Spring 2014

RED TAIL REPORT

The Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Youth-Programs Newsletter

Coming Soon, a National Youth Program

TAI's National Youth Committee, under the stewardship of Chauncey Spencer II, is entering the final stages of establishing a summer-camp national youth program, initially at Hampton University, a Historically Black University in Hampton, Virginia. (TAI's Dr. Eric Sheppard, a member of the National Youth Committee, is the dean of Hampton's School of Engineering and Technology.) The program may soon thereafter be extended to Delaware State University, another HBCU, as well as possibly Moton Field, in Tuskegee, Alabama

As currently envisioned, the program would consist of a one-week STEM academy for up to 30 young people between the ages of 15 and 18 from TAI's Eastern, Central and Western Regions. Hampton University already has a flourishing aviation program, and the TAI program would take advantage of its facilities and instructors. Hampton students enrolled in the school's aviation classes would also be utilized as volunteer mentors for the TAI high schoolers.

Another valuable facet of the program would be the fact that the Virginia Air and Space Center, with displays of aircraft and spacecraft as well as a flight simulator available to students, is just half a mile from the Hampton campus. VASC is the official visitor center for NASA's Langley Research Center.

If all goes as planned, TAI will have a national youth program operating during the summer of 2015.

Advanced Placement? Go For It!

Excerpted from a November 26, 2013 article in *The New York Times* by Motoko Rich:

Every year, more than 600,000 academically promising high school students—most of them poor, Latino or black—fail to enroll in Advanced Placement courses, often viewed as head starts for the college-bound.

Some of them do not know about these courses, which offer an accelerated curriculum and can lead to college credit. Others assume they will be too difficult. But many are held back by entrenched perceptions among administrators and teachers, whose referrals are often required for enrollment, about who belongs in what has long served as an élite preserve within public schools.

"Many teachers don't truly believe that these programs are for all kids or that students of color or low-income kids can succeed in these classes," said Christina Theokas, director of research at The Education Trust, a nonprofit group. Ms. Theokas said that if those underrepresented students had taken A. P. courses at the same rate as their white and more affluent peers in 2010, there would have been about 614,500 more students in those classes.

While some critics say A.P. Classes are little more than another round of test prep, supporters say they can foster a culture of learning. "In regular classes, people are trying to distract you with music videos or saying, 'Hey, look at this cat playing a piano' on their phones," said Humberto Fuentes, 17, who emigrated with his parents from Ecuador when he was an infant and hopes to be the first in his family to attend college. "Whereas in an A.P. Class, they will show you something from the text and say, 'Hey, this is fun.'"

In Orlando, Florida, school officials are convinced that the courses will improve their students' chances in college. Three years ago, the [school] district dropped its requirement of teacher recommendations for A. P. A.P. Students. Many students are also enrolled in Advancement Via Individual Determination, a nonprofit group that works to help prepare disadvantaged students for college.

"We wanted to find the students who might be flying under the radar," said Barbara Jenkins, superintendent of Orange County Public Schools, the country's tenth-largest school district, where about half the black and Latino students with qualifying test scores take A.P. Classes.

classes, and schools began mining data from Preliminary SAT exams more intensively to find students with the aptitude for more difficult courses.

At Freedom High School [in Orlando], teachers offer tutoring at lunchtime, after school and on Saturdays. Starting [in 2013], their district, Orange County Public Schools, allocated $12,000 to $14,000 to each high school to pay for extra instructional time for

"The things that cause kids to enroll in A.P. Classes and do well in them are the same things that cause them to go to college and succeed in college," said Kristin Klopfenstein, the Executive Director of The Education Innovation Institute at the University of Northern Colorado. "Supportive families, a college-going culture at home, and a high school with a college-going culture."

Prep School Presentation

On February 24, Glendon Fraser, president of the Maj. Gen. Irene Trowell-Harris Chapter of TAI, gave a widely applauded talk about the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen at the elite New York private school Trinity-Pawling. He spoke to an audience of 350 students and faculty members, and his speech, which included a showing of the 20-minute George Lucas documentary "Double Victory," was preceded by a week-long exhibit of colorful Tuskegee Airmen history storyboards in Trinity-Pawling's academic library.

