

Seabee Club Newsletter

October 2013



Heritage Flight Foundation's Vintage Aircraft Weekend

Hello Everyone,

February of this year I wrote, "I've really missed doing your newsletter and feel like I've lost touch with family." I got one newsletter out and promised more, I called it a new beginning. That didn't happen! Since then many of you wrote and asked to be put back on the list and each time I'd respond that the list was still intact. . . I'd just been delinquent. I wrote my sob story of starting a new job, blah, blah, blah. . . I can't begin to tell you how disconnected I feel now. So, here we go again.

It hasn't been a very interesting two years for us, just busy and not doing Seabee stuff! There have been some exciting things going on though that I'll be happy to share and I hope too that many of you will write of your adventures and news that we can share with the group. My intention, as always, has been to bring the Seabee community together. Not that we've really been apart, but especially in today's busy world it seems we just don't get a chance to get together much. Everyone has a busy life and then of course there is the cost of fuel! If we can't Bee together, perhaps we can Bee together in spirit by sharing some of our adventures. Heck, who knows, maybe it will inspire us to actually spend some time together.

As for content, unless I get the plea for help, I'm going to leave the classifieds for Barnstormers, Trade-A-Plane, our Yahoo Group and of course our website, www.republicseabee.com. I will keep the newsletter about us and offer a place to share your stories, news and anything you think will benefit others. I'll make the plea again too, if you know another Bee lover, make sure they are getting this newsletter. If they are not, either send me their email or have them send a note to either of my email addresses, BruceHinds@Earthlink.net or Brewster@WaveCable.com so I can get them on the list. Through the past two years, I've had computer changes, viruses, messed up data bases and Windows 8. Through the reconstruction process I may have lost some and my list may not be complete, so please try to spread the word. Thanks!

What's going on

First, I need to let you all know of the passing of Donn Booth. I just got the note from Judy that he'd passed away September 24th. I don't have any details. Donn has been a great "pen pal" of mine since the beginning of my newsletter days. He was eager to share his Seabee knowledge and experience with me, even sent me a few original Seabee treasures over the years. I know many of you that have been around the old water wagon longer than I probably know Donn. He was also active with SPA as one of the two Field Directors for the New York. My prayers go out to all that



knew him.

Shortly after sending that last newsletter I received another sad note from Don Kyte regarding our friend Keith Heibert. He writes, "My old friend, Keith Heibert passed away on February 9th after a 7 year battle with genetic kidney disease.

He was the first person with a background in Seabees to contact me when I started my Glacier View Airways flight-seeing business up there in 1988. I described our meeting in a chapter of my book, "Southeast Alaska Flightseeing via Seabee" on page 102. Keith's dad had a Seabee so Keith did a lot of Seabee flying with him at Wrangle where they lived at the time. Later, Keith had his own seaplane, but always had a warm spot for Seabees. We did a lot of flying together.

He lived in Petersburg at the time I met him and became a true friend. Whenever I needed anything he was always there for me. One time in particular I had a problem with my engine and made a precautionary landing in Frederick Sound near Cape Fenshaw. My wife, Jean, was with me and we were on our way to Juneau from Seattle for the start of another season of flying.

The engine would backfire and miss if I applied more than half throttle. I called the Coast Guard to see if anyone was near enough to help me. Nobody was near enough, so I called Keith on my cell phone. He found a friend with a boat and started up Frederick Sound to give me a tow back.

Since it would soon be dark, I started taxiing toward Petersburg to meet him. After a few miles it became apparent we wouldn't meet up before dark and the water was getting rougher. I found I could taxi fast enough to get it on the step without too many misses in the engine, and gradually managed to get airborne.

Keith and his friend kept coming in case I had to land, but I had enough altitude to reach the airport by the time I passed their boat. He met me at the airport after he had docked and put us up overnight. "A friend in need is a friend indeed". We will miss him very much."

