

May 15, 2007

**Next meeting:**

June 19, 2007

6:00 p.m.

Sonex Aircraft, LLC  
511 Aviation Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54902



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## Mercury 13 Honored in Oshkosh

by Kathleen L. Witman

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (UWO) paid tribute to the 13 women who began training for the space program in 1961 by awarding them honorary Doctor of Science (honoris causa) degrees during graduation ceremonies on May 12, 2007.

The women, who equaled and in some cases surpassed the test results of the Mercury 7 male astronauts, never made it into space, as they were denied formal entry into NASA's space program because of their gender.

The 13 women honored were Myrtle "K" Thompson Cagle, Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb, Jan Dietrich, Marion Dietrich, Mary Wallace "Wally" Funk, Jane "Janey" Briggs Hart, Jean Hixson, Gene Nora Stumbough Jessen, Irene Leverton, Sarah Lee Gorelick Ratley, Bernice "B" Steadman, Geraldine "Jerri" Sloan Truhill, and Rhea Allison Hurrle Woltman.

Unfortunately, Marion Dietrich and Jean Hixson are deceased, and Jan Dietrich (Marion's twin sister), Wally Funk, and Jane Hart couldn't make it for either health reasons or scheduling problems. Wally, however, did receive her degree in person on June 1 during a visit to Oshkosh.

UWO, in recognizing the women for their "courage in pushing the limits and helping to pave the way for women to become astronauts in the space program" is the first university to offer any such acknowledgement since the women tested for the program with Dr. William Randolph Lovelace—the head of the medical portion of the space program, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1961.

Martha Ackmann, journalist and author of *The Mercury 13: The True Story of the Thirteen Women and the Dream of Space*



*Flight* presented the keynote address "The Sky Is Not the Limit" at commencement ceremonies. The Oshkosh chapter had the honor of meeting Ackmann and Wally Funk in October 2006 during their visit to Oshkosh.

On Friday, May 11, Ackmann led a panel discussion at the university, which gave many in the audience the opportunity to hear the women talk about their experiences and meet the aviation/aerospace heroes in person. By the end of the discussion, it was clear that each woman who tested for the program was highly qualified and fit for space travel.

Many of the women who sacrificed jobs, and in some cases family, to join the program described what happened after the program was cancelled. Almost all the women continued or started a new aviation career, while others either stopped flying, or flew for recreation. Now in their late 60s to early 80s, it's clear that some of the women, including Jerrie Cobb, still hold onto their dream of soaring into space.

With all the recent advancements in civilian space travel, let's hope they make it!

## Meeting Notes

At the May meeting we discussed fundraising, recruitment, and began planning our annual Summer Hangar Social.

- The chapter has committed to sponsoring five girls to attend Women Soar during EAA AirVenture. Betty will contact the local Big Brothers Big Sisters organization and see if they know of any girls who might be interested. If there is a lot of interest we will ask the girls to write a paragraph about why they want to attend and select our top five to sponsor. For more information on the program visit [www.AirVenture.org/WomenSoar](http://www.AirVenture.org/WomenSoar). If you know of high school aged girls who might be interested or would like brochures please contact Kelly Nelson, Kathleen Witman, or Mary Jones.

- At the meeting we came up with several ideas for member recruitment, with the big push being an invitation to

attend our Summer Hangar Social in August. Kelly will be creating a list of people to invite from WAI membership lists, as well as seeing if she can get a list of female pilots in Wisconsin from the FAA. We will also send invitations to the state EAA chapters and 99s chapter. All members are also asked to bring a guest to the social. At the June meeting we will finalize our invitations and letters, and come up with 5-10 reasons why people should join WAI, and specifically our chapter. We are also going to contact WAI to see if we can again put out some cards advertising our Summer Hangar Social in their booth at AirVenture.

- We have been offered the opportunity to provide food at the Sonex Homecoming on June 9. Last year we raised \$170 by providing lunch for attendees.

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## Announcements:

- Peggy Chabrian has asked if our chapter would be willing to help out again with the WAI Celebrity Breakfast at the Hilton on the Friday of AirVenture from 7-9 a.m. Please let Kelly know if this is something you think you'd be able to help out with.
- The chapter will be sponsoring 5 girls to attend EAA's Women Soar program the June 22-23. If you know a high school-aged girl who might be interested in participating in the program, please contact Betty Monnett at [betty@monnett.com](mailto:betty@monnett.com) to get her registered before June 30. For more information on the program visit [www.AirVenture.org/WomenSoar](http://www.AirVenture.org/WomenSoar).

## Dinner with Dr. Peggy Chabrian

The Oshkosh Chapter had dinner with WAI President Dr. Peggy Chabrian on May 3 at the Vintage. It was a great opportunity to get to know Peggy, hear a little bit more about what WAI has planned for the Anchorage and San Diego conferences, and enjoy an exquisite meal!



## WAI News

### AWE Regional Conference

London, England  
September 14-16, 2007

Aviation for Women in Europe, a Chapter of Women in Aviation, International, is holding its annual Regional Conference September 14-16 at the Copthorne Hotel at London's Gatwick Airport. The two-day event includes an opening at the House of Lords, presentations from women in senior positions throughout the aerospace and aviation industries, as well as networking on a worldwide scale. Information about the conference is available at the chapter's

website, [www.aweu.org](http://www.aweu.org), including prices and lodging.