Fraser, a one-time outfielder for a Houston Astros farm team before he became an airline pilot, was warmly welcomed by the school that graduated first baseman Mo Vaughn, a three time major-league baseball All-Star and 1995 American League MVP. Fraser was introduced to the T-P audience by youth newsletter editor and Trowell-Harris Chapter youth mentor Stephan Wilkinson, a 1954 Trinity-Pawling graduate.

Trowell-Harris Chapter President Glendon Fraser greets a Trinity-Pawling student

Newsletter editor and Trowell-Harris youth mentor Stephan Wilkinson and Glen Fraser

The Harlem Hellfighters

During World War I, there existed an Army unit that in many ways was an earlier incarnation of the Tuskegee Airmen. It was the New York National Guard's 369th Infantry Regiment, the only all-black U. S. combat unit of that long-ago war. The 369th had second-hand equipment, and they were set up by their white superiors to fail—where have we heard that before?--yet they never lost a trench nor was a single member of the unit ever captured by the Germans. The 369th also served in World War I combat longer than any other U. S. unit.

Not surprisingly, they were known to the Americans and the French as well as the Germans as the Harlem Hellfighters. Back home, they were feared and shunned by Southern whites who were terrified by the idea of blacks with guns in an era of lynchings and race riots, and the black infantrymen faced insult, assault and Jim Crow laws throughout their training in South Carolina. They drilled with broomsticks rather than rifles, since nobody dared give them real guns.

But the French needed reinforcements as the war went badly, and the Army took to the idea of blacks rather than whites as cannon fodder. The French welcomed the Harlem Hellfighters and treated them better than they'd ever been treated in their own country. They fought under French command and wore cast-off French uniforms and helmets. There was a time, in fact, when the Harlem Hellfighters were all that stood between the advancing Germans and Paris, and they stood fast. It's hard to imagine, but the famous American Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, later sent the French commanders a letter warning them not to commend the black troops. The last thing he needed was for Americans to believe "negroes" had done better than white troops.

Now there's an unusual new book just out about these black infantrymen—"The Harlem Hellfighters," by novelist Max Brooks (author of the wildly successful zombie epic "World War Z" and the son of mega-talented film director, writer and comedian Mel Brooks and the late actress Ann Bancroft) with illustrations by Canaan White. And the illustrations are very important, because the book is what's called a graphic novel—a kind of adult comic book, if you will. But the graphic novel is an increasingly popular and sophisticated form of literature, and the phrase "comic book" does it no justice.

The Harlem Hellfighters' unit still exists, in the form of the New York National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade. Though his troops are no longer all black, its current commander, Col. Reginald Sanders, is an African-American.

(Much of the information above comes from the excellent military-affairs blog "War Is Boring"--www.medium.com/war-is-boring.)

First-Generation College Students: Succeeding While Scared

From Annie Murphy Paul's weekly newsletter on intelligence and learning, "The Brilliant Report" (subscribe at www.anniemurphypaul.com/blog/):

First-generation college students—undergraduates whose parents did not attend university—have reason to be proud. They've made it, against daunting odds. But once they get on campus, many of these individuals struggle. First-generation students "are more likely to encounter academic, financial, professional, cultural and emotional difficulties than are students whose parents attended college," writes Teresa Heinz Housel, an associate professor of communication at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, who studies this population (and was herself the first in her family to attend college).

More than a quarter of low-income, first-generation college students leave after their first year, and 89 percent fail to graduate within six years.

The number of these students is growing—nearly one in three entering freshmen in the U.S. is a first-generation student—and so is interest in helping them succeed. The practices researchers have identified can be useful for all of us embarking on endeavors for which our background and experience have not prepared us.

First: Know what you don't know. First-generation students are often not prepared for university-level work — but they believe otherwise, reports Karen Boden, a researcher at Azusa Pacific University in California. Her study of first-generation Latino students, published in the Journal of Hispanic Higher Education in 2011, found that the participants perceived themselves as academically prepared, even though they frequently lack the skills and knowledge of the offspring of college-educated parents.

Second: Figure out the unwritten rules. First-generation college students don't simply lack the learning of their more privileged peers. They also arrive on campus without skills that other students take for granted, like knowing how to take notes and how to participate in class. Housel, coauthor of the report "Faculty and First-Generation College Students: Bridging the Classroom Gap," notes that she, like many newcomers to university life, had to learn about "what conversational topics were appropriate for dinners with professors, how to make an airline reservation, what outfits were appropriate for professional interviews," and other crucial but unaccustomed aspects of collegiate culture.

