



REFLECTIONS



The Newsletter of the NWA History Centre
Dedicated to preserving the history of a great airline and its people.

NORTHWEST AIRLINES 1926-2010

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Corporate Communication at Northwest Airlines during the 1990s-early 2000s.

A report by Robert DuBert

As individuals, we all know the importance of good communication. Whether between us and our parents, our siblings, our friends, a boss, or a significant other, how we communicate with others directly affects the quality and long-term success of our relationships. It's no different with a major corporation, but positive communication is infinitely more complex—there are thousands of employees, with their individual perceptions and expectations, and each with a job to do to further the goals of the company. There may be business partners and investors to satisfy. And then there are the millions of current and potential customers a company must approach effectively in order to sell and support those products and services which generate the revenue a corporation must earn for its very existence.

Through the 1990s, a team of communications directors—Doug Killian, Jon Austin and Jeff Smith—were responsible for the day-to-day communications of Northwest Airlines with many audiences. All tops in their field, it was their task to tell the Northwest story to internal customers (employees), external customers (passengers, the media, investors) and international customers (passengers and others outside the USA, including partner airlines such as KLM). It was a tumultuous era for NWA (what time wasn't?) and the messages they had to deliver weren't always upbeat or pleasant, but they were all dedicated to fair and honest communication. Their jobs couldn't have been easy. Recently, I interviewed Killian, Austin and Smith, to find out more about what brought them to Northwest Airlines, what their jobs entailed, what they considered their greatest achievements and disappointments, and how they remember their time with the company. Their stories are the subject of this report.

Doug Killian was born in Ft. Valley, Georgia and grew up in Hudson, Wisc. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in journalism, and was hired by NWA straight out of college in September, 1982, as a public relations representative whose duties included writing articles for **PASSAGES**, the company newsletter for employees. In 1985, he was transferred to NWA's Tokyo office, to work as Departmental Manager for Public Relations and Government Sales for the Pacific Region. He fondly remembers the ad-



Photo courtesy Doug Killian

venture of moving to Tokyo at age 26, and the "fabulous experience of being exposed to the overseas business culture. It was a privilege working with all the hard-working, dedicated employees in Asia." In 1989, he returned to Minnesota, becoming

Northwest's Director of Internal Communications and an assistant to then Chairman of the Board Al Checchi. In 1991, he was appointed Director of International Communications, in which position he served until leaving Northwest in 2001.

Jon Austin's career path is perhaps the most fascinating of the three men. Born in East St. Louis, Ill., Jon graduated from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. with a degree in political science but with no specific training in either journalism or communication. From 1979-1987, he worked in the office of Sen. Thomas Eagleton of Missouri, as a general staffer, legislative assistant, and ultimately, press secretary. (Sen. Eagleton was Sen. George McGovern's vice-presidential running

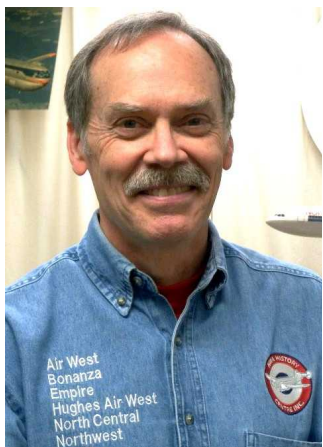


Jon Austin. Photo: LinkedIn



Simulated newscast image: Robert DuBert

cont. on p.4



Bruce Kitt Photo: Joe Callaci.

From the Executive Director

A flight delay on the ground? Stuck in a holding pattern over your destination city? When you really want to be somewhere, either (or both) can upset your schedule. For the NWAHC, it feels as if both conditions apply to our current situation.

The NWAHC is going to move into new space inside the Crowne Plaza Aire at MSP Airport. At a minimum, I speak with the Crowne Plaza Aire (CPA) manager once a week, in addition to walking through the hotel several days a week for my caffeine boost (they operate a Caribou Coffee kiosk). The 400+ rooms and ten guest floor hallways have been remodeled. Their check-in area, ballroom foyer, and restaurant are the final areas slated for remodeling and I am a very interested sidewalk supervisor watching for signs of workmen and dust. The CPA is as committed and excited for the NWAHC to be in the CPA as we are to be moving there. I would say that, much like any remodeling project to your house where you hire a contractor, delays have crept in due to one thing or another, but I have no reservations that this unique partnership will occur—and be successful for both the NWAHC and the CPA. In addition to making the NWAHC more visible and accessible, this partnership will return the NWAHC to the in-kind rent situation it enjoyed when Wings Financial Credit Union supported our operation. This will alleviate the daunting rent obligation the NWAHC has struggled with for the past four years.

