



December, 2018

Fellow Twirlybirds

The 2019 Twirly Birds Annual Meeting/reception location has been confirmed; **Maple Room at the Omni Atlanta Hotel at CNN Center, Tuesday, March 5, 2019, from 5:00 – 8:00pm**. Please note this date, time and location, so we don't meet on March 6 and you ask me where the TB reception will be held and what time?,,,,,,A frequent occurrence at previous Heli-Expo's.

Thank you HAI staff and Yes Communications for arranging to make a room available for the Twirly Bird reception.

The 2016 Les Morris Award recipient has been selected; long time Twirly Bird, Gary B. Young. Gary's much too brief and modest resume is attached.

The Whirly Girls annual awards banquet at Heli-Expo is Sunday evening March 3, 2019 at the American hotel in Atlanta. This event is always a lot of fun and a great way to start Heli-Expo. The Whirly Girls' impressive and effective scholarship program benefits ladies pursuing careers in the helicopter industry.

We received the following message from Twirly Bird, Marty Pociask.

"On August 10, after nearly 18 years with HAI, I announced my retirement. Today, August 30, will be my last day in the office. I will begin my retirement on Saturday, spending a week with my family at the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Upon returning, I will continue teaching my art classes, which I have been doing for more than 37 years. It has been wonderful working with, and knowing everyone".

Marty retired as the, "Curator, Helicopter Foundation International". "Curator" is an understatement. Marty preserved helicopter history like no one else has. Marty overcame numerous obstacles, to interview pioneers

who were often elderly, modest, difficult to communicate with, in remote locations, and often had no idea that they were significant contributions to the helicopter world.

The fruits of Marty's research and efforts appeared in the Helicopter Association International ROTOR magazine, under "Pioneer interviews, Helicopter Heritage Series, and now the "TRAILBLAZERS".

It is especially gratifying that the FALL 2018 ROTOR magazine contains a TRAILBLAZER about long time Twirly Bird, and Les Morris recipient, Roy Simmons. ROTOR MAGAZINE is available free from the Helicopter Association International; the new format and direction of the magazine makes it a must read for all Twirly Birds.

Marty spent considerable time trying to ascertain when the Twirly Birds were actually founded, because a combination of old age, poor record keeping, and an abundance of adult beverages at Twirly Bird meetings had somehow obscured and confused the actual founding date of the Twirly Birds. Marty's letter with information regarding his research and subsequent determination of the Twirly Bird founding date is attached

This fall I had the pleasure of delivering a set of wooden S-51 helicopter tail rotor blades to TB Ron Wilkins in Hood River, Oregon. These blades were owned by TB, Jim Ricklefs, and then given to me by his family following his death. Ron will use these blades to enhance the area of his 4,000 helicopter models now displayed at Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum. (WAAAM) collection in Hood River. This museum is visited by visitors from all over the world.

During my overnight in Hood River Ron, and his wife Shar, treated me to dinner as he related stories about helicopter flying in the northwest. One particularly interesting summer job was helicopter support during the filming of the moving PAINT YOUR WAGON starring Lee Marvin and Clint Eastwood in a remote location near Bly, Oregon.

Hood River is a scenic spot on the Columbia River 60 miles east of Portland

We received a belated death notice for Billy Joe Thayer, Everett Washington. Bill passed away in November 2016. The notice was accompanied by a touching note from his wife, Helen; "**Bill, my husband and best friend, was a proud member of the Twirly Birds**". Bill's obituary is attached to this newsletter.

Remember Bill Yarber'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 the package to the Twirly Birds and we will see that it is placed in the archives.

Please introduce a friend to the Twirly Birds; better yet buy them a membership.

Please nominate a qualified individual to be an Associate member. There are many non pilots who have contributed so much to this industry. The Associate Committee will carefully consider all whom are nominated for Associate membership..

"ASSOCIATE MEMBER: Those who have been selected by a duly appointed committee of General Members as having made significant and noteworthy contributions to helicopter or other vertical take-off flight through exemplary dedication and devotion."

DUES: Annual dues are \$10.00. Dues are used to pay for mailing the newsletter to those Twirly Birds who do not have an e-mail address. Dues are also used to buy TB pins, TB certificates, and partially fund the reception at Heli-Expo. Please send your dues to Treasurer Dennis MacBain, 4525 Leon Street, San Diego, CA 92107

If you are not receiving this newsletter via e-mail please send your e-mail address to Dennis MacBain, macdennis@att.net, so that we can add you to the e-mail list.

KEEP YOUR ROTOR IN THE GREEN!

Steve Sullivan

Please take a few minutes and send me a story, news item, or just a suggestion for the newsletter.

My e-mail is srs@jma.com. Or if it is easier, call me at 408 348 5780

Gary B. Young, 2019 Les Morris Award Recipient

Gary participated in the Army ROTC Aviation Program at West Texas State University (now A&M) in Canyon, Texas. It was during his time in ROTC Gary completed the fixed wing private license. The opportunity to attend flight school when basic and officer training had been completed was available, so Gary applied for Rotary Wing training and was accepted. At that time...everyone learning to fly helicopters headed to Viet Nam. It was 1965.

Although it took the US Army to cement Gary's feet in the helicopter industry, this was not where his passion for aviation began. He was eight years old when his uncle flew him from New Mexico to his home in Texas in a J-3 Cub. His first introduction to helicopter flight was in a Bell model 47 at Six Flags over Texas in Arlington, Texas—and that was the hook that could only be satisfied by eventually learning to fly!

