

ROTARY RAMBLINGS

from Old Rhinebeck

official newsletter of the Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum Number 46, Summer 2012

CONTACT...

If you have visited the Aerodrome this summer you may have noticed a change in our Ryan Hangar. The *Spirit of St. Louis* has been turned around, and is now proudly displayed along with our 1917 Indian twin and 1935 Indian 4 motorcycles (both of which were recently restored by Kurt Muller). Over the past several months, the Aerodrome has made great strides toward completing the 1927 Ryan NYP *Spirit* reproduction. The Museum has contracted with Ken Cassens to complete the NYP to flying status. Now that the paperwork and fundraising have been done, work on the aircraft can commence.

Although no plans have been made at this time to fly the aircraft, it will be ready should the opportunity arise. Many people have made generous donations to make completing this project a reality. Look for work to begin this summer. A big thanks goes out to Tom Polapink and Joel Weisbrod for their tireless work to make the completion of the *Spirit* possible. We have many other projects in the works, if you would like to sponsor any of them, please contact us. Thank you for supporting the Aerodrome through your generous donations!

Michael DiGiacomio - Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum President



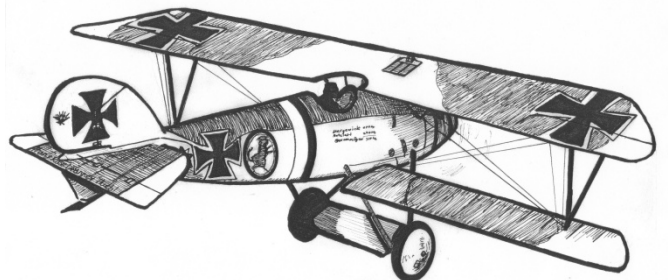
Top: The *Spirit* will soon be completed by Ken Cassens.

Above: The American Eagle and Great Lakes get some sun during a special private event held inside the Aerodrome's *History of Flight* building. Oreo DiGiacomio keeps an eye on the situation. Are you looking for a unique place to host a wedding or special private event? If so, the Aerodrome may be the perfect spot for you to consider! Contact Carol in the office for more information.

Below: Our Albatros D.Va as rendered in pen and ink by artist Brittany Rose Vianney Huebl.

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Rotary Ramblings

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Your membership support is vital to our museum!

The Museum has reintroduced the \$25 "Fledgling" membership. This level entitles members to four quarterly issues of Rotary Ramblings and a 10% discount in the Aerodrome gift shops. Our \$50 level entitles you to one-year pass to the museum and airshows, four issues of the Rotary Ramblings newsletter and a 10% discount at our gift shops. Please spread the word about the Aerodrome and consider giving a gift of membership to someone you know.

Family and Lifetime memberships are also available.

Please Consider Becoming a Member Today!

Recent activity...



Our 2012 airshows are now underway and we've enjoyed great weekend weather this season.

Clay Hammond spent June with us hopping rides in our New Standard. Clay is a New Standard "veteran" pilot having flown many of the few D-25s in existence today.

Local filmmakers Devin Pickering, Francesco Paulo Cordero and James Foster have been regular visitors this spring and are capturing the entire season on film to create a 30-minute documentary about the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. For more information about this project visit their website: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/aerodrome/aerodrome>

The Aerodrome's Fleet Finch 16B, N666J had been a workhorse at Rhinebeck from the 1970s through the 1990s. It had a well-deserved rest for the past 15 years or so, but is now back on the flightline thanks to the efforts of Bill Gordon. Look for it in the shows this year.

The Fleet is shown at left as it appeared in 1968 in the black and white photos, and how it appears today in the color photos.

Sean Crimmins has done a super job leading a team of volunteers to get the Aerodrome's rolling stock in shape for the 2012 season. Thanks Sean!

Clay Hammond

Cole Palen's Old Rhinebeck is not only a story of aeroplanes and flight; it is also a story of people and families. One family that played a huge role in the history of the Aerodrome is the Hammond family. Bill Hammond became a mechanic at ORA in June 1978. There is a great cameo of Bill in the film *Cole Palen's Flying Circus* (now available on DVD in the Aerodrome gift shop). Bill built both the Aerodrome's D-25s from basket cases, and has restored and rebuilt a few additional D-25s and other vintage types over the years.

