



NEWS In the Sky

November 2020

(www.opa.aero)

**November 5th, 2020 - Social Hour 6:30 p.m.
Dinner Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker: Adam Fox
El Reno Municipal Airport Manager Thanksgiving Dinner**

Adam Fox was born and raised in southern Alabama but eventually moved to Oklahoma as an Army aviation veteran and pilot. He is a graduate of Auburn University's aviation business program. Adam has worked for both the Alabama Aeronautics Bureau and the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission. This unique combination of working for two different state aviation organizations allows him to view airports with a clear sight picture. In April of 2020, Adam began managing the El Reno Regional Airport in El Reno, OK. Within days of his current appointment and during the midst of the COVID-19 day-to-day challenges, he began to plan, organize, and successfully hosted one of Oklahoma's largest general aviation events to-date last August. He plans to continue to support and grow the aviation industry in El Reno and the State of Oklahoma.



Due to power outages because of the ice storm, the newsletter could not be completed until Monday. We all apologize for any inconvenience.

**December 5th, 2020 - Social Hour 6:30 p.m.
Dinner Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

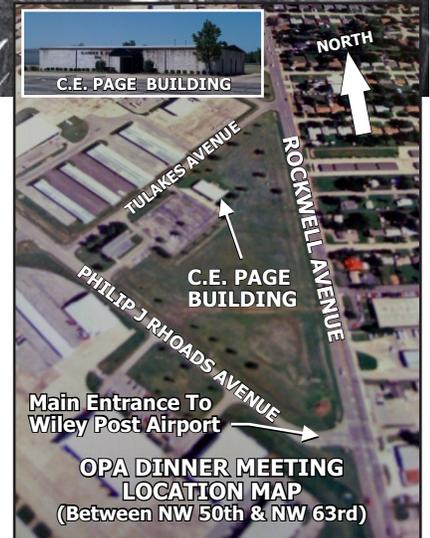
A Shade of Blue will be our performing guest during the December Membership Dinner and Christmas Party. This swing/jazz will be playing us songs from the Greatest Generation along with some holiday favorites.



VERY IMPORTANT: As a result of COVID-19, we are in a transition of testing new caterers. As such, I'm asking that you RSVP sooner than usual because our deadline for the caterers is earlier. Please RSVP with the number of people in your party as soon as possible. I suggest that you go ahead and RSVP now while you're thinking about it so you don't forget later. **I must send a count to the caterer so, please RSVP as soon as you possibly can. You can RSVP by sending an email to dinner@opa.link**



The Oklahoma Pilots Association (OPA) meets the 1st Thursday of each month at the Clarence E. Page Building, located on Wiley Post Airport. From N. Rockwell, enter the airport at the traffic light (Phillip J. Rhoads Ave.), take the first right, and drive back to the light gray brick building.





Oklahoma Pilots Association is a member-controlled not-for-profit organization for all pilots and aircraft owners. OPA strives to serve the needs of general aviation pilots statewide, promoting aviation, education and safety in personal and business flying.

Membership consists of student pilots through airline transport pilots, both civil and military and is open to all pilots and aircraft owners. Annual membership dues are currently \$35.

OPA holds monthly dinner meetings at the C. E. Page Building on Wiley Post Airport in Oklahoma City. Distinguished guest speakers present educational and safety related programs at the monthly dinner meetings.

OPA hosts monthly Fly Aways for lunch or dinner and weekend Fly Aways to interesting destinations.

OPA, through its charitable non-profit corporation, accepts money or property donated to fund the Vic Jackson Memorial Scholarship Fund which is awarded annually to a college student with career aspirations in the field of aviation. Your contributions of money or property are tax deductible.

OPA Newsletter Staff
Editors: Ben & June Roy
Circulation: Mike Rangel

Members' contributions of articles and other information relative to aviation are encouraged.

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November 14th OPA Fly Away - Hobart, OK Lunch at McCollum Market Downtown Tommy Franks Museum County Museum across the street if you want Wheels Down: 11 a.m.



Our November 14th flyaway will be to Hobart, Oklahoma, to visit the Tommy Franks Museum and, if you desire, to also visit the Kiowa County Museum, which is just across the street in the old train station. We'll have lunch at the McCollum Restaurant which is just about a block half north of the Tommy Franks Museum. We had scheduled to go to Hobart

in October, but that got canceled at the last minute due to weather, and all of those except Dean Smith were notified of the cancellation. Dean Smith did make it there and reported that McCollum's is a good place to eat. If you have not been to the Tommy Franks Museum recently, you'll be pleased to see how they have expanded. There are some new exhibits, including an exhibit from the World Trade Center.

