

# ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY HOUSE SIX NEWS AND GOSSIP

(Not to be confused with the Stars and Stripes)

1 November 2008 - 25th Edition

## NEW MEMBERS

The Roadrunners are happy to add to our ranks two new members who followed their fathers with boots on the ground at Groom Lake and two members affiliated with aviation but not at the Ranch. We welcome aboard Suzi Rogers, (right) daughter of Colonel Amundson, Deputy Commander of the 1129th SAS during Project Oxcart, and founder of Roadrunners International. Also



welcome aboard is extended to Debbie Dye, (left) daughter of T.D. Barnes, Area 51 Special Projects during Project Oxcart and beyond. Debbie and Suzi worked together at the Ranch for more than a decade before retiring or pursuing other interests. The third new member, Toni Hiley was an Air Force brat roaming the desert around Indian Springs, Nevada where her father was stationed in the Air Force. Toni is currently the



Director of the CIA Museum at Langley. The fourth new member is Kamber Lamborn, (below) granddaughter of A-12



project pilot Jack Layton. Consistent with our policy concerning members still active in areas sensitive to our nation's national security, no additional information will be published about these new members. As a note of interest the two new Groom Lake-affiliated members bring us a total of four Roadrunner descendent members having served at Ranch, Pete Slater, son of 1129th Oxcart commander Colonel Slip Slater, and Jim Simon, son of Lt. Col. Jim Simon killed in an F-101 crash at Groom Lake while providing chase for the A-12 trainer, plus Suzi and

Debbie mentioned above. Besides these four descendent members, we are proud to have in our Roadrunner association Roadrunner family members who may have also supported activities at the Ranch that we don't know about. These include Richard Fox, son of Iowa Hall of Fame inductee Bill Fox, Robert Gilliland, son of Lockheed test pilot Bob Gilliland, first to fly the SR-71, Dan & Don Griffin whose father (and Dan) worked as engineers on the YF-12 program at the Ranch, Steven Kershner, son of Honeywell engineer Bernie Kershner, Cynthia Miller, daughter of Col. Ray Schrecengost, Sam Schrecengost, brother to Ray Schrecengost, Joe Murray, son of A-12 project

pilot Frank Murray, Brad Poppeli and Justin Stephensen, grandsons of Billy and Colleen Pryor, John Pryor, son of Billy and Colleen Pryor, Debbie VandenBos, daughter of A-12 project pilot MG Mele Vojvodich. (If we missed anyone please let us know and collect a free brew at the next reunion)

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### Featured Roadrunner

This month the Roadrunner staff has selected to honor as featured Roadrunner COL.



MAYNARD (AM) AMUNDSON, a great man and leader who not only founded Roadrunners Internationale, but also served as the former Deputy Commander of the 1129th Special Activities Squadron at Area 51 during Project OXCART and Operation Black Shield. We also chose to feature Colonel Amundsen to demonstrate the importance of our fellow Roadrunners taking the time to provide their stories and photos to RI Historian Frank Murray and/or Webmaster T.D. Barnes, or at least tell their family and friends about the recently declassified periods of their career. Colonel Amundsen was born 11/22/1921 and died 02/17/1980. Several years ago he

and Lois gathered a group of the former 1129<sup>th</sup> personnel at their home in Las Vegas and suggested they organize Roadrunners Internationale. THAT'S IT, FOLKS. Sadly, this is all we and Am's family know about the military legacy of Colonel Maynard Amundson. I hope that after publishing this we will receive sufficient responses that we can redo the publishing of this limited legacy of one of our great leaders. While we don't know the military legacy of Am and Lois, we can fortunately and proudly publish the legacy of the exceptional Amundson descendents who have graciously maintained contact with the Roadrunners. We do so including the group photos in hopes they will encourage other Roadrunner family members (making them extended members of the Roadrunner family) to maintain contact with us to carry on the legacy of their parents.



Smoky is the oldest and like Am he is a man of few words but gets the job done. Smoky loves the outdoors like his father. Smoky has 4 children: Melissa, Andy, Tyler and Griffin, and 3 grandchildren from Melissa, Jacob, Emma and Abe. Smoky and his wife Luanne live in southern California.