Third: Make connections. First-generation students feel less support, both emotional and informational, from their parents than do continuing-generation students, reports Susan Sy, a professor of psychology at California State University, Fullerton, and her coauthors in a recent study published in the Journal of College Student Retention. In these cases, research shows that social connections, whether it's a mentor who's a professor in the student's area of interest or a study group of students with similar backgrounds, are essential to academic success.

Fourth: Embrace a new identity while preserving the old one. First-generation college students are often less involved in extracurricular activities than other students. They may be more likely to work outside jobs and to commute rather than live on campus, but they also may feel isolated or alienated by an unfamiliar university environment. Building bridges between home and school, old friends and new ones, is key to ensuring that the first generation to arrive at college departs there with diploma in hand.

Hitting the Trifecta

Dina Elosiebo is an African-American, a woman, and a helicopter pilot. An aviation trifecta. This past February—Black History Month, appropriately—she became the first black woman pilot for the District of Columbia Army National Guard. A first lieutenant, Elosiebo graduated from the Army's elite flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama (about 75 miles south of the Tuskegee Airmens' original Moton Field), where she learned to fly helicopters.

Elosiebo was a recipient of a TAI scholarship and as a civilian had already attained her fixed-wing commercial pilot's license and flight-instructor rating. She was mentored by DOTA Herbert Jones, the founder of one of the first black-owned flying schools in the U. S., and she credits the legacy of the Airmen with much of her success. “When I think about the trailblazers who went before me and the adversity they continuously faced, be it gender, ethnicity, or simply doing what had not been done before,” Elosiebo said, “it makes me realize I wouldn't have a story if it wasn't for them.”

All of TAI congratulates Lieutenant Elosiebo.

Flags Flying in the Virgin Islands

St. Croix CTEC aviation students salute the flags every morning.

The Virgin Islands Chapter of TAI takes flags seriously. When it realized there were none flying at the St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center, it donated a set of the Star-Spangled Banner and a Virgin Islands state flag to the busy votech.

The St. Croix CTEC has an aviation program, and its 20 students are all members of the Virgin Islands Chapter of TAI and its own Youth Aviation Club. Those students will raise and lower the flags every day, and the chapter also arranged for the JROTC commander from St. Croix Central High School, Maj. Fernando Williams, to teach the aviation students the proper and exacting procedures for displaying and caring for the national flag.

The votech's Aviation Academy offers two career tracks—one leading to completion of the FAA written exam for private pilots, the other aimed at the thorough FAA testing to certify airframe and powerplant technicians.

Small World

During the winter of 1944, Herb Heilbrun was a USAAF lieutenant piloting a 15th Air Force B-17, flying fearsomely dangerous bombing missions out of Italy. Not surprisingly, Heilbrun's Flying Fortress was often escorted by P-51 Mustangs from the Italy-based 99th Fighter Squadron—one of the Tuskegee Airmen units.

On Christmas Day 1944, Heilbrun's bomb group attacked a huge oil refinery in Czechoslovakia. It was Germany's largest fuel resource at the time, a major source of gasoline for the Luftwaffe's hard-pressed fighters and the Wehrmacht's Panzer tanks, so it was fiercely defended. Heilbrun's bomber was holed 89 times by flak and fighter bullets. While it limped slowly homeward, the B-17 was shepherded by red-tailed 99th Mustangs, which held harrying Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs at bay long enough for the bomber to make it back to base.

Unlike many bomber pilots, Heilbrun knew that the 99th's P-51s were flown by black men known as Tuskegee Airmen, and over half a century later, he decided to see if he could find one of the pilots who'd helped him home. He heard about the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of TAI and decided to attend one of its meetings.

There he found DOTA John Leahr. Heilbrun asked Leahr if he had ever escorted 15th Air Force B-17s. "Yes, of course," Leahr said, and to Leahr's surprise, Heilbrun immediately wrapped him in a bear hug.

The two men settled down to compare notes and found that on at least two missions, they'd flown wing to wing. As they continued to talk, Leahr and Heilbrun were surprised to find that they'd also both grown up in the Avondale neighborhood of Cincinnati. Not only that,

At left in the third and fourth rows. circled in red, are classmates John Leahr and Herb Heilbrun.

they'd both attended the same grade school. To stretch the coincidence even further, they'd both been in the very same second-grade class.

