

DECEMBER 2018

SPORT *Aerobatics*

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB

► GRASSROOTS

► BREAKING THROUGH, PART 3



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Contents

FEATURES

► 8 Thomas H. Adams Jr.

International Aerobatics Hall of Fame 2018 inductee
by Lorrie Penner

18 Breaking Through

Part 3
by John Strong

24 The Root of Grassroots

by Nicole Brahm

DEPARTMENTS

3 PRESIDENT'S PAGE

by Robert Armstrong

4 LINES & ANGLES

7 PROGRAMS & COMMITTEES

by Jim Bourke

30 MEET A MEMBER

by Gary DeBaun

32 FLYMART



COVER

Tom Adams alongside his Pitts at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in 1972.
Photo courtesy Tom Adams.

Above: Leigh Hubner's Eagle on the ramp at Sebring 78.
Photo by Leigh Hubner.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GILES G-200 TO BE CELEBRATED AT EAA AIRVENTURE 2019

THE IAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS has accepted a proposal put forward by DJ Molny to feature the Giles G-200/202 aircraft in the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2019 aerobatics exhibition.

"The Giles G-200 first flew in 1994, making 2019 its 25th anniversary. Its groundbreaking all-carbon design delivers amazing performance and delightful flying

characteristics on just four cylinders," DJ wrote.

"Although only 20 or so G-200 kits were produced, it's an important aircraft in its own right and of course is the progenitor of the more numerous G-202 model and the MX series. As such, I think that the plane and its designer are worthy of recognition." **IAC**



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE NELSON

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Happy Holidays

BY ROBERT ARMSTRONG, IAC 6712

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL! This year has gone by very quickly, and it is suddenly time to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! When I was much younger, there seemed to be an eternity between the holiday seasons. Now, with much more responsibility and a little aging, there is not enough time between them.

This great magazine will arrive after several events of note were held in November. The EAA Sport Aviation Halls of Fame ceremonies will have inducted Tom Adams, IAC 1999, into the International Aerobatics Hall of Fame. As a past inductee, I can confidently say it is a special night for all. I have known Tom since I became a member of the International Aerobatic Club. Tom was flying Unlimited when I flew my first contest at Fond du Lac many years ago. His willingness to help and be involved has never changed. We have all benefited from his service to IAC.

One of the very visible parts of our club is this wonderful magazine. When you look at the pages you are exposed to images that will inspire. Editor Evan Peers' photo coverage of events such as EAA AirVenture Oshkosh and the U.S. National Aerobic Championships can almost have you remembering an event you might not have attended!

My goals for IAC in the future have been painted in the President's Pages that have preceded this, and I have continued to get emails from members who support my vision to work for the beginners in our sport and not get so

complex that we discourage anyone from enjoying sport aerobatics. The issues that the board will have addressed in the fall board meeting do not need reporting here as the electronic means is so much faster now. I will continue to drive to make IAC a place for all to enjoy.

The sometimes-used word in our sport is *grass-roots*. Not that all grass is the same, but the term does cover all factions of our sport. The first-time Primary pilot landing and seeing a score that encourages them to walk proud and continue is the best way to move into the future.

Featured in this issue is part three of this very type of story. I am very proud to have new and enthusiastic pilots join our big aerobatic family. The way we welcome them will have a tremendous influence on our survival. When I flew my first contest I was exposed to a community of IAC members who welcomed me into the wonderful world of aerobatics, and I am still enjoying it.

Now, let us all go and have a happy and safe new year! **IAC**

**THE FIRST-TIME PRIMARY PILOT
LANDING AND SEEING A SCORE
THAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO WALK
PROUD AND CONTINUE IS THE BEST
WAY TO MOVE INTO THE FUTURE.**

► Please send your comments, questions, or suggestions to president@iac.org.

15th FAI World Advanced Aerobatic Championships 2022 Awarded to Jean, Nevada

THE WORLD ADVANCED AEROBATIC Championships are headed back to the USA in 2022 after CIVA delegates accepted a bid from the International Aerobatic Club and IAC Chapter 12 to host the 15th biennial event. Dates are set for October 11-22, 2022.

Duncan Koerbel, IAC 437649 and president of IAC Chapter 12, attended the CIVA plenary in Warsaw, Poland, on November 10 to present the bid. The bid named Jean, Nevada, as the contest site, citing the proximity to Las Vegas as a key point of interest for international pilots and their families and friends. The Jean Airport (OL7) is located 25 miles south of the Las Vegas strip.

Duncan put an enormous amount of time and thought into preparation of the bid and will serve as the event's managing director. Knowing that the competition requires extensive travel no matter where it is held, the objective was to make the trip be about more than just the flying for the pilots' families and support groups. Duncan and Chapter 12 weighed many factors, including weather,

logistics, airspace, ground facilities, international airline routes, accommodations, and affordability in selecting the site. Las Vegas is the most economical due to hotel room costs being subsidized by casino industry and is well served by many international air carriers. Additionally, the states of Colorado, Texas, California, and Washington have high IAC membership and, hence, volunteer support and aircraft rental is expected to be readily available.

The IAC board of directors approved the bid in October.

As a prelude to 2022 and as a shakeout of the site for the WAAC, Chapter 12 also plans to host the 2019 West Open Championships in Jean later next year.

The last Advanced championships to be held in America were in 2008 at Pendleton, Oregon.

15TH FAI WORLD ADVANCED AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS - 2022



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Videos From 2018 U.S. Nationals Now Online

THE 2018 U.S. NATIONAL Aerobatic Championships saw 195 individual flights by 79 pilots. Every flight was recorded on video as a part of the competitors' fees. The competition videos are now available on the IAC website at www.IAC.org/nationals-videos.

IAC extends our thanks to Forrest Fox Productions for the monumental task of videography and editing of these flights.



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2018 Competition Season Wraps Up

THE 2018 IAC AEROBATIC competition season wrapped up in early November with three contests held across the country. Chapters 23 and 62 held contests on opposite sides of the United States — Sebring 78 in Sebring, Florida, and The Tequila Cup in Marana, Arizona, respectively. Chapter 26 came through with the final 2018 contest on November 10 with Foxy Figures at General William J. Fox Airfield (KWJF) in Lancaster, California, a long-awaited contest after their traditional Labor Day "Happiness Is Delano" contest was forced to cancel last year.