Bob, a retired lawyer in Las Vegas is so much like his Dad and Mom. Since retiring Bob has taken an interest in the stock market, poker tournaments where, sharing Am's talent of counting cards he has done very well. Bob collects guns, so we don't mess with him. Bob has 2 boys who both reside in Las Vegas. Zach is finishing up his accounting degree and Greg just graduated from the police academy in Las Vegas. His better half is Susan and they live in Henderson, Nevada, of course.

Mary Amundson/Young is just like her mom Lois, both who loved children. She is running a daycare at a retirement facility, and like her mom, is always on the go, never letting a week go by without planning something - Canoe trips, hiking, and just relaxing. Mary even named her boat after Lois's favorite song Sandman. Mary has three children, one daughter (Jessica Betts who is married and living in Texas with her husband David Betts) and 2 sons (Nathan who is a salesman working in Minneapolis, Mn. and Peter who is a senior at Eau Claire, Wis.) Mary husband's name is Tom Young and they live in the great state of Minnesota.



John has his own tax accounting business and has a hobby that requires its own room in his and Sandie's house. The hobby is wine which he loves to taste and review. John and Sandie have two children, daughter Julie, who is a freshman at SMU and son, Tommy, a senior in high school. They live in Las Vegas.



Suzi, our latest Roadrunner member is very much like her Mom. She even looks like her. Suzi married Jack, a military man. Since leaving the Ranch Suzi works for the school district as Lois did. She has some of "Am" in her as she loves her dogs just like Dad. Suzi has two sons...Joe in the army and stationed in Iraq and Jason who just joined the Air Force. Suzi and Jack live in the big state of Texas.

Jim, the youngest, has a little of both of his parents. Am was into yard work when he had the time and also loved animals. Jimmy does both of those hobbies. He also is in accounting like "Am". Jimmy pulls the family together like their mom Lois used to do. He and Lisa have one son, Eric, who is in high school. Las Vegas is where they call home.



Am and Lois both loved the game of golf and the tradition has been handed down to the kids and grandkids. The boys are always trying to win the "family belt". Jim has the honor right now but it won't be long before the grandkids challenge him and take it. Smoky can boast that he is the only one who has a "hole in one" ...Torrey Pines in San Diego and brother Bob was his witness. If the Amundson kids are not competing on the golf course, then they are hard at bragging rights on who is the best cribbage player...a game Am taught all of them at early ages. Again, the grandkids also like to play and they all have fun ribbing each other over who's the best player. Mom passed on her love of cooking to all of the kids. Her famous pies', pizza and homemade bread is still a favorite amongst all of them. Jim and John have mastered the pie's and pizza, Mary and Suzi the homemade bread. It's all good thanks to their mom, Lois. Lois did get to see her first great-grandkid, Emma before she passed away.



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Hello Roadrunners ,

We knew the Amundson's in Omaha, Neb. Offutt AFB. Because of "Am" my Ken, was asked to come to Las Vegas. On arrival, we were greeted very kindly in their home, before moving into our home on Eugene St, Lois was kind enough to watch our son Stanley for an afternoon, who then was a little menace and ran away from her too quickly. Result was that Lois's back went out. I still feel bad about that - sorry to the family. As for Col Amundson, he was a gentle and kind man, who took a liking to my husband, Ken. That's how we got to the Roadrunners special group of people. Wish I could tell you more, but my memory of that time is little. I was alone a lot, which we as wives were all the same. After everything closed down, we did have a great assignment to Hickam AFB, my last good memory of that time was, being in paradise with Ken and our sons, Robert, David and Stanley. Regards to all. Liz Culp

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This past month we could smell the glue and heard a big "Ta-Da" from Gardnerville as RI Historian Frank Murray finished updating the RI scrapbook. Several pages were added as a result of some of you Roadrunners clearing out the old footlocker and sending your old photos and doodads to Frank. Keep it up guys. We need your "stuff."\* \* \*

### 2009 Roadrunner Reunion Update

Reunion Committee Chairman Harry Martin reports everything is go for the next Roadrunner reunion at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino on 5-9 October 2009.



