

METROPOLITAN Airport NewsTM

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The Journal of the Metropolitan New York Airport Community



7216

The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project

A Time Capsule of Restored Treasures
at Floyd Bennett Field

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Human Resource Coordinator, AGI

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PUBLISHER

Kathryn Bliss
kbliss@metroairportnews.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Julia Lauria-Blum
jblum@metroairportnews.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Raymond F. Ringston
rringston@metroairportnews.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Beverly Holder
bholderphoto@gmail.com

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Roberta Dunn
rdunn@metroairportnews.com

ADVERTISING

Edward J. Garcia
egarcia@metroairportnews.com

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Tanya Austin
taustin@metroairportnews.com

Maureen Katz
mkatz@metroairportnews.com

Jonathan Katz
jkatz@metroairportnews.com

Jerry Spampinato
jerry@metroairportnews.com

Robert G. Waldvogel
robertw@metroairportnews.com

METROPOLITAN AIRPORT NEWS

JFK International Airport
PO Box 300877
Jamaica, NY 11430
Tel: (347) 396-0904
info@metroairportnews.com

www.metroairportnews.com

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Welcome to the August issue of the *Metropolitan Airport News*. With summer in full swing, I enjoyed reading this issue about a day out on the NYC Ferry System. Our Non-Rev Travelers, **Maureen**, and **Jonathan Katz** took a break from jet-setting all over the world and took advantage of living in one of the greatest cities on the planet, New York City. Riding the ferries is a wonderful way to get around the city on a hot summer day. It feels like a vacation for just \$4.00 right in our own community. While I absolutely love to read about all their many adventures, I appreciate being reminded about everything we can do right here in the boroughs.

This month's issue features the volunteers spearheading massive restoration projects at Floyd Bennet Field. This historic place is another outstanding local day trip for anyone to learn about how and why the metropolitan New York area has significant importance in aviation history and became known as the "Cradle of Aviation." While we recognize that name as a world-class museum in Garden City, the term comes from aviation at its infancy, beginning in the early 1900s on Long Island, progressing during World War I, into the Golden Age of Flight, and booming in wartime and peacetime. Today, the aviation industry remains strong here, with over 200 aviation-based companies still operating in this region.

The women and men of the **Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (H.A.R.P.)** who tirelessly volunteer their time and talents to restore the vintage aircraft found at Hangar B are truly incredible individuals who lived and worked in the industry through the '60s and '70s, some who remember working on aircraft from the Golden Age. We are lucky to have them and their knowledge. Hopefully, they can pass along their gifts to the next generation of aircraft and aviation enthusiasts to keep the restoration projects going for a very long time.

We are coming off a very successful local event, the 2nd Annual **Airport Community Golf Classic**, which is raising money for local organizations dedicated to fostering educational and business opportunities in the local area. It was certainly a lot of fun, and so many airport companies and stakeholders were there to enjoy the day and network. There are lots of events still coming up throughout August and September; please check the Metropolitan Airport News calendar for the most up-to-date airport event listing, and register for weekly email updates! That way, you won't miss a thing, www.metroairportnews.com.

I hope you enjoy the issue. Curating our content is definitely a labor of love for our talented Editor. If you would like to connect with us to offer ideas or introductions, please email info@metroairportnews.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

I'll see you around the airports!

Katie Bliss

Katie Bliss, *Publisher*
kbliss@metroairportnews.com



ON THE COVER

Dedicated H.A.R.P. (Historic Aircraft Restoration Project) volunteers beside a restored Grumman HU-16 Albatross, Floyd Bennett Field, Hangar B. (Photo by Beverly Holder)

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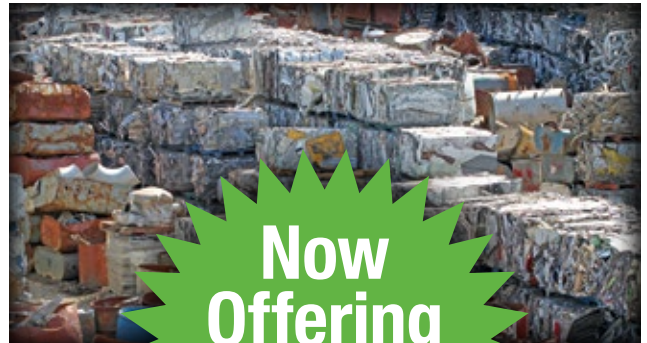
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Christine Pilarinos

Human Resource Coordinator, Alliance Ground International

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1 What obstacles do you typically see when hiring new airport employees?

Christine Pilarinos: Airports are usually very hectic, so our ground handlers must be well-trained and always alert. Despite this high workload, everyone's safety must be ensured. The hours can be unconventional, and the work can be physically and emotionally taxing. Those who make the aviation industry a career absolutely love it. They are all in, fully immersing themselves in the community and culture of aviation and airports. It's common to find many long-time airport employees changing careers but still staying at the airport.

2 What skills are most desired when reviewing job candidates?

Christine Pilarinos: When reviewing job candidates, several key skills are highly desired. These typically include strong communication abilities, problem-solving skills, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, and technical proficiency relevant to the role.

Additionally, ambition is crucial; it signifies a candidate's drive for continuous improvement, willingness to take on challenges, and motivation to contribute to the company's long-term success. Ambitious individuals often bring innovative ideas and demonstrate a commitment to personal and professional growth, making them valuable assets to any organization.

3 Do you look for any red flags during the hiring process?

Christine Pilarinos: When evaluating candidates during the hiring process, several red flags may indicate potential issues:

- **Lack of Preparation** – Candidates who show little knowledge about the company or the role they are applying for might not be genuinely interested or invested.
- **Inconsistent Employment History** – Frequent job changes without clear explanations can suggest instability or a lack of commitment.
- **Negative Attitude** – Speaking poorly about previous employers or colleagues may indicate a lack of professionalism and potential difficulties in team integration.

- **Vague or Evasive Answers** – Candidates who provide unclear responses or avoid answering questions directly might be hiding something or lack the necessary experience.

- **Poor Communication Skills** – Difficulty articulating thoughts clearly and concisely can be a concern, especially for roles requiring strong communication.

- **Unprofessional Behavior** – Arriving late, dressing inappropriately, or displaying a lack of respect during the interview process can be indicative of poor workplace behavior.

- **Lack of Enthusiasm** – A noticeable lack of enthusiasm or interest in the role and the company might suggest that the candidate is not a good cultural fit.

By being attentive to these potential red flags, we can better identify candidates who are more likely to succeed and thrive within our organization.

4 What role do you see the most need for, and is there one that is the hardest to fill?

Christine Pilarinos: Management is the most in-demand role and typically includes project managers & operational managers. These roles are crucial for ensuring that projects are completed on time, operations run smoothly, and products are developed and brought to market effectively.

