



BPA

BLACK PILOTS of AMERICA

June 2004

June 2004

BPA ATIS

“Glorious day on the farm”

by Ron Lisberg - Redtail 10



Bob Griffin

Operation Skyhook for 2004 was the largest event ever by the Black Pilots of America. With the addition of new chapters and great weather Operation Skyhook enjoyed its most successful year. There were a record number of airplanes and a record number of registrations this year.

The festivities started with the early arrivals on Thursday. The California Redtails landed at the Hot Springs, Arkansas Airport on Thursday at noon to form up and make the “Redtail Overcast” arrival. At the same time chapters from all over the nation started arriving. By the end of the day the tarmac at Grider Field looked like it did last year at Skyhook’s peak. There was an impressive population of airplanes and people and this was only Thursday!

On Thursday, there were pilots milling around the ramp who had not seen each other since last year interspersed with new members meeting new friends. It was like a big class reunion. Pilots who had just met greeted each other as long lost friends and those who had been in the organization for years greeted each other like true brothers and sisters.

Friday was much of the same. For those on the ramp early Friday morning you could tell this was going to be our biggest Skyhook yet. The old timers in the organization reminisced how they thought it looked like times of old with all the airplanes on the ramp. With all the airplanes on the ramp, the talk went to trash talking as it did in the old days. All day you could hear airplanes from all over the country entering the pattern. Later in the day the ramp was filled to capacity and airplanes were being marshaled to the far ends of the airport. What a great sight it was to see all the airplanes on the ramp, representing all the chapters.



Fuchsia Davis

The Hospitality Suite was busy from Thursday to Sunday night and became the gathering place for all the participants and their guests until the wee hours of the morning.

The Hospitality Suite was alive with jokes being told, wolf tickets being sold, and merriment every night. Members could walk from table to table, sit awhile, participate in the conversations then wander over to another table where the intricacies of flying were being dissected. To add to the merriment there was a joke telling contest and the winners were ... You guessed it; it was a tie between Eric and Dan.



Fred Lewis with Top Gun: Michael

On Friday, the teams for the Cross Country Proficiency Competition were briefed and left in a gaggle to see who could run the course, figure out what was special about the feature that was given in Latitude, and Longitude coordinates. Most of us being new to this part of the world only saw silos and could not tell from the air what the long houses were. They turned out to be chicken coups. The people from the cities scored pretty low on the Cross Country event. After the day’s activities at Grider Field, we were treated to a Fish Fry at Pine Bluff’s Regional Park. At the dinner, the Black Pilots of America were presented with several awards and citations from the Governor and other officials. The Black Pilots of America also recognized and gave out some



**Black Pilots
of America,
Inc.
Founded
1997**

The Black Pilots of America is a non-profit membership organization committed introducing under represented youth to the field of aviation

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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BPA Presidential Candidate Danny R. Perkins Receives FAA Honors

by Jennifer Moore

(HOUSTON) — The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently honored ESC Polytech Consultants, Inc. with a Prism Award and a Certificate of Commendation for excellence in the completion of the new \$300 million Runway at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH). The company's Principal, Danny R. Perkins, Ph.D. was joined by several aviation officials to receive the honor at a ceremony at the Houston Airport System administrative center. According to Houston Area Air Traffic System Manager Ronnie Uhlenhaker, "The FAA wanted to recognize individuals who consistently and without reservation supported the FAA initiative. ESC was innovative, dedicated and played a significant role in the completion of the new runway. The bonus of such diligence was a project that was completed on time and approximately \$9 million under budget."

Perkins, who is currently campaigning for the Presidency of the Black Pilots of America, is very proud of his company's achievements. The committee to elect Perkins President points to the Prism Award as another endorsement of Perkins' ability to lead, manage and get the job done.

ESC was contracted in Feb. 2003 by PBS&J to provide aviation planning services on the new IAH runway. ESC managed the coordination between the Houston Airport System's (HAS) contractors and the FAA's contractors. "Several hundred individuals worked together on a daily basis to complete the runway project including the construction and installation of the FAA's Category III Navigational Aids (NAVAIDS). ESC ensured that the lines of communication were always open between all parties by holding regular meetings to recognize issues and solve them immediately to avoid setbacks" noted Perkins.



