The WASP Museum took its annual road trip to Oshkosh, WI this past July for EAA AirVenture, or as the archivists have dubbed it, Pilot Disneyworld. This is a fairly accurate analogy considering that only in Oshkosh will you experience seven straight days of world-class aerobatics, historical flights from all eras, homebuilt and light-weight aircraft, fireworks, and camaraderie with fellow aviation enthusiasts. While the Museum team thoroughly enjoys spectacular aircraft, that camaraderie—especially with the WASP’s legacy pilots—is what they most look forward to every year.

The female aviation community remains small at 6% of all pilots, but when women come together at Oshkosh, this coterie lives large. Oshkosh 2022 contained many special moments of sisterhood beginning with the Museum’s exhibit booth located in the first ever EAA WomenVenture tent. Being surrounded by women’s organizations such as Asian Women in Aerospace & Aviation, EAA, FAST, the Ninety-nines, Sisters of the Skies and WAI gave a central location for female pilots to convene, learn about each other, and discover scholarship and job opportunities. These organizations were elated when officers of NASA along with Eileen Collins, first female shuttle commander, and Gen Jacqueline VanOvost, USAF, toured the tent and spent time with each organization.

Out on the fields and taxiways, meeting up with old and new friends was joyous. They were flying everything from WASP-flown Warbirds to the most technically advanced jets. Groups participated in the time-honored traditions of exchanging patches and challenge coins while sporting each other’s t-shirts.

The Museum team missed the WASP pilots all the more as they re-lived many years of memories when these giants made their appearances at Oshkosh. Thanks to technology, though, the team was able to loop WASP Nell Bright right into the activities of the day.

Oshkosh events also supplied endless possibilities for human connection. Wednesday, the Museum hosted a member party under the twinkly lights of a retro 1950s camper. It was a great time to share the Museum’s vision with members who support the mission, but aren’t able to visit and see the significant changes of the past three years. Food, laughter, and conversation were in great abundance.

At EAA’s The Gathering on Thursday night, the Museum visited with

Read more about this story and photos on page 4...
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ten months ago, I received an unexpected note. Robert Dorr, son of WASP Lorena Daly Dorr, 43-W-6, was inquiring if the Museum owned an AT-6, his mother’s favorite aircraft. After learning that we did not own this beautiful ship, Dr. Dorr offered to make a sizable donation for its purchase in his mother’s memory. Today, the WASP Museum is very close to owning an AT-6.

While Dr. Dorr’s donation was incredibly generous, my initial thought was where would the rest of the funds come from? A good, airworthy AT-6 is very expensive. Nevertheless, this project was exciting to me. Our founding Board of Directors firmly believed that the Museum needed to have all five military trainers on display. The Museum already has a PT-17 Stearman on loan and owns the BT-13 Vultee and the UC-78 Bobcat. Best of all, the working hangar that houses these aircraft will be fitted with new displays in August of 2023. An AT-6 would be the crowning touch.

While this project seemed daunting at first glance, I am elated to say less than a year later, the Museum has almost all the money in hand. We are thankful to our many generous supporters who eagerly stepped forward to contribute. Your excitement for us in this endeavor has bolstered our spirits and kept our eyes on the prize: a complete World War II scene that takes visitors back in time to see and experience the WASP’s military training.

As we begin our search for the right AT-6, we will continue to fundraise for money that will allow us to paint the aircraft in authentic period colors and begin a maintenance fund. If you would like to join your fellow supporters in helping us make this dream a reality, please contact me today at my email listed below.

Warm regards,
Lisa Taylor
lisataylor@wasp museum.org

A VISION BROUGHT TO REALITY

The National WASP WWII Museum began 20 years ago in 2002 with the vision of two women, WASP Deanie Bishop Parrish and her daughter, Nancy Parrish. Plans to transform their vision into reality began in the fall of 2002 with a presentation to Sweetwater community leaders. On December 9th, 2002, a steering committee met to investigate the Museum’s feasibility. The Museum was incorporated in the State of Texas in July. In September, the Museum Board of Directors leased 55 acres of land at Avenger Field from the city which included a 1929 hangar that served as the first Sweetwater Municipal Airport.