Among these, operation managers are often the hardest to fill due to the need for a unique combination of skills, including technical knowledge, leadership abilities, strong communication skills, and the capacity to manage multiple deadlines simultaneously. Finding individuals who possess this blend of skills and experience can be challenging for many organizations and industries, not just aviation or airports.

5 Does AGI currently have a need to fill open positions at the New York airports?

Christine Pilarinos: Yes, we do have open positions. AGI is actively seeking to fill open positions at the New York airports, specifically for Cargo Warehouse Agents, Duty Manager and Supervisor Office Agents, and Tractor Trailer Drivers. ■

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The Heart of the Airport Community

The 2024 Airport Community Golf Classic

The heart of a community is its people, and the 2nd annual Airport Community Golf Classic (ACGC), which took place on July 18th at the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club, is no exception to the rule.

The ACGC is hosted and managed by the Airport Community Group, a volunteer committee of airport leaders. Spearheaded by **Katie Bliss**, Publisher, *Metropolitan Airport News*; **Ray Ringston**, Creative Director, *Metropolitan Airport News*; and **Mike Falacara**, Chief Operating Officer, The ARK at JFK, the ACGC was founded to assist local airport and aviation associations by raising funds to promote workforce development, educational opportunities, and business growth while creating connections within the local communities that our airports service.

No matter the size or type of services an airport provides in each of our communities, airports play a preeminent role in the nation's transportation network, public safety, economy, and commerce.

As our airports continue to develop, the many roles that they fulfill help to strengthen communities and promote our city's culture. However, it is the people who make an airport 'tick' every day. Whether they work on an executive level, as a customer service representative, in a security position, as an on-the-ground service operator, as a concessioner, or as a private business owner who services

the airport peripherally, each role is crucial to the airport's success.

For the second year in a row, the ACGC was held at the Lawrence Yacht & Country Club. More than 300 attendees, both golfers and non-golfers from the airport community, helped to make the event a fantastic success. 100% of the proceeds will be distributed amongst four partner associations: the JFK Air Cargo Association, the Aviation High School Education Foundation (AHSEF), KAAMCO Cargo, and the Council of Airline Maintenance Managers (CALMM).

These organizations are advocates for airport and aviation education, workforce development, and the advancement of the aviation industry, serving as shining examples of what makes our airports the best in the world!

Julia Lauria-Blum

Julia Lauria-Blum, *Editor-in-Chief*
jblum@metroairportnews.com



Steve Thody, CEO, JFK Millennium Partners & Terminal 6 and Julia Lauria-Blum, Editor-in-Chief, *Metropolitan Airport News*.





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Kelly Ortberg

since January 2020 and has been a member of Boeing's Board of Directors since 2009.

■ **Boeing** announced that its Board of Directors has elected **Robert K. "Kelly" Ortberg** as the company's new president and chief executive officer, effective August 8, 2024. Ortberg will also serve on Boeing's Board of Directors. He will succeed **Dave Calhoun**, who earlier this year announced his intention to retire from the company. Calhoun has served as president and CEO



Karen Ali

experience in operations management, project leadership, and business transformation across a range of sectors, including aviation. Reporting to **Steve Thody**, CEO of JMP, Ali will develop and deliver a world-class plan that prioritizes operational excellence, guest experience,

■ **Vantage Group** announced the appointment of **Karen Ali** as Chief Operating Officer at JFK Millennium Partners (JMP), the Vantage-led company selected by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to manage JFK Terminal 7 and lead the development and operation of a new JFK Terminal 6. Ali joins Vantage's senior leadership team at JFK with nearly 20 years of experience in operations management, project leadership, and business transformation across a range of sectors, including aviation. Reporting to **Steve Thody**, CEO of JMP, Ali will develop and deliver a world-class plan that prioritizes operational excellence, guest experience, and financial performance at the existing Terminal 7 and at the new Terminal 6 when its first gates open to passengers in 2026.

■ **Anand Kulkarni** will assume the newly created position of Head of Global Markets at **Lufthansa Cargo**. In this role, he will lead and manage the sales regions and the Digital Sales department of Lufthansa Cargo. This includes the regions Germany, Austria & Switzerland, Europe, Middle East, Africa, South Asia & CIS, Americas and Asia Pacific. In his role, Kulkarni will report to **Ashwin Bhat**, CEO Lufthansa Cargo.



Anand Kulkarni

■ **DH2 Chauffeured Transportation**, a leading provider of luxury ground transportation, has named **Jeffrey Dupoux** to the role of Compliance and Risk Manager. Dupoux brings a wealth of relevant experience from security to fire service to the team and will ensure every detail is managed with care and precision. In this vital role, he will oversee the company's adherence to local and federal transportation regulations, ensuring that all operations meet stringent safety and legal standards. Given the complexities and fast-paced environment of New York City's transportation landscape, his expertise is crucial in minimizing risks and safeguarding the company's reputation. With Dupoux's leadership, DH2 aims to enhance its commitment to safety, reliability, and excellence in service.



Jeffrey Dupoux

■ **Swissport International** has named **Ajay Barolia** as its new Senior Vice President for Cargo in North America. He will join Swissport on July 15, 2024 from Qatar Airways, where he spent over nine years in different senior roles, most recently as Vice President Global Cargo Operations for the airline. At the same time, **Peter Weir** will join Swissport as Senior Vice President, Cargo Commercial for North America. He joins Swissport from Menzies Aviation, where he served over 20 years in various leadership roles responsible for Cargo Operations, Ground Handling, Sales, and Business Development.



(L.-R.): Ajay Barolia, Senior Vice President Cargo, Swissport North America and Peter Weir, Senior Vice President Cargo Commercial, Swissport North America

■ **Alba Wheels Up International**, a leader in trade-sensitive customs brokerage and international logistics services, today announced **Luis Eraña** has been named Chief Executive Officer. The position was previously held by **Damien Stile**, who takes on a new role as Co-Chairman. Eraña brings more than three decades of corporate leadership experience, most recently as CEO of ProTrans, which specializes in third-party logistics for manufacturing supply chains within North America. Prior to ProTrans, Eraña served as CEO of DHL Supply Chain Technology and Aerospace sector and held various leadership roles with DHL Express Mexico.



