

BRIEFINGS



September - December 2024

HILLER AVIATION MUSEUM WHERE INSPIRATION TAKES FLIGHT

GOLDEN AGE OF AIR RACING TO THE RENO AIR RACES: A LEGACY OF SPEED

by Willie Turner

The decade between 1929 and 1939 was a period of remarkable transformation in aviation history, driven largely by the burgeoning sport of air racing. During these years, air racing not only captivated the imagination of the public but also spurred technological innovations that would prove critical during World War II. Central to this era were the iconic Gee Bee airplanes and the early iterations of what would later become the legendary Reno Air Races.

Air racing in the United States began to gain serious traction in the late 1920s, with the establishment of events like the National Air Races. These competitions were more than just thrilling spectacles; they were incubators of innovation. Pilots and engineers experimented with new designs, pushing the limits of speed and maneuverability. The races provided a platform for aircraft manufacturers to showcase their latest technologies and for pilots to demonstrate their skill and bravery.

Among the most iconic aircraft of this era were the Gee Bee (Granville Brothers) racers. Known for their distinctive, almost cartoonish appearance, with short, stubby fuse-



Jimmy Doolittle and the Gee Bee R1

lages and oversized radial engines, the Gee Bee aircraft were marvels of engineering. The Gee Bee R-1 model became a legend in its own right by winning the Thompson Trophy race and setting a world speed record of 296mph, piloted by the famous Jimmy Doolittle who had become one of the greatest pilots in air racing and later led the first raid on Japan after the Pearl Harbor attack. The Gee Bee planes were built for speed, and they achieved it through a combination of innovative aerodynamics and raw power.

The innovations born out of the air races of the 1930s had a profound impact on military aviation leading up to and during World War II. The emphasis on speed, maneuverability, and advanced aerodynamics in air racing directly translated to military aircraft design. The knowledge and experience gained by pilots and engineers during this period were invaluable when the world plunged into conflict. Aircraft such as the P-51 Mustang, which played a crucial role in the Allied victory, owe much of their design and performance capabilities to the advancements



made during the air racing era. The P-51's development was influenced by the need for a high-speed, long-range escort fighter, a concept that had its roots in the high-speed racing planes of the 1930s. The work of engineers and designers who had cut their teeth on air racing technology proved instrumental in creating the next generation of military aircraft.



Clay Lacy Flying his P-51 at the Reno Air Races

The Reno Air Races, which began officially in 1964, owe much of their spirit and inspiration to the air races of the 1930s. While the event came decades after the golden age, it carried forward the legacy of speed and innovation. The Reno Air Races quickly became a premier event in the aviation world, drawing top pilots and cutting-edge aircraft from around the globe. Clay Lacy, a legendary figure in aviation, is synonymous with the Reno Air Races. Flying his P-51 Mustang in the first Reno Air Race in 1964 and winning the National Championship in 1970, Lacy exemplified the daring and skill that defined air racing. The P-51, known for its role in World War II, became a symbol of American air superiority. Lacy's prowess in the cockpit and his passion for aviation helped to elevate the Reno Air Races to new heights, ensuring that the spirit of the 1930s air races lived on.

In more recent years, pilots like Vicky Benzing have continued to push the boundaries of air racing. Benzing, known for her skillful air racing ability, is the only woman to have flown in the Sport, Jet and Unlimited classes, the last with her new P-51 Mustang "Plum Crazy." Vicky bought her racing P-51 from none other than the legend Clay Lacy in 2019 and raced it at the final Reno Air Race in 2023. Vicky's participation in events like the Reno Air Races showcases the enduring appeal and excitement of air racing, as well as the ongoing advancements in aircraft technology and performance.



Vicky Benzing with her P-51 "Plum Crazy"

In 2020 the family of late museum volunteer and docent George Mendonca donated his American Fighters 2/3 scale P-51 project to the museum. The project was approximately 60% complete, so the museum restoration team lead by Bob Lunde and Leon Melamud finished the racer for display. Vicky Benzing generously sponsored the project and air race display. The aircraft will be painted like Vicky's full-scale P-51 "Plum Crazy." The new exhibit is scheduled to open this Fall.

