



Reflections

The Quarterly Journal of the Northwest Airlines History Center



June 2021

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The October MSP Airliner Show is back!

“Route of the Gold Strikes” struck out with its first new jet order

Walter Mondale’s legacy at NWA

Astronomical growth plan at HSV

What goes around... the first version of the Compass logo

Our mission:

To preserve and display the memory of Northwest Airlines’ colorful history.

To tell the stories of carriers merged and allied with NWA, and the stations and regions they served.

To show how the legacy of NWA carries on into the future.



A beautiful May 2021 morning sees hotel occupancy rates in the Twin Cities finally rising but still well below historic norms. The demand for business travel and midsize meetings may have permanently changed - leaving many building owners considering how to adjust business models to cover rocketing real estate valuations and taxes.

From Hotel to Housing?

COVID-19 compels changes to our museum’s home —by Scott Norris

As many have said, the pandemic served to accelerate existing, forecasted trends in business and society five years ahead - and in the hotel business this could not be more true. In Bloomington, MN, where most of the hotels catering to the Minneapolis/St. Paul air traffic are located, lodging receipts were down by 1/3 in calendar year 2020, as business travelers switched to Zoom meetings from their homes, and people who would have come for vacations stayed away by mandate - and then in the summer by the perception that the Twin Cities had become a dangerous place in the aftermath of the George Floyd killing. Parking ramps at the hotels near MSP Airport through the fall and winter were certainly more than 1/3 empty.

HAMMER TIME? to page 8

Preflight Checklist

The Northwest Airlines History Center, Inc.

We are an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the State of Minnesota. Volunteer-staffed and volunteer-managed. We have no organizational or financial tie to Delta Air Lines.

Founder: Henry V. "Pete" Patzke (1925-2012)

Directors:

- Executive Director and Collections Manager: Bruce Kitt
- Museum Director: open position
- Directors: Bruce Kitt, Fay Kulenkamp, Bill Marchessault, Vince Rodriguez, Jeff Schwalen, Mike Vetter, Scott Norris
- Director Emeritus: Jerry Nielsen

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Visiting the Museum

The NWAHC Museum is located inside the Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel in Bloomington, MN, just south of MSP International Airport.

Current schedule: (as of mid-June) Thurs-Sat, 11 am - 5 pm Check our Facebook and Twitter for updates.

Admission and parking are FREE. (Special events may incur a charge.)

Directions:

From the airport: Use METRO Blue Line light rail from either Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 southbound and exit at the American Boulevard station. The Crowne Plaza AIRE is immediately east, across the street from the station. Trains run every 10 minutes and fares are \$2.50 peak / \$2 off-peak. Tickets are good for 2.5 hours of unlimited travel, so depending on the length of your visit, a separate return ticket may not be necessary.

From the Mall of America: Take the METRO Blue Line light rail outbound; American Boulevard is the third stop.

In the Twin Cities Metro area: Head toward MSP International Airport. From Interstate 494, exit on 34th Ave. S. and go south one block to American Blvd. Turn left (east) on American and then immediately right into (and under) the hotel. The parking ramp is on the left - follow the signs for free hotel parking (do not use spaces not reserved for the hotel.)

The museum is located on the third floor, above the pool area on the second floor, and across from the Fitness Center.

Annual Membership

Membership is the main source of funding for the NWAHC; please join!

\$30 level - receives REFLECTIONS digital edition early access via email

\$35 level - receives REFLECTIONS print edition by U.S. Postal Service (U.S. mailing addresses only)

Boarding Announcements



From Director Bruce Kitt

In the airline industry everything has a life cycle. What was once leading edge aircraft technology is replaced by newer leading edge airplane technology. Manual reservation systems gave way to computers then to self-service kiosks. Aircraft components are replaced on an hours-of-use basis by newly overhauled components. And so it goes, even to the people who made it all work.

One of the common occurrences during the COVID pandemic were the number of people who used their time to clean out closets and basements of accumulated items. What was once important is now seen as “stuff”. This stuff (historic artifacts, please) has allowed the NWAHC to grow, enriching our understanding of how an airline life cycle works. These items are now on display in the museum or reside on the archive shelves. Your stuff - our artifacts - are what we are accustomed to receiving as donations.

The NWAHC is the recent recipient of an unexpected, new type of donation. The Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, the Museum of Flight in Seattle, and other aviation museums

encourage estate donations as a means of support. They are institutions that commemorate a shared love for aviation, one that had a profound impact on the donor’s life. I am happy for both – the donor who supports the place that honors their career and the museum that preserves and shares the story of the donor’s career. The NWAHC is fortunate to have received its first legacy donation and to have earned that recognition.

