ALASKA & ROTARACT ... IFFR IS HEATING UP

Just back from the first event in Alaska, IFFR seems to be (and really is) heating up....New Rotaract members, Brazil is stirring, one IFFR member will sit on the RI Board of Directors, Atlanta promises a stunning Booth, Banquet, AGM and Fly-Out, we’ll sit in jet airplanes and hot air balloons, $100 Hamburger events sprouting like popcorn, and lots of local events. Big year ahead, so saddle up (we specialize in mixed metaphors).

What’s Happened

IFFR & Rotaract Update: District 5170 Flying High

As reported in our last newsletter, World President Svend Andersen wants to encourage more young people to join IFFR and he has made it a priority. Past World President, Sam Bishop, Past Americas VP, Larry Wolfsen, and Northern California Squadron leader, Aleene Althouse, took on that challenge.

On February 28, Sam and Larry attended the Santa Cruz chapter of Rotaract and invited their club members to join IFFR ... 19 joined that night! Two weeks later, Aleene accompanied Sam to present pins and recognize the new members ... and gathered four more new recruits. Aleene shared, “We are really excited to have them join IFFR; it is quite likely these college students will eventually join Rotary and be big supporters of IFFR for the future generations.”

The newest IFFR members are looking forward to attending their first IFFR event; Aleene said she plans to organize what pilots humorously refer to as a “$100 Hamburger” fly-in at Watsonville Airport in the coming months to share the fun of aviation and IFFR with them. Headed by Co-Presidents Cindy Tiet and Bonni Baichon, (pictured with Larry and Sam), the Santa Cruz Chapter of Rotaract is Flying High! Welcome.

NORTH TO ALASKA ... PILOTS & PELTS, MUSHERS & MACHINE GUNS

Our first IFFR event in Alaska, at least for a long time .... cold weather, warm hospitality, and some big surprises .... you’re not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy!
We arrived Thursday afternoon for the Fur Rondy celebration (short for Fur Rendezvous, because it began with trappers gathering to sell their pelts). Thanks to Section Chair, Craig Bledsoe, the first event on Friday was uniquely Alaskan .... overseen by a professional instructor, I tried my luck (not skill) at shooting a wide range of guns, including .... a sub-machine gun (yes, there’s an Alaska Machine Gun Association), AK-47, .45 caliber hand gun, Glock hand gun, and many others, including a 1903 Springfield rifle used by the army well over a century ago. Our website chronicles this event, including videos to give you the “feel” of what it’s like to shoot exotic guns... in Alaska... in the middle of winter. [Click for Alaska Photo Album]. That night we met Section Chair Craig at the “Jim Beam Jam”, a rough and tumble dinner-dance that kicks off Fur Rondy.

Saturday morning was hosted by PDG Dick Sutliff and his wife Page Spencer, both IFFR members, experienced pilots, and wonderful hosts. We first went to the annual Rondy Parade, with a traditional small-town feel... except the temperature was in the 20s. We bought the obligatory Fur Rondy buttons to keep from being put in a mock jail by the Rondy Keystone Cops who prowled town during the event.

Then came one of the high points of the trip... the world championship dog sled races (these are the 20-mile sprints, not to be confused with the 1,000-mile Iditarod involving huskies). You have to just LOVE the dogs (who are well loved by their owners) because they live to run. The website has a video that captures the feeling of the dogs... harnessed, eager to go, full of energy, jumping to get going, with 4-5 people holding the sled to keep it from moving... and at the end of the count down, the dogs leaping forward ... as the team, the sled and the musher are all into the race. If you love animals, you just have to see these races and feel the joy of running that exudes from these much-loved dogs. Perhaps because of the harsh environment, or whatever reason, dogs, guns and airplanes all seem to have a special place in Alaska. [Click for Video of Start of Dog Race].

Next was the Fur Auction, which was particularly interesting because Page Spencer, born and raised in Alaska
and a knowledgeable designer and producer of clothing, really knows her furs.

Sunday morning, we headed to the extraordinary Snow Sculptures, and while there, checked on the Reindeer burgers and other delicacies you rarely see in the lower 48.

In the afternoon, Craig and Ruth Ann Bledsoe took us to the unique Rondy Melodrama ... a play 100% corny and 100% fun, as you are encouraged to hiss, boo, cheer, groan, whatever. Buy popcorn, not so much to eat (it is good) but to throw... at the audience and toward the actors on stage. At the end, popcorn littered the stage like snow, covered our chairs ... and appeared that evening as I undressed.

