



# Commemorative Air Force Wisconsin Wing Newsletter

Chartered April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1982

Editor: Brad Ohde

## January 2022, Issue #2201

### From the Front Cockpit Col Gary Otto – Wing Leader



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE  
**Wisconsin Wing Newsletter**

Happy New Year to all our CAF WI Wing members, family and friends! I am very excited about 2022 and what it will bring to the WI Wing. We have several new members on our hard-working wing staff, lots of new and existing member volunteers, and a growing list of events for the upcoming flying season that will enable us to once again carry out our mission to Educate, Inspire and Honor! Looking back at 2021, we were able to break out of the Covid lockdowns by attending lots of events, host a great Open House in May, have a very active and profitable PX, perform numerous memorial fly-overs, plus touch many lives with our living history PT-26 and SNJ-5 memorable rides program. There are too many members to thank here for all of these 2021 successes, but I truly appreciate all our member's volunteer efforts and support.

This is a good time of the year to think about why you joined the CAF, and what your expectations are as a CAF member/volunteer? For me, I joined back in 2008 for the opportunity to fly warbirds, to share the experience with many interesting people, and to carry out the mission that we now clearly define as Educate, Inspire, and Honor. The CAF has given me the opportunity to experience all 3 of these very rewarding mission goals. Our planes are not the mission at the CAF, but are historic and priceless time machines that allow us to go back to those days of WWII and relive the challenges that those brave men and women faced at such a very young age. The warbirds are our means of providing the education of the young and old, inspiring young Americans to be proud of their heritage while reaching for high goals, and honoring the men and women of military aviation. If you have not experienced the emotional effects our aircraft have on so many people, you need to get involved in the mission of the CAF. Once you have seen and felt the results of carrying out our mission, I can assure you that you will want to keep on doing it, however you can. Flying the planes, directing them on the ground, caring for them, volunteering at the PX, educating, serving as a wing officer, or whatever you choose to do, get involved and share your passion for these airplanes and what they mean to you and so many like-minded folks.

Let's all strive to make 2022 the best year ever for the Wisconsin Wing!

The best to all of you in the new year!

Gary Otto  
Wing Leader

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## Wisconsin Wing News



### WI Wing Membership Meeting

Sat. Jan. 15th, 2022 10:30AM  
CAF/PT hangar Gate 1 Waukesha Airport

This month's special guest speaker is EAA's very own Chris Henry, presenting on "THE DOOLITTLE RAIDERS"!

You are invited to the CAF WI Wing Jan. 15th 2022 Zoom Meeting  
Saturday, Jan 15, 2022 10:30 AM Central Time  
In person attendance at the CAF hangar inside Gate 1 is optional.

To join the Zoom meeting simply click on this link!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89625252351>

Meeting ID: 896 2525 2351

Dial in by phone option:  
1-312-626-6799

### \*\*\* 2022 CAF WING STAFF CONFERENCE INFORMATION \*\*\*

Please join us for the annual members-only CAF Conference! The 2022 Conference will take place **February 17 - 20, 2022 at the CAF National Airbase in Dallas, TX**. The conference is aimed at CAF members with any level of experience, whether you have recently joined or are a long-time Unit leader; there's no better way to get to know the CAF! To attend this conference, you must be a CAF Member (Colonel, Preservation Colonel, Life Member or Cadet).

The registration fee includes all sessions, all conference lunches, and a ticket to the CAF Hall of Fame Banquet. The registration fee does not include a ticket to The Victory Ball.

Go to this link for all the details!:

[www.commemorativeairforce.org/pages/cafconference2022](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org/pages/cafconference2022)



# Wisconsin Wing News



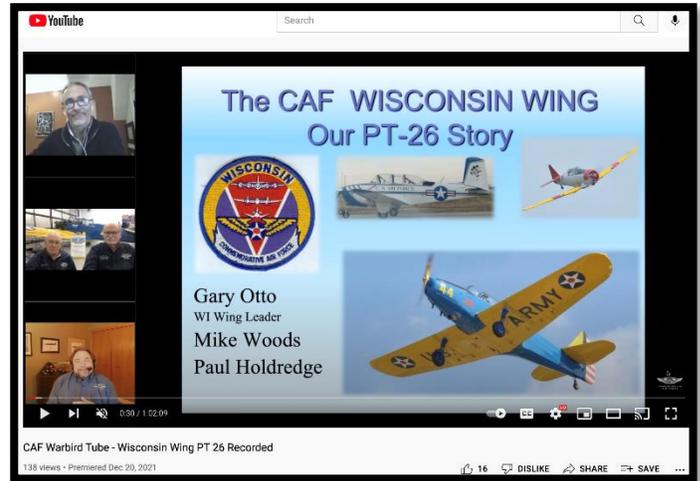
**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!**

Dec. 2021

CAF WI Wing –  
Our PT-26 Story

See link below.....

