

AYA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

DAILY COVERAGE

Daily coverage of the AYA International Convention, held in Laconia, New Hampshire, June 26-29, 2000.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/30/2000 5:23:07 AM

Friday dawned foggy and overcast, but the weather soon turned VFR, and Grummans began to depart for home.

Our first convention of the new century again showed that we can be safe and still have fun flying our planes. The gathering stands out for the warmth of the friendship we share as AYA members. We again welcomed entire families, members young and old, owners of everything from the least expensive two-seater to the most lavishly refurbished Tiger and two Cougar twins. Our friends include visitors from all across the U.S., throughout Canada, and around the world. A large fraction of the attendees gave up a little (and often a lot) of their free time to volunteer to help to convention run smoothly.

We hope to see you next year, at AYA 2001 at Cincinnati's Blue Ash Airport ([ISZ](#))!

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/30/2000 5:23:07 AM

The forecasts were dead wrong! The front moved through overnight more quickly than forecast, and on Thursday, the final day of AYA 2000, instead of predicted rain we had a perfectly beautiful day. Not until the end of the closing banquet did the rain begin. The volunteer in charge of controlling the weather did a great job!



Lake Winnepesaukee at dawn, captured by Rebecca Harvey from her AA1B.

The morning began with formation photo flights, including the Best in Show aircraft, Chuck Kiss's N28792.



N28792, Best in Show, upon its return from a aerial photo mission. The aerial photos will be available soon.

Having completed their ground school studies, the Cockpit Cool students flew with instructors Mike LeTrello and Fred Kokaska.



Graduates of this year's Cockpit Cool course.

The Star Squad met at the Sky Bright hangar to make toothpick biplanes and paper planes.



Some of the Star Squad work on paper airplanes.

The mandatory pilot briefing revealed a whole new approach for the Air Race. Instead of asking a bunch of volunteers to sit for hours at remote airports to monitor the checkpoints, Stu Morse and Graham Smith flew the course to photograph and videotape the checkpoints. Each racer was required to carry a pilot and a photographer, and each team was given a disposable camera with which to record their checkpoint passes. The racers were given a packet of color photos showing the angle from which they must capture each checkpoint. One racer had the bright idea to photograph the supplied photos!

Stu had flown with each of the racers to establish their handicaps.

Graham used his iMac to produce an entertaining movie showing the racers what to expect. He even produced a trailer with outtakes.

Despite a bit of low-level turbulence, the race went smoothly. The checkpoints included a racetrack, towers, and a hotel. They're not as easy to find as an airport checkpoint, so a few racers had to make more than one pass.



Racers await the ground crew's signal to start engines.

At the banquet, the winners were announced. In second place, at 138.01 knots, 1.64 knots slower than the handicap, was N23JK flown by Roscoe Rosché. In first place was N74818, flown by Doug Ilg, at 139.33 knots, 1.28 knots above the handicap.

More reduced-price weight and balance checks were performed in the hangar. Non-flying activities included a tour of Castle in the Clouds (also one of the Air Race checkpoints).

In the afternoon, the first seminar was by John Witcher of Tiger Aircraft, LLC, who updated AYA members on the status of new Tiger production. Witcher [announced significantly reduced pricing](#) and other details on the Tiger.

Next was Fred Kokaska, who discussed his conversion to a six-cylinder engine and the one-time STC process in general.

The final seminar was given by Roy LoPresti of LoPresti Speed Merchants, who gave members several interesting aerodynamic tips, interspersed with stories of his long life in aviation and the many aircraft he has flown and designed.

In the evening, all attendees gathered for the closing banquet and awards ceremony. We'll detail all of the award winners soon.



Denise Waters presents the Mystery Rally trophy to Doug Ilg (far left) and Steve Stewart, who had the good sense to choose a local to accompany them on the rally: Conrad Pelletier (right) of Nashua.

Names were drawn for many more door prizes, culminating in an ICOM hand-held transceiver. The keynote speaker was Roy LoPresti, who rose again and spoke glowingly of his love for the Grumman type. LoPresti warmly complimented AYA members again and again on the diversity, family orientation, and cheerfulness of our association. He said that, of all the many type clubs he has visited over the decades, AYA is the most enjoyable. Thanks, Roy!



Stu Morse presents Roy LoPresti with a plaque in appreciation for his keynote speech at the banquet.

