



# THE EAGLE

The Official Newsletter of The Wings of Eagles Discovery Center

For more information visit [www.wingsofeagles.com](http://www.wingsofeagles.com)

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October 2008

Volume 1, Issue 3

## The New Face of Wings of Eagles

In previous columns I have written about the commitment of our Discovery Center to youth and education, including the exciting addition of a Challenger Learning Center. There is much still to accomplish, but changes are already evident.

In September, we began hosting the GST BOCES Aviation program. Reciprocal education agreements with Pennsylvania mean that BOCES delivered courses are available to interested students throughout the Twin Tiers. Students enroll in this program during their last two years of High School, spending half of each school day studying at Wings of Eagles. They cover a broad range of aviation topics and are prepared to take the private pilot written examination upon course completion. To accommodate this important program, we have constructed a new classroom in the area where our science academies are held.

But this is only a temporary site for the aviation class. Next year, they will occupy yet another new classroom on the second floor, as their current space becomes the mission briefing room for our Challenger Learning Center.

To build and sustain our educational offerings, membership and volunteer support have never been more important. We need your support to make these exciting programs take flight. I hope that you will actively participate in the exciting journey that lies ahead!

-Clyde Robbins, President

## A Remarkable Life

October brought the sad news of the passing of an aviation legend in our community. Sally Lese was a very special person. Born a Schweizer, daughter of Ernie and Eileen, Sally was best known to the public through her role as Manager of the world renowned Schweizer Soaring School. For over three decades, she nurtured countless aviators and aspirants of all backgrounds and experience into the art and science of silent flight.

One of those aspirants was my own son, Bryan. Gliders offer youth an opportunity to solo and earn a license before they are old enough to qualify for the same privileges in powered aircraft. For Bryan, this was an opportunity to feed his dreams. For me, it was a harrowing loss of parental control! But I soon learned that there was no need to worry. Sally ran a tight ship and her son Shane, now our Chief Instructor, showed his gifted touch for teaching youth.

My confidence was severely tested, however, on the day of Bryan's first solo. He disappeared from view and wasn't seen again for nearly an hour! "Don't worry," Sally reassured me. "He's soaring!"

Continued on Page 3

*Don't Forget!*

**WEDC'S GIFT SHOP**  
is a great place to find unique holiday gifts!

## *2009 Annual Member and Guest Holiday Dinner*

Friday, December 12th

Cocktails—5:30pm, Dinner—6:30pm

Wings of Eagles Discovery Center Auditorium

\$15 for Members, \$18 for guests

Call 607-739-8200 for reservations

## WEDC After-School Science Academy Programs

Wings of Eagles Science Academy will be offering a Friday after school program for grades 3-8 starting in November. Students will have an opportunity to create hands on projects in a number of areas, including Aviation Science, Rocketry, Flight Simulation, NASCAR race simulation, and Paleontology. Students need not have participated in any prior robotics projects to take part in the Lego robotics part of the curriculum. All classes are free and open to public, private, and home school students. Check the website for dates to register for future sessions.

-Ron Hoodak, Director of the Science Academy

### 2009 DATES FOR THE WINGS OF EAGLES ROBOTICS TOURNAMENTS HAVE BEEN SET!

February 16-18 9am-Noon

April 13-15 9am-Noon

\$5.00 Registration Fee

Grades 3-8 Welcome!

Application Can be Found Below

For More Information Contact Ron Hoodak at [rhodak@gstboces.org](mailto:rhodak@gstboces.org)

**Robotics Tournament  
Dates Announced!**

## WEDC Science Academy LEGO Robotics Tournament Application

February 16-18 And April 13-15

Times: 9:00 to noon

Awards ceremony on the last day of each tournament

Students will learn how to build robots using the Lego Robotics Kits. Students will also learn how to use the Mind Storm computer program to guide their robots through a series of complicated courses. This program is designed after the Mars Rover Project at Cornell University. Students will work in teams. No prior knowledge of the Lego Robotics format is needed. WSKG TV will be on hand to film these tournaments for a regional documentary.

If your child is interested, please fill out the following application, detach and return it to:

**Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, 17 Aviation Drive, Horseheads, NY 14845**

### LEGO Robotics Tournament Student Enrollment Information

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ School/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature and media consent \_\_\_\_\_

For more information e-mail the Wings of Eagles Science Academy at

[rhodak@gstboces.org](mailto:rhodak@gstboces.org)

## A Remarkable Life *(Cont'd from Front Page)*

And so he was. As for so many others, Sally's thundering, velvet hand had changed yet another life forever!

