



AERO MUSEUM NEWSLETTER



Alwyn installing
a rear cover on a
Continental A-65 engine.

Port Townsend Aero Museum

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Jefferson County

International Airport

Port Townsend, Washington



Be sure and stop in to see the museum's new Gee Bee Model E donated by the Hanson Family Trust.

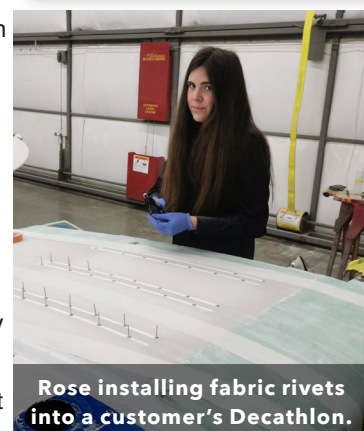
Port Townsend Aero Museum Newsletter Fall/Winter 2020

The days are growing shorter and the temperatures are beginning to drop, which can only mean one thing at the Port Townsend Aero Museum... It's time for our Fall 2020 newsletter. I'll do my best to bring you up to date on what's been happening at the museum during what I can honestly say has been a year like no other since the museum first opened in 2001. No doubt, 2020 has been a year filled with events we never could have predicted in our wildest dreams, but it has also been another year of steady growth for the aero museum, and more importantly another year of helping our youth volunteers grow into responsible young adults.

For the first time in the history of the Port Townsend Aero Museum we had to close the doors of the museum to the public on March 17th due to Washington State's response to the COVID pandemic. This also meant I had to tell seventeen young museum volunteers that they would have to stand down from taking part in the museum's youth program until further notice, again due to the pandemic. Since aircraft



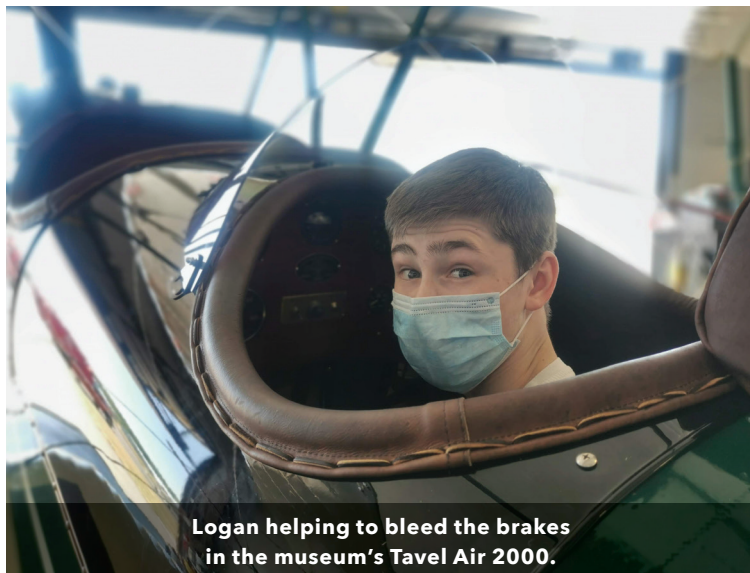
Lily & Kevin Vogel
getting the Travel Air 2000
ready for a test flight.



Rose installing fabric rivets
into a customer's Decathlon.



Lily & Tyler working on a customer's Beech Staggerwing.



Logan helping to bleed the brakes in the museum's Tavel Air 2000.

repairs and maintenance were deemed essential work, I was able to keep our restoration and repair shops open, and thereby continue to pay the bills as they kept rolling in. Finally, on June 17th the pandemic restrictions loosened and I was able to invite our youth volunteers to return to work here at the museum, although initially limiting their numbers to five on any given day to insure we were observing the social distancing requirements. On September 5th I reopened the Port Townsend Aero Museum to the public after Washington State relaxed their restrictions having to do with public museums. If anyone would have told me at the beginning of 2020 that the museum was going to be closed for nearly six months, and that we would all be wearing face masks by year's end..... I would have said they were crazy!