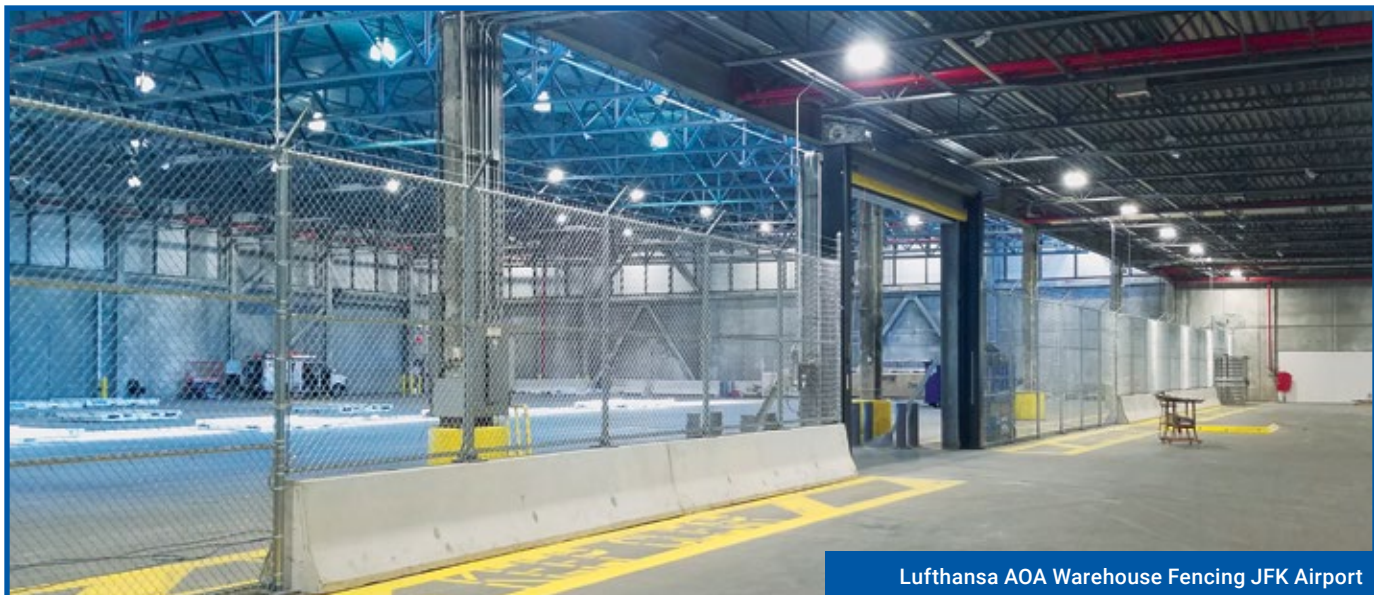
Luis Eraña

■ **Anthony Imparato** recently received the **Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award** from the FAA. The award recognizes the lifetime accomplishments of senior mechanics in the aviation maintenance industry. Anthony grew up near LaGuardia Airport, and was inspired to pursue a career in aviation from his fascination with airplanes from a young age. He received his license in 1974 from **Aviation High School** and began his career as a flight line mechanic for Capital Airways at JFK Airport and has since filled many different roles in his over 50-year aviation career. When reflecting upon his memories of training pilots and maintenance personnel, he recalls them as some of his fondest yet most challenging tasks. ■



Anthony Imparato

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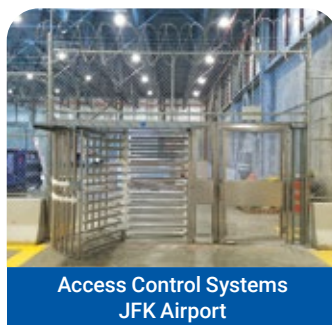
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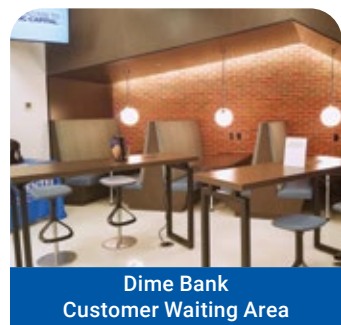
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2024 Airport Community Golf Classic

The 2nd annual Airport Community Golf Classic (ACGC) was a truly memorable event, held at the Lawrence Yacht Club & Country Club on July 18th, 2024. On a beautiful summer day, with more than 45 sponsoring companies, the event brought together 140 golfers for a full day on the course, followed by 300 cocktail party guests to enjoy the camaraderie of the airport community.

The day began with a hearty buffet breakfast and an 11:00 a.m. tee-off. The golfers enjoyed a barbecue lunch with plenty of cold beverages, followed by an outdoor cocktail party and networking gathering, all set against the beautiful backdrop of the golf course.

The ACGC hosted and managed by the Airport Community Group, a volunteer committee of airport leaders, has made a

significant impact by raising funds to assist local airport associations in promoting local workforce development, educational opportunities, and advancing business growth on and off the airport.

This year's event proceeds will benefit JFK Air Cargo Association, The Aviation High School Education Foundation, the Council of Airline Maintenance Managers (CALMM), and the KAAMCO Operations Committee. ■

Visit www.flickr.com/photos/metroairportnews/ to view the complete gallery of photos from the 2024 Airport Community Golf Classic.









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100% of the proceeds from the 2024 Airport Community Golf Classic will benefit our partner associations.

The Airport Community Golf Classic is hosted and managed by the Airport Community Group, a volunteer committee of airport leaders raising funds to assist local airport associations in promoting workforce development, educational opportunities, and advancing business growth while creating connections within the local communities that our airports service.



BEVERLY HOLDER

The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project

A Time Capsule of Restored Treasures at Floyd Bennett Field

JULIA LAURIA-BLUM

jblum@metroairportnews.com

Standing on the old 6-24 Runway at Floyd Bennett Field, looking northeast some 12 miles across Broad Channel, a Delta 767 takes wing from nearby John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and dips to the right before climbing to its cruising altitude. The distant thunder of its engines is a sound familiar to those on the ground and near the airport.

But long before the presence of JFK Airport, formerly known as Idlewild, there was Floyd Bennett Field, New York City's first municipal airport, located on Barren Island along Jamaica Bay. Built primarily in response to the growth of commercial

aviation after World War I and after Charles Lindbergh's solo across the Atlantic in 1927, Floyd Bennett Field was dedicated on June 26, 1930, and officially opened on May 23, 1931.

Given the IATA designation of NOP, Floyd Bennett Field received the U.S. Department of Commerce's highest A-1-A rating due to its state-of-the-art facilities, which included a modern terminal, reinforced concrete runways, and advanced lighting systems for nighttime flying.

Today, at Floyd Bennett Field, the remnants of a bygone era in aviation stand tall... remnants that reflect America's rich history of flight and are now dedicated to the celebration of aviation and the former airport's remarkable history.

Surrounded by its historic hangars and administration building (now the Ryan Visitor Center), which served as both the air traffic control station and the passenger terminal at Floyd Bennett Field's airport, you can close your eyes and imagine the sound of swirling aircraft propellers on their novel, record-breaking, and exploratory flights across the Atlantic during the Golden Age of Flight in the 1930s.

It was during this era of aviation at Floyd Bennett Field that legendary pilots such as Jimmy Doolittle, Amelia Earhart, Wiley Post, Howard Hughes, Jacqueline Cochran, Roscoe Turner, Douglas' 'Wrongway' Corrigan, and many others made significant contributions to aviation through their intrepid vision of air travel's potential while

raising awareness of its value as a safe and viable means of transportation. Whether these flights began or ended in success at Floyd Bennett, they had a far-reaching effect on the history of aviation in the United States and throughout the world.

