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Top Industry Leaders Speak As “One Voice” At AOPA Summit

Story & Photos by Dave Weiman

TAMPA, FLA. – It was like old friends sitting around the fireplace chatting after AOPA President & CEO Craig Fuller introduced a panel of industry leaders in the Tampa Convention Center, Thursday, November 5, 2009. This was AOPA’s inaugural Aviation Summit, Fuller’s first conference at the helm of the world’s largest aviation organization following the retirement of Phil Boyer, and AOPA’s 70th anniversary.

A summit, or meeting of the minds, was natural in the progression of events of the last few years. The first get-together of aviation leaders came several years ago at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, when general aviation first came under attack with the initial proposals for “user fees.” Earlier this year, general aviation came under attack again when President Obama accused the CEOs of the big automakers of wasting money flying corporate jets to Washington to request bailout money. News coverage of the jets arriving at Reagan National Airport started the controversy, and rather than defend their use of the aircraft, the CEOs pledged to sell off their corporate fleets in order to gain public support. Aviation leaders have since come to a consensus that an attack on one segment of the aviation community, is an attack on every general aviation pilot, business and organization.



(L/R) EAA President Tom Poberezny on “AOPA LIVE” with AOPA President Craig Fuller.

Led by Fuller, the panel consisted of Tom Poberezny, President, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA); Ed Bolen, President, National Business Aviation Association (NBAA); Peter Bunce, President, General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA); Jim Coyne, President, National Air Transportation Association (NATA); Peggy Chabrian, President, Women In Aviation, International (WIA); and Paula Derks, President, Aircraft Electronics Association (AEA). The theme for the discussion was “*One Voice.*”

Fuller asked each industry leader their perspective on common issues, and what their organization is doing to address them. All were in agreement that while general aviation faces many challenges, it will survive and prosper

by speaking as one group before Congress.

Comments included: “*Once the public realizes that GA means jobs, we will be better off.... No plane, no gain! Business aviation is a sign of a well-managed company.*” (Ed Bolen, NBAA)

(With elections around the corner) “*this is a tremendous time for us to use a sledgehammer to find out where Congressmen stand, or we can punish them.*” (Jim Coyne, NATA)

“*We are going to need Congressional help in the years ahead.*” (Peter Bunce, GAMA)

AOPA is becoming known in the halls of Congress as those “Harrison Ford people,” a label Fuller does not mind a bit. Actor/pilot Harrison Ford is the spokesperson for AOPA’s “GA Serves America” campaign.

AOPA and NBAA will each host “Light Business Aircraft Conferences” in 2010 in order to involve more members. The NBAA Convention will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, and the AOPA Aviation Summit will be held in Long Beach, Calif. Members from each organization will be invited to attend the event of the other organization. Details to be announced later.

A panel led by AOPA Pilot Editor Tom Haines followed Fuller’s initial presentation, which discussed “**GA of the Future.**” Manufacturer representatives included Jack Pelton of Cessna; Alan Klapmeier, cofounder of Cirrus Design; Corvin Huber of Remos; and Rhett Ross of Teledyne.

Comments included: “*We are turning the corner in manufacturing and sales in regards to the economy. Fuel is an issue,*” however. (Jack Pelton, Cessna)

“*We need to listen to what people’s needs are. Aviation is competing with a lot of other lifestyle options. LSAs (Light Sport Aircraft) have been built steadily since 2007. I think we have a*

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very bright future! We have to prove that GA does something for people." (Corvin Huber, Remos)

"Until manufacturing turns around, there's a very, very lean market out there. We have to quit couching the justification for GA. GA is transportation, it is saving lives, it is a business tool." (Rhett Ross, Teledyne)

"Nothing can replace GA aircraft, so I feel our future is bright." (Tom Haines, AOPA Pilot)

"Economics is a measure of people's activities. (With so many other choices for consumers to spend their money on), we need to make aviation a better choice! We have to make sure that people remember their first flight as a pleasant experience." (Alan Klapmeier, Cofounder, Cirrus Design)

Rhett Ross of Teledyne addressed the "fuel availability" issue, and said that low-lead 94 has potential, and that only minor engine modifications will be required. *"Our concerns are with the existing aircraft fleet,"* said Ross.

