



Montgomery Flight – 1904



Moffett Field – 1933



China Clipper – 1936



Hiller XH-44 – 1944



NASA Ames Research Center – 1981

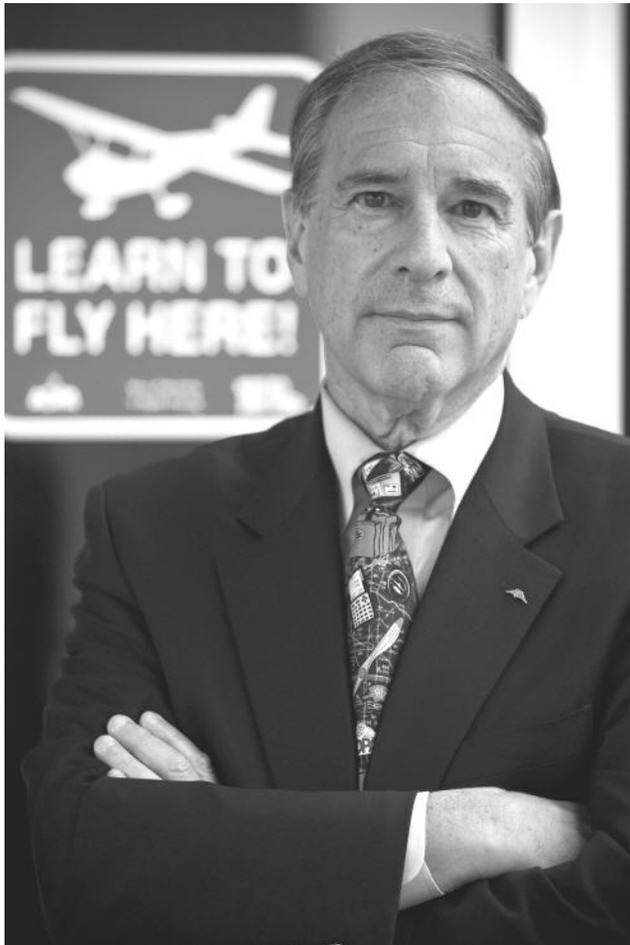
Northern Wings

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The Aero Club of Northern California

Fall 2008

Phil Boyer to receive Crystal Eagle



-- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Photo

AOPA President Phil Boyer to be honored at Expo '08

AOPA president becomes 26th recipient of honor

Phil Boyer, the longtime president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, will be the 2008 recipient of the Crystal Eagle, awarded annually by the Aero Club of Northern California to honor those whose achievements are the highest in aviation.

In a departure from the traditional Aero Club Crystal Eagle dinner, the award this year will be presented during the closing banquet of AOPA's Expo 2008, which is expected to draw thousands of pilots Nov. 6-8 at the San Jose McEnergy Convention Center in downtown San Jose.

Boyer, who has led the world's largest and one of the most influential civil aviation organizations since 1991, plans to retire at the end of the year.

With the Crystal Eagle Award, he joins a long list of aviation luminaries who have been so honored since legendary aviator Jimmy Doolittle received the first Crystal Eagle in 1983. Over the years, the previous 25 recipients have included Chuck Yeager, Bill Lear, Jeanna Yeager, Scott Crossfield, Elgen Long, Burt Rutan, Eileen Collins, Sean D. Tucker and Steve Fossett.

Boyer, a 7,000-hour-plus instrument- and multiengine-rated pilot, has been flying for more than 30 years, 15 as an aircraft owner. With an extensive background as a television news executive, he took the reins of AOPA 17 years ago and was instrumental in building its membership by more than 33 percent

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AOPA Expo 2008 comes to S.J. Convention Center Nov. 6-8

AOPA Expo 2008, this year's gathering of tens of thousands of pilots for the annual convention of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, will be held Nov. 6-8 at the San Jose McEnergy Convention Center.

The Expo returns to San Jose -- the

center of innovation and technology -- for the first time since 1996 to showcase the latest developments and products in General Aviation as well as offer a variety of aviation seminars.

More than 60 of the newest general aviation aircraft, with glass cockpits and other technological innovations,

will be on display at Mineta San Jose International Airport. Free shuttle service will be provided between the airport exhibits and convention hall.

For more information and advance reservations, check AOPA's website at www.aopa.org/expo.

Boyer to receive Crystal Eagle at AOPA Expo in S.J.

(Continued from Page 1)

to 415,000 – two-thirds of all certificated pilots in the United States.

The organization has fought for general aviation issues in venues ranging from local city councils and state legislatures to the U.S. Congress. Most recently, AOPA has led the opposition to the general aviation user fee plan that the Bush Administration and the airlines have pushed to fund the Federal Aviation Administration.