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGIPRhHgzJE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGIPRhHgzJE)



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**From the Rear Cockpit**

*By Executive Officer Col Tom McDermott*

Happy New Year!

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Executive Officer. As I begin, it's important to thank Paul Keppler for the many years he served as my predecessor. We have been blessed with his kindness, generosity and WISDOM. THANK YOU PAUL! We're a stronger Wing because of you. I ask the membership to express your personal appreciation when you next see him.



Have you experienced the JOY of our aircraft??? Yea, it's great to see our birds in the hangar, but have you ridden in one of our planes??? It will be my challenge to see that EVERYONE WHO WANTS A RIDE – GETS A RIDE.

We use our aircraft to tell the CAF story - and YOU are part of that story. We've enjoyed strong membership growth in '21 and expect that to continue. When you join the Wisconsin Wing, we want you to experience "YOUR" airplane because you are part of that plane.

We've learned that once you have flown in a Wisconsin Wing warbird, you are forever thrilled by the experience - the ride of a lifetime!

So, after reading this article, if you'd like to feel what we offer, please contact me. I'll take it from there. In addition, if you know of a prospective member, please consider introducing them to the Wing.



We'll always have ROOM FOR ONE MORE. Giddy-up.  
Tom

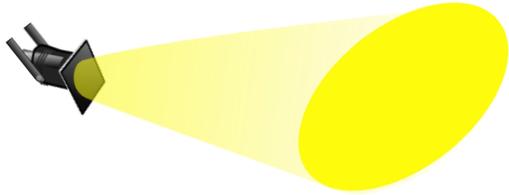


# Wisconsin Wing News



## **SAFETY SPOTLIGHT**

*By Scott Twesme – Safety Officer – WI Wing*



Hi everyone, welcome to the Safety Spotlight. With this column, I'm going to do my best to highlight timely safety items throughout the year. I anticipate they will be a mix of flight and ground safety topics, and if anyone has any ideas or topics they would like addressed, please send them my way.

Safety is not a glamorous or an exciting topic, but a good safety culture allows our Wing to keep doing the fun and exciting things that we all enjoy doing. It also enables us to perform our Mission, and keep safe our incredible aircraft that we have been entrusted with by CAF HQ.

Whose primary job is safety? If your answer isn't a resounding "Everyone's!", we need to talk. I want everyone to feel empowered to bring up safety concerns- if you see something you think is unsafe, risky, or just plain doesn't seem right, please bring it up. Our mission involves risk, and we need to do everything we can to mitigate or eliminate those risks.

We aren't doing a ton of flying right now so I'm going to throw out a winter ground safety thought. It's finally turned cold, and if you don't already have a winter contingency kit in your car, please consider putting one together. Even if you don't drive long distances, you never know when some warm winter clothes, boots, a blanket or two, jumper cables, and even a candle in a coffee can might come in handy.

Until next month, be safe!  
Scott





# Wisconsin Wing News



Welcome  
New Members!!!

2022		
Donn Droegkamp (Gold Lifetime Member)		

2021		
John Schroeder	Matt Phillips	Gary Kozlowski
Paul McAllister	Tom Leunig	Herb Coussons
Chuck Christburg	Scott Meisenheimer	Tim Tyre
Steven Mueller	Jeff Otto	John Leidel
John Hartmann	Matt Phillips	Mike Pastore
Enzo Aita	Tracy Hunter	Ed Pleva
Michael Moynihan	Tonie Michaels	Karl Beckle
Noel Skerven	Chris Reeves	Austin Kornov
Bernie DeKok		

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### Maintenance Report – January 2022

by Col Steven Sorge – Maintenance Officer – WI Wing

#### T-34

- Annual completed...some of the highlights
  - ✓ Installed USB port
  - ✓ Updated hour meter to match aircraft time
  - ✓ Removed inop rear oil temp gauge
  - ✓ Removed inop rear magneto switch
  - ✓ Installed High flow Dukes Aux fuel pump
  - ✓ Installed dual battery conversion
  - ✓ Remedied sticking canopy – Found rollers to be stiff and difficult to spin. Right and left canopy rails are bent....repaired as required
  - ✓ Gear horn limit switch was NOT set; the aircraft will need to be flown and the throttle position set and marked.