Aviators such as Clay Lacy and Vicky Benzing carry forward the tradition of excellence and innovation that began in the 1930s. Their contributions ensure that the spirit of the golden age of air racing remains alive and vibrant, continuing to inspire new generations of aviators and engineers.



American Fighters 2/3 scale P-51 in the museum's restoration shop

After nearly 60 years in Reno the Reno Air Race Association announced this year that they will be moving the air races to a new location. Rosewall New Mexico has been named the new home for the National Championship Air Races. This will begin a new chapter in the chronicles of air racing to commence in 2025.

Resources:

Golden Age of Air Racing: Pre 1940, S. H. Schmid (Author), Truman C. Weaver (Author), 1991

California Aeronautical University, Monica Raymond 2023

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE FALL 2024



It's been a fabulous summer at the Hiller Aviation Museum. For the operating year that ended on June 30 over 118,000 visitors came to

our museum – the most ever. Maintaining the Hiller Aviation Museum as a compelling destination for flight enthusiasts of all ages is a tremendous project, and one that would not be possible without an enormous amount of hard work and dedication from our museum volunteers.

Each May we host our annual volunteer appreciation event, a delightful opportunity to recognize the team that is at the heart of our museum. Last year over four hundred individuals volunteered, ranging in age from 13 to over 90! Our museum relies on volunteers to answer questions from visitors, lead tours, operate interpretive labs, make repairs, manage the museum's collection, serve on its Board of Directors and even build new aircraft for display! We are deeply appreciative of this amazing group that gives so generously of its time to ensure that dreams take flight at the Hiller Aviation Museum. .

*Jon Welte, President & CEO
Hiller Aviation Museum*

Saturday Nov. 16, 2024 10AM-1PM

FREE SHREDDING & E-WASTE EVENT!

Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos





HILLER AVIATION MUSEUM PRESENTS

Flying on the Edge

20TH BENEFIT GALA

Saturday, October 12, 2024

5pm · Cocktails 6:30pm · Dinner & Auction



Keynote by Melissa Burns

The youngest female pilot ever to have flown
in the US Unlimited Aerobatic Team.

Benefiting the Museum's Aviation and STEM education programs



HILLER
AVIATION
MUSEUM

Individual Ticket

\$300

Questions?

CONTACT Audie Amirkiai, VP of Development
650-654-0200 ext. 203 • audie@hiller.org

Table of 10 Sponsorships

\$15,000 · \$10,000 · \$5,000 · \$3,500

Tickets, Sponsorships, Donations · www.hiller.org/gala



EDUCATION PROGRAMS FALL/WINTER 2024

AVIATION CAMP

FALL/WINTER AVIATION CAMP

HOLIDAY CAMP PROGRAMS

OCT 2024-JAN 2025 • 9 AM-4 PM

Launch an adventure in aviation over the fall and winter holidays at Aviation Camp! Build and fly model aircraft, take on realistic flight simulations, explore museum aircraft and more while exploring a unique subject in flight. One to five-day programs available select holiday periods Sept. 2-Jan. 6. Six different topics available! Visit www.hiller.org for details or to enroll today.

FLIGHT EXPLORATION

SEPT 2, NOV 1, DEC 23



DRONE RANGERS

OCT 14, NOV 29, DEC. 20



FLIGHT SIMULATOR ACES

NOV 11, DEC 19



GOT BOTS?

OCT 7-11, JAN 1-3



ENGINEER'S WORKSHOP

NOV 25-27



FLIGHT & MOTION

DEC 26-27



**VISIT
WWW.HILLER.ORG
FOR MORE
INFORMATION.**

SUNDAY FAMILY EVENTS

FALL/WINTER 2024

Join the fun this fall for a series of special outdoor family events! Held on select Sundays, each features hands-on activities just for kids ages 5+. Visit www.hiller.org for more information on each event.

