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Fellow Twirly Birds:

I just received the following e-mail from Twirly Bird and Les Morris recipient, Nancy Miller Livingston Stratford. Unlike many Twirly Birds, Nancy keeps in touch. I would attach some of Nancy's e-mail jokes, but this is a family publication.....

"I just passed my birthday on the 12th, and I feel 10 yrs. older!!!!!!.....Just not too much energy at 98!!.....But can still appreciate the emails and jokes!!!! :-)

Not doing much, as you would expect, but my doggie Chester keeps me going.....My hearing is really shot now, even with hearing aids, so can't carry on much of a conversation with people!!!....Hearing loss due to those 1500-2200HP Merlin engines in the British aircraft, such as the Spitfire—and no ear protection, just leather helmets....But what a wonderful experience I had back then, WW2, flying all sorts of aircraft!!!! So glad I didn't miss that "adventure" in my life!!!....Helicopters came later and were great fun too!!!!"

Another famous Twirly Bird is Sharon Desfor; please see the following press release:



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Sharon Desfor, president of HeliValue\$, Inc., has been elected to American Society of Appraiser's (ASA's) highest position: International President.

Desfor started appraising helicopters in 1984 and joined ASA in early 2005. She earned her ASA designation as accredited senior appraiser in the MTS Aircraft Specialty by December.

Since then, Desfor served six years on the MTS Discipline Committee (two as editor of the MTS Journal and one as production manager of MTS' Valuing Machinery and Equipment, Third Edition) and four years as MTS governor with stints on the strategic planning committee and the budget and finance committee.

She was elected international secretary/treasurer in 2015, serving that year as chair of the budget and finance committee and the investment committee.

She followed the next year as International vice chairman, serving as chair of the strategic planning committee and the international conference committee.

Beyond her distinguished service to the ASA, Desfor has also been dedicated to the helicopter industry for over three decades. Her passion for the industry and her devotion to educating investors, financiers, and lessors about the remarkable qualities of helicopters as assets has influenced change and opened the doors to finance opportunities that were not widely available even a few years ago.

As president of HeliValue\$, Inc., Desfor has inspired a new generation of leaders in the appraisal world and the helicopter industry. Her focus on excellence, education, and service has made HeliValue\$, Inc. a leader in the helicopter community for appraisals, used helicopter values, and reliable advice and counsel.

We have several gifted Twirly Birds who contribute to the helicopter industry through their writing skills: Elfan ap Rees, Editor of Helicopter International Magazine, and Bob Petite, helicopter historian. Bob's work is found in numerous publications, including VERTICAL. Bob works closely with Twirly Bird, Jeff Evans. Jon Kettles contributes to the Helicopter Association, ROTOR MAGAZINE. Randy Mains and Randy Rowles share their experience and knowledge in Rotorcraft Pro. Marty Pociask created the Helicopter Trailblazer series in ROTOR MAGAZINE. Harold Summers contributes to ROTOR MAGAZINE and other HAI publications.

No doubt I have missed listing some of our talented Twirly Bird writers, please send me a note or reminder so that we can share the information with the members.

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If you do not receive the Helicopter Association International magazine, ROTOR you can receive a paper copy or on line. The magazine is free, which seems to be an important decision making criteria for Twirly Birds.

At the very least, click on the following link to read Marty Pociask's latest HFI TRAILBLAZERS issue about Twirly Bird historian, and Les Morris recipient Bill Yarber. The article is aptly titled: Bill Yarber: A Lifelong Career of Service

http://new.helicopterfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/pioneers/bill_yarber.pdf

Some of Bill Yarber's memories about Alaska Helicopter operators are attached to this newsletter. All of these notable figures were or are Twirly Birds. Thanks Bill.

With regret we include the following obituary for Twirly Bird, Phil Fillingham. Fortunately not long before Phil's death, Marty Pociask persevered in researching Phil's history and published a Helicopter Foundation International Trailblazer article in ROTOR MAGZINE.

"Philip H. "Phil" Fillingham passed away Wednesday, May 17, 2017 at his home in Monroe, NY. He was 98 years old. Son of the late Frank C. and Beatrice M. Gorsuch Fillingham, he was born May 29, 1918 in Cobham Surrey, England. Phil was the widower of Mona M. Holohan Fillingham who predeceased him in 2000.

Phil was a Veteran of the British Royal Navy. He was a retired Helicopter Pilot for Tenneco, Inc. of Houston, TX, and was a lifetime member of the Twirlybirds (Organization of Pioneer Helicopter Pilots). He was a local freelance photographer and did photography work for the Photo News, and was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 2079 of Monroe.

Survivors include his daughters: Ann Johnson and her husband Marc of Waco, TX, Mary Fillingham of Monroe, NY; his sons: John Fillingham of Escondido, CA, Philip Fillingham of Cordova, Alaska, Frank Fillingham and his wife Lynn of Jackson, MS; his sisters: Grace B. Loughlin of Worcester Park, Surrey England, Joy Barry of Toronto, Ontario Canada; his five grandchildren: Rachel, Hilary, Sean, Jesse and Emma; and his nine great grandchildren. Phil was predeceased by his daughter Susan and his brother Bernard F. Fillingham."