William and Ruth Bean chose to celebrate their careers at Northwest Airlines with a generous donation from their estate. Surprise is a fitting reaction. Gratitude is another. Bill was a pilot, Ruth a stewardess and Northwest Airlines the aviation career that defined their lives. They were lifetime members of the NWAHC - quiet supporters, with no expectations beyond that. I never met Bill or Ruth, but I did get to thank their daughter for her parent’s generosity. She told me how much her entire family enjoyed the airline world – its benefits and their family’s memories of it.

A legacy donation is a subject the NWAHC has not promoted. There have been fundraising campaigns and other financial activities to support the work of the NWAHC, but consider emulating the Bean family’s commitment. Our common goals are to see the Northwest Airlines History Center as the permanent home to what we all worked for and contributed to build the world’s best airline, and to be where we come to celebrate and remember. Please think about this. Thank you. CAVU.



From Editor Scott Norris

My last trip by air was in November 2019 to a business convention in Orlando for my “day job” as a marketing manager for an educational game publisher. I’d booked flights to ATL for our industry’s February trade show, but had to

cancel when my brother-in-law unexpectedly died just days before - from aftereffects of COVID, as we later learned. Dozens of Zoom meetings later, the furthest I’ve gone in real life is to the NWAHC’s archive location across town - where I’ve been able to travel back in time to deliver you updates via our growing website features and galleries.

Now with my family fully vaccinated, I’m buzzing and halfway packed already to fly at last - to the Airliners International conference in Phoenix, July 7-9. Our Twin Cities show also resumes in October (see back cover for details.) Hoping to talk with you in the real world at these events once again!

Shop online to support the NWAHC!

- Treasure hunt! We offer surplus materials and new apparel and pins for sale on **eBay** under the handle “cyberglitz” - the assortment changes every week!
- Buying on **amazon.com**? We all learned how convenient it can be this year. Sign up for Amazon Smile and 1/2% of every purchase is contributed to our museum. Use the link at smile.amazon.com/ch/41-2020975 to specify the NWAHC!

Interested in donating materials?

Please contact our collections manager, Bruce Kitt, at bruce.kitt@northwestairlineshistory.org with details of your items, photos if possible, and how we can reach you.

We are especially interested in items that help us tell stories or demonstrate concepts and procedures; records and correspondence; video, audio, and photos; training materials; and union communications. Items from Hughes Airwest & its predecessors, and Southern are especially appreciated.

Compass Readings

NWA board member Walter Mondale passes

Former U.S. Vice President Walter F. Mondale died April 19 at the age of 93, peacefully of natural causes. From the 1960s all the way into the 2000s, "Fritz" played roles that influenced Northwest both from outside and ultimately inside.

With a lifelong interest in aviation driven in part by childhood exposure to fellow Minnesotan Charles Lindbergh's exploits, Mondale got on the U.S. Senate Aeronautical Subcommittee and made shockwaves exposing NASA safety cover-ups after the fatal Apollo 1 fire. Mondale was well-known for his consistent support of and dealmaking for labor rights and equality for all in the workplace and in society at large.

During his time in the Carter administration as Vice President, Mondale was the U.S. point person on Taiwan - Mainland China recognition issues, building 'guanxi' from both sides and smoothing the way for American firms to do business across the region. Fritz was named Ambassador to Japan during the Clinton administration and was responsible for helping open that economy up to more U.S. trade as well. He flew NWA regularly into Tokyo and was known for pitching in (often unrecognized) to help passengers find their way through Narita Airport.

Mondale's earned respect from employees and foreign leaders, plus his government connections and insights at all levels, reputation as a truth-teller, and insight from service on the boards of United HealthGroup and St. Jude Medical, made him indispensable on the Northwest board through the 1990s. Doug Steenland said, "when he spoke, everyone listened." He helped land the Duluth maintenance base and Chisholm call center, and played a pivotal role in negotiating the Summer 1993 labor agreements which kept the company from liquidating. The success of those terms led to profitability and NWA finally going public again, removing the Checchi / Wilson control over the company.

After Senator Paul Wellstone's plane crash death in Fall 2002, Mondale had to leave his board position to step back into politics. Fritz remained involved in law practice and education, and promoting international understanding, for the rest of his life.



Fritz' picture from the NWA 2000 Annual Report.

IAM Local 1833 Donation

Founded in 1976, the IAM Local 1833 Retired Members Social Club met for the final time April 15 in Bloomington, MN. As the last order of business before gaveling into permanent adjournment, Club President Mary Sansom presented the NWAHC's executive director Bruce Kitt with a check for \$6,669 - the balance of the organization's funds. The lodge's membership peaked in 1988 at 10,000. Local 1833 represented mechanics, stock clerks, cleaners, flight-kitchen workers, equipment-service and plant-protection workers, and the merger with Republic added bus drivers, reservation & ticket agents, and clerical and office workers.



