

Reflections

The Quarterly Journal of the Northwest Airlines History Center



September 2025

Volume 23, number 3

In this issue:

Eden Prairie Center kiosk display is implemented

Meet our newest Director, Don Moran

Airliners International 2025 show recap - delivering big additions to our website

Opportunity to upgrade our archive storage system!

Our mission:

We explore and celebrate the generational impact of commercial aviation by bringing together resources, experiences, and community.

Our values:

Welcome - We embody the encouraging and positive environment that has always been part of our story.

Preserve - Both the history and future of the industry

Educate - Learning comes in all forms, at all ages, in many methods. We encourage curiosity, exploration, discovery, and dreaming.

Connect - Just as air travel brings people together, we create spaces for those connections to happen.

Inspire - Flight shows us anything is possible.



Express I revisited

A unique perspective and behind-the-scenes tales from a founder — by Scott Norris

As described on pages 4-5 inside this issue, Bruce Kitt, our Collections Manager, and I spent several enjoyable and informative days at the Airliners International conference this June, building relationships with other museums and our collection of assets to go back to Minnesota.

We also had the opportunity to sit down for a couple hours with Ellis Chernoff, recently retired from FedEx after a lengthy resume going back to night cargo and ferry flights on piston props in the 1970s. Ellis gained skills and responsibilities as he moved through several commuter carriers, which put him in the right place at the right time when Phoenix Airline Services was getting started. He also gave us a CD full of photos, some of which we'll share here and most up on our website's aircraft galleries. The show organizers had to kick us out of Delta's hangar to conclude our interview, but we recorded many of Ellis' stories and will share a few of them in these pages...

— FLEDGLING WINGS OF THE PHOENIX, to page 8

Preflight Checklist

The Northwest Airlines History Center, Inc.

We are an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the State of Minnesota. Volunteer-staffed and volunteer-managed. We have no organizational or financial tie to Delta Air Lines.

Founder: Henry V. "Pete" Patzke (1925-2012)

Management:

 Directors: Mike Vetter, Scott Norris, Kimm Viebrock, Tim Haskin, Jayne Stenstad, Ronn Lehmann, Gene Peterson, Don Moran

· Directors Emeritus: Jerry Nielsen and Wayne Snyder

· Collections Manager: Bruce Kitt

• Interim Museum Manager: Tim Haskin

Museum Address: (do not send mail here)

Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel

3 Appletree Square, Bloomington MN 55425

NEW PHONE **COMING SOON** - check our social media / website

Archives and Administration: (our mailing address; open for research by appointment only)

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Visiting the Museum

The NWAHC Museum is located inside the Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel in Bloomington, MN, just south of MSP International Airport.

Current schedule: Thursdays - Fridays 11 am - 5 pm

Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm Closed for major holidays.

Admission and parking are FREE. (Special events may incur a charge.)

From the airport: Use METRO Blue Line light rail from either Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 southbound and exit at the American Boulevard station. The Crowne Plaza AIRE is immediately east from the station. Or, call for the free hotel shuttle from either terminal.

From the Mall of America: Take METRO Blue Line light rail outbound; American Boulevard is the third stop.

In the Twin Cities Metro area: Head toward MSP International Airport. From Interstate 494, exit on 34th Ave. S. and go south one block to American Blvd. Turn left (east) on American and then immediately right into (and under) the hotel. The parking ramp is on the left - follow the signs for free hotel parking on the uppermost level (do not use spaces not reserved for the hotel) and cross into the hotel's second floor. You may need to buzz the door for entrance, as a safety protocol.

The museum is located on the third floor, above the pool area, and across from the Fitness Center. Patrons needing elevator access for mobility concerns must coordinate with the hotel's front desk due to security reasons.

For photo directions on navigating the hotel, please scan this QR code on your phone.

Memberships

Annual membership dues are the main source of funding for the NWAHC; we encourage you to join!

- \$35 level receives REFLECTIONS digital edition early access via email
- \$40 level receives REFLECTIONS print edition by USPS; US mailing addresses only

Boarding Announcements



From Chairman Mike Vetter

With fall fast approaching, I would like to bring to your attention some of the upcoming events at the museum that you may be interested in.

