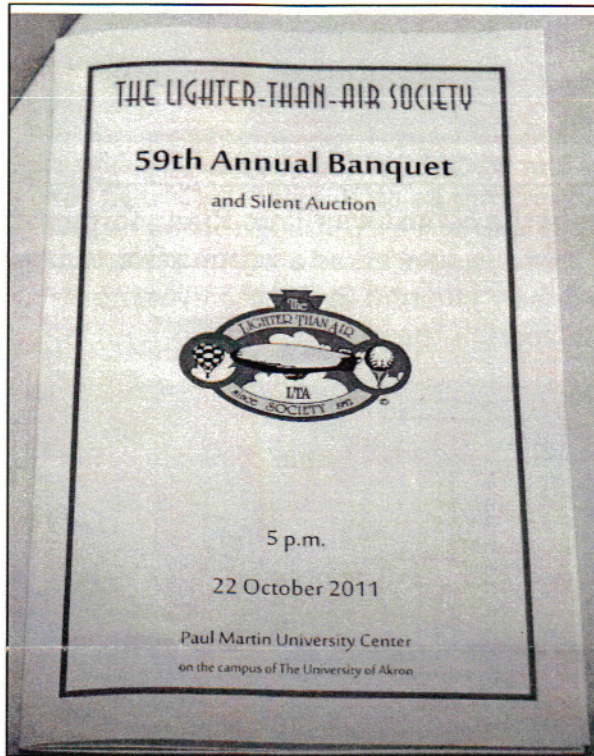


The Lighter-Than-Air Society Newsletter

Issue # 8 January 2012



Saturday, October 22nd, 2011 was a very special night for The Lighter-Than-Air Society. The 59th annual banquet was held that evening at the Martin Center on the campus of The University of Akron *and* the very first silent auction to benefit the organization was also held.

Silent auction items were gathered by board members of LTAS to be auctioned off during the evening. Some of the items included a personal tour by Dr. Tom Crouch (Senior Curator of the Smithsonian Institute's Division of Aeronautics) of the LTA collections on display at the Udvar-Hazy Center; a round of golf for four (including carts) at the world-famous South Course of the Firestone Country Club; two Akron/Macon-era girders manufactured by Goodyear Zeppelin and retrieved from the Goodyear Zeppelin Airdock; gift certificates to Abercrombie & Fitch and the always popular Goodyear blimp ride for two.



Lockheed Martin's table

The bidding began before dinner and proved to be quite fun and often very competitive as bidders vied to have the highest bid for their favorite item. When the bidding concluded, bidders were excited to see if theirs actually was the highest bid, but they had to wait for awhile to find out as bids were tallied.



Dr. Jim Maloney

While the bids were being tallied, guest speaker, Jim Maloney entertained folks with

stories about his adventures as a former blimp pilot. Maloney is an engaging speaker and kept the audience laughing.



Tom Riley receiving the Achievement award from Ren

Also on the program for the evening was the awarding of "The P. Rendall Brown Lifetime Achievement Award." This award is presented to those individuals who have devoted a lifetime to service to the Lighter-Than-Air Society, during which time they have dedicated themselves to preserving the history of buoyant flight and promoting public awareness and appreciation of the technology and the value of it to humankind. This year's re-



Tom's acceptance speech



Trey Wackerly get's ready to place a bid

cipient of the award was Tom Riley, former board member as well as a blimp pilot. Tom's family joined him for the evening to see him receive the award.



University of Akron Engineering students

As the evening progressed, we had another added treat – a caricature artist, Kari Fry, who delighted attendees by drawing their likenesses.

As the speeches concluded, it was obvious that folks were anxious to see if they had placed the winning bid on their favorite item. A line formed and the silent auction items were brought to their respective winners. The first-time ever silent auction seemed to be a great hit and raised over \$4,500 for The-Lighter-Than Air Society.

Story by Sandy Bee Lynn
Photos by David Wertz

Tom Riley, Recipient of the P. Rendall Brown Lifetime Achievement Award



Tom's Interest in flying began while he served in the USAF Reserves at Youngstown State University and at March Air Force Base in Riverside CA as an aircraft mechanic.

In August of 1963, Tom started his LTA career in Akron as member of

the newly commissioned airship Columbia's ground crew, transferring to California with the airship shortly thereafter. A year and half later he was selected as a pilot in training. His career with Goodyear continued with Tom becoming Senior Pilot, Manager of Airship Operations and culminating as Director of Airship Operations and Planning. After retiring from Goodyear, his LTA career continued with the Lightship Group (Quality & Assurance) and Airship Management Services (as contract pilot of the Fuji blimp). Tom has also been a member of the Lighter-Than-Air Society's Board of Trustees. Tom is a member of Our Lady of Victory Church in Tallmadge, where he is involved with the pastoral care mission at hospitals and home. He serves on the Board of Directors of Violet's Cupboard, Summa Pastoral Council, and is a Dominican Associate @ Elms. Tom is also a member of the Boy Scouts of America's Order of the Arrow. Currently Tom holds a valid Second Class (commercial) Medical Certificate and a Lighter Than Air & Balloon Pilot's License from the FAA; as well as a Radio/Telephone

License and a Third Class Broadcast License from the FCC.

