Our summer of IFFR activities has continued on into fall. We’ve had the Albuquerque Balloon Festival, the AOPA Fly In at Norman, Oklahoma, and this weekend we have the Formula 1 Grand Prix at Austin, Texas, IFFR hosting based out of LaGrange. While activities begin to slacken as fall turns to winter, there are still events where you can enjoy IFFR fellowship, so get out there and enjoy flying and IFFR!

What’s Coming (Also See Last Minute!)

RI CONVENTION 2018 - TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA
JUNE 23 - 27, 2018
NEW ENGLAND FLY ABOUT
JUNE 28 - JULY 6, 2018

The IFFR Hotel for the Toronto Convention is fabulous ... the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel. This was Svend’s first choice ... 6 blocks from the Convention Center, on the water, just across from the stunning Billy Bishop Island Airport. See the photos of the Billy Bishop Island Airport with the hotel and downtown in the background, the hotel and downtown as seen from Peter More’s plane on final a few years ago, and the hotel with the Billy Bishop Island Airport in the background.

All of the rooms we blocked, 40, have been spoken for, so we now have a waiting list if you want to stay at our “official” IFFR hotel. If you want to get on the waitlist, email or call George Chaffey (gchaffey@littler.com, 925-699-3343) and tell him you want a room, and give your arrival date. He’ll put you on the standby list. Should we have a cancellation, you’ll be contacted with additional information and payment instructions.

Otherwise, staying at another RI Hotel other than our IFFR “official” hotel will not keep you from enjoying the IFFR activities during the Convention.

The Fly About after the Convention will take place
entirely in the USA, with those in the USA planning to assemble in Buffalo, New York, and those at the Convention at Toronto before joining up for the tour. Beautiful parts of New York, New Hampshire, and other states will be visited. The outline of the trip can be seen in this brochure: [click for brochure]. Gary Dehnel is the primary organizer, contact him at gcdehnel@verizon.net. There has been a recent tweak in the planned itinerary due to a runway project closing an airport we’d intended to use, so with no other suitable airport nearby, a different stop with different activities was needed.

Meanwhile, get excited! Flying into Toronto’s Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (CYTZ), formerly known as Downtown Island, is one of the most memorable things you can do in personal aviation. And clearing incoming Canadian customs there is a snap. (If flying into Canada and back to the USA with other than citizens of the USA, please check US Customs regulations having to to with light aircraft).

**Last Minute!**

**US F1 Grand Prix**  
**Circuit of the Americas, Austin, Texas**  
**IFFR Fly-In - LaGrange, Texas (3T5)**  
**October 19 - 22, 2017**

This event started yesterday evening, and continues through Sunday. South Central Chair Jack Welge hosts this event from La Grange, Texas for the third year in a row.

The attraction is the race and the heats leading up to it, and this location is only about a 57 minute drive to the track, with more reasonable prices for hotels. Race information: [http://www.circuitoftheamericas.com/2017-f1](http://www.circuitoftheamericas.com/2017-f1). Track events begin on Friday, continue on Saturday (with Justin Timberlake concert following), and conclude with the Formula 1 race on Sunday.
There are plenty of interesting things to do around the area other than the race, too, as several of us discovered last year. You can check out the “painted churches” in the area, quite interesting and beautiful. [http://www.texasescapes.com/CentralTexasTownsSouth/PaintedChurchesTour.htm](http://www.texasescapes.com/CentralTexasTownsSouth/PaintedChurchesTour.htm) Contact Jack Welge: welgelaw@yahoo.com, phone (903) 753-5683. Hotel we’re using is the Best Western La Grange.

This event is in progress but you may still be able to participate by plane or auto. Check with Jack.

**AOPA Fly-Ins**

*Groton, Connecticut (KGON) - October 6 - 7, 2017*

*Tampa, Florida (KTPF) - October 27 - 28, 2017*

The Fly-Ins, which began under current AOPA President Mark Baker, have now expanded a bit with two days worth of activities, maybe even a little more in Tampa. See later in this newsletter for a short report on the Norman, Oklahoma (KOUN) event in early September.

**Groton, Connecticut ---** occurred the first full weekend in October. We had no scheduled IFFR events there, and if any members participated and also enjoyed some IFFR fellowship, we’d like to hear about it and be able to do some show and tell.

**Tampa, Florida ---** This event is the final one of the year, and happens next weekend. While there are no scheduled IFFR activities during this fly-in, if you’re going be sure to wear your IFFR wings in some way or another. Watch your inbox just in case, and take pictures and make notes!

**What’s Happened**

**HOT AIR BALLOONS .... EVERYWHERE**

Slower than a speeding bullet .... able to float over buildings in a single bound! Look, up in the sky .... it’s a bird...it’s a plane .... no, it’s...

