

# San Juan

February 2008

The Monthly Newsletter of  
The San Juan Pilots Assn  
P.O. Box 874  
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# Juan

# Pilots

Mark Your Calendar

**Annual Meeting – Tuesday, February 12, 5:30, Fire Station on Mullis.**

**San Juan Aviation Museum Opening** – Sunday, February 24, 3-5pm, Roy Franklin Terminal, KFHR.

**Monthly Luncheon** – Friday, February 29, 1:00, Jimmies Paradise (Bowling Alley).

**Board Meeting** – Tuesday, March 4, 5:15, Whidbey Island Bank Conference Room.

## Back to the Future



*"Mark my word: a combination airplane and motorcar is coming. You may smile, but it will come."... Henry Ford, 1940. In the 60's Hanna Barbera cartoons suggested the Jetson's flying car. Alas, except for the Moller SkyCar, not a great deal has changed on the roads or in the skies.*

With the opening of the San Juan Aviation Museum this month, we celebrate the beginnings of air transportation in and around the San Juan Islands.

Since **Roy Franklin** dozed a runway at Friday Harbor, air transport between here and "America" has come a long way ... or has it? About the time that Roy was picking an expectant mother off the beach at Waldron Island, smart people were predicting that by the turn of the century, we would all have a garage-full of flying vehicles.



Fast forward to 2008. The Jetson's car is as far in the future as it was then, and what has NOT changed is the distance, the weather, our passion for flying, and to a great extent, the airplanes themselves.

Over the years, many of our runways have been improved. Guidance and communication are better, but the act of going from Friday Harbor to Bellingham hasn't changed much.

## Friday Harbor Airport Timeline

1953 – Roy Franklin purchased land for Friday Harbor Airport.  
1962 – Airport opened, with a 2,300 ft hard-topped North-South Runway, and 1,300 ft East West Grass Runway.  
1981 – Airport sold to the Port of Friday Harbor  
1982 – NDB Approach Commissioned  
2005 – GPS Approach Commissioned

There are two airplanes that once worked for Roy Franklin, and are still flying residents of Friday Harbor.

In the late 1950's Roy took delivery of his first Cessna 172. That one, and the next one, are still being regularly flown by SJPA members **Vicky Thalacker** and **Dodie Gann**. We asked Dodie and Vicky about the origins of their aircraft.

Dodie Gann, "I purchased MY 172 from Herbie Kranick, who owned Herb's Tavern, in 1975. He had used it to go back and forth to Everett to buy his supply of cigars. It took years to get that cigar smell out of the cabin. He also flew once a year back to North Dakota to visit his relatives. Different pals flew with him. I think Ernie went one year. I know that my bird spent one summer fighting fires on the mainland, out in the rough. The tail feathers are a little ruffled from that experience. I had the bird re-painted soon after she was mine, by a fellow down in Yelm. And, that was during the time one could put the plane's numbers in small print. My 1958 Cessna 172 is green (turquoise) and white because Herbie painted it those colors. I went the same way when I repainted in 1976. I am told (by Roy, I guess) that it was white, red and blue, before, in the traditional manner of all planes at that time." And, thanks to Dodie for the new color – turquoise. That's "sort of" turquoise.



Vicky Thalacker, "My plane had its 'final test' on Dec. 3, 1957. It was purchased by Skyways Inc. in Troutdale, OR. The plane was "purchased lease plan" from Skyways on July 19, 1958, taking short trips along the West coast by Lad Dowling who flew the airplane until 2/5/1960 when it was purchased by Island Sky Ferries Inc., with the intent that the 'plane to be used throughout Puget Sound area'. It was then purchased by L. Wayne (Corky) North from Island Sky Ferries, Inc. in 1964. He sold it to a lady on Orcas and she sold it to Mary Lou DuBois's Son-in-law (Dr. DuBois was our Veterinarian, and she owned the Wild Hare- now Halesy). I bought it from him in December 1977."