Walt and Bonnie Porter were presented with the Lauren Larsen Award, AYA's most prestigious award, which recognizes the member who contributed the most to AYA during the past year.



Walt and Bonnie Porter with their daughters Emily and Ashley.

The owners of Sky Bright, our FBO, were presented with a colorful plaque, created by Rebecca Harvey, in appreciation for their hospitality and good service during the convention.



Finally, incoming AYA President Guy Warner was introduced, and he recognized outgoing President Roscoe Rosché as "The Most Outgoing President."

After the banquet, members ran back to their rooms through the rain, to rest up for departure day on Friday.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/28/2000 10:46:17 PM

Wednesday was the best day yet. Blue skies, puffy clouds, light winds, and moderate temperatures encouraged many members to fly and fly, whether in an event or just for fun.

Walt Porter and his volunteers flew formation photo missions early this morning. The photos were back by afternoon, when Walt gave his seminar on aerial photography. The owners of aircraft photographed this morning were very pleased with the results. One owner commented that the photo looks so good, he might just put off that paint job he was planning.

At 6 a.m., Rebecca Harvey led thirteen members on a hike up one of the lake region's smaller mountains. She was pleased with the turnout, and everyone was glad they rose early to meet such a crisp, clear morning.



Rebecca's Hike Crew

AYA member Sarah Barber of Iowa flew Laconia Airport Manager Dianne Cooper this morning. While Ms. Cooper is not a pilot, she is well respected by Sky Bright, our FBO for the convention, and has been very helpful and welcoming to AYA. She tells us that she enjoyed the flight.

Sarah also volunteered to show her Traveler to a local grandmother and grandson who came to the airport to see what it was all about. Mitch Anderson's Tiger at one point held six excited local youngsters who could hardly believe the voices on the radio came from *that* airplane right overhead.

Later Sarah did an on-camera interview with Kinney O'Rourke, the head of the Laconia Chamber of Commerce, for a feature program on the local access cable channel. Chuck and Judy Ingersoll, Southwest Regional Director Bob Arnold, and *Star* Editor Steve Williams also were interviewed, and Convention Chair Bob Arnold and AYA member Mark Matthews carried O'Rourke and the camera crew aloft for a formation video flight. With all of this positive publicity, we're sure the local opinion of general aviation will be raised.



Sarah Barber is interviewed in front of her Traveler by Kinney O'Rourke of the local chamber of commerce.

Bob Steward gave a demonstration of replacing the Tiger's side canopy windows, one of the most hotly anticipated seminars. Bob is well known on Grumman-Gang for his tireless contribution of technical advice.

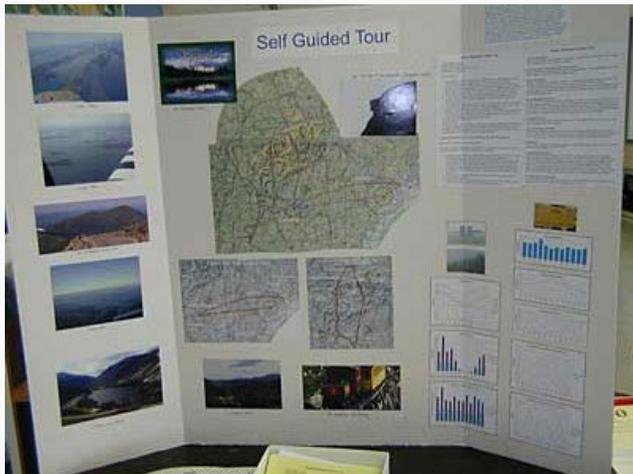


Jeffrey Foltz took part in Bob Steward's side window replacement demonstration.

The Star Squad kids and their adult volunteer leaders once again had many activities throughout the day, including a Treasure Hunt and their own Mystery Rally at the airport.

The adult's Mystery Tour Rally, organized by Denise Waters, was a whole new kind of rally. At the mandatory pilot briefing, each crew was given a set of sealed envelopes containing the information they needed to complete the rally. This sounds like a lot of fun, and we'll give more details and the results in a later report.

The self-guided air tour was a big success. Rebecca Harvey had planned two routes: one around Mount Washington and, since that route might be impassable due to weather, a backup route to the Atlantic coastline and back. With today's excellent weather, some were able to complete *both* routes.



Rebecca Harvey prepared an extensive information board for the self-guided air tour.

