

AEROGRAM

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A Solemn Remembrance

April 15th marked the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's death at the hands of John Wilkes Booth. It was to be a tragedy on many levels, with lasting effects that, at the time, were not anticipated. It was well known that Lincoln's primary post-war desire was to reunify the North and South as quickly and effectively as possible. To that end, he strongly favored a policy of leniency towards the states of the former Confederacy – and their leaders. The fact that Ulysses S. Grant also felt this way can be seen in the very generous terms of surrender offered to Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. President Lincoln's views on *reconstruction* faced much opposition from many congressional leaders who felt that the South should be punished severely for "causing the war". We will never know whether or not he would ultimately have been successful in deflecting these strong sentiments, but there is absolutely no doubt that his death removed all such restraints. The direct result of this was a long period of reconstruction that could only be described as "draconian" – creating, in turn, animosities that exist to this day. A very strong case can be made for the statement that "The untimely death of Abraham Lincoln was truly an American tragedy, second only to the Civil War itself".

The bust of Lincoln that you see in the Civil War lobby exhibit has been with us for a long time. But for many years, it remained in our archives (both in the old museum *and* in the present one). A few years back we "rediscovered" the bust and after an extensive reconditioning, it has been on exhibit ever since. "Abe" has occupied several locations and, prior to the opening of our present lobby exhibit, he previously sat on our 1825 *Stewart & Chickering* piano. On the wall directly above this instrument is a framed print of the well known c.1864 engraving of Lincoln and his cabinet by Alexander Hay Richie. After the conclusion of our current exhibit in September, he will definitely go back there. It's an interesting bust - one that appears to be rather unique. We have been advised that it is typical of the Abraham Lincoln (and George Washington) busts that used to be found in school rooms. If any of you have seen one like it, we'd like to hear from you.

Traff Doherty



Lincoln and his cabinet - Alexander Hay Richie



Bust of Lincoln on display in front lobby as part of our current Civil War exhibit.



Glenn Curtiss and the Golden Flyer

The **Curtiss No. 1**, also known as the **Curtiss Golden Flyer** (aka *Gold Bug*), was the first aircraft both designed and built by Glenn Curtiss and the first of his production series of pusher aircraft.

In 1909, Curtiss flew the *Golden Flyer* a distance of 24.7 miles to establish a new world distance record and win the Scientific American Trophy, which he had won before in the AEA *June Bug* which he had also designed.



Encouraged by this success, Curtiss decided to enter the First International Air Race to be held at Reims, France, in August 1909. With this in mind, he started the construction of a new airplane, the *Reims Racer*. In the meantime.....

From FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL magazine, July 24, 1909: "Flown at Hempstead, Long Island, by an amateur pilot named Williams, the Curtiss aeroplane was damaged on Sunday last by falling from an altitude of 30 feet while out of control. The mishap was apparently due to the nervousness of the pilot, who was doubtless somewhat surprised at the height to which he had ascended. Unfortunately, Mr. Williams sustained a broken arm, and had to be removed to the hospital."

Before leaving for France, Curtiss rebuilt the Golden Flyer and sold it to the New York Aeronautic Society for \$5,000.00 USD. This was the **first commercial sale** of a heavier-than-air machine in the U.S., marking the beginning of the American aircraft industry AND triggering the beginning of a 9-year period of lawsuits directed at Curtiss by the Wright Brothers.



PHOTO OPPS AT THE CIVIL WAR EXHIBIT



Travel writer, Ann Hattes, loads the cannon



Retired Museum Trustee, Ralph Brown, tries out the ship's wheel

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IN MEMORIAM

Richard "Dick" Hamilton

June 14, 1929 - March 25, 2015

Dick was an active and enthusiastic longtime Curtiss Museum member who was greatly involved in planning and organizing the museum's annual Old Engine Day. He also constructed and contributed to the museum a large scale model of an early Urbana house and barn. He had a great passion for American history, agricultural history, outdoor activities, community service and spending time with family. He retired in 1988 from the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service after serving Steuben and Saratoga counties for many years.

Dick is survived by his wife Myrtle, seven children, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and a large extended family.



Dick Hamilton (left) and Norm Brush tinker with one of the many engines on display at the museum's Old Engine Day 2013

IN MEMORIAM

Charles McClelland

September 9, 1919 - February 27, 2015

Charlie was a faithful Curtiss Museum volunteer for the past 8 years - taking the museum's mail to the post office every day after his daily walk around the museum with his wife, Eleanor.