The McCollum Restaurant building was originally a pharmacy. The retiring pharmacist wanted the McCollums to buy the building. It was purchased by Tammy McCollum and her husband and they spent a few years deciding what to do and how to do it and then converting it into a really neat restaurant.

So once again, we will plan on wheels down about 11 o'clock in Hobart, Oklahoma. When you first arrive, you may want to visit the Dedication they have right on the east side of the terminal building. It is a dedication to the Hobart men who lost their lives in our prior World Wars.

Please register that you're planning on arriving by typing in flyaway@opa.aero and let us know who is coming and how many are coming, so we can plan for that. Also, please leave your phone number in case we must cancel again so we will have your phone number to call you to let you know of the cancellation. If you have any questions, you're always welcome to email me at leeholmes@opa.aero, and/or call me at 405-833-7201.

Also, let us know if you have airplane seats available for members who might want to come but do not have their own plane or have a plane available. If you have other places that you think we should consider for a flyaway, please let me or anyone on the Flyaway Committee know.

As of the November publication, we have not scheduled a flyaway for December. Article from OPA Fly Away Chair, Lee Holmes



**In Memory of
Ricky Lee Fulton
July 31, 1962 – September 22, 2020**

The OPA community, sadly, lost one of our members this past month when Ricky Fulton passed away from his injuries on September 22nd, when the AT 802 "fire bomber" he was flying crashed in a ravine while he was fighting fires in Idaho. Ricky was a native Oklahoman and brother of our VP of Communications, Kyle Fulton. The State of Oklahoma honored Ricky by lowering flags to half mast in recognition of his service.

In addition to hunting, fishing, and SCUBA diving, Ricky enjoyed flying. He earned his A&P certificate in 1982, after attending the Spartan College of Aeronautics in Tulsa, OK. While working as a ground crew member he earned his private pilot certificate in 1983, and continued his flight training over the years earning his commercial certificate and instrument rating; ultimately earning his CFII. Not only did Ricky fly single and multi-engine fixed wing airplanes, he, also, flew sea (float) planes, and helicopters. He was a factory authorized instructor for the AT 802 (air tractor).

Ricky's flight experience produced just shy of 23,000 total flight hours behind the controls of many aircraft of which some include the Air Tractor(s) 301, 400, 401, 402, 502, 502B, 602, 802, and Thrush variants; Cessna 150, 152, 172, 182, 180, 185, 188, 206, 210, 310; Bonanza A36; Beech Travelair; Piper PA-18; DHC-2 Beaver; Robinson R22, R44; Schweizer 300 CB; Bell 212; Hiller UH 12E.

Much of Ricky's flight experience was very diversified. Some was flying air tractor spray planes; drug eradication operations in South America; training pilots in South America in formation flying and flying in mountainous terrain; and firefighting operations. We ask that you continue to remember The Fulton Family in the days to come.

High Flight

"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds -
and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of -
wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along
and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.
"Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of God."

by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr.



OPA President Greg Finley



For my article this month, I would like to give honor to Vic Bird as he retires from the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission. The following is an article I recently read in the online format of the General Aviation News. The article can also be found at:

<https://generalaviationnews.com/2020/10/20/oklahoma-state-aeronautics-director-retires/>

Oklahoma State Aeronautics Director retires

OCTOBER 20, 2020 BY [GENERAL AVIATION NEWS STAFF LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Oklahoma's State Director of Aeronautics, Victor Bird, has retired.

During his 18-year tenure with the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, Bird was known throughout the state — and the nation — as a leading advocate for aviation.

As the top aviation official in the state, Bird emphasized promotion of the aerospace industry, one of the state's largest industries and top employers; oversaw critical planning and development for the state's air transportation system, upgrading as many of the state's 49 regional business airports as possible to be jet-capable; and encouraged public-private partnerships to promote the aerospace industry. Under his leadership, the commission has invested \$71 million in state funds and directed \$189 million in federal funds into airport infrastructure statewide.

Bird's career in state government started in the Oklahoma Attorney General's office under Mike Turpen in 1983. He subsequently served at Oklahoma State University, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and again in the Attorney General's office under two different attorneys general.

