

The Wright Icon News

Bringing an Icon to Dayton - The Birthplace of Aviation

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Today's Modern Aerospace Hub - Tomorrow's Aviation Leader

Soaring 220 feet above the intersection of I-70 & I-75 and seen by thousands of vehicles daily, this 120 foot wingspan monument to the Wright Flyer will symbolize Dayton, Ohio throughout the world.

Monument Design Evolves

As with all major architectural projects, the concept of our monument to the Wright Brothers and the birth of aviation is evolving to a new, better informed design. Many of you are very familiar with and even fond of the scale model we have so proudly displayed at various locations around the region, but we are going to need a new one!

For a variety of reasons, including the desire to co-locate the monument with a retention pond that must be built at the site, constructability issues that take into account availability of materials, access to the site, and cost, the twin pole design has been replaced by a single pole design. Of course, the supporting

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cables remain a major feature, but with the continued support of Shell & Meyer Associates, they've been redesigned to provide support all around. The result is a much more aesthetic design that truly will be unique! The included rendering by Grant Fullmer of "Visions by Grant" shows the current concept in a view from the southwest looking at the approach to the monument from Singing Ridge Blvd. with the I-70/75 interchange in the background.

Since construction of the retention pond is likely to be put on contract by Butler Township in the near future, our project architect, Steve Brown of Brown & Bills Architects, Inc., has been working closely with Butler Township and Singer Properties to insure that monument requirements are incorporated into the Township's design and construction. Even though storm water calculations have been done, their ultimate impact on the pond design and our ability to integrate the monument with it are still to be determined.

There is more good news. The soil borings contributed this past year by Bowser-Morner, Inc. reveal dense original soil 27 feet deep, and bedrock 64 feet deep. We expect to be able to support the monument on a traditional concrete spread footing system, avoiding caissons or pilings. We most likely will need no further soil sampling before completing preliminary design documentation.



As I Remember It....

By Walt Hoy

Editor's Note: This installment concludes the two-part series.

Judge Walter Rice had formed a committee to do advance planning for the 2003 First Flight Centennial celebration. I made a luncheon appointment with Judge Rice and his committee and presented the model and our ideal. The judge approved of the idea but said we would have a problem in the fact there would be 17 locations, all of which would be characterized as the only location suitable to build the monument. As it turned out the judge was wrong – there were only 10 locations. But the advocate of each of those locations was very strong in his opinion!

The chairman of Five Rivers Metro Parks decided that the only place the monument could go would be at Deeds Point downtown. We had others that wanted the monument to be at the airport. Some thought it would be a great idea to put it on the Dayton Art Institute lawn. Others wanted it at the Air Force Museum. Carillon Park was also a favorite location.

It's been a long grind, but we're beginning to make real headway!

One of the people I talked to, Yale Ducker, thought that the intersection of I-70 and I-75 would be a perfect location. He just happened to own a large plot of land on the southeast corner of the intersection that he would donate to the cause. Yale was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea. While we were figuring out how to get this monument built, I was invited to lunch by Mrs. Singer of Singer Properties, Inc. She wanted to know what we were trying to do and was interested in helping us by donating land on the southwest corner of the intersection of I-70 and I-75. We had a very cordial lunch with her two daughters at the Elder-Beerman tea room at the downtown store. Now we had two high quality potential locations for the monument. Since we had been working with Ducker for a couple of years, it seemed appropriate that we continue with plans to build a monument on the southeast corner of the intersection. Unfortunately, Yale Ducker passed away and the decisions on the land were passed on to four heirs. After I had spent more than a year of negotiations with the Ducker family, Judge Rice made a motion in one of our board meetings that we accept the Singer family offer and build the monument on the southwest corner of the intersection. Joe Litvin, the Montgomery County engineer, did some horse trading with the state of Ohio and secured an additional 8/10 of an acre at that southwest location. We then had 8/10 of an acre from the

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WIG Makes Changes

Last year the Wright Image Group changed its by-laws to allow general membership, and this year we had our first general membership meeting. On December 2nd, Dayton History hosted the occasion at Hawthorn Hill, the beautiful mansion Orville and Wilbur built in Kettering. All WIG members were invited, and those who were able to attend enjoyed complimentary light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

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Amanda, Jodie and George Gianopulos, and Esther and Ralph Link enjoy the social aspect of 1st General Membership Meeting.

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No current board members were up for re-election at this meeting, but we elected a new one – Judi Law, President of Judo Steel Company, Inc! Judi began working with us in November and has put on a “full court press” to recruit some star power to assist in raising money this year. Judi is the 15th board member and is elected for a three year term. Also serving on the board as Directors Emeritus are Attorney Marshall Ruchman and Ms. Toulia Stamm of Stamm Communications.