Photos courtesy Union Advocate.

Bold New Master Plan for Huntsville, AL (HSV)

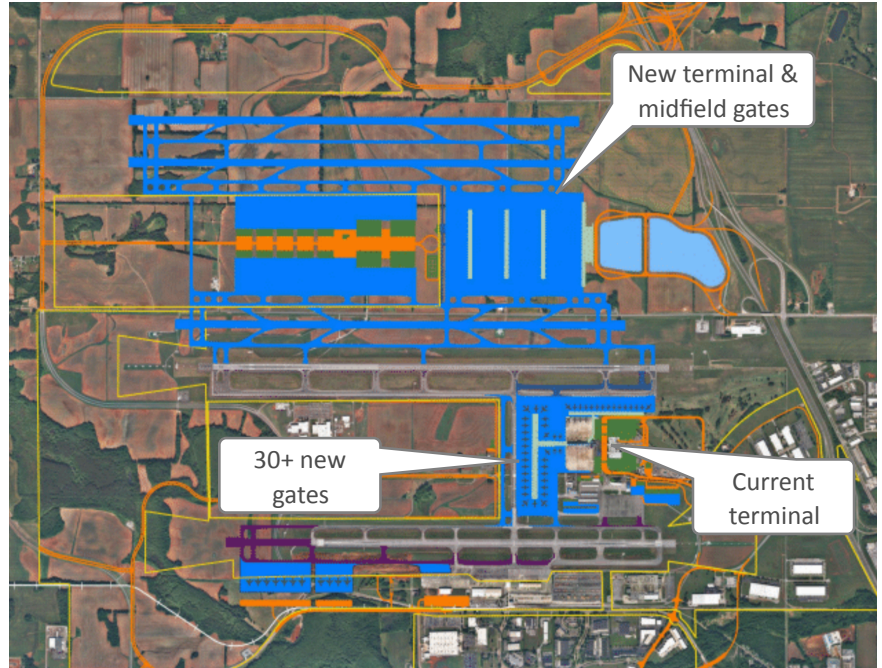
Southern Airways began service to Huntsville's Municipal Airport in 1959 as part of that carrier's second link between Memphis and Atlanta, and found success catering to the concentration of military and aerospace-related businesses. A new jet-age airport was opened in 1967, and it has been upgraded over time to a modern 12-gate facility. The "Rocket City" remained a reliable source of traffic for Republic and Northwest, continuing to fill DC-9-50s up to the Delta merger.



Images courtesy Port of Huntsville.

Up to the COVID crisis, both passenger counts and cargo volume had been increasing steadily at HSV. The region's Port Authority conducted a long-term planning exercise during the pandemic and has laid out a 20-year phased expansion plan, including:

- A 30+ gate expansion to the current facility
- Up to an additional three parallel runways (for a total of five)
- Geometric expansion of cargo and at-field manufacturing capacity through air facilities, plus rail and road build-outs
- Processing facilities for Sierra Nevada's Dream Catcher orbital taxi system
- And ultimately a new passenger terminal with up to three midfield concourses.



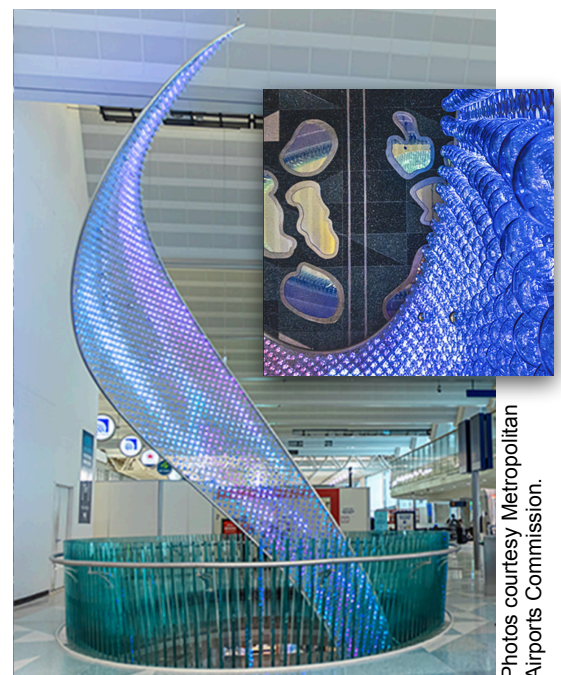
It's a long way from twice-daily DC-3 service to Low Earth Orbit, but this corner of Alabama has long outperformed much of the Southeast thanks to investment in logistics and brainpower - their progress will be interesting to watch!

