



# CLIPPER PIONEERS, INC.

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## STOP THE PRESS? NO WAY! GREAT NEWS!

At the Pan Am Historical Foundation annual meeting on June 9, 2022, the newly elected president of the Foundation, Adam Aron, announced among his first decisions was to grant \$12,000 to Clipper Pioneers to ensure that our popular newsletter shall continue. With strong support from the Foundation's chairman, Ed Trippe, Adam paid tribute to the organization and the remarkable contributions Pan Am's corps airmen have made to bring glory to the name Pan Am around the world. When the two top officers of the Foundation learned that financial resources were dwindling, raising uncertainty as to how long funds would last to continue publication, they immediately stepped in and authorized the grant and encouraged other members of Clipper Pioneers to continue to contribute memorable incidents of your storied careers with the blue meatball. They also praised Stu Archer and his staff for being the glue which has held the organization together for so many years.

Adam joined Pan Am in 1977 and left in 1985 to launch a remarkable career which included top jobs at United Airlines, Hyatt Hotels, Norwegian Cruise Lines and a short stint at the Philadelphia 76ers. He currently has a day job – chairman and CEO of AMC Entertainment, the world's largest chain of movie theaters around the world. He would be happy to answer any questions from Clipper Pioneer members on any subject. Please submit such questions to Stu.

### 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](http://www.clipperpioneers.com). To request a current membership list, email [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com) with your request. Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

## Sea Plane Trip to St. Thomas

*By Stu Archer*

It was just another layover in the early 1970s when we flew the 727 into St. Thomas. On this particular flight we had the next day off, so Buck and I decided to go to breakfast.

Buck said, lets head down to Antilles airboats to see Charlie Blair and his wife, Maureen O'Hara on our way to breakfast. Or at least, that was the plan.

We went out approximately at 9:00 AM. At their hanger, we instead met the operations officer who was standing there looking up and down the street. Buck asked what was going on and the operations officer explained, "my pilots never showed up and we have a full load of passengers on that plane. We are just waiting for the pilots. I have not been able to get hold of them. I'm stuck!"

Without hesitation or glance over at me, Buck said, "Stu is a seaplane pilot! We can take the flight."

*Are you crazy?*

He convinced me to at least go and take a look at it, and so we did. We made our way down to the dock where a British 4-Engine Sunderland was tied up, full of passengers. We climbed aboard and found the cockpit. I sat in the left seat, Buck in the right.

For a minute or so, I looked around, turned to the operations officer that had entrusted us, and asked "How the hell do I start this thing?"

He said it was no problem and proceeded to start the four-engines. Next thing I knew, the officer was gone, and we were moving away from the dock.

"Looks like we are going to St. Croix, Buck."

Having spent time in pilot training, flying B-25's, I knew how to do a mag check along with the engine run up. It was no different from the HU-16 I was also flying in the Air Force Reserves. We put the flaps to the first notch and glanced around the bay for the take off area. Once the boats had cleared, we began our take off.

Climbing out, Buck asked "how high do you want to go?"

"500 feet is good." And with that, we were headed towards St. Croix. Except there was one problem. Any time I had flown to St. Croix before, we always landed at St. Croix Main Runway. *This was a SEA plane.* We had no idea where to land.

Luckily, I was able to have a flight attendant join us in the cockpit and asked if she knew where the seaplane terminals were. She knew they were at least on the north side of the island so I asked her that when she was done attending the passengers if she could come back into the cockpit and guide us to where we needed to land. It was only a short flight from St. Thomas to St. Croix, so a few minutes later she returned and directed us.

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

## Sea Plane Trip to St. Thomas

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I had been flying the Albatross (HU-16) for six or seven years by this time with many ocean takeoffs and landings. However, the Sunderland had no reverse on its engines which made docking at the seaplane terminals a bit more of a challenge. I had to cut the engines and drift to the dock. It almost worked, but we came up short and the dockhands had to pull us in about 40 feet.

As the passengers were deplaning, the guys on the dock asked us to get out of the cockpit and go stand on the left wing. Buck asked "why?"

To which they replied, "the right-wing float leaks so we have to keep it out of the water!"

*Makes sense.*

They were about done loading all the new passengers on with their baggage to go back to St. Thomas, so we climbed down and took our seats in the cockpit when I turned to my copilot with no seaplane experience, "Buck, just like in Pan Am, I brought it over, you have to take it back."

It all worked out and it was much easier on the return flight now that we were both experienced seaplane pilots and we knew where to land.

"Now can we go get breakfast?" I asked Buck. There were no crew meals on that short flight!

We never did get to visit with Charlie and his wife, but we had a good crew party that evening with a new story to tell.

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## Flying into Barranquilla

*by Bill Nash*

Flying into Barranquilla, Colombia, was sometimes interesting. We stopped at Jamaica en route there from Miami with DC 3's, and later with C46's and DC4's.

