

# POTTSTOWN AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS

Originated February 26, 1948 – Incorporated January 15, 1960  
www.paop.org, Facebook: PAOP, Inc. a/k/a "The Flyers Roost"  
3310 West Ridge Pike, Pottstown, PA 19464

February 2020 News, enticing articles, and more...

Dear members,

In January Mike McNamara hitched a ride with me in my Cessna Skylane to our flyout, then in February I hitched a with him in his Beech Bonanza for our flyout to Fredrick Maryland. As the Bonanza climbed out after takeoff It soon become apparent that there was a broken ceiling at 4500' so we decided to climb to 6500' and get on top. We could see breaks in the clouds and by the time we got to Fredrick it was no problem to get down through. We met up with Gene and Laura at the restaurant and soon Andy and Kathy arrived. We had breakfast at the airport, however Andy and Kathy decided to get an Uber and go into town. Maybe I will do that next time. On the way back Mike filed IFR and we climbed up thru to 7000' picking up just a tad of ice. That cleared off and with a tail wind we made it home in 35 to 40 minutes. That Bonanza is definitely quicker than the 182 at level cruise.

For this year's April clean up I am thinking 2 Saturdays April 18 and 25. If you can't make both maybe you can make one. Besides the normal yard clean up, the Roost needs some repairs. We need to replace a sidewalk block by the back door and the pavilion needs some new concrete pier footings before it blows away. Some of the roof panels need to be screwed down on the pavilion. Where the bonfire used to be it has become a mess and needs to be dealt with. So, we can use your help. We usually start around 8 or 8:30 and try to be done by lunch. I am thinking we can have hoagies for lunch.

The dinner meeting this month at Copperfield's is 2/27. I am not sure if we will have a speaker just yet, but I hear we might be getting a speaker on Aviation Insurance. Come join us for the comradery and good times. This month's fly out is to the Flying W near Maguire air base in New Jersey. We will meet at the Main hanger at 9 AM. See you there!

Erik Forde

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## PANCAKES IN THE RANCH HOUSE

In 1964, William Whitesell, a former Eastern Airlines captain, and his brother, James, of Whitesell Construction fame, cofounded the Flying W Ranch (N14). It was conceived as a combination dude ranch, airport, and western-themed motel. Since then, it's gone through many iterations in services, quality, FBOs, and flight schools, and even runway configurations (a short "crosswind" runway at one time complemented the remaining runway 1-19). A constant has been the airplane-shaped pool, now the center of a swim club. The restaurants have gone from excellent white-tablecloth with \$20 Sunday brunch, to snack bar, and many forms in between, some good and some not so much.

On Sunday, February 23 we'll be flying for breakfast at the latest occupant of the restaurant space, the Patti Wagon Café for their not quite famous all you can eat buffet pancake brunch. It's a relatively short hop to N14, just 39 nm. Beware of the traffic at South Jersey Regional (KVAY), just a couple of miles northwest. The airports share a CTAF, 122.8. Flying W is distinguished by the north-south runway (with perpetual crosswind), vs. South Jersey's east-west. Of course, you'll see the pool.

We'll gather at Penn Airways at 0900 for 0930 takeoff. Bring a friend or bring a student pilot (or bring a friend who is a student pilot). Contact Andy Landis (215-527-7440 or [andrew.landis@chlsystems.com](mailto:andrew.landis@chlsystems.com)) if you want a ride or have an available seat in your plane.

Make sure you have chocks for your plane. The transient ramp facing the runway slopes away from the runway, and more than one hapless pilot has seen his plane rolling backward.

By the way, for a great read, pick up a copy of *I'd Rather Be Flying*, by Frank Kingston Smith. Published in 1962, it's the story of a retired Philadelphia lawyer and his quest for instrument and multi-engine ratings, tutored by Whitesell. It also gives more background of how Whitesell wound up in the airport-owning business, following a car crash that ended his airline career. It's available from Amazon. Smith's son, Frank Jr., is a popular air show announcer.

## The one constant is change.

One thing that you can be sure of, if you stand in one place long enough, things change. It may be subtle change, or it may be significant change. I've only been around General Aviation Since July of 1999. My flight training started out at Perkiomen Valley, N10 (Collegeville) and my first landing at KPTW was on November 24, 2000 as a student pilot. Back then it was called Pottstown Limerick Airport and was owned by Exelon, the electric company. After August 26, 2001, I finished my flight training at KPTW, with a brief interlude at the Reading airport. The Airport was still Pottstown Limerick at that time. I've flown out of KPTW as my base since 2001.