Joining in a luncheon meeting were left to right T.D. Barnes, Susan Essex with the hotel, Jim and Judy Prucnal, and Harry Martin to discuss and amend the contract for the event minimum attendance falls below what was previously agreed to. Susan gave the Roadrunners a tour of the hotel to view the major improvements made since our last reunion. For those Roadrunners complaining last year about the

hotel showers being too cramped for group showers, we can assure you that each shower will now comfortably hold four or more Roadrunners. Seriously, the hotel has been completely

refurbished and looks great. (And the price is still right) The coffee shop is now a T.G.I. Friday's restaurant. The jazz lounge has been moved but the music is still as great as always. Harry and Susan are going to



MSGT Martin looking so

obedient? Were you getting your six chewed, Harry?



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The Roadrunners join the U-2 4080<sup>th</sup> who met in Del Rio to toast proud memories of



Laughlin's 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. Meeting last October 11, 2008 for the final reunion were those who served 1957-1963 as one of the most distinguished units in the history of Laughlin Air Force Base. The then-top-secret, now famed U-2 "spy planes" had one mission: to fly at record-setting altitudes, and use highly specialized cameras and film to record activities and facilities nearly 14 miles below. Last month we also joined the 4080<sup>th</sup> in mourning the loss of Maj. Richard S. "Steve" Heyser whose mission over Cuba confirmed the presence of Soviet missiles.

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Funding cuts by lawmakers have doomed a hypersonic project by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the U.S. Air Force named Blackswift that was to develop a long-awaited successor to the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird. The combined-cycle Blackswift demonstrator was scheduled to complete first flight in 2012. It should have reached a top speed of Mach 6 using a combination of a turbojet and a supersonic combustion ramjet (scramjet). As a reusable aircraft, it should have been able to land and be ready to fly again after refueling.



A significant effort has been put forward over the last several years to develop the propulsion technology required and to build a national government and industry team capable of developing and flying a reusable hypersonic testbed. The focus of hypersonic research will shift to focusing on supporting existing programs. The DARPA/USAF Falcon program awarded to Lockheed will proceed with fabricating hypersonic technology vehicles that will begin flight tests in 2009.

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Feedback on Sam Pizzo's book.

After the service I worked for Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks CT for 36 years. One of my first projects was working on an afterburner fuel pump that went to Pratt and Whitney for one of their engines. For testing the fuel pump we had to use special fuel that came in 55 gallon drums (we called it JP-5). Every thing was secret and no one knew where the engine was used. Engineering meetings were held at motels in the mid-west someplace. I finally did get to see the engine in a test cell at Pratt and Whitney and it really was impressive. When the A-12 was presented to the public, we finally knew where that engine was used. Your book was great reading. Ted Jansen

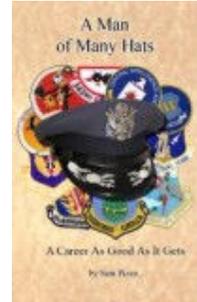
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Shucks, Sam! Guess this is your day for compliments. We feel you deserve a lot of kudos for taking the time to write about events of the Cold War severely lacking in the history of that era because of security restrictions at the time. It is a must read for historians and scholars researching a period of time that they have only heard about. Although you have exhausted your supply of the book in



hard back, it will remain available in the Cold War Stories section of our Roadrunner website that is now linked to the UNLV Cold War Oral History network, making it available to university libraries nationwide. Anyone can access your book by going to this link:

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/pizzo/book.pdf> Keywords contained in your book can be found by merely entering them in the search box on the home page of our web site or in the search box on the UNLV website. Thank you, Sam for your contribution to our Roadrunner legacy mission. For those who don't know, besides Sam's book we have posted on our website books authored by Hank Meierdierck and Velma Weiss of CIA fame.