Every Fall we say goodbye to our high school graduate volunteers who leave the museum to start the next phase of their young lives, that being college or career. This year was no different. Eighteen year old Sophie Widrig left the museum with her

private pilot's certificate land and sea, and headed off to Brussels where she will be attending college for the next three years. Four of our youth volunteers from the recent past, Maria Morrison, Christoph Webber, Harrison Shinohara, and Jake Kirschbaum, have all returned to college after volunteering and mentoring the younger kids over the last several months. Maria is a junior at Duke University and will be attending her classes this fall via Zoom until Duke returns to in-person learning. This summer Maria set up an aviation ground school for the museum youth volunteers that she conducted every Sunday afternoon via Zoom. Christoph and Jake are back at the University of North Dakota where they are working on aviation related degrees that will help to insure long and profitable careers as airline pilots. Harrison, like Sophie, has gone overseas for his education, earning a scholarship to a university in the Netherlands, where he knows exactly no one. Talk about having the confidence to move out of your comfort zone! Harrison has it, and I would like to think the Port Townsend Aero

Museum helped to play a small role in his finding it.

If you haven't been to the Jefferson County Airport recently, you really should stop in to see the improvements, starting with the new runway whose construction occurred over seven weeks beginning in late May. As it happened, the runway project occurred during the time our young volunteers were at home due to the pandemic, so the closure did not directly affect the museum's flight program. The runway reopened within a day or two of our youth volunteers returning to their duties at the museum which could not have worked out any better. Although not runway or pandemic related, we did lose a valued member of the Port Townsend Aero Museum's regular staff this last July. Rich Taracka, a very talented aviation A&P IA technician and all around good guy, gave notice that he and his family were moving to Arizona. Rich was with the museum for a short time back in the days before the new buildings were built, and then came back to the museum in 2017. He will be missed by all of us, both at





the museum and by those in our local aviation community. To help with our ever-increasing workload, I hired a local gentleman named Scott Wexman, who not only holds his A&P mechanics license but is also a licensed pilot and aircraft owner.

Like the summers before, the museum flight program has been in high gear, both in the airplanes and in the classroom. Our primary certified flight instructors are Carl Nepute, Terry O'Brian, Bill Sleeper and Neil Morrison, with a host of others who help to fill in when they can. Without the dedication of these individuals in helping our young pilots earn their ratings, we would not be able to have a flight program. Prior to getting into the museum aircraft, the youth volunteers will have attended at least three sessions of aviation ground school, which most likely would have been taught by Tom Lemanski of Port Townsend. Each and every Sunday from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM, Tom can be found up in the museum's library classroom teaching ground school to our future pilots. Again, the museum's flight program would not be possible if it were not for Tom and the other adults who volunteer their time and knowledge to ensure that these kids are given opportunities they would not find anywhere else. The museum owes these adult mentors and instructors a huge debt of gratitude for the positive influence they are having on so many young lives.

Even though there was a pandemic, you never would have known it (assuming you overlooked the face masks) inside the Port Townsend Aero Museum restoration and repair shops. Cur-

rently we are working on four different major restoration/repair jobs as customer contract work, one of which is a beautiful 1940 UPF-7 Waco biplane that we are finishing up for Bill and Martha Nelson from Hawthorne, California. We've been working on this biplane for over two years, using the help of our youth volunteers, who not only learn the art of aircraft restoration, but also the pride of a job well done. We are hopeful the owners will have their "new" 1940 Waco back in Southern California before the snow falls in the mountains to the south. It was our major restoration contract work that allowed our skeleton staff to remain busy throughout the worst of the pandemic shut down. Now that the kids are back to work in the museum shop, we'll be able to restart many of the projects they were working on prior to the shutdown including the Ercoupe 415C, Piper PA-28 and Pietenpol Air Camper. And let's not forget, they also share in the responsibility of keeping our ever-growing fleet of flying museum aircraft in tip-top shape.