With incorporation papers in hand and a site settled upon, construction of the Museum began. In 2004 the Board of Directors recruited new members to support the Museum, developed a master plan around architectural drawings, mailed the first official newsletters, and continued to seek funds to build a nationally recognized memorial to the WASP. Extensive renovations to the hangar began in early 2005 culminating in the first National WASP WWII Museum Fly-In. In celebration of much hard work, a grand opening was held on May 28, the same day the first class of WASP graduated 62 years earlier.

Happy anniversary, WASP Museum! This year we celebrate the local Sweetwater community and our founding Museum members for their muscle, hustle, time, and money in building the official museum of the WASP.

ADDING NEW MEMBERS TO THE WASP MUSEUM STAFF

We are happy to introduce you to Buffie McAnally as our new Administrative Office & Events Manager here at the WASP. While growing up on a family ranch in eastern New Mexico, she often flew over the beautiful mountains of Capitan with her dad. She is motivated, organized, and excited to be involved in preserving the history as well as planning future events here at the WASP WWII Museum. Buffie and her husband Kent have been married for 18 years and are raising their 2 teenage girls on a small farm in Sweetwater. Her background includes many areas: business management in the oilfields of West Texas; event planning and catering; and horse training and stock showing. Her customer service and eye for details will be a great asset to all of us here at the WASP Museum.

Welcome aboard, Buffie!
JENNIFER KENT IS NAMED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE WASP MUSEUM

The Museum welcomes Jennifer Kent as its new Assistant Director (AD). Jennifer brings a depth of organizational experience, event planning and execution prowess, as well as educational creativity. As the AD, she is managing multiple areas including events, facilities, and retail.

Jennifer was born and raised in Sweetwater and has spent her adult years giving back to the community. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from Texas Tech University. Later she attended Tarleton State University and received her teaching certificate. Jennifer retired from Sweetwater ISD in May 2022 after spending 30 years in education with the last 13 years spent teaching science. The Museum was fortunate enough to convince her to launch a second career. When asked what she most looks forward to in her new position, Jennifer explains, “I’m looking forward to using my skills in a new way as I continue to serve the community.”

Jennifer has many interests outside of work. She is sous chef to her husband of 36 years, Kary, and enjoys her two children and three dogs. Her favorite pastime is camping and fishing with friends and family.

Welcome aboard, Jennifer!

THE NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM WISHES YOU A

Merry Christmas
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
...continued from the cover page.

many new and potential supporters. The happiest moment came, however, when the WASP Museum’s live auction package, The Avenger Field Experience, sold for $10,000 in support of the EAA Young Eagles program.

The week closed out with a sweet moment when the EAA hosted a party for the WASP program’s 80th birthday. Executive Director Lisa Taylor was especially touched and humbled to receive a presentation of yellow roses from Lt Col Olga Custodia, USAF (ret) who is a legend in her own right. “To have the support of women like Olga for the WASP’s contributions is a wonderful tribute to what the WASP did,” Taylor exclaimed. “It continues the WASP legacy and solidifies their place in history.”

Oshkosh is a physically demanding week, but well worth every second. The Museum looks forward to Oshkosh 2023 when it will once again connect us with a small, but powerful group of female pilots as well as aviation enthusiasts.
The WASP Museum is celebrating the life and legacy of Margaret “Peggy” Helburn Kocher, 43-W-6, with a special exhibit on display through Saturday, April 15, 2023. The exhibit opened with Peggy’s children, Erik Kocher, Jr., Chris Kocher, and Debra Kocher in attendance. The Museum celebrated a wonderful Saturday with the family as they became acquainted with where their mother learned to fly military aircraft. The evening ended perfectly as visitors were able to listen to the Kocher’s memories of their mother. As always, the night ended with a toast for a woman who served her country well when it needed her most.

Ann Haub, Collections Manager for the Museum, states that the WASP in the Spotlight exhibits are her favorite exhibits and celebrations. “Each WASP has a unique story, and it’s my goal to tell them all.”

Peggy Kocher’s story is more unusual than most. Unlike most of her fellow WASP, Peggy was able to make significant contributions in the aviation community until her marriage to Eric Kocher, a member of the U.S. Diplomatic Service, in 1947. After her marriage, she spent a lifetime supporting Mr. Kocher’s activities in four countries and five U.S. states. During those years she raised her family and continued to make a dramatic impact in all the organizations in which she was involved.