#### PT-26

- Down for annual / winter hibernation

#### SNJ-5

- Aircraft On-Line



## Wisconsin Wing News



### A Dream Come True – Our T-34

by Col Mike Woods

In 1968 I graduated from college and was commissioned a 2nd Lt in the Air Force. My dream was to be an Air Force pilot and fly fighters. Well, I guess we don't always get our wishes since my eyes although close to 20/20 uncorrected, I needed glasses to get them there. The Air Force said pick a different career and base. First base choice was Wright Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio and I would be a procurement officer negotiating and writing R&D contracts. Don't yell at me, but my job was to spend lots of money, so I did, but at least I believe I did it wisely.

Perhaps God felt sorry for me as Wright-Patt had a great flying club with 172s and T-34s. As I was already a private pilot, it did not take long for me to try and get qualified in the T-34s. The most advanced plane I had flown up to that time was a 172 so a complex and high-performance plane was a good step up for me. I remember the first hour was how in the heck do you remember all of this stuff – what comes back first, was it the prop, or the throttle and what goes forward first, and oh yes, don't forget to retract the gear after takeoff and by all means do not forget to lower it, preferably before landing. The 2nd hour was better, but still not there, but like a small miracle by hour 3, all seemed normal. As I recall the total checkout was 5 or 6 hours. A college friend was also stationed at Wright-Patt and he too checked out in the T-34s. Together the two of us had a grand time flying the planes either having two planes in the air at the same time or together in the same plane. We were flying our almost fighters and would frequently fly them with the canopy open enjoying our birds eye view of the great Ohio country side.

[www.cafwi.org](http://www.cafwi.org)







[www.commemorativeairforce.org](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org)



Jan 9, 2022 Update

**Wisconsin Wing**  
**Aircraft Information:**  
**1953 Beechcraft T-34A**  
**N5347W "Mentor"**

- Airframe TT 4453hrs TTSMOH 72hrs
- Air Force primary trainer from 1953 to 1964
- Engine: Continental IO-550 300HP (upgrade)
- This T-34A was donated to the CAF and assigned to the WI Wing in 2017
- Initial restoration 1988 in California
- CAF additional restoration from 2017 to 2021
- Smoke system
- If you are interested in sponsoring, flying or supporting this historic and beautiful T-34A, see contacts below for information:  
Gary Otto – Wing Leader 262-875-1640  
Mike Woods – Operations 414-791-6991




Shooting ahead many years, I did not think I would ever have the opportunity to fly such a great plane that handled so nicely and was so much fun to fly. However, there were many other planes that came my way, so I always felt that flying the T-34 was great, but those days were gone. But, a few years ago I remember standing next to Roberta Finkler at the Waukegan Air Show and admiring the T-34s parked there. I guess it was my old love affair with the plane so I told Roberta, that a T-34 should be our next plane that our Wing should try to get. I figured it would be a few years to do that, if indeed, even if it could be done at all. Again, blessings from Heaven and the next year we started the search for a T-34 and we ended up with our plane, N5347W.

What a plane it is too. The original T-34s, which seemed like a rocket to me when I was 22 had 225 hp, whereas ours has 300 hp and it is a rocket. Take offs can be made in about 600 feet and climb rates are well in excess of 1000 fpm. The normal top cruise speed in calm air is 152 knots (175 mph). Ours will cruise at that only if I pull the power back; in calm air you can push it even more. To fly with our SNJ the power must be pulled way back or it will outrun the SNJ at less than ½ the fuel burn of the SNJ.



# Wisconsin Wing News



*(cont'd from previous page)* **A Dream Come True – Our T-34**  
 by Col Mike Woods

The controls are so delightful and if the speed is kept down, you can fly it with the canopy open. I feel so lucky that I am now able to fly my fighter, and best of all no one is shooting at me.

