



PRESIDENT  
STU ARCHER  
7340 SW 132 ST  
MIAMI, FL 33156-6804

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

## An Easter Story

*by Ash Cutchin*

This is a long story which I will try to make interesting to the Clipper Pioneer members because it actually involves the newsletter itself. On Wednesday Feb. 28, 2024, I received a telephone call which my wife Ginna answered. She handed me the phone and said, "It's Jim." I said hello and sure enough the voice (which I did not recognize) said "Hi Ash, this is Jim. Jim Weldon. Surely you remember me."

I replied, "Yes, I remember Jim Weldon, but you are not he, because the Jim Weldon I knew would have said his name as two syllables... Ji-iim, and I'm pretty sure he died years ago. You must be playing a trick on me." I had not heard that voice in about 30 years.

"Aw, come on Ash, it really is me, your old buddy Jim Weldon. I thought you were dead, too. Steve Van Gorder just called me and said, "Guess what Jim. Ash Cutchin is still alive. I just read a couple of stories he wrote in the Clipper Pioneer newsletter. He is alive and well!" So Jim finally convinced me that it was actually he on the phone and that his wife Carol Lee (who I also know) convinced him to stop pronouncing his name as two syllables. She is a Yankee from Rhode Island, and we flew together several times.

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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](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.

## An Easter Story

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I'm sure my pacemaker must have recorded a sharp rise in my heart rate as Jim and I talked for nearly an hour and re-lived some of our experiences together, both in a plane and on the ground. Jim was one of my very best friends at Pan Am. We flew together many times while I was a flight engineer and many more times after I became left-seat qualified on the 747. We attended the 103 Memorial Service together in London in 1988 a few days after the Lockerbie bomb disaster. Every month I called Jim and Ed Spellacy, and John Tiger, and Stan Roitz, and asked them what trips they were bidding each month. I would then bid the same trips, and very often lucked out and was able to fly as a pretend Captain. In fact, Stan Roitz and I, and also Jim Weldon and I flew the 103 flights five times in December, 1988. I was lucky enough to be at home on Dec. 21. I remember watching CBS news that night and watching that disgusting newscaster Dan Rather interview Jack Burke in Seattle and try his best to get Jack to say that mechanical failure was the probable cause. Jack insisted it was not. Jack had been my flight instructor on the 707 back in 1967.

Another time I was in the left seat of a 747 alongside Jim Weldon. I was holding at the edge of RW 12 at Dulles ready to fly to either London or Frankfurt. The tower controller said, "Hold for arriving SR-71 Blackbird." We sat and watched as the SR-71 landed, popped the drag chute and taxied off the active. It was the same one that is in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at Dulles. That was its last flight and it had just broken the speed record from LA in 54 minutes and a few seconds.

Jim Weldon and I, along with Guy McCafferty, and Gordon Young hunted birds together in South Dakota several times, and even once in Argentina. I pre-positioned several cases of 20-gauge shells at EZE, and Gordon and Jim met me there and we spent about 10 days hunting grouse and Perdiz in the countryside south of Buenos Aires with my bird dog Christie. When we departed, we left a big cooler full of freshly killed game birds with the ground crew, because we could not bring uncooked meat back to the US.

I call this an Easter story, because it almost seems like a resurrection of sorts. After Dec. 4, 1991 Jim and I exchanged Christmas cards a few times and then his cards quit coming. After I sent him a couple more, with no response, I assumed he had died. After he quit receiving mine, he thought I had passed. So my story in the newsletter a few issues ago, brought about this resurrected friendship. Both Jim Weldon and Gordon Young and Steve VanGorder, Steve's friend Larry Long and Harry from JFK Scheduling joined me in Oregon Inlet, NC, where we spent a wonderful day together fishing for tuna off Cape Hatteras. Harry caught a beautiful Wahoo... 47 pounds. He wanted to have it taxidermied,

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**Bank balance as of February 29, 2024** was \$21,954.80. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 5 of this newsletter, which will go toward continuing forward. Thank you to the those who have mailed in your donations in 2023 already! Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

## An Easter Story

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but we convinced him it was the best-tasting fish that swims, and he finally decided to share it with us.

One summer weekend, while my family and Jerry Saunders' family were vacationing together on the NC Outer Banks, Jim and Carol Lee flew down in Jim's Cessna 185 and spent a couple of days together. I distinctly remember that he landed at the Wright Brothers Memorial airstrip but was very surprised to learn that he could neither leave his plane overnight NOR get any fuel. The phone in our cottage rang. "Aa-ash, this is Ji-iim. I need help old buddy. Can you bring me a couple gallons of aviation fuel so I can fly to Manteo? I need gas and they don't have any here where I am." So, Jerry Saunders and I went to the Ace hardware store, bought three one-gallon cans, drove to Manteo airfield, filled them with av-gas, then drove them to Wright field, put the fuel in Jim's plane, and then drove back to Manteo airfield while he flew his plane there, and then we drove to our cottage. Only 6.81 miles as the crow flies, but it took us all afternoon, and more than 100 miles of road distance in my Chevy Silverado. What a day! What great memories! We ate fresh-caught yellowfin tuna grilled over charcoal for dinner that night.