"There were 40 kids in my class," Heilbrun recalled, "and only one was black." It was, of course, John Leahr. Heilbrun rummaged through his mementos and papers and came up with his second-grade class photo. There was Leahr. And sitting right next to him was...Herb Heilbrun. Small world.

John Leahr and a model of his P-51D, and Herb Heilbrun holding a replica of a B-17G.

Legacy Flight Academy

LFA students with a suitably redecorated Piper Cherokee trainer.

In July 2012, the Western Region of TAI helped to sponsor the first Legacy Flight Academy, at Moton Field—the Tuskegee Airmens' original training base—in Tuskegee, Alabama. Fifteen privileged students attended, and for some, their lives were changed forever. As a result of that initial success, LFA Director Kenyatta Ruffin, a USAF captain and F-16 pilot, has worked to repeat the LFA summer event.

For awhile, chances looked good for a 2014 LFA to be held this summer at the Air Force Academy, in Colorado Springs, but in January, budgetary constraints forced the Air Force to withdraw its support for the program. Captain Ruffin has announced that there will be no 2014 Legacy Flight Academy and has shifted his efforts to finding a site for a 2015 encampment. "We determined that it is best to redouble our efforts to conduct a high-quality program later rather than a mediocre one this year," Ruffin recently wrote to us.

We'll pass on plans for the 2015 LFA as soon as we learn of them.

The Kid at the Airport Fence

In the days before transportation-security hysteria shut down the public's access to the pleasures of simply watching airport activities, particularly at small general aviation fields, "the kid at the airport fence" was an everyday reflection of aviation enthusiasm. Some of those kids graduated to airplane-washing and then jobs as flight-line parking and fueling personnel, and the casual, "Hey, kid, wanna go for an airplane ride?" produced more than a few civil, military and airline pilots.

That's history. A teenager wandering near an airport chain-link fence today is likely to meet K-9 dogs, TSA mall cops, sheriffs' deputies and local storm troopers with nothing better to do with their Saturday afternoon. It's a shame, because the kid at the airport fence has been as important a part of this country's aviation legacy as was Lindbergh, Jimmy Doolittle, Neil Armstrong and everybody else you could name who got into flying for the love of the game.

So let's hear it for the Ventura County, California 99s, a chapter of the famous womens' aviation group. They have established an inside-the-fence "Viewport" at Camarillo County Airport, where young people can get close to the action in a fenced area outside the airport's Waypoint Cafe. The Viewport will eventually have benches, a miniature runway-and-tower display and various aviation exhibits.

"We're trying to get young people involved," says 99s spokeswoman Linda Ehrlich. "The pilot community is an aging community. Young people are going to keep it going." As a 78-year-old pilot who started flying 48 years ago, your youth-newsletter editor hopes that's true.

Out of Africa

Gindongo Rodgers Armstrong decided when he was 12 years old that he wanted to be an airline pilot. He studied aviation books and worked at a local airport washing airplanes and loading luggage, and the dream of flying consumed his waking hours. Today, he is 26 and a student at San Diego Flight Training International, a large California flying school.

A familiar story.

Except for the fact that Armstrong is from Uganda. He barely survived the brutal Ugandan civil war, somehow got an elementary education, hoarded stray volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and didn't even know computers existed until 1998. The “local airport” was Wilson Airport, the international field in Nairobi, Kenya, to which in 2010 Armstrong found his way from his small village in eastern Uganda.

Armstrong caught the attention of an organization called U-Touch (www.u-touch.org), a group of workers and volunteers bringing computer technology to rural villages in Africa. “The smartest person I've met in the seven years since we founded U-Touch,” said Deb Plotkin, who with her husband Ron started the nonprofit in 2007. Plotkin urged an American U-Touch volunteer, Larry Kesslin, to meet Armstrong, and the payoff was that Kesslin pledged to buy Armstrong an airline ticket to the U. S. if he could get a visa.

It took 18 months, but, visa in hand, Armstrong arrived in California last February 6 and soon started flight training. If you'd like to support his efforts, go here: http://pilotarmstrong.com/donate/. And perhaps San Diego's Gen. B. O. Davis Chapter can extend a welcoming hand to him as well.