The NWAHC's archive storage is at Yogi Berra's whimsical fork in the road. There are two possible homes for the bulk of the physical history of Northwest and its legacy airlines. Depending on what happens in December, the archives may stay in our current location on 34th Avenue South or relocate to a facility at Flying Cloud Airport (FCM on your Twin Cities Sectional Navigation Chart) in Eden Prairie, 14 miles west of the CPA.

Earlier this year the NWAHC vacated Suite C38, the archive suite, as the most immediate cost-saving step we could take to reduce our monthly expenses. The contents of Suite C38 were moved into Suite C30, the actual museum display area, with the thought of operating both the archive and the museum in that smaller space. It wasn't pretty. We quickly realized that the museum looked small and cramped, and did not represent how we want to display our history to the public. For those reasons, the Board decided to temporarily suspend the operation of the museum until it reopens in the CPA. If the archive remains at 34th Avenue South, the NWAHC will only rent Suite C26, a manageable monthly expense.

The possible relocation to Flying Cloud Airport (FCM) represents a small, yet significant step towards the ultimate goal of an AirSpaceMN (ASM) museum. The facility at FCM is co-owned by two partners, one of whom is a benefactor of the Wings Of The North Museum (www.wotn.org) and ASM. The NWAHC is awaiting word on whether adequate space could be available for our archive.

Cont. on p3

The NWA History Centre is temporarily closed to visitors, pending our relocation. Please monitor our website and facebook page for our reopening announcement.



Like us on Facebook.



THE NWA HISTORY CENTRE

Founder **Henry V. "Pete" Patzke**
1925-2012

8011 34th Ave S, Suite C26
Bloomington MN 55425-1637
952-698-4478

nwahistory.org

facebook.com/NWA.History.Centre

Executive Director **Bruce Kitt**
Admin. Director **Jerry Nielsen**
Directors **Chuck Huntley, Fay Kulenkamp, Bill Marchessault, Vince Rodriguez, Jeff Schwalen**
Collection Manager **Bruce Kitt**
Development and Retail Sales **Fay Kulenkamp**

The NWA History Centre is an independent not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the state of Minnesota.

REFLECTIONS is published quarterly by the NWAHC and is a benefit of membership. Submissions are welcomed, and subject to editing for content and length.

Editor **Robert DuBert**
robert.dubert@gmail.com 734-678-7600

Reporters **Anne Kerr, Bruce Kitt, Carol Hall, Don Swanson.**

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Email **\$30** (correspondence and digital edition newsletter via email.

USPS mail (print edition newsletter) **\$35**

Donations are gratefully accepted, are necessary for the continued operation of the NWA History Centre and are tax-deductible. Enquiries:

donations@nwahistory.org



Cont. from p2

If so, we would be co-tenants with WOTN, ASM, the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame, and the Minnesota Submarine League—all supporters of the idea of a grand home for the commemoration, education, and recognition of the innovations of Minnesota's role in air and space achievements. The NWAHC's Board feels that ASM still represents the best, long-term solution for preserving our collection and being accessible to the public.

Until these issues become more defined, especially regarding dates, the NWAHC is in a holding pattern. It's frustrating for our volunteers as the museum is not open to the public while we prepare to move, yet we're not actually packing up for our move because we're not sure of the physical lay-out of the future museum space or how we'll set up the displays. We have the Minnesota Historical Society's Outreach Service people on-call to help us configure the new space, but again, their help is dependent on standing in the new space.

Nonetheless, we're still at the NWAHC every day, working on small projects and tending to the business of keeping our history intact and organized for the grand re-opening. Your continued support, especially your financial support, reminds us that our shared history matters. As with air travel, this is only a temporary delay, and the final destination is worth it. CAVU. →

PASSAGES

PASSAGE: the act or process of moving through, under, over, or past something on the way from one place to another. (Google Dictionary)

The concept of **PASSAGES** is familiar to every former Northwest employee. During the last few months, the Board of Directors and volunteers of the NWA History Centre have been diligently preparing for our next passage.



Sue Rostkoski, center, chats with some of the final visitors to the NWAHC prior to the Sept. 1 closure. Photo: Gail Diercks



Patrick Alison Chau, of Hong Kong, our last visitor until we reopen, with Vince Rodriguez and Gail Diercks. Photo courtesy Gail Diercks



Vince Rodriguez, Dave McCarthy and Jeff Schwalen take a brief break while moving the archives from C38 to C30. Dave worked on the transfer almost every day during September. Photo: Robert DuBert



Bruce Kitt contemplates one of the spaces in the Crowne Plaza Aire which will house NWAHC display galleries. Photo: Robert DuBert

Lower left: Bruce Kitt with Gina Walsh, Crowne Plaza Aire Director of Catering, who conducted a tour of the future NWAHC spaces within the hotel for your editor in September. Photo: Robert DuBert