Alan Klapmeier: *"100LL is going to go away, no question about that."*

Fuller was on top of his game speaking without notes, and demonstrating his knowledge of the



(L/R) Rhett Ross (Teledyne) not in photo, Corvin Huber (Remos), Alan Klapmeier (Cirrus), and Jack Pelton (Cessna) discuss "GA of the Future" with Tom Haines (AOPA Pilot).



(L/R) FAA Chief Operating Officer Henry Krakowski and FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt with AOPA President Craig Fuller on "AOPA LIVE."

issues, whether he was moderating a panel of industry leaders in the main ballroom, interviewing them one by one at the "AOPA LIVE" stage in the exhibit hall, or during question and answer sessions with members.

"AOPA LIVE" was a live televised

internet broadcast to AOPA members throughout the world. Members were encouraged to email any questions and comments, and they did.

In addition to interviews with the presidents of each aviation organization, Fuller interviewed FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt and FAA Chief Operating Officer Henry Krakowski.

We all know what the FAA Administrator does. He's on the front lines with members of Congress, aviation organizations, and makes the big decisions, which affect us all. But how many of us know what the FAA Chief Operating Officer (COO) does?

As COO, Krakowski is responsible for all aspects of the U.S. air traffic control system — its operation and maintenance, financial performance, research and acquisition of new systems and equipment, and planning for the air traffic control system of the future. Air traffic control includes 38,000 of FAA's total workforce of some 48,000 employees.

Like Babbitt, Krakowski comes to the FAA with an airline background, but unlike the past couple of administrators, Babbitt and Krakowski are actually "pilots," and understand what makes an airplane fly.

Krakowski is a Boeing 737 captain, and spent 30 years with United Air Lines in a variety of senior management positions. His last position there was as Vice President of Flight Operations where he was responsible for flight operations, flight training and standards, technology, and labor relations.

Previously as United's Vice President of Corporate Safety, Security and Quality Assurance, Krakowski was responsible for managing all aspects of corporate and flight safety, security, and regulatory compliance. This included environmental and occupational safety and all counter-terrorism and corporate security programs, as well as United's corporate emergency response programs and internal evaluation programs. On 9/11, he was



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Director of Flight Operations Control at United.

Krakowski is also an experienced aircraft dispatcher and certified as an airframe and powerplant technician.

Before joining United, Krakowski worked for Midway Airlines and Air Illinois Airlines. For five years, he flew as an aerobatic pilot on the air show circuit with the "Lima Lima" aerobatic team.

Krakowski holds a bachelor's degree in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering from St. Louis University's Parks College, and a master's degree in Business & Management from National-Louis University.

Like Babbitt, Krakowski has held numerous positions with the Air Line Pilots Association.

Topics covered by Babbitt and Krakowski included improved relationships with air traffic controllers, and the need for Congress to pass a reauthorization bill with a higher public-funds contribution and a stable funding mechanism from the aviation community.

Fuller also interviewed world aerobatic competitor and air show performer, **Patty Wagstaff**, about her career, and on the topic of women in aviation. Wagstaff said: *"We have to do a better job as an industry in welcoming potential flight students to the airport."*

Fuller also asked Wagstaff about her work in Kenya, providing recurrency and aerobatic training to Kenya Wildlife Service pilots. *"For the most part, the pilots were not getting any recurrency training before this program started,"* said Wagstaff.

Larry Williams (BRS Aerospace) was recently elected Chairman of the Lindbergh Foundation, which is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In a press conference during the AOPA Aviation Summit, Williams noted that Wagstaff's training has reduced the accident rate by 80%, and that the more flights there are by wardens, the less poaching there is.



Aerobatic champion and air show performer, Patty Wagstaff, with AOPA President Craig Fuller on "AOPA LIVE."

Dr. Rich Sugden donated a new 180 hp "Husky A1C" aircraft through the Lindbergh Foundation, to help start replacing the Kenya Wildlife

Service's aging fleet of seven aircraft and two helicopters. Every aircraft in the fleet has been damaged an average of three times (www.lindberghfoundation.org).