MSP's "Aurora" Interactive Sculpture takes light

The past year of COVID-related travel restrictions has allowed Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport to accelerate a number of improvement programs across both terminals (see the June 2020 REFLECTIONS for notes on G-Concourse additions) - including substantial changes to pre-security baggage claim and ticketing areas in Terminal A - Lindbergh.

The artistic capstone to these upgrades is *The Aurora*, a 29-foot high glass and metal sculpture suspended from the undulating ceiling of the ticketing level that punches through the floor into the baggage level below. Sculptor Jen Lewin engaged with travelers around Minnesota (your author participated in one such session) to gather input about what we considered iconic sights, sounds, and feelings about the region - and used over 6,000 color-changing LEDs in the interactive piece to reflect the changing seasons and weather.

Glass platforms among the baggage carousels represent the Twin Cities' lakes, and travelers walking or dancing by them will set off cascading changes in color and motion above and below. Over 20,000 aluminum rings and 1,900 hand-blown glass bulbs are incorporated in this permanent feature.



Photos courtesy Metropolitan Airports Commission.

Denied Boarding

Bonanza's thwarted drive for early jet leadership

Bonanza's embrace of the turboprop Fairchild F-27 through 1959 and 1960, and disposal of smaller, slower Douglas DC-3s profoundly improved the company's economics and competitive position. By the end of 1962, Bonanza achieved the highest passenger load factor of all scheduled airlines in the U.S. (not just Regional carriers!) Its Las Vegas hub connected the major points of Salt Lake City, Reno, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix with milk-run stops at smaller communities across the Desert Southwest, often competing on its trunk routes with Major carriers like Western, United, American, and TWA.

As the Major carriers started to introduce higher-capacity propjets, like the Lockheed Electra 188, or turbojets like Douglas DC-8s and Boeing 707s, Ed Converse and his team anticipated travelers would prefer the larger and faster equipment and erode Bonanza's business. Also, the Phoenix - Salt Lake City nonstop was one of the longest scheduled F-27 flights at the time, tying up equipment which would have been better used on shorter hauls and endangering passenger satisfaction.

In 1962, Bonanza concluded jet equipment would be necessary not just to remain competitive but to generate the kinds of profits that would allow their government subsidy for serving smaller towns to be reduced. This logic was sound when the F-27 order was placed, and the Federal loan guarantee proved sensible. With no U.S. airframe manufacturer offering a smaller-capacity, short-to-medium range jetliner, Bonanza was forced to look overseas, and found the U.K.'s promising new entry, the British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) One-Eleven, most acceptable. The Series 200 version of this twin-jet would seat 79 passengers and have a range of up to 830 miles, a fine step up from the F-27. Further confidence came from Rolls-Royce producing the 1-11's Spey jet turbines, and Bonanza was quite happy with the Rolls-Royce Dart turboprops on the F-27. BAC had already secured a breakthrough order in the United States in 1962 from Braniff, and another win from northeastern Regional carrier Mohawk, so spare parts and airframe support were going to be well-covered. An order was placed in November for three airframes, and Bonanza petitioned the Civil Aeronautics Board for a loan guarantee as insurance on the jets' financing.