Born in Scotland, he came to the States with his family in 1928. His working career was spent as a tool and die maker and later in industrial management. He served in the U. S. Navy during World War II aboard the destroyer, USS Doyle, and took part in the Normandy invasion. An enthusiastic golfer, Charles was a 60-year member of the Elkview Country Club near Carbondale, PA.



He is survived by his wife, daughter, Jean Doherty, son, Phil McClelland, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

IN MEMORIAM

Larry & Brenda Burton

Longtime museum members, Larry & Brenda Burton, died on 5/8/15, as a result of a tragic automobile accident which occurred in Dauphin County, PA.

Larry was born in Bath on May 2, 1934., graduated from Haverling High School and Alfred State University. He was a Marine helicopter pilot who flew an astounding 634 missions in Vietnam and was shot down twice during his service to his country. He was a lifelong member of the Bath American Legion, and of the Bath Presbyterian Church, serving in many leadership positions throughout the years.

Brenda was born in Bath on May 23, 1941 and graduated from Haverling High School. She ran her own beauty shop and also co-owned Merrie Mites Children's store in Bath for fifteen years. She worked at Bath Haverling High School as study hall monitor and teacher assistant at V.E.W. Primary school. She was a lifelong member of the Bath Presbyterian Church, where she served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher for many years.



CHECK OUT ALL OF THE NICE COMMENTS FROM MUSEUM VISITORS
FEATURED ON TRIPADVISOR



**CURTISS MUSEUM RANKED
No.1 for 2015
AMONG ATTRACTIONS IN AND
NEAR HAMMONDSPORT!**

Following a full year's worth of fabulous tourist reviews of our museum, we have been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for 2015.

Thanks to all our faithful members who tell their friends and relatives about the museum and thanks to the many visitors who wrote in to TripAdvisor with glowing reports about the museum!

**The Museum's best advertisement is
"Word of Mouth" !**

**Keep your e-mail address up to date
with the Museum**

Many members have asked for the Aerogram to be delivered by e-mail, but then change their e-mail addresses without letting us know.

If you wish to continue to receive the Aerogram by e-mail so that you can enjoy it in color and also share it with your friends - you will need to let us know of any changes .

Thanks!



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**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

March 6 - Sept. 7, 2015
Civil War Navy Exhibit

August 1-2, 2015
**Classic Motorcycle
Weekend**

August 8, 2015
Curtiss Museum Gala

August 17, 2015
Curtiss Golf Classic

Sept.18 - Nov. 1, 2015
Quilt Exhibit

September 19, 2015
Seaplane Homecoming

Nov.13,2015 - Feb. 24,2016
**25th Annual Dollhouse &
Miniatures Exhibit**

Nov.28, 2015
**20th Annual Miniatures
Vendors Show & Sale**

**MEMBER
DONATIONS**

Tom & Lyn Chadwick
Deke Johnson
Russell & Judith Cranston
Bruce & Sally Shirey
Arnold Kish

DONATIONS

Thomas Connelly

**RESTRICTED
DONATIONS**

Ed & Patricia Babor.
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From The Director - Trafford Doherty

Water, water everywhere.....

For several years, we had been having issues with our water system(s). There are two wells associated with this property, one for the fire suppression system and, the other, for potable water. Water from the fire suppression well was used to maintain water levels in the 200,000 gallon reservoir that you all have seen as you come in the driveway. And this was to supply water to the sprinkler system in the event of a fire. The tricky part was keeping it from freezing in the wintertime. In the old (wine storage) days, an oil-fired boiler was used to heat the tank, but in 1992 a very clever person came up with the idea of installing a geothermal system to accomplish the same thing. And it worked very well; as soon as the tank water temp got below 45 degrees, a thermostatically controlled, high-pressure pump would force 54 degree ground water into the reservoir until the ambient temperature got comfortably above the 45 degree mark. Overflow came out a pipe at the top and created the most interesting ice sculptures. There have been maintenance problems over the years; pumps, leakage, electrics, etc., but the real "opportunity" occurred when it became apparent that sulfur in the water was (literally) rotting out the 10" diameter piping and fittings in the small pump house. I was becoming very concerned that it would let loose and we would have had our own version of "Old Faithful"! My plan was to get it fixed before that happened, but I couldn't get anyone to even look at it (one guy told me that it would likely cost somewhere in the \$30,000 range, but he didn't want the job).