The 2018 season suffered an unprecedented number of weather-related cancellations, causing many pilots in the mid-America and Eastern chapters to be disappointed. Organizers in each case held hope that weather would cooperate, but placing safety and enjoyment of the participants ahead of all else was universally commended as the right move in every case.

Overall, IAC chapters held 32 of the 39 regional contests scheduled. In total, 374 pilots and 132 judges took part. Results of each contest are available at IACCB.IAC.org, the IAC's repository of contest, pilot, and judges' scoring data. **IAC**



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEIGH HUBNER



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEIGH HUBNER



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEIGH HUBNER



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF GRANGER



Safety Series

BY JIM BOURKE, IAC 434151

HOW DO I WRITE a safety article that will entertain? It's challenging. Safety, in a way, is the absence of excitement. Safely operating an airplane is mundane. It's what we do routinely.

The easiest way to get people to read a safety article, paradoxically, is to focus on something that is unsafe. After all, the quickest route to fame in aviation is to survive under miraculous circumstances. Unsafe activity is provocative. It's interesting. It's titillating.

It's true that to be safe we have to know what not to do, and that means we have to analyze what has gone wrong in the past. So, we should spend time talking about unsafe flying. If it happens to be entertaining, that's incidental. But we must do more than dwell on failure. We should take time to look at our own practices, even when they've given us no cause for alarm. After all, a lot of unsafe flying goes unpunished. The victims of many fatal accidents escaped well-deserved injury for years, progressively mollified by diminishing luck, but proportionately increasing in false confidence.

This is my first year as IAC safety director, and I'm pleased to say that most of us are operating our aircraft without issues. I've had the pleasant opportunity to speak to some members after incidents or reports of risky behavior. I know that no one wants to get a call from the safety director. A couple of my friends have even started answering the phone with, "Uh oh! What did I do?" But I take my job seriously. I reach out because I care. My job is to make non-judgmental contact with people, to talk through experiences, and to remind people of how important it is that we manage risk both for ourselves and for innocent bystanders.

I've seen firsthand what happens when an overconfident pilot's life comes to a crashing

end. I remember when I started in this sport I got tired of people "mothering" me, but I understood it all after that incident. Now I've started mothering a bit, too. We need a culture that allows for healthy confrontation over safety issues.

I do not consider myself to be a tremendously safe person. In fact, I think I take more risks than most people. I like to think I manage those risks well, but I wasn't given this position because I had proven myself to be the best at being safe. I'm capable of making some really dumb decisions. If you see me doing something stupid, it's okay to tell me.

The IAC Safety Program (per IAC Policies and Procedures 223) has three separate components: Aerobatic Mishap Review, Human Factors, and Technical Safety. I've asked our editor, Evan Peers, to reserve space in the magazine for a series of safety articles on these three topics. Hopefully the Aerobatic Mishap Review articles will be kept to a minimum; we have a good record lately. Let's keep it up. On the other hand, Human Factors covers many areas from physiology to psychology. There is always plenty to talk about there. And, of course, Technical Safety articles are always appreciated.

If you have any thoughts about what topics should be covered or, even better, if you would like to contribute one of your own, please email me at jtbourke@gmail.com. **IAC**

► **AT THE NOVEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**, Jim Bourke accepted responsibility as the IAC Membership Committee chair and vacated the Safety Committee chair. Until a new Safety chair is appointed, *Sport Aerobatics* will continue this Safety Series as envisioned by Jim.

Thomas H. Adams Jr.

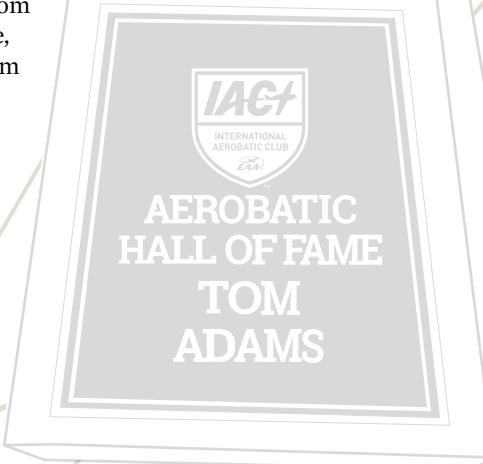
IAC 1999



INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME 2018 INDUCTEE

BY LORRIE PENNER, IAC 431036

WITH A FATHER WHO was a barnstormer through the 1920s and later a pilot in P-47s in World War II and F-86 jet fighters in the Korean War, it seemed that Tom Adams' path into aviation was set. Still in third grade, Tom remembers his dad, Harry Adams, strapping him into a parachute to ride along in his J-3 Cub on Sundays at Georgia Aeronautics where his dad was teaching World War II vets to fly. Even before that, from either memory or stories, he recalls his dad sticking some cushions into an apple box, loading the 3-year-old Tom into the box, and setting it on his right side as he prepared to fly to a weekend air show. They would then wing their way in a Stinson Tri-Motor to the air show. At that time, Harry was chief pilot for Straughn Aircraft Company.





Thomas H. Adams Jr.



The images and memories from early years kept Tom inspired, and his father gave him flight instruction when he was old enough. Tom earned his private pilot certificate in Seattle at Boeing Field in 1955. He went on to get his commercial and CFI ratings in 1956. To help pay for college, Tom did some crop-dusting in the 450 Stearman, also called the Super Stearman. Tom's crop-dusting experiences took place in three seasons: one in Mississippi and two in Wilcox, Arizona.

Steve Johnson, who met Tom in 1998, said he and Tom attended a contest one year at the Joplin Regional Airport, near where Tom was born, and Tom showed him pictures of Harry that were on display at the airport. Tom was quite proud of his dad's early days as a barn-stormer, military, and agricultural pilot.

After attending college at the Central Washington College of Education, now Central Washington University, Tom went on to join the

Marine Aviation Cadet program in Pensacola in 1959. After his hitch at Cherry Point, North Carolina, flying A4D carrier-based attack jets flying attack jets, he spent a summer flying PB4Y-2 bombers spraying in the Idaho mountains for a spruce budworm infestation. He then started his 32-year career with Northwest Airlines (NWA).