A little over a decade later, from 1941 to 1971, Floyd Bennett Field was called Naval Air Station-New York serving vital functions, defending the airways and shores of the East Coast during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In 1972, Floyd Bennett Field became a part of Gateway National Recreation Area, one of the nation's first urban national parks preserved by the National Park Service (NPS).

Historic Aircraft Restoration Project

Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (H.A.R.P.), located at Hangar B on the east side of the field, is a National Park Service Volunteer In Parks program that is dedicated to preserving the aviation history of Floyd Bennett Field by restoring artifacts and examples of aircraft that once flew from this historic site.

Hangar B was constructed by the U.S. Navy during World War II and served as the base for VRF-4, one of the squadrons of the Naval Air Ferry Command, headquartered at Naval Air Station-NY. After the Second World War, the Naval Air Reserve used Hangar B as a training facility to help keep



Floyd Bennett Field DC-2 owned by Cities Service in front of Hangar 4.

the nation's naval aviators and support staff prepared for national emergencies. Pilots and ground crews were readied for service overseas during the Korean War, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam War.

Today the historic Hangar B is once again utilized for the care, maintenance, and preservation of aircraft that advanced aviation's progress through its nascent years. Since 1995, H.A.R.P. volunteers have devoted thousands of hours to restore vintage aircraft and their components, displayed at the Gateway National Recreation Area's Hangar B. These aircraft enable volunteer docents and park rangers to tell the story of aviation at Floyd Bennett Field as it relates to New York City, the nation, and the world.

H.A.R.P. volunteers are people of all backgrounds, ages, and skill levels, but the common thread woven through their efforts is their love of airplanes and their passion for aviation. One of those volunteers is **Paul Garcia** who recently guided me through the incredible time capsule housing the aircraft and artifacts preserved inside and on display at Hangar B. During the walk-through, his wealth of knowledge and narrative greatly expanded upon the rich history of, not only the aircraft, but their significance at Floyd Bennett Field.

In 1961, Garcia, a veteran of the U.S. Navy, enlisted at age 17 and served in the USN for three years. After his discharge, he began his career in aviation as a flight attendant for a charter company, Saturn. In 1971, he went to work for American Airlines, where he spent the next 51 years of his 53-year career before his retirement.

One day, over 22 years ago, Garcia was driving down Flatbush Avenue past Floyd Bennett when he saw a vintage aircraft parked outside its grounds. "I wanted to find out more. I was an aircraft mechanic in the Navy, so of course, I gravitated to the work here," said Garcia.

After Garcia learned about the Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (H.A.R.P.), he enthusiastically volunteered with the organization. Two decades later, he arrives at Hangar B three times a week to dedicate his time to H.A.R.P.'s mission; the restoration and preservation of Floyd Bennett Field's history and the examples of the aircraft that once flew there.



(L.-R.): Ed Garcia, *Metropolitan Airport News*; Paul Garcia, HARP; and Julia Lauria-Blum, Editor-in-Chief, *Metropolitan Airport News*.

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The aircraft restored by H.A.R.P. volunteers represent several different eras of flight at Floyd Bennett, from the 1930s as a municipal airport to the 1940s and through to 1971. The aircraft also represents the different services that flew from the Field. At least one of the aircraft in the hangar represents the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air National Guard, and the New York City Police Department, with both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

There is a lot to see and learn about in Hangar B, with both civil and military aircraft on display. In the room adjacent to the volunteer's small cafeteria, which is lined with an array of photographs of past and present volunteers, panels outlining the history of Floyd Bennett Field, there is a long table used for fabric work; beside it, wrapped in protective plastic, are two refurbished cockpit seats.

Next comes the 'pièce de résistance'...as you walk into the immense Hangar B. One of the first artifacts on display is an 18-cylinder F4U R2800 engine that rests on a stand. Beside it is a 1917 Gnome rotary engine that was built in Long Island City and was most commonly used on WWI aircraft. Overhead is a recently suspended Japanese Kamikaze aircraft whose size pales in comparison to the majority of the other vintage aircraft housed in the hangar that have been restored, reproduced, or are currently under restoration.



Aircraft on display include a replica of the Wright Flyer, a Beechcraft JRB 'Expeditor' military transport, a Consolidated PB5-5 'Catalina' patrol bomber, a Douglas C-47 'Skytrain', a Grumman G-21' Goose and HU-16' Albatross' military patrol, a Fairchild PT-26, an SNJ /AT-6 Trainer, the Douglas uA-4 'Skyhawk', the massive USAF C-97, a Sikorsky HH-3 'Pelican' air-sea rescue helicopter, a Lockheed SP2H 'Neptune' anti-submarine bomber, a Stearman N2S-2 'Keydet' and much more.

One of the most historically significant civilian aircraft at Hangar B is an exact full-scale model of the Lockheed Vega "Winnie Mae", which commemorates the first solo

flight around the world by Wiley Post, who circumnavigated the globe and returned to Floyd Bennett Field in 7 days, 18 hours, 49 minutes on July 22, 1933.

H.A.R.P. volunteer **Peter Sorvino** was one of the leads on the 10-person team of volunteers who constructed this incredible treasure from scratch. Peter spoke of how this 5-year project evolved, along with draftsman **Hank Iken** and **Dante DiMille**, who built the aircraft, along with Sorvino and the others on the team. "It is a 1:1 scale static model. I gutted the engine, which was donated to us. There is a steel frame on the inside, and the rest is made of aviation plywood. Fiberglass was used for the cowl-ing, and some of the skirting, and the rest of it is plywood composite, and fiberglass covered styrofoam," said Sorvino. "Everything was done here, including the paint and livery. If you put it side by side with the original on display at the National Air & Space Museum, you couldn't tell the difference." Although the plane is strictly a static aircraft, it was created so that the propeller can spin while timed to the sound of its engine starting.

Volunteer Arthur stands beside a Navy SN-J (aka AT-6) and explains its significance at the Field: "This plane is here for two reasons; it was originally here in 1947, and I ran into it at Aviation High School in Queens; there was a 75th-year reunion that I went to. They took us around and outside the hangar apron, and I remembered

Continued On Page 18





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starting up a particular yellow plane, which would've been an SN-J, or an AT-6. This one was way in the corner, painted black, missing parts, and painted with shark's teeth. I went over to the assistant principal and asked, 'What are you going to do with this plane?' And he said, 'Well, we took everything that we needed from it, so we're going to scrap it.'