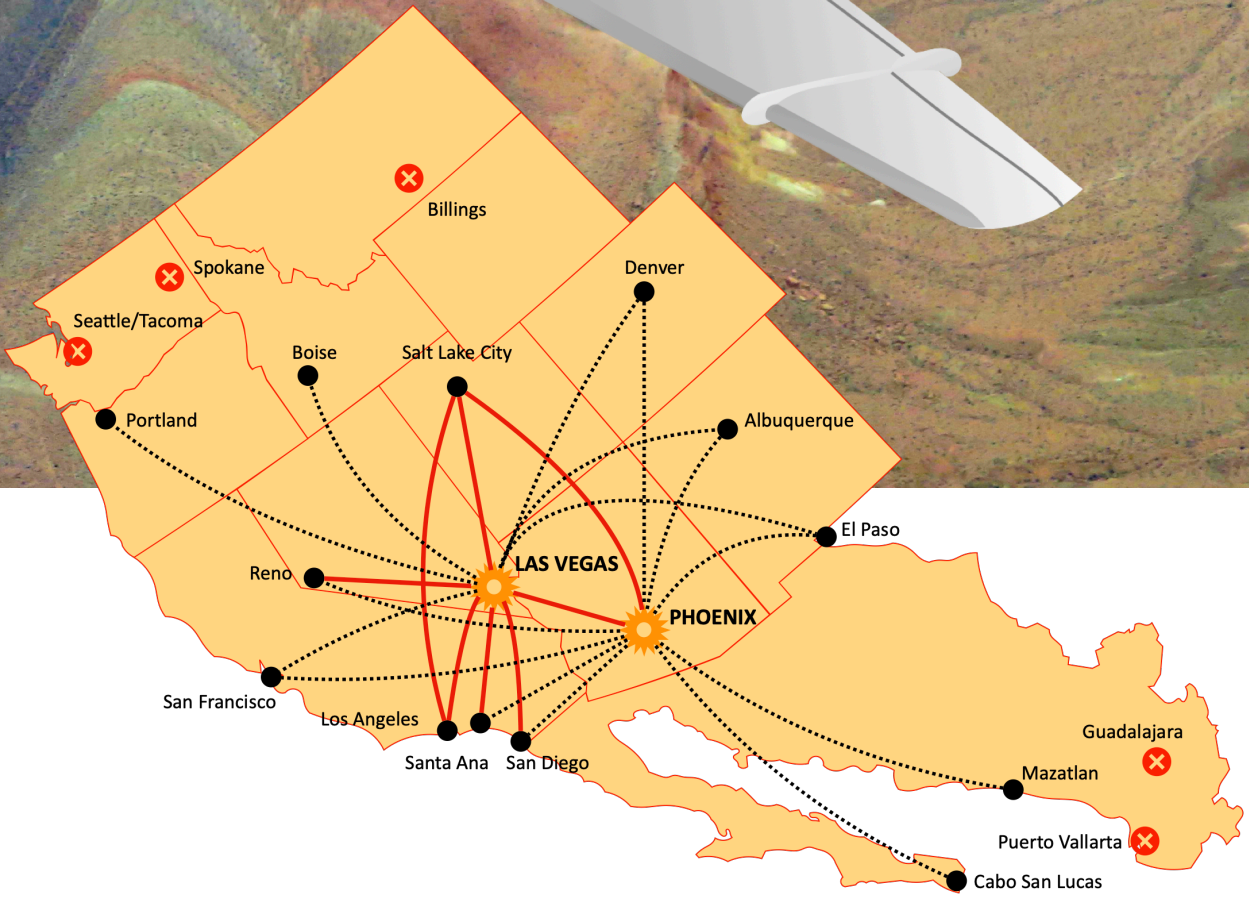
By the end of 1962, however, the C.A.B. was under political pressure to stem the rush toward foreign suppliers - as Western had also signed an order for 1-11s, and Ozark and Frontier were also ready to make commitments. Douglas in particular needed more time to refine their DC-9 design. The C.A.B. rejected Bonanza's application in February 1963, claiming the carrier would need subsidies to operate jets, and that American subsidy dollars should be spent on American-built aircraft. Especially in retrospect, this assertion was clearly nonsense - but it did its job: Western cancelled its order; Bonanza and Ozark waited another two years to acquire DC-9s, and Frontier opted for the new Boeing 737.

BAC still found success in America, with a top-up order from Braniff, a large fleet placed with Allegheny, and a batch delivered to Aloha. Would Bonanza have ordered more than three frames ultimately, and petitioned for different routes if they had jets two years early? Would 1-11s be painted in the yellow Hughes Airwest livery? We will never know - though it is fun to speculate.

Aside from a photo of one desktop model, no other artwork from BAC has been unearthed yet showing the 1-11 in Bonanza livery, so author Scott Norris created this illustration, superimposed over desert scenery he photographed just outside Las Vegas. If you know of any early 1960s-vintage images from the airline or airframe, please contact us so we may add them to our online Aircraft Gallery for this type!



A RANGE PROBLEM? - The Series 200 ordered by Bonanza offered a standard range of 830 miles, which was more than adequate for the company's longest routes in the early 1960s, and would have offered route planners an enticing array of destinations to consider applying for. However, considering the hot conditions at both Las Vegas and Phoenix, the practical range would have been insufficient to reach the key interchange points of Seattle from Las Vegas, or Dallas from Phoenix. Routes to Mexico would have been limited: Puerto Vallarta still would have needed the range of the Douglas DC-9.



Key early 1960's routes

 Examples of BAC 1-11 potential routes

Hotels across the country are facing severe challenges even as tourism begins to recover: First, 'midsize' business meeting bookings are not expected to return as they have been replaced by video conferencing. Second, existing labor shortages are amplified (especially with reduced immigration), and third, property values and taxes are rising as residential real estate demand remains strong. The combination of these margin hits is leading many hotels to reconsider their business model.