### Calling All Presenters

Women in Aviation, International, is looking for a few (about 50!) good presentations for the upcoming 19th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference, to be held March 13-15, 2008, in San Diego, California.

Do you have a message for women of all ages who are passionate about aviation and aerospace? Get onboard by emailing Jacque Boyd at [presenters@wai.org](mailto:presenters@wai.org). She'll give you all the information you need to put together a stellar proposal. Speaker proposals are due to Jacque by September 1.

## President's Letter

### Hidden Treasures

No doubt about it, the World Wide Web is a big place. There is more information hiding out there than you may ever have the time to explore. Not all of it is credible, but by exercising a little discretion you can usually sort the good from the bad. Overall, it's pretty cool all of the things you can learn/find with the click of a mouse nowadays, and I thought I'd take a moment to share some of the neat stuff I've run across lately.

#### Whitt's Flying • [www.whittsflying.com](http://www.whittsflying.com)

This site isn't exactly easy to navigate, but if you have some time (and patience), some good (and funny!) stuff can be found here.

#### TED • [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

*Ideas worth spreading*, they say, and in many cases I'd have to agree! This website features talks from various speakers on topics ranging from technology to entertainment, business and the arts. A lot of cool innovation can be found here.

#### WAI Members Only • [www.wai.org/membersonly](http://www.wai.org/membersonly)

Have you logged on to the Member's Only section of the WAI web site yet? I have a feeling you're going to like what you'll find. All you need is your e-mail address and your member number to get create a password to use for future visits, and you'll have access to your WAI membership profile, job postings, a list of mentors, the WAI discussion forum, back issues of the WAI Connect Newsletter, and more.

## MEETING NOTES

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The plan this year is to offer brats, chips, a pickle, and a cookie for sale from 11-1. We will pre-cook the brats that morning so that there is little to do that day other than serve the hungry pilots. Please let Kelly know ASAP if you will be able to

help that day.

- Betty Monnett reported that things are going really well with our Girl Scout program and the partnership we have with EAA. She and Kathleen made a presentation to a group on May 12, and both stressed the importance of giving the girls something they can relate to so that they stay interested. Marion Blakely says that the next Girl Scout program is scheduled in fall and so we will take this time off to refine the presentation and write out a script. We also need to assemble a packet we can send out to troops who request it. Betty will be working on this.

- We are eligible for a 20% discount on WAI merchandise as a chapter if we place an order of \$200 or more. Chapter members may purchase the items at cost, but the merchandise may then be used for a fundraiser. We will be placing an order in early August so that we can sell merchandise at our Summer Hangar Social as well as give our members the opportunity to purchase WAI merchandise. Please visit [www.WAI.org](http://www.WAI.org) to browse the catalog and bring your selections to the next meeting or e-mail them to Kelly.

- The next meeting is scheduled for June 19, and Marion is checking to see if her friend from Angel Flight can join us.

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## Member Spotlight: Rusty Sachs

**1. Job title:** Executive Director, National Association of Flight Instructors

**2. What I enjoy most about my job:** The intimate involvement with flight training throughout the world, helping members to define and solve their problems.

**3. When I am not at work I am:** Home in Vermont. If I'm in Wisconsin, I'm working.

**4. Aviation affiliation:** I started flying as a high school junior in 1959 and never stopped.

**6. Favorite Airplane:** Whatever I'm about to fly; it's tough to narrow it down. Perhaps a Socata Trinidad TB-21, which I fly a lot. My favorite *aircraft* is a Sikorsky S-58, which I flew in Vietnam and still fly in airshows occasionally.

**7. One thing most people don't know about me:** People who know me know everything about me, sooner or later. I have no secrets. But there are some "facts" about me that are NOT true. No matter what you hear: I was never six foot two, I never had a weekend fling with Sandra Bullock, and I did not play rhythm guitar for KISS.

**8. My greatest accomplishment in life so far:**

Becoming a charter member of the Oshkosh chapter of WAI.

**9. One thing I want to do before I die:** Fly the Atlantic. Oh, and have a weekend fling with Sandra Bullock.

**12. The person I most admire:** Of people I actually know, Marlene Sachs. Of all those who ever lived, it's a tossup between Charles Lindbergh and Mark Twain.

**11. The latest CD that I bought:** CCR's greatest hits.

**12. My most favorite (a) food and (b) restaurant:** (a) Food is a big thing in my life. An ideal meal would begin with *Billi-bi*, a cream-based mussel soup; continue with saddle of lamb *en persillade* and a *gratinée*, with Baba au rhum for dessert. (b) Bofinger, not far from the Opera in Paris.

**13. My least favorite place to be:** In line.

**14. My favorite place to be:** At the controls of an aircraft with my family on board, headed off for an awesome vacation somewhere. Or see 12(b).

**15. Why I joined Women in Aviation:** The organization focuses on the two subjects I love the most.