Bird earned his law and bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa, leading to him to a career in law within the public sector. It was this legal background and his knowledge of state government that ultimately led him to the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission as director in 2002. Although he was a newcomer to aviation and aerospace, he saw the amazing opportunities to help foster and grow the industry and immediately put his knowledge and connections within state government to work.

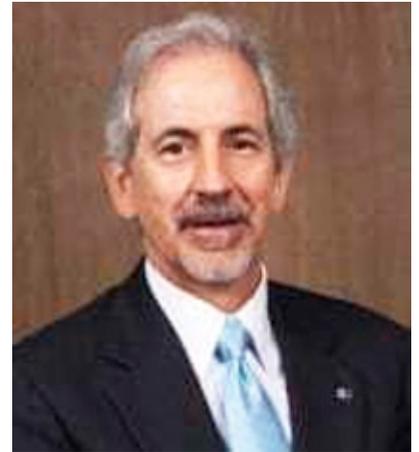
"Congratulations to my longtime friend, Vic Bird, on retirement after 18 years of service as director of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission," said U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.). "As the longest serving director in Oklahoma history, he has been a tireless advocate for aviation and aerospace. His efforts have resulted in pro-aviation legislation here in Oklahoma, growing its annual economic impact to \$44 billion that has resulted in tens of thousands of jobs. He has championed general aviation, supporting pilots and airport investments across the state. His tenure as director has been marked with distinction from his peers and professional firsts. He is the first and only Oklahoman to serve as chairman of the National Association of State Aviation Officials in its 90 year history. He is also the first and only non-elected public official to receive the Joseph B. "Doc" Hartranft Jr. Award from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). I am proud of his service to Oklahoma and the aviation community as whole. Thank you, Vic."

Highlights of Bird's tenure include formation of the Governor's Aerospace Task Force in 2004, which resulted in several recommendations to ensure the viability and growth of the state's aerospace industry. One of those recommendations that Bird was instrumental in bringing to fruition was the Legislature's creation of Engineer Tax Credits for Aerospace, which provides tax credits to engineers that go to work in aerospace and the aerospace companies that hire them.

Bird also championed a sales tax exemption on purchases of products and services from the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) sector of the aerospace industry. Up to 80% of aerospace companies in Oklahoma are engaged in MRO and this provided them a critical competitive advantage.

Other legislative successes include the Aerospace Development Act of 2008, which transferred two key aerospace programs, the Center for Aerospace Supplier Quality and the Oklahoma Aerospace Institute, to OAC. These programs evolved into the very successful Aerospace Commerce Economic Services (ACES) program now operated by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. The Aircraft Pilot and Passenger Protection Act, which became law in 2010, was also accomplished under Bird's watch and ensured that public-use airports and military airports were provided legal protections from encroaching development. It was this accomplishment that led to Bird receiving AOPA's coveted Hartranft Award.

In 2010, Bird was elected chair of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) as the first Oklahoman to ever hold the post, and he has been the long serving co-chair of NASAO's Legislative Committee.



October Dinner Meeting Article

Thanks to Brian Hancock for the article and to Angela Drabek for the pictures

Greg opened the meeting by thanking Tony for letting us use his hanger for our October meeting and allowing our guest speaker, Tony Ragozzino, display his aircraft.

Our October guest speaker was Tony Ragozzino. Tony has spent the past decade constructing a modern-day replica of the famed Spirit of St. Louis. He plans to fly the aircraft from New York to Paris in 2021, just like Charles Lindbergh did in 1927.

Ragozzino noted that his Spirit of St. Louis, dubbed Spirit of St. Louis 2 (SOSL2), is an exact replica with modern day safety upgrades and a much more elaborate electrical system. Ragozzino's hope is to fly into the Paris Air Show in 2021; but is not locked into that date, given possible weather issues and pandemic issues.

This is not Ragozzino's first lofty aviation goal. In 2000 Ragozzino famously became the first person to solo a highly modified open-cockpit 450 Stearman biplane around the world; beating the speed record logged by a two-person team 76 years earlier. This feat landed Ragozzino in the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame. Robert has owned a flight school and worked as a corporate pilot for 32 years. He has flown over 35 different aircraft. He currently resides in Norman, OK. Ragozzino had no formal presentation; but instead, took questions from the audience at the dinner. The questions and his answers follow.

Q. What type of Navigation will the plane have onboard?

A. Lindbergh flew with a compass system. I will be flying with the same but will also have a hand-held GPS device. I am hoping to have a satellite communication system that would allow me to be tracked by my support team and would also allow people to follow the flight on the internet. It's a \$30 million dollar system so we are not sure we will get it.

