

# Kiwi Kaleidoscope

The National Newsletter for Members of The Kiwi Club of American Airlines

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**President**

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## Savannah Sojourn

**Sweet, Sweet Savannah!** It's been decided, the hotel chosen, the deposit made...we are **on** for 2024 our National Kiwi Convention! The dates are **April 23-25, 2024**, so mark your calendars now. It will be an event to be remembered. A city deep in the South, with all its beauty and Southern charm. Expect warmth from the weather as well as the citizens. Kiwi Central is the DeSoto, a boutique hotel located in the historic district with many of shops and restaurants nearby. Plans are still being formulated by Convention Chairperson **Caroline Ballachey Womack** leading a team of enthusiastic Kiwis. Within upcoming issues of the *Kiwi Kaleidoscope*, you will get details of the events and a few "surprises."

## A Kiwi You Should Know...

### Susan Cook Henry



The love of cats runs deep in this family—especially Persians. Susan's first cat show was in 1960, her mother Donna decided this would be a hobby she would pursue, and Susan followed along! Their first winner was a Cream Persian (male) in 1965 and this breed

ultimately became their favorite. He came from Jadon Persians, breeders of top-quality Persian cats. Jadon Persians have taken many top national awards including Cat of the Year, Premiership Cat of the Year, Kitten of the Year. Kitten of the year went on to take Best-in-Show honors beating out 1,000 entries from all over the world. Obviously, this is a cherished cattery. While Susan joined the airline industry (World Airways in 1978, USAIR in 1987 and finally AA in 2015) her mother continued their breeding program and Susan would participate in shows when she could. Her travel benefits allowed her to travel domestically as well as

international cat shows with her mother, a perk for which she was very grateful. Her mother passed away in 2012 but Susan has carried the torch by showing a few Persians from the Jadon line.

In September of 2021 she traveled to Helsinki to pick up a Cream kitten "Snickelfritz" who is of Jadon heritage. Currently she is showing "Jamie" a 14-month-old Cream boy who is highly ranked in the national standings for the 2022-2023 show season which concludes at the end of April. Now retired Susan is a member of the Washington D.C. chapter and keeps up with Crazy AA Flight Attendant Cat Owners Group on Facebook. She also volunteers for the Wings Foundation.



## Get it Early!



### Jan Hanson

In January of 2023 I celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my first breast cancer. I am a three-time survivor. I call myself the poster girl of early detection. That's the key-get it early. After my 3<sup>rd</sup> cancer diagnosis, I opted for a bilateral mastectomy, no

reconstruction. Today we have many options-remember FALSIES?

My strongest recommendation: **Get your mammogram every year.** Annual mammograms have helped reduce the mortality rate of breast cancer in the U.S. by nearly 40% since 1990. If you have been putting off scheduling your mammogram-do it now! Early detection can mean no chemo. Remember to be aware of your body-do self-examinations. If your doctor tells you they need to do a biopsy, don't have a meltdown, the odds are with you that it is benign. The fact is that 80% of breast biopsies are benign. Doctors always err on the side of caution.

There are many advancements in treatment. For example, radiation now takes five days not 6 weeks. My radiation was five days a week for 6 weeks. It's a part time job. The joke is it takes longer to undress and dress than it is to get zapped. As early diagnosis and treatments for breast cancer improve, women are not only surviving the disease they are surviving longer. There are many new screening tools in the pipeline, from blood tests to smart bras that transform the outlook for breast cancer patients. Remember do your **SELF EXAM AND MAMOGRAM!**

*EDITORS NOTE: Jan has been a dear friend of mine since the early 70's. Heed her words. I do!*



## Your Kiwi Board Wants You!

Have you ever thought about running for the National Board? Now is the time for 2024-2026 term. The job descriptions in a nutshell:

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**-Responsible for communication with MAL's, stepping in for president if necessary.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**-Kiwi database, keeping it current.

**Secretary**-Responsible for welcoming new members, board meeting minutes, convention responsibilities.

**Treasurer**-Responsible for banking of Kiwi dues, managing the term budget. Interested? Contact: Stephanie Butler

## It's Almost Summer Travel Tips



### Shirlee Keyes Albrecht

Your smart phone is your friend.