On Saturday, October 11th, we will be hosting our annual MSP Collectible Sale

at the Wyndham Hotel next to the Mall of America. This has always been a fun event that showcases memorabilia from airlines around world, but the emphasis is on NWA and its associated airlines. I guarantee you will find something there that will bring a smile to your face. Look for more information about the event on the back cover for more info.

Another exciting development I would like to report is that the museum is in the planning stages of sponsoring a Speakers Series. We will be showcasing a variety of speakers throughout the year that will be tied to aviation and I'm sure you'll be pleased with the variety of topics we plan to present. Stay tuned to our social media and member emails as we will report developments as they happen.

At the museum, we have recently updated some of the exhibits as well as added some hands-on, kid-friendly options. While you are there, check out some of the new NWA merchandise for sale we have added. We will have all of your favorite NWA items for sale just in time for Christmas! Elsewhere, the museum is opening a Kiosk at the Eden Prairie Mall in October. This is an exciting new development for us as we are expanding outside of the museum for the first time. Stop by and check us out!

The Museum is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays in Bloomington and we look forward to your visit. I want to thank each and everyone one of our members who contribute to the museum. Your financial donations keep us in business, but equally important are our volunteers. Whether it may be working as a Docent, Archivist or even a Board Director, your contribution is valued greatly appreciated. Please see northwestairlineshistory.org/join-us/ for more information if you are interested in joining the team.

Until next time, Blue Skies, Mike

Donor Thanks

The Board and all the volunteers at the Northwest Airlines History Center would like to thank our donors for their contributions this year. Donations enable our ongoing operations, cleanup and preservation tasks, building new displays, outreach efforts, and work to design and gain approvals for a new permanent museum.

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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Check your basements and storage boxes!

Do you have physical materials, recordings, or electronic files to contribute to our museum? Please contact our collections manager at bruce.kitt@northwestairlineshistory.org or (952) 698-4478 with details of your items, photos if possible, and how we can reach you. We can not accept materials without this vetting step. Also, please do not bring materials to our museum location in Bloomington as we aren't able to process them there.

Buy wise to support the **NWAHC!**

Visit our online store, with world-exclusive designs on a wide variety of items - from shirts to mugs, travel gear to golf balls, and more, at **shop.northwestairlineshistory.org.** Or scan this QR code to jump to our store directly.

We also offer surplus materials and new apparel and pins for sale on **eBay** under the handle "cyberglitz" - the assortment changes every week!

Compass Readings

Colleagues and Collectibles: the Museum's visit to Airliners International 2025 in Atlanta

Steamy Atlanta, from June 24-27, was the location of the annual Airliners International enthusiasts' show as well as the annual meeting of the AAHA - Airline Archivists/Historians Association. The NWAHC sent Bruce Kitt, Collections Manager, and Scott Norris, Vice-Chair, to this year's gathering.

AAHA is currently an un-incorporated federation of independent, university-run, and airline-run museums focusing on commercial aviation, and also includes researchers, authors, and photographers not part of a bigger institution. It provides a forum for researchers and directors to share ideas and successes, commiserate over challenges, and open channels of collaboration.

The first full day of the conference, June 25, started with a field trip to the College Football Hall of Fame, where the group learned about how that museum uses video and AI applications to personalize visitors' experiences and boost ongoing marketing and engagement.

Afternoon sessions were held at the Delta Flight Museum campus and on their static Boeing 747-400 N661US which flew with Northwest from December 1989 onward. We learned about techniques for preservation and storage of textiles from the Atlanta Public Museum and heard about large-object storage tactics used by our hosts at Delta.

Members presented updates Wednesday and Thursday morning at the Renaissance Hotel where esteemed transportation photographer George Hamlin presented rare 747 slides and the organization held its annual business meeting. The 2026 get-together will be hosted by our compatriots at United at their downtown Chicago headquarters.

Before lunch, we had the opportunity to go "behind the scenes" in the Delta Flight Museum archives at Hangar One, as well as in the basement of another nearby building on the Delta HQ campus.

Following the AAHA meeting, most attendees immediately jumped into the Airliners International collectibles show being held in the museum's freshly-updated hangars - well worth a visit if you are in Atlanta.