The CAF says you need 10 hours to check out in a complex aircraft like our T-34. I thought, I don't need that much time, but my 10 ½ hr. checkout with Carl Schwerman was not only very educational but extremely enjoyable. We can all learn new things and sometimes we pick up bad habits or we forget good habits, and Carl was great at making sure everything was totally up to snuff. On one of our flights Carl asked if I wanted to do a spin (you are not required to have chutes to do spins). Since I had not done any in many years and since I am not a big acro fan, I reluctantly said yes. Well, if you decide to become a T-34 pilot and check out with Carl, ask to do a spin. I hate to admit it, but it really was great fun.

I can't wait to get back in the Spring and fly the T-34 more. I am always willing to give a ride to anyone that wants to enjoy such a great flying plane, and I know Gary Otto is to. The plane is so enjoyable to fly and sharing that with others only doubles the pleasure.

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Date: December 18, 2021

From: COL R. M. Lawn, Election Committee Chairman  
 To: COL Gary Otto, CAF WI Wing Commander

Subject: 2021 Election Results for Wisconsin Wing

1. The following Officers/Members have been elected by majority rules to the following positions:

- Executive Officer
- Operations Officer
- Safety Officer
- Education Officer

TOM McDERMOTT  
MIKE WOODS  
SCOTT TWESME  
JANEITE ANDERSON

2. The Election Committee certifies that all election balloting to fair and accurate.

  
 R. M. Lawn  
 Election Committee Chairman



## Wisconsin Wing News



### **Finance Report – 2021 Year-End**

by Col Ryan Beard – Finance Officer – WI Wing

With 2021 in the rear view mirror, it provides a great opportunity to look back and see “how’d we do” financially last year. After such a down year in 2020, I wasn’t sure what to expect when I analyzed our 2021 finances. I’m happy to report that things are trending in the right direction and looking good! While the following is a simplified overview for brevity just to share the big picture, please feel free to reach out to me if you’d like clarification on anything or to dig deeper into any fine details.

Jumping right in with the good news, our PX had a net profit of approximately \$3,500 and a remaining inventory on hand with a retail value of nearly \$4,900. With each aircraft turning a profit individually, our rides program profits added over \$1400 to the wing general fund as well as adding more than \$3,000 to SNJ and PT-26 maintenance reserves. \$4350 of membership dues and over \$3,600 of general donations to the wing were also added in 2021.

The biggest expenses at our wing come from the maintenance and operation of our three warbirds. In the case of both the SNJ and the T-34, those fixed and operational costs are first paid for with any donations received from both within and outside of our wing, and then any remaining expenses are paid for by the generosity of the respective aircraft pilot sponsors who have agreed to cover those remaining costs. As such, SNJ and T-34 expenses are not paid for with wing general funds. In the case of the PT-26 however, some expenses such as hangar rent and miscellaneous insurance bills are. Additionally, printing, postage, office supplies, event costs, website fees, general wing insurance, memberships/licenses, etc. are also paid for with general wing funds.

After considering all sources of income to the wing general fund in 2021 and subtracting all expenses, we see a net profit/increase to the general fund of \$1,309.77.

At the end of the year, we have over \$63,000 held across multiple CAF Wisconsin bank accounts. In addition to this, since the second half of 2021 requests for donations (RFDs) to our aircraft pilot sponsors weren’t sent out until late in December, we also have over \$32,000 of anticipated donations still to be received. Considering those expected donations as well, we’ll have a total of over \$95,000 in our various bank accounts. That amount is all earmarked for various different purposes such as the general fund, several aircraft reserves, and restricted donations which I intend to cover in my future newsletter articles.

In summary, I’d say 2021 wasn’t bad at all. Our PX was profitable. Our rides program was profitable. Our wing general fund increased value and closed out the year just over \$3,100. Here’s looking to an even more successful 2022!

Ryan

From Kathy Laabs....  
Your CAF WI Wing Event Coordinator

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Lets start filling up our 2022 events calendar!

If you have any ideas for events we should attend or events we should host, please email me the event date and contact info as well as any other pertinent info → [t28gal@att.net](mailto:t28gal@att.net)

I am also looking for volunteers to help coordinate Fly Ins we will attend, open house planning and lunches for meetings.