Speaking of museum aircraft... Our 1928 Travel Air 2000 finally received the approvals necessary from the FAA for them to grant us a new Airworthiness Certificate! It took nearly two years of waiting for the paperwork to make it through the approval process, but the wait was worth it. To date, we've made three test flights in the Travel Air, each of which noted and subsequently repaired a squawk (operational issue for those unfamiliar with the term). Weather permitting, we should be able to complete the flight testing this fall, after which this wonderful aircraft will join the line of flying museum aircraft available for the kids to experience. The beautiful Gee Bee Model E Sportster that we received from the Hanson Family Trust and North Cascades Vintage Aircraft Museum has been assembled and is now proudly on display in the museum where hundreds of visitors have marveled at this beautiful little aircraft. Like the Gee Bee, each of the many aircraft in the Port Townsend Aero Museum's collection are aviation works of art, and nearly all of them still fly. In our restoration department we are working on a number of museum aircraft projects including our 1938 Cessna Airmaster,





Rose cleaning a set of aircraft spark plugs under Rich Taracka's supervision.



Owen, Lily, & Phillip polishing the museum's Ercoupe 415C.

a 1947 Ercoupe, a classic Pietenpol Air Camper project, and the original Piper PA-28-140 low wing trainer. Needless to say, we always have museum aircraft projects to work on! If you've not been to the aero museum for a while, please come see for yourself. You will not be disappointed. In fact, just last month, the readers of the Peninsula Daily News voted the Port Townsend Aero Museum the best museum on the Olympic Peninsula in 2020!

Our current collection of aircraft on the display floor include the following: 1930 Stinson SM8A donated and restored by Earl Root; 1928 Travel Air 2000 donated by John Desmond and restored by PTAM; 1953 Mooney M18 "Mite" donated by the Harold Hanson Family Trust; 1938 Taylorcraft Model B donated by Bud Swanson and restored by PTAM; 1933 Gee Bee Model E Replica as donated by Harold Hanson Family Trust and restored by Jim Jenkins; 1946 Piper J-3 Cub donated by Carol Russo and restored by PTAM; 1949 CallAir A2 donated by the Harold Hanson Family Trust; 1947 Aeronca Champ 7BCM

donated by Jerry and Peggy Thuotte and restored by PTAM; 1944 Fairchild PT19 donated by the Harold Hanson Family Trust and restored by Jack D. LaBounty; 1933 Fairchild Model 22 donated by the Harold Hanson Family Trust and restored by Bill Worman of Orcus Island; 1930 Rose Parakeet replica donated by the Harold Hanson Family Trust; 1942 de Havilland Chipmunk donated and restored by Bill Sleeper; 1937 Beech C17B Staggerwing donated by William Hellsell; 1938 DH82 de Havilland Tiger Moth donated and restored by Tim Jacobson. These listed aircraft are only a portion of the museum's collection of world class vintage aircraft. The other aircraft in our collection are either hanging from the ceiling in our display building or safely stored in our storage hangar waiting for the day when we'll have the additional display space we so desperately need to house our growing collection of aircraft and aviation artwork.

About our expansion.....As you may remember, in late 2018 the Port Townsend Aero Museum received a very generous

pledge grant of 1.5 million dollars from the Harold Hanson Family Trust that would allow us to build the necessary addition to properly display the wonderful aircraft we had received from Harold Hanson's North Cascades Vintage Aircraft Museum after they closed. This grant money is to be paid to the Port Townsend Aero Museum as we incur the expenses of building the new south expansion. We had hoped to be building the 5,400 square foot addition to the south wing of our current building beginning this last May, but the ground lease needed from the Port of Port Townsend was held up as a result of a Port Director change from Jim Pivarnik to our new Port Director Eron Berg, and as a result of the new runway project and its requirement for there to be a current Airport Layout Plan (ALP) on file with the FAA. The ALP is a comprehensive "blueprint" required by the FAA to show the current airport layout, and all future building and infrastructure improvements that are known or planned at this time, including the Port Townsend Aero Museum's plan for expansion. It has been





Private pilots Sophie & Luca w/ student pilot Ryan in the museum's Cessna 172 made possible by a grant from the Hanson Family Trust.