Other guest speakers at AOPA LIVE included former AOPA Government Affairs staff member, Lance Nuckolls, who is now the Aviation Safety Inspector of Flight Operations with the FAA in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining AOPA, Nuckolls worked for Avemco Insurance out of the Rockford, Illinois office in the 1980s.

Nuckolls discussed the use of "flight simulators" to improve training and reduce costs. *"An individual pilot can log solo time to maintain instrument currency if he/she has not let his/her rating lapse,"* said Nuckolls.

On Friday morning, November 6, at the general session, **Bill Trimble, Chairman of the AOPA Board of Trustees**, spoke of the transition from Phil Boyer to Craig Fuller. He said

An advertisement for Johnson Aviation Insurance. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the lower right, a red and yellow biplane is shown in flight, angled upwards. On the left side, the text "WE SHARE YOUR PASSION." is written in large, bold, red capital letters. Below this, the Johnson Aviation Insurance logo is displayed, featuring a stylized biplane icon above the text "JOHNSON AVIATION INSURANCE." At the bottom of the ad, a smaller line of text reads: "Started by the founder of the EAA's Young Eagles' program, Sam Johnson, we understand the aviation industry and its unique insurance needs. To find out how our passion for aviation equals your best protection call 1.800.477.IFLY or visit johnsonins.com/aviation."

that when Boyer decided to retire, the board needed someone with a lot of Washington experience, yet they wanted to find someone who flies single-engine airplanes. "Every board member flies a single-engine airplane, and we wanted a president who did as well," said Trimble.

Trimble discussed with members a letter AOPA sent to all 100 members of the U.S. Senate, and that AOPA wanted to cut off issues at the pass. "We serve our own interests, not corporate interests, and that's what distinguishes us from other groups," concluded Trimble.

The topic of discussion during the morning general session was entitled "Trends in Aviation: Defining NextGen." Fuller interviewed Margaret Jenny, President of the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA), to learn more about how the modernization of the air traffic control system will impact GA flying. RTCA is an advisory group to the FAA, and welcomes input from

pilots and aviation organizations.

Fuller: "Why should pilots in remote areas pay for NextGen?"

Jenny: "We should all be involved. NextGen will provide more GPS approaches to GA airports, and provide more low-level guidance."

Fuller: "Why something new that will cost more money, when the present system is working just fine."

Jenny: "The focus is on large airports and metro GA airports. NextGen will require more training, and an investment in equipment. But we need the technology we already have before we can create more. Cost versus benefit is being looked at. We need a plan up front to close the business case. The price for equipment will drop with more units manufactured."

Jenny says that the implementation of NextGen won't happen overnight, but it is coming. She expects that the first tier of airports that will use the system will be in a metropolitan area, but not in New York where the problems are the greatest. The first tier will likely be a smaller metro area.

Another panel on Friday led by AOPA Pilot Editor Tom Haines discussed "Flying the Future Now," and described "synthetic vision," and the equipment needs of general aviation in order to comply with NextGen traffic avoidance system requirements. Included on the panel were Bill Stone of Garmin; Tim Taylor of Free Flight Systems, and David Vos of Rockwell Collins.

It was noted that in 2000, the Space Shuttle mapped the world and this information is now available to private industry.

The discussion then moved to equipment needs and requirements of the NextGen air traffic control system.

The FAA's Surveillance and Broadcast Services program office was formed in 2005. The program office will change the nation's air traffic control system from one that relies on radar technology to a system that uses precise location data from the global satellite network.

Enabling this evolution is a proven technology called Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B). ADS-B is a crucial component of the nation's Next-Generation Air Transportation System, and its implementation over the next 20 years will turn the NextGen vision into reality. After years of research and development, and use by general aviation pilots in Alaska and air transport carriers in the Ohio River Valley, the FAA determined in 2005 that ADS-B is ready to be made operational throughout the national airspace system.

