



# AERO MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Shop Manager Kevin Vogel  
laying out a plan of action on  
the Ercoupe with Sterling



Michael Payne, Director  
Port Townsend Aero Museum

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Jefferson County  
International Airport  
Port Townsend, Washington



Our expansion is well underway and we are hopeful  
it will be enclosed before the rainy season returns!

## Port Townsend Aero Museum Summer/Fall Newsletter 2021

**The Summer season** has finally arrived at the Port Townsend Aero Museum, bringing long days and warm temperatures – the ideal combination for antique aircraft operations and for running a youth-in-aviation education program! It's taken several months but we are finally back up to speed after last year's COVID shut down. Both our aircraft collection and youth program have grown this year, with several new young people joining our ranks. The expansion of our museum building is under construction and moving along well, with the new steel structure going up as I type this letter. Our restoration and maintenance shops are busy as ever, working on both museum and customer aircraft projects as they provide us the necessary teaching opportunities for the teenage volunteers in our program. Things are looking up for the Port Townsend Aero Museum so let me fill you in on what we've been up to since my last newsletter....

**Every summer** I try to hire one of the graduated teenagers from our program to return on their summer break to work as a paid intern for the Port Townsend Aero Museum. This year's intern was Jacob Kirschbaum, an exceptional young man who left the aero museum two years ago to start college. This fall Jake will be a senior at the University of North Dakota where he is enrolled in their aviation program and well along his way to becoming an Airline Transport Pilot. Jake returned to the aero museum this summer with his FAA Commercial and Certified Flight Instructor ratings! Not only was he able to help us in the restoration shop on complicated restoration and repair work using the skills he learned in the years spent volunteering while still in high school, he was also able to do flight instruction with the kids in our youth flight program. To think, only a few short years ago it was Jake in the student pilot seat, with museum flight instructor



Every year PTAM brings young Volunteers and old airplanes to the Diamond Point Airport Community Event!



Olivia and Mike Payne applying specified torque to cylinder base nuts on a Customer's Cessna engine.



Josephine (Jo) installing wing fairings on a Customer's 1946 Globe Swift.

Carl Nepute instructing, and now it's Jake doing the instruction!

**In addition to Jake**, we had Maria Morrison and Harrison Shinohara - two outstanding youth volunteers from the past - volunteering this summer acting as mentors to the new kids in the program and helping with restorations and running the flight training program. Maria will be a senior at Duke University this fall and has already been accepted into Harvard's law program.

Talk about setting a good example for the kids following in her footsteps! Harrison spent his summer commuting between the Port Townsend Aero Museum as a volunteer and working in Montana (for pay) for a business connection he made while attending the University of Montana. Jake, Maria and Harrison are all exceptional young adults and we feel fortunate the Port Townsend Aero Museum was able to play a part in who they are today.

**Speaking of today.....**we have six new teenage volunteers in our youth mentorship program since last June! Two young women - Ava and Josephine (Jo) aged 16 years and 13 years respectively - and four young men - Brody, James, Ben and Gabriel, aged 13 years to 15 years - are all excited about being a part of this program. We don't advertise our youth program in the media so each of these kids found the Port Townsend Aero Museum on their own and then took the necessary steps to get involved. In a nutshell, this is what the youth program at the Port Townsend Aero Museum is all about, showing these young people that effort, when properly guided, equals reward. The fact that these new volunteers put in the effort to get involved with this program is only the start of what I know will be a very rewarding experience for them.

**A big part of the attraction** for our youth volunteers at the Port Townsend Aero Museum is our flight program. For those kids who commit to volunteering at least one day a week, all year long, we offer a flight training program where they can earn their pilot's certificate at no cost to them or their family. It really is quite an amazing opportunity for these young volunteers, but it is not an easy program. As much as I would like to say every kid who ever came through our program left with a Private Pilot's Certificate, that would not be the case. Quite a few, yes, but each and everyone, no. We are constantly evolving our flight training program and finding new ways to encourage our student pilots to learn the required knowledge to become a private pilot, including a recent donation of a new three-screen flight simulator that we now use for training when the weather is not cooperating. The next young private pilot on the PTAM horizon is 16-year-old Henry Brown who recently soloed the museum's Cessna 172 trainer and is currently working on his cross-country flight training. He'll be turning 17 soon - the minimum age requirement for becoming a licensed private pilot - and Henry is right on course for finding success!

**Late this last spring**, as soon as the forecast turned towards the sun and away from rain, with all necessary permitting in place,



**Sixteen year-old Logan flying the museum's J3 Cub over Port Townsend.**



**Our latest addition to our collection is this beautiful 1946 Globe Swift GC-1B.**

Mark Grant of Grant Steel Buildings and Bill Leavitt of Leavitt Trucking and Excavating started working on the Port Townsend Aero Museum / Hanson Family Foundation expansion of our existing display building. This project began over two years ago as the direct result of our having received a donation of seven museum quality aircraft (along with many project aircraft) from what was then the recently closed North Cascades Vintage Aircraft Museum in Concrete, Washington as founded by Harold Hanson. With the welcome but sudden increase in aircraft to display we found ourselves completely out of space. It was at this time that members of the Hanson Family Foundation decided they would grant PTAM the funding necessary to expand our current building so that we would have the space to properly display each of the beautifully restored classic and antique aircraft in our collection, including those that came from the Harold Hanson collection. Knowing the Port Townsend Aero Museum was founded around a youth education and mentorship program no doubt played a part in the Hanson Family Foundation decision to grant PTAM the funding for this expansion. For this we will be forever grateful.