To view her exhibit and learn details of her life please visit: https://www.waspmuseum.org/wasp-in-the-spotlight/

UPCOMING SPOTLIGHTS

APRIL 2023 | EXHIBIT UNVEILING

The next WASP in the Spotlight will feature collections of six incredible women. We will be launching this exhibit the week of the annual WASP Homecoming.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page for more information about who will be displayed.

To find out more about upcoming events, please visit www.waspmuseum.org.
**Girls in Aviation Day 2022** was the first such event hosted by the Avenger Field Chapter of Women in Aviation, and the 15 girls in attendance had an exciting, eye-opening, inspiring day—thanks to all of you, our sponsors and aviation friends. Historic Avenger Field and the WASP Museum made a perfect setting for this inaugural event.

Pilots from EAA Chapter 471 in Abilene flew in with five airplanes, the USDA pilots brought out their Cub and helicopters, and Bill Johnson added the PT-19 to the lineup on the ramp. Midland College and Texas State Technical College shared their training programs, and Maxine and her Dyess colleagues gave the girls a lot to think of with their stories of Air Force service. Maxine wowed all of us, girls and adults, with her beautifully done video about her Air Force career—so inspiring! Maria, a Texas National Guard Blackhawk pilot visiting the museum, readily stepped up to say encouraging words. Rebecca from Midland College, now a Director of Maintenance for an aviation company, talked about her successful training and career path. Whitney from TSTC shared good career ideas and her secret welding skill, Charlotte Rhodes spoke of years as an air traffic controller and an air boss, and Rebecca Burgby shared flight training and flying stories.

The WASP Museum was a new experience with a lot of wonderful learning for the young ladies, with a terrific tour led by Ann, Beth, Chris and Cole. Well done, everyone! The Wishing Well was fun, and the memorial walls invoked thoughtful looks; hardship and heartbreak recognized. The EAA and USDA pilots, along with Bill, were great about answering a million questions as the girls sat in airplanes and learned how things work. The girls finished the event with cake and goody bags, as well as earning extra goodie for

The EAA pilots graciously agreed to spend the whole day with us, and when the GIAD event was officially complete, the girls returned to the ramp where the pilots were waiting to take them for Young Eagles flights. This was a special treat, as each budding pilot received extra flying time and a lot of personal attention. Their excited eyes and smiling faces were a marvelous testament to the magic of flight, the inspiration of the WASP, and the kind generosity of all of the pilots and volunteers. Sincere thanks to all who made this marvelous day possible!

Aspiring pilot Addie flew down from Stratford, TX, in the family Tri-Pacer with her dad, Roger—a 3-hour flight in the trusty little bird, with a headwind! Addie really wanted to attend Girls in Aviation Day, and is now even more motivated to pursue a flying career. Go, Addie!
Nancy Harkness Love and Jackie Cochran were two women from two different walks of life. Theirs was a true dichotomy, a contrast of personality and life experience, before and after the Women’s Auxiliary Flying Squadron and the Women’s Flying Training Detachment programs became one.

From the 150 miles east of Wilmington, Delaware, where the WAFS first reported for duty in 1942, and the 1,600 miles east of Ellington Field, where the WFTD began that year before its move to Sweetwater, lay a geographically natural airfield on the Hempstead Plains of Long Island called Roosevelt Field, and that is where Nancy and Jackie’s paths and eventual place in aviation history would cross in the years before the WASP. Roosevelt Field was known as ‘The World’s Premier Airport’ and was the center of the aviation world between the two World Wars. Everyone in aviation knew of Roosevelt Field and there was train service from Manhattan, where many of the early aviators lived, to conveniently get there. Two of them were Nancy and Jackie.

In the 1930s, during the Golden Age of Aviation, and in the two decades prior to that, the Hempstead Plain was the aviation hub of the world. Aviators came to the Plains from all over the country and the world, to explore, challenge, and exceed the sky’s limits. Many of them became famous, others lesser known or obscure, outside of aviation history books. But there on the Hempstead Plains, Harriet Quimby became the first licensed woman pilot in the United States in August of 1911, and in 1927, Elinor Smith became the youngest licensed pilot in the world at age 16, setting multiple endurance, speed, and altitude records during her flying career. Two years later, on November 2, 1929, twenty-six women pilots gathered at Curtiss Field, Valley Stream on the Hempstead Plains to form the Ninety-Nines; its name coined by Amelia Earhart who was one of the first 26 women who attended the first meeting and frequented Roosevelt Field as well. Nancy Harkness was only 15 at the time.

