



## FALL NEWSLETTER 2020

[washingtonseaplanepilots.org](http://washingtonseaplanepilots.org)

[admin@washingtonseaplanepilots.org](mailto:admin@washingtonseaplanepilots.org)



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## President's Corner

**Stephen Ratzlaff, WSPA President**



This was supposed to be our Halloween edition, but now we can think of it as pre-Thanksgiving. The rain has really settled in and we can expect to see some freezing weather coming our way. Not the best for float flying, but maybe you have switched to wheels as we did.

***Is anyone in our group switching to skis? We'd love to know. And send us some photos of your off-season activities, which may end up in our next newsletter.***

In our last issue, I highlighted the work we have done to promote amphib safety and the procedures we developed last year as a part of our Safety Stand-Down event. In our September board meeting we decided to pursue developing and formalizing a standard checklist and training program. For it was our conclusion that one of the contributing factors to the recent spat of amphib accidents is the lack of an industry standard procedure or checklist. I think it was Bruce Hinds who first suggested this and others on our board who concluded the same. As we proceeded with this idea, we learned that SPA was working on a similar initiative and was instituting

an industry panel to guide their effort. The end result is that we have joined forces with SPA and will jointly be developing the standard checklist for amphibious operations. Our goal is to develop this standard checklist before next season along with a certification program we will pursue with all floatplane training schools.

Also, in the last month, the Renton Aviation Advisory Committee (RAAC) held its first post-COVID meeting. Of course, it was an online meeting since COVID-19 is still with us. The meeting included the new Transportation Director, Martin Pastucha, who provided a brief status on their Master Planning deliberations. In summary, they are in conversation with the FAA on how to resolve the issues with the plan but were unwilling to share much more with it comes to details. We are optimistic that reasonable minds

will prevail and the Class D RDC designation will be returned to Class B. At the same time, we are cognizant that the turmoil at Boeing may be a complicating factor. During the meeting, they also mentioned they were working to get approval to dredge the water offshore of the seaplane base and suggested August 2021 for the planned date. Shane Carlson and the other attendees advised that August would not be a good timeframe and they are considering alternative dates.

Many of you are probably also wondering about Grounded Hogs this year and the NW Aviation Conference. We have not made a formal decision about GH yet, but as of now, the Museum of Flight is closed to special events. And even if they were open, we are thinking we will probably take a break for 2021. But keep it penciled in your calendar – just in case. The NW Aviation Conference may still take place and we will be there in our booth if at all possible. The dates are February 20-21, 2021.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome our latest Board Member, Scott Cooper. Scott has a long history in commercial and military aircraft development and has now focused on flying boats. I remember that Scott was one of our primary supporters during our effort to save access to Ross Lake. That was when he and I first met, and he has contributed to WSPA ever since. In fact, Scott is our editor for this newsletter and the last several newsletters. Welcome to Scott!

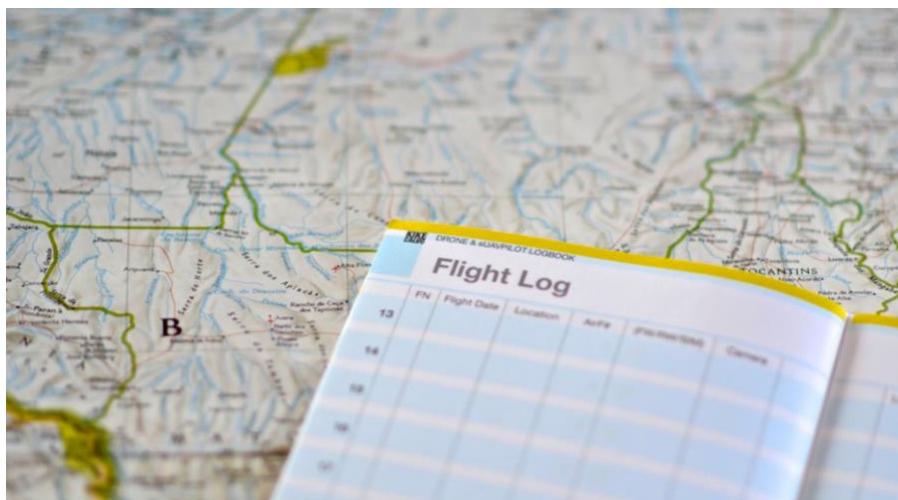
We hope that you had an enjoyable Halloween and have a great Thanksgiving!