Lower right: A Nov. 19 meeting to develop future plans for collaborative efforts between Wings of the North, the Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation, the Minnesota Submarine League, the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame, AirSpaceMinnesota and the NWA History Centre. The meeting was conducted by staffers from Museology Museum Services of Minneapolis, which provides planning, design and development assistance for small museums. Attending for the NWAHC: Directors Bruce Kitt, Fay Kulenkamp and Chuck Huntley, and volunteers Arnie Bier, Woody Fountain, Carol Hall, Dave McCarthy, Linda Peck and our newest volunteer, Maryann Smith. Photo: Bruce Kitt



Cont. from p.1

mate in the 1972 presidential election until he had to drop out for health reasons; he was replaced by Sargent Shriver). After leaving Washington, Austin worked as a product development manager for a software startup company in Seattle and was in the interview process for a job with Microsoft when he was recruited by Northwest Airlines VP-Corporate Communications Mark Abels in 1991 for the position of Director of Corporate Communications, eventually becoming Managing Director of Corporate Communications in 1996.

Jeff Smith was born in Alton, Illinois, a river town on the Mississippi, and he proudly states "I'm a river kid. The Mississippi River is very important to me." As a child, Jeff built model airplanes and says "I have been an airplane junkie all my life." In high school and later at Indiana University, he was a member of the debate teams, and cites intercollegiate competitive debating as "good training for analyzing data and writing quickly." In college, he majored in radio and television, graduating with a degree in broadcast management. His wife Denise (high-school sweethearts, they married in 1970) was attending the University of Missouri, and Jeff got his first job in nearby Jefferson City as a disc jockey for a country music station ("and I knew nothing about country music!"). Eventually, "I talked my way into the news department, becoming a journalist in the field I was trained in." While in Missouri he met Mark Abels, and the two later worked together for Learfield Communications, a regional radio network that distributed the sports team broadcast programs of the University of Missouri, with Abels as Executive Producer and Smith as VP-Marketing. In 1985, Smith moved to Minnesota to become President and General Manager for the 3-year old Minnesota News Network, which provided satellite distribution of news programs and the broadcasts of the Minnesota Twins, including during the 1987 and 1991 World Series.



Photo: Robert DuBert

In 1989, the Wings Inc. investment group, led by Al Checchi, and in partnership with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, acquired ownership of Northwest Airlines. Mark Abels (who had earlier left Learfield for a position with the public relations firm Fleishman Hillard) was recruited by the new management team to serve as VP-Corporate Communications, and in 1991 Abels recruited both Austin and Smith for Northwest, with Smith serving first as Director of Internal Communications—"Mark Abels recruited Austin to do the external stuff and me to do the internal stuff." The two joined Doug Killian, who was doing the "international stuff", thereby creating the congenial and effective communications troika that would serve NWA for over a decade.

Killian, Austin and Smith joined a company whose operations were worldwide and 24/7. There was always something going on somewhere that required their attention. They had small staffs and long, unpredictable work days. For Austin, who was Northwest's domestic spokesman, there was a "rhythm" to a typical workday. There was often a media interview at 6am, followed by rush of incoming calls and media enquiries until 9am. For the next two hours, the pace slackened slightly, resuming from 11am-4pm. The hour between 4-5pm was quieter, and he could call home. From 5-8pm, there was a "spike of stuff."

14-16 hour workdays were the norm, but the increasing use of cellphones, laptop computers and the internet during the 1990s allowed him to conduct out-of-office interviews and to take work home.

When Doug Killian first joined Northwest, overseas station reports arrived by teletype! Much of his work involved handling media calls about Northwest's international service, especially from Dutch journalists as NWA and KLM became increasingly aligned. He remembers the day in August, 1987, when flight 255 crashed in Detroit. Almost immediately, his office in Tokyo was besieged by thirty Japanese reporters, wanting to know if any Japanese nationals were onboard. A quick fax of the passenger manifest from headquarters revealed no Japanese on the list, calming the situation. In 1993, when Northwest's board considered the possibility of filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the news leaked out and Killian spent hours explaining the Chapter 11 process to worried foreign business associates and media representatives, who viewed the situation with undue alarm. His job also included the more pleasant duties of entertaining managers and executives from Northwest's foreign partner airlines visiting the USA on familiarization (FAM) trips, conducting briefings, tours and orientations of Northwest's Minnesota-based corporate culture. He particularly remembers one memorable day, shortly after the announcement of the strategic alliance agreement between NWA and KLM, when he took a group of visiting KLM execs on a sightseeing cruise on Lake Minnetonka. At first, the Dutch were "a little stiff", but after one or two drinks they loosened up and so enjoyed floating karaoke sessions that they demanded the cruise be extended until the boat's captain finally insisted on returning to port at nightfall.