AIR POWER ADVENTURE ASSEMBLY

NOV 10, DEC 8, DEC 30
11 AM



BUBBLE BONANZA

SEPT 29
10 AM-12 PM



FLIGHT SIMULATOR RALLY

NOV 17, DEC. 22
3 PM-4 PM



GLIDER DISCOVERY DAY

SEPT 15,
NOV 3, DEC. 1
11 AM-12 PM



HELICOPTER ADVENTURE

SEPT 22, DEC 29
11 AM-12 PM



KIDS' CARNIVAL

SEPT 14, OCT 19,
OCT 20
10 AM-12 PM



STARLAB

NOV 16, DEC 21, 1:30 PM-3 PM

STARLIGHT NIGHTS

NOV 7, DEC 12, 5 PM-7 PM

STRAW ROCKET WORKSHOP

NOV 7, DEC 12
5 PM-7 PM



WATER ROCKET RALLY

SEPT 10, OCT 6
11 AM-12 PM



HOLIDAY FUN WEEK

DEC 26-31

Celebrate the holidays with a special event in flight! Daily events December 26-31 provide special experiences in aviation for kids and adults alike! Each event starts at 11 AM unless noted and is included with museum admission.

GLIDER DISCOVERY DAY

THUR, DEC 26
11 AM



HAPPY BIRDS

FRI, DEC 27
11 AM



OPEN COCKPIT

SAT, DEC 28
10 AM-1 PM



AIR POWERED ADVENTURE

NOV 10, DEC 8,
DEC 30
11 AM



NOON YEAR'S EVE PARTY



TUES, DEC 31, 10 AM-1 PM

Join the countdown to twelve noon on the last day of the year in a kid-friendly New Year's Eve spectacular! Dance and music routines, hands-on activities, and special presentations prepare the way for the dramatic countdown and noon-time balloon drop. Advance tickets are required!

ILLUMINATION NAVIGATION BY LIGHT



**SAT, SEPT 28, 11 AM
PRESENTATION BY
FARIDE KHALAF**

Join us on a journey of discovery and learn of a 17th century French civil engineer and physicist who revolutionized lighthouses everywhere for all time. He advanced the science

of physical and geometric optics to enable an oil lamp to cast light to the very edge of the horizon to guide the weary sailor. Naval aviators rely heavily on this invention to land their F 35s on carriers in all-weather, day and night. The Fresnel lens is everywhere you look. A fine example of its use stands tall in our gallery; it is of the type currently in service in nearly every airport to bring the weary pilot home for a safe landing

STARLIGHT NIGHTS



**THUR,
NOV 7,
DEC 12,
JAN 9**

Fall and winter evenings

come alive at the Hiller Aviation Museum's Starlight Nights! The museum and gift shop remain open until 7 PM, with Starlab sky shows available inside and, weather permitting, telescopic observations of the Moon and planets of our solar system available outside. Experience San Carlos Airport at night and explore the heavens above with these special evening adventures.

HALLOWEEN EVENTS

HALLOWEEN HAUNTED HANGAR



**OCT 19-31,
10 AM-5 PM**

Share a family-friendly fright as the Hiller Aviation Museum transforms into the Halloween Haunted Hangar in a special annual tradition! Enjoy creepy creations, dreadful decorations, and spirited Halloween fun.

HALLOWEEN KIDS' CARNIVAL

**SAT/SUN,
OCT 19/20,
10 AM – 12 PM**

Paint the museum's Cessna Cardinal in ghoulish Halloween colors, launch a Ghosticopter in a wind tunnel, assemble a Halloween craft and more at the Haunted Hangar.



HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL AND PUMPKIN DROP



**SAT/SUN, OCT 26/27
10 AM – 12 PM
(PUMPKIN DROP AT NOON)**

Join the fun as our high-flying witch prepares her doomed pumpkins for their final flights! With Halloween

games, special prizes, and helicopter-borne pumpkin drops as the clock tolls 12 noon.

MEMBERS ONLY PARTY

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7, 10AM – 1PM

Hiller Aviation Museum Members enjoy brews, sweet treats and more at the fall Members-only party! Members enjoy exclusive access to the family-friendly fun area including bubbles, bounce houses and special bakery goodies courtesy of Raymond's Sourdough Bread. Adults may also partake in the adjacent Hops and Props event – complimentary branded mason jars provided for Members while supplies last!

Hiller Aviation Museum Members enjoy year-round museum admission, free or discounted admission to signa-



ture events, a 15% discount in the Flight Shop gift shop and so much more! Visit the Membership page on the museum website today!







Hops and Props

Saturday, September 7th, 2024
11 AM - 3 PM

What could be better than microbrew beer, live music and cool airplanes under the warm September sky? The Hiller Aviation Museum presents Hops & Props Beer Fest.