The Swap Shop once again took place in the big AYA tent at the airport. Even the FletchAir folks moved some of their goodies under the tent. Too much sun?

Lunch was held at the Margate resort. After lunch the aircraft judging results were announced and trophies awarded. This year the trophies are large mugs bearing the AYA roundel, the AYA 2000 insignia, and the name of the event.

For the second year in a row, no aircraft were entered in the Best Original Two-Place category. We're gratified that our little orange AA1A could have won by default, even with its run-out engine, scratched paint, and cracked canopy, but honestly we're not sure we should be awarded for keeping a two-seater so "original" for so long!

Best Custom Two-Place was awarded to N6392L, an AA1A in F-14 Tomcat livery owned by **Chuck and Judy Ingersoll**, who obviously have carefully maintained this aircraft since obtaining it several years ago from Don McNamara, who originally created this Navy replica. The Ingersolls told us that they would have brought the tailhook, but it wouldn't fit in the back with all their luggage.

Best Equipped Two-Place was taken by N6211L, an AA1B owned by **Thomas and Christine Micke**. This aircraft is one of the few Grumman two-seaters with a traffic avoidance system.

The **Best Original Four-Place** was **Craig Wilker's C-GXAV**. We're glad Craig attended this year, especially since he brought longtime AYA member Liz Lane, who has owned her two-seater for 28 years, since she picked it up at the factory. This was our first chance to meet Liz, a colorful and inspiring Grumman owner who earned her pilot's license at age 50.



Craig Wilker (left) accepts the Best Original Four-Place award from AYA 2000 Convention Chairman Stu Morse.

Best Custom Four-Place was awarded to N4536V, a Tiger owned by **Tom Reese**. In addition to a fine exterior, this Tiger is outstanding for the fit and finish of its custom interior.

The **Best Equipped Four-Place** was N28792, owned by **Chuck Kiss and Dorothy Plonka**. More on this aircraft below.

And the big announcement: This year's **Best in Show**, by popular vote, is Tiger N28792, owned by **Chuck Kiss and Dorothy Plonka**. (See below for a photo. We hope to publish an aerial photo soon.) This plane stands out for its unique metallic green and gold paint scheme, with the engine cowling dominated by a hand-painted Tiger on each side.

Awarded yesterday were trophies for the Flour Bombing and Spot Landing: First place in the Flour Bombing was won by Darrel Lipman, and second place by Bob Mears. Spot Landing first place went to Richard Murphy, flying C-GGPC, who touched down five feet short of the mark. Second place in the Spot Landing contest went to Mitch Anderson flying his Tiger N28515. Mitch landed fifteen feet short of the target.

Awards for the Broken Towbar, Rigged Preflight, and Precision Taxi contests will be announced at the banquet tomorrow.

Non-flying members again enjoyed local sightseeing activities and a trip to Tipton Outlets for shopping.

In addition to the Bob Steward's maintenance demonstration at the airport, several seminars were held at the Margate. Stu Morse, Kenny Burke, and another member (to whom we apologize for not writing down his name), all air traffic controllers, answered many questions on proper procedures, tips for getting that direct route you want, and just exactly why controllers do those inexplicable things. Stu Morse reports that controllers do, very, very rarely, actually make a mistake.

Next was Walt Porter's aerial photography seminar, during which he displayed several never-before-seen photos of Greg Amy's Tiger with its winner's circle paint scheme.

Finally, AYA President Roscoe Rosché presented a follow up on his extensive article in a recent *Star* on the planning and execution of his flight to Alaska and back with Jon Maestre. Roscoe showed a lot of very interesting video shot from Jon's Tiger during the trip. Glaciers, mountains, Moose, Salmon, and lots and lots of tundra were some of the highlights.

This evening was perfect for our dinner cruise on the MS Mount Washington. Excellent food was served as we cruised smoothly around Lake Winnepesaukee. It soon became clear that it would be a travesty to interrupt the fun with the planned General Membership Meeting. But there's a fiduciary duty to fulfill, so the ship's loudspeakers blared, "Now hear this! The General Membership Meeting will be held tomorrow at 12:30 p.m. at the Margate! That is all!" which was met with a round of applause.



Tom and Rachelle Smith of Massachusetts enjoy the dinner cruise. The purple ribbons identify first-time convention attendees.