The new-exhibit highlight for most historians and Northwest alumni is the 'wall of color' along the south side of the building. Uniforms, service items and technical gear, bags and posters, tags and timetables are arrayed from all the carriers part of the Delta family, including allies like Aeromexico, Virgin Atlantic, and Air France; merged carriers like NWA, Western, Northeast and their links like North Central, Bonanza, and Pacific Northern; as well as elements acquired from Pan Am. Most items are actual artifacts, though some pieces such as timetables are photo reprints to hold up better under light and gravity, and some items like posters were reproduced at smaller size to better fit into the assembly. One could easily spend an hour just taking it all in!



Who we are: The Airline Archivists and Historians Association (AAHA), founded in 2013, brings together archivists and historians dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of commercial aviation, and highlight airlines that have operated and continue to operate in the United States and across the globe.

Our statement of purpose: The Mission of the AAHA is to celebrate the rich heritage of commercial aviation and to recognize the cultural & historical significance of the airline industry and strive to ensure that the stories, records, artifacts & legacies of the airlines past & present are safe guarded, shared, and cherished.

AAHA member organizations:

1940 Air Terminal Museum
Air Canada
Alaska Airlines
American Airlines
Boeing Company
Delta Flight Museum
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
Flight Path Museum
Flying Tiger Line Historical Society
Hamlin Transportation Consulting

Hawaiian Airlines
Museum of Flight
Northwest Airlines History Center
Ohio Air and Space Hall of Fame
Pan Am Museum Foundation
SFO Museum
Southwest Airlines
David Stringer, Airline Historian
TWA Museum
United Airlines Legacy Foundation







ABOVE: AAHA members pose in front of Delta's recovered DC-7, parked in front of their museum.

TOP RIGHT: Stacks and stacks roll on literal tracks in the Delta Archives.

RIGHT: Giant NWA 747 suspended along the Wall of Colors. Hundreds of items are displayed.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Hundreds of timetables are now added to our website!

BELOW: Just a few NWA large-size models in storage at the Delta Archives

BELOW LEFT: Southern, Pacific, Hughes Airwest, and North Central materials on the Wall of Color

LEFT: "Speed" Holman's Waco 10-9GXE, moved from MSP Airport to the Delta Museum theater.



Of course, we were also on the floor to pick up fresh finds for our museum. Manuals, menus, annual reports, slides, magazines and more were all on our hunting list and we came home very happy. And while other shows have seen a better haul of timetables, we were still very pleased with the results. Our Delta friends set us up with a box of surplus issues as well - these have also been scanned and uploaded to the website.

Scott checked in with other top-tier timetable collectors Arthur Na, David Stringer, Dave Keller, and Perry Sloan as they all assist each other in cataloging. Perry's website, airtimes.com, has been an invaluable resource to collectors and historians, and he has started adding PDF files to his lists of issue dates for worldwide carriers. He has also graciously granted us use of those PDFs to supplement our own website's postings - and so we've been able to add a significant batch of listings to Southern, West Coast, Southwest/Pacific, Bonanza, and Wisconsin Central this summer. (Scott is sending files of the many carriers he's digitized to repay the favor.)







Compass Readings

Mini-exhibit now up and running in Eden Prairie

Time flew quickly between our announcement of renting cart space in the Twin Cities' southwest-side Eden Prairie Center shopping mall (*REFLECTIONS* June 2025) and the beginning of our rental period!

With the signing of a six-month lease to run through March 2026, the mall gave us several free weeks in September to set up, and this bonus time was needed as the graphics and materials we had prepared off-site per the mall's kiosk blueprint did not fit the actual space supplied (which was a unique unit that didn't match the dimensions!) Most notably, this cart had a glassed-in top which precluded hanging any aircraft from the overhead wire grid.

Editor Scott Norris and his daughter had to quickly improvise with the models, hanging panels, postcards and other items they'd carted in for setup, and return a week later to fill in with more vertical elements to better fill the space. The inaugural theme for the cart is "Connecting Minnesota with Asia".