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#### FEEDBACK

##### THE JACK WEEKS ACCIDENT

By: Roadrunner Daniel Beaulieu

I helped change the engine on the A-12 flown by Jack on his fatal flight, so I don't think it had the same engine in which Dennis Sullivan experienced over temp problems. It is my belief that the hydro system malfunctioned causing the bypass door to close. With the spike retracted, no air was flowing to cool the engine. Unfortunately, all one can do is speculate as to what happened so suddenly that Jack was unable to react and the cause to be undetected by the birdwatcher system.

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**UK Roadrunner member Alan Johnson wants to know if he moves to America will he get a share when Obama spreads our Roadrunner wealth.**

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#### ARTICLE 121 NEWS

Air Force Flight Test Center Museum  
Blackbird Air Park, Palmdale, CA.

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article121.html>



RI President Barnes reports meeting at the Air Force Flight Test Center Museum and having a great visit with Fred Johnsen, Director/Curator (left) and Tony Moore, Museum Technician (right) replacing Roadrunner member Doug Nelson and Ilah, the woman behind Doug's success. The Blackbird Air Park will continue with the Roadrunner paver placement as in the past. We look forward to a long and pleasant supporting relationship with Fred and Doug in regards to Article 121.



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#### ARTICLE 122 NEWS

Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, New York City

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article122.html>

The World War II aircraft carrier Intrepid, powered by tugs and accompanied by a festive Hudson River traffic jam, was returned last month to the Manhattan pier where it has served for 24 years as a military and space museum. Following the lead of Roadrunner member Ron Girouard who donated a story board to the Battleship Memorial Park Museum in Mobile for display with Article 132, Roadrunner member Jeannette Remak is preparing a similar

story board to be presented to the Intrepid for exhibit with Article 122. Hooah to both of you. Let's hope the Intrepid Museum will join Mobile in continuing a Roadrunner legacy recognition trend for the other A-12 museums to follow.

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ARTICLE 128 NEWS

CIA Compound Langley, VA

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article128.html>

Museum Director Toni Hiley has advised us that an officially sanctioned photo depicting Article 128 in its final resting venue will be provided shortly for insertion in our web site. We have seen a restricted photo and can say that Toni and company have made us all proud for Article 128. We can hardly wait to share what we've seen with the rest of you.

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ARTICLE 130 NEWS

San Diego Aerospace Museum San Diego, CA

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article130.html>

NOTHING TO REPORT

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ARTICLE 134M NEWS

Museum of Flight Seattle, WA

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article940.html>

Executive Director Dave Pinsky reports receiving a message from the National Museum of the United States Air Force ("Air Force Museum") on September 24th that the Pacific Coast Air Museum has been awarded operational certification by the National Museum of the United States Air Force. After a two and one-half year struggle against what at times seemed insurmountable odds, the museum is now certified by both the Naval Aviation Museum and the Air Force Museum.

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ARTICLE 131 NEWS

Southern Museum of Flight Birmingham, AL

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article131.html>

Is in constant contact with us. Nothing new to report.

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ARTICLE 132 NEWS

Battleship Memorial Park - Mobile, Alabama

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/article132.html>

Sorry folks, no coon or southern cuisine stories this month.

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FLIGHT TEST HISTORICAL FOUNDATION "GATHERING OF THE EAGLES 2008"

Several Roadrunner members were present at Dryden on 24 October 2008 for the saluting of members of the XB-70 Flight Test Program. RI President Barnes received a double treat with there also being an event that morning marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of test pilot/astronaut Bill Dana's final flight in the X-15 that ending that hypersonic research program. Barnes had participated in both programs prior to transferring to Area 51 as Operation Black Shield was winding down and the MiG and stealth programs