Kathy Laabs  
Event coordinator, 414-418-7222



## Wisconsin Wing News



### Restoration of a wartime aircraft

by Col Chris Reeves

I found this 1943 Beech 18 by chance. I spend way too many hours online surfing various classified ads for airplanes and parts. My wife and I were planning to build an RV10 over the next twenty-some-odd years until I spotted an ad for a classic Beech in Southeast Wisconsin. I sent off an email, just to kick the tires, as this project seemed to fit the same kind of footing- spend money and a lot of time. Well, fate is a mysterious thing.

It turns out this dusty old Beech had a long service history. Designated a C-45B Expeditor, it was delivered to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1944. It left RCAF service in 1964 and sold to a Canadian cargo operator, Millardair. It flew for nearly thirty years hauling who knows what across the tundra of my former homeland. After Millardair filed bankruptcy in the '90s, the Beech was exported back to the U.S. For the next decade, it would perform numerous jobs- from dropping skydivers in South Carolina to hauling rubber dog poop around the Southeastern states as a freighter once again. It was acquired in 2003 and flown to East Troy, where it sat waiting with good intentions to be restored.



I was born and raised in Canada. I've always had a fascination with airplanes and aviation in general. I was very fortunate to be introduced to flying at an early age, and the bug took hold and stuck. I eventually made my way to Milwaukee through several years in the military and a few flying jobs along the way. One of those jobs was flying the Beech 99, the 18's successor in the freight hauling business. It was only fitting from an old freight dog, finding a very old freight hauler just down the road in need of restoration. I'm a wartime aviator, a Canadian, and cantankerous at times too. Perfect for this twin Beech.

I signed the bill of sale on June 24th of 2021 and got to work right away. Located at the East Troy airport, unairworthy, it needed a way to be transported to Timmerman (MWC), where I was able to source a hangar for the restoration work. I, with fellow CAF member Austin Kornov, disassembled and transported many of the spare parts in our trucks to MWC. The big day came in late August when I hired a crane and tractor-trailer to hoist the plane on to a trailer and move it to its new home at MWC. It was something else to see this oversized behemoth travel down the side roads of Waukesha and through Milwaukee!

Looking at this project from the 30,000' view, it's enough to make the most resolute person, shake in their boots. Motivation is a driving factor in getting this aircraft airworthy again, and then to a pristine showpiece. I'm often repeating to myself, the question of: How do you eat an elephant?

Having a punch list of priorities is important. The first item we have checked off is transporting it from East Troy to MWC. That was a task and a half at the time, however, looking back it was manageable. Next is cleaning. And I mean a deeeeeeep cleaning. We are ¾ or so through that task. The waning days of summer and warmth allowed us to clean as much as we could. After sourcing a steam pressure washer, it took nearly fourteen thousand gallons of water, sweat, swears, and determination to blast away the grime and grease buildup. Austin and I found a paint stripper solution and were able to strip the fuselage and tail over a few days, while we still had a little bit of warmth leftover from the fall. The wings will be attacked in the spring. Next is rebuilding the many different parts that have been neglected over the years. As of this writing, the tail-gear is nearing reassembly with freshly rebuilt and powder-coated parts.



## Wisconsin Wing News



### (cont'd from previous page) Restoration of a wartime aircraft

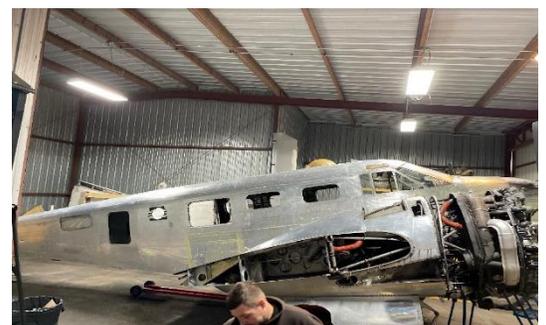
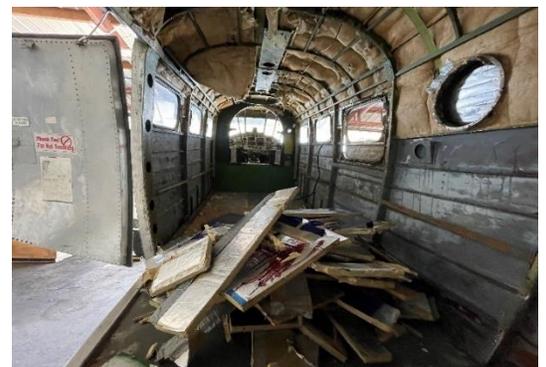
by Col Chris Reeves