Arthur talked to the Parks Department and told them that similar planes were at Floyd Bennett, so he worked out a deal with the school, and they transported it over to Hangar B. H.A.R.P. volunteers began restoring the SN-J, when the Parks Service then had the available funding. Arthur went back in history while the plane was being readied to paint. He learned that Floyd Bennett had a squadron from 1938 to 1940 with the trainer's livery in certain colors, of which the aircraft was restored. The SN-J now stands in its glory on the floor of Hangar B, with its silver metallic fuselage and its yellow wings, modified with a red tip on each. The large white and red-ringed circular emblem beneath the pilot's cockpit represents The Naval Aviation Reserve Base-NY, with a Knickerbocker in its

center, a symbol of New York State and representative of a 'New Yorker.' It is also reminiscent of the former brewery that produced the once-popular Knickerbocker Beer in New York City in the early to mid-20th Century.

There is so much more to see at Floyd Bennett's Hangar B, in addition to the aircraft meticulously restored and refurbished by H.A.R.P. volunteers: an Army Jeep, a medic vehicle, painted murals, and an operational 1950s telephone switchboard.

Another historic artifact significant to Floyd Bennett Field is displayed at Hangar B, a (disarmed) Nike Missile. During the height of the Cold War, from 1954 until 1974, Nike Missiles guarded the New York area. They could intercept long-range Soviet Bear Bombers and destroy them while still over the ocean. Nineteen Nike Missile sites surrounded New York City, and two of the missile sites and headquarters unit were located in what is now the Gateway National Recreation Area.

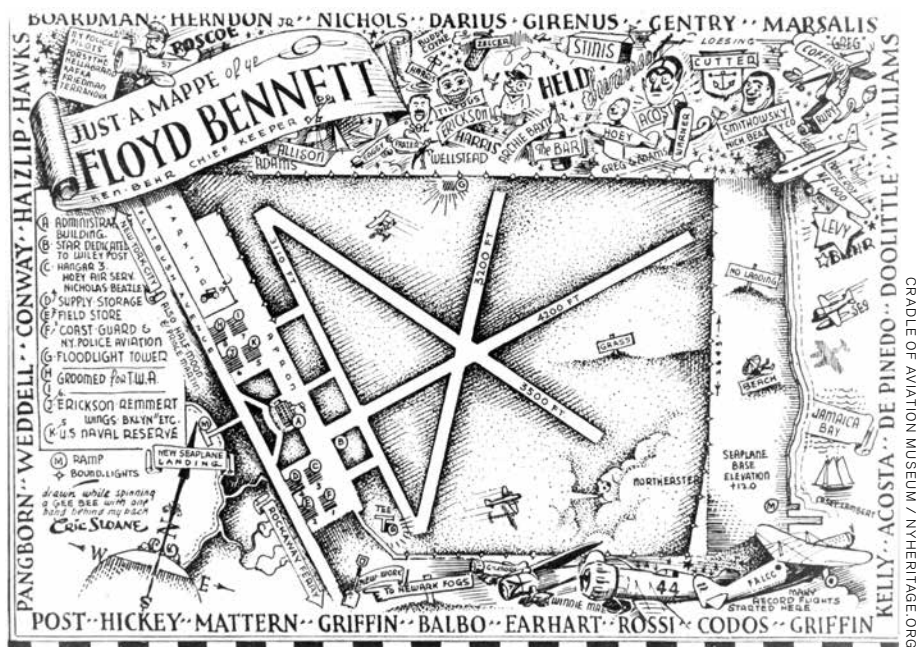
At the end of my tour of Hangar B, I asked Paul Garcia if there was a particular project that he worked on that he was most proud of. He thought momentarily and said, “I think

it's still coming. I'm really looking forward to working on the C-47, which if we continue to work the way we are now, the project will probably take a year or two, we used to have 30 guys, and now we are down to 10 or 11. It's hard to find new people available to volunteer, especially on weekdays... but you gotta give back," said Garcia, adding, "The three years I gave the Navy was not enough.



Floyd Bennett

“SOMEDAY, CORA, THERE WILL BE AN AIRPORT HERE.” – CORA BENNETT, A RECOLLECTION, 1932



Cartoon Map of Floyd Bennett Field Drawing by Eric Sloane c. 1936

Floyd Bennett, the Aviator

Floyd Bennett was born in Warrensburg, New York, in 1890. He worked in the automobile trade before enlisting in the U.S. Navy as an aviation mechanic in 1917 when the United States entered World War I.

By 1919, the Bureau of Navigation announced that a class of 25 enlisted men had been ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. As the first enlisted group to receive flight training, the graduates would be certified as a Naval Aviation Pilot (NAP). Floyd Bennett was one of the enlisted men and became NAP-#9 upon graduation in 1920.

At Pensacola, Floyd Bennett met Richard E. Byrd, and he later served with Byrd on an aviation survey of Greenland in 1925. Bennett's ability caught Byrd's attention, and the two men became close friends.

Together, they planned an expedition over the North Pole, flying a Fokker tri-motor, the 'Josephine Ford'. The flight departed from Norway and headed to the

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North Pole and back on May 9, 1926. President Coolidge awarded both aviators the Medal of Honor for this flight, and Bennett was promoted to Warrant Mechanic by an Act of Congress.

In April 1928, Bennett took part in a rescue mission of the crew of the *Bremen*, who were stranded on Greenly Island, Canada, following a non-stop attempt across the Atlantic from Europe. During the mission, Bennett contracted pneumonia as he was weakened from injuries he sustained in an earlier crash in the *Fokker America*. Bennett died on April 25 in a Quebec hospital. He was mourned throughout the United States as a national hero and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

In a book written about her husband after his death, Floyd Bennett's wife recalled that she and Floyd once toured Barren Island when he said to her, "Someday, Cora, there will be an airport here." (Bennett, Cora L. (1932) 'Floyd Bennett,' New York: W.F. Payson, p.163)

And so it came to be, as Floyd and Cora Bennett had lived in Brooklyn at the time of his death, and the City's first municipal airport, built at the time of Bennett's death, would be named in his honor.

Floyd Bennett, the Field

In May 1927, Charles Lindbergh was the first man to fly a non-stop solo across the Atlantic, billed as the New York to Paris flight. As the flight actually originated outside the City's limits from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, the City of New York wanted an airport within the city's limits, so a panel was formed to locate a site, and it was led by aviator Clarence Chamberlin.

Chamberlin sought to find a place to build a modern airport within New York City and eventually settled on Barren Island, off the south shore of Brooklyn. The parcel lay in a small community that was an animal rendering facility, and it had a small flying field that provided fair conditions and plenty of room for expansion.

Using tons of sand dredged from the bottom of Jamaica Bay, the parcel was expanded to over 1,100 acres and connected by the landfill to Brooklyn. Flatbush Avenue was extended as well to provide access to the new airport.



Wiley Post posed by 'Winnie Mae' at Floyd Bennett Field, 1935.

Floyd Bennett Field was built to the most modern specifications of the time. While most airfields and runways were dirt or grass, Floyd Bennett Field's runways were constructed with thick concrete, which could accommodate flights requiring heavy fuel loads. Its hangars housed and serviced the largest aircraft of the day, and facilities were also built for seaplanes. Additionally, the administration building housed the airport's control tower and

served as a modern passenger terminal.