starting up. Though there were more Roadrunners in attendance, we obtained



Bob Gilliland & T.D. Barnes



Tony Landis & Dennis Jenkins



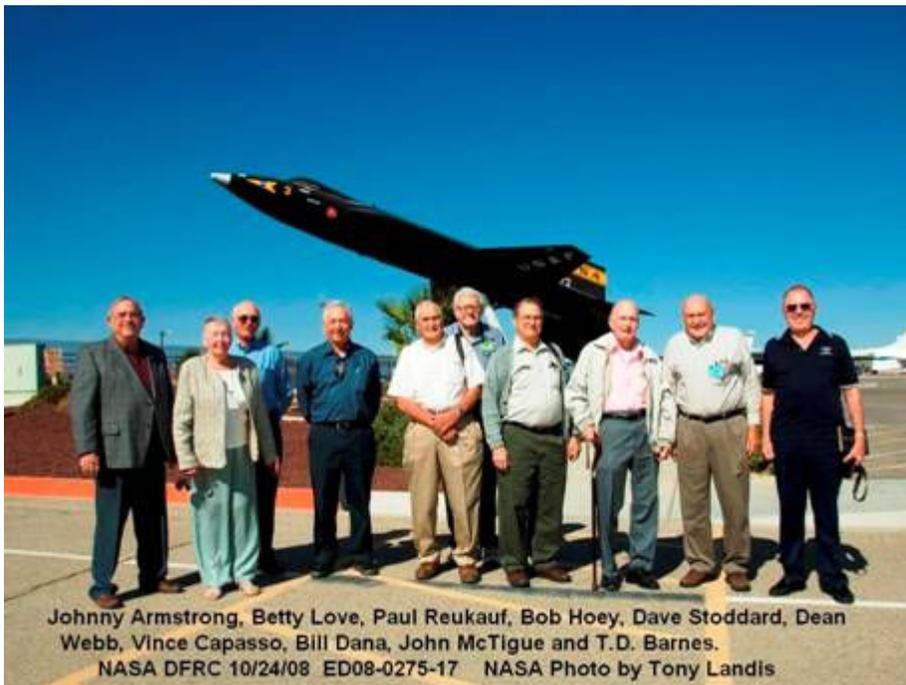
Bob and lovely Marci Sturmthal



Barnes and Pete Merlin

photos of only famed Lockheed test pilot Bob Gilliland, first to fly the SR-71A, B, & C, and the only pilot to fly all models of the YF-12A and the SR-71, T.D. Barnes who spent several years on the NASA High Range prior to Area 51, Pete Merlin, NASA Historian and author, Tony Landis, NASA photographer The X-15 alumni pictured (below) celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NASA and pilot Bill Dana (third from right) flying the final flight of the X-15, marking the end of the line for what many consider to be the most successful research airplane in history. The hypersonic X-15 flew 199 flights, reaching a top speed of Mach 6.7, and an altitude of 354,000 feet, establishing astronaut rated pilots over the skies of Nevada starting approximately a year after astronaut Alan Shepard earned his wings as the first American in space. Barnes was an engineer at the NASA High Range's Beatty station during the hypersonic flight testing of the Mach 6.7 X-15, Mach 3+ XB-70, YF-12, and A-12 (secret, unidentified plane at the time), the lifting body program developing the space shuttle, and the LLRV program developing the Lunar Lander used by Apollo. One of Barnes' contributions to aviation history is his forcing his pilot safety concerns upon NASA that ultimately shutdown flights on the entire NASA High Range to fix a 2,000 foot altitude problem in the Dryden and Ely radars that had for years been mistakenly accepted as an "inherent error" in the Beatty radar. Barnes, formerly schooled and

having served as instructor with Army Nike Ajax, Nike Hercules, and HAWK surface to air radar and missile systems plus a combat deployment with the HAWK during the Berlin Wall crisis, insisted that such a deadly error was unacceptable and that there was no such thing as an "inherent error" in the NASA SCR-584 Mod-2 radar systems. He insisted the problem was in the NASA Dryden and Ely systems because the Beatty radar data always agreed with the altitudes reported by the planes. While the radar data at both Dryden and Ely agreed with each other in altitude, they falsely indicated a pilot being at 2,000 foot altitude while the plane was actually sitting on the runway. Because the data from two radar systems always agreed, it was