I usually see Keith at our NW Aviation Trade show that happens every February. Since I'm there with the WSPA, he makes it a point to stop by our booth and talk Seabee. I knew he had big health issues and doubted he'd ever fly again. The last time I spoke with him though, we talked helicopters. He said he was doing better and was researching which kind of copter to buy! I missed the conference being stuck in AZ one year and missed seeing him. Then this past year that I was there, he didn't show. It was shortly after that last newsletter that I got a call from his wife Jane.

Fair winds and blue skies dear friends . . .

Getting on to better news - John Cuny, long time Seabee owner who hailed from Texas for a long time, yes he was even SPA's Field Director there for quite a while. He now lives here in WA, but his Bee has been in a shop for the last 14 years! This may take the record for the longest rebuild in history. For many years little progress had been made. Recently it's become a high priority and it's quickly coming together in a shop in Minnesota. This spring John plans to fly the pants off of it there to work the bugs out, exploring the Midwest and central Canada(talk about bugs!) then, bring it home the end of next summer. This will be one magnificent airplane.



Long time Seabee owner Roger Duke finally sold his airplane. Roger had done the Simuflight conversion himself back in the '70s and has owned it all this time. There a few people that had looked at the airplane and expressed concern about the GO-480 installed. It had been manufactured in Italy! Actually many of the GO-480's were built there under license from Lycoming. What makes this especially interesting is that the airplane has gone to Italy!

I had gotten a call from Cesare Baj of Aero Club Como who was coming to the US to look at Seabees and wanted to get in touch with Roger. You may have seen this story in SPA's Water Flying

magazine. Roger delivered it to Renton Airport where it was disassembled, loaded in a container and shipped to Lake Como. The Seabee plays a strong role in the history of Aero Club Como and there are



many fond memories of the Bee they once had. This year the club celebrates its 100th anniversary and should have the Bee back on the water soon. While their team was here they took the time to offer us a wonderful evening presentation on the history of Aero Club Como and share their excitement in the acquisition of their "new" Bee.

Did you know that your American licenses are recognized in Italy? The other part of this good news is that you can actually rent seaplanes at Aero Club Como. So, once they re-assemble the Bee and add their special touch of tender love and care, it may be available for you to fly in Northern Italy. Wow!

Then there's the "Other Bruce." That's what we've been calling ourselves over the past few years that we've been pen-pals regarding his interest in finding a Bee of his own. Boy did he find a dandy too. Dave Reeve who had actually known Joe McHugh and done the Simuflight conversion under Joe's supervision finally parted with his airplane. Dave had also done extensive work on the old girl recently and it was in beautiful shape.

The "OB"(Bruce Douglas) is on fire about his new love. Check out the Seabee Grin! We got to meet when he came out to pick it up. He met with Rich Wais for some instruction and then they departed for his home in Minnesota. The weather didn't work out too promising and they got stuck in Spokane for a time. Bruce had to get home and Rich continued the trip a week or so later on his own to get the Bee to the OB. Rich was just a little surprised that the performance going across the high country was not what he expected, that is until he delivered the airplane and they started unloading it. He could not believe all the stuff that was stashed in the hull compartments.

The surprising coincidence about this sale is that Dave had moved from WA and had been living in MN for many years and not far from Bruce. Bruce actually knew about Dave's airplane and was surprised when he found it for sale in WA.

Those of us in WA are saddened that two beautiful flying airplanes have left the state, but the great news is that they will be flying. That's something that neither one had done in some time. Hopefully John will have his home by next summer and we'll be up one on the count of those actually flying on a regular basis. I am still surprised that there are so many here that just don't fly. Why is that?

Although we didn't get out much this summer, we did meet up with Tom and Mary Hoag for the Vintage Aircraft Weekend at Paine Field. That's always a fun time and you can see our few seconds of fame here. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWIG51nR494&feature=player_embedded We are about 2:43 into the very interesting 3:44 minute video. Thanks to Tom Hoag for sending that and the opening picture at the top of the newsletter.