Bronze Eagles winners of the Team Trophy

Cont'd from Page 1

well deserved awards for those who have helped us make Operation Skyhook the success it has become.

On Saturday, The premier event of Skyhook was held, the Pylon Races! This event always draws the most spectators as well the most airplanes competing. The competitors were given a buffet breakfast before the briefing so that we would all be present at the briefing. Pilot briefing was at 0900hrs sharp as directed. For the west coast pilots this was 0700hrs and a bit early but at the threat of not being able to compete all were there on time. The FAA had granted us a radio frequency to use for our flight operations and it was drilled into everyone. Airplanes were divided into six classes. From the ground, it was a sight to see and hear those airplanes rev up as they crossed the finish line above them.

In the afternoon, we were treated by several flybys of a United States Air Force F16 Falcon flown by "Rip" Gooch's nephew. The last pass was a low high-speed pass with a pull-up to a vertical climb all the while doing victory rolls until he was out of sight! Word spread like wildfire that the pilot of the F16 was one of our own! How proud we were when we found out it was one of ours flying the airplane. Folks were strutting around like proud fathers and mothers knowing that the pilot was part of our family. What an impressive display of power and flying! By then, all of Pine Bluff and the surrounding communities knew we were having our event at Grider Field.

At 1600hrs when the competition was over everyone lined up to fly all the children who had come to Grider Field to see the Black Pilots perform their magic. Over 50 children plus parents and other adults who were not counted were flown by the group. To see the smiles on some of the children that were flown was worth the trip in itself! Some of the children did not know Pine Bluff had an airport! Kudos' to the staff who had the children all lined up and ready to go as the airplanes became available.

Saturday's General Meeting and candidate forum was cut short by a dinner hosted by the owner of the PJ's Supper Club and resumed after dinner to let the candidates for offices answer all the questions posed to them by the membership. Some sneaked out to see the Lakers/Timberwolves game! After the General Meeting most relaxed in the hospitality suite for a round of serious socializing. Saturday night also saw the weather turn nasty! Flashes of lightning and claps of thunder from thunderstorms is not what this California Redtail is used to seeing! You could tell all the Redtails in the room because every time a clap of thunder was heard they would all stop what they were doing and look around the room with a quizzical look. This reporter was waiting for the room to start shaking as in an earthquake.

Sunday saw us all trying to get to the Breakfast Buffet by 0830hrs to get the free breakfast before the Balloon Burst and Spot Landing contests but mother nature took care of the Balloon Burst competition by blowing winds at more than 20kts. The forecast was for the wind to continue for the rest of the day so both the Balloon Burst and the Spot Landing contests were called off. This was a disappointment to most who had counted on participating in these events. Some milled around the airport while others took off to explore the city of Pine Bluff and the surrounding areas by car.

Sunday night the Awards Banquet was held in the Convention Center. All the chapters were there wearing there chapter shirts and cheering for all that won trophies. This year the new chapter from Kansas City let it be known that they will be a force to be reckoned with in future Skyhook events.

Bob Griffin gave a stirring speech about the trials and tribulations of his career and the obstacles he had to break down. The room was quiet as we listened to Bob's moving story of his life breaking down barriers every step in his career. When Mr. Griffin's speech ended, the room erupted in a standing ovation honoring his achievements.

Next, the young woman from Philadelphia Fuchsia Davis gave a speech that had the audience in awe of her accomplishments and speaking ability for such a young person and her grasp of the flying issues that made it possible for her to be in the position she is in today. "To be young gifted and Black"!

This year saw Althea Smith bring a group of children from the Colorado Springs area to see and learn from the Skyhook experience. They were given assignments and expected to complete those by the time Skyhook was over. Several members volunteered to be mentors and several pitched in to lead them on tours of the airplanes on the tarmac.

On Sunday night, members said goodbye to each other and all promised to return in 2005 to do it again. New friends were made by all of the Black Pilots of America and our family grew by more than just numbers.