Gidongo Armstrong, living his dream.

The Civil Air Patrol's STEM Kits

For adult TAI chapter members who are also Civil Air Patrol educator members—or who would like to become CAP educators in order to participate in a local CAP youth program—the well-known Air Force auxiliary corps is offering, free of charge, five different STEM-education kits (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The kits come complete with study guides, audiovisual material and the necessary hardware, and the kit components can be varied according to the size of the study group.

One is an **Astronomy** package, and it includes an appropriate number of

lightweight, portable, durable Celestron telescopes for field use. The astronomy kit has been put together with the assistance of the American Astronomical Society, a 7,000-member organization of star-gazing professionals and serious amateurs that stands ready to continue mentoring CAP students with higher-level programs if the CAP kit succeeds in stimulating real interest.

The **Flight-Simulator** kit includes a Microsoft X-gold simulator program plus a desktop aircraft yoke and rudder pedals and instructional video. (The kit requires that the CAP educator or

youth squadron already have a PC with gaming and graphics software.) The package is designed ideally for use in conjunction with a CAP orientation-flight and training program, and it also is intended to stimulate interest in a variety of aviation careers.

Particularly appropriate in this era of growing interest in UAVs—Unmanned Aerial Vehicles—the CAP's **Model- and Remote-Controlled Aircraft** package will introduce students to the assembly of ready-to-fly model aircraft (included in the kit)

and the skills required of a radio-control modeler, taught via an R/C simulator program and hand-held controller. Free memberships in the Academy of Model Aeronautics are part of the kit, and local chapters of the AMA stand ready to train CAPers in the flying of the Calypso R/C model that is also part of the kit.

The getting-started-with-**Robotics** kit includes a robotic-arm assembly kit plus programmable software and a full curriculum. This beginning project ideally will lead to participation in a variety of national robotics competitions. Tapping the expertise of established CAP robotics experts could guide young people toward

careers in manufacturing, space exploration and medical applications.

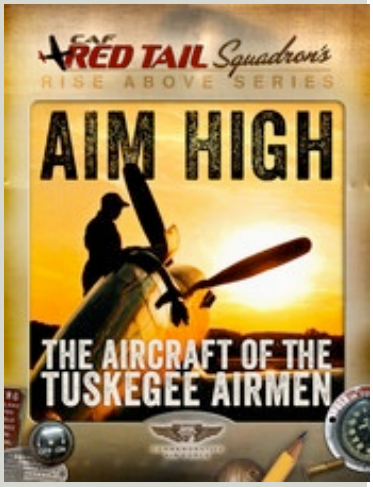
And finally, who can resist a **Rocketry** kit? The package includes the more powerful motors and bigger rockets that allow a student to progress beyond the simple single-stage beginner model rockets. A specialized curriculum and instructional video will foster any young person's interest in creating more imaginative rockets

and experiments, as well as perhaps pursuing mechanical or chemical engineering careers.

Admittedly these free kits are available only to established Civil Air Patrol youth squadrons and Air Force Junior ROTC programs. But they illustrate the potential of youth programs that, with the proper funding, could find a place in TAI's own youth activities. The Civil Air Patrol STEM Kit Program is funded by the National Defense Education Program's Air Force STEM Outreach Coordination Office, and more information can be found by doing a search at www.capmembers.com. It's worth a look if only to glimpse the potential of a properly funded, well-organized youth program.

Two Free E-Books!

Brad Lang, a Delta Air Lines captain and member of the Los Angeles Chapter of TAI, is the driving force behind the Commemorative Air Force's Red Tail Squadron. Lang flies the squadron's immaculately restored P-51C, painted in 99th Fighter Squadron colors, and he takes it to air shows and aviation and civic events all over the country, with a particular focus on instilling awareness of the Tuskegee Airmen in young people wherever he goes. Lang's fund-raising efforts (largely to support the substantial hourly cost of operating a rare and complex World War II warbird) have no connection with his TAI membership, but his efforts deserve the support of us all.



One of Lang's most recent projects has been the production of a free, 90-page interactive e-book, "Aim High--the Aircraft of the Tuskegee Airmen," that the Red Tail Squadron is offering as a teaching tool intended for upper elementary and middle school students who are ready to be excited and intrigued by the story of the original Tuskegee Airmen and their airplanes. The book includes 200 colorful photographs, many by well-known aviation photographer Max Haynes, as well as sound effects, slide shows and interactive questions--entertainment as well as education.