You may have received a call or an e-mail from Twirly Bird, Kelley Parlier's company, Yes Communications, regarding dues and inquiring about your interest in receiving this newsletter and remaining an active member. Kelley offered to help us clean up our mailing/member list and gently nudge those few members

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who may be arrears with their annual dues. Please mail dues to: Dennis MacBain, 4525 Leon Street, San Diego, CA 92107.

We need to bring new members into the Twirly Birds. Unfortunately there are a lot of qualified helicopter pilots who are not aware of the Twirly Birds. Please set yourself a goal of bringing in one new member this year. The Twirly Bird web site is a great recruiting tool. Also please remember, we always welcome nominations for Associate Twirly Birds who are not helicopter pilots, but have made significant contributions to vertical lift.

Newsletter correction from Gary Potochnik: -"I never worked for HAS as (Helicopter Accessory Service) I worked for HAS as "Helicopter Aviation Services" Corporation, one of the then major helicopter customizing facilities." Sorry for the error Gary, old age and too much cheap whiskey have taken its toll.

Please take a few minutes and send me a story, news item, or just a suggestion for the newsletter. I would really appreciate hearing comments regarding the newsletter. My e-mail is srs@jma.com. Or if it is easier, just call me at 408 348 5780

Remember Paul Oelkrug's suggestion regarding your collection of helicopter "stuff". Add a sentence to your will or put a note with your will asking that the memorabilia be sent to the Twirly Bird archives at the University of Texas at Dallas. Or send it to the Twirly Birds and we will see that it is placed in the archives.

Please check the Twirly Bird website. The 2017 reception pictures should be posted soon. Our long suffering and hardworking webmaster Roger Gould is updating the website as this newsletter goes to press.

Finally,,,do you remember the total flight hours of the Twirly Birds present at the Dallas reception???? The total was **437,498 flight hours!**

KEEP YOUR ROTOR IN THE GREEN!

Steve Sullivan

The following was submitted by Bill Yarber, Twirly Bird Historian:

Helicopter Pioneers of Alaska



Carl Brady owned Economy Pest Control in Yakima, WA, and performed aerial application. He went to Alaska in 1948, to do a USGS survey of Chichigof Island near Juneau. His Bell 47A single engine was the first helicopter in the territory. He carried surveyors to map the northern half of the island. In 1951, Brady's company, Economy Helicopters was selected by the U.S. Army Map Service to support summer mapping in Alaska. During this contract, he met Joe Seward who co-owned Rotor-Aids with Ray Falconer. All three men worked together with various Army projects in the years that followed. Carl recalled that if they were required to pull an engine or transmission, they had to cut down small pine trees and make an A frame to lift the transmission or the engine out. By 1957, Rotor-Aids brought two large Sikorsky S-55's to Anchorage to shuttle oil-drilling crews for Rowan Drilling Company. At the same time, Brady was offered a contract with Standard Oil. Brady and Rotor-Aids joined forces and became Era Helicopters (E for Economy, RA for Rotor-Aids) in 1958. They based their operation on Merrill Field, and served the petroleum industry. Rowan Drilling purchased Era in 1968, expanding its fleet and operations to the Gulf of Mexico, Africa and the Middle East. Brady was the President and CEO. By 1978, the company became Era Aviation adding a fixed-wing division and was the largest regional airline in Alaska.

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Bud Lofstedt owned Kenai Air Alaska. Bud bought a helicopter and learned to solo in Seattle. After an hour soloing, he and his brother-in-law, took off to Alaska. Bud's sister cried believing she would never see either of them again, knowing they would crash their model 47. After they reached Kenai, he was approached by the Alaska State Troopers to investigate the death of a miner on the other side of the Cook Inlet. This was during one of their first few winters and he had not yet been able to put side-baskets on the helicopter. When they found the miner, he was completely frozen. They didn't know how to load him without side-baskets. It was dark, and storm was coming, so they put the miner head down in the bubble and his feet on the Troopers chest and they made it back to Anchorage. One of the striking examples of decoration in Bud's office was a huge Mastodon ivory tusk that was eight feet long.