Many lodging owners are considering converting properties to senior housing, medical complexes, or general housing. Office space and retail uses, however, are generally oversupplied.

Location, location, location

While the Crowne Plaza (then just a Holiday Inn) was the biggest hotel near the airport when constructed in 1981, much more capacity has come on stream from all the major US chains nearby. Surrounding lots have transitioned from small warehouses and parking lots into high-end office space and now residential and senior high-rise housing.

Bloomington's "South Loop" neighborhood evolved eastward across empty space from the Mall of America in the mid 2000s and now reaches the Crowne Plaza and MSP Terminal 2. Beyond is Minnesota River parkland and biking trails. With excellent freeway and mass transit, and immediate access to air cargo, this area may soon become the "third downtown" for the Twin Cities - an example of the "aerotropolis" development model.

Our hotel's real estate has become exceptionally valuable in the fastest-growing part of the metro area.

A go-forward plan

Ownership of the Crowne Plaza AiRE has received authorization from the Bloomington City Council to convert eight of its floors to a mix of market-rate and subsidized housing. Most of these units will be studio or small one-bedroom units.

Four floors of hotel rooms will remain with updates, with a focus on extended-stay clients and airline crews. They will also adopt a new hotel brand for these 134 units.

Meeting and ballrooms on Level 2 will be converted to flexible working spaces, community gathering areas, gaming and socializing centers, and storage lockers. Indoor bike storage and mailboxes will be added to the ground floor, and an outdoor entertainment / viewing area will be opened on the third floor.

Building owner Kaeding Development Group would like to begin conversions this summer, concluding potentially by year-end 2021. They will also build another residential tower just to the east on what is now a disused parking lot, and a senior-living facility just to the south, opening in 2022-23.



Above: prepared image from the AiRE showing the layout for a typical 1-bed studio micro-apartment. All told the redevelopment proposal includes 27 different layouts ranging from this up to 2-bedroom / 2-bath.

Below: the existing ground-floor coffee shop and adjacent full-service restaurant would continue and likely get consistent business through breakfast, lunch and dinner, as nearby residential buildings come on stream. A storage area behind this wall would be converted into a retail drugstore with a drive-through pickup window in the 2022 phase, adding a necessary retail element to the neighborhood. (AiRE photo)



The METRO Blue Line light rail American Road station is literally outside the AiRE, taking residents directly to the Mall of America hub, the airport, and Downtown Minneapolis. A new high-frequency bus line will also call here mid-decade, and by the end of the 2020s another rail service will stop here enroute to Downtown St. Paul. (Photo by author)





Impact on the NWAHC Museum

Our partnership with the AiRE has been fundamental in keeping the Museum's operating cost low enough that we can provide free admission - and its accessible location compared to our prior home increased monthly visitors by a factor of 10. The NWAHC would not have survived the late 2010s without the timely invitation to exhibit rent-free at the AiRE.

For the general public, once the construction dust has settled, the same access will remain: an easy drive from most of the Twin Cities metro, and steps away from a Blue Line station - minutes from the airport and Mall of America. So our visit frequency should be getting back to 2019 levels by next year.

While the loss of seven floors' worth of hotel guests will mean some degree of foot traffic is lost, most of those guests would not have been in the hotel during our usual operating hours. We are glad, however, to see management wants to keep the crew-rest business as those have been wonderful visitors!

But the prospect of airport and airline staff living on-site, with daily exposure to our lobby exhibits and looking through our windows during visits to the gym, will certainly mean more curious and knowledgeable visitors when our doors are open - and we hope this will lead to more interest in volunteering and even joining our board.

Likewise, if more retirees are living on-site or next door, this should also boost visits, memberships, and volunteer counts.

Having more volunteers could then lead to further opportunities to interact with our new neighbors, possibly in conjunction with the Aire - such as events and meet-ups in the new breakout areas or on the Sky Deck, and expanded hours for the Museum itself.

While these thoughts are speculative, our Museum's mindset of growing our member and volunteer base in order to "go big" positions us to see more opportunities than threats in this property evolution.

The Sky Deck on Level 3 may afford a great view of the ramp in front of Building C, as demonstrated in this Google Maps view.

The ease of access from the AiRE to all the working areas of MSP Airport - without needing to drive a car - will be an important selling feature. This will be a good thing as residents will have only ramp parking, not enclosed garages.



Logos don't speak for themselves (Part 4)

By Bruce Kitt

The 1945 logo symbolized a period of maturation and growth for Northwest Airlines. A transcontinental route expansion...service to Asia... new airplanes... new logos – Northwest was out of ground effect and flying into an era of “new”. The 1947 logo never reached the acceptance level of its 1945 predecessor, missing its debut opportunity when the Martin 202s were introduced in the fall of 1947.