Last newsletter I had sent out a list of California Seabees and asked if anyone knew of their status... "Hey Bruce, regarding Seabees N6248K and N6292K, both were owned by my boss Richard Essery. N6248K lost its prop in flight and made a hard landing in 2007. What was left of it was stored at Ramona



airport until 2012. I disassembled the wreck and brought it to Gillespie field in El Cajon. Richard decided to try and have a replacement Seabee built, and bought N6292K which was previously owned by Wally McDonald. It too had crashed, from an engine failure, and Wally brought it back to Sonoma and started to rebuild it. He did a lot of really nice work, but he passed away before completing it. I brought that project to Gillespie field in El Cajon also. I am building one plane out of the two. I'm using the Daubenspeck conversion with GO480 G2D6 from N6248K. Michael Daubenspeck would not give permission to use that on a second airplane (one aircraft only STC), so the new plane will be a "repair" of N6248K. So I guess that means that N6292 will be gone from the registry. I am busy building the plane right now and will deal with all the registration paperwork when it's done. The whole thing is coming together (relatively) quickly, except that I am having a hell of a time finding either a new prop, or parts to repair the old one. So that's the story on those two N numbers. Cheers, Seth Schlam"

Regarding Mike Daubenspeck, I'm trying to get the paperwork on one of his dad's STC's for a twin turbo set up for the GO-480. I know of only one airplane that has it. When it was flying here it was ideal for the limited time you need some extra MP for crossing the rocks. It had a manual waste gate so you only ran it when needed and the rest of the time it stayed pretty cool.

I got a nice note from Connie Clark, she is finally out from under the stress of selling Ed's airplane. It was purchased by Jerry Frey. I believe it has been shipped up to Simuflight to bring back to flying status. Yeall!

Small world!

It's been a few months since this happened, but I'd been emailing back and forth with Steve Mestler regarding the website, newsletters and how we've become so taken with the whole project. Of course Jim Poel's name came up since he and Jim were instrumental in taking over the website from John Hooper. Jim was a focal point for the both of us, no real surprise there. Jim was Mr. Seabee Hospitality to everyone he met I think. The best part of it was that he made you the Special New Seabee Guy and introduced you to everyone making you feel like you were his new best friend. What a gift he had.

Well, that's what happened to me at Sun and Fun about a year after we purchased our Bee. That's the same thing that happened to Steve Mestler at Sun and Fun! He writes, "Jim Poel flew up to Atlanta and we all flew back to Spruce Creek to his house for a week of training. During the training he had to go to Sun 'n Fun but my dad and I stayed and trained with Gene Letter (CFI-former Seabee owner) for the duration. It was the best week I ever had. Jim came back from SNF and gave us a "checkride". Flew back home the end of March!!"

As we bounced our stories off each other, he said, "that was March 2000!" That was the same month and year we bought our Bee. What stars were lined up at that time? The two guys that run the website and the newsletter from opposite ends of the country both purchased our Simuflight SuperBees the same month and same year. Brothers in spirit, no doubt!

Real Deal

I believe this to be the real deal. I'm sure many of you have had the email that appears to come from someone you know. They claim to be stuck in a foreign country . . . Sound familiar? The following letter from Don Wehmeyer may sound fishy, but it is for real. Don purchased the type certificate and has plans to put the aircraft back into production. Don is from Seattle and is in China working on experimental engine technology. He has clients that wish to have a coastal patrol plane and the Seabee fits the bill. He figures with the hydro-forming process he can make many of needed airframe parts and he's currently using this technology for other projects.

We had talked on a few occasions; the whole process to bring the Bee back would be slow and if it's going to happen, will probably take place in stages. He may just supply some needed parts that are getting rare, and then more to eventually even build a kit. He would like to spool up production over there for his clients to produce complete airplanes. Nobody wants to purchase something they can't see

and touch, so he's looking for solid airplanes that can be cleaned up and put on display.