Beer

by Devil's Canyon

- Spare the Air Hazy IPA
- Fluent in Sarasam West Coast IPA
- La Canada de Diablo Mexican Lager Especial
- Full Boar Scotch Ale
- Beer Kitty Kolsch
- Fest Bier
- Kaleidoscope Lemon Raspberry Sour
- Root Beer Non Alcoholic

Wine

- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Pinot Noir
- Rose'
- Chardonnay
- Sauvignon Blanc

*Beverages are subject to change

Bands

- The Roadrunners (11 AM - 12:45 PM)
- The Montgomery Coe Band (1 PM - 3 PM)

Food

- T-Mo Food Truck
- Mister Softee ice cream
- Hot Dogs



Event included with museum admission
Free for museum members

More details and tickets | www.Hiller.org

601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos CA

HILLER AVIATION MUSEUM



Saturday Oct 19th through Sunday Oct 27th, Daily 10am-5pm

HAUNTED HANGAR

KIDS' CARNIVAL

SAT-SUN

Oct 19/20

10 AM-12 PM

- SPECIAL ACTIVITIES JUST FOR KIDS
- COCKPIT EXPLORATION
- GLIDER AND HELICOPTER CONSTRUCTION AND MORE
- PAINT THE MUSEUM'S PRINT-A-PLANE ORANGE AND BLACK
- FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

HELICOPTER PUMPKIN DROP

SAT-SUN

Oct 26/27

OCT 26 EVENT 10AM-12PM (DROP AT 12PM)
OCT 27 EVENT 10AM-12PM (DROP AT 12PM)

- PUMPKIN DROP
- CREEPY GAMES AND PRIZES
- MEET THE WITCH AND SIGN HER SPECIAL HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN
- GREAT PUMPKIN SAFARI HUNT