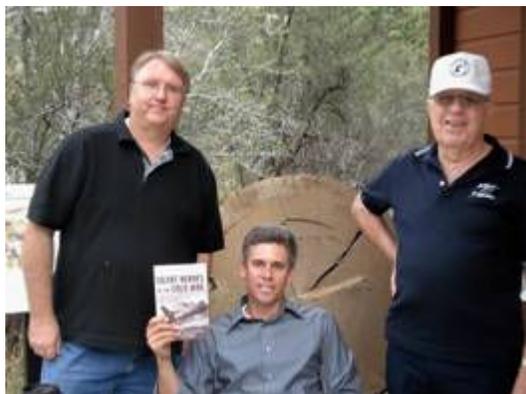
Johnny Armstrong, Betty Love, Paul Reukauf, Bob Hoey, Dave Stoddard, Dean Webb, Vince Capasso, Bill Dana, John McTigue and T.D. Barnes.  
NASA DFRC 10/24/08 ED08-0275-17 NASA Photo by Tony Landis

NASA's belief that the problem was with the Beatty system, not realizing that they had for years endangered the lives of countless test pilots depending on faulty local radar data. Laying his career on the line, Barnes confronted his NASA counterpart about fixing the Dryden and Ely problem during a period the range had no flights scheduled. Overhearing Barnes' persistent argument on the High Range net and noting a reluctance of NASA to react or accept it was the Dryden radar at fault, NASA Chief Test Pilot Joe Walker, backed by the other X-15 and lifting body pilots, refused to fly until the error was fixed. During approx 3 weeks of correlation flights and intensive tests that first proved that Barnes was right, the Ely and Dryden radars were repeatedly dismantled and tested until it was finally discovered that a field modification had been issued nearly 20 years earlier for the 1940's vintage "Mod-2" radar, however had been installed in only the radar located at Beatty. Barnes was recruited for highly secret Area 51 Special Projects shortly thereafter.

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#### UPDATE ON THE SILENT HEROES OF THE COLD WAR MEMORIAL

Committee Chairman Steve Ririe reports good progress on the monument to honor the 14 CIA, Air Force, and civilian employees killed in the crash of a C-54 on Mt. Charleston while enroute to Area 51 in 1955 for the U-2 Project Aquatone. Thanks to the unrelenting efforts of Steve that have included appearances before the U.S. Senate, meetings with the U.S. Forest Service, etc., the



project is now in the design and financing stage. This past month Author Ky Plaskon published the book "Silent Heroes of the Cold War" for which book signings were conducted on Mt. Charleston and at the Atomic Museum in Las Vegas. All proceeds go towards the memorial. To raise money for the project a special tour of the Nevada Test Site will occur on December 12, 2008 under the guidance of Troy Wade, President of the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation, T.D. Barnes, President of Roadrunners Internationale, Author Ky Plaskon, and Chairman Steve Ririe.

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Thank You Dan Harrison

Hi, I retired from Lockheed 18 plus years ago. I worked for Bob Murphy delivering the SR's in the early 60's. I landed at the ranch Valentines Day 1983 and didn't leave till 1990. Forced retirement. I did liaison work on all of the 117's except the one Bob Ridenaur had fail on take off. I was at site two Plant 42 working for Bob Murphy prior to the first SR coming up from Burbank. I landed in Burbank in 1939 having come across on Route 66 from Connecticut. Dad had been hired by Hal Hibbard head of engineering. As a child, youngster, I was taught to fly control line model aircraft by Rod Kreimendahl. He died in the C-54 crash and my father lost his closest friend. Rod was Kelly's wing design man and for fun was the designer of the Shoestring racing plane. The point is his name is misspelled in the scrolling list on the front page of the web site and I hope you can fix it. Thanks so much, Dan Harrison.

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And a Thanks to Robert in Seattle

Many thanks to Robert in Seattle for volunteering to help the RI webmaster identify broken photo links remaining after the recent website script change. With over 2,000 links on the site, there still exists some that are corrupted. The RI staff doesn't know Robert except that he was a mechanic on B-52's and KC-135's and initially trained on a B-47 at Amarillo AFB, Texas. Let's give Robert a big HOOAH!!!! Thanks are extended to all the rest of you and strangers pointing out glitches on the web site to get it right. It's truly a team effort.

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If we post something in error, we would like to know. We depend on you to help us get it right.

TIRED OF THE SAME FACES EACH EDITION? - SEND US YOUR STORIES AND GOSSIP.