Jerry is gone now, having died in 2021. Jack Burke is gone. Gordon Young is gone. John Tiger and Stan Roitz are gone. I no longer have a boat. Having a pacemaker, I'm sure I could not renew my FAA license. I really do not miss flying that much, but I really do miss my wonderful friends at Pan Am, and I am so grateful that some of us are "resurrected" and can spend some more time together soon. Jim and Carol Lee are meeting us at our daughter's condo at Hilton Head in late April for some fun time together. I plan to visit Ed Spellacy and Marge in Massachusetts in May. Ed flew the last 747 home from Rio on Dec. 5 or 6, 1991. He has composed a wonderful story about that.

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## MEMORABLE MOMENTS – L-1011

*by Larry Black*

With the B-707 being phased out, I had to make a choice between FEO on the 747 or the new L-1011. I wanted to go with the younger crowd, so I chose the L-1011. Little did I know at the time this was a wise choice. Seniority and equipment set me up for the transfer to United Airlines six years later.

Systems training took place in Miami and the 24 hours of simulator training took place in Worthing, England. I was teamed up with a first officer and Capt. Jim McQuarrie who was later killed in the

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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>

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!

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS – L-1011

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Lockerbie Flt. 103 disaster. After getting checked out, I enjoyed flying to Central America, Europe and South America.

On one of my early flights to Caracas, an engine over temped and we diverted to MIA. The FAA was aboard. Guess I did my part correctly.

After about four years as a L-1011 engineer, I was on a flight from RIO to JFK. Approaching Barbados, #1 engine vibration gage went full scale, requiring a shutdown. We landed in Barbados in the middle of the night causing the hotshot maintenance man to come to the airport. We had hardly shut down when the maintenance man told us we had a loose cowling, and we would be back in the air in 30 minutes. Since I did the preflight, I didn't believe him. I took my flashlight and inspected #1 engine and found metal pieces in the engine tail cone. We all went to a hotel. A decision from NYC was to have a crew from the office make a two-engine ferry flight back to JFK. The next day, the crew arrived for a test flight before the two-engine ferry flight. Someone forgot to cover the bore scope ports causing the test flight to have a fire warning. They commenced dumping fuel thus contaminating the runway. After investigating the fire warning, the ports were buttoned up and the two-engine flight departed for NYC.

The L-1011 had great take-off performance as was witnessed on Gatwick to Houston non-stop flights. Even fully loaded, the aircraft nearly jumped off the runway on takeoff. During union attempts to get a better contract, we tried to burn more fuel. At normal cruise of .82, the aircraft flew at a slight inclined attitude. The flight attendants complained about having to walk up hill. In an attempt to burn more fuel, we increased the speed from .82 to .83 or .84. We found the fuel consumption was better at the higher speed since the attitude became more level, making the flight attendants happier, too.

The Pacific buyout by United Airlines took place, and my seniority allowed me to transfer. Flying the Orient was new and interesting. I still have some mementos purchased in Seoul, Korea. My last flight on the L-1011 involved a layover in Taipei. We got up the next morning to find the maintenance working on #2 engine. I had no inbound items; however, the #2 engine-driven fuel pump had to be changed due to time in service. We were sent back to the hotel until late that evening. Finally, we boarded for a flight to Seoul. On takeoff, I reported to the captain the #2 engine EPR was slightly lower than #1 and #3. He decided to keep on rolling. Good choice! I was suspicious of #2, and continued monitoring the fuel flow. As we climbed, I noticed the fuel quantity for #2 was considerably lower than #1 or #3. The captain shut down #2 on my recommendation that we had a fuel leak. We diverted to Okinawa. The mechanics found the engine-driven fuel pump was only finger tightened causing fuel to spill inside #2 cowling. Underneath the #2 nacelle is a pipe two to three feet long. Its purpose is to drain the fuel from the nacelle. It did its job. Had we aborted our takeoff in Taipei, I suspect we could have had a gigantic

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**Don't forget to check out our website at: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS – L-1011

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fire in the tail of the aircraft. After arriving back to SFO, I went to captain training on the B-737 where I stayed for eight years until retirement.

Pan Am is still in my daily routine. I have several items purchased from the Pan Am Aware store in MIA. My nightshirt says, "I sleep around – the world." For my afternoon naps, I use a Pan Am blanket. Pan Am is still very much on my mind.

## Interesting Places to “Visit” on the Internet

**Foynes Flying Boat Museum, in Foynes, Ireland** – features a full scale replica of the Boeing B314 “Yankee Clipper”. This replica was created for the museum from detailed plans by a team specialising in movie sets, and the reviews they have received of the aircraft are fantastic. Check it out at [www.flyingboatmuseum.com](http://www.flyingboatmuseum.com)

Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

## Tip Sheet: Safety on the Internet

### Be Careful What You Download

A top goal of cybercriminals is to trick you into downloading malware—programs or apps that carry malware or try to steal information. This malware can be disguised as an app: anything from a popular game to something that checks traffic or the weather. As PCWorld advises, don’t download apps that look suspicious or come from a site you don’t trust.