In 2000, when I started being based at KPTW, the airport was owned by Exelon Generation Company, but operated by Keystone Helicopters and in 2009 the Airport was sold to an enterprise owned by Mr. John Desmond'. "Limerick Aviation LP" owns the airport and is managed by Penn Airways.

Prior to that purchase, John Desmond was working on the purchase, and at one point attended a dinner at the Roost at KPTW operated by the Pottstown Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Inc. (PAOP). John was not a young man at that time, but brought his enthusiasm for aviation, and for the coming settlement on that airport with him. He explained his vision for new facilities, and expansion of the runway, and closest to his heart, a museum of aviation to be built to house the antique aircraft which he owned.

John Desmond, a man in his nineties, passed away before he could fully realize his dreams. His Grandson Josh Desmond now oversees the Airport operations and stated that his Grandfather had in fact delighted in owning the airport and more particularly coming to the main hangar where three of his cherished antique planes were housed. Those planes have been sold off by his estate and are in the hands of other collectors.

Renaming the airport to 'Heritage Field' was one of the enduring legacies of Mr. Desmond's ownership. Josh Desmond agreed to an interview so we can have a glimpse at the future of the Airport as it is currently developing. I hope I accurately represent our conversation here for your understanding of how complicated moving forward can be.

A general aviation airport consists of a runway (KPTW - 3,375 x 75 feet), taxiways, hangars for safekeeping aircraft, an office building or main hangar with offices from which the airport is managed, weather stations, FAA airport lighting and wind indicators, dawn to dusk runway and taxiway lighting, and more. The airport at Heritage Field houses within the main hangar the FBO or Fixed Base Operator (Penn Airways), management of the property (Limerick Aviation LP), and offices for the flight school, charter service and others. The flight school is operated by Fly Elite LLC, and the charter service by Fare Share LLC. A rescue helicopter service is operated by PennSTAR and housed in the main hangar, as well as the rescue helicopters themselves stationed out on the tarmac. There are also licensed aviation Airframe and Powerplant certified mechanics with Inspection Authorization (A&P/IA) at the main hangar as well as two tenants, Kent Heller and Ned Gibbons, on the south side of the airport who provide such FAA mandated services to the general aviation public. Fuel service for the planes includes self-service and hangar delivered aviation fuel which is also provided by the FBO.

In operating a General Aviation airport such as Heritage, it is necessary for the operation and growth to take advantage of public funds, which are available through both State and Federal Grants and Loans programs. Heritage is such an airport. At the time the Desmond interests bought the airport, there were already grants and loans in place, which had benefitted or continue to benefit the airport.

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In 2009/2010 the airport was federally obligated because of prior or existing grants and programs. Obligated but with no plan, and no money. In the first three years of ownership the owners were fighting to get out of the obligations in order to run and finance the airport privately without the financial oversight and strings that were attached to the federal programs. Finally, the decision was made to go with the flow, and 2017 was the first year to be awarded any project money. In cooperation with the State Bureau of Aviation and the Federal Agencies, 2017 was the first year to be awarded money from the State of Pennsylvania or the FAA.

Without getting into too much detail of the specific programs, the Airport had begun applying for grants under the State 'Multi Modal' programs, beginning in 2013. 2017 was the first year to be awarded any project money for snow removal equipment. In 2017 in cooperation with Limerick Township as a sponsor, there was access to state funds. In 2018/2019 The airport was funded for design of planned improvements. The overall approval could be for as much as Fifteen Million Dollars to be spent, much of that money coming from state and federal programs.

The first sign to come of the development will be the addition of taxiways on the north side of the airport along with the placing of foundations for commercial hangars on the north side of the airport. A new Airport Entrance approximately 50 to 75 feet south of the present entrance is planned to make a more appropriate and better entrance. Also planned is a renewed or replaced Apron, Hangar and Terminal. In 2021-2023 plans are for corporate hangar pads approximately 60x60, all funded and going forward.

The Runways are a longer process in part because the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has to perform risk assessment of any revised design all the way up to shovel ready.

A new phase is also coming. in addition to being one of three reliever airports for Philadelphia International, according to Josh Desmond, no other airport of the three has the growth potential for development and expansion.