While he worked for NWA, he built his first Pitts S1C and began competing in IAC regional aerobatic contests. Tom is the 17th person in International Aerobatic Club history to earn the ALL-TEN achievement award for proficiency in aerobatic flight through IAC's Achievement Awards program. The program provides the

mechanism through which competition and noncompetition pilots can work to reach the desired level of proficiency in Primary through Unlimited categories.

In one of the Pitts airplanes Tom built, he used an O-360 helicopter engine and received some advice from Curtis Pitts regarding the fuselage design. Tom had the original Pitts plans that he was working from, but decided to cut along the longerons and extend the fuselage for a roomier cockpit as Curtis had suggested. Later on he built and added symmetrical wings with four ailerons. The thing he enjoyed most in the building process was the woodwork on the wings. Little known is his development of the first three-bladed constant-speed propeller for a single-seat Pitts.

When he finally got the chance to fly it, he did enjoy the Pitts, because he hadn't flown a tailwheel airplane since his experience with the Stearman doing crop-dusting. His initial training and practice doing aerobatics was challenging. When he first started flying the Sportsman sequences, he would fly a sequence or two, land, and throw up. He didn't get discouraged — he kept at it. After

"YOU CAN COUNT ON ONE HAND ANY BAD ACTORS ... LOTS OF 'A' TYPE PERSONALITIES, THEY ALL WANTED TO IMPROVE THEIR FLYING AND WIN."

— Thomas H. Adams Jr.

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Photo by Jim Koepnick



Thomas H. Adams Jr.



three days of repeating the same ritual, he overcame his airsickness.

During the early 1970s Tom joined IAC. He was attracted to a makeup of people in which “you can count on one hand any bad actors.” IAC members are devoted and interested in aviation and aerobatics. “Lots of ‘A’ type personalities, they all wanted to improve their flying and win,” Tom said with a twinkle in his eye. He has always been impressed at how IACers step up and, even though it is an individual sport, how the group feels like family and rallies around each other to support and encourage. In the early years, he would fly aerobatic competition with good buddies Jim Rossi, Bob Davis, Don Taylor, and Larry

Owen. Later on, his circle of flying friends would include Clint McHenry, Kermit Weeks, and Hubie Tolson.

When he first joined the IAC and wasn’t flying in contests or flying for work, Tom flew for an aircraft museum in Minneapolis. That volunteer job allowed him to experience flying antiques, classics, and warbirds. One plane in particular he recalls flying was a Morane-Saulnier MS.230, which stood in for a Fokker EV parasol monoplane for the movie *The Blue Max*. Over his career, he has flown more than 100 types of airplanes, including a North American O-47, which now resides in the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. He retired from NWA as a captain on the B747-400.

In 1995 Tom was a member of the first U.S. Advanced Aerobatic team to compete in the inaugural Advanced World Aerobatic Championships, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa. Tom shipped a Pitts S-1T, tail number N95JC, which was flown by him, Don Rhynalds, and Larry Owen. Other planes the U.S. team was competing against included the Zlin 50 flown by the newly crowned Advanced world champion, Martin Stahalik of the Czech Republic, and the Yak-55 of second- and third-place finishers Svetlana Kapanina and Victor Chmal from Russia. John Morrissey was the top U.S. finisher in ninth place flying a Pitts S-2B.

Tom remained an Advanced category competitor through 2011 when he switched over to Intermediate, won the category, and retired his competition flying at the Phil Schacht Aerobatic Kickoff in 2012. He flew a Pitts for most of his competition years and flew a Staudacher S300D for last few years. Tom’s name appears as the Advanced category Nationals champion banner three times.

In addition to aerobatic competition, Tom has also served as chief judge and/or grading judge at 250-plus contests since 1971. For 2017 and 2018 combined, he judged more than 234 individual flights. Tom was the 2010 recipient of the Robert L. Heuer Judges Award, recognizing his outstanding achievements made in competition aerobatics by a judge. In 2015, he was awarded the Kathy Jaffe Volunteer Award in recognition for his coaching, mentoring, judging, new ideas for improving the sport, encouraging others, and his time in the contest starter



position for many years at the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships.

As an aerobatic competitor and judge, Tom has been able to share his expertise with many fellow aerobatic pilots and has done coaching at contests, chapter practices, and at his private strip for more than 25 years. Goody Thomas has known Tom for more than 21 years and said Tom is always willing to help and share information, whether you want to hear it or not! He remembers a time when Tom invited him, Hubie Tolson, the late Chandy Clanton, and Mike Goulian to his house in Tennessee for a training camp. Russian aerobatic champion Sergei Boriak trained with all of them for several days. Tom's place was like an aviation mecca — the most beautiful home and grass strip. Tom's wife, Lori, cooked amazing meals for them and welcomed everyone into their home. Goody said he remembers so many laughs, good times, and Tom with his quick wit and always that smile with a laugh.

A valued coach, Tom traveled at his own expense as a coach for his good friend Steve Johnson and the U.S. Advanced Aerobatic Team to Radom, Poland, in 2006. Tom's and Steve's families traveled around Europe on vacation while Steve practiced. Tom's coaching style worked well for Steve, and Tom was able to help several other Americans during that contest. Steve liked Tom's direction of telling him what was wrong at the moment it happened while he was flying in the box. Tom also used an audio recording for playback later. After coaching from Tom and moving up from Intermediate to Advanced, when he won his first Advanced trophy Tom told him it was because he had a great coach. Steve confirmed — Tom was right!

At the conclusion of WAAC 2006, Americans Rob Holland, Jeff Boerboon, and Hector Ramirez were the top scorers, enabling the United States to bring home the silver team medal.

When it comes to coaching, Tom is thrilled and proud to tell anyone who'll listen about his son Kelly, who earned a spot on the 2010 and 2012 U.S. Advanced Aerobatic Teams. Kelly is a natural born pilot with many innate skills. Tom was happy that one of his sons wanted to follow in his footsteps. Tom said his son's desire for aviation continues to inspire him. From about 8 years old, Kelly set his sights on being a professional pilot. According to Steve Johnson, while Kelly is an excellent aerobatic pilot, he didn't like to practice very much, and this would frustrate Tom, but then Kelly would go out and fly great in competition and Tom would be surprised, but grateful, that his coaching had somehow stuck.

