

# DECEMBER 2022 LOBO WING CHATTER



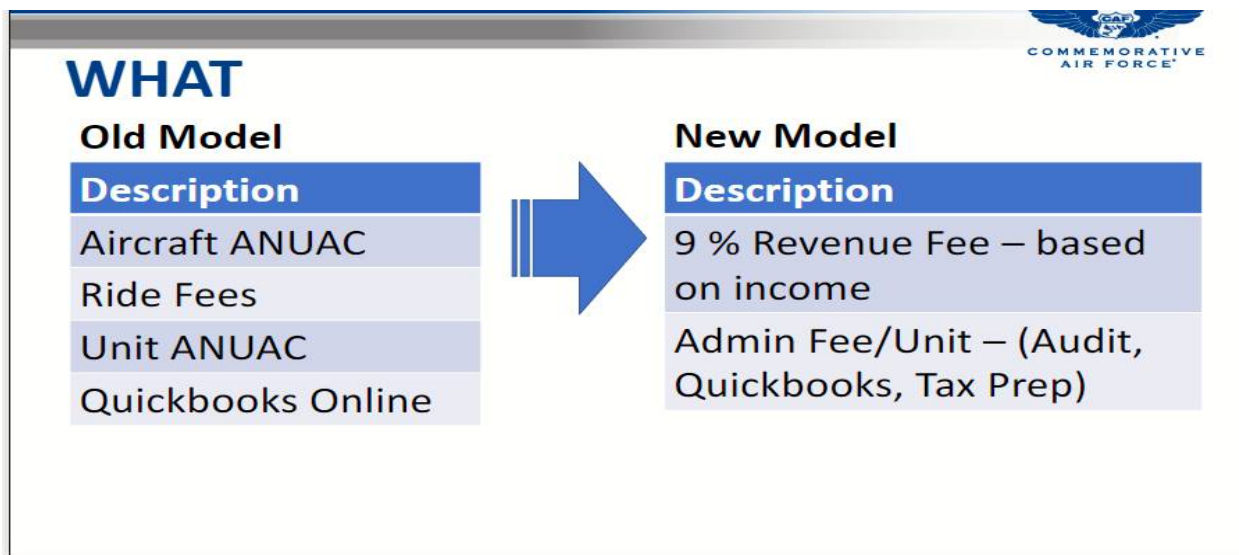
## WING LEADER BRIEFING by Scott Witschger

This issue will act as the Chatter newsletter and the membership renewal update. Most of the important news for the Wing is from headquarters. You will be receiving your membership renewal by mail shortly.

## NEWS from Headquarters

First is the tragic loss of the B-17 Texas Raiders and the P-63 King Cobra at the Dallas Air show. There is plenty of information available on-line on the accident and you should be receiving emails from Hank Coates with status briefings. There are no immediate financial impacts on the CAF and it is impossible to know at this time what the long-term impacts might be. I absolutely don't believe that the impacts on the CAF will be terminal. They could be minor and they could be significant, only time will tell. In the interim we will continue to operate as normal and will continue working to complete the AT-11. In the future you will continue to receive video briefings from Hank Coates and if Wing Leaders are provided any additional information that will impact the Wing it will be distributed to all members.

In September headquarters announced a new revenue model. The current method that is used by headquarters to collect money from the wings has been in place for about 30 years with no change. The new model transitions from a Fee based model to a Revenue based model.



Our main fee paid to headquarter has been ANUAC (Annual Unit Activity Charge). We pay one for each airplane and one for the unit. We also pay an annual fee to use QuickBooks accounting software. When the AT-11 converts to flying status, we were looking at a very large increase in the ANUAC fee for that aircraft. The other large fee paid by some units is a ride fee of \$75.00 per seat sold on Experimental/Exhibition aircraft like the B-29 and the B-24. The \$75.00 per seat fee is why we could not fly the AT-11 in the Experimental category. The ride fee is so large that our analysis indicated that we could not fly the AT-11 and make a profit. The PT-26 operates in the ride program in the Normal category so it must be in the FAA drug and alcohol program. This means that anyone who flies or maintains the aircraft must be in the FAA drug program. We pay headquarters a fee to be in the Drug program.

Under the new revenue plan we will pay (be taxed) 9% of all revenues that we collect. Only a few items like Aircraft sponsorships, Unit Dues and in-kind donations are not taxed. An initial analysis indicates that the AT-11 can pay the 9% tax on ride revenues and still make a good profit. It appears that in 2023 we will pay headquarters a little less than we would have under the old plan. The finance officer and I are still analyzing the longer-term impacts on the wing after the AT-11 is in flying status. This will be shared in a future news letter

There are too many small details incorporated in the new plan to cover all of them here. If you would like more information, please shoot me an email.

Also note that the CAF headquarters basic Colonel annual membership fee is going up to \$225.00 annually after no increases for many years. Due to this increase the Wing will not be increasing our \$60.00 membership dues.