*Hot Air Balloon Pilot!*

IFFR members from four states converged on Albuquerque, New Mexico for the annual International Hot Air Balloon Festival, and IFFR event wonderfully planned and hosted by Squadron leader Dave Daniels and Janna Daniels. It lead off with a great dinner Friday night at the home of Bob & Sandy Rausch. We mingled with fellow Rotarians, and hot air balloon pilots (like Jaybird) who introduced us to the world of hot air ballooning. Note: IFFR Americas has a
number of Hot Air Balloon pilots as members. And in the course of dinner, we inducted local Rotarian pilot Nick Ritz and wife Jill into the IFFR. While most of our group was enjoying the great dinner (including George & Carol Chaffey, Larry Wolfsen and son Taylor, Mark & Karen Hagen), Sam & Elena Bishop were visiting Trinity Site, near the White Sands National Monument, location of the first atomic bomb test in 1945 (see short article at the end of this one).

Saturday morning, we were up early to see the mass ascension. That was impressive, but the winds prevented those that ascended from hanging around the field and they quickly disappeared to the south. But that evening, we saw a fabulous balloon “Glow”, which is hard to describe... think of an area the size of many football fields, filled with huge balloons, twinkling like Christmas tree lights as the pilots fire off their propane jets, and with all of us being able to be right up close within a few feet to experience it.

Sunday morning provided an extraordinary display, with perfect weather. It started with a 6:00 am briefing for the pilots, followed by Dawn Patrol, with a half dozen balloons ascending and moving around the field at low altitudes, twinkling like Christmas tree lights as the pilots periodically fired their jobs to keep them aloft and rising or lowering their altitude to catch winds in different directions. Finally, at dawn .... a fabulous ascension of 550 balloons ... slowly inflating, finally rising erect, and then one by one ascending under the direction of “zebras”, playful black & white outfits. Pictures
experience, so we also include video clips (here and on the IFFR Americas website) to capture the sight and sounds of balloons inflating (inflating video), zebras directing traffic and pilots and passengers ascending to the cheers of friends and fans, only feet away (zebra at work video). Traditional balloons of every color, and wonderful special balloons like the giant cow, the Wells Fargo stage coach, Yoda, chickens, pilots, motorcyclists, and much more.

During the day, there was food galore ... where else would you eat a Hatch New Mexico chili lobster roll, or watch a chain saw carving contest?

Then in the evening we watched the inflation of 8 hydrogen balloons as part of the annual Americas Cup ... 4 from the US and 4 balloons from other countries. Once inflated and ready, they lifted off one by one from the same spot, with the goal to travel the farthest before finally having to land. We watched them each launch into the darkening sky, realizing how cold and lonely the next 3 days would be for some (H balloon video). We followed their path through an Internet site, and the winning team (Swiss) finally landed 2 1/2 days later near Labrador, having covered over 2,200 miles. This was a whole new world to most of us, and while balloons travel slowly compared to airplanes, consider that the winning balloon was covering almost 900 miles a day.

If you’ve never been to this Fiesta, it is worth the trip. Check out pictures and video here: (ABQ folder)

--- George Chaffey

**Trinity Site Tour**

The Trinity Site is the spot where the first atomic bomb was exploded, which was in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. That site is only open twice a year to visitors, as it is inside the White Sands Missile Range restricted area. That October open date happened to also be the first day of the Balloon Fiesta.
Since it was on my “bucket list” for many years, Elena and I plus my sister and brother in law went there on Saturday, then to the Balloon Fiesta on Sunday, so we missed almost all the fellowship with IFFR members. However we were very happy to meet up with Mark and Karen Hagen at the Sunday evening Balloon Glow, so we do claim IFFR participation. Actually that morning we were at the event and so was George, but we were so enraptured by the sights and sounds we totally forgot to try and find each other. We flew home on Monday.

--- Sam Bishop

**NORMAN, OKLAHOMA AOPA FLY-IN**

**SEPTEMBER 8 - 9, 2017**

After Section Chief Jack Welge put out the call, we heard from a few of our members not planning on coming to this event, but heard from no one planning to come. I committed to going anyway, and to wearing my IFFR shirts and cap while there. I did publish my intentions, and did exactly as I said I would do.

Arriving on Thursday evening and following the NOTAM arrival, I missed being able to pick up my credentials by just a few minutes that evening. I decided to have dinner at Ozzie’s, the café on the airport. They had a chicken fried steak special that evening, and most of the people there had come to the airport from Norman. This certainly is a restaurant worthy of the $100 Hamburger flight.

Things were setting up more on Friday morning. Several seminars were being held, and the most popular one was held all day at the Severe Storm Forecasting Center there in Norman. Shorter tours of the facility were offered during the day by prior arrangement. I decided Ozzie’s had treated me well the night before, so had lunch there. Things started getting busier as far as traffic coming in that afternoon. I walked around the flight line both Friday and Saturday, with several things catching my eye. The Stemme motorglider was very interesting, and the factory rep fielding questions had a profile like Sam Bishop’s doppelganger. Also, easier to look closely at the Cirrus Jet than it had been at Oshkosh, so I took a few pictures.
The kickoff dinner started about 7 on Friday night. Good barbecue and a more pleasing music choice for the entertainment, along with perfect weather, made this the best event of this sort with AOPA I’ve attended.