Tom has served on the IAC board of directors for more than 28 years and was awarded director emeritus status in September 2018 at the Nationals opening ceremony in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He continues to play an active role in aerobatics

TROPHIES AND MEDALS FROM 1975 THROUGH 2011

TROPHIES:

U.S. Nationals: first place, five times; second place, once; third place, three times

IAC Championships: first place, three times; second place, three times; third place, once

Regional Contests: first place, 28 times; second place, 18 times; third place, 17 times

MEDALS:

(individual category flight medals)

U.S. Nationals (Grayson, Texas) and IAC Championships (Fond du Lac): 11 Gold, 19 Silver, 10 Bronze

Contest of the Americas:
CIVA silver medal

THE ADAMS FAMILY DURING THE INDUCTION CEREMONIES AT THE EAA AVIATION MUSEUM.

Back row: Kelly Adams (youngest son), Denise Adams (Kurt's wife), Kurt Adams (oldest son), Darren Adams (grandson), Kim Adams (Kelly's wife), Paige Adams (granddaughter)

Front row: Taylor Adams (granddaughter), Lori Adams (Tom's wife), Tom Adams, Meghan Adams (Darren's wife), Thomas Adams (great-grandson), Ava Adams (great-granddaughter)



Thomas H. Adams Jr.

Tom Adams (center) receives his award from EAA president Jack Pelton (left) and IAC president Robert Armstrong.



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as a national judge and coach. During the 2018 Nationals, he served as a judge for the Unlimited category and as coach for David Prather. David flies a Staudacher S600 in the Intermediate category and finished in the top 10.

Reflecting on past teams and pilots he has coached, Tom said he's seen a change in the way the Advanced team looks at coaching. "They are more focused on increasing the amount and

quality of coaching to improve their overall performance," he said. "There have been improvements in the quality of the airplanes as well. The Pitts pilots have to work so much harder at this level than they did in the past. In the last 20 years planes like the Staudacher, Panzer, and now the SC model of Extra aircraft have really raised the bar."

"Tom is synonymous with aviation and aerobatics," Goody said, which anyone who has been fortunate to meet him will know. "He is dedicated and passionate," Steve added.

Tom has followed the path set out by his father, and I believe Harry would have been proud of the good and constant man that Tom became — a man who has been a great contributor to the sport of aerobatics. **IAC**



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PERSPECTIVES

In the early Florida morning at Sebring 78, Wayne Asplundh, IAC#37713, readies his Pitts S-2C in preparation to fly his Free sequence. Wayne placed first in Intermediate at the contest, with a total score of 82.87 percent.



BREAKING THROUGH

PART 3

BY JOHN STRONG, IAC 435285

IT HAS BEEN a year of stretching and daring for me, from taking on new roles at the office and competing in the Chicago Triathlon (I'm a dreadful swimmer and Lake Michigan is rather intimidating) to flying my first aerobatic contests. But as Max DePree said, "We cannot become what we want to be by remaining what we are." I'm hoping there are a few potential new competitors who may have drawn some courage in how an old dog can still leave his comfort zone and do something amazing. I've been impressed by everyone I've met this year, from fellow Primary competitors to the Unlimited folks. Simply competing in aerobatics is amazing in itself, but

the way my first year of competition flying concluded was amazing in a way I had not expected.

As I wrapped up the second part of this article series, I was preparing to head out to Kokomo, Indiana, for one more contest before the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. As the weekend approached I heard from contest director Hollywood Hayden that the weather forced the unfortunate decision to cancel. I also had to miss the Michigan Aerobatic Open earlier in the summer due to a cracked exhaust, so it was looking like I was only going to have two regional contests under my belt before heading to Oshkosh. That certainly wasn't the plan. Work



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and weather conspired to further limit my flying before the Nationals, yet my final aerobatic practice session over the Wisconsin farmlands in my Super D felt surprisingly solid and even relaxing. It left me feeling pretty confident – not that I was going to necessarily win anything, but that I was going to fly well and enjoy myself at the contest, which was the goal. I checked the list of registered competitors and found that again I was up against the talented students from the University of North Dakota, which did not seem to bode well for me. I flew with them at both the Giles Henderson Memorial Challenge and at the Doug Yost Challenge earlier that year, and I knew how good they are. In fact, I feel that I had improved my own flying by closely watching how they flew their competition sequences this summer. I reminded myself that the only pilot I had to worry about was me, and to keep the right attitude.

On another front, the logistics of competing at the Nationals were a bit daunting. I was going to be balancing the weeklong flying activities with my commitments at work, so I had planned out how I was going to drive back and forth between Oshkosh and home (about a two-hour drive) to make it work. It sounded like a good idea at the time, but despite being technically feasible I had not anticipated how it would increase my stress level, nor had I considered how weather delays could potentially upset the plan entirely. Yet, if it did, I was of the mind that if I had the chance to even fly one round in the skies above Wittman Regional Airport (OSH) I would have still had a very good year.

My scheduled practice slot was Friday afternoon, and I planned to depart Kenosha Regional Airport (ENW) that morning, but winds gusting up to 35 knots at OSH kept me grounded. Instead, I arrived

The Quiz



BY JONATHAN APFELBAUM, IAC 433983

1 The International Aerobatics Hall of Fame was formed in 1986. Who were the first inductees?

2 One of Duane Cole's contributions continues to be used by aerobatic pilots. What is it?

3 What was Curtis Pitts' first aircraft?

4 When was the first official U.S. national aerobatic championship contest, and who won?

5 Frank Price represented the USA alone in the first World Aerobatic Championships in Czechoslovakia. When did the USA field a team?

LOOK FOR THE ANSWERS ON PAGE 27



HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

DEADLINE JANUARY 2019

Many people have made significant contributions to the sport and art of aerobatic flight. Some have dedicated their lives to aerobatics. Some of these people may not be pilots. The Hall of Fame selection criteria, "a significant contribution to aerobatics," is broad enough to apply to anyone, including pilots, competitors, designers, and volunteers. You know who they are! If you have a candidate whom you feel deserves to be recognized for significant contributions, please forward their nomination to the committee for consideration.

