Lisbon.

SpaceShipOne coming to AirVenture

EAA AVIATION CENTER, OSHKOSH, WI. - (Feb. 23, 2005) - SpaceShipOne, the world’s first successful civilian-built spaceship that captured the world’s attention last fall by winning the \$10 million Ansari X Prize, is coming to Oshkosh! The history-making spacecraft and its carrier aircraft, White Knight, have been confirmed for arrival at EAA AirVenture, the World’s Greatest Aviation Celebration, July 25-31 at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh.

This is the ONLY planned public appearance of these two aircraft in one place. Preliminary plans call for White Knight and SpaceShipOne to be at EAA AirVenture for the event’s entire seven-day run. The aircraft will be available for up-close viewing on the main AeroShell Square showcase



Gone West — Stan Kuck

Stanley Kuck was one of those rare individuals who soared to great heights in life -- professionally, spiritually, and even literally.

Formerly the Manager of Corporate Aviation at Kohler Co. for 26 years, Stan Kuck passed away on November 1, 2004. He was 74. Under his visionary guidance, Stan helped a young **Herbert V. Kohler, Jr.**, now Chairman, CEO, and President, reestablish aviation at Kohler in 1969. Even though the company had been one of the first in the United States to use corporate aircraft, it had been without a plane for many years because Herb's father, then Chairman, felt it was just too dangerous. Herbert V. Kohler, Sr. had survived a crash over the English Channel and had witnessed six top executives at the Crane Company, a leading plumbing competitor, die in a single incident. When young Herb became Executive Vice President, he felt it was necessary for the company's effectiveness to reestablish aviation. Fortunately, he found Stan.

Over the course of his tenure at Kohler, Kuck shepherded Corporate Aviation's growth from a single, twin-engine Piper Navajo, which took a maiden voyage at 9,000 feet under the light of a full moon through the Rocky Mountains, to a fleet of four jets providing international service at the time of his retirement in 1995. An avid aviator, Kuck had a true passion for flying, whether he was at the controls of a Lear jet capable of flying 550 miles per hour, or flying the 1937 Stinson Reliant single-propeller plane that he rebuilt himself.

He also was an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and had served a congregation in Elkhart Lake. Herb Kohler felt that "Stan Kuck was one of the finest people I have



Pictured with a twin-engine Navajo in 1969, Stan Kuck headed the Corporate Aviation Department from that year until his retirement in 1995.

Photo courtesy of Bill Shepard, Kohler People Magazine

ever known." Stan served as minister at the wedding of Herbert V. Kohler, Jr. and Natalie Black, Senior Vice President-General Counsel and Corporate Secretary.

Characterized by warmth, candor and discipline, Stan Kuck was known for his optimistic, upbeat outlook on life. He is survived by his wife, Jean, two daughters, Kristine Bastien and Karen Dobias, a son, Kim Kuck, one sister, Elaine Kuck, and eight grandchildren.

Reprinted through the courtesy of Bill Shepard and Kohler People Magazine.

Gunter Voltz honored by Soaring Society of America

WAHF Member Gunter Voltz, Whitefish Bay, has been inducted into the Soaring Hall of Fame.

According to the SSA website, Gunter Voltz has been soaring for the past 75 years. Gunter has instructed and had a positive influence on a remarkable number of glider pilots young and old over the years.

Gunter has trained over 30 CFGIs, and has soloed well over 400 students. He trained most of these to get their licenses.

During his career as the head of the SSA Youth Committee, the percentage of youth members reached an all time high that has never been surpassed. In the '60s and well into the '70s, Gunter and his partners ran an Air Explorer post that produced many youth glider pilots. At 88, he continues to teach soaring out of Hartford, Wisconsin.

Gunter was honored at a special reception following the induction ceremonies at the SSA National Convention in Ontario, CA on Feb. 10th, 2005.

The board members of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame wish to congratulate Gunter on this prestigious honor.



