

# The Aviator Newspaper

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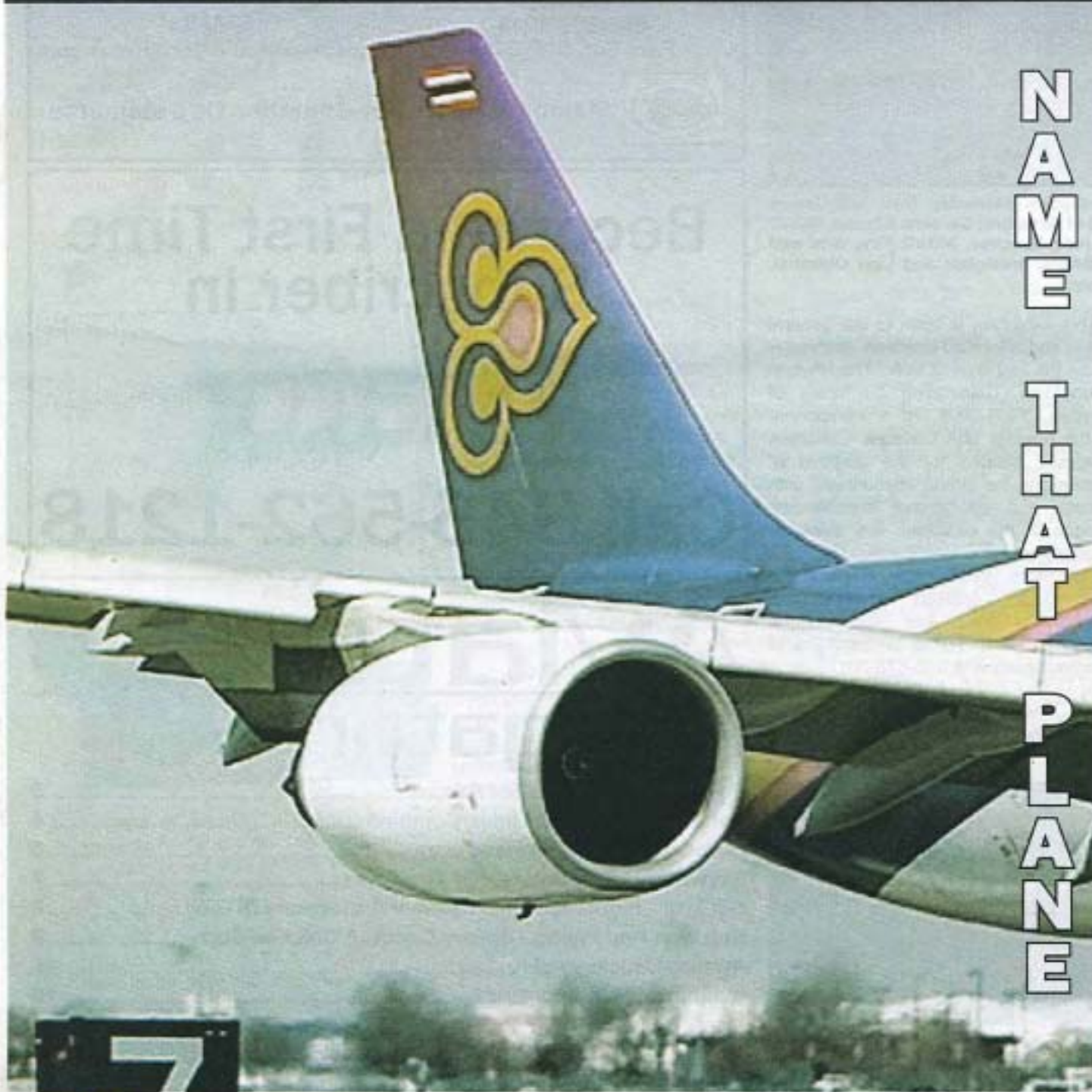
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A Publication of E.W. Smith Publishing Co., Inc. Est. 1979



VOL. 2 NO. 31

APRIL 20, 2008 - MAY 19, 2008

## PHOTO MYSTERY OF THE MONTH



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## CANCELATIONS AND CHAOS

By Mary A. Luce

### A Chronology

*Tuesday, April 8:* American Airlines canceled 550 MD-80s over questionable safety checks. Under scrutiny was the electrical wiring in the auxiliary hydraulic pumps in the landing gear. According to an American spokesman, ties in the bundles of wires in the wheel-well were either too close or too far apart. Additionally, some of the clips were not facing the same direction. According to officials this problem may cause an in-flight electrical fire.

