

2023 GREY EAGLES PRESIDENT'S 2023 YEAR-END RECAP V.2

Dear Grey Eagles:

My term sunsets December 31st. So, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you who entrusted me with the privilege and honor of serving as your 2023 Grey Eagles President.

It's been a humbling experience to serve alongside such an extraordinary Executive Board (EXB) and Grey Eagles Board. You each bring a servant's attitude to our great organization which makes it better. I'd also like to acknowledge the calls and emails I received from members at-large, who offered great ideas for future Grey Eagles events. As is often the case, the best ideas come from within.

In 2023 the Grey Eagles celebrated our 61st anniversary since forming in 1962 as a 501.c.7 fraternal organization. It was CR Smith himself who was our first Honorary Member. The key that I believe motivates most AA pilots to join the Grey Eagles is our common desire to foster and continue the relationships we built during our careers in the cockpit. As a result, the Grey Eagles have grown to become the premier retired and over-50 airline pilot organization in the world. We have the largest membership, are the best run and most well-funded. The requirement to become a Grey Eagle is simple: Be an AA pilot over-50. An AA "Pedigree" doesn't matter. No whether we started out as "native-Americans," or were "merger-Americans," in the end we're all AA and Grey Eagles. And our goal as Grey Eagles is to foster and enjoy the relationships we've built and make new ones. While at the same time having the most fun doing it!

I'm glad to report to you that the state of our Grey Eagles is strong. Our balance sheet is sound, and our membership has grown. Below you'll see a list of the 10 initiatives we undertook in 2023, with a brief note on what they intended to accomplish. Now as we close the 2023 books and look ahead to a great new 2024, President-elect Steve Catalano has already announced exciting plans for our Grapevine Reunion in October that our membership won't want to miss out on. I encourage everyone to go to the GE [website](http://www.thegreyeagles.org) at www.thegreyeagles.org to learn all about what's coming up. Don't miss out on our monthly luncheons if one is near you. Read Gary Yudell's Newsletter [News of the Day](#), Tom Noe's ORD Newsletter, and Allen Brock's [DFW](#) Newsletter. Volunteer to greet a retiring pilot at the gate for their "[FiniFlight](#)" celebration. When you're the GIB, stop by the cockpit and let them know you're a Grey Eagle. And encourage your non-Grey Eagle friends to fill-out a GE membership [application](#).

I couldn't be prouder and more appreciative to be a GE. Thank you for the honor to serve as your 2023 GE President.

I'd also like to extend the following special "Thank-You's" to...

To the following GE's for extending their experienced counsel (alphabetically): 2022 President Bill Bohlke, 2018 President Pete Erchausier, 2019 President JC Farrell, 2017 President Bob Hoch, 2016 President Melanie Jarvi, 2015 President Fred Landbeck, 2020 President Dave Pakiz, 2014 President & GE Secretary Bill Rose, 2021 President & IT Comm Chmn & Historian Joe Sellers, and 2010 President & "News of the Day" editor Gary Yudell. Also, for the wise advisement I've received from our EXB's and Boardmembers: 2VP Allen Brock, Treasurer Steve Browning, Honorary GE Jock Bethune, Webmaster Rock Bottomley, 1VP Steve Catalano, Aux Mbr Coord Sheryl Guth, 2VP-Elect Steve Hart, Mbrshp Chairs Jeff & Janet Lenhart, Past Aux Mbr Coord Linda Matthews, and Comm Chmn Sam Mayer. And our dedicated Area Directors (AD's) and Deputy Area Directors (DAD's), for all you do each day. And last but not least, our Western Area Director (WAD) Ed Cook, for his outstanding performance at MC'ing nearly every one of our ten 2023 nationwide APA/GE Retirement Banquets.

To the following at APA: For having partnered with the GE's on four new 2023 initiatives at little or no cost to GE's: (1) The APA-GE MOU reinstating our covid cancelled Retirement Banquets. (2) APA-VP's Itr offering pro-bono GE access to APA Legal Counsel. (3) GE's verbal pledge to encourage GE volunteers to support FiniFlight which hosts last-flight gate celebrations. (4) APA's Graphics & Printing Itr expanding APA Graphic Arts & Printing Services to include GE recruiting publications and business cards. Our sincere appreciation is also extended to APA's Pres Ed Sischer, VP Chris Torres, FiniFlight's Tim Jackson, Domicile Coord Toni Kennard, and Graphics & Print Production Specialist Karen Nicholson.

To AA Flight: For reinstating AA's historical financial and convention event support to the Grey Eagles. We thank VP-Flight Russ Moore and 777/787 Fleet Capt Wayne Snyder.

To Boeing: For receiving us with unprecedented VIP-level Boeing-Everett assembly plant access at the GE 2023 pre cruise Boeing tour. It all started off with my call to AA LAX Chief Pilot Sam Mayer, which escalated to AA VP-Flight Chip Long, AA 777-787 Fleet Manager Wayne Snyder, AA VP-Flight Russ Moore, Boeing VP of Cust Support Allan Smolinski, Boeing Mgr of America's Sales Brad Till, Boeing Marketing Dir Brandon Bennett, and Boeing Future-of-Flight Events Director Shawna Davis. And last but

certainly not least...all the coordination made by our esteemed GE Convention Coordinator Vicki McGowen.

To Vicki McGowen, GE Convention Planner: For all she did to make successful our 2023 SEA Alaska cruise convention, we especially thank Vicki!