The formal dedication of Floyd Bennett Field took place in May 1931 and was marked by a flyby of over 650 U.S. Army aircraft. New York Mayor Jimmy J. Walker presided over the opening, which drew nearly 25,000 spectators. U.S. Navy airplanes commanded by Lt. R.F. Whitehead were the first aircraft to arrive officially at the field. After its official opening, several of the airfield's features contributed to its



Floyd Bennett Field Howard Hughes flight, 1939 NY World's Fair 4-5-1939



CRADLE OF AVIATION MUSEUM / NYHERITAGE.ORG

Floyd Bennett Field Aerial view, looking away from Administration Building and hangars c.1932.

popularity amongst aviators; its location along the Atlantic coast made it the ideal site for cross-country, trans-Atlantic, and round-the-world flights and expeditions, and its modern facilities at the time were second to none. Throughout the 1930s, dozens upon dozens of notable and record-breaking flights took place at the Field. Though not a complete listing, many of them are noted by the National Parks Service at www.nps.gov.

Though intended to serve as a modern gateway to New York City, Floyd Bennett Field never achieved the commercial success that it was intended for. There were various reasons for this, including the airports somewhat remote location away

from Manhattan in far southeast Brooklyn and the U.S. Postal Service's rejection of Floyd Bennett's air terminal application (U.S. Air Mail) in 1936. As a result, commercial airlines, along with lucrative air-mail operations, opted for Newark Airport in New Jersey.

Hence, The City of New York (largely prompted by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia) found a more convenient location for a municipal airport within the City that was closer to transportation in Manhattan and more accessible to commuters.

This ultimately led to the opening of NY Municipal-LaGuardia Airport in 1939, which remained New York City's primary airport until 1948, when New York

International Airport (more commonly known as Idlewild Airport and today, John F. Kennedy International Airport) opened in southeast Queens.

From 1941 through 1971, Floyd Bennett Field became U.S. Naval Air Station-New York. During World War II, it served as a base for anti-submarine flying boats and a take-off point for aircraft and air cargo bound for Europe.

In 1972, the Field became part of Gateway National Recreation Area, one of the nation's first urban national parks. Today, the area includes over 1,300 acres of grassland, tidal mudflats, salt marches, a marina, the former airfield, and the Ryan Visitor Center. ■



H.A.R.P. Tours & Hours of Operation

Hangar B at Floyd Bennett Field is open to visitors on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Tours for groups can be scheduled in advance by calling (718) 338-3799.

Volunteering

Volunteer opportunities include aircraft restoration, support vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, art and exhibits, education and interpretation, and clerical and administrative support.

For additional information about Floyd Bennett Field and the National Park Service can be found at:

Gateway National Recreation Area
 FBF Building 69, Brooklyn, NY 112234
www.nps.gov/gate

Comair: One of the Original Delta Connection Carriers

BY ROBERT G. WALDVOGEL
robertw@metroairportnews.com

Many small, independent airlines, which operated a handful of turboprop aircraft within a limited catchment area, were later propelled into the major ranks because of three main aviation trends: deregulation, major carrier alignment, and the new breed of regional jets. Comair was one of them. But success can sometimes lead to failure if independence is lost—and in Comair's case, it was.

Origins and Early Growth

Voids often serve as catalysts to their fulfillment, which, in many ways, was the reason for Comair's creation. David Mueller, a corporate pilot for a Cincinnati bank, noted a shortage of area air service whenever he flew, and he elected to fill this gap with his father, Raymond, by establishing a local carrier that would provide high-frequency flights between cities that sorely needed them. Comair, needless to say, was the result, and it came into being on April 1, 1977.

Its initial fleet was modest by any standards—a trio of seven-seat, piston-powered Piper Navajos, which barely crossed the bridge between general and commuter aviation, and their base was the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. The air service shortage was finally addressed, plugging the gaps to Akron, Cleveland, and Detroit.

Deregulation

Deregulation, gateway to growth, endowed Comair with new freedoms, enabling it to enter and exit markets, establish frequencies, and set its own fares.

"The company benefitted from the deregulation of the airline industry in the early 1980s," according to 'History of Comair Holdings.' "As the major airlines dropped unprofitable routes in the face of intensified



competition, Comair and other regional fliers were quick to fill in the gaps in service."

Shortly after the dawn of the decade, the carrier acquired 30-seat Embraer EMB-120 Brasílias and 34-seat Saab 340s, both of which were pressurized, featured stand-up aisles, and offered in-flight service. An IPO raised \$5.5 million after trading on NASDAQ, ensuring the airline's expansion.

Delta Cooperation and Connection

Sometimes statements are subtly made. In the case of Delta Airlines, it made one by allowing Comair to list its flights in its Delta-matic computerized reservations system (CRS) at the end of 1981. It ultimately led to a marketing agreement and Delta Connection cooperation. The statement was simple: Comair was doing something right and an agreement with it could offer Delta advantages it could not achieve on its own.

Although an initial Comair-to-Delta inter-flight feed only entailed those to 15 destinations in seven states, by 1984, the joint venture expanded to encompass 100 daily departures from Cincinnati.

But passenger make up had begun to shift—from its primarily business one to a leisure one, facilitated by connections to Delta flights and, as such, Comair itself inaugurated service to destinations catering to this class of clientele. By July of 1987, it operated a 37-aircraft fleet to 29 cities.

Leisure, indeed, dictated its direction. When Delta became Walt Disney World's official airline, it needed additional flight feed at its Orlando hub, and Comair fit the bill by establishing its second hub there on November 1, 1987, initially with 19-seat EMB-110 Bandeirantes, but later with its larger EMB-120s.

"By 1992, Comair's Delta Connection system in Florida had expanded north to Savannah, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama, and west to New Orleans," according to 'Sunshine Skies: Exploring the History of Commuter and Regional Airlines of Florida and Georgia.'

Aside from feeding each other passengers, Comair and Delta also injected each other with strengths, establishing an interdependence.

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Regional Jet Era

Small jets seating between 45 and 90 passengers had already been designed during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. But their success hinged upon powerplant availability. General Electric's quiet, fuel-efficient, optimum thrust CF34 series made a new breed both feasible and economical.

Comair became the US launch customer for what was originally known as the Canadair, but later Bombardier, Regional Jet.

From its very first flight from Cincinnati to Toronto on June 1, 1993, it became apparent that it not only introduced a new aircraft type, but a new concept. Aside from its mainline-jet comparable comfort and, in some cases, range, its greatest advantage was its speed, especially in its ability to operate within the Delta Connection program.

"We needed more real estate," according to Charles Curran, the airline's Senior Vice President of Marketing. "The turboprop can only go so far. We wanted to expand our hub and attract more people to Delta, and we needed a jet to do that. The RJ has opened markets that, previously, we couldn't even think about."