Individuals, groups, and chapters are encouraged to support the nomination of a local candidate. Quite often, the accomplishments of an individual are best known regionally, and members pooling their resources to develop supporting documentation on behalf of their candidate certainly helps. Nominees who go on to be the inductee typically have a good deal more information provided than just data on the nomination form.

The Hall of Fame committee accepts nominations until February 1 of each year. A nomination petition form may be obtained from the IAC website at www.IAC.org/files/programs/hof_form.doc.

www.iac.org 19



BREAKING



John Strong (left), Sofia Lindberg, and Adam Messenheimer.

Saturday at 7 a.m. at Hangar C on the OSH grounds, which is where I met Sofia. Sofia Lindberg, IAC 440212, is an accomplished commercial airline and aerobatic pilot from Sweden whom I had encountered on social media a couple months prior. She had already won Sportsman in the Nordic Aerobatics Championship and was hoping to compete for the first time in the U.S. Nationals, but needed to arrange to borrow a Super Decathlon to do it. It seemed like our chance online encounter was a bit of serendipity, and after some texting and planning we arranged for her to use my plane for the competition. I was happy to have made a new connection in the aerobatic world, especially since it made her dream to compete at the U.S. Nationals possible as well. That morning I also met Adam Messenheimer, who was flying Intermediate in his Pitts, as well as Rob Holland, who had encouraged Sofia to compete in the United States. I had actually run into Rob at the Doug Yost Challenge in Iowa, but didn't have a chance to chat with him at the time.



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THROUGH



Primary didn't fly until Monday, so I had plenty of time. Sofia and Adam took the opportunity to get familiar with my Super D with a couple of off-airport practice flights Saturday and Sunday. I felt like staying on the ground. Perhaps it was nerves, but I didn't feel that another practice flight was going to do me any good and might just serve to build up my anxiety. My concern, though, was being able to see the markers and keep myself in the box with the forecast 25-knot winds at 3,000 feet. When my slot came up on Monday, I did have a difficult time quickly picking out the box markers from the ground clutter. What's more, clouds were sweeping through the box at 3,000 feet, obscuring my view as I was about ready to dive in. It was just what I needed to throw me off my game, said my self-doubt. After radioing the chief judge my intention to hold, I waited until a big enough hole in the clouds appeared, and then I took the opportunity and dove in. My start was less than auspicious as I did my three wing wags not



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BREAKING THROUGH



On the flightline at the Doug Yost Challenge in August.

toward the judges, but the other way. The next thing I remember, I was done and calling the contest director for landing instructions. So much for relaxing and enjoying myself! I was so tense I could barely remember anything about how I flew my maneuvers, which to me meant I probably didn't do too well.

I drove home Monday night wondering how I really did. Those clouds turned out to be a harbinger of rainy weather, and the rest of Monday's flights as well as all of Tuesday's were scrubbed. That turned out okay for me since I had to be at work all day Tuesday anyway. Wednesday morning brought sunnier weather as the Primary and Sportsman categories finished up the first round. As I waited for my second slot to come around, I got a text message from Sofia. "I saw your results!! Really good!!!!

Congratulations!!!?" What? The scores had been posted, and I was in first. Immediately the memories of what happened in my first contest at Salem came flooding back. It was there that I surprisingly found myself in first place after the first round, and I let the self-induced pressure to perform get to me, blowing the second sequence with a silly mistake. I told myself that was not going to happen this time. I had already achieved more at the Nationals than what I had anticipated, so all I had to do for the second round was smile, relax, and

enjoy the fantastic view while flying over OSH on the picturesque shore of Lake Winnebago.

I did just that for my second flight, but perhaps I relaxed a bit too much. I lost too much altitude in my spin recovery, finding myself perilously low prior to the half-Cuban where I tend to lose another 200-400 feet. If I were a quick thinker I would have wagged out and re-entered with a bit more altitude, but instead I pressed on. I got sloppy at the top of the half-Cuban and rushed the recovery with a short after, ending up at 1,750 feet. What's more, I neglected to float the loop, but perhaps the brisk headwind helped to conceal it a bit. At least I ended it with a decent roll. It was probably not as good as my first flight, but not so bad either. I actually felt pretty good all in all, and wherever I ended up in the scores, I was content. I flew near the best of my abilities at the Nationals and didn't have any hard zeroes. I'll take that! What's more, I then had the pleasure of watching Sofia fly my airplane in a truly amazing Sportsman Free sequence. I had never seen someone fly a square loop with a Decathlon before.

Later that afternoon the scores for the second round were posted. I was right; it wasn't as good as my first flight, but it was still good enough for first place. Then it started to sink in. Doug Bartlett, my mentor in my first contest and contest jury member at



the Nationals, sent me a congratulatory email. With Tuesday scrubbed, it was unlikely that there would be any time for a third round for Primary. I called my wife. "Honey, you're not going to believe this"

I had not originally planned to be at the Nationals on Friday, but instead intended to spend the day at work. Given the circumstances, my manager was happy to give me the extra day off to stay and attend the awards ceremony. My wife and 11-year-old son joined me and made the night special. Sofia scored really well in her Free sequence and won the award for highest score for a first-time Sportsman competitor, Adam took first for Intermediate, and, of course, Rob took Unlimited. It turns out we all did pretty well.

And so ended my first year in acro competition.

When I started writing this article series, I thought that I'd probably have a wealth of flying tips and advice to share with pilots starting in competition acro by the time I wrapped up the last article. I have learned an amazing amount about flying competition acro this year, but I think perhaps I'll let the more experienced pilots handle that. Instead, let me offer this encouragement and advice. This sport can grow only through the influx of new pilots. If you're thinking about flying your first contest, know that you'll be warmly received as a new competitor and you'll find no shortage of encouragement and help to get a good solid start. Your fellow pilots will be rooting for you. You can make mistakes and rest assured that you won't be making any that others have not made before you. Even if you don't feel you're ready, my advice is to start going to contests anyway and volunteer. Volunteers are always needed. Be a recorder on the judging line and watch the Primary and Sportsman pilots. Listen to the judges' scoring and you will learn so much more than what I knew going into my first competition. This is the single best piece of advice I can give at this time.