As the Schweizer Aircraft Corporation evolved its products from gliders, to Ag Cats and finally helicopters, the soaring school was no longer a core business unit. When it closed its doors, the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center was the fortunate recipient of their donated assets. To-

day, Karen Robbins manages the Elmira Soaring School, where youth of all ages can once again soar.

They do so in the loving memory of Sally Lese, without whom this would not have been possible. God bless your soul, Sally. You will soar forever in our hearts.

**-Mike Hall, Executive Director**

## Member News

The weather is getting colder but members can still find ways to be involved at the Discovery Center. Did you know that most of the volunteers you see working around WEDC are members? If you've ever thought of becoming a volunteer but did not know how—it's easy! Simply come into the museum and request an application or visit our website <http://www.wingsofeagles.com/volunteer.cfm> and return the completed form to our Director of Operations Brenda Benza at the Discovery Center.

One of the best ways to mingle with other mem-

bers and staff here at Wings of Eagles is to attend one of our Member Dinners. Our next Member Dinner will be held Friday, December 12th and will be held in the Wings of Eagles Auditorium. Cocktails will begin at 5:30pm with Dinner at 6:30pm and a program to follow. Tickets cost \$15 for members, \$18 for guests. If you are able to attend please RSVP by calling 607-739-8200 or e-mailing us at [bbenza@wingsofeagles.com](mailto:bbenza@wingsofeagles.com). We hope to see you at the Discovery Center soon!

**-Stacey Brown, Director of Communications**

## Karen Robbins Joins the Executive Leadership Team

Karen Robbins has been appointed to the position of Executive Assistant to the Director of the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center. In her new role, Karen will assist with the execution of organization plans and programs, while retaining her previous responsibilities as Flight Program Manager. She will also assume a significant role in facilitating communications between the program Directors, the Executive Director and

the Board of Trustees. When announcing Karen's appointment, Executive Director Mike Hall said, "We have come to know Karen for her outstanding dedication and customer relations skills as our Flight Program Manager. We are fortunate to have this opportunity to apply her skills more comprehensively to address our expanding requirements." Congratulations, Karen, on your well deserved promotion!

## Development News

Things are moving forward with future plans for Wings of Eagles and the development of the Challenger Learning Center. There are many opportunities for collaboration with various organizations throughout the Twin Tiers and I am excited about the chance to work cooperatively with everyone to make the Center bigger and better than ever.

Streeter and Associates have been busy building around here and I now officially have an office in the second floor administration area, please come by and see me any time. I look forward to meeting one and all at the holiday member's party and I want to offer my help to the members, volunteers, and staff alike.

**-Pat Krauss, Director of Development**

## From the Curator

### Thanks Walter!

In the last issue we published a list of collections projects for which we need volunteer help. Walter Elvidge, a retired plant electrician and a member of WEDC, drove up on a Tuesday to see what was needed. When I showed him the exhibit cases that needed to have the lighting rewired, he helped determine what materials were needed then said he would be back the following week with his tools. I bought all the materials from Lowe's, who offered a 10% discount, then attended a preservation and conserva-

tion workshop at Cornell University over the weekend. Walter had begun working when I arrived at the museum Monday morning. He spent the next two days rewiring six display cases. Since Walter's home is located outside Scranton, PA, he stayed in a motel Tuesday and Wednesday nights at his own expense. As a result of Walter's experience, skill and spirit, there will be new exhibits in attractive well lit cases.