I'd be interested to hear if any of you have talked to Don or taken him up on this deal.

Dear Seabee Owner

July 1, 2013

My name is Donald Wehmeyer and I am writing to you because you are the owner of a RC3 Seabee amphibious aircraft. I am sending this letter to registered Seabee owners. My family purchased the Republic RC3 type certificate two years ago and we are in the process of getting the Seabee back into production. It is a major undertaking to say the least. We must start with little steps as we progress we will eventually start producing Seabees in the US.

As you are fully aware, the US is not the economical country to start aircraft production. We will begin producing certified parts and components in China, ship the parts to the US and build Seabees one at a time. Even this is one or two years away. We will also be making Seabee parts available to existing owners.

China does not have private aircraft or even private pilots in numbers over 1000. The wealthy people want to own aircraft. We have spent the last year working with local and regional government agencies to learn what to do and how to do it. We are now ready to bring two or three non-flying Seabees to China for exhibition only. We have agreements with Exhibition Centers, Large Luxury Malls and Private Country Clubs to display the Seabees. The Seabees will be a major attraction. We have several large companies that want to place their logos on the Seabees for advertising exposure. The logo ads will produce cash flow.

Now the reason for this letter:

- [1] If your Seabee is not being flown much or is unable to fly for any reason we would like to use it, buy it or lease it. If we can agree on the value of your Seabee then we proceed.
- [2] It does not have to be in perfect condition or flying condition. We intend to make it presentable. It will be a static display, not to be flown.
- [3] The Seabee would be dismantled and shipped to Shanghai in a special sea freight container.
- [4] We would strip & paint if needed re-assemble, add the logos and put it on display. It would not be flown in China.
- [5] The revenue from the logo ads would be first used to recover expenses. Then the profits would be divided between the Seabee owner and our Chinese company.
- [6] The term of the logo ads is 12 months. During that period we may want to buy out your interest in the Seabee.
- [7] Another function of the Seabee on exhibition is to demo it to prospective buyers. It is difficult to get orders for aircraft if they don't see a real one.
- [8] If my family were wealthy I would not be writing to you. We have invested all of our savings in the Seabee project. Chinese investors are actively looking at our business plan and may come through with the funds to start production quickly. My logo program is a separate project but will become a division of the manufacturing company when it is funded.

If you have an interest in this project I will be happy to discuss the details at your convenience. I am living in Shanghai, China but my home is in Kirkland, WA. I am an engineer and have always liked the Seabee.

Thank you for your time to read this letter. If you know other Seabee owners please tell them about this project.

Sincerely yours,

Don Wehmeyer

donwehmeyer@yahoo.com

206) 965-8137 (Hong Kong time)

I know I said no classifieds, but I also got the following plea from Bob Wells. Perhaps what I should do is run anyone's ad once. Just to be the first place on the market where all Bee lovers can have first shot. What do you think?

I don't know if I am retired or just retarded. I had a helicopter service from about 1971, quit flying about 5 years back, still run the shop doing overhauls and annuals. The problem is that when the gas price goes up, flying goes down and the FAA gets larger.

Please keep me out of trouble. I have a lot of Sea Bee parts; a lot of junk but also some good things. Wing struts, control surfaces, some wing floats, couple of struts for the floats, engine parts, one propeller (It's look good, but I don't think it is any good, it's the old fiber/plastic), and tail wheel parts. Anyone interested? Let me know and we'll check it out. I'm open for pricing and would prefer to trade for something I may need. You can contact Bob at rwcopter@gmail.com

Thanks all for taking the time to read through all this. Once again I'm so sorry it's been so long. Feel free to call or write, offer comments, criticism and/or suggestions. Help us keep the Seabee alive. Seabee is always spoken here.

Bee Sea n'ya,

Bruce Hinds
360-710-5793 cell