As for me, I'm going to start preparing for Sportsman for next year. In my competition flying I may never actually go beyond the Sportsman level. I don't think I want to sell my Super D, and I'm pretty sure my wife won't tolerate me buying a second plane. Besides, I have a feeling the challenge of the Sportsman level will keep me inspired and busy for years to come. **IAC**



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The Root of Grassroots

BY NICOLE BRAHM

THE INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB IS SAID TO BE A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION.

However, it can be difficult to pinpoint an exact definition for the term *grassroots*, especially when it comes to flying. Overall, this grassroots club is about the planes, the love for aerobatics, and, of course, the people.

Bob Heuer founded the IAC in 1970 at the Heuers' dining room table. With only national and world championships available, there was a need for local and regional championships. So, the IAC started to look into regional and local aerobatics, specifically focusing on creating local chapters.

"Once we put the organization together, people started joining. We said, 'Why don't you start a local chapter?' And so they did," said Bob's son Mike Heuer, IAC 4. "All it took was five members of the IAC to fill out the application and send it in."

As more chapters grew, local and regional competitions grew.

"We consider those regional competitions ... the start of grassroots," Mike said. "It was for us — building an organization that catered to people that wanted to be involved locally and didn't necessarily want to compete at the national championships."

Within the first year, 1,000 members signed up, and the IAC regional championships were created. The club grew quickly because of the need for club involvement in aerobatics — people were finally able to come together with their shared hobby.





GRASSROOTS IS: AIRPLANES

Robert Armstrong

IAC President Robert Armstrong, IAC 6712, blames his love for aviation on the board of education. As a kid attending a high school near an airport, Robert would spend his classes with his eyes glued to the window, watching the planes flying to and from the airport. Robert later got a job at the airport, where he mopped floors and cleaned planes. Through a friend, he was given a partially assembled Pitts Special, which he later finished assembling himself.

Robert then competed in his first contest in Fond du Lac.

"It was my first contest, and they have a trophy for the highest-scoring first contest pilot," he said. "And that's the only trophy I have with my name on it."

Grassroots to Robert is working with what you have. He said what you have will eventually serve you well. When it comes to getting started in aerobatics through the IAC, there isn't a list of requirements.

"Let's say you're going to go race in Reno," Robert said. "It's obvious what you need to race at Reno in an airplane – it's very specific. But the IAC, with the way we have our categories structured, we don't say you have to start here; you don't have to have a piece of equipment. It's what *do you have?* Would you like to come participate with us?"

Dan Rihn

After receiving the Curtis Pitts Trophy for his DR-107 One Design at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2018, Dan Rihn, IAC 3836, has a similar opinion on what grassroots is.

"What it really means is somebody who is enjoying an aircraft and flying aerobatics in an aircraft that is not incredibly expensive; he might have built it himself," Dan said.

Using Giles Henderson's plane as an example, Dan defined the epitome of grassroots as an antique airplane that's been modified and restored. He also said a key to grassroots airplanes is modifying airplanes and designing them to be what the pilot wants to achieve from them, whether it be for competition or as a hobby.

Jim Bourke

Grassroots to Jim Bourke, IAC 434151, is also flying a not-so-powerful airplane, despite the fact that he now flies a high-end aircraft.

"When we think of grassroots we think of people flying the kind of airplane that you can purchase for the price of a sports car and a majority of the members of the IAC will be those people," Jim said.

Jim said grassroots to him is enjoying the sport at a lower cost with an emphasis on having fun and becoming proficient. Grassroots, Jim said, stems from beginner airplanes despite the fact that many people are flying very high-end airplanes. High-end airplanes are not a guarantee of victory in competition.

"So it turns out ... when we have a grassroots airplane versus an airplane like mine, on the high end, that 60 percent of the time that grassroots airplane will actually win," Jim said. "A lot of that is because some of the older, better pilots have those airplanes. So that goes to show that you don't need the very best equipment to win; you just need a pilot behind the stick."

GRASSROOTS IS: A LOVE FOR AEROBATICS

Jeff Boerboon

Pilot of the Yak-110 Jeff Boerboon, IAC 16931, defines grassroots through his humble beginnings in aviation.

"The seed was planted in my world back when I was about 7 years old here in Oshkosh and even prior to that, building and flying model airplanes," Jeff said.

Jeff said humble beginnings are a foundation that pilots can build on top of.

"I think it makes you appreciate when you get to that pinnacle," Jeff said. "When I won the national championship I was able to look back at all of the people and the planes, all the things I did over my 40 years at that point to go, 'Man, we really accomplished something here.'"

Overall, Jeff finds inspiration from successful air show pilots that he considers to be grassroots.

"When you look at names like David Martin, Rob Holland, Patty Wagstaff, Mike Goulian, Sean Tucker – they won National Aerobatic Championships," Jeff said. "And they didn't get there by going straight to the highest-powered airplane. They all started in Cubs, Super Decathlons, Pitt Specials and worked their way up through more of a grassroots avenue."

Jeff said that through low-powered airplanes, they all sparked a dream to get to the U.S. National Aerobic Championships one day. Overall, Jeff said getting to the national championships made him a confident and safe pilot.

"You've gone through all this hardship to get to that point," Jeff said. "It's a long road to get to the national championships, and I think you can do it from a very grassroots start."



The Quiz Answers

1 Jose Aresti, Duane Cole, Curtis Pitts, and Frank Price. No one has touched the lives of as many aerobatic pilots as Jose Aresti with his development of the Sistema Aresti. Duane Cole, who could be rightfully considered the grandfather of aerobatics in the USA. Curtis Pitts' design of the iconic Pitts Special. And Frank Price for his pioneering involvement and promotion of the World Aerobatic Championships.

2 The groin or crotch strap, creating the five-point harness to prevent "submarining" under the lap belt.

3 Curtis was born in 1915 and soloed in 1934, two years after he built his first airplane. That first project was guided by the pages of an old flying manual. It was a parasol model with a Model T engine in it. He never flew it, since a wind gust caused it to cartwheel during a taxi test. Curtis sold the remnants for \$6.00.

4 1962 in Phoenix, Arizona. Won by Duane Cole.