Immediately prior to the General Membership meeting, the Board of Directors had its annual meeting to elect officers and approve by-law changes. The by-law changes reflect a revision of our committee structure to streamline, clarify, and consolidate the many aspects of board activities. The new structure consists of five standing committees – Executive, Design and Engineering, Fund Raising, Public Information, and Board Affairs.

Our founder, Walt Hoy, was elected to fill the new office of Board Chair; Walter Ohlmann was elected as President; Sally Ruh was elected as Secretary; and Jacqie Nawroth was re-elected as Treasurer. Steve Brown was re-elected VP of Design and Engineering and continues to head that committee, while two new VP offices were created to head up Fund Raising and Public Information. George Gianopoulos and Curt Nelson, respectively, were elected to those offices.

[Our Supporting Communities](#)

Beavercreek
Butler Twp
Centerville
Clayton
Dayton
Fairborn
Kettering
Miami Twp
Montgomery Co
Washington Twp
Xenia

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state of Ohio, two acres donated by the Singer family and an option to purchase two more acres. Since the state cannot cede land to a private entity the 8/10 acre was given to Butler Township for use by the Wright Image Group.

To protect the Singer family, the contract includes a provision that if construction is not started within three years of the gift, the land can revert. The WIG board of directors has held off signing the contract until we are assured of being able to comply. A principal of Singer Properties is on our board of directors and continues to work with us to assure the availability and best use of the land.

Although we are not now a member of the National Aviation Heritage Alliance (NAHA), they have taken up our cause and given us a very high priority in projects to be done in the Dayton area. They, like many other organizations, have tagged us with a new name, “North Star.” I’m sure we will have several other names tacked on the project, but the entity that comes up with the money will have the naming rights. *[Ed note: Since publication of the first part of this article, the Wright Image Group, Inc. has been officially accepted as a formal partner of NAHA.]*

Yale Ducker believed that if we had the consensus of our community, the money would follow, and I think his position is still relevant. We have been talking to social groups and community councils for years, collecting resolutions of support, and we just recently got an endorsement from the city of Dayton. We now have enough evidence of solid community support that we can pursue the next stage of our strategy, approaching state and federal agencies and businesses to solicit funding to complete the project.

It’s been a long grind, but we’re beginning to make real headway.

To join, make a donation, or get information explaining the different contribution and recognition levels, write to us at:

Monument
1605 N. Main St
Dayton, OH 45405

Board Member Spotlight



George Gianopulos –VP, Fund Raising

Born and raised in Springfield Ohio, George became a naval aviator when the Korean War broke out. He flew a variety of fighters, completed active duty, and moved back to Dayton. After two years at WPAFB, he went to work for Projects Unlimited, Inc. for the next 21 years, and worked his way up to VP of Sales. He then went to work for Western Gear/Lucas Aerospace, opened the company’s mid-west Field Marketing Office, and later became the director of all seven of its Field Marketing Offices in the U.S. Seventeen years later, he launched George Gianopulos & Associates where he continues to work as an independent aerospace marketing consultant. George is a multi-faceted individual – as a member of NAMI he is deeply involved in helping substance abusers through AA and NA; as a member of his church, he serves on the Greek Festival and Investment Committees, and has sung in the choir for over fifty years; as a pilot he indulges his love of aviation by periodically roaring into the air in an SNJ/AT-6. He is a member of the Daedalians, the Wright “B” Flyer, the Old Crows Association, EEMG, DADCA, and AFA. He’s proud of and passionate about our Dayton heritage as the “Birthplace of Aviation!”

Annual Membership Dues table with columns for Individual (\$20), Couple (\$30), and Business (\$50).

Make checks payable to: Aviation Heritage Foundation, Inc. With the following comment on the “For” line: “Restricted for WIG”

- WIG Board of Directors list including: Walt Hoy – Chairman, Walter Ohlmann – President, Stephen Brown – VP, Design & Engineering, George Gianopulos – VP, Fund Raising, Curt Nelson – VP, Public Information, Sally Ruh – Secretary, Jacqueline Nawroth – Treasurer, Shayna Kolodesh, Jon Kurtz, Amanda Wright Lane, Judi Law, Ellie Lewis, Anthony Perfilio, Walter Rice, Marshall Ruchman*, Bob Ruh, Toula Stamm*.

Published by: Wright Image Group, Inc. 1605 North Main St Dayton, OH 45405-4198. Phone: 937-276-2963 800-266-4767. Website: www.wrightmonument.org (Past newsletters are available). Email: walter@ponweb.com