The next morning there was a pancake breakfast followed by a general meeting. I was able to attend 4 of the seminars going on, grabbing a small sandwich from the Chick-Fil-A vendor for lunch. Finishing official events was a Town Hall meeting led by AOPA President Mark Baker, ending in ice cream for everyone. The figures were still being tabulated, but thanks to the perfect weather there were about 7300 attending, and 500 planes that flew in. The 2 that flew the furthest: Bellingham, Washington and Laconia, New Hampshire. I’ve been to both airports and they are certainly a long way from here.

There was a big rush to leave as expected, but I relaxed and watched it happen. I headed back to Ozzie’s, sat for a while in the area outside the café to see if I might connect with any Rotarians, then had an early dinner before departing in light traffic after the NOTAM expired.

I never made contact with another IFFR member while there, but did print some business cards before I left and visited about Rotary and IFFR with a few people while we were standing in the various food lines. I also ran into a friend of IFFR member PDRI Mike Pinson.

The format for the fly-ins doesn’t give much extra time to plan special events for other organizations, but we can still use these events to make possible some IFFR fellowship.

-- Tony Watson

Who’s Who

NEW SECTION CHAIRS FOR IFFR AMERICAS

The new Rotary year means we have some Section Chairs new to that position. We reported on Aleene “Ace” Althouse, new South West Chair, last month. This month we introduce Rankin Whittington, taking over from Dale Read for South East.

NEW SOUTH EAST SECTION CHAIR RANKIN WHITTINGTON

A member of the Rotary Club of Lenoir, North Carolina, Rankin Whittington grew up on a farm in Amelia,
Virginia, USA. He has a degree in English from Guilford College, a Quaker school in Greensboro, North Carolina. He met Sandra Shansky there and they were married in 1970. Rankin was a public welfare social worker and has a master’s degree in social work administration from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He was a county director of social services for seventeen years. In 1994 he founded a company to provide services to people who have mental or physical disabilities so that they may remain at home and not have to live in institutions. The company had more than six hundred employees working from eight offices when it was sold in 2015.

In semi-retirement, Rankin leases out office space from four buildings and sings in a men’s chorus. One daughter lives in New York City and the other in Chapel Hill.

Rankin is a Paul Harris Fellow and Major Donor. He has been a Rotarian since 1977 and has been president of two Rotary clubs. Rankin soloed a J-3 Cub when he was seventeen and flew hang gliders. He has owned a C-150, a C-172, and a Starduster Too. He currently owns a C-182 and a Super Decathlon. Rankin has been a member of IFFR since 2000 and has been on most of the convention fly-outs since then.

Contact Rankin via email at: rankinwhittington@gmail.com.

JACK WELGE NOMINATED FOR DISTRICT 5830 GOVERNOR

South Central IFFR Chair Jack Welge is now the District Governor Nominee Designate for his Rotary District, which is northeastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, and one county in Arkansas (where Texarkana is). His term of office should be the 2020-21 Rotary year.

Jack Welge joined Longview Rotary Club in November, 1978. Jack is a 38 consecutive year Perfect Attendance Rotarian, Past President of his club, Officer/Member of the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians, and a Paul Harris +5 Rotarian. Jack has chaired and served on many of the Longview RC Committees. Jack continues to be involved in many Community Organizations.

In Jack’s Professional Life, he has been a Lawyer since 1977 and has had court admissions to the United States District Court for Eastern and Northern District of Texas, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, United States Supreme Court, Board Certified Family Law in the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Judge in the Municipal Court of Record, City of Longview, Texas. Also, Panel Attorney Member AOPA Legal Services, and Past Chair of Aviation Law Section of State Bar of Texas. These are just highlights of Jack’s professional and civic accomplishments.

Jack’s Law Office of Jack H. Welge, Jr. continues to serve the Longview Community. He and his wife Ava celebrate 40 years of marriage, 2 successful adult daughters, and a Border Collie. (Thanks to District 5830 and its current DG Ted Huffines for this succinct bio).

$100 Hamburger Events - South Central

South Central Chair Jack Welge has these events on the docket, subject to change due to weather issues and interest shown by our members:
That last event is a bit more than just that $100 hamburger! If you have interest in this, or any of the other events, let Jack Welge know so you can be a part of the conversation. Jack Welge: welgelaw@yahoo.com, phone (903) 753-5683.

**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. So, always watch for those broadcasts from IFFR – it can mean a fun flight and a fellowship event that will keep you wanting to come back for more.

**Coming Soon ...**

Next month and beyond ... look for continuing news on a fall full of events - even a couple during the winter worth going to.

Webmaster: PWP Peter More
Newsletter Editor: PWP Tony Watson