Gavin reassembling the Stinson SM8A after Annual Inspection.

a long road, but I have good news... Just a couple of weeks ago I received notice from the Port's lease manager, Sue Nelson, that our museum expansion project had received the green light from the FAA to proceed! Now we can finally finalize a new lease with the Port for the expansion and begin the construction phase of the project.

Looking towards the future, as we slowly get back to what is being called the "new normal" involving social distancing and virus avoidance, I have to say the future of Port Townsend Aero Museum is looking bright. We currently have seventeen teenagers in our youth education program, with a wait list nearly as long. This past month we had two teenagers pass their written private pilot FAA written exam, and next week, eighteen-year-old Tyler Nelson will be taking his private pilot check ride. These are life-changing events in the lives of these young people, changes that are the direct result of hard work and commitment on both the part of the kids and on the part of so many adults who support and make this program possible. Our repair and restoration reputation for excellence continues to grow with each passing month, with calls coming in inquiring about restoration work from all over the western states. Not only does this contract restoration work help to pay the bills, it provides us with a variety of interesting and challenging on the job training opportunities for our young volunteers.

This last summer due to the social distancing requirements in Jefferson County, I had to cancel our annual dinner dance fundraiser that had been scheduled for October 2020. I'm hopeful that by the summer of 2021 we will be able to host this very fun and important fund-raising event at the Port Townsend Aero Museum. I will be scheduling our 2021 event with GBF Catering and our favorite band, Swing Fever, for a date in late August or September. If you think you might like to attend, please call our front desk and we'll put you on a list to notify you of the event date as soon as we have it established.

That brings you up to date on everything from our recent shutdown and reopening, to the expansion project that will help to ensure the Port Townsend Aero Museum will continue growing into a future filled with both world class aircraft and amazing young volunteers. But, as you might have guessed, it takes an incredible amount of funding to keep this program running each and every day throughout the year. The Port Townsend Aero Museum, a publicly owned non-profit 501(c)3, is only as successful as it is because of the hard work of our staff and volunteers and because of the support and funding that we are blessed with by those of you who know that what we are doing is making a positive difference in the lives of so many teenagers and in our local aviation community. Our progress can



Logan, Alwyn, Jocelynn & Mike during the set up for last year's evening fund raiser.

only continue if you continue to support us by contributing to our program. All donations, whether material or monetary, are one hundred percent tax deductible, and appreciated beyond belief by all of us at the Port Townsend Aero Museum.

If you would like to set up a Port Townsend Aero Museum bequest in your will or living trust, please give me a call and I'll put you in touch with someone who specializes in this form of giving. Your contribution would be a gift that will continue to give for generations to come.

Thank you for your support!

Mike Payne
Director, Port Townsend Aero Museum

Sincerely,

Mike



ABOVE: Jacob Thibeault was a teenager when he first worked at the museum in 2001. Now he's an Alaska Airlines pilot with a young son who may one day volunteer at PTAM!

It's not all work at the aero museum. Over the last several months we've learned that Rose not only excels in our workshop, she's also a great cook!



Learn more about **PTAM** at ptaeromuseum.com

Open 9-4 Wednesday through Sunday.

Closed Thanksgiving & Christmas Day

Membership Program

Individual	\$35.00 (annual)
Family	\$50.00 (annual)
Supporter	\$250.00 (annual)
Sponsor	\$500.00 (annual)
Patron	\$1000.00 (lifetime membership)
Visionary	\$5000.00 (lifetime membership)

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Individual ☐ Family ☐ Supporter ☐ Sponsor ☐ Patron ☐ Visionary ☐

Please return this form to:

PT Aero Museum, 105 Airport Road, Port Townsend, WA 98368

**Thanks for
your donation!**