Jeff Smith's duties eventually expanded to include four distinct areas of oversight: Internal Communications (to employees, including **PASSAGES**); Investor Relations (including generating Annual Reports for shareholders); Onboard Communications (he was Executive Editor for **WORLD Traveler** magazine); and Community Relations (including AirCares, the NWA charitable program). Smith worked to bridge the divide between management and labor. After consultation with Pratt & Whitney, which offered employees the opportunity to speak directly with top management, Smith instituted a similar program at Northwest called "Dial Dasburg", where employees could speak with then-CEO John Dasburg in a live, call-in program format. Although aware that some employees regarded **PASSAGES** with wary skepticism, he felt strongly that "Well-informed employees need to understand the company perspective on things, and that's what our job was with **PASSAGES**." He is proud of setting up the Internal Communication Advisory Board, which consisted of representatives from each major employee group (NWAHC Executive Director Bruce Kitt served as mechanics' representative for two years). Smith is genuinely sincere when he states, "I'm a pro-union guy, and I definitely believe that



WORLD Traveler, June 1997, commemorating Northwest's 50 years of service to Asia, beginning in 1947.



large employee groups should be unionized. I had great respect for the IAM (International Association of Machinists), the IBT (International Brotherhood of Teamsters) and ALPA (Air Line Pilots Association). They took good care of their members, had a large national presence that gave them good bargaining power, and they had generally good leadership.”

Employee strikes were a painful experience for everyone at NWA. In 1998, the pilots went on strike, grounding company operations for two weeks until a tentative agreement was reached. Emotions ran high and Austin, as Northwest's media spokesman, became the unpopular messenger for management positions he had no part in formulating. When I suggested that he came across to employees as “the Darth Vader of Northwest Airlines”, he took no offense, noting that taking the heat was part of his job. Nevertheless, “I never liked labor disputes, and found them debilitating. I liked the people and hated fighting. Metaphorically, we threw rocks at each other” and “lost the ability to be dispassionate.” In 2014, Austin, in an interview for the Minneapolis **StarTribune**, said of both ALPA and Northwest, “We let it get too personal and too emotional. Both sides tried to enlist the public's support, and the public didn't want to be enlisted.” Jeff Smith adds: “Many employees were angry, and said 'Don't send us this propaganda' (**PASSAGES**), but we said 'No, we must tell you the company's side of things because we know you're being communicated with very effectively by your union.'” Austin realizes some might consider him abrasive, but with a touch of humor he says, “Doug has always been 'the nice one' among us, Jeff 'the good one' and I think I was 'the loud one.'” But, adds Killian, “Jon Austin gave Northwest a personality as spokesman and reporters loved talking to him.”



Regarding the 2005 strike by AMFA (Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association) which led to almost all Northwest mechanics permanently losing their jobs, Smith laments, “The AMFA strike just killed me. What we did to our own mechanics just killed me.”

The three are proud of the airline's achievements made during their time with the company. Smith, as head of the Air Cares program, attended the 2000 AmeriCares Celebration of Hope ceremony on Ellis Island in Upper New York Bay, where Chairman Gary Wilson received an award from former First Lady Barbara Bush in recognition of Northwest's disaster relief flights of supplies and personnel to areas of need worldwide. He credits the company with three strategic successes during this period: the alliance with KLM (“We became as close to one airline as you possibly could without a merger”); establishing fortress hubs in secondary heartland cities (DTW, MSP and MEM, “where we could control the fare structure”); and the millions of dollars saved by rehabilitating the DC-9 fleet for decades of extra service. These efforts led to NWA and KLM jointly receiving the 1998 Airline of the Year Award from **Air Transport World** magazine. He recalls with pride his significant role in helping the KLM alliance to be successful and his part in promoting the development of the World Gateway Terminal at DTW: “The concept of a mile-long concourse was unheard of. I remember going there all the time (during the construction) and we couldn't believe it.” Smith used an artist's rendering of the terminal in a special foldout cover for the 2000 Annual Report.