With ADS-B, both pilots and controllers will see radar-like displays with highly accurate traffic data from satellites – displays that update in real time and don't degrade with distance or terrain. The system will also give pilots access to weather services, terrain maps and flight information services. The improved situational awareness will mean that pilots will be able to fly at safe distances from one another with less assistance from air traffic controllers.

The gains in safety, capacity, and efficiency as a result of moving to a satellite-based system will enable the FAA to meet the tremendous growth in air traffic predicted in coming decades. Because ADS-B is a flexible and expandable platform, it can change and grow with the evolving aviation system.

The first manufacturer to comment on the panel gave members the impression that aircraft owners would be required to buy new avionics costing tens of thousands of dollars. The second manufacturer that commented clarified to members that they could get by for much less by sacrificing the capability of receiving traffic information in their aircraft, and that they would only be required to transmit traffic information to air traffic control. I could sense a sigh of relief from fellow pilots who are more concerned about ensuring that 100LL will be available in the future, than meeting the needs of NextGen.

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In order to receive information, the aircraft would be required to have a WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation System) receiver, which many aircraft today already have. An automatic broadcast system transponder will be mandatory by 2020 to transmit information to air traffic control.

Product announcements were many. Garmin debuted its new Aera line of touch-screen portable GPS navigators; Avidyne introduced its new DFC90 digital attitude-based autopilot; and PSEngineering demonstrated its new PMA6000B audio-control system. I was especially intrigued with digital engine cylinder temperature instruments; the tried and proven selection of auto pilots by S-Tec (now Cobham Avionics); travel information from the Bahamas, Mexico, and destinations here in the United States; and the many sunglasses and pilot flight bag and luggage manufacturers represented.

The excitement and enthusiasm surrounding the opening day of the AOPA Aviation Summit were capped off by the unveiling of the association's **2010 AOPA Sweepstakes Aircraft** in the exhibit hall of the Tampa Convention Center: a brand-new Remos GX light sport aircraft (LSA).

The theme of next year's sweepstakes is "Fun to Fly," and the Remos, N210FN, is sure to live up to that promise. The two-seat airplane sports a snappy paint scheme, a three-blade propeller, and a 100-hp Rotax engine.

The Fun to Fly Sweepstakes also marks the first time that AOPA's giveaway will run from Nov. 3, 2009 to Sept. 30, 2010. If your membership is current as of Sept. 30, 2010, you are automatically entered in the sweepstakes. The name of the winner will be announced at AOPA Aviation Summit 2010 in Long Beach, Calif.

Tampa's Peter O. Knight Airport featured 100 display aircraft, and played host to the hundreds of aircraft that flew in for the Summit. AOPA named the airport display "Airportfest" to keep the trade show



(TOP) A 1936 Lockheed 12A Electra Junior, owned by Joseph Shepherd of Fayetteville, Georgia.

(BOTTOM L/R) AOPA President Craig Fuller with author Susan Butler (*East to the Dawn*), Joe Shepherd (pilot), and Jay McClure (copilot).

appeal of the Summit alive and well. A shuttle from the convention center ran every 30 minutes.

Included among the Airportfest display aircraft was the full line of Piper, Diamond, Cessna, Beechcraft, and Cirrus aircraft, a nice variety of Light Sport Aircraft, and a Cessna 206 on Wipline floats. The aircraft,

which received a lot of attention, was the 1936 Lockheed 12A Electra Junior, owned by Joseph Shepherd of Fayetteville, Georgia.

Shepherd and his copilot, Jay McClure of Atlanta, Ga., who flew scenes in the motion picture "Amelia," joined author Susan Butler as special guests at the Friday luncheon. Butler wrote "East to the Dawn," one of two books used to write the screenplay for the movie starring Hilary Swank and Richard Gere. (See movie review, and feature on Joe Shepherd and his Lockheed Electra, elsewhere in this issue.)

The AOPA Aviation Summit had plenty of interesting seminars, such as the popular "Pinch Hitter" course for non-pilots, and everyone's favorite speaker, Rod Machado (flight instructor, author, aviation humorist, and *AOPA Pilot* columnist). Since we host the "Midwest Flyer Canadian Fishing Fly-Out" each year, I was especially interested in a seminar entitled "Ditching & Water Survival" in which Doug Ritter of the Equipped To Survive Foundation discussed how to survive a water landing without floats, as well as other survival tips and equipment (www.equipped.org).