Response will be measured via click-throughs on QR barcodes placed around the cart, as well as pickup of museum brochures and postcards for the October collectibles event. The display will continue to be refined over time, and may have a change-out after the holiday season.









A unique archiving opportunity and special funding request

Improving our ability to house, preserve, and document the growing archive of donated materials under our roof - and making them available to the public through our exhibits and at our website, **www.northwestairlineshistory.org** - is critical to our mission of *Connecting Generations*. We have now rented additional space at our archive in the ClubJet building at Flying Cloud Airport: this space will allow us to set up a photo booth, scanning and copying equipment, and our microfilm reader and VHS-to-digital converter, as well as hosting fundraising events and consolidating our off-site video, radio, and film assets under one (air-conditioned) roof.

This new space is better configured than a room we are renting across the hall, and should allow us to consolidate space through better storage layout and de-duplication of assets, which will allow us to reduce space rental costs long-term.

To kick off outfitting this new space, we have a lead on eighteen metal "flat file" cabinets that will be coming up for auction this fall from a publishing company in the Twin Cities that will be going out of business - these usually sell for \$700-950 each but we should be able to win the whole lot for about \$2,000. These are perfect for housing maps, posters, construction diagrams and even signage. Because of the size and weight of these units, and the need to utilize a lift-gate box truck, we will need to hire bonded, professional movers in early November to get them out of their current location on the north side of the Twin Cities and across town to Eden Prairie and into our archive space - this will likely run \$2,000 to \$3,000.

We are making this project our "Minnesota Give to the Max" spotlight effort in November. Our goal of \$5,000 will underwrite this important step forward to professionally store and maintain one-of-a-kind materials!

How can members help right now?

- "Give to the Max Day" is a popular fundraising event in Minnesota, where hundreds of nonprofits pool their messaging to capture attention before the holiday buying season kicks off. This year the event is Thursday, November 20 (a week before Thanksgiving).
- We will be using Give to the Max logos in online marketing leading up to the event to tap into the broader awareness & broaden our base of support.
- Event organizers also funnel corporate and foundation funds into matching prizes that participants like us can qualify for.
- No need to wait for that date you can head over to https://www.givemn.org/organization/Nwa-History-Centre right now (note the specific spelling, or just use a search engine) and make an online donation.





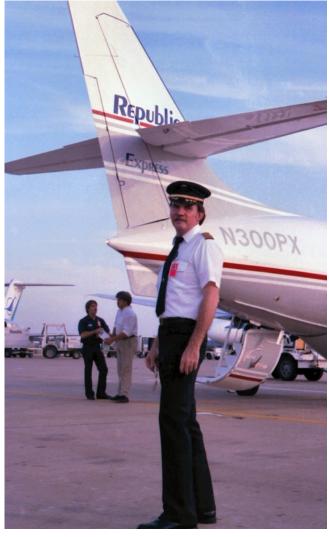


About the Jetstreams:

"We had ordered 25 planes with an option for 25 more. I'd worked on airplanes and I'd taught airplanes. I hadn't flown Jetstreams, but I had flown airliners and. I'd flown a whole bunch of different airplanes. So I knew airplanes and I knew the systems and this is great. So now while I'm there in Prestwick getting familiarized and through their technical course, I'm compiling a pilot training manual, because British Aerospace has one, but it's written in UK language. A lot of words that don't translate, you know, so I have to make a tailored manual - and our airplanes that we had on order were not like anybody else's Jetstream.

One of the things that we had talked about when I first went to Brady was, we're going to order airplanes that are going to have electric heaters in, so when they're out on the ramp in the wintertime, you can preheat the cabin. You know, a commuter airplane doesn't have an APU. So to hook up ground air conditioning or heating is a big deal. Basically, all we had to do is plug in ground power, plug in electric, flip the switch, and you can run these electric heaters to warm the cabin until you start the engines and use those as normal.