In order to get the book distributed widely and into the hands of as many students and teachers as possible, Lang is asking that everybody who supports his efforts download the book and share it with family, friends, teachers, youth groups, churches, e-mail lists, Facebook friends and anybody else who might spread the word about a valuable educational resource. So let's get clickin', okay?

The book can be downloaded here: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/aim-high-aircraft-tuskegee/id691393190?mt=11&ls=1.

The husband-wife team of John and Martha King operate King Schools, a San Diego-based software company that has pioneered the development of computer-based instruction for people aspiring to become private pilots as well as pilots upgrading their licenses and ratings.

They now offer a new e-book, "So You Want to Learn to Fly" that can be downloaded free to any computer or electronic reader (such as Amazon's Kindle) by going to www.kingschools.com or the iTunes bookstore. The e-book answers just about every question a prospective pilot might have

about undertaking the process of getting a private pilot's license: choosing the right instructor, what kinds of training aircraft are out there, which FAA regulations are

applicable, what flying is like, what it costs, what learning resources are available and which ones are really worth the money, and lots more.

"We're excited to share our love of flying with the next generation of pilots through this book," John King has said. "So many people have a dream of learning to fly but don't know where to get started. We want to ensure that no one is held back from pursuing their dreams simply because they don't have the right guide to help them through the process."

"So You Want to Learn to Fly" is written in a simple, straightforward, fun and easy-to-read style particularly applicable to young readers. And, most important, it's free.

Pacific West Aviation Youth Day

Seattle Chapter member Tayarji Peterson, who operates the Pacific West Aerospace Academy, is organizing the summer 2014 Pacific West Aerospace/Tuskegee Airmen Aviation Youth Day, on a date still to be determined.

Peterson has lined up the cooperation of the Astoria, Oregon Coast Guard Air Station to host the one-day event, and he hopes to have transportation and space for up to 50 at-risk and economically disadvantaged young people from Washington and Oregon, concentrating on the area's African-American communities, to attend. Peterson is looking for students aged 10 to 19 who profess an interest in any of a variety of aviation, aerospace and engineering careers. Coast Guard representatives will ensure that the students see first-hand the operation of the air station's helicopter and fixed-wing squadrons. (CGAS Astoria is sited on a particularly vigorous section of Pacific coastline as well as the entrance to the fast-flowing Columbia River. It operates Jayhawk and Dolphin helicopters and Falcon twinjets on frequent search-and-rescue missions as much as 300 miles out to sea and along some of the most challenging waters in the country.)

"Students will tour flight operations and airport, military, tower and fire-fighting facilities," Peterson writes. "Military flight demonstrations will be conducted for the students. This will introduce them to the importance of discipline, responsibility, integrity, leadership, accountability, perseverance and honesty—all of them qualities demonstrated decades ago by the Tuskegee Airmen."

Round-trip transportation and meals will be provided for students, guests and volunteers. Parents can attend the event but will need to furnish their own transportation. The event will be supported by not only the U. S. Coast Guard but Nike, Boeing, Lucas Films, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the Museum of Flight, the NFL Seattle Seahawks and Big Bend Aviation.

For more information, contact tayarjip@gmail.com or visit www.pacificwestaerospaceacademy.com.

PWAA students with Astronaut Leland Melvin

“Bunny” Returns

Lt. Col. (ret.) Robert J. Friend, 93, is the oldest surviving Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 140 missions over Europe during World War II and remained in the Air Force long enough to take part in the Vietnam War as well.

The Palm Springs Air Museum, in Palm Springs, California, is currently restoring to flight status a P-51D that has already been painted in Bob Friend's colors and markings, with its famous “Bunny” bathing beauty logo on the nose. The Mustang has been on display for a number of years at the museum but is no longer airworthy. That will change during an extensive—and expensive--restoration process that will involve renewing all of the airplane's vital systems, completely overhauling the engine, replacing every corroded or worn airframe part and, as a final fillip, redoing the classic paint job.