In August of 1930, Nancy climbed into a single-engine, tandem Fleet trainer with her instructor and by November of that same year she obtained her private pilot’s certificate at age 16. By April of 1932, at 18 years of age, she earned her limited commercial license at Roosevelt Field and in 1933 she logged 200 hours and passed the written tests for her transport license. In 1934 she applied for membership in the Ninety-Nines and would later become close friends with one of the organizations original 26 charter members, Betty Huyler Gillies. Betty, who had her first flying lesson in an OX-5 Travelair at Roosevelt Field, was later the second woman to join the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) in Wilmington, Delaware.

In 1934 Nancy moved to New York and shared an apartment near Washington Square with two other women pilots. With a mutual passion for flying, the three young pilots would go to Roosevelt Field at sunrise to fly. By the end of that winter, they each went their own way. Nancy became a sales and demonstration pilot in Boston and worked as an air marking pilot between 1935-1937. In 1937-1938 she test-flew for Gwinn Aircar before returning to sales and demonstration piloting up until 1942 when Nancy became the commander of the WAFS. Whether for recreational or work purposes, many of the hours logged into Nancy’s logbook in the years before the WASP, were flown to and from the runways at Roosevelt Field on the historic Hempstead Plains of Long Island. And the rest, as they say, is history.
PART 2: JACQUELINE COCHRAN
NANCY & JACKIE BEFORE THE WASP

Roosevelt Field & The Hempstead Plains of Long Island

In 1932, Nancy Love earned her limited commercial license at Roosevelt Field, where she frequently flew from in her early years before the WASP. That same year, Roosevelt Field was the place where Jackie Cochran’s storied flying career literally took off from.

In 1906, Bessie Pittman, the aviator now known as Jacqueline ‘Jackie’ Cochran, was born in a lumber mill town in the Florida panhandle. Moving from one town to another with her family in search of work at the saw mills of the South, Bessie owned a remarkable amount of ambition as a child. She left home at a young age to pursue greener pastures and reinvented herself by taking the name Jacqueline Cochran which, according to her own accounts, signified her personal break from the past.

After studying to be a nurse, Jackie got a job in a beauty shop and moved to New York in 1929 to seek further opportunities in the industry. Working as a beautician for the highly fashionable Antoine’s salons at Saks Fifth Avenue and Miami Beach, Jackie climbed the social ladder.

At a dinner in 1932, Jackie met wealthy financier Floyd Odell (later to be her husband). That evening, in conversation, she shared with him her desire to go on the road to sell cosmetics and launch her own business. Floyd suggested (out of practicality and the country’s economic depression) that if Jackie were ever to meet her dream of starting her own cosmetics company, that she would need wings to cover enough territory and earn enough money to outdo her competition.

Jackie took Floyd’s advice to heart, and in the summer of 1932 she enrolled for flying lessons at the Roosevelt Aviation School on Long Island. With the intent to obtain her pilot’s license in a mere three weeks, Jackie took the six-weeks of vacation that she had accumulated at Antone’s and set out to do just that. At the start of her vacation in July, she boarded a train to Westbury via the Long Island Railroad where she met chief instructor, Husky Lewelleyan at Roosevelt Field. There, she took flying lessons in a Fleet Model 2 with a 90 hp Kinney K-5 engine and a top speed of 110 mph. The Fleet was the primary flight trainer used at the Roosevelt Aviation School. Within days Jackie soloed, and on August 17 she earned private pilot’s license # 1498 after only three weeks of lessons. She later received advanced training at the Ryan School of Aeronautics and obtained her instrument rating, her commercial, and her transport license.

Early in her flying career, Jackie was captivated with air racing and during the early to mid-1930s she entered as many races as possible. In 1935 she established Jacqueline Cochran Cosmetics and entered her first Bendix Race, winning third place overall.

In 1937, Jackie was back at Roosevelt Field running fuel consumption tests on a new engine installed in a Beechcraft that she was going to fly in the next Bendix race. Russian émigré, war ace, and aircraft innovator, Major Alexander de Seversky, asked Cochran if she would, instead, fly a P-35 pursuit manufactured by his company, the Seversky Aircraft Corp. of Farmingdale, Long Island.