To My Lovely Wife "First Lady" Kristina: For making it possible for me to seemingly be in multiple places at once. I thank Kristina for our 50+ years since being high school sweethearts. She attended our GE planning meetings with Vicki, the Boeing site inspection, and helped GE's sign-up for events and cabin assignments. Then she was unceremoniously kicked off the cruise ship just before our summer 2022 site inspection tour due to having tested positive for covid. Then later underwent unrelated Mayo heart valve surgery, which has now thankfully fully resolved. Then I followed her to Mayo myself for parathyroid surgery. What a couple of health messes we turned out to be! But that's all behind us now. And we're both looking back on having enjoyed a busy year and having a lot of fun doing it!

2023 YEAR-END GE FINANCIAL UPDATE: I'm very glad to report that during 2023, your Grey Eagles balance sheet is sound. We enjoyed a net 7% year-over-year cash increase from 2022. We added \$25,142 to the bottom line. But if we subtract-out the \$30K+ 2022 convention attrition debt that was subsequently reduced by 67% to \$10,093.25 through skillful negotiation by Vicki and Steve Browning, our 2023 financial performance would have improved from 7% to 14%. Projecting forward into 2024, our balance sheet should continue to gain further accruals as new members come onboard from retirement banquets and FiniFlight. As to our 2023 convention performance, we experienced a net positive cash flow of \$11,551.69. Which was enough to cover 100% of our 2022 convention loss without dipping into our treasury. After paying off the 2022 convention's "attrition debt" of \$10,093.75, there was enough left over to return an additional \$1,457.95 to our 2023 treasury. All in all, 2023 has been a good year of rebuilding, and setting the stage for a successful 2024.

2023 YEAR-END MEMBERSHIP UPDATE: GE'S added 172 new members, net of deaths and attrition. 70 of whom are ActDu...the kind we need most, to add "young blood" to our ranks. Our membership count ended in 2022 at about 2,941. By adding 172, our net-net membership grew to approximately 3,113 in 2023. (As of 12/18/23).

2023's Goals and Results:

10 NEW INITIATIVES WERE IMPLEMENTED:

1. **GE-APA MOU:** Reinstated covid-cancelled Retirement Banquets. But this time with APA fronting expenses and employing their organizational resources. The result is a vast simplification of our GE Area Director (AD) duties. Allowing them to focus on banquet invitations, luncheons and recruiting.
2. **Fidelity** is the custodian of all AA employee retirement benefit 401K accounts. With GE-APA concurrence, we requested Fidelity to live-man a lobby information table during the 90-minute banquet check-in period. Retirees were seen viewing their accounts and asking technical questions of the licensed representatives. But Fidelity concluded after a year of retirement banquets that overall interest was insufficient to sustain the expense of live reps. In November 2023 Fidelity asked to sunset their manning of the nationwide Fidelity table effective December 31st.
3. **APA Legal Counsel:** We requested APA and were granted pro-bono access to APA's legal counsel should the need arise. This was acknowledged in a ltr from APA VP Chris Torres. If there's ever a legal issue, this is a benefit of our close GE-APA relationship that could be very valuable.
4. **2022 CLT Marriott Attrition Mitigation Agreement:** Our \$30,189.74 2022 convention attrition fee was skillfully reduced to \$10,093.75 by Vicki McGowen and Steve Browning. This remaining balance could not be reduced further and has been paid off and closed.
5. **FiniFlight:** I verbally pledged our GE support to encourage our members to volunteer for last-flight airport gate retirement parties with provided cake and festivities. At APA HQ I attended FiniFlight's planning seminar with organizer GE Tim Jackson and Family Awareness volunteers. Finiflight is also great GE membership recruitment tool. To learn more about becoming a Finiflight volunteer, call GE Tim Jackson at 847-899-888, or go to [FiniFlight](#) for more info and to sign-up. You'll have a blast.
6. **AA Financial Assistance** was a tradition AA had suspended for a number of years that we requested be reopened. AA VP-Flight Russ Moore reinstated the Flight Department's 2023 GE convention funding to the tune of \$5K+, effectively buying us our rooftop luncheon atop Boeing's Future of Flight Museum following the tour. And Russ subsequently committed to Steve Catalano and myself to provide AA facilities and support for our 2024 GE convention in Grapevine.
7. **Our 2023 Boeing Tour and Alaska Cruise convention** sold-out, with a participation on the cruise of 228 GE's, spouses, and guests. And on the Boeing pre-cruise tour were 132 GE's and spouses. Our resulting Income vs. Expenses for the two events was \$11,551.69 positive cash flow, due in large part to additional credits the cruise line rebated us because of our large group attendance. That extra income was enough to pay off our 2022 CLT convention debt of

\$10,093.79, and still have enough left over to return \$1,457.95 to our 2023 balance sheet.

8. **English Mailing Services** of Carson City, NV was contracted to provide inexpensive quarterly address updating services to ensure accuracy of our membership database.
9. **APA Graphics and Printing** sent an email expending their service offerings to the GE's, by including production of GE membership marketing materials, business cards, etc. Including packaging and mailing. All at no cost to GE.
10. **2023 GE Membership** count increased in 2023 by 172 new members. Our membership improved from 2,941 in 2022, to 3,113 in 2023. Including 70 new "young" ActDu members which we vitally need. These are "bottom line" new members, net of deaths and attrition.

So you may ask what happens to a GE past-president when he leaves office? The Past President becomes Chair of the GE Nominating Committee for 1 year, then becomes a member of that committee for the following 2 years. Meanwhile, I never gave up my "day job" as Reno Grey Eagles Luncheon Coordinator and will continue to enjoy that fellowship.

Good-bye 2023 & welcome 2024.

Semper Fi

Bill

Bill Baerresen

2023 President, The Grey Eagles