Next year's Skyhook hopes to be bigger and better. Yes, there were issues and yes, we will get over them.

SUNDAY Q&A /*Hall reflects on his political past , future*

By KRISTEN MACK

Staff



Anthony *Hall* , Mayor Bill White's chief administrative officer, has a long and storied history in local politics and at City *Hall* . He was a state representative for most of the '70s, served on City Council for 10 years, was chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and most recently served as Mayor Lee Brown's city attorney. Chronicle reporter Kristen Mack talked to *Hall* as he was relocating his office from the annex to City *Hall* .

Q. Question: Would Houston be a better place today if you and Kathy Whitmire were able to move forward with the monorail system you backed in the early '90s?

Answer: The monorail system would have been a better and less expensive system and clearly more expansive that we are going to be able to achieve under the current program. It would have been elevated, more efficient and faster. It got maligned as part of the *political* debate at the time and we lost an opportunity.

Q: Why did you come back to city government in the Lee Brown administration after a 10-year hiatus?

A: After serving as chair of Metro, I left city government for 10 years with the expectation that I would never again return to city government, quite frankly. Not because of bitterness or anything, but because I was ready to move on to do some other things. . . . I did not accept the offer (from Brown) when it was first made to me because my view was that I wanted to be the great kingmaker and the person who had good, close access to city government.

Q: Did you ever think growing up in Sunnyside that you would lead a life like this?

A: I didn't know about many of these things. I didn't know any black lawyers when I was growing up . . . and I certainly didn't know any black people who had been on (corporate or charitable) boards. I have been nurtured by this community.

Q: You were among the first African-Americans elected to an at-large (City Council) position. What was that like?

A: The white establishment got upset with me. They didn't intend for there to be that many blacks on council. That was not the intent of the powers that be.

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing African-Americans in Houston politics?

A: African-American participation and influence is at some risk because of the success we have achieved - at one time having four council members who were black, electing a black mayor, having a black police chief, and a black superintendent of schools and a black chair and president of Metro. It has caused some of us, maybe, to believe that we are reaching a stage in our community that everyone supports full participation and diversity. We have not. And I fear that all that success and achievement could be rolled back, could be lost as a consequence of what I call right-wing, racially divisive elements in our community. If we don't continue to advocate and agitate for full participation for all segments of the population we will risk losing it.

Q: We know that your title was city attorney as part of the Brown administration, but what was your role?

A: It's no secret Lee Brown gave me a far expanded role than most city attorneys had. By tradition, the city attorney is a close adviser to the mayor. I was given the opportunity to participate in the formulation of policy on many issues in addition to the legal role.

Q: A lot of people feel like you were Mayor Brown's mouthpiece at the council table.

A: Every mayor has different approaches. It is no secret that public debating and public engagement was not the thing that the mayor most often did. My role in the administration was dictated by the mayor's preferences. So I was designated to make the explanation or

to offer the framework for the discussion that took place. I did that and did it willingly. I did it with the recognition that it puts you in controversy and conflict and sometimes people don't appreciate it and it causes conflict down the road. Different roles demand different kind of responses.

Q: What is your biggest regret of the last six years?

A: Recent history is not appreciative enough of the accomplishments and success of the Brown administration on so many fronts. Distant history will be much more favorable. That's particularly important to me because it was the first administration led by an African-American mayor. My biggest regret was that I was not able to do more to have more people appreciate the kinds of things the mayor was trying to accomplish while he was trying to accomplish them.

Q: You were ready to walk away from public life when Brown left office. Why did you stay?

A: I was two days away from signing an office lease at 2 Houston Center when Bill White asked me not to do that and stay with his administration. It was a very difficult decision for me, because I had got my energies focused on making lots of money practicing law.

Q: A lot of people don't realize how much of a Renaissance man you are. What do you do in your spare time?