The ambitious plan is to do one section at a time, starting with the tail. The tail feathers are being recovered. The bearings, hinges, and assembly for the elevator and rudders are next. Moving forward from the tail, I have the Beech wing spar x-ray AD scheduled for late January. With the wings removed, the next segment will be the right/left inboard wing sections holding the oil reservoirs and fuel tanks. Engines and props may be sent out for major overhaul this spring. Ideally, in a perfect world, I'm hoping to start the engines sometime in late 2022. Hearing those twin R-985's come to life again will be music to my ears! Second only to 36.5" of Mg of takeoff power!

After the airframe and powerplant restoration, I'm somewhat fluid on how to finish the interior. Major items are an avionics suite that will make this a capable IFR aircraft and an interior that will rival the last King Air 90's that replaced the Beech 18's as corporate aircraft.

There is a lot of "less than desirable" work that could be done, and I'm open to volunteers to swing by and shoot the breeze with. There are still many corners and crevasses that need cleaning, rivets drilled out, and sheet metal needing forming. Both myself and Austin are airline pilots with a whacky schedule. We also fly the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for the Wisconsin Army National Guard. With that, our ability to forecast out a day or weekend to spend in the hangar isn't easy. Often it is last minute drive out to the hangar for a few hours work. I look forward to adding many of the members of the Wisconsin Wing CAF to the roster who brought back life to this wartime Beech.

Please feel free to contact me at (760) 586-7995 or [chris.reeves@tctaerial.com](mailto:chris.reeves@tctaerial.com) if you'd like to come out, get a little dirty and hear tall tales of aerial intrigue.



[Click here to check it out!!!](#)

## Calendar – Upcoming Events

Date	Event, Time, Location
Sat., 1/15	CAF WI Wing Meeting 10:30AM, CAF Hangar
Wed., 2/9	Wing Staff Meeting (Zoom)
Sat., 2/19	CAF WI Wing Meeting 10:30AM, CAF Hangar
Sat., 3/19	CAF WI Wing Meeting 10:30AM, CAF Hangar
Sat., 4/16	CAF WI Wing Meeting 10:30AM, CAF Hangar
Sat., 5/21	CAF WI Wing Meeting 10:30AM, CAF Hangar
Sat., 5/21	TBM Reunion, Peru, IL
	*** Updates coming soon !!! ***

## WI Wing Staff

Position	Person	Contact Info.
<b>Wing Leader:</b>	Gary Otto	262-875-1640 gary.arthur.otto@gmail.com
<b>Executive Officer:</b>	Tom McDermott	608-289-2424 mcfender@yahoo.com
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ryan Beard	847-858-7846 rcbeard1@gmail.com
<b>Maintenance Officer:</b>	Steve Sorge	414-852-8104 ssorge@wi.rr.com
<b>Operations Officer:</b>	Mike Woods	262-781-0487 mikewoods@gmail.com
<b>Safety Officer:</b>	Scott Twesme	920-650-6101 srtzen@gmail.com
<b>Ground Crew Leader:</b>	Mike Ziarniak	414-380-9532 ziarniakm@gmail.com
<b>Public Information Officer:</b>	Andy Jaskie	414-241-5092 pilotjaskie@hotmail.com
<b>Development Officer:</b>	Bob Vajgrt	414-550-2770 dawnbob@wi.rr.com
<b>Education Officer:</b>	Jeanette Anderson	414-313-9513 jfa16daa@gmail.com
<b>Membership Officer:</b>	*** Open *** This could be you!	
<b>Adjutant Officer:</b>	A.G. Bharatkumar	262-366-3295 agbkumar@wi.rr.com
<b>Events Officer:</b>	Kathy Laabs	414-418-7222 t28gal@att.net
<b>Historian:</b>	*** Open *** This could be you!	
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Brad Ohde	262-309-8600 brad.ohde@outlook.com
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