Tom is most proud of his wife Sarah, sons Thomas and James, daughter-in-law Nikki and granddaughters Taylor and Nicole

Chairman's Report/Year in Review

At the Banquet and the December Board meeting, our Chairman reviewed the highlights and achievements of 2011:

- ♦ The LTAS exhibit at the Akron History Exhibit at Lock 3 in downtown Akron continues, and was modified extensively and improved.
- ♦ The Society partnered with the Akron-Summit County library by providing images and historical descriptions to web based the Summit Memory Project.
- ♦ We participated with a booth at the Cleveland Film Festival at the movie "Farewell" about the Graf Zeppelin's around the world flight.
- ♦ We continued to work on Grant applications to fund future projects.
- ♦ We continued to refine plans to do a major archiving and inventory of our extensive collection. We will be discussing options to work with the Akron-Summit County Library and the University of Akron.
- ♦ The name of the *Akron Airship Historical Center* was renamed *The Lighter-Than-Air Historical Center in Akron* to better reflect our mission and Akron's role in the history.
- ♦ Redesigned our Website with the long term plan to create an on-line virtual museum. The web site is updated frequently with news of the Society, and with stories of interest to the Lighter-Than-Air community.
- ♦ The finance committee did a great job controlling expenses.
- ♦ Significant contributions of photos, drawings, books and 3 dimensional objects continued to be received.
- ♦ Continued our partnership with the Akron-Summit County Public Library with displays and special programs, including a presentation by our banquet speaker, Dr. Tom Crouch, on the afternoon of the banquet.
- ♦ Overall, an exciting and productive year!

Special reprint from the July-August, 2004 Buoyant Flight

The Flying Maloneys

Caricature by Tom Riley



Jim Maloney Sr. by the engine nacelle of Columbia N2A.

No it's not a circus high wire act but an aerial adventure story of sorts. It's a father/son team of airship pilots who collectively logged thousands and thousands of Lighter-Than-Air hours from the 1940's to current day!

It's the story of a young man's devotion admiration and *respect* for a wonderful father whose lifelong dream was following in his famous Pop's footprints in the sky. The names are known far and wide among airship folks; James Maloney (s) times two.

I first met Jim Sr. the day he interviewed and hired me in Akron, Ohio, late-summer of 1963. In the late Fall of that same year I met Jim. Jr., in Los Angeles, during the early years while he was working part time for his Dad and attending USC. A young engineer in the making, Jim was already married to his high school sweetheart, Sally, (via signatures of both parents consenting because of their young ages), they lived on campus housing, while Jim attacked his EE degree, which ultimately turned into a Masters and ended up as a PhD! All the while Jim worked as a crewman on the *Columbia*, N2A, and made the continual request of Dad to learn how to fly the blimps! Dad patiently listened but all the while didn't want son Jim to live the "life on the road" he'd done for many years. Jimmy was told to come back and make the request again after graduation. He did and there were no job openings at the time. He continued on to graduate degrees but by then Jim Sr. said he was overqualified!

Jim Jr. did the next best thing - he pursued and obtained airplane pilot's licenses; private, commercial and instrument types. Then headed out for a career in electrical engineering and biding his time. In later years, after the much-beloved Jim Sr. had died Jimmy asked his Dad's long time friend, Frank Hogan (then manager airship operations) for a chance to fly the blimps. Frank said yes and Jim's still flying today as Pilot in Charge of the Akron-based *Spirit of America* airship.

Jim Sr., surely a man of his word, though he didn't need or use much verbiage in instructing, lecturing or communicating with you. I was very proud of serving as his clerk (administrative assistant) from initial hire at Wingfoot through the Fall of '64 at our Los Angeles airship base, when he approved my entrance into pilot training on his Columbia Operation. His training regimen for me wasn't easy - every cross country and night sign flight plus an hour-a-day formal instruction. My only days off were the non-scheduled flying days but on those days I attended ground school at Long Beach Airport plus looked over operations' needs by dropping by the base each and every day. He didn't demand that extra time but he deserved every effort I could make to the betterment of our program. He never asked more than he was willing to give from his own talent reservoir.

All of us felt like family under his (and Lois') oversight and protection. Now for the real Stuff - - the day to day observation of the man; living and working with him; a hero-worship for sure.