The general aviation (GA) fleet is aging. In 2000, the average age of the nation's 150,000 single-engine fleet was more than 30 years. By 2020, the average age could approach 50 years.

Single-engine airplanes returned to regular production in the late 1990's, but the flying activity at Friday Harbor has actually been on the decline, since 2000. Airport Manager, **Pat Mayo**, has kept a record of airport operations for several years, using a permanent electronic counter, mounted abeam the runway.

Traffic peaked in 2000, with 66,723 aircraft takeoffs or landings. By 2006, operations had dropped to 58,846. Pat's assumption is that the cost of fuel may be reducing the amount of flying. An interesting side-note: Last year 12,542 commercial passengers departed San Juan Island, which is approximately twice the total population. So, at least, it shows we're not staying home.

What's in store for the future? The airport master plan calls for general aviation activity to increase by 75% by 2024. At the same time, commercial operations are expected to double.

As we observe the opening of the San Juan Aviation Museum on Sunday, February 24 (3-5), we celebrate the pioneering spirit and very hard work of Roy Franklin. It took him 10 years to build the airport we all now take for granted. All the while, many of us continue to maintain and fly aircraft whose log books show entries in the 1970's and before.



Fifty years from now, those old airplanes will not likely be flying in regular use.

Maybe we'll all have the Jetson's car by then.



*Don't Forget*

Annual Meeting (And Potluck) Set for Tuesday

**It's at the Fire Station, at 5:30.**

You should have received, via US mail, a letter from SJPA President, **Tom Schramm**, with an invitation to renew your membership, as well as a ballot to vote for the board.

In the unlikely event that you can't remember what your Twenty-Bucks-A-Year buys you...



*Editor's note: Actual food photo, from last year, thanks to **Tom Eades**.*

**Tom points out the highlights of 2007.**

1. A great Summer Barbeque, featuring lots of good food, exhibits, and fun activities.
2. A successful silent auction to benefit the John Volk Memorial Scholarship (the initial scholarship will be awarded this spring).
3. Informative presentations at our potluck dinners, including flight planning software, how automated weather works, and a fun, interactive program on ATC communications.
4. A well-attended Christmas dinner, featuring SR-71 veterans David Dempster and Cecil Braeden.
5. And, of course, every month we each receive this humble newsletter, which has not won a Pulitzer Prize, but was awarded the coveted Pullet-Surprise Award, from **Charlie and Nancy Lindenberg**.

If you haven't mailed in your ballot for board elections, you can bring it with you, to the meeting. To refresh your memory, incumbents are **Bob Brunkow, Dan DeShon, Tom Eades, Fred Schumacher, Tom Schramm, and Mike Taylor**. Former board member, **Jonathan Taylor** is back in the USA, and has agreed to run again. New to the list are **Stuart Hansen**, from Friday Harbor Airport and **Bob Miller**, whose Humpback you have likely ridden.

*So, we'll see you Tuesday and don't forget to bring your favorite dish, to share, plus your own plates, silverware, and favorite beverage.*

*Future Events*  
**Mark Your Calendar**

Two **Potluck events** have been scheduled, both at the Fire Station, and starting at 6pm.

Tuesday, May 13  
Tuesday, Aug 12

Fuel Update – The latest local pump prices as of February

Friday Harbor	5.20	Orcas	5.20
Anacortes	4.89	Skagit – Viajet	4.63
Bellingham - Texaco	4.63	Blaine	4.92
Boeing- Aeroflight	5.19	Arlington - Fliteline	4.68
Everett – Fliteline or Jet Center	4.71	Port Townsend	4.77



*Dave Ross at Aeronautical adds that private card holders save an additional 10 cents at KFHR and KORS.*



**San Juan Pilots Association 2007 board :** President – Tom Schramm, Vice President -John Geyman, Secretary –Tom Eades, Treasurer – Bob Brunkow, Richard Babbit, Fred Schumacher, Pat Mayo, Mike Taylor, Art Miller and Dan DeShon.