The Federal Aviation Administration, or F.A.A., issued an Airworthiness Directive in September of 2006. The FAA considers the wiring inconsistencies a safety risk.

A spokesman for American said they were complying with the FAA directive and that the problem was a technical issue – not a safety issue.

*Wednesday, April 9:* American Airlines scrubbed almost 1,000 MD-80s – more than one-third of its capacity. Most of

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With Gloria Smith Zawaski

# Skywriting



Tired of hearing about pilots who dreamed of flying since before they could speak? Bored with stories about those pilots who built model airplanes, hung around airports then one day hitched a ride? Then listen to Eileen Piasecki-Couch's story. In June of 2001, she was a 46 year old seemingly sensible wife, mother of three boys and business owner when one day she just decided to take to the skies. "I was driving my son to his friend's when I opened my mouth and the words tumbled out: 'I'm going to be a pilot.'" To which her teenaged son replied: "Right mom. Sure you are."

Eileen confesses the idea didn't come totally out the blue. "The night before, I saw the movie Pearl Harbor and loved

the flying scenes. The next day, I knew I'd fly."

Eileen, owner and founder of Pine Island Herb and Spice Company in Pine Island, New York, trained with CFI Rich Bartlett at Sussex airport. She maintains that Bartlett needed convincing about her determination to become a pilot. "He thought I wanted to hire him for a one-shot, "flight-seeing" ride," she says. As soon as she climbed aboard the airplane, she was committed to get her license. "I was scared to death for about the first 20 hours," she says.

Eileen fondly reminisces about her lessons at "FWN". "Everyone knew each other and looked out for each other. I loved getting there early in the morning when the sun was coming up and the flocks of killdeer were starting their racket." According to Eileen, the late morning was a little dicey. "That's when the thermals picked up at the end of runway 21," she laughs.

She earned her private pilot's license in April of 2002. She later received her instrument rating on August of 2005.

Eileen bought her first plane, a 1968 Cherokee 140, before she finished her private pilot rating. "What I saved by taking lessons in my own plane helped me meet loan payments," she jokes. A lot of people don't do much more than local hops in their 140s, but Eileen and her Cherokee 140 ("Betty") journeyed first to Alaska -- "not exactly over the mountains, but around and through them," -- she says. She also took Betty to the Bahamas before setting her sites on Betty Too, a 1963 Mooney 20C. Eileen

hangars Betty Too in Blairstown, New Jersey 1N7, so she can make frequent visits to her mother, who still lives on the farm in Great Meadows, NJ where Eileen grew up. Mother and daughter enjoy painting local landscapes. "I love painting en plein air," remarks Eileen. Her paintings and her company are featured in the Walkkill River School's recently-published "Orange County Bounty." Eileen is a member of the art school as well.

Eileen plans to fly in the all-women's 2008 Air Classic Race from Bozeman, Montana to Mansfield, Mass. slated for

the last weekend in June. The only thing larger than Eileen's determination to compete is the cost associated with the race, so Eileen's devoting time to finding sponsorship dollars. She's seeking corporate as well as individual donations for her team "The Squawk of the Town" and invites anyone interested in helping to visit [www.squawkofthetown.net](http://www.squawkofthetown.net).

Does she have advice for other women who yearn to become pilots? "Don't worry about not being as good as men pilots," she says. "Chances are you'll be a lot better. At least women aren't afraid to ask for directions."



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