Gunter Voltz with John Dorcey, Oshkosh, 2003

The WAHF Archives

— By Michael Goc

The mission statement of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame declares that it will "collect and preserve the history of aviation in this state." It is a daunting task for an all-volunteer organization but one that our founders believed in and worked at long before the Hall of Fame came into being. WAHF founder Carl Guell and Wisconsin Historical Society Director Clifford Lord initiated aviation historical work on a statewide basis to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Wright Brothers flight in 1953. They encouraged local historians, most of whom did not consider the story of flight as sufficiently historical, to rethink their notions. As a result, the efforts of Alfred Warner, John Schwister and other Wisconsin aviation pioneers became part of the historical record.

George Hardie, the dean of Wisconsin aviation scholars, was already researching and preserving the story of flight in the Milwaukee area. In addition to helping launch WAHF, Hardie started the historical files that became the Experimental Aircraft Association library and archives, founded the Gallery of Flight museum at Mitchell International Airport and bequeathed his invaluable and voluminous collection to the state historical society archives at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

When Carl Guell, Earl Pingel, Dave Duax, Chuck Marotske and friends got the Hall of Fame ball rolling in the mid-1980s, they created the first organization committed to the study of aviation history throughout Wisconsin. In addition to collecting written records and photographs, Carl set out to interview and tape record the reminiscences of as many historical figures as he could track down. Carl's files, photos and tapes--along with material George Hardie shared--were the first items in the archives of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.

The book project which Carl initiated and I was fortunate to complete, expanded the archives. Thanks to the support of the Hall of Fame board, led in memorably energetic fashion by Earl Pingel, we were able to contact every local historical society, community library, aviation organization, business and allied group in Wisconsin, and beyond. We spent many hours gathering material in places large and small, from Beloit and Kenosha, Cornucopia and Washington Island, Algoma and Manitowoc, Hudson and Prairie du Chien. The archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, as well as the area research centers in Milwaukee, Stevens Point, La Crosse, and Superior were mines to be plumbed, as were the files of the Aeronautics Bureau of WDOT, the EAA library in Oshkosh and rich local historical society files in Waukesha, Janesville, Sheboygan Falls and Milwaukee, to name just a few.

By adding thousands of news clips, interviews, reminiscences, photos, drawings, posters, scrapbooks and other source material, the book project gave WAHF what is probably the most comprehensive aviation historical archive in Wisconsin.



Books, pamphlets, scrapbooks, news clips, government documents, audio tapes, photo prints, slides and photo collections on CD, plus hundreds of files holding information on aviation history make up the WAHF archives.

Other collections are certainly larger, none is as broadly-based. In other words, the WAHF archives do not contain everything about Wisconsin aviation history, nor do we have everything on any single person or subject, but we do have a little bit of information on just about every facet of our state's aviation history.

The work of archive building did not stop once the book was published. Quite to the contrary, while the book displayed how much we know about Wisconsin's aviation history, it also showed us how much we don't know. In 1999, the board voted to continue collecting and publishing the aviation history of Wisconsin by issuing the *Forward In Flight* historical newsletter. Unlike other organizational newsletters--including our own --*Forward In Flight* does not contain news about organization activities. It contains nothing but Wisconsin aviation history. Its goal is to help WAHF fulfill its mission to "inform others of [that history] and promote aviation education..." As a result of articles published in *Forward in Flight*, for example, we researched and shared stories about an airplane used on the first contract air mail flights in Wisconsin, about the Oshkosh-born artist whose witty cartoons helped train three generations of naval air cadets, and the "Prairie Chicken," Eau Claire's answer to the Wright Flyer. We also make it a point to review aviation history books with a Wisconsin link in *Forward in Flight*, and then place the book supplied by the publisher in the collection. Our most recent addition was *Lindbergh's Badger Days* by Anne Vandenburg.

In addition to the work required to publish historical articles and review books, *Forward in Flight* also helps WAHF build its archives through its readership. *Forward in Flight* is distributed to all WAHF members and approximately 750 libraries and historical societies in Wisconsin. Many of them have replied to periodic requests for aviation stories from their communities with the new information going into our files. Libraries in Milwaukee, Madison and Oshkosh have asked for back issues so they have a complete set for their patrons.

