

BELLANCA AIRFIELD

FALL 2013 UPDATE

Numerous improvements have been made to the hangar, and new and improved exhibits have been added, both for the Bellanca story and the Delaware Aviation Hall of

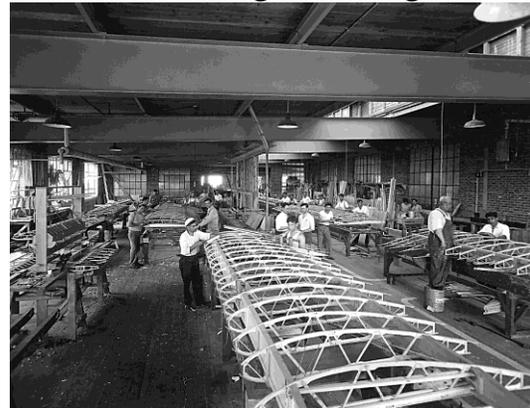


Fame exhibit. The hangar and museum is open for visitors on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from April through October. Tours at other times are available for groups upon request. The facilities may also be used for catered lunches or dinner meetings.

FoBA Treasurer Al Tamabourelli reported two large anonymous donations plus the generous annual donation from the daVinci Society and one from Italo-Americans United. Donations continue from

our members, corporations and , the public, in cash, services, materials, and artifacts.

We have long benefited from talented volunteers such as Bill Wilson, a retired electrician from Bear. He is married to Linda Gibellino, the grand-daughter of



Aldo Gibellino, who was in charge of Bellanca's wood shop for more than 25 years. The renowned wings that provided such a great edge in Bellanca aircraft performance were fabricated in his shop.

Joe Finocchiaro, a building contractor and pilot, from Bellefonte, built a new entrance foyer, totally replaced two

staircases leading to the upper level at the west end of the hangar, framed both bath rooms for men and women, installed vinyl floors, and completed the kitchen area along with Bill Wilson. The two installed a wind sock at the west end of the building. Joe also built two new schedule signs placed on Route 273, and installed our impressive 60 ft. by 6 ft. sign on the front of the



hangar. The power lift needed to raise the new sign was provided by Mario Medori of New Castle. If you have not been to the hangar recently, take a minute to turn into Centerpoint Boulevard and onto the entrance road to the hangar. You can't miss our new sign.

Another returning volunteer was Gray Baker, a master painter, who painted all of the interior walls of the hangar as well as the new entrance foyer, staircases and end caps on the display boards.

Bill Wilson wired the kitchen range, microwaves ovens, refrigerator and lighting. Joe Georgi of Georgi Kitchens donated

a large number of kitchen cabinets



that were installed by Joe Finnochiario. Aldo Gibellino, a

contractor from Bear and grandson of the Aldo mentioned earlier, provided a temporary outdoor restroom and donated a stove, microwave, double sink, dishwasher, counters and cabinets for the kitchen. Mr. Gibellino also donated plumbing fixtures, materials, stall dividers and ceilings for the two new restrooms as well. Mirrors, lights and venetian blinds were donated by other generous individuals. Nick DiPinto, another one of our talented volunteers, taped, spackled and sanded all of the new walls. Work will be completed soon and we now have very nice kitchen and two attractive restrooms

Five display cases were recently donated, one of which houses a



special exhibit from Hilary Smith

of Portsmouth, England. This is an aluminum tray, one of only two known to exist, created from the aluminum gas tank of Bellanca's famed airplane, *Columbia*. The *Columbia* was flown to Berlin two weeks after Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight to Paris. The embossed tray depicts the two flights the *Columbia* made across the Atlantic. The tray was first offered on Ebay for \$1,000, but Miss Smith, after learning of the Bellanca museum, donated it to us last year. The Smithsonian has the only other known *Columbia* Commemorative tray.

Michael Brock, owner of Hardcastle Galleries donated aviation pictures, frames and tripods and is restoring three oil paintings. Elliott Smith, FoBA president, has donated a public address sound system.

The 52-foot airport beacon tower that was acquired by FoBA member Harry Van Den Heuvel



has been painted and readied for installation. It will replicate the original one donated by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, when the Bellanca airfield opened in 1928.

In the meantime a 14 foot tall replica of the Beacon Tower has been erected



inside the hangar. The rotating white and green lights atop this tower are authentic beacons from a 1920s era Delaware airport.

The Trustees of the New Castle Common announced that they will soon install a paved parking lot with 108 spaces at the front of the hangar. We are very appreciative of this improvement which will be used for Little League parking as well.

Students from Tall Oaks School and the Junior Air Force ROTC from William Penn High School as a community service project spruced up the hangar for opening day.

FoBA Secretary Ann Rossi reports that large group visits have been easily accommodated, such as "The 99s," an organization of women pilots, founded by Amelia Earhart and other notable women pilots, to promote competitive flying events, encourage women to

become pilots, and to preserve the history of women in aviation.

Last August, another organization of 84 pilots, "Quiet Birdmen," enjoyed a meeting and catered dinner at the Hangar. Early members of this fabled group were Jimmy Doolittle and Eddie Rickenbacker.

The Aero Club of South Jersey, the Pennsylvania Aero Club, Friends of Italian Culture and Italo-American United were among the organizations that held meetings, received a lecture, and enjoyed catered meals at the hangar. There is no charge for use of the hangar.

With the completion of our attractive new rest rooms for men and ladies, we can expect to host more group visitors and accommodate students on educational field trips

In July arrangements were made for the Delaware Large Scale Model Railroad Club to set up an exhibit in the hangar. A forty foot circle of track with a wide variety of engines and cars and a double circle of landscapes and buildings of every description was assembled. One train consisted of several flat cars carrying a variety of dismantled model combat air planes. These were reminiscent of

the gondola cars that used to be assembled at the freight siding at Ninth and Young Streets in New castle during World War II carrying dismantled bombers from the New Castle Airbase.



The model train exhibit was very successful with more than 200 visitors attending the first weekend open house. The Delaware Large Scale Club will continue to run their trains when the hangar is open for the next few months. We are pleased to see many families with small children attracted to our hangar by the train exhibit.

Friends of Bellanca Airfield are very appreciative of the support offered by so many enabling us to preserve Delaware Aviation history. We are a non-profit tax exempt organization and donations are welcome and necessary to continue the effort to maintain and improve the hangar and the Delaware Hall of Fame exhibit.

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