Q. How did you get started as a pilot?

A. I was basically raised on an airport. Both my dad and brother are commercial pilots and I started flying with them before ever even getting a license. Flying is an obsession for me. I've owned a flight school and worked as a corporate pilot for 32 years. I've flown everything from gliders to jets.

Q. How did you get started on the Spirit of St. Louis 2 (SOSL2)?

A. Basically, we found an old airplane rusting and rotting and rebuilt it over the last 20 years. It's moved from Colorado to California to Norman and now to Wiley Post and resides at Associated Aero. We've basically built a complete aircraft from the ground up with no expenses spared. When you do that, you build a great aircraft that you absolutely trust. (Ragozzino referred everyone to their website for pictures and plan for their rebuild - www.spiritofstlouis2.com)

Most world record planes that are well funded have a high level of success.

Q. What's going to be the biggest challenge while flying?

A. Staying awake. It took Lindbergh 33 hours, so staying awake for that period of time is going to be tough. It will test your skills. But I guess you don't have to stay awake if you like diving in the ocean.



October Dinner Meeting

Q. What engine are you using?

A. The original Spirit of St. Louis was powered by a J-5 engine. Ours will have a 1930s Jacobs 755B2 Gen 3 radial. Jacobs is the best radial of WWII.

Q. Is the SOSL2 going to be heavier?

A. We're going to be heavier than the original, especially with a satellite radio broadcast system.

Q. How much heavier?

A. We don't have an exact number yet.

Q. How much fuel will you carry?

A. Approximately 500 gallons. Which should be a lot more than needed but if you have fuel, the engine is going to keep going, so we are going to carry as much as we can.

Q. What training are you doing to prepare yourself and how much flight testing will be required.

A. I'm learning to fly a blind plane, but we will basically do as much as the FAA requires, and as much as it takes to master the things we have to do to complete the flight. I'd guess 25-50 hours of practice. But this is a \$3 million dollar airplane with only \$300,000 worth of insurance so we don't want to fly it more than we have to.

Q. Will you fly across the US like Lindbergh before the flight?

A. We probably won't even fly it to New York because of the insurance... we'll truck it up there.

Q. What was it like flying around the world in a Stearman?

A. The Stearman could go anywhere. Greenland was beautiful. We had problems going from Japan to Russia and back to the US. We didn't file a flight plan, then claimed we had an oil pressure problem in the flight to avoid having to permit the landing. They have to let you land when you have a flight emergency, but they were really nice... said they love for people to visit. But it took 25 days to get the permit to fly out. It was a great experience; and I learned a lot about flying over big bodies of water that will help with the SOSL2 flight.

Q. There is no periscope like Lindbergh had... is there plans to install one?

A. Lindbergh didn't want it... it shakes to much from the engine vibration and you can't see through it. We are possibly going to install a camera in its place. But we did leave panel space for it and may put one on for historical purpose. You want a plane that looks like the original Spirit of St. Louis.

Q. What will you do after the flight?

A. There's lots of possibilities; but I'm done after the flight. I may stay in Paris. The plane may be bought by Red Bull; but something good will happen to it.

Q. What is the timeline for the flight?

A. We haven't made the timeline, so it's a guess. June 2021 for the Paris Airshow is the target; but that date is 50/50. Plus, weather or even delays due to the Pandemic. There was no show this year.

Q. How fast will it fly?

A. Not sure, we estimate 100 mph which is 10 mph faster than Lindbergh, who flew hit speeds between 98-77 mph. We're not real sure, but we did things to get 10% more miles per hour.