**Thanks again, Walter!**

**-Ed Flesch, Director of Collections and Artifacts**

## Volunteers Still Needed

Ed Flesch, Director of Collections and Artifacts, needs volunteers for the following positions:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Talent &amp; Staff Hrs</u>	<u>Description</u>
"Women-in-Aviation - Pioneers"	Light carpentry 16-24 hrs	Decorate and install exhibit back
"Women-in-Aviation-WWII"	Carpentry 16-24 hrs	Drill holes for glass shelves Decorate
"Women-in-Aviation-WWII"	Administrative 16-24 hrs	Select material and artifacts prepare captions, redesign existing display case.
"Eileen Collins"	Light Carpentry 4-8 hrs	Cut plywood to prepare new back for display case.
"Vietnam Exhibit"	Administrative & Light Carpentry 8-16 hrs	Select picture frames for purchase, Prepare captions, mount picture and captions to display case.
Small Exhibits (2)	Administrative 16-24 hrs	Select material and artifacts, prepare captions, using an existing display case.
Space Program	Administrative 16-24 hrs	Select material and artifacts, prepare captions, redesign existing display case.
Sign Stands	Metalwork At least two people	Cut, bend, assemble heavy gauge aluminum and paint sign stands.
Accessions	Administrative Continuous/more than one person	Accession artifacts into inventory.

All materials will be furnished. All projects require some training during the week or on weekends by appointment. Volunteers must be capable of working independently or with minimum supervision after training.

Contact Ed Flesch at [eflesch@wingsofeagles.com](mailto:eflesch@wingsofeagles.com) or [eflesch@stny.rr.com](mailto:eflesch@stny.rr.com) or 607-739-8200

### New Exhibit

On July 1, 1960, an RB-47 with a crew of six, took off from a forward base in England on a routine reconnaissance mission to record the Soviet Union's defense radar frequencies along the shores of Barents Sea. Their course was planned and calculated to keep them at least fifty miles from Soviet Union airspace and did. They were shot down by an over enthusiastic MiG-19 pilot. The only survivors were the navigator and the pilot, an Elmira native. They would be accused of espionage and would spend the next seven months in Lubyanka prison.

### Other Planned Exhibits – Please Come and Help

- B-17 waist gunner crashes near Paris and is imprisoned in Stalag Luft 17B
- Space artifacts on loan from NASA and donated by individuals.
- A Navy nurse meets her husband in the south pacific during WWII.

## Restoration News

As fall approaches we turn our attention to the annual inspections for our entire flying fleet, 7 powered aircraft and 5 gliders (don't forget the DC3, see other article). Our team of wonderful volunteers will soon start the process of disassembling gliders, opening inspection ports, and servicing as needed.

If it moves we lubricate it, if it doesn't move we clean it and paint it. Our volunteers will put in a

few thousand hours of hard work so that you can come fly with us next spring. If you hurry you can see the leaves this fall. If you haven't seen the leaves from the air, you have never seen the leaves change!

**-Ed Knitter, Director of Restoration  
& Maintenance**

## Flight Programs News

Those of us privileged to fly vintage aircraft such as the PT-17, SNJ-3 and L-5 are always mindful of the heritage represented by these aircraft, but sometimes we are fortunate to make a direct connection with the past. I had just landed our Stinson L-5 at Williamsport on Sunday Sept 14 when I was told that an elderly gentleman who had been scheduled to ride in the Stearman wanted to switch to the L-5. He approached the aircraft with family and proudly informed me that he had flown the L-5 in the Army. He was a bit frail, but managed to climb into the back seat, gave me a thumbs up and off we went. Once airborne, I asked him if he'd like to fly it and he did for a few minutes but turned the controls back over to me and said he'd just rather enjoy the ride. I asked him what kind of experience he had in the L-5. He told me he participated in the North African campaign, went on to Sicily, and then to Italy. He participated in the invasion of Southern France and proceeded all the way into Germany. Having recently read a book by a L-5 li-

ason pilot who had followed pretty much the same route, mostly flying officers around, I asked him if that was what he did. No, he said, "I was controlling air strikes for the fighters." I asked him if they used marking rockets and he said "no, every time we tried that they shot at us." That tracked pretty closely with the stories Vietnam era forward area controllers (FACs) used to tell. He told me that in two days he would be 90 years old and that he sold his Cessna 172 and quit flying a couple years ago. What a guy! It was a real honor to fly with someone who had actually used the L-5 in combat and had participated in so many campaigns during World War II. There aren't too many of those guys left and it is important for us to make those direct connections with the past while we still can. It is gratifying that our aircraft are instrumental in facilitating those connections and that is a major reason we need to keep them flying.

**-John Herrington, Director of Flight Operations**

## Volunteers and Museum Help Local Food Banks

October 4<sup>th</sup> dawned sunny, though chilly for a Chicken Barbecue that was held at the Painted Post Airport, formerly known as Costa's Airfield. Wings of Eagles took part in the event that benefitted the local food banks, by sending the PT-17 Stearman and a group of wonderful representatives of the Museum. Although we only

had two rides, many thanks go out to volunteers Darrell Tenny, Don Phillips, Jim Doane, Zach Heifferon, and John Dyer for showing the community what great individuals we have involved with the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center.

