

**PRESIDENT**

STU ARCHER
7340 SW 132 ST
MIAMI, FL 33156-6804
(305) 238-0911

VICE PRESIDENT

CG "DINO" VLAHAKIS
54 WESTVIEW LN
LEBANON NH 03766-2016
(603) 448-3729

TREASURER / EDITOR

GENE PATTERSON
1202 EAST RIDGE VILLAGE DRIVE,
CUTLER BAY, FL 33157
(305) 235-7613

More Troublesome Passengers

By Captain Robert Lee Bragg - Edited by Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg, Ph.D.

Over the years, I have had a great deal of experience dealing with passengers - all kinds of passengers. While most of the bad ones were nothing to write home about, there were a few that do stand out in my memory.

A very typical "troublesome" passenger was a rather small Arab flying in first-class from London to New York in the 1990s. The purser informed me that she had a loud passenger in first class who was using extremely foul language, cursing out the flight attendants in a very belligerent manner. I immediately went back to talk with him. I asked, "What's the problem?" His responses, in perfect albeit surly English, included the fact that he didn't think he was getting the service he deserved and that he didn't like having to ask for things twice, especially for more champagne. I explained that he was not the only passenger that had to be served and that he simply could not continue to curse the flight attendants and the purser. I stressed that his conduct was just not acceptable on any commercial airline. I know that I repeated myself for emphasis throughout our conversation. I refrained from saying anything about what the *Koran* has to say about alcohol.

At the end he calmed down and sat down. I can't say he was happy, but he was at least quiet. I always thought it helped that I had on my cap, tie, and jacket. All in all, he was one of a limited number of "trying" passengers who were just part of an ordinary day now and then. The really memorable passengers were much more unique. An example immediately come to mind.

One one occasion, our B-747 was bound for New York's Kennedy airport from Frankfurt. The year was 1990. It was a very ordinary flight until about three hours after take-off when the purser called the cockpit

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No Password Needed for Members Only Section of the Website

Please note - we have changed the access to the online newsletters so that you will no longer need a password to access them. GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT: www.clipperpioneers.com. To request a current membership list, email sue@clipperpioneers.com with your request. Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

More Troublesome Passengers

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and said that she had a passenger who wouldn't comply with her request to lower his window shade. She quickly went on to explain that he was sitting right next to the movie screen and, since he wouldn't lower his shade, no one could see the movie. I said I'd be right down.

As I walked up to the passenger in the first row of the coach section, he immediately took the initiative and said, "I've told your purser that I won't put my shade down, and I'm now telling you the same thing, I won't put the shade down. I insist upon reading by natural light – and I know my rights." This took me back. Not only was he unusually aggressive, but he was also rude in every way he could be. And, to be truthful, I didn't actually know what rights a passenger had pertaining to window shades. I was surprised, to say the least.

I went back to the cockpit and started thinking that there just had to be some way to get even with such an obnoxious jerk. While I was still thinking about how to do it, I asked the purser to get me the passenger's name, which she did.

After we landed at JFK, I immediately went and found the head of the immigration department at our Pan Am terminal. I told him about the situation and asked him if he had any ideas. Obviously, he did.

Without hesitation, this gent took me over to a computer and informed me that this was the master computer and that he was going to put a notice in that would go out to all the other computers and that "my" passenger would not get through immigration unless an agent saw the notice.

What he put into the computer was for "search and seizure," the most thorough of all searches. It's where the passenger is taken into a room, asked to remove all of his clothes, and is forced to subject himself to a really invasive search, one that includes all his luggage, right down to the items in his shaving kit. The latter is almost as nasty as the body search itself. They dump your aftershave, empty your toothpaste from the tube, and unwind your dental floss – among many other things. With any "search and seizure," the delay is a minimum of one hour. To this day, I still wonder if my "non-complying" passenger ever associated his on-board actions with what happened to him in immigration. All I can say is, "Probably not." Jerks don't usually appreciate that they are, indeed, jerks.

You are a part of this wonderful Pan Am "family". Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter? We've gotten some great response, and there will continue to be interesting stories coming in the upcoming months. Please share yours with us, as well! Please send them to Sue by email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

We'd like to have more stories to share! If you have a story you'd like to send, please send it in sooner rather than later! We appreciate you and the interesting stories you send in for all to enjoy! Email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

Don't forget to check out our website at: www.clipperpioneers.com

Last Flight From Saigon, Vietnam: 40 Years Later

by Al Topping

Many of the memories are still clearly branded in my mind of what took place during the final weeks, days and hours before Clipper Unity N653PA lifted off the runway at Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon. With captain Bob Berg in command and an all-volunteer crew we headed for Clark AFB in the Philippines with 463 souls on board.

