



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

VICE PRESIDENT
RALPH ABRAMES
1051 SW PINE TREE LANE
PALM CITY, FL 34990

TREASURER / EDITOR
SUE FORDE
P. O. BOX 3457
SEQUIM WA 98382

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos

by Bill Nash

Not a cloud in the sky, but we were forced to fly by instruments in our Pan Am propellor planes over Central America, where a dense haze blotted out the world. Water droplets clung to the smokey exhalation of volcanoes, and warmer air over cooler ground caused the filmy yellowish smog to squat on the ground and thicken up to 11,000 feet. This was Central America in the winter.

In the summer a more direct sun heated the ground, and the ground passed this heat along to the air right above it, which, becoming lighter, arose high into the sky, carrying with it the coughings of the volcanoes. The resultant sharply clear visibility uncovered the beautiful mountainous terrain, exposing volcanoes for miles, north and south. Of course that rising air carried water vapor up with it, which, upon cooling to the dewpoint, condensed into visible behemoths of clouds we call thunderstorms. We could dodge around, under, and between them.

There was a volcano in Nicaragua by which one could set a clock. It spit every eleven minutes. With new first officers it was fun to point out that it would erupt, for instance, at 9:02 A.M. When it did, first officers initially would be wide eyed at the clairvoyance of their captain, but being sharp, they soon realized there was a more mundane reason for my talent. After the volcano had obliged by spouting smoke and rocks as big as automobiles at exactly 9:02, I revealed to my co-pilot its eleven minute time

(continued on next page)

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.

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos

(continued from previous page)

sequence, and that I had seen it go off in the distance at 8:51.

Often, for the passengers, I circled the cones of volcanoes, and they could look down into an old crater, with perhaps a lake in it 9,000 feet high, or into the volcano Poas next to San Jose, Costa Rica, with a gray mass of fluid magma surging back and forth. Other craters were dry, but perpetually smoked. I never flew passengers over Nicaragua's eleven minute cone, but did give them the time that it would spout if we were near enough to see it. I did not explain its regularity to them, but let them ponder the mystique of Pan American pilots.

Costa Rica is a land of flowers, colorful flower carts, and handsome people. This country spends more on its school children than it does on its military, and to this day it is one of the world's most literate nations. In 1954, my first wife and I adopted three siblings, two girls and a boy, from a Costa Rican orphanage.

San Jose was surrounded by mountains and two semi-active volcanoes. To get out of that valley without doing a hardness test on the side of a mountain, we would perform a climbing holding pattern before proceeding on course to Panama or Nicaragua. One of our planes, leaving the valley at altitude, but still flying by instruments, finally popped out of the clouds at Puerto Limon on the Caribbean coast. The pilots still could see nothing in front of them but gray. However, bright sunshine shone in the cockpit side windows. Then it occurred to the crew that the source of that pungent odor they had experienced inside the clouds was the furnace-like breath of a volcano. Tiny hot particles had frosted their windshield. At Panama they performed a tricky landing, able to see only through the side windows.

In Guatemala, 13,000 foot Mount Agua often smoked and regurgitated lava. Near it, at over 6,000 feet, an extinct volcano had left a huge crater lake. Once, while swimming in it, a huge living thing surfaced directly in front of me. It just looked at me, while I made a frothy retreat back to the boat. Later, some research indicated it to be a manatee or Dugong, huge but harmless. One of our stewards made many dives in this lake to recover items of archeological value - statuettes, pottery, etc.

(continued on next page)

Keep the good stories comin'!

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.

Bank balance as of February 28, 2025 was \$12,931.33. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 7 of this newsletter, which will go toward continuing forward. It's time to renew for the new year. Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos

(continued from previous page)

The natives of Central America's countries grow some of the best coffee under the shade of trees on the sides of volcanoes. In San Salvador enterprising entrepreneurs built a scenic hotel on the slope of one volcano which faced another cone. Brave guests could watch the smoking, or its fire at night, while relaxing on an expansive veranda sipping the local coffee.