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based 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). For less than \$300.00, pilots can have the reassurance that only GPS technology can provide. Aircraft 406 Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs) are also now on the market, and the controversy as to whether or not they will be required in Canada, continues.

Awards & Recognition

AOPA welcomed celebrity involvement this year, including a recorded video message from pilot/actor Harrison Ford, accepting the 2009 *“Let’s Go Flying”* award for his involvement as the national spokesperson for “GA Serving America;” and a concert by John Oates, which was open to the Tampa community. Other celebrities included actor/author/producer Montel Williams, who promoted healthy lifestyles; and Michael Torchia, founder and president of Operation Fitness. Williams and Torchia teamed up with FAA Air Surgeon, Dr. Frederick Tilton, to focus on the importance of staying fit as pilots. AOPA also launched a new health benefit program for AOPA members at the AOPA Health Pavilion – Fly Well!

The J.B. “Doc” Hartranft Award went to two members of the House of Representatives, Rep. Allen Boyd (D-Fla.) and Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), for founding the “General Aviation Caucus.” The caucus was formed to educate lawmakers about the importance of general aviation to the United States. The award is presented annually to the federal, state, or local government official who has made the most significant contribution to general aviation during the year. J.B. “Doc” Hartranft was AOPA’s first employee when the organization was incorporated on May 15, 1939, taking the title executive director and moving the offices from Philadelphia to Chicago, right next to the Ziff-Davis publishing house. From there, Hartranft launched a whirlwind of activity to benefit private flyers.



(L/R) AOPA President Craig Fuller and Walter Fricke of Veterans Airlift Command.



Hal Shevers of Sporty’s Pilot Shop is recognized for his 50 years of AOPA membership. He was presented his 50-year membership pin and an AOPA Presidential Citation from Craig Fuller for partnering with AOPA.



Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) pictured here received the J.B. “Doc” Hartranft Award for co-founding the General Aviation Caucus with Rep. Allen Boyd (D-Fla.).

The Laurence P. Sharples Perpetual Award went to Walter Fricke, the chairman, president and founder of the Veterans Airlift Command (VAC). Using a nationwide network of volunteer pilots, VAC provides free transportation for medical and other compassionate reasons to wounded warriors and their families. The Sharples Award is given annually to the private citizen who has demonstrated the greatest selfless commitment to general aviation, and is named in memory of one of AOPA’s five founders.

Do you remember Jessica Cox from EAA AirVenture-Oshkosh, the young woman who was born without arms and fulfilled her dream of learning to fly? Well, she was at the AOPA Aviation Summit, and an inspiration to all.

What we do with our arms and hands, Jessica accomplishes with her legs and feet. The aircraft that works best for her is the Ercoupe, because the ailerons and rudder are interconnected (Oct/Nov 2009, www.midwestflyer.com). Jessica’s full-time job is motivational speaking, so if you are a member of a pilot, civic or business group, and are looking for an outstanding speaker, contact her through her website at www.rightfooted.com.

The president of the National Air Transportation Association (NATA), Jim Coyne, did an excellent job speaking and moderating AOPA LIVE during the political rally at the main stage in the exhibit hall. Coyne and Fuller knew each other when Coyne was a member of Congress.

Like EAA AirVenture-Oshkosh, the AOPA Aviation Summit is an opportunity to reunite with old friends, and meet new ones. From our Midwest states, I met a lot of people from Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Indiana. One pilot I met from Minneapolis drives a Ready Mix Cement truck and rents aircraft at Thunderbird Aviation at Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie, Minn. A lawyer from Chicago I met

took the same instrument course I took some 20 years ago at Morey Airplane Company in Middleton, Wis. We met other pilots and their families from elsewhere in the country.