Gary had only two jobs after finishing college: The US Army and Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. Having completed a tour with the Army and achieving enough flight hours, he was hired onto the Production Test Pilot Staff at Bell in 1967.

Although assigned to Production, Gary served additional pilot functions within Bell's pilot staff to include Experimental and eventually...Training. It was in the mid-70's where Gary found his true passion and eventual home of work within the Bell Helicopter structure. Gary was selected to aid in the development and expansion of the Bell Training School working with Loren Doughty, the future Director of the school. Much of the credit given to the establishment of the world-renowned Bell Training Academy we know today was created by the combined skills and determination of both Gary and Loren.

As a side note...It wasn't until the eighties that the Bell Training Academy, as it's known today, changed its name from the Bell Training School. A Bell customer attending flight training arrived with t-shirts displaying Bell Training Academy...the name stuck!

Gary retired as the Chief Instructor of the Bell Training Academy where he served for 37 years. At his retirement date in 2004, Gary had accumulated more than 17,000 hours of flight time in his career (almost 450 hrs. annually), and, except for the V22, has flown and or instructed in every aircraft Bell has ever produced. Over his career, Gary executed more than 150,000 instructional autorotations without an accident.

Today, Gary is the Chief Instructor for the HAI [Heli-Expo] Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC). He was the recipient of the HAI W. A. (Dub) Blessing Certified Flight Instructor of the Year Award in 1988. Additionally, he was awarded the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2016 for 50-years of accident/incident free flying.

When asked about his greatest career accomplishment, Gary humbly stated "My greatest accomplishment was to work with the best team of helicopter flight instructors combined with teaching the best customers the industry had ever seen".

As a career flight instructor, Gary has touched thousands of helicopter pilots throughout the world and has demonstrated a pioneering spirit crafting a training industry standard, thus making a significant contribution to the helicopter industry improving pilot safety.

TB Founding Date

Hello Steve:

I have good news. As you know, I have been persistent about nailing down the correct founding date for the Twirly Birds. I was uncomfortable about the October 7, 1944 date that was written on a yellow sticky by someone way back when, because it did not make sense. As I mentioned earlier, that would be 8 months before V-J Day, the marker for Founding members' membership. There were other dates, which also did not seem to be likely founding dates. I simply did not want to perpetuate an incorrect founding date in the article I am working on.

During HELI-EXPO, my assistant and I met with Bill Yarber. We visited the University of Texas Museum to look at the Twirly Birds collection. After the visit Bill gave me a few sheets of information on the Twirly Birds. One page was a Xerox copy of a page 25 article dated January 1946. That was from an AHS publication. I read that page several times. The following peaked my interest.

"An upshot of the gathering of the American Helicopter Society was the impromptu forming of the "Twirly Birds." Membership in this organization is restricted to those who soloed the helicopter prior to V-J Day. Mr. Sikorsky was unanimously elected as the club's first President."

I thought about it and realized the Twirly Birds were formed at this AHS gathering. Now, all I had to do was find the date and location of the gathering to nail down the date. I contacted AHS and spoke with Mike Hirshberg, the Executive Director of AHS. Mike said there was indeed a dinner held at the Ambassador Hotel in New York on October 7, 1944 (the date on the little sticky on the sign in sheet). But he said, the article mentions the Second Annual Banquet, which took place on December 7, 1945 (also held at the Ambassador Hotel in New York). This date made sense since I also had information that the Twirly Birds first meeting was held at the McAlpin Hotel, also in New York, on February 9, 1946. That meeting was to ratify the Constitution and By-laws. It makes sense that this meeting took place two months after the (December 7, 1945) forming of the Twirly Birds, as they would not wait a year to ratify the organization's Constitution and Bylaws.. The earlier October date was erroneously selected by someone who was aware of the 1st Annual Dinner date, which took place a full year before the AHS article mentioning the founding, which the article stated took place during their gathering. So I am 100 percent certain that December 7, 1945 is the correct founding date.

I called Bill Yarber last Wednesday and told him the good news. Mystery solved. Thought you would like to know. I have attached the link that Mike Hirsberg sent me listing all of AHS' meetings. The second event on the list corresponds with the correct founding date and follows V-J Day by nearly four months.

Best wishes,
Marty

Billy Joe Thayer Obituary

Billy Joe Thayer born October 8, 1926, served with the Army Air Corps and was a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. At 90 years old, Bill peacefully passed on to be with our Lord on November 17, 2016. Bill was a successful helicopter pilot with 13,000 hours of pilot in command flight time. He leaves behind his best friend, loving and devoted wife, Helen. Married 55 years, together they traveled the world in a partnership of adventure and discovery, creating educational programs for a national program called Adventure Classroom. Bill and Helen were the first married couple to ski to any of the world's poles when they skied to the magnetic North Pole. Later with Helen, Bill walked 1,600 miles across the Gobi Desert and was the first man to do so. Again with Helen, Bill was the first man to walk the distance of 4,000 miles across the entire Sahara. To create a rain forest educational program, he kayaked 2,200 miles of the Amazon River with Helen. Bill and Helen spent one year camping alongside a wild wolf den in the Canadian Yukon in a unique wolf study. Bill and Helen were members of the 1973 United States National luge team that toured Europe where Bill won several medals. Bill was a devoted husband, pilot, athlete, adventurer and world traveler. His favorite hobbies were hiking mountain trails, reading non-fiction, and working their Snohomish, WA, rural farm. Bill continued hiking in the mountains until almost 90 years old.