Boyer and other AOPA officials have argued in congressional testimony that the current system based on aviation fuel taxes has been highly successful in building the best aviation system in the world and can easily finance the new technology air traffic control systems of the future.

In the 1990s, AOPA played a major role in the fight to reform the tort law

process that nearly killed the piston-engine aircraft industry in the 1980s. Liability suits targeted manufacturers — presumably the deepest pockets — on flimsy evidence, driving many out of business. AOPA's strong advocacy proved critical to congressional

passage of the 1994 General Aviation Revitalization Act. The act's 18-year statute of limitations and other provisions reinvigorated general aviation.

Boyer also led a successful campaign to persuade the Federal Aviation Administration to certify the satellite-based Global Positioning System for general aviation flight operations.

In addition to political issues, AOPA under Boyer's leadership has developed an extensive series of traveling safety seminars for pilots throughout the country, as well as online aviation safety courses. AOPA has established the AOPA Air Safety Foundation, as well as an AOPA Political Action Committee.

Crystal Eagle Recipients

1983 – James “Jimmy” Doolittle	1996 – Darryl G. Greenamyre
1984 – Charles E. “Chuck” Yeager	1997 – Robert L. “Hoot” Gibson
1985 – Stanley Hiller Jr.	1998 – Donald D. Engen
1986 – William “Bill” Lear	1999 – Paul H. Poberezny
1987 – James M. “Jim” Nissen	2000 – Wayne Handley
1988 – Anthony W. “Tony” LeVier	2001 – Igor I. Sikorsky
1989 – Elbert “Burt” L. Rutan	2002 – A. Scott Crossfield
1990 – George S. Cooper	2003 – Clay Lacy
1991 – Allen E. Paulson	2004 – Elgen Long
1992 – Jeana Yeager	2005 – Eileen Collins
1993 – Robert T. Jones	2006 – Sean D. Tucker
1994 – Frank L. Christensen	2007 – Steve Fossett
1995 – James S. Ricklefs	2008 – Phil Boyer



Lee Behel speeds to Gold win

Lee Behel wins Sport Class Gold at Reno

Aero Club member Lee Behel, flying a non-turbocharged Lancair Legacy, won the Gold Championship in the sport class at the Reno National Championship Air Races in Reno, Nev., Sept. 14.

Behel, a retired San Jose automobile dealer, averaged 335.464 over six laps around a more than seven-mile race course to beat a number of other sport class racers, many of which had turbocharged engines. His aircraft, named “Breathless,” averaged 14 mph faster than the second-place aircraft over the 43 miles of the race around the pylons at Reno-Stead Airport.

Dan Martin, a San Jose building



-- Frank Sweeney Photos

Dan Martin averaged 474.3 mph

contractor flying the highly modified P-51D Mustang “Dago Red,” came in second in the Unlimited Gold Championship race after a tight battle with Bakersfield cotton farmer Bill Destefani in “Strega.”

Martin led the race for several laps around the 8 1/2-mile unlimited course, at times flying so low at more than 450 mph that some observers joked that he must be cutting sagebrush with his propeller.

However, Destefani, in his modified P-51D Mustang, went high over the back side of the course, put his plane into a slight dive and passed Martin. Destefani averaged 483.062 mph; Martin 474.305 mph.

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-- Northern Wings Photo

Kim Becker, SJC assistant director, speaks to Aero Club San Jose airport expansion on track, club luncheon told

San Jose's \$1.3-billion passenger terminal expansion is on time and close to budget with completion scheduled in 2010, assistant aviation director Kim Becker told Aero Club of Northern California members at the club's Fall Luncheon Oct. 1.

A \$750 million project to build the James M. Nissen Passenger Terminal complex is part of an overall program that includes a massive parking garage and major roadway construction at Mineta San Jose International Airport, the aviation gateway to Silicon Valley.

"It's chaotic, it's busy," Becker said, but "it's a great time to get construction done with the passenger numbers down."

San Jose's passenger volume is now about 10.3 million a year, down from 14.6 million before the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks sent the airline industry into an economic spiral.

Five gates in the new North Concourse are scheduled to open next spring, with the remainder of the facility and the new Terminal B to go into service in 2010.

The 20-year-old Terminal A is being expanded and upgraded, while the 43-year-old Terminal C will be demolished when the project is completed.

"We're spending a million dollars a day," Becker said, explaining how rapidly the work is being completed.

The passenger terminal complex is named after Nissen, San Jose's first airport manager who from 1946 to 1975 built the airfield from a dirt landing strip into a modern airport with airline service throughout the country.

More than a year later, Fossett's plane found

More than a year after he disappeared on a pleasure flight, authorities have recovered the wreckage of 2007 Crystal Eagle honoree Steve Fossett's light plane from a mountainside near Mammoth Lakes on the east side of the Sierra Nevada.