For Doug Killian, a highlight of his career was the World Plane project of 1995-7, where a 747, as part of the “50 Years Bridging the Pacific” anniversary, was decorated with designs created by school children, “to commemorate 50 years of Friendship Between the Peoples of Asia and America.” This project was recognized by the Public Relations Society of America with a Silver Anvil Award, presented in recognition of “exemplary professional skill, creativity and resourcefulness.”

cont. on p.6

*Photos, top to bottom: Jeff Smith with his photo album of highlights of his time at Northwest Airlines (Photo: Robert DuBert); James Earl Jones with Jeff Smith. Jones (the voice of Darth Vader) performed voiceovers for NWA television commercials (Photo courtesy Jeff Smith); Former First Lady Barbara Bush with Northwest Chairman Gary Wilson, at the AmeriCares Celebration of Hope Gala on Ellis Island in 2000. (**PASSAGES**); Honolulu artist Thomas Robillard, 9, signs his design which was applied to the World Plane; The Robillard design depicting Hawaii, on the World Plane (Northwest Airlines photos via the Honolulu Star-Bulletin).*



Cont. from p.5

Jon Austin's fondest memories are of the people he worked with at Northwest. "They were competent, calm and resourceful. You wanted to hang around with them. I can't say enough for just how outstanding they were, and I didn't fully appreciate that until I left."

Regrets? Killian: "We could have always used a few more people." And he wishes there had been more time to be proactive rather than reactive to situations. Smith: "that Northwest didn't survive as an independent carrier." He asks himself, "What did I *not* do to have been influential enough to make the economic case not to break the mechanics' union? That really burns me up because we had the best mechanics in the business." Austin: "When I was hired, I told my wife 'I'm going to learn how to fly.' I never did. And I wish I had done even more non-rev travelling while our children were growing up."

When I asked each of them "How do you remember Northwest Airlines?", their responses were revealing, the pride palpable. Says Doug Killian, "It was a hard-working airline, and I've always been impressed with its proud and rich history." Jon Austin states, "It was fascinating, fractal and incredibly complex on every level you looked at. The company was interesting and held my attention for 10 years, and I stayed longer than I expected to." Jeff Smith treasures "the friendships that endure. Northwest Airlines was definitely the most fun job I had of my whole career." ➔



Left: Jon Austin in his office in 2014. Proficient with the latest in computer technology, Austin was admired by his colleagues for having all the latest tech gear in his office at Northwest.

Photo: Minneapolis **StarTribune**.

Right: The artist's rendering of the DTW World Gateway Terminal, used by Jeff Smith for the cover of the 2000 Northwest Airlines annual report.

Jeff Smith collection.



Far left: As part of the "50 Years Bridging the Pacific" observance, NWA received the loan of the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation's C-54E, to which were applied logos and titles to resemble an NWA DC-4, the type used to inaugurate service to Asia on July 15, 1947, and a commemoration ceremony was held in MSP. Photo: **PASSAGES**.

Left: Several crew members who worked various segments of the 1947 inaugural flight were present, and made ceremonial descents down the airstairs. Among those greeting them at the base of the stairs was Walter Mondale, former US Vice President, former Ambassador to Japan and an NWA board member. Mondale's political mentor was Hubert Humphrey, who as mayor of Minneapolis attended the 1947 inaugural departure. Humphrey served as US Vice President under Pres. Lyndon Johnson. Photo: Don Foley (VP-Corp. Comm., 1996-2000)

For more photos about this story, see. p.12 of the digital edition.

For more information on the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation:

<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org/>



The inaugural departure of service to Manila via Anchorage, Shemya, Tokyo, Seoul and Shanghai, using a DC-4 christened "The Manila." Photo from *Flight to the Top*. Kenneth Ruble.



Northwest mechanics with the C-54E, temporarily renamed "The Manila" for the occasion. Photo: Jeff Smith.

SCENES FROM THE SHOW—ATTENDANCE OVER 300, UP 50% FROM 2015!

The annual MSP Airline Collectibles Show, Sale & Get-Together, Oct. 8 at the Best Western Plus Hotel.



L: Fay Kulenkamp and John Yuen set up one of the NWAHC Gift Shop clothing sales tables.



R: Chuck Huntley, Sue Rostkoski and Gordon Gilbert work on pricing and setup for the display of airline china and glassware from the surplus inventory of the NWAHC. These sold well, but we still have plenty more leftover for next year!



L: The busy sales floor.



R: Staffing the admission desk: Arlye Weisheim, Jeff Schwalen, Gail Diercks and Linda Peck.



L: Bill Marchessault makes a sale of an NWA logo polo shirt to flight attendant Steve Dyczkowski.



R: The youngest shopper at the show.



Far R: "Make me an offer", says Keith Oberg. His box of models for sale included this Northwest Airliner CRJ.



L: "Don't take my photo!", wails Kay Ferrell (to no avail), to the amusement of Judy Swanson.



R: The NWAHC Gift Shop clothing table was a mob scene at times. Note the customer using her phone to take a photo of an item, to verify a size for a friend before making a purchase.



L: Elaine Hernke, Chuck Huntley, Bill Marchessault, Bruce Kitt and Fay Kulenkamp contemplate repacking and cleanup at the end of the show.



R: Empty boxes, the hallmark of a successful show and sale!