## LOCAL NEWS

From a human resource standpoint, the last six months have been difficult. Of our active working members, we have lost three members to personal illness or family illness issues. We have lost another two to relocations for job reasons. This is in addition to the normal summer travel that we retired folks participate in. This has really slowed down progress on the AT-11. Hopefully some of our members will be back soon. Our Adjutant, Ralph Crump, is one who has been impacted so David Hill has agreed to assume the Adjutant duties on a temporary basis until Ralph returns.

On the positive side of the ledger we have new member Brad Hueftle. Brad is an A&P who worked as an aircraft mechanic before joining the pilot ranks and is now a retired United/Continental Airline pilot. His experience and attention to detail have already proven to be a valuable addition to the AT-11 project. Our current maintenance officer Chuck Swanberg has wanted to be relieved of his maintenance officer duties for some time now and Brad has agreed to take on that task. I encourage a yes vote on the membership renewal.

Our Saturday lunches continue to be well attended and are a great source of revenue. We have raised our donation request prices and the customers have mostly responded well. But material prices are still climbing so more increases may be in order.

The Lobo Wing remains one officer short of our required positions. We still need an education officer. The position would need to be defined not on how it is defined by headquarters but rather what we think we can reasonably accomplish. While headquarters has new programs that they will share to help educate young people some are simply not within our reach. We need an education officer to help define how we are going to present the AT-11 and how we use the AT-11 to educate the public on Albuquerque's contribution in WWII. Send me an email indicating your interest in exploring this position and we can talk.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

In a few days you will be receiving the annual membership renewal package in the mail. There is no increase in dues this year. We could use an increase but given the increase by headquarters we don't want a double whammy. Once again we will be conducting our officer voting by mail given the good response we have received in the past. Our deadline for renewals is pretty loose but we would be grateful if your renewal could be returned by the end of January. We did not think we needed a vote this year but discovered we had not followed the voting rules so we have to repeat our elections as is explained in the renewal memo.

## LOCAL HISTORY

Many years ago, the Lobo Wing was blessed with Harry Elegreet. Harry was our news letter editor for many years and did a remarkable job until he ran afoul of the headquarters political correctness police and decided to call it a day. Harry truly used the real cut and paste method. He prepared many stories then printed them out and pasted them together to make up the final version of the then named Tale Wind. The following two clips published in February 2000 are the first time that Dave McBride and I appeared as officers of the Lobo Wing. That began a 23-year run as wing officers. I ran across this issue while cleaning up old files. Enjoy!

## Scott Witschger Lobo Adjutant

It took Heidi Fleiss about two months to become better known than, oh, say the Secretary Of Labor, whoever the hell he is.

Lobo Col Scott Witschger took only a few minutes to gain such a rise in recognition. Scott volunteered to accept appointment as the Lobo Wing Adjutant...and are we ever glad.

The Lobo Wing is a lot like running a small business and sometimes keeping the administrative aspects together is a lot like putting out the cat when it doesn't want to go. Whatever, we rest easy as Scott recently was responsible for successfully bringing a major corporation through the Y2K situation.





## AT-11 Briefing by Scott Witschger

Our efforts to bring in the Twin Beech from Guymon has failed. Although many attempts have been made no schedule would come together. However, I was able to spend some quality time with the Twin Beech at Airbase Arizona and gathered some good data and pictures. This airplane flew just three days prior to my visit. I also ran all the engine controls through their working range to compare them to ours. I was stunned. Ours are smooth as butter in comparison, so one concern has been alleviated.

All the current AT11 projects are in final assembly detail. Every time we think we know something we are proven wrong and we go back to the drawings to figure it out. The most frustrating problems are those that require the disassembly of an already finished component or system in order to correct the fitment of a new piece. Even though we have gone to great lengths to ensure this doesn't happen we have occasionally been taught that we are not all seeing. Then it's back to the drawings to figure out what happened, or we go to pictures of other Twin Beeches or we ask other Beech owners.

An example is the cockpit floor boards. We had an upholstery shop visit the hangar to determine how to install the cockpit Leathertex side panels. We had to build new floor boards with the wood attaching strips installed so they could get exact measurements without harming the finished floors. We also have to add more retaining strips on the side walls and ceiling to better retain the Leathertex fabric. It's always something when you are getting into the finish detail.

Here are a few shots of current projects:



**Researching Blueprints**



**Korry Tilbury and cockpit glass**



Dave Hill and the never ending reskin project



Good progress on the Turret Dome Buck

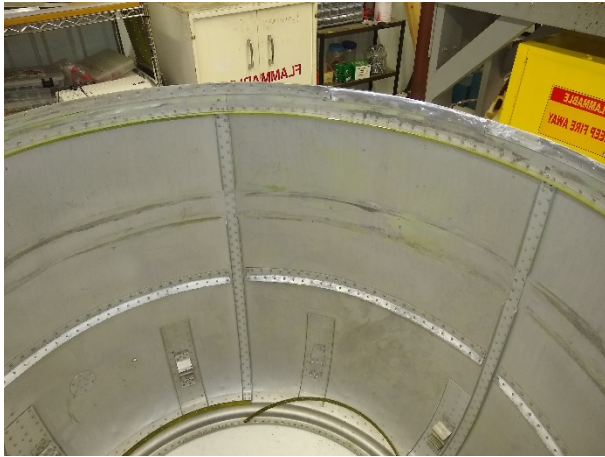


Completely finished Emergency Cabin Door release.