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## Introducing *Logbook Reveries*

**Amy Fenwick, WSPA Board of Directors**

Oh, the places you *should* go....



The WSPA currently comprises 553 members. Our members prove to hold an unmatched spirit of adventure and enthusiasm, each eager to visit the most extraordinary places that sometimes only a seaplane can take you.

In our monthly board meetings, one question invariably arises amongst the group: “Where have you all been flying to lately?” More and more, our board members share experiences they have had on lakes and rivers outside the state, in a way, challenging the rest of us to expand our horizons and give our group something new to talk about.

With all that 2020 has brought to bear, the challenges of getting out during the pandemic have forced us to satisfy our need for adventure in places located a little closer to home. Thankfully, Washington is brimming with unique, challenging to get to, and charming seaplane destinations – which many of us may not know exist!

With that in mind, I'd like to introduce to you our newest addition to the WSPA newsletter: *Logbook Reveries*.

With each new issue, we invite WSPA members to share stories of their favorite seaplane destinations in Washington State. It is our hope that we can inspire one another to get out and enjoy Washington's waterways to the fullest. The column should provide our readers and fellow seaplane pilots with a few good reasons to visit someplace new and interesting, offer some helpful tips for getting there, and entice their curiosity with photos and maybe a few anecdotes that illustrate the destination's appeal with first-hand information.

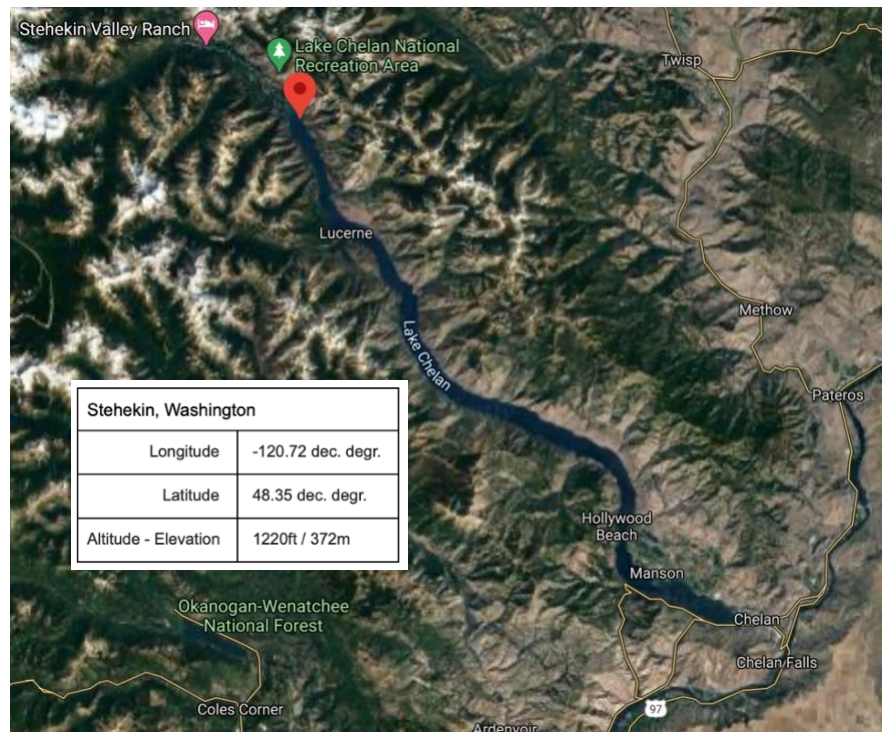
For this inaugural piece, I'd like to highlight a place that's tucked away in the peaks and valleys of the Lake Chelan Recreation Area. Inaccessible by car, visitors can travel there only by boat, ferry, horseback, hiking, or seaplane. Those who have been there can attest to its charm, beauty, and forgotten-in-time-like nostalgic warmth. Many of the pilots I've spoken to have returned after their first visit, usually with friends along to share in the adventure. For those who have not been there, it is a great time to start planning a summer seaplane adventure to Stehekin, Washington.