Photos: Robert DuBert

Many thanks to these NWAHC volunteers who worked at the show and helped to make it a big success:

Gail Diercks; Bob DuBert; Gordon Gilbert; Carol Hall; Elaine Hernke; Diane Herrmann; Chuck Huntley; Bruce Kitt; Marion Kordich; Fay Kulenkamp; Dave McCarthy; Bill Marchessault; Linda Peck; Susan Rostkoski; Jeff Schwalen; Arlye Weisheim; John Yuen.

December Retrospective

Variously called the *BEAM*, *Northwest Passage News*, *Northwest Airlines News* or *PASSAGES*, this was the weekly, biweekly, monthly or bimonthly house publication for the employees of Northwest Airlines. Here are some of the cover story headlines and photos from the Ghosts of Decembers Past.

1943

The December 1943 issue cover includes five members of the Northwest Airlines Choir: Henry Griffith; Director Robert Edgren; Melvin Sorensen; Jeanne O'Brien and Marlyn Farl.

Inside the front cover is Pres. Croil Hunter's wartime Christmas message to employees.



THIS is America's third wartime Christmas. From Northwest Airlines have gone many to serve their country in all parts of the world.

We at home are doing our best to provide supplies for them and to speed those supplies on their way.

Our job is small compared to theirs. Both jobs are important.

We must be steadfast in our determination to do our day-to-day job. Anything less than our maximum effort is not good enough.

To all of you of Northwest Airlines, wherever you may be, this greeting carries a sincere wish for a happy holiday season and a successful new year.

Croil Hunter
President and General Manager.
Northwest Airlines Inc.

1947

**Psst, Santa Claus! Bend Your Ear—
STEWARDESSES WANT AN INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY
They Have to Listen Now to Passengers' Babble of Babel**

NWA introduced service to Asia in July, and stewardesses Charleen Hull and Coral Yahr ask Santa for a dictionary. Croil Hunter's Christmas message predicts a bright future for the company and its employees.



CHRISTMAS OPENS VISTA TO BRIGHT FUTURE

IT'S AN OLD CUSTOM WITH NORTHWEST Airlines that whenever Christmas rolls around, there is always something to look forward to with lively anticipation.

It started back in 1926, when the first new airplanes for this company came out of Santa's sack.

In more recent years, the New York extension was certificated during the holidays.

A year ago, preparations were under way for the Orient survey flight as the first step in setting

up the international operation.

Now we are looking forward to the day, only a few weeks away, when Northwest Airlines will begin scheduled flights into Washington, D. C., by way of Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

Thus the Christmas season has a double significance, a period of gratitude for benefits received and a happy augury of things to come.

In this same bountiful spirit the management of Northwest Airlines wants to wish its employees a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CROIL HUNTER,
President and General Manager

1954 Here Comes the Connie!

Northwest flight engineers and operations managers train at Lockheed's Burbank plant in preparation for the first L-1049G delivery in January, 1955.



The issue includes a profile of the 4-member sales staff of the NWA Okinawa City Ticket Office (CTO) in Naha: Noemie Avanzino; Tokiko Yoza and Yoshiaki Yoza. Photo taken by District Sales Manager (DSM) Lou Devantier (the fourth staff member).



1957 News of the MSP Christmas Party



THE RED CARPET . . . NWA's Twin Cities Christmas party will be held at the Prom Ballroom Wednesday evening, Dec. 15. As part of the entertainment, the Twin Cities Choral group, formerly the Overhaul Base choir, will sing carols prior to the dance.

1967 Aircraft on order and new computers!

NWA president Donald Nyrop announces that the company has ordered 19 new aircraft—18 727s and one 707—at a total cost of \$104 million, and a new Univac 494 mainframe computer system.



1973

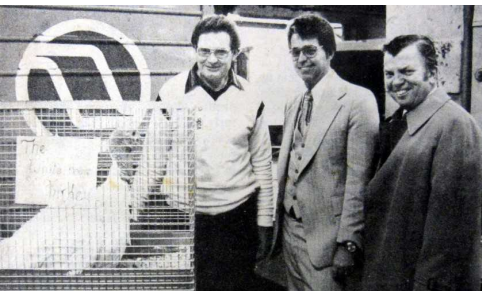
Members of the Minnesota Vikings football team pose inside a new DC-10, to demonstrate its roominess. 2-4-2 in coach? Wow!



1977

Dianne Michelson, Alice Broden and Linda Soderberg of the Cost Accounting Dept. decorate the Christmas tree in the General Office.

Meanwhile, members of the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association prepare to ship a turkey to the White House in Washington, D.C., for the presidential Christmas dinner. NWA Supervisor Joe Lotti, center, oversees the arrangements.