The airplane is not Friend's actual World War II mount, which was almost certainly scrapped somewhere in Europe or possibly in the U. S. at the end of the war. (Surplus warplanes usually weren't worth the trouble of bringing home, and many of those that ended up Stateside were sold to civilian enthusiasts for the value of the gasoline still in their tanks.) It's a P-51D identical to Friend's but one that was built too close to the end of the war to ever see combat. It was eventually supplied to the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1951.

A forced landing in 1956 ended the airplane's RCAF flying days, but the damage wasn't terminal. The Canadians stored the crippled 'Stang until an American pilot bought her in 1959 and got the airplane airworthy again. In 1980, a famous air-racing enthusiast, the late Bob Pond, bought the P-51 and had it repainted in Friend's “Bunny” colors; Pond was a founding sponsor of the Palm Springs Air Museum, and the P-51 went on indoor display there.

Bob Pond was best known as the driving force behind the Pond Racer, a remarkable raceplane designed and built by iconoclast Burt Rutan to compete in the well-known Reno Races as an Unlimited-category entrant. The Pond Racer was a twin-engine, twin-fuselage design with a cockpit pod between the engine booms, forward-swept wings and Nissan V6 racecar engines, and it was built entirely of composite plastics and carbon fiber rather than metal.

The Pond Racer competed three times at Reno, in 1991, '92 and '93, but suffered an engine failure and crashed in 1993 during a forced-landing attempt, killing its pilot, pro racer Rick Brickert. Pond died in 2007 of a cerebral hemorrhage, and his P-51 “Bunny” became the property of the Palm Springs Museum.

Pond's legacy as well as that of the Tuskegee Airmen will eventually be represented in this, yet another restored and flying Mustang painted in 332nd Fighter Group colors.

The revolutionary Pond Racer.

Elijah Sampson Takes Off

Sixteen-year-old Elijah Sampson, a member of the New York area's Claude B. Govan Chapter, attended TAI's Eastern Region Conference in Dover, Delaware, at Delaware State College, on April 11-12. He was presented with a full scholarship to Del State's aviation program, provided that he maintain his current 3.0-or-better academic average, and was given the opportunity to take an introductory lesson in one of the college's Piper Cherokees. His proud mother sent us this photo. Our congratulations to Elijah!

Angel MedFlight Scholarship

The air-ambulance company Angel MedFlight, which operates a fleet of medically outfitted small jets and offers worldwide medevac services, is accepting applications for its $3,000 Scholarship for Excellence in Aviation, toward tuition at any accredited college or university in Arizona. Applicants must prepare a three-minute video explaining the importance of an aviation career to them; detailing a situation in which they demonstrated resourcefulness when presented with a challenge; and outlining improvements they would like to see in Arizona's aviation industry. Applicants must be attending or be scheduled to attend an Arizona school's two- or four-year aviation-degree program. The video plus a resume, application form and two letters of recommendation must be submitted postmarked no later than July 11, 2014.

For full information and to download the application, go to www.angelmedflight.com/azbaascholarship.html

Rules for Pilots to Live By

Rules are made by people who think they can fly your airplane better than you can.

Rules are a good place to hide if you don't have a better idea and the talent to execute it.

If you deviate from a rule, it must be a flawless performance. Meaning if you fly under a bridge, don't hit the bridge.

Pilots are people who drive airplanes for people who can't fly.

Passengers are people who say they fly, but really they just ride.

Fighter pilots, despite being steely-eyed weapons systems managers who kill bad people and break things, are also capable of such feelings as love, affection, intimacy and caring. Unfortunately, these feelings don't involve anyone else.

The optimist invents airplanes. The pessimist invents parachutes.

Death is nature's way of telling you to watch your airspeed.

As a pilot, two bad things can happen to you, and one of them will. You will walk out to your airplane knowing it is your last flight. Or you will walk out to your airplane not knowing it is your last flight.

Before each flight, make sure your bladder is empty and your tanks are full.

He who demands everything that his aircraft can give is a pilot. He who demands one iota more is a fool.

There are certain aircraft sounds that can be heard only at night or over water. All of them are scary.

An aircraft's limits are written only in case there will be another flight by that aircraft. If subsequent flights are not likely, there are no limits.

An old pilot is one who remembers when flying was dangerous and sex was safe.

Airlines have changed. Now a pilot can get a flight attendant pregnant.

I've flown in the left seat and the right. The other seat is always occupied by an idiot.

You have to make up your mind about growing up and becoming a pilot. You can't do both.