Download your airline's app, you will find your boarding pass, gate changes

and seat upgrades. Do this at home before you leave for the airport. When your boarding pass comes in take a screen shot so you can keep it live on your phone while you are in line to board the aircraft. Make sure you have a safe easy place to access your phone. You don't want to leave it behind on a counter.

Take photos of your important travel documents and put them in the notes section of your phone so you can retrieve them if necessary; email them to yourself as well. Documents to photograph are your passport picture page and Covid vaccination card. Take a photo of your checked bag in case your bag does not make your flight. A picture can help you and a baggage agent find your bag.

If flying out of DFW AA has a new app that will aid you getting through TSA security using only your phone so you can keep your boarding pass (standby document) and ID in a safe place.

Whenever possible fly early in the morning. First flights have a better chance of departing on time.

Trip insurance is a good idea.

Things to bring on the aircraft: Your phone. You will need it for onboard entertainment, but more importantly you will be able to see connecting gate information and timing. Bring your own headset/Airpods. Headsets are better-they don't fall on the floor, and you won't lose your expensive Airpods. Carry a flashlight-something small, or your phone may have a flashlight. Wear or take a sweater since the plane can be cold and blankets are a thing of past. Need hand lotion? Fill a contact lens case with hand lotion and face moisturizer to use in flight.



Noreen Reid Skinner-Club EWR  
 Donna Klave Hodgson-DFW Mid-Cities  
 Vicki Wilson-Sorenson-DFW-Mid-Cities  
 Barbara Gerdau Drotar-Golden Gate  
 Patricia Roux Mitchell-Golden Gate  
 Jesse Pirie Pressman-Golden Gate  
 Rachelle Smith Carter-MAL  
 Diane Jenney Lester-MAL  
 Ann Kiltau Riggs-MAL  
 Pamela Brundage-O'Hare  
 Gloria Gula Neilsen-O'Hare  
 Lisa Sidner Suydam-Southwest Florida  
 Debra Carroll-Washington D.C.

### **Baby Boy Hari & Haka**

At the time of this writing our baby boy Hari Kiwi bird is no longer a "baby." He has traveled to Germany where he has taken up residence at a German zoo, with the hopes of him starting a family. His replacement is "Haka" at the Columbus Zoo. Haka is translated to "dance" (Maori) often meaning "war dance." The Maori "tribe" would face their enemies and by fierce gestures of the face and body it was meant to intimidate their foes. It is a captivating chant that is performed at various functions such as funerals, weddings, soccer games etc. Haka is integral to New Zealand culture. It is performed and received with utmost respect. The Zookeepers that are assigned to Haka have found ways to enrich his life by redesigning his nest box. With the changes in his nest, he has become more active which was the goal. Kiwis are nocturnal and it's hard to determine what he is up to, but the Keepers note that he is busy, looking for worms. Go get 'em Haka!

*Editor's Note: If you would like to contribute to the support of Haka the website is: [give.columbuszoo.org](http://give.columbuszoo.org) To see Haka performed Google: Haka and select a wedding and a soccer game.*

### **Kiwi Tales...**

**Linda Hessler Radke**



Most airline folks are familiar with the "cult" movie Airport '75 starring Charlton Heston, Karen Black, and a full array of actors and actresses. American Airlines was chosen with a full complement of pilots to fly the plane and mechanics (if needed). Since

there was to be a an" evacuation" on the doomed flight there was a need for certified flight attendants. At the time I was working in the LAX training department as an instructor along with three temporary instructors. We became part of the cast though we were in "silhouette." The cockpit crew, mechanics and we four flight attendants (Judy Kiripolsky, Charlie Hanna, Kathy West, and I) flew the 747 to Oakland where the airplane was repainted and rebranded as Columbia Airlines. Then off to Utah to film the inflight scenes.

The most harrowing was flying through the red rock mountains which was executed by our superior AA pilots.



**Charlton Heston & Linda**

The big day of filming the evacuation we ran our drills like robots.



We opened our doors and in hindsight we were surprised at the unbelievable volume of the

inflating slides. We got all the celebrity passengers off in record time. It was fun to watch the evacuation from the ground to see them jumping

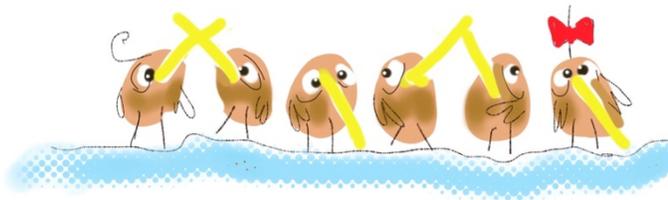
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into the slides at all angles and postures. On our last night in Utah there was a “wrap party” for all that worked on the movie. We talked to the actors, had food and drink, and brought home lots of fabulous memories. It was a great experience!