Roy LoPresti, head of LoPresti Speed Merchants and the engineer responsible for the design and manufacture of the Tiger and the Cougar, joined us for the dinner cruise. Many members enjoyed personal conversations with Mr. LoPresti both during the cruise and afterwards, when a transportation glitch left us waiting on the dock for an hour or so. Ice cream, bumper cars, laser tag, a penny arcade, and a beautiful cool evening made the wait quite enjoyable.

Mr. LoPresti will be the keynote speaker at the banquet tomorrow. He'll also present a seminar on speed mods during the afternoon.

The weather forecast for tomorrow is uncertain. It won't be as nice as today, but we'll just have to see whether the ceiling permits us to pull off the Air Race, and whether thunderstorms will develop.

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/27/2000 10:07:45 PM

Tuesday started out very hazy, with a bit of stratus floating over the airport from time to time. But the visibility was good enough for the scheduled flying contests.

Rebecca Harvey and her volunteers began the aircraft judging this morning. Grumman owners who especially wanted their aircraft considered for best in show were invited to park near the terminal. The results of aircraft judging will be announced later in the week. (Remember that Best in Show is awarded by popular vote by all attendees, whereas all other categories are judged by volunteers using more objective criteria.)



A Best in Show Candidate is Inspected by Members



Members Inspect More Best in Show Candidates

The mandatory pilot briefing for flying activities started on time at 8:30 a.m., and was well attended. The flour bombing and spot landing contests went smoothly. It's important to remember the large number of volunteers on the ground who are necessary to the safe and efficient flow of competitors. The ground handling and airboss crews coordinate engine start, taxi, and takeoff using donated radios. Volunteers man the spot landing and flour bombing targets. And still more volunteers make sure that all of those people have water, fresh batteries, and whatever else they need to do their jobs.



Mike Sherer and one of his ground handling volunteers.



Flour Bombing/Spot Landing Competitors Await the Signal for Engine Start



The Flour Bombing crew watches the approach of the next competitor. AYA Safety Director Ron Levy (foreground) monitored all flying activities.

Trophies for these competitions were presented at lunch, but we'll have to provide the details in a later report.

The Cockpit Cool ground school began today. Some of the students will fly with AYA Pilot Familiarization Program instructors tomorrow.

Bonnie Porter, Melinda Rolfe, and others began the Star Squad activities, including an "Aerogami" Workshop, Aviation Collage Clock Crafts Workshop, and Kayak Races and Swim at the Margate hotel's lakeside beach.

The Swap Shop was held in the morning, and David Fletcher and Garner Rice of FletchAir Aviation had hundreds of Grumman parts available for sale at reduced prices throughout the day.



Garner and Dave with their usual bevy of goodies.

Pat Goodman led a hike for non-flying attendees. Rebecca Harvey will lead another hike tomorrow morning at 6 a.m.!

Lunch at the airport was catered by the Lobster Pound, a popular local restaurant. The proprietor of the Lobster Pound invited members to visit the restaurant for dinner, and many did later in the evening.

In the afternoon, some attendees toured the Canterbury Shaker Village and learned lots of interesting facts about the achievements of this unique community.

Due to poor visibility, the self-guided air tour was moved to tomorrow. The haze did clear later in the afternoon, but we hope tomorrow will bring still better visibility.

Also in the afternoon were many popular airport activities, including the always entertaining Precision Taxi, Rigged Preflight, and Broken Towbar competitions. The results of these competitions will be announced later in the week.



Searching for Squawks in the Rigged Preflight Competition



Broken Towbar Competition



Precision Taxi. Trust me, the egg isn't in danger.

Tach checks, radio calibration checks, and rigging checks were offered throughout the day. The tachometers were, by and large, surprisingly accurate this year.



Tachometer Check



Rigging Check

In the Sky Bright hangar, reduced-cost weight and balance checks were offered. We're not sure how many aircraft were weighed today, but it was a lot. Tomorrow, reduced-cost prop balancing will be offered.

Greg Amy's Tiger appeared on the front page of a local newspaper today in a very dynamic air-to-air color photo over the Laconia airport. The photo was accompanied by an article explaining the event, including several quotes from AYA Southeast Region Director Joe Reed. The convention also was described in radio broadcasts over the past few days, and a television news crew from Channel 9 came to the airport today to capture lots of footage of airplanes and conduct an interview with AYA President Roscoe Rosché and Editor Steve Williams. The head of the Laconia Chamber of Commerce came to the airport today, and tomorrow will fly with a videographer for a weekly television show on the local access cable channel.