Rex Bishopp was a cousin of Jim Ricklefs who at one time was the world's largest helicopter operator. Rex was sent to Alaska to oversee Ricklefs' helicopter operation. During the summer months, Rick and Rex worked out of Anchorage. They drove a truck from California to Alaska with two helicopters on the back. "We would travel up to Alaska in the summer with the piston machines. Those early Bell 47 helicopters had a very short transmission overhaul time, so we trucked them up and back. It was

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cheaper than changing the transmission when we got there!" In an interview with Jay Journey, Rex recalled, "We used to come up to Alaska years and years ago to fly the U.S. Geological Survey folks around in the summer. In the fall, we would take the helicopters back down to the San Francisco Bay area and do agricultural spraying." He also remembered, "In 1967, Rick Helicopters had a chance to do some Alaska flying in the wintertime on the North Slope. Back then we only had piston engine helicopters and pilots had to take the batteries to bed with them, drain the oil and take the oil inside to warm it up. I guess we lost about \$25,000 that winter! Later we got turbine helicopters and they worked fine in the colder temperatures on the Slope and surveying the pipeline"

In 1978, Alaska Helicopters merged with Columbia Helicopters based out of Portland, Oregon. Columbia Helicopters was owned by Rex's good friend, Wes Lematta. Columbia is a leader in heavy-lift, precision- placement helicopter operations. By 1982, Rex had a new hanger facility at Anchorage International Airport from which Alaska Helicopters offered outside maintenance. Tommy Craig came to Alaska with Rex and stayed with Alaska Helicopters as chief of maintenance.

Rex was awarded the Arlo Livingston Award in 1987 by the Alaska Air Carriers Association. There are over three hundred aviation companies serving Alaska. Rex said in his interview with Jay Journey, "We were concerned about keeping the aviation community together, improving safety and having serious clout in Juneau and Washington. The helicopter industry in Alaska was having an especially rough year in 1969. It was very busy with pre-pipeline work and all the helicopter operators experienced multiple accidents that year. Back then, the equipment being flown, and the overall aviation infrastructure was nothing like it is today."

In 1995, Rex and Ruth sold the business and retired. Rex was the kind of professional that not only led his company, but gave back to the aviation community and helped contribute to aviation safety.

Al Gay was a modest operator that didn't like to have his picture taken. He was the president of Sea Airmotive, Inc., in Anchorage. It was alleged that one of the senior pilots flying a 206 in Hawaii got wind of the repossession of the helicopter. Subsequently, flew the helicopter into the sugar cane fields and hid it until the investigation was over and they stopped looking for the aircraft. Later this senior pilot became a successful tour operator whether he operated the purloined 206B or some other aircraft, I do not know.



Ken Eichner was an operator in Ketchikan, AK. He operated mostly Hughes 500 helicopters, and in later years, acquired a Bell. In the HFI interview Ken provided information about his early years. He was in Alaska during WWII but wasn't called up for active duty because he had a family and his transportation job was essential to the war effort. He served in the Territorial Guard which was formed before WWII to protect Alaska and to provide local knowledge for any troops that might be brought in. Ken thought he might be drafted into the Army but was told if he had a pilot's license he could fly something for the Army. Airplanes were a necessary transportation so they were not restricted. He went to the Ketchikan Air Service October 1944, to start his lessons. He trained in an Aeronca Chief and a Taylorcraft on floats. After he got his CAA license, the draft board sent him to Annette Island to go through the induction process. But they didn't classify him as 1A. So, the Army sent him back to Ketchikan and then the war ended.

Ken's first purchased aircraft was a Taylorcraft on floats, N36210, from Ketchikan Air Service in 1947. He used it to hunt and fish and bounty hunt for wolves. In 1959, Ken, Joe Soloy, and Bob Young started TEMSCO which is the acronym for Timber, Exploration, Mining, Survey, Cargo, Operations. Ken never kept a record of the number of rescues he was participated in, but logged only his revenue flights. However, he remembers one week where he had three rescues. The government at that time did not have the equipment or the ability to perform them, so all the local pilots were dedicated to search and rescue, knowing the next one could be for one of them! Ken believes he was about ten years behind most of the real pioneers. He was grateful to be in the era when helicopters were improved to where you could do more work safely. However, they were still the

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guinea pigs for the manufacturers. Because of the area he lived in and the type of work he had to do, he did experience a lot of firsts. He was 43 when he got into the helicopter business and hated quitting at age 71. Ken said that he looked forward to every day he went to work!



Arlo Livingston first went to Alaska from Oregon for a three-month job in the summer of 1959. He was doing a job for the USGS out of Ketchikan, AK, with a Hiller UH-12E. After that job, Arlo determined that Alaska was the place to be for helicopters and moved to Juneau the next year. He had several USGS contracts, bought two more UH-12e's and hired pilots to fly them in 1960. Douglas Island, near Juneau, became the base of operations for Livingston Copters. They flew for sightseeing tours, photo missions and transporting skiers. Arlo's wife, Nancy, a pilot herself, was the first woman helicopter bush pilot in Alaska. She and Arlo shared the many responsibilities of running Livingston Copters and flying various jobs. They sold their business in 1977, to Era Helicopters, when Arlo was almost 70 years old. He served as a past president to the HAI, was a Twirly Bird Member, and a charter member of the Men's Auxiliary of the Whirly-Girls. Arlo died in 1986, and in 1988, Nancy founded the Whirly-Girls Livingston Award in Arlo's memory.