### **Not On My Flight!**

On a transatlantic flight a plane passes through a severe storm and the wing is hit by lightning. One woman loses it and stands up in front of the plane and starts screaming “I’M TOO YOUNG TO DIE!” Then she yells “WELL IF I’M GOING TO DIE, I WANT MY LAST MINUTES ON EARTH TO BE MEMORABLE! IS THERE ANYONE HERE WHO CAN MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A WOMAN?” For a moment there is absolute silence, and all the passengers are riveted on the woman standing in front of the plane. Then a man stands up. He is tall, dark, and handsome. He starts toward the woman unbuttoning his shirt. The woman is breathing heavy with the anticipation as the stranger approaches. He removes his shirt. Muscles ripple across his chest as he reaches her. He extends his arm, holds out his shirt to the trembling woman and whispers “Iron this...”



### **Did you know?**

-We have a new media editor! **Kathy Joy Minner** has taken on the responsibility to advertise The Kiwi Club on all forms of social media. She has begun with Facebook: The Kiwi Club

-The Kiwi Club has donated over \$691,669 to WINGS.

-**Sad News:** The following chapters have disbanded: Central Florida, Sierra Nevada. Phoenix, Raleigh Durham, Pittsburgh, and Miami.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President **Vicki Valenciano Kubal** has encouraged chapter members to become a MAL (Member-at-Large).

### **Your National Board**

**President:** Stephanie McCauley Butler

[Kiwisteph35@gmail.com](mailto:Kiwisteph35@gmail.com)

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:** Vicki Valenciano Kubal

[Kiwinationalvicepresident@gmail.com](mailto:Kiwinationalvicepresident@gmail.com)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** Ginger McDonough Paul

[gingermcd3@gmail.com](mailto:gingermcd3@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** “Kat” Applegate Walton

[kiwikatsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:kiwikatsecretary@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Melissa Williams McGrath

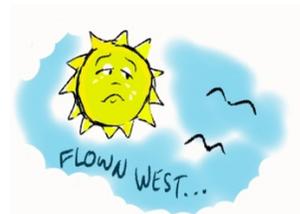
[thekiwiclubmelissa@gmail.com](mailto:thekiwiclubmelissa@gmail.com)

**Past President/Parliamentarian:** Sam Gooch

[Kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com](mailto:Kiwisam.gooch@gmail.com)

**Advisor:** Kathy Poppenberg Kridel

[Kiwipres34@gmail.com](mailto:Kiwipres34@gmail.com)



Cathy Koke Gebhart-Dallas Chapter

Georgina Roach Lee-MAL

Mickie Abood Lee-DFW/Mid-Cities Chapter

Gerrie Lynn-Golden Gate Chapter

Joan Brewer Moran-Chicago Chapter

Agnes Brunton Schmiecher-O’Hare Chapter

Nancy Payne Strawn- South Bay Chapter

*Rest in Peace*

## A Bit of History of American Airlines

### 1940s-1950s

#### Part 2

During the 1940's the war in Europe and Pacific, travel for fun, was not in vogue. But in the 50's there was a boom to AA and other carriers. In 1951 AA provided a free airplane for a Hollywood movie "Three Guys Named Mike" starring Jane Wyman. Jane played an American Airlines stewardess who had to decide which man she wanted (three guys named Mike) to bring her everlasting happiness. A fifty's romance with lots of schmaltz. For her efforts Wyman was made an Honorary Kiwi. During the early 50's the DC-7 was used for transcon flights, but in 1959



The Boeing-707 was introduced and replaced the DC-7. During this time American made a large investment in jet age aircraft. The 707 proved to be a favorite among passengers and airlines. The plane was large and spacious with lots of leg room and its "club seating" in first class. The 707 with its jet engines reduced flying time between destinations and the beginnings of the "Jet Age."