1984

At Republic, the employee newsletter was **REPUBLIC PEOPLE** and **OurLine**. Santa checks flight loads for Dec. 24 just in case his sleigh is grounded due to bad weather.



1985 Republic takes delivery of its first 757 and employees tour the aircraft.



1992 Snoopy greets arriving British passengers from a "Shop 'Til You Drop" flight at MSP, a joint promotion of NWA and the Mall of America.

1996

NWA Cargo manager Mary Orman, center, assists employees from Bachman's Nursery in Minneapolis with preparations for a shipment of poinsettias to Washington, D.C., to decorate the White House.



The NWA Federal Credit Union offers a low-cost VISA credit card to help with holiday shopping. No annual fee and only 13.8% APR! "Leave your checkbook at home."

2016
Happy Holidays to all from
the NWA History Centre!

VISA®
For All Your Holiday Shopping Needs

All you need to carry with you is your VISA® credit card from NWA Federal Credit Union. Leave your checkbook and high interest rate credit cards at home. Your credit union VISA® card features:

- 13.8% APR
- No annual fee
- 25 day grace period on new purchases when the balance is paid in full
- Toll-free assistance for inquiries and balance information, 24-hours a day

For a credit union VISA® card application, call your regional branch office or the VISA Department at (612) 726-2073 or toll-free outside the Twin Cities 800-NWA-CASH, ext. 2.

NWA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

World Headquarters (MSP) • 612 726-2073 • 800 NWA-CASH
Eastern Regional Branch (DTW) • 313/742-2088
Southern Regional Branch (MEM) • 901/346-0421
Western Regional Branch (SEA) • 206/433-3456
MSP Buildings A, B & C

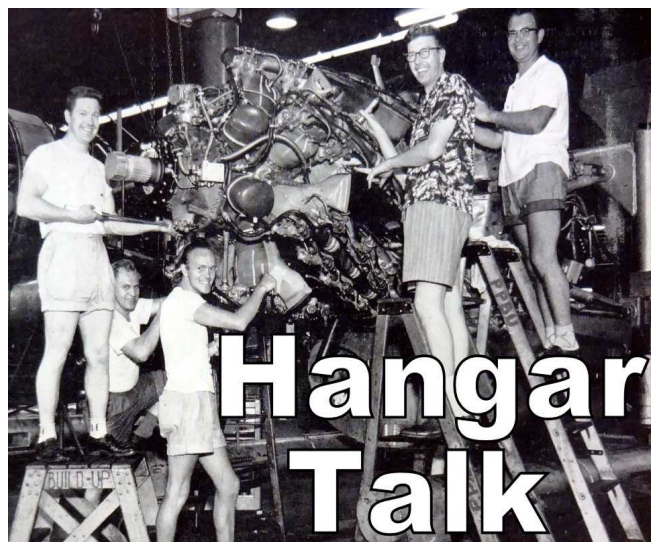


Photo: NWAHC Archives.

NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS



FABULOUS FLORIDA BRUNCH

Pelican Point Golf & Country Club, Venice, Florida

Call for details: 517-596-3005 or, after Jan. 8: 941-475-0163

If you've attended in the past, you'll receive an email in January.

A Message from the Aviation Heritage Center of Wisconsin

Dear Friends and Former Employees of North Central Airlines:

Did you ever believe that you could again "work" for North Central Airlines? The Aviation Heritage Center of Wisconsin is "hiring" volunteers to help keep former NOR DC-3 N33632 flying! Do you want to be a part of this historic aircraft? If so, please consider joining one of these groups:

The North Central Airlines Grand Arrival Committee: Help plan the return of the North Central Airlines DC-3 when she lands at Sheboygan County Memorial Airport in Aug. or Sept. 2017. Design the program: the speakers, food, entertainment and every aspect of a day to remember! Meetings can be joined via teleconference, so your location doesn't matter.

The North Central Airlines DC-3 Operations Committee: We need mechanics, type-rated DC-3 pilots with DC-3 currency, "flight attendants" and anyone else who want to help keep North Central Airlines flying!

The North Central Airlines Tour Committee: We hope to put North Central Airlines on tour next summer. This committee will help plan the DC-3 visits to a few select communities in Wisconsin including Clintonville, where the airline was founded.

The North Central Airlines DC-3 Fund Development Committee: Help identify corporations, foundation or individuals who want to partner with one of the only remaining airline DC-3 aircraft flying in airline colors.

Please reply and let us know how you'd like to help! Don't miss this opportunity to affiliate with one of the world's great aircraft and airlines.