It will take months for the National Transportation Safety Board to determine the probable cause of the fatal crash. But it may never be really known why the single-engine Bellanca Decathlon slammed into the face of a mountain at the 10,000-foot elevation.

Fossett, who set 115 records in aviation and sailing, disappeared on Sept. 3, 2007 after taking off from a private ranch south of Carson City, Nev.

Weeks of searches by aerial and ground crews turned up no trace of Fossett, the only person to fly solo, nonstop around the world in both a balloon and an airplane.

On Sept. 29 this year, a hiker found Fossett's pilot's license and some other documents on a mountainside and notified authorities. The aircraft wreckage was found two days later.

Fossett died before he could accept the Aero Club's Crystal Eagle Award. On March 8, his wife, Peggy Fossett, accepted the award on his behalf.

Einar Enevoldson of Oakland, Fossett's co-pilot on their altitude record-setting sailplane flight in Argentina on Aug. 29, 2006, was the dinner speaker.

Nissen family funds Aero Club scholarship

One of the scholarships that the Aero Club awards annually to college and university aviation students now has a permanent endowment, thanks to the generosity of the Nissen family.

Sallie Nissen Moran, daughter of the man who built San Jose's airport from 1946 to 1975, attended the Fall Luncheon of the Aero Club to present a \$20,000 check from the Nissen estate to endow permanently an Aero Club scholarship in Jim Nissen's name.

The James M. Nissen Scholarship has been awarded since Nissen, the 1987 Crystal Eagle honoree, died in 1994. The family's donation ensures the scholarship will always be funded by the interest gained on its investment

S.C. County supervisors abandon attempt to sell Reid-Hillview

Santa Clara County supervisors, after launching a study of closing Reid-Hillview Airport so the land could be sold for development to offset the county's staggering budget

deficit, decided that isn't such a good idea after all.

The board voted 4-1 against the idea Aug. 12 after getting a report from its legal counsel that trying to

escape sponsor's agreements with the FAA for federal funds would be a long, difficult and likely losing legal battle. The agreements require the county to keep the airport open.

History Corner

Jim Nissen: A distinguished flier before building SJC

When Jim Nissen started building San Jose's airport in the late 1940s, he already had a long, distinguished flying career as a Navy aviator, trans-Pacific flier and research test pilot.

Nissen, for whom Mineta San Jose International Airport's new passenger terminal complex is named, was what aviators consider a "pilot's pilot" – the very best.

Born in Livermore in 1915, he started flying gliders from local hills at age 10. Later he was pulled aloft with a tow from the family car. He flew powered airplanes as a teenager, then earned an engineering degree at the University of California at Berkeley.

After graduation, Nissen entered the Navy's aviation program. He flew everything from the biplane fighters of the late 1930s to the Navy Catalina flying boats on long-range journeys to Latin America. His goal was to become a research test pilot with the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics – the forerunner of today's space agency, NASA.



--Nissen Family Photo
Jim Nissen with glider in 1920s

In 1940, NACA had established Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, and Nissen waited for a job.

In the meantime, he began flying Pan American Airways Clippers – huge four-engine flying boats – from San Francisco across the Pacific to Asia. It took several days of flying, with stops at various islands each night, to make the crossing.

The following year, however, NACA called and Nissen became a research test pilot in a World War II era when aviation broke all of the old boundaries.

Airplanes were flirting with the sound barrier, and those of the near future that were likely to go supersonic were jets – with no propeller. No one knew the

aerodynamic forces on an aircraft approaching that speed, particularly without a propeller.

Nissen proposed NACA remove the propeller from a P-51 Mustang fighter plane, equip it with aerodynamic sensors, and tow it aloft. From 30,000 feet altitude, Nissen could dive the plane at tremendous speed to get the compressibility stall measurements, then make a dead-stick landing.

The first few flights over the Southern California desert were uneventful. But on the final flight, both tow cables snapped off the P-61 Black Widow tow plane and wrapped around both of Nissen's wings, jamming his controls. Nissen crashed-landed in a gravel pit, but tests were a success.

In 1945, Nissen and two partners leased 16.4 acres of the undeveloped land that San Jose had bought for an airport in 1940. They started a small aviation business and built a hangar and a dirt runway. Two years later, the city hired Nissen to become the city's first airport manager and build the airport.

The Aero Club of Northern California

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Chartered in 1981 as a chapter of the
National Aeronautic Association



-- To keep the public informed of the importance of aviation and space flight to the nation's economic progress, its security, and to international understanding.
-- To support a vigorous aviation and space education program for students at all levels of learning.
-- To recognize and honor those who make outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation and space flight.