A: There are a number of things I do with my time. I enjoy flying. I own my third airplane. I am a certified flight instructor. I have a passion for boating. My family has a boat we have kept on Clear Lake for 14 years. I scuba dive. I've traveled most of the Caribbean scuba diving. I much enjoy hunting. I enjoy fishing, but I don't typically get to go but two or three times a year. When you add all of those things up with the civic activity - I serve on national and local boards of Junior Achievement. I serve as chair of the United Negro College Fund effort for this part of the state. I serve on the boards of the Museum of Fine Arts and (Houston) Symphony. And when you add all those things up I don't have time to do anything else.

Q: How long do you plan on staying with the White administration? There is already speculation that you will leave within two years as soon as your retirement benefits have maxed out.

A: My commitment is two years.



Ray and his flight instructor Danny Hill also of the Draper Chapter



Ray Davis(age 16) completed his first solo flight on Sunday(3-14-04). Ray Davis (BPA#02-631S) of the Draper Chapter attended the Summer Flight Academy back in 2002 but was too young to solo at that time.

Aviation prodigy inspires students

Aerobatic show pilot says sky's the limit

Tuesday March 16, 2004

By **Brian Thevenot**

Staff writer

At 12, Jamail Larkins rode in an airplane for the first time. At 14, he flew solo — in Canada, because U.S. law considered him too young. At 15, he started his own company selling aircraft instruments and instruction materials. At 18, he bought his own \$300,000 plane.

Now, at 20, the Augusta, Ga., native is the youngest aerobatic air show pilot in the country. He also attends college full time and recently launched a tour of schools in nearly 50 cities, telling students that getting into the expensive and exotic business of flight might not be as difficult as they imagine.

At the Aviation High School Signature Center in Central City on Monday, Larkins found a receptive audience: about a dozen students who have visited airports and control towers, and have ridden in and flown small aircraft, with supervision. The aviation school is one of several new specialized public schools started this year by New Orleans Superintendent Tony Amato.



When a student asked Larkins what he would change about the aviation industry, he said he would like to make it cheaper to learn to fly so more young people could have the opportunity.

“Learning to fly can be pretty expensive,” he told them. “It was \$70 to \$80 for one hour of flight. Now, it can be anywhere from \$50 to \$150 an hour for flight lessons.”

Prices vary but it can cost \$4,000 or more to get a pilot’s license, said Palmer Sullins, a member of the New Orleans Golden Eagles, the local chapter of the Black Pilots of America, which has partnered with the school to run the after-school component of the aviation-training program.

To defray the intimidating costs of flight training, several organizations and companies offer scholarships, though that’s not widely known.

For example, Larkins said, the Georgia nonprofit Careers in Aviation, for whom he is a spokesman, doesn’t spend much of the \$70,000 it has for training.

“They can’t even give away the full \$70,000 because a lot of people don’t know about the opportunities that are out there,” Larkins said. “There are ways of getting around all the hurdles.”

One of the best ways to get flight time, he said, might be to go to the nearest small airport and volunteer to wash planes or move them around the hanger. Such efforts usually are rewarded, Larkins said.

Students in the fledgling aviation school greeted Larkins like a visiting celebrity, with several asking him to autograph their flight log books. But Larkins seemed just as impressed with them and their school.

“I’ve been to seven cities, and I haven’t seen anything like this,” Larkins said. “I went to another school in Miami, where they had an aviation component, but it wasn’t nearly as organized as this. From them (New Orleans students) having simulators, to ground school, to actually getting the chance to go up in planes and get basic flight instruction, these are all things you don’t normally get the opportunity to do until you commit to flying lessons.”

While Amato’s new signature schools have experienced some startup difficulties, including much lower than expected enrollment, parents and students Tuesday praised the intimate learning environment and career focus that the aviation school has offered.

Clustered inside the old Clark High School campus on Rocheblave Street, a massive and well-worn building typical of other district high schools, aviation students attend regular academic classes most of the day. For those, they are combined with students from the other signature schools housed on the same campus.

But they break into their own group for their aviation elective, and they have attended after-school and Saturday sessions taught by pilots, and have gone up in planes.