William Lothrop and Brad Hueftle fabricating cowl repair pieces

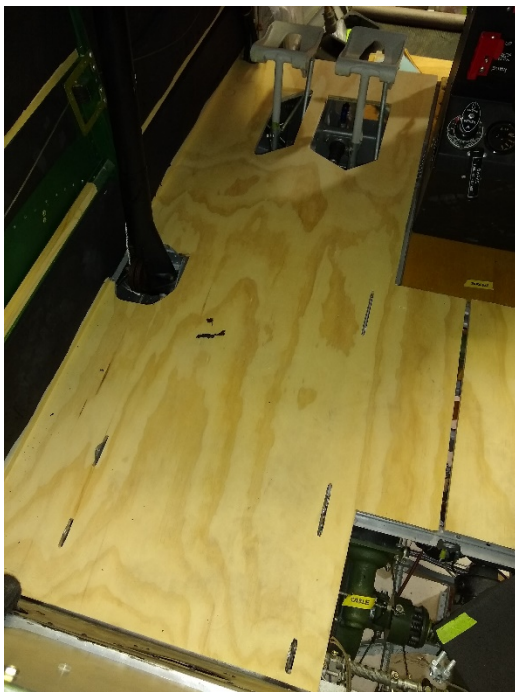




Cowl repairs...Looking good as new!



Interior fabric support strips



Temporary Floor Boards.



*Very small rigging*

## PT-26 Briefing by Dave McBride

### **PT-26s, Propellers and Safety**

If you've been out to the Lobo Wing hangar lately, you'll notice we have put stanchions around the nose and tail of the PT-26. The ones around the tail are mostly for protection of the PT-26. And the one around the nose serves a very important dual purpose. One of those is for the protection of the nose section. The other is highly important as it protects anyone from getting anywhere near the propeller. Most people are aware that a spinning propeller is very obviously

dangerous. What a lot of people aren't aware of is that a stationary propeller can also be very dangerous and unfortunately one of our members found out the hard way. To explain I have to give some details on how the engine and propeller of the PT-26 operates.

Most fuel fed aircraft engines require two spark plugs per cylinder. The spark for these is provided by two separate magnetos. When a magneto is grounded (off) the spark should not happen. If, for whatever reason, a magneto shorts out either internally or externally it can become "hot" and capable of providing a spark to the plugs. And if the propeller is moved even a little bit, and there is fuel in the engine, that spark can happen and the engine can start resulting in the propeller spinning. If a person is not ready for that to happen serious injury can occur.

As Paul Harvey used to say, here's the rest of the story.

A couple of months ago one of the magnetos on our PT-26 was not functioning correctly so a mechanic looked into the cause and repaired the suspect magneto. After the maintenance was completed a runup was required to ensure it was operating correctly. We had one pilot and one mechanic in the airplane. After ensuring the magnetos were off, the mixture was in cutoff position and the brakes were set, the ground crewman started to pull the propeller through to clear the cylinders of any oil prior to actual start to prevent any possible hydraulic lock. This is the way we have done this on this airplane for 23 years. **As he started to pull the propeller the engine started!!** We had a hot magneto!! As he had been trained to do, the ground crewman was pulling the propeller through and he was also pulling away from the aircraft in the same motion. In doing so the propeller clipped him in the chest damaging his cell phone and he fell backwards and tumbled away from the aircraft. As there was little to no fuel the engine stopped almost as soon as it started. His injuries consisted of a small scrape on his chest and a damaged cell phone. Not to mention scaring him to half to death!

Were we lucky? Yes and no. The ground crewman was taken to the local clinic and checked over for any additional injuries with none reported. I don't usually believe in luck but the circumstances might dictate otherwise. Another half inch or so and that ground crewman could have been severely injured. That he was properly trained prevented that.

What happened? Upon further inspection and unknown to the mechanic, there were magneto wires that were compromised and probably caused the short which caused the hot magneto. After correcting this the magneto worked correctly.

Lessons learned:

1. We have changed our procedures and no longer pull the propeller through manually. We now use the starter to clear the cylinders which is much safer. It might be hard on the starter but they can be replaced!
2. We have placed the aforementioned stanchions around the nose of the airplane to keep everyone from getting close to the propeller. If you're not the pilot or the mechanic it would be in your best interest to **Stay away!**



## **On Short Final**

We always need help from our members. Any time you can you can get to the hangar we can find work. Do you have a skill you think could be helpful? I'll bet I can find a way for you to contribute. Do you have a few hours a week available for paperwork? Bet I can find a way to help. Do you belong to another organization that might have potential Lobo Wing Members? Let's arrange for a presentation.

Stay Healthy, stay involved, see you soon.

Scott Witschger

Lobo Wing

Wing Leader