Eastern Metro Express already had them (the Jetstream). Atlantis had them. There were other operators that had Jetstream 31s, but we were the first one that was going to have the baggage pod, under the belly. We got the prototype pod. We got water methanol injection, which other operators didn't have. We had the latest model Garrett engine, which had strain gauge torque sensing, as opposed to hydraulic torque sensing. We had these electric heaters and we also had a freon air conditioning system on board, so in the summer, we didn't need an external air conditioning cart either! Nobody had this. We ordered like the best version. In fact, the water methanol system that we had, no one else had at that point. There were no diagrams in British Aerospace's manual. The designer of it drew it out *by hand* and I got his copy that I incorporated in my manual"



More photos from this collection are posted on our blog and Facebook page; we'd appreciate help in identifying and contacting the subjects!



Setting up the first pilot training courses in May 1985:

"Mike Brady already had hundreds of thousands of dollars of his own money and his family's money sunk already. I had carte blanche from Brady. I said, I'll do 12 guys at a time. The regulations said for a Part 135 carrier then was 80-90 hours of ground school. But for major air carriers, initial training was 120 hours, so that's what we planned on.

"If you know Memphis, they've got the B concourse that goes up the middle and you go to the very end, the last gate at the end, and if you go downstairs underneath the concourse, there's a suite of offices. So we get our original suite of offices down there, but you've got to go through the whole concourse to get out there.

"I told my new hires when they came in, I said, you know, if you went to work for a Republic or United or anybody else, this (120 hours) is what you're going to get." And a matter of fact, you're going to get more from me than you're going to get from them, because they assume when you go in there that you already have everything you know. But I said, the only difference between those airlines and ours is our airplane has 18 seats, instead of 100 seats. I'm going to take this just as seriously, and on their side of it, I said, you're also going to take this seriously. This is not some slumbag commuter airline. You're going to show up every day for school with a shirt and tie. Nobody was going to be in class without a tie. You know, you go to work for Delta, you go into ground school, you come dressed casual every day, that's fine.

No, not at my outfit. I said, I'll tell you why. I'll give you two reasons. Because at that time, I'd already been with enough carriers that were really casual and really sloppy. I said, you know, if you come in casual and sloppy-dressed, your attitude is that way. The other thing is, to get to my classroom, you're going to walk through the passenger terminal. And every employee of Republic Airlines is going to know who you are because they're going to see you every day coming and going. and they're going to know, oh, these are the new commuter guys, and I hey're predisposed to be skeptical about you guys, and I said, I want them to have the attitude when they see you, that you're really professionals."











Cover Story



The Saab 340s have teething problems their first winter in Memphis:

"We get to December 1985. Sitting in my office about 6, 6:30 at night, it's dark outside. and a pilot or an agent comes running into my office. Ellis, you've got to come outside! You got to see this! We have two Saabs sitting on the ramp. Airstairs are down, I walk into the first one, and I look at the flight instruments. The 340 was like the 767: all the engine gauges round dial, had an airspeed round dial, but it had two pair of glass CRTs in it. They called it an AARs and a nav display; pretty hot at the time - state of the art. But like an old' 50s TV, the vertical hold is tumbling. All four displays are tumbling, this is bad! The other airplane, same thing. It's about 99% humidity out there, low visibility, very humid and cold. Cancel the flights, we're done for the night!

Well, of course, that's something you've got to report to the FAA. The FAA's response was to slap a restriction for daytime VFR only on our Saab 340s. Five \$8 million state of the art airplanes brand stinking new, and we're into Christmas travel. We wet leased a couple of Convair 580s from Sierra Pacific from the West Coast. They flew the schedule with 580s under lease until we could solve the problem. We finally get our Saabs back in operation. It was a moisture problem! Which was surprising because the airplane was made in Sweden. You'd think they could make an airplane that handles the cold, but I think it's just dry in Sweden. They don't have the humidity."



Meet our newest director, Don Moran

Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got interested in the NWAHC?

We never drove anywhere when I was growing up, we would fly to Manitowoc or Green Bay when we went to see my grandma in Wisconsin. We did this because my dad was the VP of Traffic and Sales for North Central Airlines (NCA). In 1963, my family moved to Bolivia for two years as a part of a NCA project to help turn around the Bolivian national airline. You can see a brief story of the project in one of the NCA display cases in the NWAHC. Come in and check it out, there is some interesting twists in the origins of the project.