Back in 2012, while we were struggling with this problem, the New York Department of Health announced to us that we could no longer serve well water to the public unless we installed an extensive chlorination and UV purification system (hello water cooler and paper cups). With that, of course, would come regular water quality testing and record keeping, plus supplies and maintenance. That wasn't particularly appealing, either, so we approached the *Town of Urbana* to see how much it would cost for us to extend the existing water main down to the museum (about half a mile). That turned out to be a "pipe dream". Fortunately, back in 2010, a grant was secured to extend village water up to the *Bully Hill Winery* (up on a hill, northeast of the village). This project was judged not feasible, but the funding was still available, so in 2012, the Town appealed to the regulatory agency (the EPA, no less) for permission to repurpose the grant to extend the water main in the opposite direction, out to us and our neighbors - and they got it! It was a \$500,000 grant and the job was quoted at \$485,000 – a nice fit! To make a long story somewhat shorter – they got the job done late last fall and we completed our hookup at the end of May (we couldn't start until March, because of the deeper-than-usual frost line). Because of our sprinkler system, it involved 6' pipe and a high degree of complexity, but for the long-term wellbeing of the organization, it had to be done - there was no future in continuing with the wells (and we were able to shut down the pump house BEFORE it blew!)

We have a "Rainy Day Fund" that has accumulated over the years from special events such as Galas and Seaplane Homecoming Weekends, plus fundraisers such as the Golf Classic - **and from our member donations**. Between the engineering, materials, and construction costs, the "RDF" took about a \$70,000 hit, but it was money very well spent – the museum can now move forward unencumbered by water problems – and that's a big deal! I would like to extend my personal thanks to the Town of Urbana, The Village of Hammondsport, the Steuben County IDA, Jody Allen (our long-suffering engineer) **and our members**, for their help and support in what turned out to be, a **major** project.



Kolo Excavating, hard at work on the waterline project

From The Restoration Shop

The Fledgling 4th wing has rib stitching completed and is ready to paint. Yet to fabric cover are elevators, rudder, and fuselage. One of the tandem seats is nearing completion, cowling attachment brackets are done and wing tip floats are ready for final paint.

P-40 right wing is about half aluminum covered. We bought valve covers and pan in California and the valve covers are now installed (these parts were missing from the aircraft). Parts for the aileron controls and

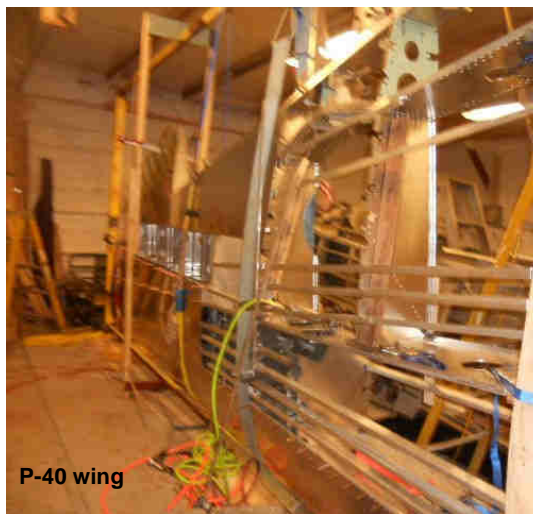


Fledgling wing



Progress on the P-40 wing as of May 2015 →

the pieces that join the wings on the aircraft center line are being salvaged from the original damaged wings. One main gear oleo strut is in place to identify center of wheel in the retract position. Machining is in process to salvage a main gear actuating cylinder.



P-40 wing

The Seagull fuselage stripping is complete and ready for final finish.

The shop crew prepared running displays for the well attended Old Engine Day, held May 9th. These were our Henderson, Model A, Wind Wagon, Horseless carriage Ford reproduction, and Hit and Miss engine. The Wright J-6-7 is being overhauled and will be running at a future Engine Run Day.

Old-fashioned street lamps, originally from the village square, are being sand blasted and refurbished and will be installed, mounted on poured concrete formed posts along the Museum front sidewalk.