GET TICKETS AT WWW.HILLER.ORG

HILLER AVIATION MUSEUM 601 SKYWAY RD SAN CARLOS, CA 94070

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

SUN, SEPT 1 • 11AM
Water Rocket Rally

SAT, SEPT 7 • 11AM – 3PM
Hops & Props

SUN, SEPT 8 • 11AM
Straw Rockets

SAT, SEPT 14 • 10AM – 12PM
Kids' Carnival

SUN, SEPT 15 • 11 AM
Glider Discovery

SUN, SEPT 22 • 11AM
Helicopter Adventure

SAT, SEPT 28 • 11AM
ILLUMINATION: Navigation by Light

SUN, SEPT 29 • 10 AM – 12 PM
Bubble Bonanza

OCTOBER

SAT, OCT 5 • 10:30AM & 11:30AM
Starlab

SUN, OCT 6 • 11AM
Water Rocket Rally

SAT, OCT 12 • 5PM – 10PM
Museum Gala

SUN, OCT 13 • 11AM
Straw Rockets

OCT 19 – OCT 31 • 10AM-5PM
Halloween Haunted Hangar

SAT/SUN, OCT 19/20 • 10AM – 12:00PM
Kids' Halloween Carnival

SAT/SUN, OCT 26/27 • 10AM – 12:00PM
Halloween Helicopter Pumpkin Drop

NOVEMBER

SUN, NOV 3 • 11AM
Glider Discovery

THUR, NOV 7 • 5PM – 7PM
Starlight Nights

SUN, NOV 10 • 10AM – 12PM
Air Power Adventure

SAT, NOV 16 • 10AM – 1PM
E-Waste recycling drop off

SUN, NOV 17 • 2:30PM – 4PM
Flight Sim Rally

SUN, NOV 24 • 11AM
Straw Rockets

WED, NOV 27 • 11AM
Turkey Toss

THURS, NOV 28 • CLOSED ALL DAY

DECEMBER

SUN, DEC 1 • 11AM
Glider Discovery

THUR, DEC 12 • 5PM – 7PM
Starlight Nights

SAT, DEC 7 • 9:30AM – 12PM
Santa by Helicopter

SUN, DEC 8 • 11AM
Air Power Adventure

SUN, DEC 15 • 11AM
Straw Rockets

SAT, DEC 21 • 1:30PM & 3:PM
Starlab

SUN, DEC 22 • 2:30PM – 4PM
Flight Sim Rally

WED, DEC 25 • CLOSED ALL DAY

THUR, DEC 26 • 11AM
Glider Day

FRI, DEC 27 • 11AM
Happy Birds

SAT, DEC 28 • 10AM – 1PM
Open Cockpit

SUN, DEC 29 • 11AM
Helicopter Adventure

MON, DEC 30 • 11 AM
Air Power Adventure

TUE, DEC 31 • 10AM – 1PM
Noon Years Party

FLIGHT SIM ZONE AND FMX FLIGHT SIM WEEKENDS 11AM - 2PM

INVENTION LAB • WEEKENDS 11AM - 3PM

DRONE PLEX • WEEKENDS 11AM - 3PM

HELICOPTER TURKEY TOSS



WED NOV. 27, 2024 11 AM

Celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with a family-friendly re-enactment of a classic television event! In 1978, WKRP in Cincinnati first aired its timeless "Turkeys Away" episode. In 2024, the Hiller Aviation Museum commemorates this fictional holiday catastrophe with a "Turkey Toss" of its own.

The museum is known for many helicopter-borne events throughout the year. At Thanksgiving the museum will drop turkeys not the actual birds, but soft foam turkey toys! Small, squeezable take-home turkeys will rain from the sky — reminding all of the immortal words of WKRP General Manager Arthur Carlson, "As God is my witness, I thought turkeys could fly!"

SANTA CLAUS ARRIVES BY HELICOPTER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 10 AM
RAIN OR SHINE.
DOORS OPEN AT 9:30.

Join the West Bay Community Band and sing Christmas carols while the kids line up to tell Santa their Christmas gift list. No Museum admission fee required for this event!





HILLER AVIATION MUSEUM

601 Skyway Road, San Carlos, California 94070 www.hiller.org

Non - Profit
Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
San Carlos, CA
PERMIT No. 96

Halloween Costumes

Be an Aviator,
pioneer
airline pilot
fighter pilot
or astronaut

Suit up in
the Gift Shop!

Special Holiday Shopping

NOV 26 THROUGH DEC 24

**MUSEUM MEMBERS
RECEIVE A 25% DISCOUNT
IN THE GIFT SHOP**

Become a Museum Member
and take advantage of this
great holiday offer!

Join Now!

Senior (age 65+) \$69
One adult plus 2 one-time use guest passes
Individual \$85
One adult plus 2 one-time use guest passes
Family \$139
2 adults and up to 4 children (17 & under)
plus discounts on Aviation Camp
& 4 one-time use guest passes
Pioneer \$189
Family Membership benefits plus one
additional card for an adult, ideal for
caregivers (up to 3 adults per visit),
& 4 one-time use guest passes
Pilot \$259

Family Membership benefits with a total
of 4 guest passes & Complimentary
Admission to signature Events (Noon
Year's and Biggest Little Air Show).
Barnstormer \$500 Adventurer \$1,000
Pilot Membership benefits with a total of
6 guest passes + & Complimentary
Admission to signature Events (Noon
Year's and Biggest Little Air Show).
Explorer \$2,500 Navigator \$5,000
Pilot Membership benefits with a total of
8 guest passes + 15% off Museum Rental
and Birthday Parties.
Aviator \$10,000
Pilot Membership benefits with a total of
12 guest passes + 25% off Museum Rental
and Birthday Parties and a Hiller Aviation
Museum jacket.

Annual Membership Application

Or join online at www.hiller.org/member

I want to be a member of Hiller Aviation Museum in the following category:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Senior (65+) \$69 | ☐ Barnstormer \$500 |
| ☐ Individual \$85 | ☐ Adventurer \$1,000 |
| ☐ Family \$139 | ☐ Explorer \$2,500 |
| ☐ Pioneer \$189 | ☐ Navigator \$5,000 |
| ☐ Pilot \$259 | ☐ Aviator \$10,000 |

☐ New Member ☐ Annual Renewal

Primary Adult Member: _____

Second Adult Member: _____
(Family Memberships and up)

Third Adult Member: _____
(Pioneer Memberships only)

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Email: _____

This is a gift membership from: _____

Payment Amount: _____ ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

CSC: _____ Print Name on Card: _____

Signature _____

Thank you for your support.

Please make checks payable to
Hiller Aviation Museum
601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos, CA 94070