Best regards,

Jon Helminiak, Executive Director

Aviation Heritage Center of Wisconsin, N6191 Resource Dr,
Sheboygan Falls WI 53085. 262-893-5500 takeflight@ahcw.org

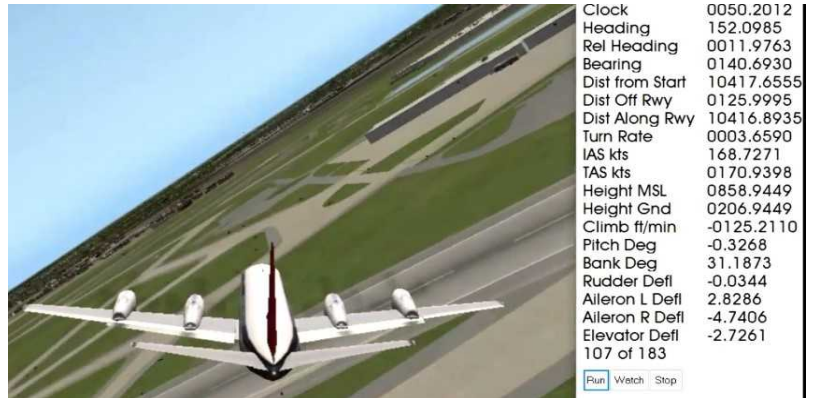


In mid-October, the Grafe Auction Company, which specializes in the auction of commercial and industrial equipment, completed the disposition of furnishings and equipment in the former Northwest Airlines Training Company and headquarters buildings. Items auctioned included flight simulators and general office equipment and furnishings. The DC-9 flight simulator shown below reportedly sold for \$3500. Demolition of the buildings is currently underway, as the site is prepared for the new Minnesota Vikings Headquarters and Training Complex.



Photos: Left, Center-Grafe Auctions. Above: Brent Koth, via facebook. To see more demolition photos, see the NWA Employees Forever page on facebook.

Craig Hagstrom, who has been conducting a private investigation into the 1961 crash of Northwest flight 706 near ORD (REFLECTIONS December 2015), has released his detailed findings, which are presented on YouTube in a presentation entitled "Knife-Edge Flying," with flight data: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JiGSJ5xPQg>



The History Theatre of St. Paul, Minn., announces the production of the drama "The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin", by **Jessica Huang**, about the life of **Harry Chin**, who during World War II worked at the NWA Bomber Modification Center in St. Paul (REFLECTIONS, Fall 2011). The theatre specializes in plays, musicals and staged readings about the history of Minnesota and the American experience. The show runs from March 16 through April 9, 2017. Information, performance schedule and ticketing: <http://www.historytheatre.com/2016-2017/paper-dreams-harry-chin>

Far left: Harry Chin as a young man. Photo: The History Theatre.

Left: Chin during a visit to the NWAHC in 2011, with Wayne Snyder. Photo: Anne Kerr.

SNEAK PREVIEW

Crowne Plaza Aire's new aviation-themed rebranding and redecorating.

Jeff Smith, former NWA Internal Communications Director and Executive Editor of *WORLD Traveler* magazine, with one of the aviation-themed displays in a hallway in one of the guest room floors at the hotel. These finished displays are the first phase of a total make-over of the hotel, which will include the NWAHC display galleries and gift shop.

Photo: Robert DuBert



Oops! MSP, Nov. 27, 2016.



IN MEMORIAM

Vicky D. Pritchett Oct. 4, 2016. Vicky died unexpectedly at home. Her career as flight attendant and inflight manager at Northwest Airlines and Delta Air Lines spanned 40 years. She was a regular volunteer at the NWA History Centre and was the subject of an article in REFLECTIONS (March 2014) about her duties as a manager for White House press charters operated by NWA: http://nwahistory.org/assets/14_mar_newsletter.pdf.

She is interred alongside her husband Ben, an Army veteran, at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery. **The StarTribune** obituary: <http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/162068/?fullname=vicky-d-pritchett>

Right: Vicky as a new-hire flight attendant. Photo courtesy Vicky Pritchett. Far right: At the NWAHC, with a t-shirt showing world leaders at the 1994 G7 Summit meeting in Naples, Italy. Vicky accompanied the NWA charter flight cabin crews as an onboard manager for this event. Photo: Robert DuBert



Digital Edition Extras



1995: Doug Killian, right, along with Bob Stassen, center, of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, briefs a Japanese reporter on Northwest Airlines operations at MSP. Photo courtesy Doug Killian.

Jeff Smith was a member of the Northwest Airlines clown club, which brought a touch of levity to various company parties and social functions. That's him on the left in both photos. Photos courtesy Jeff Smith



March 2000: In the Rainbow Room on the 65th floor of the NBC Building in NYC: Doug Killian conducts a press conference about the Northwest Alliance with KLM and Alitalia, announcing plans for NWA to begin service to Rome and Milan. Photo courtesy Doug Killian.