In 1978, Bill's oldest son Clay was born in Kingston NY. Clay's younger brother Nate was born three years later. Clay and Nate came down with serious cases of "aeromania" and have been involved in aviation all their lives. Just as many of the children of the Aerodrome crew did, they spent their time at the Aerodrome and aviation seeped into their blood.

Clay's first aeroplane ride was at 5 weeks-old on his mother's lap, and began learning to fly at age 10. In the show Clay acted as bombardier while his dad flew the Fleet or other aircraft in the show. Clay also had the neat experiences to fly in the Jenny, Davis, and Monocoupe.

Some of Clay's favorite memories were when Cole used the Monocoupe 113 to "Perfume the Aerodrome." Perfume was pumped from the aircraft to emphasize the fact that woman pilot, Phoebe Omlie made the Monocoupe famous in the 1920s and 1930s. The smell would permeate the countryside. Ski flying in the winter was a great thrill too!

Clay began flying radial-engined aircraft about six years ago, and started flying D-25s four years ago. He flew at the Aerodrome throughout the month of June and plans to return in the fall. His experience, good humor and willingness to pitch right in has been awesome. He wasn't at ORA more than a few hours and he was out cutting grass on the runway and helping out.

"It's neat to come back and be a part of it, and to relive my childhood," says Clay. He is back flying the same pattern he did when he rode with his father and enjoys sharing the joy of flight with others.

Clay and his wife, Marla, have three children: Erin, 10, Jake, 9, and Andy, 6. As I watched them playing at the Aerodrome and asking questions about the aircraft, I realized that the Palen Magic has once again captivated a new group of youngsters. We all look forward to seeing them again this fall when Clay returns.

Mike DiGiacomio



Above: Clay strikes a pose in his flying gear in front of the Aerodrome's Curtiss Jenny in the early 1980s. Below: Clay in the front seat and his dad, Bill, in the rear cockpit flying Bill's 1928 Travel Air D-4000.



Below: Clay about to take another group of passengers up in the Aerodrome's New Standard D-25 to view the scenic Hudson Valley from the air, 1929 style. Jay Dubetsky assists.



Florida contractor saves important pieces of Aerodrome and aviation history!

Many are aware that Cole and Rita Palen spent their winters in Florida. Cole took advantage of the warm weather to work on aircraft for the coming show season each year. Cole passed away in 1993, and Rita and her brother Eddie continued to stay at the Florida home while returning to Rhinebeck each year in the spring. When Rita passed away in 2002, Eddie chose to stay permanently in Florida along with his other sister Marion. Eddie passed away in the mid-2000s, and Marion decided to sell the house. Rita, Eddie and Marion employed local contractor Tom Artes to maintain their Florida home.

By chance, Tom was passing the Palen home when he saw it was for sale. He stopped to speak with Marion and inquired about the airplane parts he had seen in the attic having done some roofing repairs at the house. Marion, under stress from big changes in her life, hadn't thought about them and was primarily concerned with selling the house. She suggested to Tom that if he wanted whatever was up there, he could take it...so he did. Tom brought the items to his home and stored them there for a few years. He contacted Brian Karli (a pilot and aircraft restorer from Georgia, currently restoring a Curtiss Jenny) to see if he could identify the parts and determine a value for them as he was thinking of selling them. Brian suspected the items were related to Rhinebeck and confirmed it with a little research when he sent me a photo and asked me to identify a pair of wings that looked like the long-lost set of wings that Cole had constructed for his very first Demoiselle reproduction. Sure enough, this was exactly what they were.

Brian contacted Tom and suggested that the best place for these items would be the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. In addition to the Demoiselle wings, there were several other items that were significant to the RAM collection. These included fittings and parts for the one-of-a-kind, original Aeromarine 39-B, landing gear legs that were fabricated for Cole's second Deperdussin reproduction, templates that were traced from the National Air and Space Museum's Albatros D.Va during its restoration, which were used to create Cole's reproduction of the type, photos and other odds and ends.