A University of Pennsylvania geophysical scientist, upon learning that I flew through Central America, asked me to photograph for him certain meteor craters that existed on a flat area between volcanic mountain ranges in Central Mexico. I did so, but wrote to him that I believed the "craters" were very old volcanic craters, not meteor craters as he had thought. Some of these "craters" had the sides of old cones projecting up around them. It appeared to me that material, washing down from the heights on both sides of the valley had caused the floor of the valley to gradually fill in, rising on the sides of many small volcanic cones until the sediment was level with their tops. Examining the photos, he agreed with me.

Navigation in Central America called for interesting innovations. Mexico City had the only precision approach system. Pan Am and some of the nations had installed omni-directional signal beacons at airports which we could use to follow bearings to or from the station and descend on for instrument approaches. In the summer, thunderstorms, generating electrical power for greater than our beacons, caused our instrument needles to point at the storms, not the beacon. For several airports we pilots worked out instrument approaches using powerful local broadcast stations (nothing else that powerful was nearby) without revealing this to either our company or the Federal Aviation Administration. This procedure was not approved, but we were the ones whose necks were out there amidst all of that vertical real estate.

Navigating in the winter haze with mountainous terrain on all sides called for other non-airline techniques. We would fly by time and zigzag headings to artificial or natural prominences on the surface of the earth to destination airports. I still have my charts marking routes through canyons to destination airports. Short route legs held for minutes and seconds with magnetic headings for each were followed exactly, flying low enough to see the ground and to identify the prominences through the haze when they came into view. This required close attention, preventing our flying up blind canyons, which could become too narrow to turn in or too steep to climb out of. Using this method, the destination airport became the final prominence.

We could sneak into San Jose, Costa Rica, this way, coming in from the Pacific coast at Punta Arenas and following the meandering track we had marked on our maps to the airport.

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

If you enjoy reading the Clipper Pioneers newsletter, and would like to see it continue, please send in your renewal if you haven't already, for 2025. Form is on page 5.

A Memory About Bill Nash

After a 5 year and 4 months hiatus from aviation, I received a telegram from Pan Am on Christmas Eve offering a job as a flight engineer on a DC-6 in Berlin. After learning that the pay had doubled since I'd been laid off and since we were broke, I accepted and took my wife and 2 babies to Germany.

I was offered the job of check engineer. Accepted (extra work but extra pay)!

One night my student and I were pre-flighting the mail flight when our very stern and apparently displeased captain admonished me. "We can't tolerate any delays here - let's get on with it! See those men over there with the stop watches? They're from the Deutsche Bundespost. If we don't move on time they report us and we could lose a very lucrative contract!"

We left on time and, as I got to know and like Bill we became friends.

I miss Bill!

~John Frisbee

A CAPTAIN SAM MILLER STORY

© 2024 Ash Cutchin

I have seen several references to Captain Sam Miller in some of the newsletter stories. I once flew as a passenger from JFK to FRA in 1972 with him as the operating Captain. I believe he was also Vice President Flight Operations at the time. My wife and I were en route to visit relatives in Wiesbaden, Germany. I checked her in as a Standby passenger and escorted her to the gate. Then I proceeded to Operations to ask for the jump seat. After introducing me to his First Officer, Captain Miller told me to check in at the gate, accompany my wife to her seat, and then come to the cockpit because he would allow me to ride in the jump seat. I was a 707 Flight Engineer at the time, and I believe it was my very first time aboard a 747 in fact. I did as instructed after being told by the purser that my wife would be able to sit in First Class. Cool. Once I was seated behind Captain Miller, he turned around and introduced me to the Flight Engineer and then said, "Mr. Cutchin, I know your wife is seated in First Class, but you are on a cockpit pass for the jump seat."

"Yes sir. Thank you, sir."

He continued, "I am assigning you to observe the service in First Class between here and Frankfurt. If the service is unsatisfactory, you are to submit to me a written report when we arrive. If the service is satisfactory, then no report is required. Now go sit with your wife and enjoy the flight."

"Yes sir. Thank you, again."