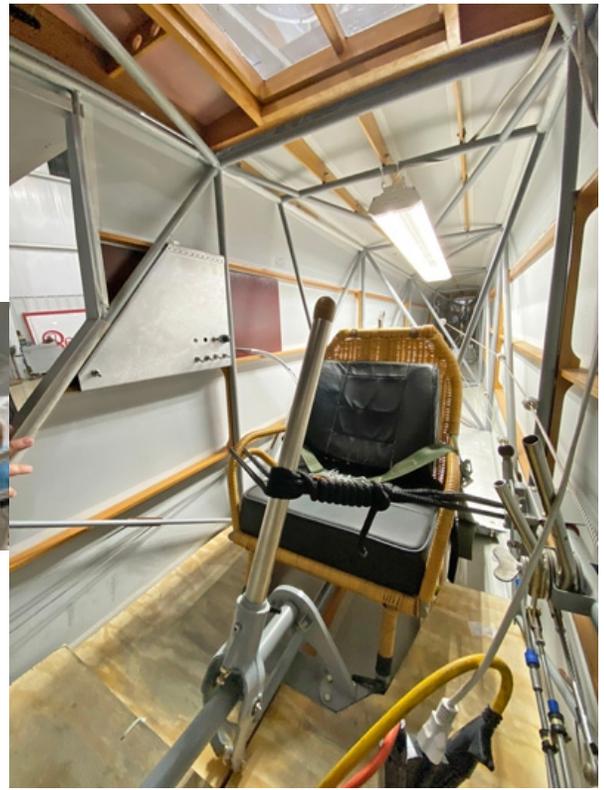


November OPA Dinner Meeting

Thanks to Angela Drabek for the pictures And Brian Hancock for the article
Thanks to Tony Plant for hosting our meeting at Southern Wings

Ragozzino had his aircraft on display for all dinner goers to view. Please note the pictures and accuracy of the reconstruction of this aircraft. In writing this article I captured as much as I could during the presentation. Obviously Ragozzino elaborated on several topics and I probably missed several points that others may have captured, for that I apologize. Brian Hancock

Editor's Note: Brian, we think you did a wonderful job! Thank you so much for taking care of this during our absence. Please thank Angela for all the great pictures you have been able to enjoy. June and Ben



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or a Meeting?**

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My name is Amelia Bearhart, II, and I LOVE to fly!

Article submitted by Elaine Regier - Watch for more photos



Here's my story. The Oklahoma Chapter of the 99s earned the travel award, the first Amelia Bearhart, at the 2017 Fall South Central Section meeting in Louisiana. Angela Drabek and Wyvema Startz brought her to Oklahoma where she flew with several different Chapter members all over the state! Her adventure with the Oklahoma Chapter ended when Elaine Regier and Angela Drabek took Amelia to the 2018 Spring Section meeting in Colorado Springs. They took her all over town before reluctantly telling Amelia goodbye so she could go with a chapter from Texas.

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Thanks to Angela and Wyvema, I joined Elaine's family as a birthday surprise! Of course, Amelia Bearhart was the only name that fit! Elaine takes me with her on every flight. We recently went with Angela on Flights for Life. The Oklahoma Blood Institute met us at Sundance and loaded four boxes of products in Angela's plane. I kind of fell behind the boxes and couldn't see very well. We flew to Lawton, where we received four more boxes and a tote for the return flight. This time I could lean against the tote and had a perfect view! The flight was smooth both directions, and we had a great time! Since then, Elaine had to cancel two flights because of weather, but we hope to fly again soon! We have lots to learn because every flight is a training flight!

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2020 OPA Calendar

All scheduled items are subject to change as necessary to meet directed Covid 19 requirements and for the health and safety of our members and guests.

November 5th - OPA Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

November 14th - **OPA Fly Away** - Hobart, OK
 Lunch Downtown - McCollum Market
 General Tommy Franks Museum
 County Museum
 Wheels Down: 11 a.m.

November 19th - OPA Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

December 5th - Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

December - **OPA Fly Away - Cancelled**

December 17th - **NO OPA Board Meeting**

2021 OPA Calendar

January 7th - Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Southern Wings Hangar
 Wiley Post Airport

January Fly Away -To Be Announced

January 21st - OPA Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
 Page Building, Wiley Post Airport

Make dinner reservations at dinner@opa.aero

Monthly Oklahoma Fly-Ins

CHECK THE OPA FLY AWAY PAGE ON THE WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID
 1st Saturday - Ponca City Aviation Booster Fly-In
 Breakfast - Call Don Nuzum 580-767-0470

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID
 1st Saturday - Pauls Valley Lunch Fly In
 Call 405-268-3925 (Breakfast in Summer)



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Material for publication will be accepted up to the deadline which is the 15th of each month, space permitting. The editorial staff reserves the right to accept, refuse, or edit any material submitted. Publication of articles and opinions in the OPA Newsletter is not an endorsement by the Association, nor does the Association assume any responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained in the Newsletter. Permission is granted to reprint, provided credit is given to The Oklahoma Pilots Association Newsletter. **For circulation issues including newsletters not received or email and address changes contact Roger Walton 405-219-5149 or email mem@opa.aero.**