### **RENEW TODAY!**

In order to keep the newsletter and website going for the Clipper Pioneers, it’s time for renewal dues of \$50 00. If you haven’t already, please send it to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382. Thank you!

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

(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!*



## **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 or cblayd@aol.com

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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

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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.

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## **Flying Somewhere? Useful Tip for Air Traffic**

FlightAware is a free flight tracker that will change what you think about live flight tracking and aviation data. It

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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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## **Enjoy Listening to the Pan Am Podcasts**

Now in the third season, The Pan Am Podcast brings the history of Pan American World Airways to life through engaging storytelling and insightful interviews with Pan Am employees, passengers, authors, and aviation enthusiasts. <https://podcast.thepanammuseum.org/>

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The PanAm World Fellowship Golf Classic is run by new people, still called Pan Am Golf. The new website is [www.panamgolf.com](http://www.panamgolf.com). This year October 2024 will be in Las Vegas, Nevada.

*...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

**Tauno Kalevi Wirkki**, 83, of Salem, passed away Wednesday, December 27, 2023 at his home with family holding his hand. He was born in Manhattan March 8, 1940 the son of the late Eino and Aino (Viitanen) Wirkki.

Tauno graduated from Salem Washington Academy as Salutatorian of his class and received his Bachelor's in Science from Cornell University. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army serving during the Vietnam Era.

Tauno began his career with, and flew for, Pan American Airways for many years until 1991; advancing from Engineer, to Co-Pilot and then Captain. He then worked for South African Airways and finally Atlas Air until he retired.

He was a man of devout faith. He was also a servant to his community, holding many positions within the Village and Town. He was a strong advocate for anything that enhanced the community, such as supporting the proposed sewer system to allow for Salem's growth. Most recently, he became a member of the Salem Rescue Squad, a source of connection and camaraderie that he deeply valued. Tauno was also an active and dedicated member of the Cambridge Flying Club, the Historic Salem Courthouse and the 221st Aviation Company.

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: Clipper Pioneers, attn: Sue Forde, c/o P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382.

## 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).

**Visit [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

## PAN AM REUNION CRUISE - APRIL 28 - MAY 12, 2025

### MIAMI TO SOUTHAMPTON ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE SEAS

Dear Pan Amers:

Once again we prepare for our next much welcomed Pan Am reunion cruise. We honor the many requests for a Transatlantic cruise with lots of wonderful and interesting ports of call. Our 14 day cruise departs Miami visiting Kings Wharf (Bermuda), Ponta Delgada (Azores), 2 fabulous days Lisbon (Portugal), Vigo (Spain) then ending in Southampton (England). Take time to melt away land-based stress with a spa massage, build a scrapbook of memories or simply relax poolside. Four days for the crossing is a blessing considering the usual 6 - 8 days. Plenty of time to reach out to old friends, enjoy movies and much, much more. Expect a great time.

Embarking on an oceangoing adventure like this will be no doubt one of the most exciting moments of any traveler's life. The old saying that it's as much about the journey as the destination has never been truer. Adventures await you at each port, shopping, sightseeing famous attractions or sipping a cool drink in a romantic café. So, welcome aboard, I know this cruise will provide you with a lifetime of memories to cherish. Family and friends are most welcomed.

Call in your reservation now; As usual, all major credit cards are accepted but checks are preferred in an attempt to keep down credit card fees and pass the savings toward our onboard amenities, parties and the like. DON'T DELAY ! Call Carmen at 786-252-7838 for prices

Insurance is available and highly suggested and is priced by your category chosen. Inquire on your price. More information will come with your invoice. Flights available through Air / Sea 844-278-9745

Call Interline Travels at Carmen's cell 786-252-7838. If line is busy please be patient and leave your message, I will get to you ASAP Email address [interlinetravels@yahoo.com](mailto:interlinetravels@yahoo.com). Address - 456 MERLIN CT. , TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301 Feel free to contact Stu Archer former Pan Am pilot and cruise consultant at 305-238-0911. Email [stunjune@aol.com](mailto:stunjune@aol.com). Carmen Jaquet - cell 786-252-7838 or 305-598-0363 Pan Am Cruise Coordinator

Date	Ports	Arrive	Depart	
Mon 28 Apr	Miami, Florida	-		Boarding
Tue 29 Apr	Cruising			
Wed 30 Apr	Cruising	-		
Thu 01 May	King's Wharf, Bermuda	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	
Fri 02 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sat 03 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sun 04 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Mon 05 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Tue 06 May	Ponta Delgada, Azores	9:00 AM	6:00 PM	
Wed 07 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Thu 08 May	Lisbon, Portugal	11:59 AM	-	Docked
Fri 09 May	Lisbon, Portugal	-	5:00 PM	Docked
Sat 10 May	Vigo, Spain	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Docked
Sun 11 May	Cruising		-	Cruising
Mon 12 May	Southampton, England	5:30 AM	-	Departure