What is likely the rear portion of the Aeromarine 39-B fuselage, one of many projects Cole had been working on while in Florida.

Thanks to the generosity of Tom Artes these items will return to Rhinebeck, where they belong.



The Demoiselle wings: Dan Taylor restored the Aerodrome's Demoiselle back in the late 1990s, but fabricated a new set of wings for it in doing so. As it turns out Dan's wings more accurately represent the original aircraft than these do, however it is still nice to have these pieces back in the collection.



Mike Lockhart (right) looks through a photo-album, while Tom Artes holds one of Cole Palen's favorite magazines. Photos were taken when Mike picked up the items from Tom's garage.

The original "Aerodrome kid" Mike Lockhart (so-called because he grew up in the neighborhood of the Aerodrome and rode his bicycle there to spend time with Cole, when ORA was in its infancy) conveniently for us now lives in Florida and arranged to pick up the items from Tom so Tom could have the use of his garage back. Mike and his son David picked up the materials and will deliver them to Rhinebeck during their next visit to the area.

Tom Polapink

Meet our newest Museum Board Member: Warren Batson



Having grown up on Long Island, within a few miles of some major airports, (Republic, Zahns', Grumman-Bethpage and Roosevelt Field), I was always straining my neck every time I heard the unmistakable noise of an airplane engine overhead. My parent's house, about two miles south of Republic airfield, was in the direct flight path to the North-South runway. When I was a child Fairchild-Republic was building the A-10 "Warthog" Attack plane. Further away in Bethpage, Grumman was building the first of the F-14 and earlier generation jets. Back in those days it was not uncommon for the jet flights to break the sound barrier over land.

When I was about 8 years old I started building models. My first models were plastic, snap-together kits that my mother purchased for me at the local five & dime store.

Because of all the full-scale aircraft exposure, my eyes always gravitated to model aircraft when they were available. My model building progressed through many rubber band-powered Guillow's kits and eventually to radio-controlled aircraft at age 11. Lately I have been building semi-scale 1/4- scale aircraft.

My very first exposure to the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome came from seeing coverage in R/C Modeler magazine of an event called the Old Rhinebeck Jamboree, hosted by the Mid-Hudson R/C Society. At that time, in the early 70's this was one of the largest RC events in the Northeast, if not the country. I could not wait to see the coverage of the Jamboree event every year in the magazines. At age 18, I spent all summer convincing my parents that I wanted to go to the Jamboree event to see it in person that year. To my surprise my parents

allowed my brother (age 16 at the time) and I to make this 150-mile trip from Long Island to attend the Old Rhinebeck Jamboree event. We left at 4 a.m. Saturday and spent Saturday night sleeping in the back of our old van on a very cold September night. I did not mind as I was at the famous Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. I was in awe of the renowned Cole Palen and finally had the opportunity to meet him.

Little did I know that years later, after graduating from college I would move to this area, join the Mid-Hudson R/C club and become very involved in the running of the Old Rhinebeck Jamboree event.

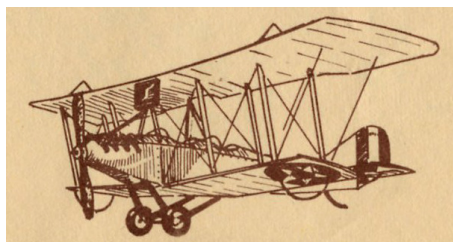
I have spent 34 years working at IBM in the Hudson Valley. The past year 20 years have been spent designing and coordinating the construction of large manufacturing areas. With all this construction experience I gained from my job, I have run a handyman/carpentry business for more than 20 years. In the last housing boom from 1999 to 2005, I also built three modular houses to sell on speculation all while holding down my full-time job.

Cole Palen used to call upon the Mid-Hudson R/C group whenever he needed a group of 15 or 20 people to help him with a major project at the Aerodrome.