He may have done the same thing with every jump seat rider for all I know, but that night I felt particularly fortunate to know Captain Sam Miller, a real gentleman's gentleman. The flight was great, the service was great, I did not have to submit a report, and we spent a wonderful week in Germany. I even got a chance to ride in the bridge of a Rhine cruise vessel while we docked at Rudesheim. First time I ever observed side thrusters on a boat.

Episode 8: A Lifetime of Romantic Adventure...From Flying Boats to Jumbo Jets

from The Pan Am Podcast

In this issue, we shared the obituary of Dave Bridges. He was featured in The Pan Am Podcast about three years ago, and his interview might be of interest.

Pan Am Captain Dave Bridges, Centenarian. He celebrated his 100th birthday earlier this year and he just might be one of the oldest people to ever be on a podcast! A 37-year Pan Am veteran, Captain Bridges joined the company in 1943 and retired in 1981. He began as a relief co-pilot on the Boeing 314 flying boat during World War II, and after the war he flew a variety of land-based aircraft including the Douglas DC-3, DC-4,...

Listen on Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-pan-am-podcast/id1581321929?i=1000540377127>

A good interview with Dave can be found here: <https://aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2024/june/>

Please Send Us Your Stories

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

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. Check it out at www.flyingboatmuseum.com Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

RENEW TODAY!

In order to keep the newsletter and website going for the Clipper Pioneers, it's time for renewal dues of \$50 00 (or more if you wish to donate extra to help keep us going!). If you haven't already, please send it to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382. Thank you!

Your Name: _____

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

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

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.

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

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*

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/>

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

*...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

Edwin David Bridges, pilot, tinkerer, airplane enthusiast, and devoted family man died peacefully November 9, 2024, at home in Los Altos. He was 103 ½ years old, and in his words, “not too shabby”. Dave was telling jokes, on his iPad, and checking the weather by asking SIRI until a few days before his death.

Born in San Francisco in 1921, Dave was curious and mechanical since childhood. He was raised on Versailles Avenue in Alameda. He was on the Alameda High crew team, and when he reflected on that time he talked about how clear the estuaries and San Francisco Bay were back in the 1930's.

He met his love on a trolley car in San Francisco. Eleanor Marie Garibaldi was – as he described her – a “darling” Italian girl who was 5' 5" tall; Dave a 6' 6" and a strikingly handsome guy. Dave was the first non-Italian to marry into the extended 3rd generation Italian family, and he was a big hit; the family loved his charm and how happy Eleanor was. Family lore has his attempts at Italian to impress the family at a big dinner to be a bit of a disaster. He tried his Italian skills and asked Big Louie to “please pass the butter”- instead, he said, “please kiss my behind”. When the table burst into laughter Eleanor knew it was going to be okay. They wed in 1944 and were married for 58 years.

During the war, Dave was a flight instructor for Army Air Corps and, after being discharged, joined Pan American Airways (“the world's most experienced airline”). He started out as a crewmember on a China Clipper B-314 “flying boat” and ended his career flying a Pan 747. He could navigate by the stars and flew over and around the world for 36 years. He is the last surviving Pan Am pilot with those credentials and at 100 years old was interviewed for The Pan Am Podcast episode #8. He was the talk of the town when, one year, he gave Eleanor a surprise wedding anniversary gift: dinner in Tahiti on an overnight Pan Am flight.

Dave and Eleanor left San Francisco for the Los Altos “sun” in 1952, when the apricot orchards made way for the new ranch-style homes. The backyard Doughboy Pool was a weekend hit with Eleanor's family coming down from the city to escape the fog. Dave lived at 524 Distel Drive for 72 years; he was the last original homeowner on their street in Los Altos. Dave could rebuild a car engine and repair a TV or toaster. He was the neighborhood fix-it guy. His garage was filled with handmade remote-control wooden airplanes and electronic projects. He put a 707 Pan Am yoke cap into the steering wheel of his 1968 Oldsmobile Delta 88 “luxury car” (You can imagine Eleanor telling him to slow down). After his retirement, he continued building and fixing things. He taught his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren how to whistle and make tunes from blowing over bottles.

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

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. 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. 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 |