5 1962, at the Budapest, Hungary, contest, which was won by Josef Tóth of Hungary in a Zlin Z-326. The USA was represented by Duane Cole, Lindsey Parsons, and Rod Jocelyn. Lindsey Parsons flew very well and placed fifth, flying a Great Lakes against the more modern Zlin and Yak monoplanes.



1962 U.S. Team in Budapest, Hungary.

CORRECTION:

The October quiz referenced the use of the Bölkow Junior (Bo 208) in the Nigerian Civil War. Fellow member Rudolf Hankers, IAC 10378, from Germany wrote to us with a corrected representation.

The aircraft taking part in that conflict were MFI-9Bs from Swedish Malmö Flygindustri, which was the predecessor to the Bo 206. Per some references the MFI-9B was built under license as the Bo 208. I apologize for any inaccuracies.



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Mark Nowosielski

Like Jeff, air show pilot Mark Nowosielski, one of the Twin Tigers, started going to air shows at a young age – when he was about 4 years old.

"As a kid and growing up in high school and college, and even after I graduated college [when] I got the airline job, I'd always come to Oshkosh and watch the air show and spend a week's vacation here," Mark, IAC 433175, said. "I'd be at the IAC center looking at all the magazines, all the T-shirts, and all the stuff, kind of wishing, you know, one day I'd be doing it."

After flying RC airplanes and getting his private pilot certificate in high school, he decided to pursue a career in aviation.

Mark said grassroots to him is having fun, particularly when he's flying at events. Overall Mark's true goal is to fly to enhance his safety through improving his skills.

"I use the competition stuff to really get myself safe," Mark said. "It's a little dangerous up there if you don't know what you're doing. I used the competition stuff to get my discipline to where I'm safe and know what's going on and have really precise control of the airplane."

Bob Hart

IAC Treasurer Bob Hart, IAC 18522, defined grassroots the same way as Mark – safety is the key to aerobatics. Bob said teaching beginners the basics in a safe way is extremely important to him.

"[Grassroots] means that we need to take care of all levels of participants within the organization," he said.

Greg Koontz

Greg Koontz, IAC 20242, runs his own aerobatic school out of his home, where he provides a pleasant addition to his training – a bed and breakfast. Greg trains about 80 students a year, and through the experience of training thousands of students, he pairs the term grassroots with beginners.

"I think it means the people initially getting into it," Greg said. "I don't think it means commercially or competitively particularly, although I think competition's a good place for beginners to get to."

Greg said he often feels people don't understand that the sport doesn't have to be just competition; however, he finds the competition to be a great way to challenge one's abilities.

"We have Primary and Sportsman and Intermediate that are just good fun competitions full of regular people that you're going to have a beer with at the bar after the contest and laugh and talk and have a good time," Greg said.

When he's competing, Greg said he isn't actually competing against any other pilots – he's competing against himself.

"It's about chasing after something and making it better; it's about perfection, loosely, perfection," Greg said.

GRASSROOTS IS: COMMUNITY

Gordon Penner

Gordon Penner, IAC 429704, said the most defining feature of grassroots is that anyone can be involved in the club, it's just a matter of spreading that knowledge. Aviation is now more specialized, more powerful, and more available for the average person. Gordon said the biggest issue that beginners face when coming into aerobatics are the misconceptions, such as having to fly in competitions or having to purchase an expensive plane.

"There is such thing as general aerobatics," Gordon said. "There is a way of learning how to maneuver that airplane so you stay within its limits and stay within your limits, and so that it makes you a safer pilot."

Robert Armstrong

Robert also found the IAC community to be the most defining part of the grassroots aspect of the organization. He compared the IAC to a self-help group – a place where people can come together with their shared hobby and speak the same language. Robert said in the aerobatic community, members have every imaginable vocation.

"WE'VE GOT DOCTORS, WE'VE GOT LAWYERS, WE'VE GOT JUDGES, WE'VE GOT FARMERS, WE'VE GOT STUDENTS ... WE'VE GOT MILLIONAIRES, AND WE'VE GOT PEOPLE LIKE ME WHO CAN JUST BARELY AFFORD WHAT WE'RE DOING SOMETIMES."

— ROBERT ARMSTRONG

"We've got doctors, we've got lawyers, we've got judges, we've got farmers, we've got students ... we've got millionaires, and we've got people like me who can just barely afford what we're doing sometimes," Robert said. "Yesterday we had an NFL football player who's got an aerobatic airplane and is just an enthusiast."

Michael Lents

Michael Lents, coach of the University of North Dakota Aerobatics Team, also said the focus of grassroots in the IAC is having a solid community of people in the club. By watching young people get involved in the sport, he's been at the front line of the excitement from students realizing aerobatics is something they can do. However, the most important part of the competition is the support from the friends they are competing with.

"Even though they're fighting with each other for the top trophy and award, if you have a bad flight, or even if you have a really good flight, you're basically telling your friend how they can beat you, even though you want to win yourself," Michael said. "You're setting them up so the team can have a really good score."

Michael said ultimately the funds and resources that are involved with flying aerobatics, especially at the high end, can become very individualized. However, with a supportive community where students are thinking about each other, thinking about safety, and thinking about improvement, their learning curve accelerates.

"So that's what grassroots is to me, starting with just the basic raw materials and having such a support system that it keeps everything working and growing in a good direction," he said. **IAC**



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Liz Birch

BY GARY DEBAUN, IAC 4145

IAC 439640
Occupation: Student/CFI
Chapter Affiliation: 78
Age: 20

GD: LIZ, TELL US HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN AVIATION.

LB: When I was 12, my brother, mom, and I were on our way home to central Illinois from a baseball tournament in Appleton, Wisconsin, when we decided to stop at the EAA Aviation Museum. After exploring the museum and flying the simulators, we were directed outside to Pioneer Airport where my brother and I received Young Eagles flights. As the airplane took off and the wheels left the grass runway, my smile grew larger and larger as the ground got smaller and smaller. At that moment, the love of aviation was sparked in my heart, and the rest is history.

GD: WHAT LED YOU TO CHOOSE THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA?

LB: UND was actually the first school that I visited. I instantly fell in love with the campus and staff; it made me feel at home despite being more than 800 miles away. The school has good name recognition, a superb training program, and is reasonably priced.