As a niche carrier, the type allowed Comair to blur the lines between its previously turboprop-only operation and Delta's exclusive-jet one, enabling it to supplement or replace turboprops on routes of between 100 and 1,500 nautical miles, inaugurate service in new markets, entirely or partially substitute Delta mainline jet flights to maintain or even increase frequencies and allow sector demand to grow and mature



Comair Embraer EMB-110 Bandeirante turboprop airliner in 1982.

until larger aircraft could be deployed.

"... Comair's operations are shaped to appear as any other flight leg of Delta Air Lines," according to Carole A. Shifrin in her article, 'More Small Jets Enter Regional Fleets' (*Aviation Week and Space Technology*, May 12, 1997). "The Delta Connection carrier shares Delta flight numbers, ticketing/advanced seat assignment, frequent flier benefits, and automation through-baggage service to the final destination."

The explosive, regional jet-sparked growth frequently required airport facility expansion. In September of 1994, for example, Comair opened a \$50 million, 53-gate one dedicated to regional operations in Terminal C at Cincinnati. Three years later, the combined Delta and Comair flight schedules from it had a 450-city, 80-country reach, with the latter's regional jets spreading their wings to destinations in the Midwest and to the East Coast, the South, Florida, and Canada.

As the nation's third-largest regional airline hub, it demonstrated the potential of this new breed of mini-jets. They significantly increased its catchment area, funneled an ever-higher number of passengers through it, and facilitated an infinite number of Comair-to-Delta and Comair-to-Comair flight connections.

Virtually overnight, Comair recorded record revenues of \$297 million, of which \$28.5 million were profits, and carried 2.7 million passengers. For the fiscal year that ended in March of 1997, that revenue had almost doubled to \$563.8 million.

"Comair was outperforming its regional airline rivals because its jets, which numbered more than 50 by 1997, enabled the airline to start new routes, cater to business travelers and command higher prices," according to 'History of Comair Holdings.' "While other regional carriers were scrambling to catch up by purchasing their own regional jets, Comair had, by 1997, vaulted into the number two spot among the regionals, trailing only AMR Corporation's Simmons Airlines."

Two years later, it carried 6.44 million annual passengers on more than 750 daily departures and earned \$763.3 million in revenue.

Delta Ownership

Faced with reverting to autonomous operation, concluding a similar code-share agreement with another carrier, or being financially acquired by Delta when its original Delta Connection contract ended, Comair chose the latter option, paying the

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Comair CRJ100ER with new livery at Boston Logan International Airport

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way for its ownership change on October 18, 1999, after a \$1.8 billion purchase, which equated to \$23.50 per share. A wholly owned subsidiary by the following January, it became part of the new Delta Connection, Inc. unit, which oversaw all of Delta's regional carriers, including ASA Atlantic Southeast Airlines.

That Comair's meteoric rise to success prompted the strategy could not be disputed, but its quality was confirmed when it won Air Transport World's 1999 Regional Airline of the Year award.

Its growth, facilitated by additional regional jet acquisitions, was the equivalent of unstoppable momentum.

In April of 2000, for example, Delta signed a \$10 billion contract for 500 firm- and optioned- orders for its ASA and Comair subsidiaries to complete their turboprop aircraft replacements.

"The CRJ deal is the first fleet purchase for Delta Connection, formed last year after ASA and Comair became wholly owned subsidiaries of Delta," according to Graham Warwick in his 'Delta Signs Massive CRJ

Deal' article (Flight International, April 4-10, 2000). "The 94 firm orders, valued at \$2 billion, consist of 25 40-seaters and 20 44-seaters, all for Comair (along with seven stretched CRJ700s)."

After delivery, the once-fledgling and independent Cincinnati carrier operated an 182-strong regional jet fleet.

Hinged Success

Comair's success now hinged upon Delta's, and if its new owner entered a decline, the win-win equation would rapidly invert into a lose-lose one, which it eventually did.

On September 14, 2005, parent Delta was forced to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, financially affecting affiliate Comair. Cost reductions could only be achieved through flight, city, frequency, and personnel reductions.

An early-2008 Delta domestic capacity decrease forced a similar one at Comair, and two years later, it ceased operating the very aircraft that had catapulted it to success—all of its original, short-fuselage, 50-seat CRJ100 and -200 regional jets.

Yet another two years later, Delta

implemented the unthinkable: it pulled the plug on Comair, shutting it down. At its peak, it had served 83 destinations in the US, Canada, the Bahamas, and Mexico.

Lessons and Legacy

Deregulation, the Delta Connection code-share agreement, and the regional jet had all infused Comair with unprecedented growth and success—so much so, in fact, that Delta purchased the very arm without which it itself could not have grown the way it did. But that success became inextricably tied to its owner and, ultimately devoid of choice and independence, led to its demise. ■



ROBERT G. WALDVOGEL

spent thirty years working at JFK International and LaGuardia airports with the likes of Capitol Air, Midway Airlines, Triangle Aviation

Services, Royal Jordanian Airlines, Austrian Airlines, and Lufthansa in Ground Operations and Management. He has created and taught aviation programs on both the airline and university level and is an aviation author.



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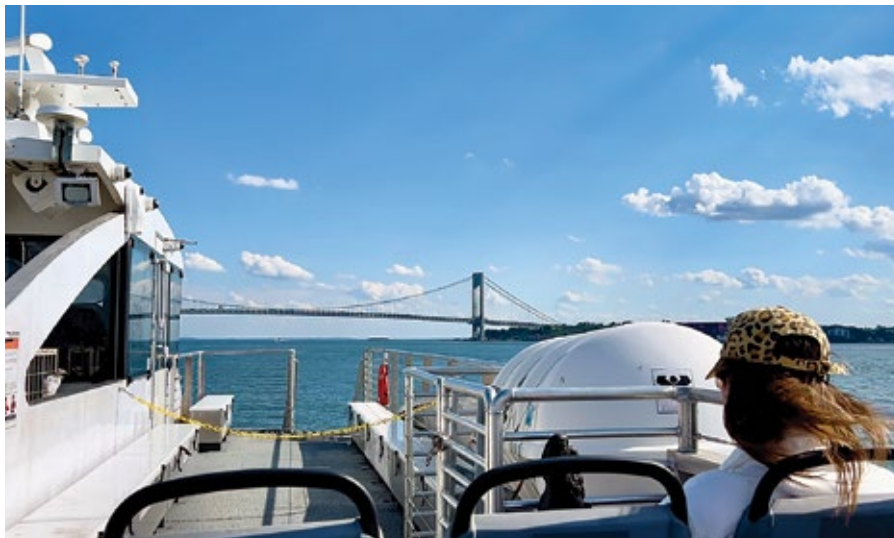
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The New York City Ferry System Evolves



BY MAUREEN KATZ

Mkatz@metroairportnews.com

The New York City Ferry System is one of the best ways to travel around New York City. I recently had an appointment in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, near the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Instead of fighting the absolute worst traffic on the Belt Parkway, my husband Jonathan and I took the East River Ferry and the South Brooklyn Ferry.

