

Presidents Letter from across the Pond on the Isle of Wight in the south of England.



I am somewhat relieved now that Christmas is over as I am not really very fond of it! Bah Humbug! Christmas Eve was always rather a miserable time for my mother as it brought back memories of relatives and friends who were no longer with us. However, Christmas Day was altogether different and full of joy especially if my mother in her role as the local district midwife had helped to bring a new life into the world, especially on Christmas night! The babies were born at home and she would take me with her the next day to check mother and baby. It was very wonderful to see a new born baby on Christmas Day, and when I was very little, I imagined it was the baby Jesus lying THERE in his crib! My fondest memory was of Christmas morning. My mother always managed to stuff one of her stockings and hang it on the end of my bed filled with tangerines, nuts, a Mars Bar, a book and other bits and pieces. (Never a Lear Jet though, that may come later! Santa Baby!) There was always some knitted thing, either a bobble hat, mittens or a sweater she had made secretly whilst waiting for the babies to be born. For those of you who follow Call the Midwife on the Public Broadcasting Service you may have learned that Midwives are very good at drinking tea and knitting. They can also sleep sitting up! Being a midwife myself, I can do neither except sleep sitting up which I did in my car in the parking lot of Burgard Vocational School in Buffalo! I was supposed to be attending Ron Ciura's Airframe and Power Plant Mechanics class starting at 6:30pm. I was late and decided to have a little nap and go to class at the breaktime usually 8:00pm. I woke up at midnight! Nevertheless I did survive Christmas 2023 in spite of the horrendous winds reaching 94 miles per hour in some parts of the island and rain causing numerous floods on the island and around the country and I hope you all had a safe and peaceful Holiday also with happy memories.

As we make the count down to the New Year and make our New Year resolutions (and break them), I should like to thank you all for supporting the Aero Club this past year and I trust you will resolve to continue your support by attending the monthly dinner meetings in 2024. The first dinner

meeting will be January 18th at Rizotto's Eatery and Sweetery when Allen Kidder presents Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory's Flight Test Aircraft. Between 1946 and 1971, the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory (CAL, the predecessor to Calspan) Flight Research Department, flew an amazing variety of military and civilian aircraft. They included WWII single and multi-engine fighters and bombers; two Navy hybrid carrier fighters with a piston engine in front and jet in the back; first generation jets; and Korean war fighters and bombers; two of which were captured in WWII. Most of the aircraft were flown out of Buffalo Airport. Allen Kidder spent 30 years at Cornell Aero Lab/Calspan as Principal Economist and Assistant to the General manager, and 15 years at Genesee Community College as Director of Grant Services and Associate Dean. He learned to fly in 1964 in the CAL Flying Club and has been a flight instructor for 37 years. In 2015 Allen was recognized by the FAA at an Aero Club meeting, (of course), as a Wright Brothers Master Pilot for fifty consecutive years of safe flying operations. At our February 15th Dinner meeting we will have 2 very accomplished female pilots who fly for Mercy Flight, Becca Hunter and Jeanne Suski.

I have the onerous task of reminding you not to break the important New Year resolution of paying your annual dues by February 1st 2024. Payment of your dues are necessary to continue bringing you interesting and knowledgeable speakers to entertain you. We would also appreciate donations to the Scholarship fund. Applications for the scholarships will be sent out at the end of January, so please encourage all the young people you know that are interested in aviation, flight and aerospace to apply. You now can view upcoming events, pay your dues, order and pay for dinner and donate to the scholarship fund on line. See the website www.aeroclubofbuffalo.org for more details.

Have a safe healthy and prosperous New Year, see you soon Willy.

Mary E Mattocks 90th President of the Aero Club of Buffalo