In addition to being a technological leap for Northwest, the Martin 202 was also a logo-transitional airplane. Whereas the first seven 202s were delivered in the then normal bare metal and 1945 logo livery, the eighth 202 unveiled an refreshing new eye-catching look for Northwest - an airliner that wore paint (and introduced Northwest's iconic Red Tail) plus another new logo (Illus.10). The inauguration ceremony for Northwest's service into Washington, D.C. served as the debut of this Raymond Loewy livery and logo. Buried on the last page of the March 26, 1948 issue of Northwest Passage News (NWPN), the article, “2-0-2s Are Right In Style” mentioned that previously delivered 202s were being updated with the new livery and logo. The introduction of a new livery is not an overnight's occurrence. In the case of airliners, seats are a perishable commodity and a plane not flying represents lost income. Consequently the new livery was a slow, system-wide rollout for Northwest's fleet of DC-4s and 202s. No Northwest DC-3 flew in this new livery during the transition. (As a historical note, the Northwest DC-3s that did sport the 1948 livery were the ones hurriedly acquired in 1951/52 to replace the 202s which were withdrawn from service following their spate of crashes).

The transition to the new 1948 logo & livery wasn't a snap of the fingers event...there were a few “What about this..” ideas. Illustration 11 shows both the early livery for 202s #1-7 and the new 1948 livery for ship #8 onward. Illustration 12 shows a trial paint scheme. What isn't immediately apparent is that the logo is also an interim idea. In comparison to the logo that was ultimately adopted, the arrow and outer ring are gold, and the center circle is red. Foreshadowing a marketing gimmick that would be adopted on Northwest's 2003 fleet livery, note that the starboard compass arrow points northeast, to “balance” the northwest-pointing compass on the port (left) side.



ILLUSTRATION 10:

LEFT: the 1945 logo

BELOW: the 1947 logo

RIGHT: the 1948 logo



ILLUSTRATION 11: MSP ramp shot from the late 1940s from the James Borden Photography Collection at the NWAHC Archives.



ILLUSTRATION 12: NC93046 at MSP; photo contributed by Mrs. Harold Kittelson, via the James Borden Photo Collection. Logo detail below:



Northwest's 1948 livery, logo, and piston-powered planes would fly together for the next 13 years until the jet age overtook all three. While the 1948 logo enjoyed a visible 13-year run on airplanes, it was hit and miss where print was concerned. It took until the 1951 Annual Report, the March 1953 issue of the Northwest Airlines News, and the two agreement books (Illus.13), before the 1947 logo was retired. The most expedient way to promote a logo was usually via timetables, due to their inherent short effective dates. During

the 13-year span of the 1948 logo however, the logo only appeared on two timetables, both in October 1954.

The 1948 logo did have one striking use – the wings on stewardess uniforms (Illus.14). Much like the 202 logo variation mentioned above, the stew wings existed in three variations. Between 1948 and 1963, however, another design was employed, one that's still a topic of discussion whether it even was a "real" logo, as you will see in the next installment.