“We’ve got some kids who want to be pilots, some that want to be mechanics and others that don’t know yet,” Sullins said. “But they’ve expressed an interest, and that’s the key.”

Two students with a keen interest are Evans Butler and Philip Bommarito, both 15. The boys earned a flight in Larkins’ plane — the biplane he bought and flies in air shows — by winning an essay contest in class.

Both boys originally had been more interested in mechanics than in aerobatics. After flying earlier this year, both have changed their minds.

“Since that first trip to the air show, I’ve just been really into it,” Butler said, referring to one of the school’s field trips.

Bommarito originally enrolled in an automotive mechanics signature school, which later was combined with the aviation school because it had only six students. Now, he’s as interested in flying planes as knowing how their engines work.

“I had heard about the aviation school, but I didn’t really want to do it,” Bommarito said. “But I love flying the planes. I like the adrenaline rush.”

Brian Thevenot can be reached at bthevenot@timespicayune.com or (504) 826-3482.



Tuskegee Airmen Remembered

Rufus A. Hunt Jr., Aviation Historian



Rufus Hunt seen here with LuAnne Wills-Merrill, Manager of the DuPage Standards Flight District Office. Ms. Wills-Merrill presented Hunt with a plaque that noted his commitment to honoring aviation pioneers of the past.

In 1931, Cornelius R. Coffey and John C. Robinson initiated the custom of flying over Lincoln Cemetery annually on Memorial Day and dropping a floral piece in tribute to Bessie Coleman. The Challenger Air Pilots Association (African/American) later expanded and continued this observance well into the 1960's. As members of that original organization retired from active flying, the custom waned.

The custom was revived in 1979 as a result of the research efforts of Aviation Historian, Rufus A. Hunt, Jr. Saturday, May 3, 1980 was proclaimed Bessie Coleman Day in Chicago by then Mayor Jane M. Byrne. This day of observance was so designated by each succeeding Chicago Mayor until April 30, 1994. The memorial that year added Willa Beatrice Brown and Janet Harmon. While Janet was cremated, Willa B. Brown was also buried in Lincoln Cemetery. There after the memorial was designated as Chicago's salute to Aviation's Pioneer Colorful Women.

In May of 2003, Congressman Danny K. Davis at a congressional session introduced a bill proclaiming the annual observance, America's salute to Aviations' Pioneer Colorful Women. A significant aspect of the observance is the flower drop on the respective grave sites of Bessie Coleman and Willa B. Brown.

A formation of airplanes traditionally arrive over Lincoln Cemetery at the conclusion of the ground ceremonies. On the second of three passes, two of the airplane peel off from the formation to perform the traditional flower drop. Juan C. Haygood, Chief Pilot of the Detroit Chapter of Black Pilots of America, was poised to lead three airplanes from Detroit City Airport to Chicago-Gary Airport for the 1800 hour briefing.

The weather brief obtained from the Kankakee flight service station that morning however, prompted me to call Mr. Haygood and suggest that he not lead his formation to this year's observance. Student pilot Dana Rogers had journeyed from her home in Columbus, Ohio to Detroit, Michigan to fly in the observance with Mr. Haygood. She was excited and anxious to participate in the observance. In deference to Ms. Rogers, they attempted to fly, but were forced to return to Detroit due to deteriorating weather conditions en route.

At this point I was confident I could fly the mission solo with my thirteen-year-old grand daughter Jyneeva Hunt. At 2000 hours: we lifted off Chicago-Gary Airport en route to Lincoln Cemetery. Less than ten miles from destination, we could see rain in the area. At this point we decided an abort and requested The Chicago-Gary Airport Traffic Controller to relay that decisions to our ground support personnel.

Saturday, May 1, 2004 marked the 25th consecutive year that I personally directed this event. This was only the third time that I had to cancel the aerial aspect due to weather conditions. The ground ceremonies were conducted as scheduled.

In recognition of this achievement, Mr. Hunt was awarded a plaque, commemorating the event, by The Great Lakes Region of the Federal Aviation Administration.