About two years ago I approached Mike DiGiacomio about interest from Mid-Hudson R/C Society members and other modeling friends volunteering at the Aerodrome. This team of modelers repaired many damaged buildings from the 2010 Thanksgiving wind storm that came through our area. This past winter the team concentrated in enlarging the parking lot and clearing around the building of the Palen homestead.

From this work Mike suggested the possibility of me joining the Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum board. Mike asked if I would be willing to focus on being in charge of the ORA site facility infrastructure, organizing continued repairs and planning new projects. There is a lot to learn but this is a job I look forward to performing for the ORA. I look forward to meeting and working with everyone.

Warren Batson



Gordon Bainbridge's illustration of the Aerodrome's Aeromarine 39-B as it appeared in a 1969 Aerodrome brochure.

Spirit of St. Louis



The Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum is proud to announce that the *Spirit of St. Louis* project, started many years ago by Cole Palen and continued by Ken Cassens and Scott Mackenzie up through 2003, will be completed by Ken over the next year or so.

The Aerodrome's *Spirit* reproduction idea came about when Cole Palen acquired a Wright J-5 in a batch of New Standard D-25 aircraft that he bought. Cole, an avid Lindbergh fan felt the Aerodrome should have a *Spirit* and framed up a fuselage and a wing. Other projects requiring more immediate attention kept him occupied until Cole passed away in 1993. In 1995, Ken resumed work on the project. Ken constructed a new fuselage when he founds that welds done by a volunteer on Cole's fuselage were not airworthy. The wing also needed major rework due to damage that occurred while in storage. Nearly all of this work had been completed by 2002, but the aircraft has remained 85% to 90% finished since then.

Completing this project is important for many reasons. *The Spirit of St. Louis* is recognized as one of the most significant aircraft in aviation history and its historic transatlantic flight in 1927 landed it right in the midst of the Golden Age of Aviation. This is a period of aviation history that the Aerodrome is working to preserve and celebrate.

The *Spirit* project was built entirely due to the kindness of donors, and the Museum remembers and recognizes the generous support for this effort, both past and present. This is perhaps the most important reason that we are working toward completing the project...to follow through as best we can on what was promised.

We could ask for no better person than Ken Cassens to finish the work and look forward to seeing work progress on the *Spirit* this summer with more update reports to follow.

T.P.

The Walker Brothers

My two brothers and I have been working at ORA about two years now. It all started when we read Richard King's book *The Skies Over Rhinebeck* a few years ago. After reading that book we went to two shows in 2008, one in 2009, and then started volunteering in 2010. Now it has become a big part of our lives and hardly a conversation passes between any two of us without some mention of the aerodrome, WWI aircraft, antique cars or something aviation related.

When we first came to volunteer at ORA we knew next to nothing about either the airplanes or the cars in the collection but the people already working there were so welcoming and helpful that we were soon taught to wing run the pioneer and WWI aircraft, drive the antique cars, run the Liberty engine and do countless other amazing things that one has the opportunity to do while at ORA. We have also been able to add to the airshows with our own talents. Peter is studying singing in graduate school so he sometimes sings the National Anthem at the beginning of the show. Other times Forrest will play the Anthem on his trumpet, and I often play the Black Baron's funeral march at the end of the Sunday show on my bagpipes.



Forrest Walker (left) and his brother Patrick take a quick break for the camera in front of the Aerodrome's Caudron G.3.

What first drew my brothers and I to ORA was the aircraft collection. Because we are not pilots there was only so much we could do with the planes. So we started helping with the cars. Now we get to drive them and help work on them before the show and sometimes during the winter. After getting the chance to work on and drive ORA's old cars the three of us started talking about how much we would like to have our own Model T to fix and drive. Sadly for us Model Ts are a bit too pricy for three high school/college students to own so we decided to build our own. We started in our living room in the winter of 2010, and by mid-2011 we had all but

finished our *Walker Speedster*, which we now regularly drive in the airshows.



Patrick Walker and Aerodrome gift shop staff member Madison Reither go for a ride in the homebuilt *Walker Speedster*.

