



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

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## Cold War Airline

*by Captain William B. Nash, Ret., Pan American World Airways*

*(continued from previous issue)*

During my fourth year we began to fly the jet - the Boeing 727 - a great "schoenes kleines Flugzeug."

The communists continued to harass us in the corridors. At our 500 mph jet speed it would have been easy to slide out of the corridors. We watched our headings even more carefully. On the approach into Tempelhof airport in Berlin, the usual final approach was over East Berlin. Often, at night, the communists aimed a huge powerful spotlight directly at our cockpit to blind us. I would put on dark glasses and look only at the instruments. The copilot wore dark glasses and told me when we were below and abeam the second floor of some apartments close on our right. Touchdown was then imminent.

We still had to maintain between 3,000 and 10,000 feet flight level with the jet in the corridors. Our fuel consumption was high, flying a jet that low, but when we left the corridors at the West German border, we could climb to over 30,000 feet flight level, at which level our jets drank a lot less fuel. These were flights to Düsseldorf, Cologne, Stuttgart, Munich, Nürnberg, or other cities in Europe.

In the meantime, the communists were busy obliterating our radar screens by dropping metallic tinsel from high above us in the corridors.

### **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.

## Cold War Airline

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It was not long after we got the jets that we lost one. It was the nightly mail plane returning to Berlin from Frankfurt in the middle of the night - no passengers on those flights. For some reason that night, Tempelhof was closed and Tegel airport in the French sector was the destination airport. This took the airplane north of its usual track approaching Berlin, and it crashed en route to Tegel airport in communist territory.

The next morning I had a flight and took photos of the crash site, showing digging machinery close to the 727. Parts of the airplane were being pushed into the holes and buried. The only conclusion I could come to was that the communists had shot the plane down and were hiding the parts of the plane which revealed this. I gave my photos to the chief pilot.

No one but the communists were permitted at the crash site until the communists had finished hiding the evidence. Our United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigators were stymied.

Years later, in the United States, I met a man at a pilot meeting, who had been one of the FAA investigators. He told me the photos told the story, but due to our State Department and the resistance of the communists, the investigation was called off. Nothing would be proved. His opinion was definitely that the 727 had been shot down. All that Pan Am got back were the unburied parts of the airplane and the three bodies of the crew.

I believe that the communists at that remote anti aircraft outpost had never received a message that the mail plane, the only plane in the sky that time of the night, would be over their territory and land at Tegel airport.

News reporters often lurked at both ends of the flights between Berlin and West Germany and would try to collar some of our crew and eagerly ask, "Did anything happen on your flight?" We had all agreed to tell them nothing. They might have started World War III.

*(continued on next page)*

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

**Bank balance as of October 31, 2025 was \$6,474.27.** 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. It's time to renew if you haven't already! Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

## **Cold War Airline**

*(continued from previous page)*

My last fifteen years with Pan Am were in Europe, including eleven years on the jet. The flying was unique and precise for me, and great travel for the family. All of us experienced the educational sophistication of visiting many countries and exposure to foreign cultures and languages.

It was a three year assignment. However, we liked Germany and did not return to the USA to live until my retirement in May 1977, after 15 years in the IGS, with two additional family members: a pretty German wife and our four-year-old Berlin-born son, Billy.

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## **Pan Am 100th Anniversary Legendary Voyage - Oct. 2027**

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR! RETRACE THE CLIPPER ROUTE BY SEA**

Journey along Pan Am®'s historic Clipper route, visiting 19 ports and 13 countries over 28 days.

#### INTRODUCING PAN AM'S NEWEST PORT

Spend a day at RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay™, named the #1 private island 20 years in a row.

#### HISTORIC PORTS OF CALL

From Santo Domingo and Santa Marta to Belize City, explore storied gateways reimagined.

#### INSPIRED BY AVIATION'S FINEST ERA

Signature touches and exclusive onboard experiences evoke the Golden Age of Travel.

#### THREE-TIME "BEST SERVICE" AWARD WINNER

Exceptional 2:1 guest-to-crew ratio & voted "Best Service" by Cruise Critic for three years in a row.

#### DESTINATION DINING™

From familiar flavors to timeless classics, we're committed to fresh culinary experiences.

19 Ports - 13 Countries - 2 Heritage Brands - 1 Legendary Voyage

28-Day Legendary Voyage - Pan Am 100th Anniversary

Zuiderdam - Roundtrip Miami - Oct. 30, 2027

Contact Your Travel Advisor to Book Today - @tourwithorit Orit Rindner - Tel: 850-270-7745

BOOK EARLY & SAVE - Holland American + Pan Am

Reserve your place today and receive up to 60% off our most popular amenities plus added benefits and upgrades.

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## Account Take Over - What to Look For and What to Do

Stay a step ahead of the scammers. Educate yourself on some of the most common frauds and scams.

### What is account takeover?

The definition of account takeover is when a fraudster uses someone's personal information to take over their online accounts. Once in, they can roam free in the account environment and make purchases, change passwords and make changes to personal information.

### How criminals get usernames and passwords:

Dark Web: Purchase of data through data breach marketplaces on the dark web.

Phishing: Directly from the consumer using malware or via phishing

Hacking: Hackers use bots to test different credential combinations on multiple sites to gain access.

### Tips to protect yourself from an account take over.

Use strong passwords. It's important that each of your online accounts has a strong, unique and complicated password. Enable two-or multi-factor authentication when it's available.

Monitor your account. Check your account for unfamiliar or suspicious transactions, or if there is any newly saved shipping or credit card information.