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## Logbook Reveries Stehekin, Washington

**Amy Fenwick, WSPA Board of Directors**

Stehekin is an unincorporated community located at the northwest corner of Lake Chelan. It is a lesser-known destination that offers a memorable experience to anyone who visits. According to the Census Bureau, in December 2015 Stehekin had a population of just 33 residents, although summer months tend to bring an influx of tourists and service staff.



My husband, Stuart, and I were introduced to Stehekin in 2016 and return annually to relive that memorable experience. To us, Stehekin is a place that feels like a real-life Pleasantville – a fictional community where everyone lives in an exaggerated state of peace and harmony. A place where residents offer friendly smiles and welcoming waves to neighbors and strangers alike, making sure no one is overlooked, especially if you need a hand. In Stehekin, the locals share the Pleasantville reputation for being characteristically helpful and friendly, and I can assure you the smiles are genuine, the waves come from everyone you pass along the single road in town, and the authentic hospitality is indeed unmatched.

Each year, we hope to turn someone new onto Stehekin by taking them along for our annual adventure. With limited space in our four-person Lake Buccaneer, our efforts to show the world this special place have been slow going, to say the least. In an effort to inspire you to take this worthwhile trip, let this be your introduction and first-look visitor's guide, so to speak, to a place we know and love.

## Getting There

The journey to Stehekin in a seaplane is one that begins long before you touch down on the water at Stehekin Landing. It's one where you'll want to strap a GoPro to your wing



to capture the intense and rugged landscape as you fly low over the cyan-blue lake water, winding your way north for 50 miles along the mountainous shores of Lake Chelan. Along the way, you will pass several beaches, trail heads, cliffs, waterfalls, and original cabins that have survived the test of time and the harsh winter elements of the northern Cascades. If you afford yourself enough time, you might just find yourself splashing down for a quick photo op here and there.

## Other Ways to Get to Stehekin

If you have friends who don't fly seaplanes, or you don't have enough room to take everyone, invite your friends to meet you there. Stehekin has a local grass airstrip (6S9) where your pilot friends on wheels can land. Your non-pilot friends can hitch a ride on SunnyJo, a 32-passenger catamaran ferry operated by

[Stehekin Ferry](#). Alternatively, guests can opt for a leisurely cruise up the lake on the historic Lady of the Lake Ferry operated by the [Lake Chelan Boat Company](#). Both services transport visitors year-round and offer various options for recreation and sightseeing along the way.

Of course, the beauty of the seaplane is that you can arrive and depart on your own time and stop at the various beaches and creeks along the way. Borrowed from the Stehekin Ferry website, the map below includes popular stops along the round-trip ferry route.



*Image provided by Stehekin Ferry.*

## Settling In

Once you have arrived, your first decision to make will be how and where you secure your seaplane. In Stehekin the options vary with the weather, water level, windspeed, and the type of aircraft you're flying (float plane or a flying boat).



Arriving at a time of high winds will mean that securing your aircraft will test your technical abilities in a manner for which you may not quite be ready. Whatever method you choose, it's good to have passengers along to lend a

hand.

The most common option is to use one of three seaplane docks available for use by private pilots. They serve as the end caps to the boat slips. Northwest Seaplanes is a commercial flight service which runs approximately 15 flights per month into Stehekin, so it's common to see a friendly face when you arrive. Experienced float plane pilots note that unless there is a strong wind out of the south (which is very rare), always dock facing north "right side," as shown in the photo on the following page. If you dock facing

south and you head into town, consider turning the plane to face north prior to leaving the dock and double down on your dock lines.