The days leading up to our final departure contained many situations of uncertainty and drama. As I watched the gradual collapse of South Vietnam I knew what was going to happen and I knew what we had to do, I just wasn't sure how we would accomplish that mission.

I had been at Ton Son Nhut Airport that day in March when the last World Airways evacuation flight from DaNang arrived. We thought it was a miracle that the plane had made the flight at all. The Boeing 727 had been rushed by thousands of panicked (and armed) South Vietnamese soldiers desperate to flee the advancing North Vietnamese army. They had pushed their way into the plane's cabin as well as the baggage compartment, and even the wheel wells. The plane had barely made it into the air, and had been shot at and even had a grenade thrown at it as it rolled down the runway during take-off. When it arrived in Saigon, there fuel leaking from bullet holes in the wings, and blood running down the landing gear from the crushed stowaways in the wheel wells. It was impossible to put that image out of my mind as we contemplated our own imminent evacuation in those last days of April.

Our mission was clear. We would get all of our staff out before it was too late. It was at this point that Pan Am made a commitment: We would evacuate our employees and their immediate families to safety in the United States.

Under normal circumstances it could take as much as two to three months to process the documents to permit a Vietnamese citizen to leave the country. There was no time for that.

In early April when we participated in Operation Baby-Lift Pan Am operated two 747's loaded with over 600 children headed for the US for adoption. This was the result of a very special individual, Robert Macauley the founder and CEO of AmeriCares. When Macauley saw what was taking place in South Vietnam he mortgaged his house and chartered the 747's.

After several sleepless nights wracking my brain trying to develop a plan to get our people out, I came up with an option that might work. If we can carry hundreds of babies to the US for adoption why can't I ask the South Vietnamese government to permit me on behalf of Pan Am, give approval for me to adopt our employees and some members of their family. Why not? Time is running out. Chaos is building. Panic is in the air. Let's pray that we can pull it off. If this plan fails, our only option would be the plan suggested by the American Embassy . That would mean having our people assemble on designated roof tops in the

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Last Flight From Saigon, Vietnam: 40 Years Later ~ continued from previous page

city and then airlifted to US Navy ships off-shore. I was not in favor of this option. Too many things could go wrong.

I had already decided that April 24th would be our final departure. Why? Because May 1st was May Day - a holiday celebrated in some Communist countries such as Cuba and the Soviet Union. So what better time than May 1st for the North Vietnamese to celebrate the take-over of South Vietnam.

During this critical period I could sense that some of our employees were getting concerned about my plan, or lack of a plan. They were beginning to worry about being left behind and falling into the custody of the advancing Communist troops. In looking at the map one could see that Saigon was going to be the end of a funnel. I tried to assure them to have faith and trust me.

I was stunned when our HR supervisor returned from the Ministry of The Interior with a stack of immigration documents for my signature. It worked! I signed them all and paid the fees. So now I had officially adopted our 61 employees and family members bringing the total number to over 300.

On Wednesday April 23rd I advised our employees that tomorrow would be our last flight out of Vietnam. They would have to be ready in the morning to board special buses at the downtown sales office that would take them to the airport and I would meet them at the entry check-point. That night many of them slept in the back offices downtown on the floor.

This was a moment filled with trauma. All of these employees and family leaving their country for the first, and what could be the final time, with whatever belongings could fit in a carry-on bag and heading to a country where they knew nobody and had no idea where they would live. As we lifted off the runway that day my heart was pounding. Saigon was now surrounded by Communist troops and what a target we were. A huge 747 in broad daylight in full view of troops with weapons that could take us down with just a single rocket. But as we continued our climb out and turned to the east, I could see the coastline falling away as we were now over the South China Sea. I began to breath again. Thank God - we made it. I will be eternally grateful to the Pan Am pilots and flight attendants, who at great personal risk volunteered to operate those flights under very hostile conditions.

On the flight from Manila to Guam, Al Topping happened to sit next to LA Times report David Lamb, who quickly wrote this report on the evacuation, that was published the following day, April 25, 1975

(From story as posted on <https://www.panam.org/global-era/423-saigon-farewell-1976>)

Pan Am Historical Society has a Facebook page. You can view it here:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pan-Am-Historical-Foundation/226994925218>

ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS

JUNE 7, 2021 – JUNE 17, 2021 Round trip Copenhagen

Dear Pan Amer's:

To our family of travelers, travel is not about merely grazing the surface of a destination; it's about learning, building human connections, and exploring what life has to offer. For all of us ex Pan Am—travel is life. We will emerge from this crisis more empathetic, engaged, and eager to travel more than ever before and will be much more appreciative of the world and all its beauty. Therefore, after much thought and consideration on our next cruise, we have chosen to explore the Baltic and its beauty.