Our nomination and induction process also expands our archives. Members who nominate candidates must provide basic



Steve Wittman in the guise of an absent-minded professor with aerobatic star Betty Skelton at an Oshkosh air show, about 1950.

information about them. Often our induction committee conducts additional research. All of this material, whether or not a candidate enters the Hall, remains in our archives. For example, our copy of a 1935 photo of General Billy Mitchell presenting the Mitchell Air Race Trophy to Milwaukee-born Army Air Force Captain Karl Gimmmler accompanied a nomination, as did documents introducing Earl P. Johnson, the "Flying Baker" of Washburn, and so on for all our nominees.

Our most active collectors are our board members. They clip news articles, scan the Internet, acquire photos, and share information from other aviation historical groups.

Chuck Marotske recently acquired information about and photos of the B-29 named the *City of Milwaukee*, which led us to think about hunting up all the military aircraft named after Wisconsin communities in the 1940s and '50s and adding it to the files. Occasionally, one of our board members makes an extraordinary contribution. Wausau's Robert Wylie, who retired from the board in 2003, compiled volumes on the aviation history of his home town, published it in a book, then donated not just the book, but copies of all of the photos and many of the documents he used to produce it. As a result of Bob's work, we have more information about the history of aviation in Wausau than we do about any other community in Wisconsin--except for George Hardie's Milwaukee.

Our members also make contributions, as do many perfect strangers who reach us by way of our website. Some of these contributions come in the form of questions which prompt us to find answers, with both Q & A added to the files.

In the best of all possible worlds, WAHF would have the resources to store our historical files in a fire proof, climate-controlled structure. We would be able to employ a professional archivist who would carefully catalog the collection, make it available to visitors and be willing and able to roam the state, if not the world, in search of additional material. Until that day comes, we will continue to rely on our members and friends, and especially our board of directors, who really should be identified as our board of volunteers.

It is easy to think of history as static and fixed in days gone by, when it is actually always growing and new. As our most history-loving President, Harry Truman, said, "The only thing that's new is the history you don't know." At WAHF, we're trying to learn all that's new and add it to our archives.



An unidentified group of aviators at the La Crosse airport, about 1940.

Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame Archives Acquisition List, 1998-2004

Editor's note: This is only a partial list. The list does not include material previously collected for the book, *Forward in Flight* and other items. If you have items that you would like to donate or loan to the WAHF Archives, please contact Michael Goc at 608-339-7191.

Books

Airport Memories, by Duane Cole 1997, from Ken Cook Printing, 6/1/98.

Piper Cub Era at Nicolet Airport, by Bev Butler 1993, from Bev Butler, 12/1/99.

Wings North, Wausau's Aviation History, by Robert Wylie, 2001, from Robert Wylie, 1/1/01

Lindbergh's Badger Days, by Anne Vandenburg, 2004, from Goblin Fern Press, 7/1/04.

Manuscripts

- Ms on aviation career of World War I aviator John Nichols of Milwaukee; from Robert Wylie, Wausau, 9/16/03.
- Ms by Robert Kaye, brief history of aviation at Phillips. from Pat Schweds?, Phillips, 4/4/03. Place file

News clips

- Rodney Williams in air combat, in Waukesha Freeman, 8/15/1918; from M.Goc, 8/1/02. Alpha file.
- Hungarian fliers cross Atlantic, in Oshkosh Northwestern, 7/29/1931; from M.Goc, 9/1/03 in Felix Waitkus Alpha file.
- Steve Wittman in motorcycle accident, undated in Oshkosh Northwestern; from M.Goc, 9/1/03 in Alpha file
- Leroy Jonas in WAHF, Wausau Daily Herald 11/20/01, from Bob Wylie, in Place File.

Photos/Art/Images

- Photo of B-29 City of Milwaukee from Rich Rodriguez, Brookfield via C. Marotske. In Photo File.
- Photo of Billy Mitchell presenting first place trophy for Mitchell Trophy Air Race of 1935 to Milwaukee born USAAF Capt Karl Gimmmler, from Katherine Sorenson via C. Marotske, 1/1/99. In Gimmmler WAHF nomination file.

Videotapes/CDs/DVDs

- VHS tape of Bruce Hamilton, Westfield, associate of Relis Conant, interviewed by Jack Hamilton, 10/16/90; from C. Monk, Wausau; with notes by M. Goc, 6/1/02 in WAHF Hist. File
- VHS tape of interview with William Roddis; making birch plywood for "Spruce Goose", by personnel from Evergreen Aviation Museum; from Sara Connor to M. Goc.