On Monday, Page drove us to Girdwood (site of Aleyeska, Alaska’s premier ski destination) to visit senior IFFR members PDG Phil Livingston and wife Diane. Phil is a former Vice President of our Region and Diane was Secretary-Treasurer. Upon returning to
Anchorage, we had a gathering with a few of the IFFR members, including Section Chair Craig, Dick Sutliff, Page Spencer, Bob Bell, Rocky Capozzi, Micah Shilanski, and Spencer Wilson. Great group and we’ll be seeing them again. Bob Bell’s humorous book “Oh No, We’re Gonna Die” might be must reading for folks heading into the Alaska outback.

Then Craig drove us an hour and a half north of Anchorage to the closing dinner of the Junior Iditarod, a 2-day race for young “mushers” age 14-17. Very impressive what these young folks do.

The biggest surprise of the entire trip came in the little village of Talkeetna, 2 1/2 hours north of Anchorage and the place the town in the TV series Northern Exposure was patterned after. There, we visited the volunteer program headed by Larry Rivers called “Talkeetna Build-A-Plane .... real kids building real airplanes. When the FAA heard about “a bunch of kids rebuilding an airplane”, it was so concerned it did a surprise investigation, resulting in the inspector writing that, in all his decades of experience in the industry and as an FAA inspector ... “I have never seen better work than what has been done by the students at Talkeetna Build-A-Plane.” It is such an extraordinary story that we’ll devote a full article to it next month. Stay tuned.

Our first Alaska IFFR event in a long time won’t be the last. We just scratched the surface this time. We couldn’t stay for the second weekend and the start of the 1,000-mile Iditarod, so that must await another visit. Can’t wait!

**SOUTH CENTRAL’S $100 BURGER – MARCH 25, 2017**

**THE TAXIWAY CAFE - LANCASTER REGIONAL AIRPORT (KLNC)**

A beautiful day with CAVU and reasonable winds at the surface (strong not too far aloft) we had for our March IFFR gathering for South Central. Our District Assembly was that morning, so both Bill W. Dendy and I attended the first session of that north of Dallas, then checked out with fellow IFFR member DG Bill E. Dendy before we left. Bill E. Dendy (DG 16) and Bill W. Dendy (DG 14) pictured.

As advertised, we began gathering around 11:20 with me getting dibs on the big table at The Taxiway Café in the terminal building. PDG Bill
W. Dendy (DeSoto Rotary), also based at LNC, arrived to help me host the event, followed shortly by region chair Jack Welge (Longview Downtown) and Ava (Longview), who wound up driving due to a mechanical with their door mechanism on their Cessna.

Soon, Greg Hanson (Addison Midday) flew his late model 36 Bonanza all the way from Addison (24 NM) with Scott Buzzell, also of his club. My wife Jane showed up with our son Peter, representing my club (Midlothian). Finally, battling a strong headwind for the respectable 195 NM straight line course from Houston’s Ellington Field, came Danny Schnautz (Pasadena South).

So, we had Flying Rotarians from 6 different Rotary Clubs and 3 districts, and 2 different zones attending our small luncheon. Picture by plane is Greg, Scott, Bill, Danny, Tony, Ava and Jack.

After lunch, we headed out to Greg’s Bonanza to take a picture of the group, then on this beautiful and comfortable day made a walk to the south hangars to check out the Cold War Museum (it was closed, but still some interesting aircraft next door), then back to the northernmost hangars where the DFW Wing of the CAF is headquartered, and has their own museum as well as warbirds on display. So we walked off a few of those calories from lunch.

Greg and Scott flew back to Addison, Danny was rewarded with a good tailwind back to Ellington, and the rest of us dispersed in our automobiles, having had a good time of developing acquaintances as an opportunity for service. What a great way to celebrate the first object of Rotary!

-- Tony Watson, IFFR Americas Newsletter Editor
South East Section Chair Dale Read, Americas VP George Chaffey and others have been working on our AGM, Banquet, and the details of our fellowship trip together after the convention.

**Official IFFR Airport for the Convention is Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport at Gainesville, Georgia (KGVL).** This is where IFFR members will be accommodated the best while the convention occurs, and it is the starting point for the southeast tour.

Monday the 12th of June will be the day for the IFFR Board Meeting (2:30 pm EDT) and the IFFR Annual General Meeting (4:00 pm). The always popular IFFR Banquet will be Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Our IFFR booth is to be staffed daily at the House of Friendship at the Convention site.