Seagull ready for finish

NEW MEMBERS

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CURATOR'S CORNER - RICK LEISENRING

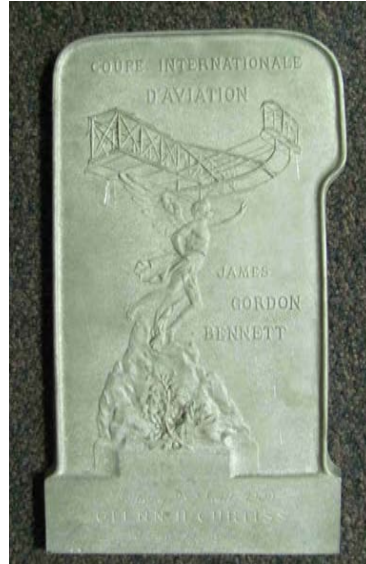
Is it Summer? Is it Fall? Really crazy kick off to the 2015 season weather-wise, but it still beats winter! Regardless of the atmospheric conditions, visitation for the year is off to a good start and the response to the Civil War exhibit *New York State and the United States Navy* have been great. The exhibits two "photo ops" are getting a good work out and seem to be very popular with the visitors. This type of interaction will definitely be something we will use wherever possible with future exhibits. Again, this exhibit will run until Sept.7, Labor Day Weekend. In addition to the Civil War display, an outdoor wildlife photography exhibition titled *Nature's Own Photography* by Dr. Ed and Gail Cordes of Corning, NY is up and running. This fantastic exhibit contains 63 of the most beautiful color photographs I've had the pleasure of viewing in a great while. The subjects range from gorgeous scenery to incredibly dynamic wildlife images. This will also run to Sept.7. Both exhibits will be followed by our bi-ennial Quilt Show which is scheduled to run from Sept.18 through Nov.1.

Exhibits and displays – The display case for our bronze statue of Joshua Chamberlain donated by the Peckham family has been completed by Ray Poehlein and now on display. We received the bronze medal that Lua Curtiss won in 1916 (story in previous newsletter) on loan from the Smithsonian and it is now on display in the Florida Years exhibit with some of her miniature paintings. Also received from the Smithsonian as a donation is a full size copy of Glenn Curtiss's Bennett Trophy plaque won at Reims in 1909. This was cast in aluminum from the original for the Smithsonian in 1932. They now have the original and generously passed on the reproduction to us. It will go on display in the Curtiss Trophy case next to the Seaplane wall. We are in the process of acquiring several more porch posts for quilt racks for the upcoming quilt show.

Well here it is, "Oh by the way" - One of Glenn Curtiss's favorite pastimes, aside from hunting, was a sport known as Archery Golf (he won several trophies). Simply described – it is shooting arrows at a paper disc the size of a hole cup on a golf course, each shot counting as a stroke. The sport dates back to about 1923 in the U.S. and Glenn was an early enthusiast. About that time, while laying out the plans of Opa-Locka, Florida, Glenn included an 18-hole archery golf course. His first course manager was a young man named Howard Hill. While working for Glenn, he became a good friend and hunting companion. Glenn introduced Howard to Arthur Brisbane, a prominent newspaperman, who in turn introduced Howard to Hollywood producers. Now by this time, Hill had become a nationally known champion archer. He went on to work on or appear in fourteen films (including *Robin Hood* and *They Died With Their Boots On*) and taught several stars to shoot a bow and arrow, including Errol Flynn. He and Flynn would also become fast friends. Always admiring and never forgetting his close friend Glenn Curtiss, Howard came to Hammondsport after Glenn's death in 1930, and for several summers after that, to teach young boys hunting, fishing and archery at the scout house as a favor to the Curtiss family. While there is so much more to this story than space allows, we can certainly see how Glenn's enthusiasm for new things and his interest in helping others brought the "World's Greatest Archer" to Hammondsport.



Glenn and friend playing Archery Golf



Our Gordon Bennett Trophy

MEMORIALS

In Memory of Jim Poel

Dick & Susan Rogers

In Memory of Theodore Adams

Ray & Wilma Poehlein

In Memory of Lucille Erway

Marie Tillman

In Memory of Richard Hamilton

Janet & Jim Hallahan

In Memory of Charles McClelland

Ray & Wilma Poehlein
Greg Hintz
Art & Kay Wilder
Chuck Comstock &
Randy Schiavone

In Memory of Serepta Sadd

Janet & Jim Hallahan

In Memory of James Empey

Gretchen Van Gelder Casey



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LATE SPRING 2015



MUSEUM HOURS

WINTER

Nov.1-Apr. 30
Mon.-Sun. 10-4

SUMMER

May 1-Oct.31
Mon.-Sat. 9-5
Sunday 10-5

Museum closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Easter Sunday

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

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Please check the membership category of your choice and return to:

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Additional tax-deductible donations will be used for museum improvements including up-grading facilities, restoration shop and new exhibits.