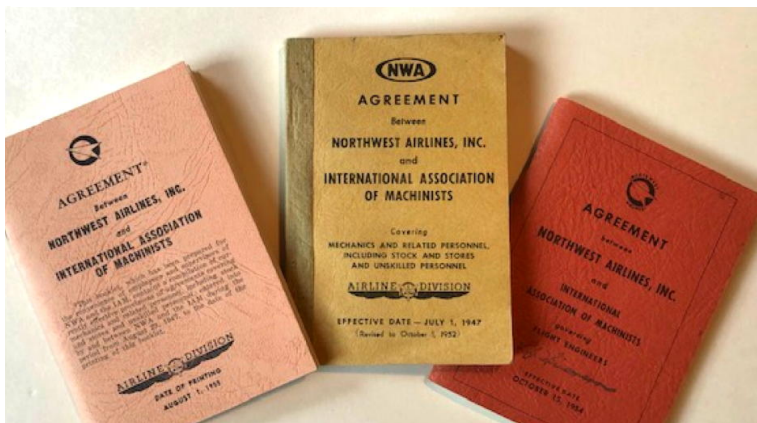
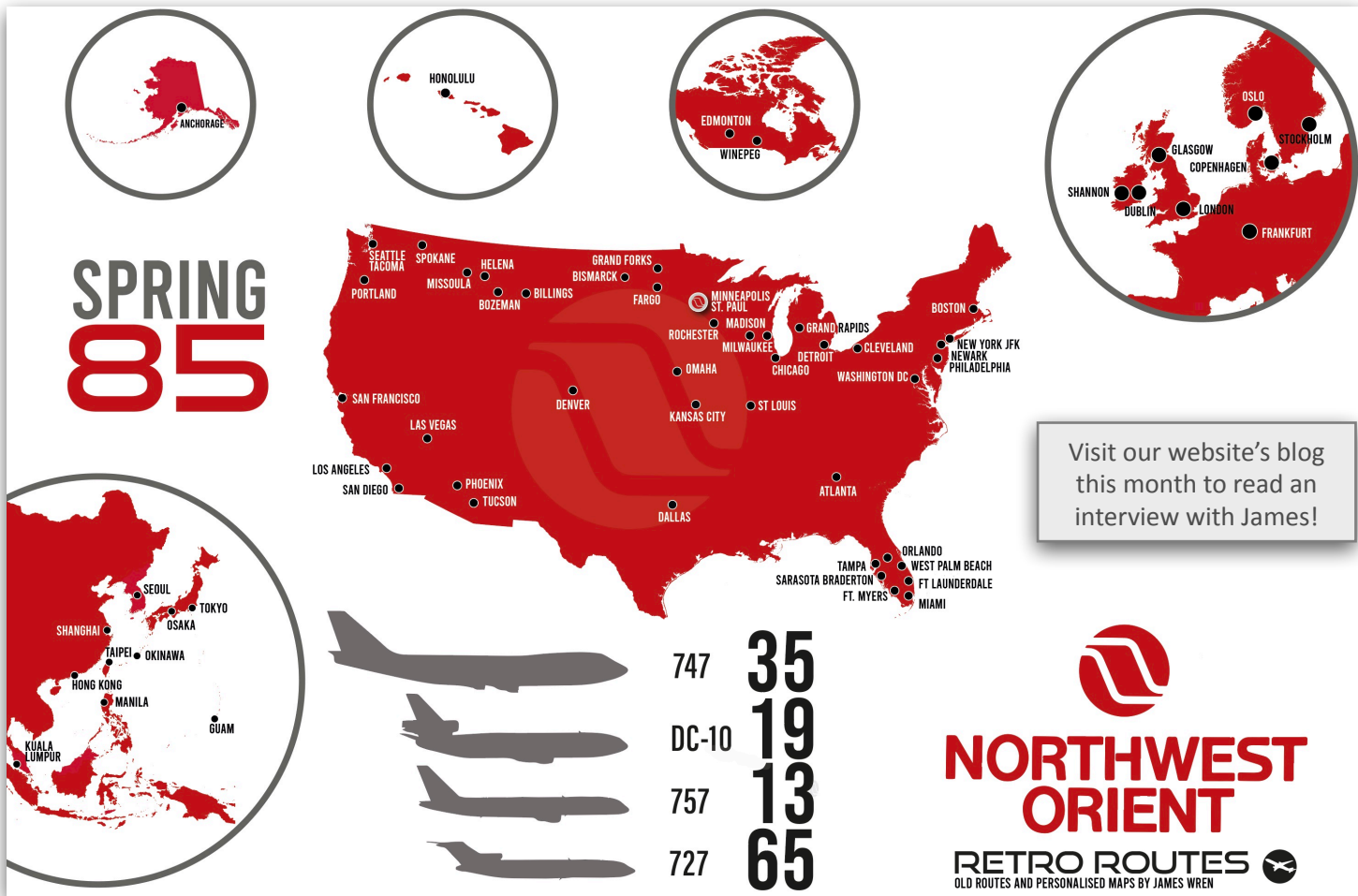


ILLUSTRATION 13: Labor agreement books with the Int'l Association of Machinists. From Bruce Kitt's collection.



ILLUSTRATION 14: Stewardess wings, via Karen Jensen.

New Infographic Artist Spotlight: James Wren is a professional marketer in Austria but who grew up across the globe and developed a passion for aviation. As a side-project he's starting "Retro Routes," a bespoke map service at @thevoicebloke on Twitter.





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Be prepared to haul great treasures home.

Back on the calendar!



**The 2021 Twin Cities Aviation Collectible Sale & Get-Together.
Saturday, October 9, 9 am - 4 pm.**

At the Best Western Plus Hotel in Bloomington, MN, across from the Mall of America.

Admission only \$5 (kids under 12 free); proceeds support the Northwest Airlines History Center. Free parking. Free shuttle from MSP Airport. Or use METRO Blue or Red lines to the MOA. Table space: (612) 386-5080 or bill@airlineposters.com Hotel reservations: (952) 854-8200