**-Karen Robbins, Flight Program Manager**

## Breathing New life into an Old Bird (no, I'm not referring to you and me...)

It had been ten years since the props turned, but with a cough, sputter and belch of blue smoke our storied R4D came back to life this month. Following several years of loving restoration by Lee Robbins and a stalwart group of volunteers, final preparations are underway for the return to flight.

Many thousands of volunteer hours have been invested in this project, which included an overhaul of practically every system and component in the old bird. The result is a "like new" aircraft that will serve to connect our visitors to our aviation roots.

Produced in 1943, N293WM entered wartime service with the Navy before assuming the colors of Air Manitoba in support of the rapidly developing airline industry. While WM was crossing the western prairie, sister ships flown by Robinson, then Mohawk Airlines brought air service to our Twin Tiers. And for years, DC-3 aircraft formed the backbone of the Corning Incorporated Aviation Department, where Lee Robbins earned his stripes flying this remarkable type.

Teamwork gets the job done and I would like to thank all of our members who have lent a hand to this restoration effort. Our special thanks go out to all those volunteers and a special thanks to Ed Knitter, Director of Restoration, for his assistance in making this a fun project for all of us. We still have a trip ahead of us! Following a thorough airworthiness review and extensive ground tests, N293WM is expected to return to flight in preparation for the 2009 flying season.

**-Lee Robbins**



## Virtual Tour Now Available on Website

Some of you may have already noticed the addition of a new virtual tour to the Wings of Eagles website. David Desantis, President of Dadzfeatured-tours.com, donated his time and efforts to make the tour possible. The tour includes views from the display hangar, restoration hangar, gift shop, auditorium, and entrance area. Viewers can navigate through the tour either by clicking on the eagle logo buttons, which will take them to the next area, or

they can choose a specific location or image from the drop down menu in the upper right

hand corner. If you are interested in viewing the virtual tour you can find a link on our website at <http://www.wingsofeagles.com/tours.cfm>.



## Operations and Administration News

So what is happening at WEDC? Changes. First came the elevator, which was a blessing in disguise. Then there came changes in personnel, church service on Sunday mornings, construction of two new classrooms, a new office in the administration area on the second floor, new tenants occupying the old and new conference rooms, new volunteers, and Lou Smith's BOCES Aviation Class. People ask why so many changes? Two simple reasons: growth and new opportunities for the future of our children and grandchildren at WEDC.

Now that the holidays are approaching the Gift Shop will have extra hours of operation. Starting after the Thanksgiving holiday, the Gift Shop will be open