### **The Port Townsend Aero Museum**

restoration and repair shops have been busy with both museum aircraft restoration

work and customer contract restoration work. Currently we are finishing a 1940 Waco UPF-7 biplane for a customer, making this the second Waco UPF-7 biplane we will have completed in the last couple of years. I can't say for sure when we'll have this beautiful Waco finished, but we are getting close to covering the fuselage, the last big part of this aviation puzzle to complete. Our youth volunteers recently finished refurbishing a 1946 Ercoupe 415-C, a unique little aircraft designed by the manufacturer to be an airplane so easy to fly that anyone could learn to fly it with minimal instruction. After finishing this Ercoupe several of our student pilots had the chance to fly it, and true to design, they could not believe what a fun and easy aircraft it was to fly. With this Ercoupe now looking and flying great, we will offer it for sale to raise much needed funding to keep our program going and growing. We have several other restoration projects on the schedule for our youth volunteers including a Pietyenpol Air Camper project, an original Ercoupe received as a donation from the Museum of Flight in Seattle and the very first Piper Cherokee 140.

**This last February** our display aircraft collection number increased by one with the addition of a Globe Swift Model GC-1A, a post-war all aluminum retractable landing gear two place aircraft. What makes this



**Lily installing new door seals on a customer's beautiful Cessna 120.**



**Harrison Shinohara on summer break from college, working at the museum and mentoring our youth volunteers.**



**Gabriel flying the museum's J-3 Cub on a sunny day with both doors wide open!**



**Travel Air Specialist Jack Becker checking compressions with Brody.**



**Maria Morrison working with two of our newest Volunteers, Josephine (Jo) and James.**



**Highly specialized Flight Nurses for Airlift Northwest talking to PTAM youth about the important work they do.**

particular Swift so unique is the fact that it is in such original condition, having never received any of the high-performance modifications that have helped to keep the Swift aircraft not only current, but highly desirable to this day. Unfortunately, our new Swift GC-1A was not donated to us, rather sold to us at a reasonable price. And although it was sold at a "price I could not refuse", it was still a cost that was unanticipated and one that we are still recovering from. That being said, we are happy to have this Swift in our collection and will be sure to keep it flying so we can share the experience with the young pilots in our youth program for years to come. Side note on the Swift.....if we had not purchased this Swift GC-1A when we did, it was going to be sold to an overseas buyer and taken out of the USA, never to return. The Swift brings the total number of retractable landing gear aircraft in our collection to three, ranging from the tiny 550-pound Mooney M-18 Mite to the 1937 Beech C17B Staggerwing. I have to say, I think we have

the general aviation retractable landing gear aircraft spectrum pretty well covered at this point!

**I do have some sad news** to report. Jerry Thuotte, one half of the founding husband and wife team responsible for the Port Townsend Aero Museum, passed away on January 5th after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Jerry and his wife Peggy started the Port Townsend Aero Museum in 2001 and worked tirelessly over the next fifteen years building the museum into the success you see today. If not for the determination and dedication of both Jerry and Peggy this world class aviation museum and its unique youth mentorship program would not be here today. It is as simple as that. Jerry will be missed and what he built will live on for generations to come.

**Earlier this year** I decided to postpone our annual dinner dance auction fundraising event due to the uncertainty of what the COVID restrictions were going to be this summer. Planning for this once-a-year





**PTAM Flight Instructor Carl Nepute congratulates Henry after his solo flight in the museum's Cessna 172.**



**Summer Martell taking Gabriel up in her beautiful Student Prince biplane**

event begins in January with gathering and requesting donations, making reservations and scheduling, none of which I could do with any level of certainty in the early months of 2021. However, at this time it is looking like we will be all clear to host our event in the summer of 2022. This event is a big deal for us and is the only fundraising event we schedule throughout the year. We depend on it, and yet for the last two years we have not been able to host it. To date, our largest single day entrance fee income (with no big tour groups) was just over \$500. This was a huge day for us, and more than double what we consider a good day, but as you might guess, nowhere near the funding needed to keep this museum open. The only way we can continue is through the generous support of those individuals like yourself who like our program and the positive effects we have in helping young people grow into responsible young adults. If you have the means, and would like to help ensure the Port Townsend Aero Museum can continue to do the work we do while

growing into a healthy future, please make a donation. Whether monetary or material, your donation will make a difference in this program and in the lives of the young people who have made the Port Townsend Aero Museum a part of their future.

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. It truly 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**



**Sterling hard at work prepping for paint.**



PORT TOWNSEND

AERO

MUSEUM



ABOVE: Airlift Northwest made the time this summer to give an excellent presentation to the youth volunteers at PTAM.



Sophie Widrig, home for the summer from college and volunteering on fabric work.

Learn more about **PTAM** at [ptaeromuseum.com](http://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) |

Thanks for  
your donation!



#### 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**