Cambria Aviator Climbed High

— Niece of aviation pioneer David L. Behncke shares her memories of him

**By Amanda Lutey, Beaver Dam Daily Citizen.
Reprinted with permission**

CAMBRIA — Dolores Senft remembers that her Uncle Dave “liked to climb where it was high.”

It’s a fitting memory of a man who was an aviation pioneer. Her uncle, David L. Behncke, learned to fly in the Army. He was a barnstormer, an airmail pilot, organized the Airline Pilots Association and was an advocate for aircraft safety. Behncke was raised on a farm east of Cambria, the second of four children. A plaque in his honor at the EAA Museum in Oshkosh says that he was born in Cambria, but Senft said he was actually born on a farm outside Beaver Dam.

Senft’s remembers her uncle as a workaholic and perfectionist. She used to watch him fix his mustache in a mirror at the family home.

“It had to be perfect,” said Senft.

Senft’s mother was Behncke’s youngest sister, Florence. Raymond, known as “Peat,” was the oldest, followed by David. Another sister died at 14 from complications of diabetes. Senft said that her uncle Dave was a diabetic too, but refused to tell anyone about it.

When Behncke came home for a visit, it was a major family event. They would picnic at Devil’s Lake, because Behncke liked to climb the bluffs. Behncke was known to “buzz” Cambria when flying his airmail route from Chicago to the Twin Cities.

“He would sometimes land on the back 40 of the farm when flying to the Twin Cities,” Senft said.

Senft remembers being alone in the house with her grandmother one day when her uncle appeared unexpectedly. Before greeting her son, she wanted to know what Franklin Roosevelt was up to. Roosevelt wasn’t the only president Behncke knew. “He was very pleased to have been invited to (Harry) Truman’s inauguration. I remember his excitement and the tales,” said Senft.

Another youthful memory of Senft’s is having a flurry of whippers and housecleaning going on around her.

“I pulled a chair in front of the window facing Highway P,” she said.

When she saw a familiar car approaching, she ran into the kitchen to announce that “Uncle Dave is here,” startling the family, as his visit was supposed to be a surprise to her. Senft vividly remembers her uncle’s car, a “gorgeous silver gray Packard” and how glamorous her uncle’s wife seemed.

Senft’s parents divorced when she was eight, and she and her mother lived with her bachelor uncle Peat, helping him to take care of the family farm.



Photo courtesy Amanda Lutey, Beaver Dam Daily Citizen

“I was a very lucky girl to have Uncle Peat and Uncle Dave,” Senft said.

Senft now lives with her husband Ron, a retired farmer, in rural Cambria. She enjoys time spent with her six grandchildren. She graduated from UW, after spending summers working the farm for her uncle.

“I loved every minute of it,” she said. “Which is why I married a farmer.”

Senft has donated a copy of the plaque enshrining Behncke at the EAA Museum in Oshkosh to the Jane Morgan Memorial Library in Cambria and shared copies of letters her uncle wrote home. She has loaned photographs of her uncle, including one of him pictured with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York and another of him with a group of men including President Franklin Roosevelt to the library for an upcoming display.

Behncke had two sons, who told Senft, their cousin, about waking up one morning to find a strange man sleeping on the couch. It was Mayor LaGuardia, in Chicago for a convention, who opted to stay at his friend’s home rather than a motel.

At her home, Senft has one of her uncle’s letters home, written in 1937, framed. The letter is about an article of his that had been published in Liberty magazine. Senft is seeking a copy of a Saturday Evening Post article about her uncle, with a vivid description of him.

“It compared him to John L. Lewis, the coal miner union organizer who was known as a fiery orator. It said that compared to Dave Behncke, Lewis was a deaf mute.”

Senft said that her uncle “tangled” with fellow aviator, Howard

2005 WAHF Renewals

— We want you - to renew!

Many of the recent accomplishments the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame has made are due to you, our valued members and supporters.

Sadly, as of mid February, there are still about 50 members who have not yet renewed, and we're asking you to, please, *renew today!* Your support is vital in helping to further the organization's goals of preserving and sharing the aviation history of Wisconsin, and of honoring those worthy of induction. The organization survives and thrives by the input and support of our members statewide. As our membership grows, we can continue to research aviation history and recognize those who are making a difference.