It has been rumored around the airport about a sale of the airport to new owners. The report is true. An Agreement of Sale has been entered into with a new ownership group. The potential new owners do not want to go public with their identity before approvals by the FAA, NRC, State and local officials. The good news is that this new group desires to run and operate the airport and is fully aware of the current and future plans including Multi modal funding, and the strings attached to the State and Federal grants and programs.

I want to thank Josh Desmond for taking the time to give me the interview, and after talking with him about the current progress in obtaining and working the various programs, as well as the intentions of the potential new owners, I feel positive and excited about the future of Heritage Field, and it's progress going forward.

On a purely personal note, and one I have shared with Josh Desmond for a couple of years is: "Where is the second-floor airport café overlooking the airport and runway for the pilots and the public to enjoy in the plans?"

Mike "Sky-hawk" Sehl

"a beautiful day to fly"

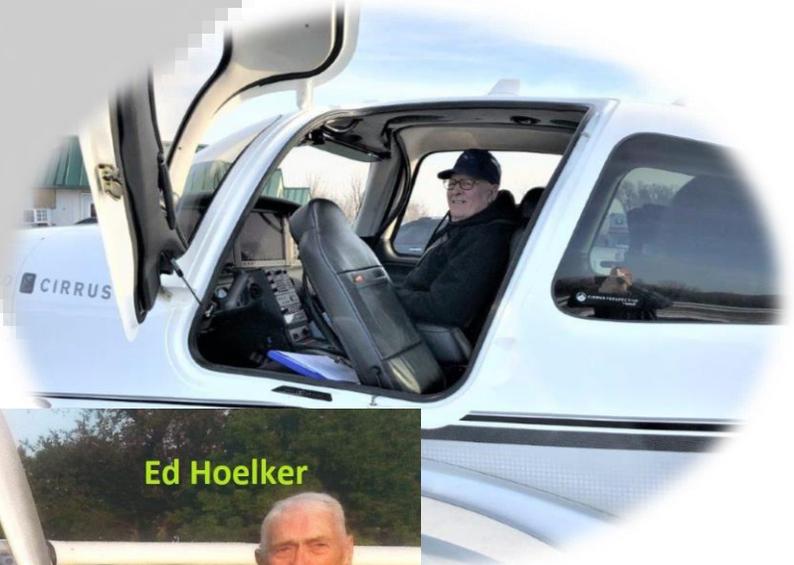
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## The Editor's Beacon

I took a Sunday ride today in my Arrow. Just Kathy and I tooling around with not much of a destination. The air was calm at the surface but shear mixing from lower level wind speeds of 20 knots or more made the air ripple like a playful brook without boundaries of earth and sky. We usually don't mind this light bump and buffet and I think it gives that invisible fluid more of a presence to perceive the beauty of our wings. I often say there are only 2 things you can do in an airplane – fly around or go somewhere. Today we did a little of both. What a joy to climb, descend, turning and tracking, searching, communicating on the radio, and taking in the myriad stimulus only the magical airplane seat can give.

Part of the joy of flight is connection to others we come to know who share this magic of up, down, twisting, turning freedom. As whim and desire set my path I flew over and around familiar places sometimes thinking of folks I've known and flown with who passed on just last year. I sometimes find the sky a refuge where I can feel a little closer to those who have shared the same with me in the past.

Clayton Landis, That's my Dad. 1925-2019



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...They say that young folks are our future...and here is one now!

Meet Kyle Clemmer:

Kyle is a new PAOP member who shares the love of flight. He was a little reluctant to become a Flight Instructor but has enjoyed teaching at Quakertown and Wings Field. Kyle also built up some logbook hours flying the last two summers at the Jersey shore towing banners in this Cessna 150 outfitted with a 180 HP motor. Not a typo...180 HP...Now that sounds like fun and Kyle has assured me that indeed it is! I'll bet you need to step on that rudder pedal.



Kyle has taken an offer from PSA airlines and is currently being indoctrinated on the CRJ 200/700/900. He has already completed his (ATP-CTP) Airline Transport Pilot Certification Training Program. Perhaps he will take some notes and share his experiences with us at a future PAOP meeting. I always ask friends I know who go on to fly these awesome machines for panel pics showing those impressive ground speeds or amazing front seat views. All the best from your friends at PAOP!

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