Take a look in my scrapbook some time. You'll see more Jim Sr. than me, that's a fact. I rustled through the old documents just this week and found more than an abundance of history and loads of memories flooding back during what was maybe one of the happiest times of my life.

In the 60's many if not all of us were trapped by the evils of nicotine. Jim's preference was the unfiltered kind (probably Luckies) but memory fades from time to time. Anyway the man had the largest hands I've ever encountered with fingers that almost hid those short unfiltered cigarettes! We'd sit in the back of our operations bus doing paperwork and I always was captivated by the very small amount of cigarette which showed on either side of those massive fingers - - seemed like just the burning end showing on one side and a little saliva mark on the other end. The same with watching him write something or better yet pecking out something on the old manual typewriter - much of the time two keys hammered home

Special reprint from the July-August, 2004 Buoyant Flight

versus the one selected. Once while digging through files in the office we had in the back of the bus I came across a letter from the home office that stated: "what the hell is Riley doing to your paperwork?!" Jim buried it in what he thought was a "hidden" location so I wouldn't feel bad about not catching on to the paperwork too quickly. Like I said he was that kind of guy.

He was a giant in many ways although not particularly tall but rather in the person he was and the way he treated others. With all the President Reagan praise recently it's about time to let people know about others who always had a kind word and deed though Jim, in his day, was in fact nationally prominent via his Captaincy of the airships. Nationally syndicated columnist Herb Caen of the San Francisco Chronicle once wrote; "Mrs. Jim Maloney, describing her husband's job as skipper of the Goodyear blimp: "he pilots with his feet. "The rudders and lifters and everything else - - all with his feet." "Why, do you know that he has the body of a 16 year-old-boy from the waist down?" Broke up the audience, much to her embarrassment! Jim and Lois evoked those kinds of wonderful feelings, emotions and characterizations from all who encountered them. Jim and Lois were an item in the ilk of Ron and Nancy.

I won't dwell on Jim's Navy or Goodyear Aircraft piloting career - maybe that's another installment for this publication in the future? If you ever flew with him you know that gentle touch on the controls denoted confidence and assurance of a successful flight every time whether sub-hunting, testing new airships and equipment or flying a sporting event for television.

He was the embodiment of the "quiet" man. A John Wayne quality, and by the way, he knew the "Duke" and arranged for Lois and the other wives (my Sarah included) to spend an evening "on set" with Wayne and other stars while filming in Old Tucson. He once told Sarah: "Darlin' we love you dearly but if your car breaks down while we're traveling cross country we'll pass you by - the blimp is always first!" The breakdown never happened so we don't know for sure but I figured he'd be the first one to come to the rescue.

During our instructor/student flights he didn't need lots of words but rather that gentle hand and an occasional comment or two usually penetrated my more-than-thick skull. The famous cheese (dry) sandwich and plenty of ice water (the student's responsibility to provide) was cross-country fare for

the long flights crossing the U.S. from LA to New York. I overheard him talking to my Dad one time when I wasn't supposed to be listening. I don't know whether I was prouder because my Dad heard the words or Jim said them. There's a photo in my collection of the old *Columbia* N2A crew walking back to the bus after a landing - - the postures and facial expressions tell the whole story. I'd just landed in Tacoma, Washington (small landing area) after posting my first four-digit flight logged hours (1,000). It was maybe the worst landing of my career and Jim didn't let the milestone event or the poor landing escape that famous look he could give that would stop your heart. We both knew I made a mistake in not backing the crew up to give me more room so a lot didn't need to be said.

I cried my way though the eulogy I was asked to give at Jim's burial many years ago. I could never express how much I still miss him - - he was rock solid and one you would always know would be there for you.

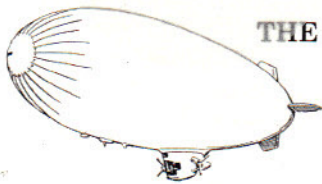
Did I tell you that Jr.'s mannerisms are a bit scary as you watch his movements and speech patterns (Jim Sr. is imbedded within) it harkens you back to times past.



Columbia N2A crew after the landing at Tacoma, Washington.



Jim in 2001



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PURPOSE: *To further knowledge pertaining to the history, science and techniques of buoyant flight; to encourage the use of lighter-than-air transportation; and to establish and maintain a library and museum on lighter than air.*

Everyone is welcome to join

The LTA Society Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Types of membership available:

- ☐ Active Membership, U.S. & Canada: \$25 per year
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- ☐ New Membership Please mark your envelope ATTN NEW MEMBERSHIP or
- ☐ Renewal ATTN RENEWAL to speed processing.
- ☐ **Please note:** My address has changed to the one written above

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