We would arrive in the blue light of dawn, often to be met by a heavy ground fog which was only about 30 feet thick. To land we would approximate the location of the runway by observing the tower and other stuff sticking up through the fog, and make a low pass over where it should be with gear down and a lot of flap, hanging the tail down to blow the fog away from the runway. If there was no wind and we had hit it right, we could see the runway and land. If our open slot was drifting off, we'd make another pass; this time a little upwind, so that by the time we had completed a circuit the slot would be over the runway and we could see it to land.

One morning upon our arrival from Miami at the Barranquilla airport, it was clear; but there was no contact from the tower. We circled and saw people running around the airport. The entrance gates were closed and people were crowded outside. No green light or any signal from the tower.

We landed and taxied to the fuel pumps and cut the engines on our C-46. No one approached us. Finally, a ground man we knew came running to us, waving his arms. I leaned out the cockpit window and asked him where were the fuel men and unloaders. We could hear shouting at the gates to the airport and could see the gates rocking.

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## Flying into Barranquilla

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Our ground man yelled - "there's a national strike! No one is supposed to work! Can't give you fuel or service! Get out of here! There are three trucks of strikers on their way to the airport to stop all work. The gates are about to go!" We could see the three trucks full of strikers pulling up to the gates. We thanked our brave ground man and started the engines. Just then the gates went flat and the mob surged through. Many carried rifles.

To taxi to take-off position and take-off would give the mob a broadside shot at our bird, so we shoved the throttles full forward and rolled across the field at right angles to the runway, through grass and rough ground, and lifted off before we got to an area of heavy brush.

Circling widely, we could see the mob running about, waving their arms and some shooting at us.

Without enough fuel to Panama we headed the opposite way to Maracaibo, Venezuela - without legal papers to land there. We called Jamaica on HF frequencies and asked them to relay our message to Miami to send a clearance request to Maracaibo. When we got there we circled - and we circled. No green light, so with fuel gages looking dangerous, we landed anyway. Then we got attention - lots of it. Military vehicles with many guns surrounded us.

We opened the door and came out with our hands up - the two of us. There was hell to pay with Venezuelan officials, because we brought a load of cargo manifested for Colombia, had no clearance, etc., etc. An hour after we landed the message we had needed to precede us finally got there from Miami.

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## 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/>

**Bank balance as of May31, 2022 is \$7,877.77** The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 8 of this newsletter, which will go toward continuing forward. Thank you to the those who have mailed in your donations in 2022 already! Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

**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](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com).**

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**Thanks to those of you who have sent us stories! Keep 'em coming!**

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## PAN AM 15 DAY MIAMI TO ROME CRUISE



Dear Pan Amer's:

Come join us on our next transatlantic reunion cruise on Royal Caribbean's Explorer of the Seas. Reserve restful days at sea to splurge in Spain, France and Italy with ports of call to die for. It's going to be fabulous – don't miss out – bring family and friends along ! Your cruise includes gourmet meals, entertainment, accommodations, group activities, cocktail parties and much more.

### Itinerary – April 23, 2023 from Miami to May 8, 2023 Rome, Italy

Date	Port	Arrive	Depart	Boarding
Sun 23Apr2023	Miami, Florida	-	4:00 PM	Cruising
Mon 24Apr-01 May	Cruising High Seas	-	-	Docked
Tue 02May2023	Malaga, Spain	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	Docked
Wed 03May2023	Cartagena, Spain	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	Docked
Thu 04May2023	Palma De Mallorca, Spain	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	Docked
Fri 05May2023	Provence (Marseilles), France	9:00 AM	6:00 PM	Tendered
Sat 06May2023	Nice (Villefranche), France	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	Tendered
Sun 07May2023	Ajaccio, Corsica	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	Departure
Mon 08May2023	Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy	5:00 AM	-	

#### Rates from:

Inside \$859 / \*Inside Virtual Bal / Outside \$959 / Balcony \$1399 / Suites \$1999

Prices: Per person, subject to availability at time of booking and do not include port charges and taxes (\$354.pp) or amenity fees (\$150.pp) (cocktail parties, pay restaurant get togethers, etc).

\*Interior with Virtual Balcony – High-definition screen that spans floor to ceiling, providing real-time views of the ocean and destinations. Inquire on pricing.

Deposit \$450.pp. ; all major cards accepted. Mail amenity fee check to Stuart Archer upon reserving (7340 SW 132 St., Miami, FL 33156). Insurance, available and advisable on invoice.

More information in future emails. Call 1-844-278-9745 Air & Sea for flights.

To reserve: call Carmen 786-252-7838

Cruise information call former Pan Am Capt. Stu Archer 305-238-0911

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## 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](mailto:cblayd@aol.com)

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## 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](mailto:davecriley@comcast.net), and send your email contact. They started out with 5 and have grown to 17. ~from Dave Criley

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## Do You Know About Events that are Upcoming?