Jackie’s hopes of winning first place in the Bendix soared with the prospect of flying the P-35 and in a couple of weeks after her first test flight in the airplane; she pushed the pursuit up to near 300 mph. Ultimately, her dream of winning the top prize in the prestigious Bendix competition arrived in September, 1938 when she flew a Seversky AP-7 (an improved civil version of the P-35) between Burbank, California and Cleveland in 8 hours, 10 minutes, 31 seconds.

In the years preceding 1941, when the ominous clouds of war gathered on the horizon, Jackie logged many hours of flight time and experience into her logbook......countless hours of experience that originated from, and concluded, upon the runways at the historic Roosevelt Field. And for Jackie, it all began in a yellow-winged Fleet 7 trainer at the Roosevelt Field School of Aviation on the Hempstead Plains of Long Island- in the decade before the WASP.
MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

DAVID TOWNSEND

A life-long love of airplanes, pleasure in the company of aviators, and an interest in World War II history first drew me to the National WASP WWII Museum. I was already familiar with the WASP story and was involved with Warbirds and other vintage aircraft when Bill Johnson and his friend John Gray invited me to visit and fly Bill’s Stearman. I found the museum in Sweetwater to be a gem of aviation history and the people to be a delight. In particular, the museum illuminates a critical time in our history as experienced by young people, called to extraordinary duty. The passion you all have for the WASP as individuals and as inspiration to current and future women aviators is infectious.

I strongly believe that the values, character, and resilience exemplified by the Greatest Generation produced the blessings we now enjoy as a country and will be critical to our future. The WASP especially are valuable role models of what hard work and an adventurous spirit can accomplish, regardless of gender. Many pilots have said before me that airplanes don’t know if you are male or female, black or white, rich or poor, or any of the other circumstances that divide us. The merit of your knowledge and skill must stand alone. That’s a great life lesson.

So, I volunteered to help however needed. Now I average 2-3 days a month at the museum: caring for airplanes and related equipment. I serve on the Aviation Committee formed by the Board of Directors. I’m happy to contribute financially through my membership as well as to maintenance and operational costs of the aircraft. I have been well rewarded by relationships with the WASP, KOWs, other museum folks I have met and the experiences I have had. My wife and I often participate in museum events together and we are committed to continuing.

Thank you for supporting the National WASP WWII Museum!
APRIL 28-29, 2023

WASP HOMECOMING AND FLY-IN
Journey to the Stars
Celebrating 30 years of women in combat

THURSDAY, APRIL 27
FOR OUT OF TOWN GUESTS
FREE | REGISTRATION REQUIRED
6:00pm - 8:00pm
Hamburgers in the Hangar

FRIDAY, APRIL 28
* TICKETS REQUIRED *
5:00pm - 10:00pm
The Rendezvous
Dinner & Dance with a Live Band

SATURDAY, APRIL 29
9:00am - 4:00pm / Fly-In on Avenger Field

AUTHOR’S CORNER
AND FEATURED SPEAKERS
Mo Barrett, Erin Miller,
Sarah Byrn Rickman,
Lisa M. Bolt Simons,
Jacqueline Ruiz,
and more!

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & EVENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT WASPMUSEUM.ORG

* Tickets available starting January 1, 2023 until sold out! *
2023
UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 23-25 | Women in Aviation International Conference in Long Beach, California

APRIL 28 | A WASP in the Spotlight Exhibit Unveiling

APRIL 28 | WASP Homecoming Hangar Dance “The Rendezvous”

APRIL 29 | WASP Homecoming Fly-In

Please visit our website for more on upcoming events.

www.waspmuseum.org

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I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER

| $10        | $38          | $100 - $499         |
| Cadet (Student) | Aviator (Adult) | Bronze Wings |
| $500 - $999 | $1,000 - $2,499 | $2,500 - $4,999     |
| Silver Wings | One Star General | Two Star General |
| $5,000 - $9,999 | $10,000 - $19,999 | $20,000 or above |
| Three Star General | Four Star General | Five Star General |

Your Membership keeps us flying!

I would like to join as a member to the National WASP WWII Museum at the price of:

Annual Membership Price: $___________

Full Name ____________________________

Phone ____________________________ Email ____________________________

Address ____________________________ City ____________________________ State _______ Zip _______

☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ Check

Total $___________

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