Carefully guard your personal information. Secure your social security number and bank account numbers. Shred all paper documents that contain this information. Never give out passwords or personal information to an unsolicited caller, or in response to an email or text message, even if it sounds or looks legitimate. Verizon will never proactively contact a customer asking for sensitive information such as a password, account PIN or to perform authentication.

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## Health Tip: Reminder - Move to Stay Active

Regular physical activity is the foundation of good health at any age. For seniors, moving your body daily supports mobility, balance, and independence while reducing the risk of chronic diseases. Be sure to do several exercises to get your body moving today!

**Don't forget to check out our website at: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://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. Funds are dropping, and we may not have enough to continue without your help! Form is on page 7.**

## Writer seeks Pan Am pilots to interview

My name is Jason Ross. I am a writer who is attempting to speak with former Pan Am pilots who went on to fly with United, following the purchase of the Pacific routes in 1986. I'm looking to interview several pilots for the writing of a potential book focusing on United's purchase of the Pacific.

A little about myself. I grew up fascinated with aviation and especially aviation history. Influenced by family members who worked for Pan Am and served in the Air Force, I started my career as an Air Force officer. Over time I became passionate about organizations' cultures and how they have led to success or failure, and everything in between. Ultimately, this led to my interest in the acquisition of Pan Am's Pacific routes and individuals' experiences with the acquisition. If you are interested in sharing your experience, I can be reached at [jason.r.ross@gmail.com](mailto:jason.r.ross@gmail.com). Thank you again for your help.

Best regards,  
Jason Ross

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## PAN AM MUSEUM CRUISE APRIL 25 - MAY 2, 2027

Welcome Aboard the Magnificent AmaMagna - An Unforgettable Voyage with Purpose

Set sail on a once-in-a-lifetime journey along the legendary Danube River, where timeless history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes come together — all from the luxurious comfort of the AmaMagna.

This isn't just a cruise. It's a celebration of heritage, a gathering of kindred spirits, and a meaningful way to support the Pan Am World Museum! Join fellow Pan Am enthusiasts and adventurers as you explore the heart of Southeast Europe in unparalleled style and sophistication. April 25 - May 2, 2027

PRESENTING GEMS OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE on AmaWaterways AmaMagna

If you are thinking of joining us, don't delay! Take full advantage of our discounts, extended solely for our group. We've had a wonderful response so far, it's sure to be another fabulous trip!

Only \$400 deposit - balance is not due until 90 days before cruise. (\$200 is non-refundable).

For more information, visit <https://thepanammuseum.org/travel/cruise2027>

Start planning for the 3rd Biennial Pan Am World Museum Fundraiser Cruise!

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## Places to Visit

**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](http://www.flyingboatmuseum.com) Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

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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 or [cblayd@aol.com](mailto: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.

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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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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

**There are no obituaries to report this month.**

*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.*

### Stranded in the Sky: Untold Story

Philip Jett is the author of STRANDED IN THE SKY: The Untold Story of Pan Am Luxury Airlines Trapped on the Day of Infamy, which combined the stories of the Anzac, Hong Kong, Pacific, and Philippine Clippers, with a great deal of original research. The book debuted before a large group of Pan Am clipper families on Treasure Island in San Francisco in May of 2023. He may be available to speak to Pan Am groups or associations without charge. If interested, you may visit his website at [www.philipjett.com](http://www.philipjett.com) and email him at [philip@philipjett.com](mailto:philip@philipjett.com). His book is available in hardback, paperback, and eBook.

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

### 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)

# SFO PAN AM RETIREES ASSOCIATION MEETING REGISTRATION

Saturday December 6, 2024

Contact: Al Gilbert, [asgilbertus@gmail.com](mailto:asgilbertus@gmail.com) (415) 516 0359

Our Christmas luncheon will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025 at Michael’s at Shoreline in Mountain View. No-host Beer & Wine at 11:30 and lunch at 12:30.

Our speaker will be Nancy McAllister, President of World Wings International. Nancy joined the family business in 1973, following in her Pan Am pilot father's footsteps, and flew through 1986.

After a long storied history of camaraderie and philanthropy, World Wings International will be merged with the Pan Am Museum Foundation at the end of 2025, and we look forward to hearing about the history and future of World Wings International.

Also, "just in time for Christmas," I will be signing and selling copies of my book "Pan Am Stories: You Can't Make This Up." Books will be \$10 if pre-purchased during registration, and \$15 at the door. 100% of sales proceeds benefit the Pan Am Museum Foundation.

**Please complete and return the registration form on the bottom by November 29th**

## SFO PAN AM ASSOCIATION

When: Saturday December 6, 2025

Where: Michael’s at Shoreline Golf Club, 2960 North Shoreline Blvd, Mountain View, CA 94043  
(650) 691-9305

Time: 11:30– No-Host Beverages

12:30 – Lunch - Choice of:

- o Roast Beef, English Cut, Au Jus -\$47
- o Broiled Salmon, Lemon Beurre Blanc - \$43
- o Breast of Chicken Marsala -\$38
- o Spinach & Cheese Tortellini -\$35
- o Stir Fry Vegetables with Noodles -\$35

Mail to: Al Gilbert, 285 Humboldt Rd. Brisbane, CA 94005 (Tel: 415 516 0359)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Tortellini \_\_\_\_\_ Stir Fry Vegetables \_\_\_\_\_

\* Guest(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Tortellini \_\_\_\_\_ Stir Fry Vegetables \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Copies of “Pan Am Stories: You Can’t Make This Up” (\$10)

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO “Al Gilbert”