**IFFR Banquet in Atlanta - Tuesday, June 13**

The IFFR Banquet in Atlanta will be in one of the most prestigious social clubs in Atlanta: The Commerce Club, on the 49th floor of the Peachtree Tower, with stunning views (you’ll be dining higher than you sometimes fly), and only two blocks from the IFFR Hotel. The Banquet is $110 (US) per person.... think of it as your traditional “Hundred Dollar Hamburger” weekend fly-out, except this has prestigious venue, exquisite atmosphere, fabulous food, stunning views, and worldwide company.

**Reservations:** Make your reservations by emailing George Chaffey...just click this link [gchaffey@Littler.com](mailto:gchaffey@Littler.com) and say you are coming and how many (with names). First come, first served.

**Payment:** Either check or Pay Pal.

1. **Check.** If you’re in the US or Canada, you can send a check, made out to “IFFR”, to Steve Henderson, Americas Secy/Treas., at 561 Auto Center Drive, Watsonville, CA, 95076; Or.....

2. **PayPal.** You can pay by PayPal from anywhere in the world. If you have a Pay Pal account, just send the money to IFFR Americas’ email address.... [ifframericas@gmail.com](mailto:ifframericas@gmail.com). If
you have no account, it’s easy to set up (you’ll need an email address and a password). Go to www.paypal.com, select the “Pay or send money” icon at the top of screen and select “Send money to friends or family”. Enter the amount to pay and “send”. It’s that easy.

We hope to see you in Atlanta and at the Banquet.....High in the Sky!

POST CONVENTION FLY ABOUT - JUNE 16 - 24

If you’ve been putting off signing up, organizer Dale Read has told us that he has a larger coach than originally contracted, so our maximum has gone up from 50 to about 56. We still had room for you as of this writing (March 29).

Thursday morning the 15th the tour leaves from Gainesville, whether taking the coach or flying in private aircraft. Stops on the tour will include Chattanooga, Tennessee; Lexington, Kentucky; Charlottesville, Virginia; Williamsburg, Virginia; and Manassas, Virginia. The last stop will allow time to visit the many museums in Washington, DC.

A brochure and registration is available on the IFFR Americas site on the home page (scroll down to find) or you can click on either of these: [brochure] [registration]

You’ll need to complete the registration, and at that point you’ll get the hotel list. You’ll need to contact the individual hotels on the list to make your reservations once you have the list.

GRANTS PASS BALLOON AND KITE FESTIVAL
JUNE 2 - 4 AT GRANTS PASS, OREGON (3S8)

New North West Section Chair Caleb LaPlante will host a NW Section Fly-in at his home airport, Grants Pass, Oregon, a week before the RI Convention in Atlanta. Grants Pass and vicinity is a lovely area and this sounds like it might be a fun activity.

We’ll have more in the coming months, but thought those of you wishing to go and able would like a heads up.

Caleb LaPlante, (541) 646-0068, [http://www.greatergrotary.org/]

What’s Up

REMEMBER: DUES ARE ON US - OUR THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS

Last summer, the World IFFR Board rebated to us some of its accumulated surplus that had come from our dues. In
September, the IFFR America promptly saw that as an opportunity to accelerate our on-going program to attract younger members, particularly Rotaractors, and to extend IFFR into South America, particularly Brazil. This multi-year effort will support them with supplies, events, and any costs/activities to help them be involved and a boost to general aviation. In our January, February and March Newsletters, you have seen numerous articles about our recruiting and engaging Rotaractors and Brazilians in IFFR. We’re hard at work!

Apart from the world rebate, we realized we too had built up a surplus from our own members’ dues, so the IFFR Americas Board voted in December to waive dues for all our current members and new members for 2017 and 2018... one way of saying “Thank You” to our members for their support over the years and into the future. In addition to being a “Thank You”, it is also an excellent recruitment tool---free membership for a couple of years – like taking a test drive ... for free! Check it out on our website.

---- George

**Pop Up Events**

With the use of our modern communications methods and the right circumstances a “pop up” fly in or fellowship event is always possible. $100 Hamburger pop ups could happen anywhere, especially if weather looks good and we don’t have to invest a lot of planning effort. You’ll probably see more of these as our new Squadron Leaders become more active and plan things closer to home.

**Coming Soon ...**

Next month and beyond ... look for continuing news on Atlanta events, IFFR Dinner, and fly about; and a summer full of events.

--- George Chaffey

**Rotary**

Tail winds to ya’,