Among some of the businesses from the Midwest, which displayed at the AOPA Aviation Summit, were Wipaire, Inc., South St. Paul, Minn.; Rapco, Inc., Hartland, Wis.; Cirrus Design, Duluth, Minn.; NationAir Insurance, Inc., St. Louis, Mo.; University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.D.; Sporty's Pilot Shop, Batavia, Ohio; American Champion Aircraft, Rochester, Wis.; BRS Aerospace, St. Paul, Minn.; Cincinnati Avionics, Cincinnati, Ohio; Mid-Continent Instruments, Wichita, Kan.; Cessna Aircraft, Wichita, Kan.; Waco Classic Aircraft, Battle Creek, Mich.; Travers Aviation Insurance, St. Louis, Mo.; and Frasca

AOPA, NBAA Announce Memorandum of Understanding To Promote Use of Light Business Aircraft

FREDERICK, MD. – The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) announced on October 21, 2009, an accord that will draw on the strengths of both organizations to support owners and pilots who use their aircraft as effective business tools. As a result of the memorandum of understanding, beginning in 2010, AOPA and NBAA will each host "Light Business Aircraft Conferences" as part of their annual conventions.

"Combined, AOPA and NBAA have more than 130 years of experience supporting our members," said Karen Gebhart, AOPA's executive vice president of communications. "With more than 415,000 members, AOPA brings strength of numbers, and offers tremendous safety education and one-on-one support through the AOPA Air Safety Foundation and our Pilot Information Center. And NBAA has more than six decades of specialized expertise to help owners/pilots make the most of their aircraft as business assets."

"NBAA and AOPA have a long history of working together," added NBAA President and CEO Ed Bolen. "This new collaborative effort to address the needs of a vital sector of the industry – the small businesses which use aviation – will enhance the value of each organization to our members and can help businesses that do not yet take advantage of business aviation understand why it would be in their interest to do so."

Because the AOPA Aviation Summit and NBAA's Annual Meeting and Convention are often on opposite sides of the country, the jointly hosted Light Business Aircraft Conferences will be able to reach more pilots each year.

For 2010, the NBAA Annual Meeting & Convention will be held October 19-21 in Atlanta, Georgia, and the AOPA Aviation Summit will be held November 11-13 in Long Beach, Calif. Members from each organization will be

International, Urbana, Illinois.

Being in Florida, the "Sun 'n Fun Fly-In" had a booth, encouraging everyone to come back to Florida, April 13-18, 2010 (www.sun-n-fun.org).

AOPA Aviation Summit 2009 is over, but you can relive it online at www.aopa.org through online video and news archives.

If you have never attended an AOPA annual convention, plan now to attend AOPA Aviation Summit 2010, November 11-13 in Long Beach, Calif. (www.aopa.org). You can register online, and check on available housing and local attractions.

Craig Fuller summed it up the best: "Your decision to attend the AOPA Aviation Summit is a great demonstration of your commitment to the future of general aviation." □

invited to attend the event of the other organization.

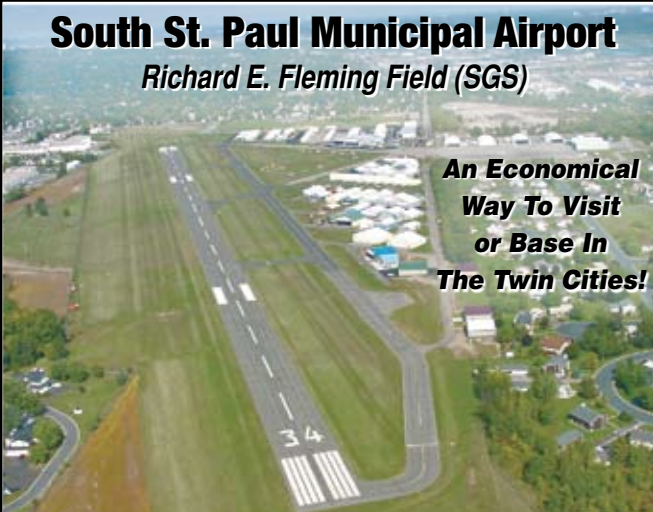
With more than 415,000 members, AOPA is the world's largest civil aviation association. Seventy percent of all U.S. pilots are members of AOPA (www.aopa.org).