2004 Operation Skyhook Scores

Cross Country

GAILLARDS	MICHAEL	265.84
HICKS	JOHN	249.61
JACKSON III	BIRDEL	236.75

Pylon - Category 2

KWASA	DONALD	N3049R	150.00
JACKSON III	BIRDEL	N62112	117.05
GAILLARDS	MICHAEL	N7003P	115.88

Pylon - Category 3

Williams	Eric	N3166R	150.00
JETER	JAMES	N4EC	120.97
PEACE	WILLIAM	N30892	112.61

Pylon - Category 4

BUNDARA	WEJAY	N9317V	150.00
BROWN	JAMES	N124JK	147.93
PHIPPS	VAUGHN	N5943P	146.42

Pylon - Category 5

NOBLE	HORACE	N33HN	150.00
ROBINSON	DURELLE	N218CG	138.61
SMITH	MARVIN	N560SL	125.38

Pylon - Category 6

HALL	ANTHONY	N44SP	150.00
JACKSON	JESSE	N7235F	146.98
COPELAND	FOREST	N8681A	145.80

Commercial Category

GAILLARDS	MICHAEL	381.71
HICKS	JOHN	371.73
KIMBROUGH	EDWARD	367.10

Formation

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER	138.00
BRONZE EAGLES	127.20
CALIFORNIA REDTAILS	106.40

Team Score

BRONZE EAGLES	1735.67
ATLANTA RAPTORS	1259.79
CALIFORNIA REDTAILS	1063.84



BLACK PILOTS OF AMERICA

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

HOUSTON, TEXAS is the site of the Black Pilots of America National Membership Meeting. The meeting will convene August 12-14, 2004 and the South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center is the headquarters hotel. Welcome to Houston - the nation's fourth largest city where you will experience everything bigger and better in Texas! Please join us for fun in the sun as we fellowship, commemorate and celebrate.

The Bronze Eagles Flying Club of Texas is setting an inviting table to tantalize and delight their guests. Please bring your swimsuits and enjoy the swim-up bar at the hotel. Don't forget your appetites as you enjoy fresh seafood, Cajun delicacies, authentic Texas bar-b-que, down-home soul food and salsy Mexican cuisine. You will be culturally enriched with an outing to Galveston to take in the Lone Star Flight Museum, followed by dinner in the historic Strand District. "Welcome Aboard" the Star Gazer (luxurious double deck entertainment yacht) for a sunset dinner cruise on the rippling and soothing waters of Clear Lake, complete with "sweet soul music".

Hotel Information

South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center
2500 South Shore Boulevard
League City, Texas 77573
Phone 281/334-1000
Fax 281/334-1157
www.sshr.com

The Black Pilots of America's room rate is \$89.00+ tax per night, single or double. To make reservations and take advantage of the board meeting room rate, please call 281/334-1000 and ask for the Black Pilots of America room block. The room block will be released on July 27, 2004, after which time reservations will be based on availability at the rate of \$94.00 or at the guest room rate at that time. Check in time is 3:00 PM. Check out time is 12:00 noon. The registration fee is **only \$125.00 for you**, our members! Please review and complete the registration form. A complete schedule of events will be forwarded soon.

Welcome to Houston: The Real Texas!
Yall come!

Black Pilots of America
National Membership Meeting
August 12-14, 2004
South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center
2500 South Shore Boulevard
League City, Texas 77573

Registration Fee

\$125.00 BPA Members

\$160.00 Non-BPA Members

Make all checks payable to:
Black Pilots of America, Inc.

Mail your registration form and check to:

Anthony W. Hall, Jr.

P.O. Box 61228

Houston, Texas 77208

Note: A \$20.00 late fee will be assessed for any registration postmarked later than Monday, August 2, 2004.

Hotel Arrangements

South Shore Harbour Resort & Conference Center \$89.00/single or double

281/334-1000 – room block under “Black Pilots of America”

_____ Detach Here and Return Form Below _____

Name _____ BPA# _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check # _____ (Note: registration fees are based on individual registrant)

Credit Card # _____ Type _____ Exp. Date _____

Please list an special arrangements or assistance you may require below:



SKYHOOK
2004

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