This is just our story of what volunteering at ORA became. Many others who have worked at ORA have also “caught the bug” as they say and soon find themselves building their own replica WW1 aircraft or searching the countryside for forgotten old aircraft or vehicles to drag out of some farmer’s barn and bring back to life. Cole Palen, the Aerodrome’s founder, spent his entire grown life doing just that. He built and restored countless early aircraft and vehicles during his lifetime. He loved these old machines and his love and passion for them is still very much alive at ORA today.

Patrick Walker

Indian Motorcycles restored!



Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Kurt Muller, our 1917 Indian V-twin, and 1935 Indian “4” have been restored. The 1917 Indian shown above, and Cole Palen’s Sears Auto buggy have been on Aerodrome property since the earliest days of the Aerodrome, for as long as anyone can remember.



The Aerodrome was invited to participate at the *Concours de Elegance* in Greenwich, Conn., just before the airshow season. Mike DiGiacomo promotes the Aerodrome to a passer-by.

Special Thanks

- Paul Savastano – Benches for Museum.
- Donors who helped to make the *Spirit* project arrangement possible.
- Al Zitz – Donation of a beautifully restored and fully equipped 1940s, 5th Air Force Willys Jeep.

Wants:

Your email address! We need your email address so we can deliver future issues of *Rotary ramblings* to you electronically. This will save postal and printing costs and allow us to stretch your membership dollars further toward covering other expenses relating to the museum and keeping our vintage aircraft flying. Send your email address along with your name to carol@oldrhinebeck.org

Do you have a J-3 Cub or Aeronca Champ that you’d like to donate to the Aerodrome to help some of our up and coming pilots gain some valuable taildragger experience? We’d certainly appreciate it!

Ackerman or Atlas Spring type wheel to match the existing wheel in our collection for eventual installation on the Albree Pigeon Fraser Pursuit.

Copies of old home movies and photographs shot at the Aerodrome over the years for our archives.

Stampe SV4 wing panels.

One pair of 6.50 x 10 wheels, brakes and tires for Velie Monocoupe 113 restoration. Also seeking a donation of \$1,600 to cover expenses for new spar material for this aircraft.



RHINEBECK AERODROME MUSEUM

the original living museum of antique aeroplanes
P. O. Box 229—Stone Church Road • Rhinebeck, NY 12572 • 845/752-3200

2012 Air Show Schedule

Saturdays: Pioneer and barnstorming airplanes featured
Sundays: WWI Airplanes featured

July 1: Red Hook Bicentennial Celebration Air Show

July 14 & 15: Meet The Fokkers Weekend

July 21 & 22: 100 Years Ago Weekend

July 28: Pioneer and Barnstorming Air Show

July 29: WWI Air Show

August 4 & 5: Planes Built in New York Weekend

August 11: Pioneer and Barnstorming Air Show

August 12: WWI Air Show

August 18 & 19: Artists-Authors-Photographers Weekend

August 25 & 26 Open Cockpit Weekend

September 1: Pioneer and Barnstorming Air Show

September 2: WWI Air Show

September 8 & 9: Radio Controlled Model Weekend

September 15 & 16: World War I Weekend

September 22: Antique Biplane Fly-In

September 23: WWI Air Show

September 29: Pioneer and Barnstorming Air Show

September 30: WWI Air Show

October 6 & 7: Pumpkin Bombing Festival

October 13: Pioneer and Barnstorming Air Show

October 14: Final Air Show of The Season

Visit www.olderhinebeck.org for details on each event

BLUE RIBBON AWARD
American Film and Video Festival
New York 1988

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD
International Aviation Film Festival
Alberta 1990

Cole Palen's FLYING CIRCUS

The Story of the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome

An award-winning film that captures the heart and soul of the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome... not just from the bleachers, but from the cockpit. The thrill of flight, the fascination of history... the story of the people behind the Aerodrome and the early aviators who inspired them.

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Above, left: The great film "Cole Palen's Flying Circus" is now available on DVD at the Aerodrome's gift shops. Above, right: Trudy Truelove (Andria Hutter) and Sir Percy Goodfellow (Stephen LoPresti) after a Sunday show.