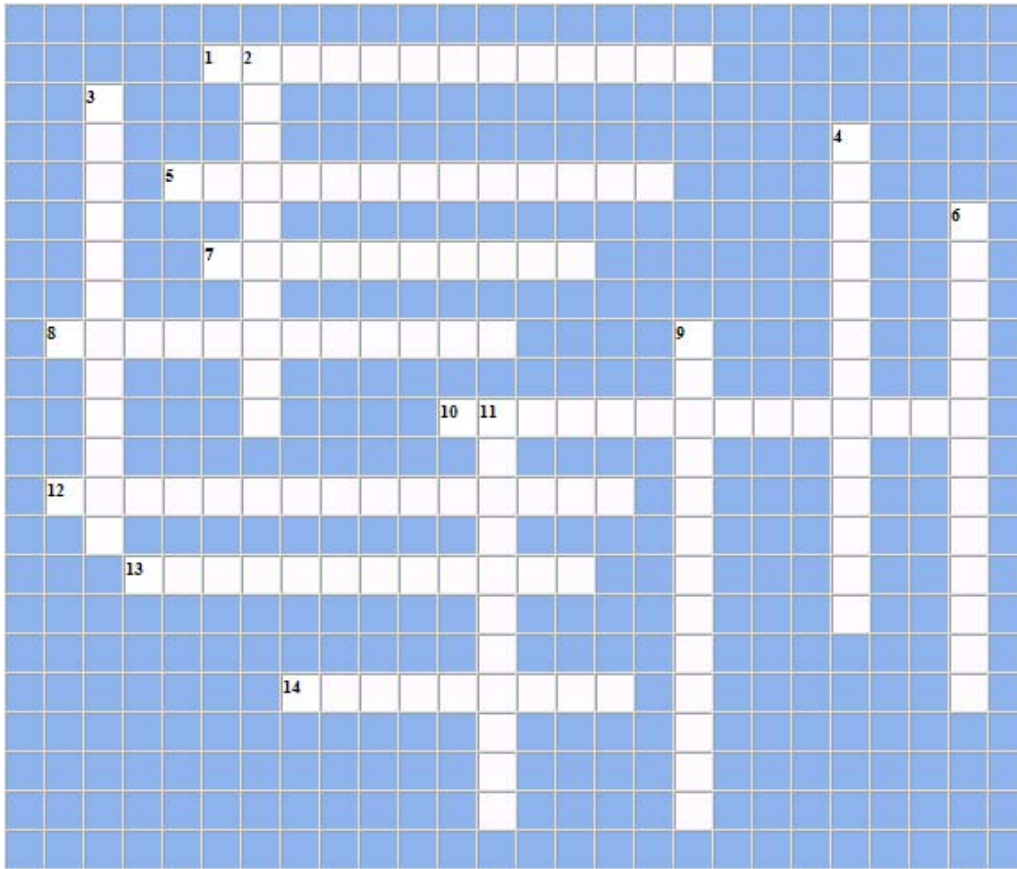
Tuesday and Friday evenings from 6 to 9 pm. Need that special gift? Call me and I'll see if I can find it for you. The Gift Shop offers an assortment of airplane model kits, aviation books and magazines, children's flight jackets, sweatshirts, games and much, much more....

Wishing each and everyone of you a Safe Holiday and Happy New Year...I leave you with this thought during the holidays (Heb 13:2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have encountered angels without knowing it"

**Happy Holidays.**

**-Brenda Benza, Director of Operations & Admin**

# Women in Aviation History – Crossword Puzzle

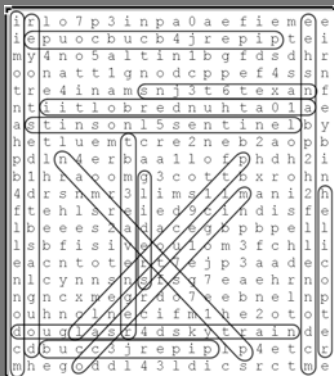


## DOWN

2. Awarded the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Gold Medal for distinction in exploration research and discovery
3. The first person to fly solo in a west-east direction across the Atlantic Ocean against the prevailing winds
4. The world's first black female pilot and the first woman to receive an international pilot's license
6. Set 3 speed records before 1940 and was the first female transatlantic bomber pilot
9. The first woman pilot of a Space Shuttle and the first woman Space Shuttle Commander
11. The youngest woman to fly solo at the age of 15 in 1926, and at the age of 16, she became the youngest person to earn a pilot's license in the United States in 1927

## ACROSS

1. Became the first woman in the United States and the second woman in the world to earn a pilot's license
5. Made the first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 15 hours 18 minutes - the fastest crossing on record
7. Along with Elinor Smith, she set a joint record endurance flight of over 42 hours and together they became the first women to refuel a plane in midair in 1929
8. The world's first female test pilot who flew the world's first practical helicopter and was one of the first people to cross the Alps in a glider
10. Made the first woman's solo balloon flight
12. First American woman astronaut to walk in space
13. Became the first woman stunt pilot in the motion picture industry in 1929, performing air stunts for Howard Hughes's film, Hell's Angels
14. The first woman to completely circle the globe in an airplane



Answers to last issue's puzzle

BONUS WORD:  
Stinson L-5 Sentinel

**Answers:** 1-Harriet Quimby, 2-Anne Morrow, 3-Beryl Markham, 4-Bessie Coleman, 5-Arnelia Earhart, 6-Jackie Cochran, 7-Bobbie Trout, 8-Hanna Reitsch, 9-Eileen Collins, 10-Jeanne Labrosse, 11-Elinor Smith, 12-Kathryn Sullivan, 13-Florence Lowe, 14-Gerry Mock



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*imagine the possibilities*

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.wingsofeagles.com](http://www.wingsofeagles.com)



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