As a result of all the publicity, several groups of parents, kids, and other locals visited the airport today. All were invited to see the Grumman aircraft up close, and at least one Young Eagles flight was conducted.

A stunning sunset capped off a very successful day.

Tomorrow's plans include some early morning formation photo flights, the Mystery Air Tour Rally, seminars, and many other activities on and off the airport. We're very much looking forward to tomorrow's dinner cruise on the MS Mount Washington on Lake Winnepesaukee.

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/26/2000 8:07:48 PM

Sunday evening's thunderstorms left us with some fog overnight, but Monday dawned bright and less hazy than the weekend. As Monday is arrival day, we were hopeful that many

more members would arrive.

GREGG WILSON'S FORMATION FLYING SEMINAR

Early Monday morning, many pilots attended a formation flying seminar arranged independently of AYA 2000 by AYA member Gregg Wilson, but timed to be convenient for attendees. Gregg required all participants to study and pass a test on a formation flying manual which he developed and published on the web. The first order of business was a mandatory pilot briefing.

Among the aircraft used in the formation flying seminar were Greg Amy's N81140, newly painted in a racing checkerboard, and Stu Morse's racer N5TU, familiar to many who have seen Stu in races.

Qualified formation pilots flew with each of the students in the seminar.

SCENIC TRAIN RIDE

A large group of early-arriving members took a scenic train ride along the lakeshore. Lunch was served on the train. The weather was hot and muggy, but the train created a nice breeze as it rolled along.

MORE ARRIVALS

This morning, Rebecca Harvey took off in her two-seater to photograph the Grumman parking on the grass along Laconia's closed runway.

By this evening, the official count of Grumman aircraft tied down at Laconia stood at 104. Still more members are expected to arrive during the week. A few have been delayed by weather, while others plan to attend only one or two days.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The AYA Board of Directors held its annual meeting this afternoon. Several AYA members observed the board meeting. The board adjourned after several hours, and will complete its agenda tomorrow afternoon.

WELCOME RECEPTION

This evening, we held the traditional reception to welcome first-time convention attendees. AYA Vice President Guy Warner and Past President Sharon Spence encouraged first-timers to jump into any conversations and activities, and promised they would be welcomed. They explained that many AYAs have attended many conventions at which they made fast friends who sometimes gather only once a year, at this event. It's natural for those friends to gather together, but we never mean to exclude new people. Sharon described the warm welcome she received at her first convention in 1986.

AIR RACE CLASSIC WINNERS DENISE WATER AND RUTH MAESTRE ARRIVE

Two special guests were recognized at the reception: **Denise Waters and Ruth Maestre**, just arrived from Hyannis where they **won this year's Air Race Classic** flying Denise's Tiger! Denise won last year's Air Race Classic as well, flying her Tiger with Bonnie Porter, with Ruth providing weather and logistical support on the ground. Congratulations, Denise and Ruth!

Tomorrow morning, the convention officially begins with flying events at the airport, aircraft judging, the Cockpit Cool course, and hikes and other activities for non-pilots.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/25/2000 4:17:09 PM

Saturday, June 24, a record 33 Grummans arrived at Laconia a full two days before the arrival day. The ground crew was busy in the morning marking out the parking lines on the grass, and putting cones over the gopher holes. Later they directed the planes to parking, avoiding the weather.

Sunday brought murkier weather, but around 35 more aircraft arrived and parked on the flight line. AYA volunteers already have put in many hours of ground handling and preparation of the convention site at the Margate hotel.

One interesting arrival was a Grumman (not Gulfstream) G-1 turboprop.

Many greeted old friends and met new ones at the airport and the hotel.

As we write this, thunderstorms are moving into Laconia, but we hope the weather will improve for arrival day tomorrow.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2000

posted by Steve Williams 6/21/2000 4:32:20 PM

For the first time, daily coverage of AYA's international convention is available on the internet.

AYA volunteers bring you this frequently-updated coverage of AYA 2000, held in Laconia, New Hampshire, June 26-29, 2000.

Watch this space! We may even have news to post on early arrivals Saturday and Sunday.

We hope to see you in Laconia, but if you can't make it, we'll be with you here on the AYA web site each day.