In high school, I got my private pilot's license and then worked on my 'fun' ratings: Single-Engine Sea and Multi-Engine Land. During that time, I attended Normandale Community College in Bloomington. Then took two years off to work at a Fixed Base Operation at Flying Cloud Airport. I had always wanted to be a pilot and rode along on some of the charter flights. I quickly decided that required too much sitting around and not enough flying. So, I went back to the College of St Thomas and earned my

degree in Marketing and met my future wife, Penny.

My first job out of college was for a Control Data Corporation in a division that developed and sold computer-based training (CBT) to airlines around the world. I was in heaven; I got paid to attend Farnborough, Shanghai Airshow (China) and the Singapore Airshow twice. After spending time in an international city for a length time, it always felt like I was half way home when I saw the NWA plane with the big red tail at the departure gate. Interesting side note, the person that I worked for at my first job was also one of the people I worked for prior to my retirement. I was so grateful to have had the opportunity to travel international and domestically to every state except for Alaska. One guess what state is on my travel bucket list.

How much travel did you do prior to retirement and after retirement?

I am retired now but, was VP of Sales for several companies during my carrier which required a considerable amount of travel. Over the years I traveled over 1.2 million miles domestically and internationally on NWA and Delta Airlines. My wife and I continue to travel frequently and are planning to spend two weeks in England in the spring.

What have you learned from volunteering at the NWAHC so far?

I have been volunteering since March at the History Center and recently spent time helping at the archives. The things I have learned since starting to volunteer is how dedicated and knowledgeable all the volunteers are and their interest in learning more. It is inspiring to be working with long time volunteers Bruce Kitt, Kevin Sliwinski, Vincent Rodriguez, and all the other volunteers.



We have recently had some additional new volunteers join us and I am amazed by their passion for history. Everyone has a story of why they are passionate about the museum and it is really interesting to listen to them. If you like aviation history and enjoy talking and listening to guest stories please reach out to us, we are in need for more volunteers. It is fun seeing people's eyes light up as they share their stories with you, it is very rewarding.

Since joining the board how have you taken the initiative to help the NWAHC?

Prior to joining the board, I took on the initiative to build a process to improve our donor recognition. This is a critical project to help NWAHC grow and mature as an organization. We have implemented the process and are sending timely thank you emails and letters to every donor. If you have any feedback positive or constructive please let me know at morandon63@gmail.com, I would appreciate to hear how we can improve.

I will also be a part of the team that will be working on several strategic initiative to help drive the future direction of NWAHC including community outreach, strategic planning and budgeting.

What is one thing you want all the members to know?

It bears repeating, your museum is in the hands of some of the most dedicated and passionate volunteers I have ever met. I am excited and humbled to be a part of this team and look forward to being a part of the museum's future.

In memoriam: Mary Fryer

One of our Museum's earliest organizers, Mary Fryer (born December 12, 1941) passed peacefully on August 31 at home.

She grew up in rural North Dakota and Minnesota before attending business school in Mankato, MN and moving to the Twin Cities to begin her career at Northwest.



She continued on into the Delta years and migrated to the Wings Financial Credit Union where she worked as secretary to Pete Patzke, founder of the NWAHC. Per Fay Kulenkamp, "She was still working when Pete retired. Mary was at every board meeting and prepared agendas and minutes while still working at Wings Financial. We were invited to attend her retirement party at the beautiful executive board room top of the Wings building in apple Valley. Paul Parish was then president of Wings.

"Mary helped Pete start our museum and was instrumental in the credit union giving us free rent in the basement of the location on 34th Ave in Bloomington. . I started with the museum just a couple yrs after Mary and was so happy that she was our secretary for at least 12 or more years... she knew everything about board function and our by laws as well as protocol for meetings and voting. When Bruce eventually came on board, she was still the backbone of the operation and did 90% of the work. Even physically loading things for the collectible show and any other event. She probably didn't weigh 100 lbs. ringing wet!

"I can't say enough good about her! I have been fortunate enough to have lunch with Mary, Flo, Gail and Karen. Mary did seem to enjoy her real retirement. When she was younger she went our west hunting and fishing. She loved her garden club. She planned an anniversary party every year for the NWAHC and many other events."

This issue of REFLECTIONS is sponsored courtesy of

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