#### Boeing 707



*Lockheed Electra*

#### *Winter Uniform 1946-1953*

In 1957 American opened the stewardess college in Ft. Worth. It was the first stewardess training campus in the world. In 1959 the Lockheed Electra was introduced for short haul flights. A propeller driven airplane offered spacious seating as well. Loads of leg room and only four seats across in "coach" which American called "first class." A small section of the plane (behind the cockpit) was seats. I personally flew the Electra and all I saw up front was bags and bags of U.S. mail. At the rear of the airplane there was a half-circle of seats for cocktails, playing cards, and conversation. These seats were never sold or sat in them during takeoffs and landings.

*Editor's Note: The picture of the stairs at the new AA training center. Our precious emblem was saved!*

**Next issue: 1960-70's**

## Kiwis Travel...all over the world!

Jerry Ann Wheatley Piontowski has always wanted to see Queen Elizabeth who was Princess Elizabeth when she started to write as a child to a pen-pal in England. Her English pen-pal sent her pictures of the Princess and her family during their years of writing and Jerry Ann's family sent food to her her family each month during WW2. Over the years they lost touch and she has sought her out many times with no luck.



Queen Elizabeth's age of 96 and her upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of being Queen was a chance for Jerry Ann to fly to London as this was a historic event, exceeding all expectations! The Queen's presence was felt everywhere, and people were always expressing their love for her. Jerry Ann attended every event she could. The Jubilee Thanksgiving service to thank the Queen for her reign was held at St. Paul's Cathedral. She arrived early enough to get close enough to get a good view of the royal family and the Prime Minister. St. Paul's is the same church where Prince Charles and Diana Spencer were married in 1981.

Jerry Ann was interviewed by three TV stations-the BBC and SKY that roamed the area. Each time she mentioned her former pen-pal Ann Fieldhouse of Staffordshire with the hopes that someone would know her. There were parties all over the commonwealth and even a parade of Corgi's which is the breed of dog the Queen favored (she had 30 during her reign). After London Jerry Ann took a 12-hour bus trip to Windsor Castle, Stonehenge, and Bath.

Jerry Ann made this trip alone at 86. But she never felt alone! There was always someone to help, point out signs or just talk to her. Her hotel staff was amazing. When she took a taxi to Heathrow for her trip home the driver asked her to text him to let him know she made it home safely. How I love the English!

## Who is Bessie Coleman?



At O'Hare International Airport there is a street by the name of Bessie Coleman. During my trips to ORD I wondered, who is this? She was the first Black woman to receive a pilot's license from Federation Aeronautique Internationale. With license in hand, she returned to the U.S. in 1921 and found there were few positions for pilots. So, she returned to Europe to learn stunt flying. After months of flying borrowed airplanes, she had enough money purchase her own Curtiss plane known as "Jenny." In 1923 she was enroute to an air show when the plane's motor stalled at 300 feet and fell to a crash landing. With fractured ribs and a broken leg, she continued with her flying engagement. Throughout her short career she found sponsors, gave lectures, and yearned for the day she could open her own flight school and purchase her next Jenny. Coleman understood the importance of tailored appearances.

Known as "Queen Bess" or "Brave Bess" she was an impressive figure in her long coat, leather boots and Sam Browne officer belt. During the Spring of 1926 Coleman prepared for a show in Jacksonville, FL. Pilot William Wills delivered her plane from Texas. Wills arrived late; mechanical problems made for unplanned stops. She and Willis flew a test flight the morning of April 30, 1926. Willis controlled the plane from the forward cockpit, Coleman sat in the back, unbuckled, to scout for good parachute jumping sites. Suddenly the plane accelerated and nose-dived, then it flipped upside down at about 500 feet. Being unharnessed Coleman fell from the cockpit and instantly killed upon hitting the ground. She was 34 years old. The plane crashed and Willis was also killed. Later it was found that a loose wrench jammed the gears which caused the plane's erratic behavior. It was noted by other pilots at the scene that the Jenny had a poorly maintained engine.

African American pilot William J. Powell established a flight school in her name in Los Angeles. In 1977 a group of female pilots in the Midwest formed the Bessie Coleman Aviators Club. She was honored with a U.S. postage stamp in 1995 and enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of fame in 2006. And of course, O'Hare named a road after her: Bessie Coleman Drive. She made her mark in the world, not ever to be forgotten.

*End of Newsletter*