We'll be sailing on Royal Caribbean's Adventure of the Seas June 7, 2021 for an 10 day venture giving plenty of leeway for safe travel. Our cruise includes all meals, Vegas style shows/ entertainment ,accommodations of your choice and a wide variety of activities onboard. Join our Captain Stu Archer in special Pan Am cocktail parties plus some other tricks up his sleeve, ports of call to dream about and much, much more. This is an open invitation for your family and friends to join the fun and have a great time.

ITINERARY:

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|-----------------|------------------------|----------|----------|------------------|
| Mon 07 Jun 2021 | Copenhagen, Denmark | 05:00 PM | | Boarding |
| Tue 08 Jun 2021 | | | | CruisingCruising |
| Wed 09 Jun 2021 | Riga, Latvia1 | 0:00 AM0 | 6:00 PM | Docked |
| Thu 10 Jun 2021 | Tallinn, Estonia | 11:00 AM | 07:00 PM | Docked |
| Fri 11Jun 2021 | St. Petersburg, Russia | 07:00 AM | | Docked |
| Sat 12 Jun 2021 | St. Petersburg, Russia | 06:00 PM | | Docked |
| Sun 13 Jun 2021 | Helsinki, Finland | 07:00 AM | 05:00 PM | Docked |
| Mon 14 Jun 2021 | Stockholm, Sweden | 08:00 AM | 05:00 PM | Docked |
| Tue 15 Jun 2021 | Cruising | | | Cruising |
| Wed 16 Jun 2021 | Copenhagen, Denmark | 11:00 AM | | Docked |
| Thu 17Jun 2021 | Copenhagen, Denmark | | | Departure |

Cabins from: \$999 Inside * \$1199 Ocean view * \$1959 Balcony *\$2450 Jr. Suites

Rate factor 5/15/2020—cruise only, per person, double occupancy (singles pay 200%) and based on ongoing daily pricing at time of booking with Royal Caribbean. Port charges and government taxes additional (\$456.24PP). Book early and lock in your price. Insurance is available according to category of cabin chosen. Look and book thru Royal Caribbean's AIR2SEA program and get the best airfare deals. Third/fourth passenger rates available upon request. Deposit is \$450 per person and all major credit cards are accepted ; however, and as always we prefer and appreciate to receive deposits and or full payments by check. Additional is a fee for Pan Am amenities at \$125 per person for onboard parties, discount at specialty restaurants and gifts; this is a private fund for Pan Am activities and only checks are accepted. Checks payable to and mail to INTERLINE TRAVELS, 456 MERLIN CT., TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301.

Throughout the months we will be sending out updates on all the different ports of call to help you plan your itinerary and make the most of your travel photo album. ~Carmen

Pan Am Philadelphia Area Pilots (PAPAP)

We meet the second Tuesday of every quarter at the Continental Inn in Yardley, PA at 1200 for a bit of BS before going to our private conference room upstairs for lunch.

Been going on since 1992 and it's a great way to stay together. Contact: Chris Blaydon [215 757 6229](tel:2157576229) or cblayd@aol.com

Come Join the Santa Rosa Breakfast Group!

The Santa Rosa Breakfast group meets about every six weeks. They have 17 pilots, FA's and FEO's that get together to discuss the old days. Anyone in the Sonoma, Napa, and Marin county areas north of San Francisco who would like to join them should email Dave Criley at davecriley@comcast.net, and send your email contact. They started out with 5 and have grown to 17. ~from Dave Criley

Flying Boat Reunion clip now available for viewing

A 15-minute special that aired April 27, 2016 on Ireland's popular RTE TV show "Nationwide" is now available for viewing. China Clipper First Officer Robert Hicks (94); Merry Barton, daughter of Folger Athearn (Pan Am's station manager in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1941); Director of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum Margaret O'Shaughnessy; Ed Trippe and Mary Lou Bigelow were interviewed during the Foynes Flying Boat reunion. <http://www.rte.ie/player/us/show/nationwide-21/10566026/>

Layovers for Pan Am

Check out Pan American layovers at www.paacrewlayover.com, where some 81 cities and over 161 hotels are shown in photos.

Check Out the Lockerbie Website

A website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at www.lockerbie103.com. It might be a worthwhile site to check out, especially for those who plan on visiting Lockerbie. Be sure to enter the web address in the browser (not Google Search, etc.) with the www. Otherwise, they will get hundreds of Lockerbies and 103s and may not find the web site after 15 pages. ~Claude Hudspeth

Pan Am -- Personal Tributes to A Global Aviation Pioneer

The Pan Am Historical Foundation recently published the highly acclaimed *Pan Am – Personal Tributes to a Global Aviation Pioneer*, a book that caught the attention of Pan Amers and aviation enthusiasts around the world. Visit <https://www.panam.org/shop/669-panam90-book> to order.