Your 2005 renewal now includes a free pass to the Deke Slayton Memorial Space and Bike Museum, Sparta, WI, along with your quarterly news-magazine, *Forward in Aviation*, your annual *Forward in Flight* aviation history newsletter, an invitation to the annual awards ceremony and the opportunity to nominate qualified individuals for induction.

Blue Sky Moments

— New book is gift to members

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame is pleased to announce a new membership benefit... *Blue Sky Moments ~ A Collection of Wisconsin Aviation Memories*. In celebration of our 20th birthday, the WAHF produced this book as a gift to the members who have supported the organization through the years. Certain to become a collector's item, the book includes photographs of inductees, artwork, aviation quotes and other historical material that the organization has collected through the years.

All *current* 2005 members will receive the 100 page, soft-cover book. The book is also available to non-members or those who would like an extra copy for a \$7 donation. Supplies are limited, order (or renew) today! This item also makes a great gift.

To order a copy of *Blue Sky Moments*, make a \$7 check payable to the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame and send to:

John Dorcey, Treasurer
Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame
8550 Greenway Blvd #413
Middleton WI 53562-4724



WAHF Photo

David Behncke at the Checkerboard Airfield

Behncke, continued

Hughes, owner of TWA, on the phone. As president of the Airline Pilots Association, Behncke urged TWA pilots to strike in 1946.

Behncke died in 1953, when Senft was in her teens. One of her biggest regrets is that she didn't get the chance to question him about the people he knew and things he accomplished. She often wonders what her uncle would think of all the advances in aviation.

Though it has been 52 years since Behncke died, Senft still has a way to remember her uncle. All she has to do is watch the sky on a clear night.

"We were outside one evening and a plane went over," Senft said. "He told me 'When you look up at night and see that red blinking light, think of me, because I put it there.'"



WAHF Photo

David L. Behncke 1897-1953

- May 1, 1897: Born on a farm outside Beaver Dam and raised in Cambria.
- Joined the Army at 18 and learned to fly.
- In 1921, he won the Chicago Air Derby.
- Behncke was one of the first three pilots hired by Northwest Airlines.
- He ran Checkerboard Field, one of Chicago's first airports.
- Behncke helped organize the Airline Pilots Association union and served as president for 20 years.
- Behncke died in 1953, shortly after being voted out of office.
- Inducted into Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame 1993



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Preserving Wisconsin's Aviation History

Celebrating Twenty Years 1985-2005

Welcome new WAHF members:

Al Nagel	Peter L Drahn	Eric Gatzke	Greg Gatzke
Stan Ellis	Jeff Parnau	Sandy Ruka	Kenneth Gatzke
Dan Donovan	Jocelyn Maxwell	Bryan H Kust	Michael Mecha

Thanks for coming on board. We look forward to seeing you at a WAHF event soon!

The 50th Annual Wisconsin Aviation Conference will be held May 9 - 11 at the Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Among the many activities: a big name guest speaker, informational sessions, golf and a boat cruise, plus, the WAMA Lifetime Service, Distinguished Service and the WI Aviation Business of the Year Awards will be presented. Contact Pete Drahn, Ex. Dir. WAMA at 715-358-2802, visit their website at www.wiama.org or e-mail Pete at daredem@nnex.net for more info.

Thank you...Sheboygan Falls Historical Society, for inviting WAHF board members John and Rose Dorcey to speak at your Saturday morning program. Thanks also to all the fine folks, nearly 70, who came to hear (and share) Wisconsin aviation history.

Thank you to the Deke Slayton Museum and EAA Chapter 1365 for invitations to their events. Read more on page 6.

Next Issue, June 2005. Read several exciting announcements including our 2005 Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame inductees, the retirement of the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics' Tom Thomas, and much more! Do you have an idea for a story? Your story ideas and feedback are important to us. Please call Rose at 715-421-0055 or 608-836-9840 or send your ideas and comments to the address or e-mail address in the shaded box to the right. Thank you!

The submission cutoff date for our June issue is May 20, 2005.

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