GD: HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT UND AEROBATICS, AND WHAT COMPELLED YOU TO JOIN THE UND AEROBATIC TEAM?

LB: One fall afternoon, I was waiting in dispatch to get assigned an aircraft when I looked up to see an advertisement for an aerobatics informational meeting flash across one of the TV screens. I thought, "Well that would be interesting," so I decided to attend the meeting. After listening to Mike Lents talk about aerobatics, I enrolled in the introduction class that the school offers. Going into the class in the spring, I thought that I might join the team, but once I finally got the chance to fly the Super Decathlon, my mind was set. Now I have been on the team for two seasons and hope to continue flying aerobatics as long as I can.

GD: WHEN AND WHERE WAS YOUR FIRST CONTEST? HOW DID IT GO?

LB: My first contest was at the end of June 2017 in Seward, Nebraska. I didn't fly very well; I did a two-and-a-half-turn spin in Primary instead of one-and-a-half, but it was an amazing experience and I got to meet so many awesome people.

GD: HOW DOES COACH LENTS MOTIVATE YOU AND THE REST OF THE TEAM?

LB: Mike is, hands down, the best instructor, coach, pilot, and mentor that I have ever had the pleasure to learn from. With his vast experience flying aerobatics, in the Super Decathlon specifically, there is no end to his knowledge. Earlier this month, I began instructing in the Super Decathlon, and I hope to pass on some of the knowledge that Mike has bestowed upon me.

GD: WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AEROBATIC RIDE? ANY CHANGES IN THE FUTURE?

LB: I currently fly the UND Super Decathlon in the Sportsman category. As it is looking at this time, I will be departing for the airlines mid-summer next year, so I will be unable to continue flying the UND aircraft. My hope is to find some alternative aircraft toward the end of next season so that I can continue to fly because aerobatics is my real passion.



THE UND TEAM AND PIPER AT THE 2018 NATIONALS.

GD: TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE U.S. NATIONAL AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS THIS YEAR.

LB: Who doesn't love a week away from classes and work to watch airplanes fly upside down and talk to amazing pilots every day? With the weather days, we were unable to get three flights in, but due to the generosity and kindness of the Unlimited pilots, they gave up one of their Unknown flights to allow us to finish our second sequence. My favorite part about Nationals, both this year and last, is the connections you make and the knowledge shared between pilots.

GD: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FIGURE TO FLY?

LB: Hands down, my favorite figure to fly is the hammerhead. There's nothing quite like it, and it's a maneuver that the Decathlon can fly well. While at Nationals, I got the chance to fly Jim Bourke's simulator and attempt a torque roll. Once I get in an airplane that can do them, I may find myself with a new favorite maneuver.

GD: DO YOU HAVE ANY PRE-ACRO ROUTINE, LIKE STRETCHING, YOGA, OR LISTENING TO MUSIC?

LB: I don't really have any routines at this point. Before I fly, I like to just relax and talk to people. I do this because it makes my competition flying feel like I am just going up for a practice flight, so I don't get as nervous.

GD: YOU ARE RELATIVELY NEW TO THE INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED?

LB: The IAC is an amazing organization filled with amazing people. I would like to see IAC receive more support from EAA for the U.S. team to help financially support the members as they represent the United States.

GD: WHO IN THE SPORT HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO YOU?

LB: Debby Rihn-Harvey is my inspiration. Not only was she a captain for Southwest Airlines, but she also competed in aerobatics and flew air shows. A few years ago I was able to meet her at Oshkosh during AirVenture, and her amazing personality blew me away.

GD: DO YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF FLYING?

LB: Outside of flying, I enjoy spending time with my dog, Piper, an Australian shepherd. As many people at Nationals discovered, she is super sweet and loves to play fetch. **IAC**

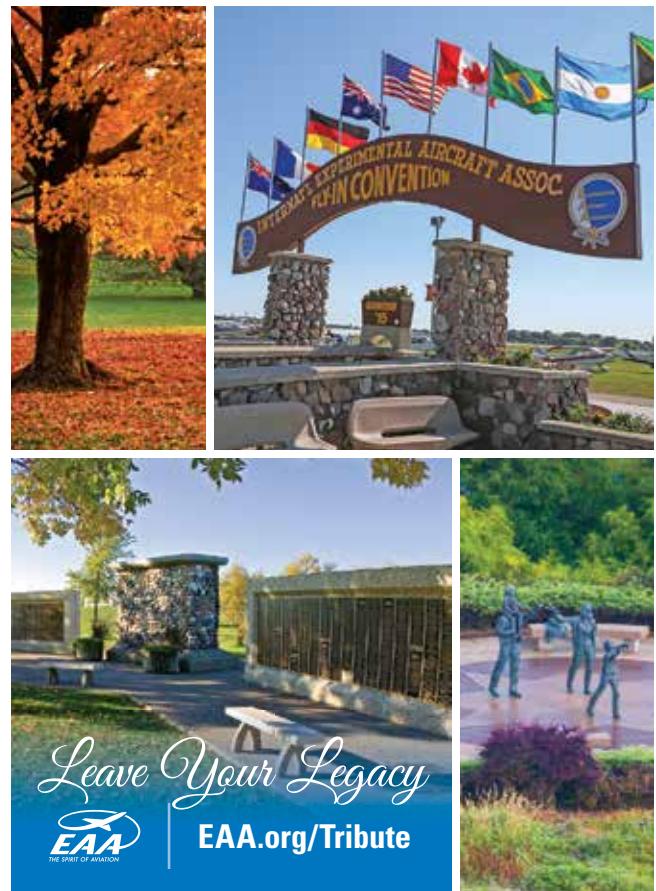
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Season's Greetings

Your IAC board of directors and staff wish everyone a happy, prosperous, and safe holiday season.

See you all in the 2019 flying season.

Debby Rihm-Harvey, Gerry Molidor, Ron Schreck, Robert Armstrong, Doug Bartlett, Lynn Bowes, Bob Hart, Lorrie Penner, and Peggy Riedinger. Not pictured: Bruce Ballew, Jim Bourke, Norm DeWitt, Bob Freeman, Rob Holland, Greg Principato, and Mike Rinker. Photo by Evan Peers.



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