Thank You for the Stories You're Sending In! Keep 'em coming!!

We've been getting some good stories about memories of your times with Pan Am, and we want you to know we appreciate it! Keep them coming, and you will see them in the upcoming issues! Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter - short or long? Have you come across an interesting article that you'd like to share with us? Would you share pieces from a book you've written? Send them to sue@clipperpioneers.com.

*...and God will lift you up on Eagle's Wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

IN MEMORIAM

Herbert M. Newstrom, Jr. On Thursday, May 7, 2020, Herbert M. Newstrom, Jr. ("Herb"), loving widower and father of two, passed away at the age of 89. Herb was born on July 16, 1930 in San Antonio, TX to Herbert and Estelle Newstrom. He received his degree in Business from the University of California Los Angeles after serving in the US Air Force during the Korean War. Prior to the war, he proudly attended Texas A&M University and considered himself an "Aggie" until his passing. The majority of Herb's professional life was spent as an airline pilot for Pan American Airways. On February 17, 1956, he married the love of his life, Sharon Ruth McGinty. They raised two sons, Eric and Curtis. Herb had a passion for all things associated with flight. He served his country honorably as an F-84 pilot in Korea and flew various Boeing and Airbus passenger planes for Pan American until his retirement in 1990.

Sumner K (Bud) Hushing, 100 years and 9 months old, died unexpectedly late Tuesday night, March 31, 2020. He was able to continue living comfortably in his home to the end. He is survived by his children Otamay, Sumner III, and Mikele, his grandchildren Brighton, Tyler, and Dorothy, his great-granddaughter Alice, and his close companion of 28 years, Adele Siegel.

Sumner was born in the Panama Canal Zone to Sumner and Anne Hushing, who quickly nicknamed him Buddy, to avoid first name confusion, and he embraced that nickname until the 1980s. Bud grew up in Litchfield, IL, and Alexandria, VA. He learned the value of honest work, as he washed dishes in his parent's restaurant in Carlinville, IL.

Henry "Lew" Meloan, 85, of Chattanooga, TN, passed away on Monday, April 27, 2020. Lew was born October 30, 1934 in Clarksville Missouri. A graduate of Louisiana High School in Louisiana, Missouri.

Lew graduated from the USMA, West Point, in the class of 1960. On June 8, 1960, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. After pilot training he was stationed in Evreux, France for four years and in 1995 he spent two years in Columbus, Ohio. Lew flew the C130s and earned the rank of Captain before leaving the Air Force to work for Pan American World Airways. Lew became a Captain for Pan Am before the end of that company. Following that event in December of 1991, Lew became a 747 Flight Instructor for the Pan Am International Flight Academy before relocating to Chattanooga. His love of numbers led him to many satisfying days doing taxes for H&R Block. Lew was a communicant of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chattanooga, a member of the Clipper Pioneers, the Airline Pilots Association, and the West Point Associate of Graduates. His career allowed him to enjoy his deep appreciation of opera and classical music as he travelled the world.

For more information and full obituaries about each of these friends who will be missed, click on "In Memory Of..." at our website: www.clipperpioneers.com. Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Sue Forde at sue@clipperpioneers.com, or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382

Look Out for COVID-19 Medicare and Other Scams

Some tips from the Federal Trade Commission:

- Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government. Here's what you need to know.
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. There are no products proven to treat or prevent COVID-19 at this time.
- Be wary of ads for test kits. Most test kits being advertised have not been approved by the FDA, and aren't necessarily accurate.
- Hang up on robocalls. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the CDC or WHO. Use sites like coronavirus.gov and usa.gov/coronavirus to get the latest information. And don't click on links from sources you don't know.
- Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.

More Tips from Medicare:

Unfortunately, scammers are using the COVID-19 pandemic to try to steal your Medicare Number, personal information, and money. And they're using robocalls, social media posts, and emails to do it.

Remember, if anyone reaches out to get your Medicare Number or personal information in exchange for something, you can bet it's a scam.

Be on the lookout, so you can stop scams before they happen. **Here are recent Coronavirus scams to watch for:**

- Robocalls offering you respiratory masks they'll never send
- Social media posts fraudulently seeking donations for non-existent charities, or claiming to give you stimulus funds if you enter your bank account information
- Fake testing kits, cures, "immunity" pills, and offers for protective equipment

Visit [**Medicare.gov/fraud**](https://www.medicare.gov/fraud) for more information and tips on preventing Medicare scams and fraud.

Sincerely,

The Medicare Team

Please update your email address and phone number if it's been changed!

Email or write to:

***Clipper Pioneers, c/o Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382
or email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com***