Founded in 1947 and based in Washington, DC, the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) is the leading organization for companies that rely on general aviation aircraft to help make their businesses more efficient, productive and successful. NBAA represents more than 8,000 companies (www.nbaa.org). □

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Love Was In The Air At AOPA Summit

Steve Schapiro



Glenn Plymate of Portland, Oregon, places a wedding ring on the finger of Irene Bolam of Mooresburg, Tennessee, with Joe Shepherd's 1936 Lockheed 12A Electra Junior in the background.

by Steve Schapiro

Friday afternoon, November 6, 2009, during the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) Summit in Tampa, Florida, seemed like most other years. There were pilots and aviation enthusiasts walking through the exhibit hall checking out the latest in aircraft supplies and services. There were seminars on safety and learning to fly. And people were boarding buses at the Tampa Convention Center for the short ride to Peter O. Knight Airport to see a variety of Light Sport Aircraft, personal jets and antiques assembled at the "Airportfest" portion of the Summit. Little did they know they would be guests at the impromptu wedding of two Amelia Earhart enthusiasts.

In fact, when Glenn Plymate and Irene Bolam woke up that morning, they didn't even know they would be taking their vows under partly sunny skies in front of the 1936 Lockheed 12A Electra Junior that was used in the new film "Amelia."

The couple met in June after Irene posted a photo on an Amelia Earhart Society website of herself next to an Earhart monument in Hawaii. She was bragging a little that she "had seen something most of them hadn't seen."

Well, Glenn isn't most people – he, too, had been to the monument. So he sent Irene an email. Soon the emails turned into phone calls. They talked about the famous aviatrix who disappeared attempting to fly around the world in 1937 and their own flying history. Glenn got his private pilot certificate in 1949 and several ratings since. Irene soloed in 1969. Irene asked, "Would you take me flying in your plane?"

"That question melted me down," Glenn said. "It spoke volumes about the confidence she placed in me and her desire for us to meet."

The couple met in person in July, appropriately at an airport. Glenn flew from Portland, Oregon to Knoxville, Tennessee via Seattle and Atlanta. Irene drove from her home in Mooresburg, Tennessee about an hour and a half northeast of Knoxville.

Glenn lost his wife, Erral, in July of 2003 after 56 "wonderful years of marriage." Irene also is widowed after a long and wonderful marriage, losing her husband, John, of 43 years in 2006. Neither wanted to be lonely any more and the topic of marriage came up.

At breakfast at the AOPA Summit, they were chatting with Pat Ohlsson about the difficulty in getting all the paperwork completed to get married. Glenn and Irene mentioned they were considering going to Las Vegas. Pat said, "My husband can marry you today!" Talk about a done deal!

Pat and Lenny flew their Waco from Spruce Creek Residential Airpark in Daytona Beach, Fla., where he is a realtor and notary public. In Florida, a notary public can marry couples and Lenny has officiated at 15 weddings. He went into action and was able to get the marriage license expedited so the wedding could take place that afternoon.

With the Lockheed 12A as a backdrop and a number of uninvited AOPA members as guests, Glenn Plymate and Irene Bolam tied the knot and celebrated with champagne and cake.

"The only thing we disagree on is what happened to Amelia," said Bolam. "He thinks she crashed and sank. I know she crashed and survived and made it back to the United States." □

ELLISON FROM PAGE 39

performer Sean D. Tucker's aerobatic team, "The Collaborators." Oracle Corporation sponsors Tucker's act, "Team Oracle."

Ellison attended the University of Southern California Film School and learned to fly aerobatics at an early age. At age 20 he became one of the youngest pilots to perform at EAA AirVenture-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wis., when Tucker debuted his new four-plane team that also included his son, Eric, and one other pilot. Ellison created Skydance in 2004

with the goal to combine his passion for acting, aviation and producing. His first aviation film was "Flyboys," the 2006 Tony Bill-directed WWI film that Ellison co-financed. Ellison was also part of the cast. "Flyboys" did not do well at the box office, but Ellison is not giving up on aviation projects.

Among the many film projects in the works is "Northern Lights," a drama about four aspiring aerobatic pilots who form a team and compete with a more experienced varsity team to be number one. □