There are many events and get-togethers that may be of interest to our readers. If you know about one, or have a group that gets together on a regular basis - or even once in awhile - please let us know so we can share with our readers! :)

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## Layovers for Pan Am

Check out Pan American layovers at [www.paacrewlayover.com](http://www.paacrewlayover.com), where some 81 cities and over 161 hotels are shown in photos.

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## Check Out the Lockerbie Website

A website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at [www.lockerbie103.com](http://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

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## 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](mailto: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

**Captain Donald Earl Wright** died May 19, 2022 after battling cancer for several years. He was 82 years old and in good health until a few weeks before his passing. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, HIROKO and his parents; JAMES and INEZ Wright. He leaves a son, BRET, daughter, LORINDA, grandsons, JAMES and SCOTT, and first wife, ANGELA Wright.

Captain Wright attended Pendleton Oregon high school and joined the U.S. army soon after when faced with a choice between military service and reform school. While serving his country at Fort Bragg, NC and in post-war Korea he learned to fly and quickly accumulated enough flight hours to qualify for commercial and instrument pilot certificates. He graduated Oregon State University in 1965 with degrees in general science and journalism. To help pay the bills, he also earned a flight instructor certificate and, with something like 400 total flight hours, began teaching people to fly. He was living proof of the adage "If you want to learn a subject teach it." After graduating college, Pan Am World Airways (Pan Am) hired him as a pilot/navigator flying Boeing 707s across the Pacific. There, he discovered an aptitude for staying awake all night and for plotting the aircraft's position using a sextant and "dead reckoning." He was 26 years old and frequently was the only one aboard the jet who knew where they were.

Two years after joining Pan Am he was promoted to first officer, a position that required him to stay awake all night and to navigate while peering at a tiny screen and plotting his position on a knee board. Looking to advance more quickly to the coveted left front seat of the 707, Don moved his family to the East Coast where they moved into a small house in Doylestown, Pennsylvania and he began flying from JFK airport across the Atlantic Ocean. Several years later he upgraded to copilot on the Boeing 747 where he was required to stay awake all night and navigate using a magical new electronic device called an "Inertial Navigation System" originally developed for submarines.

**George William "Bill" McCollom** passed away at his home in Mission Viejo, California on July 7th, 2021. Bill was born in Lihua, Hawai'i, January 15, 1932. We can still hear him say that flying was really the only thing that he ever wanted to do. He received his pilot training through the School of Hard Knocks and paid for flying lessons—one hour at a time—cleaning and gassing planes at the Honolulu Airport.

In 1954 he was hired by Pan American Airways (PAA), which began an extraordinary journey of life-long friends and far-out places. While his first love was PAA (where he spent the majority of his flying career), during multiple furloughs, he had stints with Aloha, Northeastern Airlines, Civil Air Transport (CAT), and finished with United Airlines. Some notable experiences include secret missions all over the South Pacific. He flew embassy personal out of Baghdad during the 1958 Iraqi Coup and Charles Lindberg from Tokyo to Hong Kong in 1968. After circling the globe several times over, he retired in 1991 as a 747 Captain out of LAX.

**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](http://www.clipperpioneers.com). Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Sue Forde at [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com), or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382**

## A Documentary Series about Pan American Airways on PBS

When Pan Am's M-130 flying boat "China Clipper" took off for the first scheduled flight to Manila on November 22, 1935, it riveted the attention of people around the world. At that moment Pan Am vaulted to a commanding position and the world changed forever as a result. That's the story brought to life in "Across the Pacific." Newly unearthed archival motion pictures, photographs, and original sound recordings as well as stunning graphics, help bring this history back to life.

The film by Moreno/Lyons Productions tells the epic story of how Pan American Airways became the first to bridge the mighty Pacific - the first airline to cross any ocean. Focusing in particular on the contributions of Pan Am's visionary leader Juan Trippe, aircraft designer Igor Sikorsky, and radio engineer Hugo Leuteritz, the three-part program is currently broadcast on PBS. "Across the Pacific" premiered on VPM PBS in Richmond Virginia May/June 2020. You can watch each episode on the home page of the Clipper Pioneers website ([www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com))

## Health Tips

As we age, there are critical nutrients the body becomes depleted of. Be especially cognizant of your levels of each nutrient below and talk to your doctor about supplementing if necessary.

- Vitamin D is essential for boosting the immune system.
- Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps improve the overall function of our bodies by boosting vitamin absorption, wound healing, and aids in vision and organ function.
- Calcium is essential for bone and teeth health.
- Vitamin A is good for heart, lung, and liver health.
- B Vitamins must be replaced as you age because our bodies become less efficient at absorbing B vitamins from the foods we eat. B12 deficiency can negatively affect brain function and only increases our chances of memory loss, high blood pressure, and nerve pain.

## RENEW TODAY!

In order to keep the newsletter and website going for the Clipper Pioneers, it's time for renewal donations. If you haven't already, please send your donation to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382. Thank you!

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Donated: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Make check payable to: Clipper Pioneers and mail to: P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382)

*Thank you for your continuing support of the Clipper Pioneers!*