We started on the East River route at East 34th Street. The last stop on this route was Wall Street/Pier 11, a major hub; we then made the connection to the South Brooklyn Ferry to Bay Ridge. Each segment

costs a very reasonable \$4.00 and gives you unforgettable views of New York City.

The East River route makes stops in Greenpoint, North Williamsburg, South Williamsburg, Dumbo, and Wall Street. In the past, we have stopped at Williamsburg and Dumbo to walk around.

There are many great restaurants and unique shops in these areas. Also, Wall Street/Pier 11 is next to the South Street Seaport, where you will find good restaurants and scenic views of New York City, including the Statue of Liberty. The Wall Street Ferry stop is also very close to the Staten Island Ferry, which is worthwhile and free of charge to everyone.



The South Brooklyn route makes a stop at Governors Island. This island was a former Coast Guard base, but as a cost-cutting measure, the Coast Guard closed its facilities in 1996. My father-in-law was a retired Lt. Colonel in the Army and had military privileges that allowed our family to go to the island when it was restricted. We used to have Thanksgiving dinners in the Officer's Club.

Now, Governors Island is open year-round to the public. It offers picturesque views of Manhattan and recreational activities without cars. There are two unique features on the island. One is a luxury camping resort that is becoming well known for being a wonderful 'glamping' vacation, and the unique QC Spa is an enchanting oasis overlooking the iconic city skyline. It is open year-round and has outdoor panoramic spa pools that are heated even in the winter.

The last stop on the South Brooklyn route is Bay Ridge. This area has many ethnic restaurants and interesting markets. The Botanical Gardens have views of New York Harbor and the Verrazano Bridge.

We took the Rockaway route to the Sunset Park Ferry Terminal from Bay Ridge. This ride is lovely on a beautiful day as it goes under the Verrazano Bridge and passes Coney Island. When we arrived at the Rockaway ferry landing, we proceeded to the Rockaway Hotel, two blocks from the ferry landing. On top of this newly constructed hotel is a rooftop deck with beautiful ocean views, which serves hors d'oeuvres and drinks. We had dinner outside by the pool, which was also very worthwhile. The Rockaway Hotel is also two blocks from the beach, and the NYC Ferry System has become a very convenient way for Manhattanites to go to beautiful beaches in Queens. You can take a subway directly to JFK Airport via the AirTrain from this ferry landing.

The NYC Ferry System's connections to New Jersey from Manhattan's East and West Sides are an added benefit.

Visit www.ferry.nyc for the full NYC Ferry routes and time schedules. ■



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August 3

38th Annual Semantics & Friends Fishing Trip
540 Guy Lombardo Ave.
Freeport, New York 11520
www.thesemantics.org

August 7

JFK Airport Rotary Club Dinner Meeting
Vetro Restaurant & Lounge
Howard Beach, New York 11414
www.jfkrotaryclub.org

August 8

KAAMCO Cargo Annual Fishing Trip
540 Guy Lombardo Ave.
Freeport, New York 11520
www.kaamco.org

August 9 – 1:30pm

LGA Kiwanis Club Monthly Meeting
Virtual Event
www.lgakiwanis.org

August 10 – 10:30am

Vintage Wings and Wheels
American Airpower Museum
1230 New Highway
Farmingdale, NY 11735
americanairpowermuseum.com

August 12 & 26 – 7:00pm

Civil Air Patrol Falcon Squadron Meeting
JFK International Airport, Building 14
Jamaica, New York 11430
www.falconsquadron.cap.gov

August 13

Republic Airport Commission Meeting
Republic Airport-(FRG)
East Farmingdale, New York 11735
www.republicairport.net

August 15

Dan Ferrante Annual Golf Outing
Stonebridge Golf Club
Smithtown, New York 11787
www.dfgojfk.org

August 19

National Aviation Day

August 20

The New Terminal One M/W/LBE SDVOB & ACDBE Information Session
Virtual Event
www.anewjfk.com

September 5

LAAMCO Monthly General Meeting
LaGuardia Airport-(LGA)
East Elmhurst, New York 11371
www.laamco.com

September 9

JFK Airport Rotary Club Ladies Golf Outing
Lawrence Yacht and Country Club
101 Causeway, Lawrence, NY 11559
www.jfkrotaryclub.org

September 9

JFK Airport Committee (JFKAC) Quarterly Meeting
Virtual Event
aircraftnoise.panynj.gov

September 12

30th Annual Competitive Edge Awards Gala
The Lighthouse
Chelsea Piers New York, NY 10011
competitiveedgeconference.com

September 12

PANYNJ ACDBE Certification
Virtual Event
www.panynj.gov

September 16

Queens Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Outing and Dinner
Garden City Country Club
Garden City, New York 11530
www.queenschamber.org

September 17

MWBE Certification Webinar
Virtual Event
www.anewjfk.com

September 23

JFK Airport Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing
Brookville Country Club
Old Brookville, New York 11545
jfkairportchamberofcommerce.org

September 25

LaGuardia Airport Committee (LGAAC) Meeting
Virtual Event
aircraftnoise.panynj.gov

September 26

2024 Charles E. Stagg & Nicholas J. Mandella Memorial Golf Outing
Wind Watch Golf & Country Club
Hauppauge, New York 11788
www.thesemantics.org

October 2

Our Lady of the Skies 2024 Luncheon
Honoring Brian Cooley, American Airlines and Sharon DeVivo, Vaughn College
Crest Hollow Country Club
8325 Jericho Turnpike
Woodbury, NY 11797
www.jfkchapel.org

October 5

The Pan Am Museum Foundation 2024 Gala
Cradle of Aviation Museum
Garden City, New York 11530
www.thepanamuseum.org

October 10

2024 Building Awards Gala
TWA Hotel at JFK Airport
1 Idlewild Dr,
Queens, NY 11430
www.queenschamber.org

October 23

New York Community Aviation Roundtable (NYCAR) Meeting
Virtual Event
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- Building facade cleaning
- Stainless steel cleaning
- Pressure and power washing
- Interior and exterior painting
- General maintenance services
- SIDA badged AOA Janitorial Services for Airport Terminals, Offices, Warehouse, and Hangars
- Ramp, roadway, and warehouse mechanical sweeping
- Foreign Object Debris (FOD) Programs
- Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation and management
- Airport marking painting and removal
- Emergency Spill response
- Bird-dropping cleaning, Bird control installations, including netting and spikes
- Bird strike clean-up
- Catch basin cleaning
- Emergency aircraft cleaning and decontamination
- Heavy-duty equipment and vehicle pressure washing



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