*Image courtesy of Don Goodman. Docked at the middle float with northmost float in the background.*



If the docks are occupied or unavailable during your visit, you might consider beaching your aircraft. There exists one known spot to beach on the shoreline just south of Discovery Bikes and indicated by the pinpoint on the map. Experienced pilots familiar with Stehekin generally recommend against it, as beaching here requires expert skill in your aircraft, and

this particular spot cannot be used in the wind as the rocks and foliage as shown in the photos are likely to cause damage if the aircraft is left unattended.





*Beaching the Lake Buccaneer.*

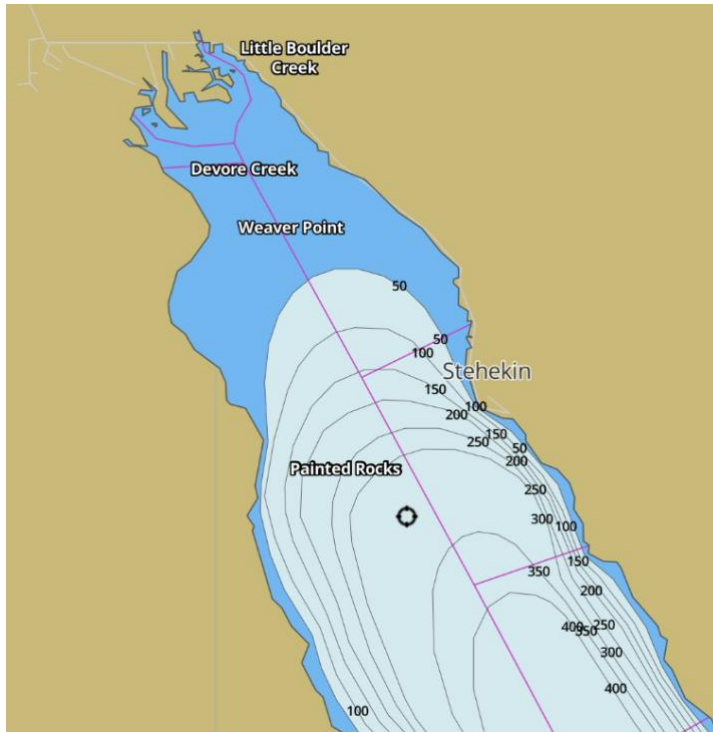
A third option is to anchor the aircraft away from shore in the northern shallows. Known as the “Mud Flats” during winter months, more than one anchor is advised, in the event that the muddy bottom gives way and leaves your airplane sailing in the wind. If anchoring, expect to arrange a ride to shore, or pack a dinghy if your aircraft will allow it.



*Passengers departing Dr. Loel Fenwick's Grumman G-73 Mallard in a rubber dinghy.*



In addition, it is recommended that you study the [depth charts](#) prior to your visit as well



to ensure you don't accidentally beach somewhere you weren't planning to. Furthermore, the shallowest portions of the lake contain stumps that can damage a seaplane on even the slightest impact. Having an extra set of eyes to help you spot obstacles is a great idea to consider. Another great reason to bring along a friend or two. *Click the map to view the depth charts online.*

Finally, while no mooring buoys currently exist to secure your seaplane, a request has been made with the Forest Service to have one installed. This request is slated for discussion at their next board meeting.

## Exploring Stehekin

Stehekin may be small, but it's packed with a variety of things to see and do. In what follows, I've highlighted a few of our favorite spots, as well as a few others we haven't yet gotten around to enjoying that are available and ready for you to discover.



**The Bakery** Stehekin's Crown Jewel, in my humble opinion, and the *real* reason we go every year is to visit the town's bakery, part of The Stehekin Pastry Company and Log Cabins. We love to introduce our friends to this "world famous" bakery with "as-big-as-your-head" freshly baked sticky buns. The bakery has been a seasonal must-visit hotspot since 1989.



Per Stehekin standards, the sticky buns have just the right amount of cinnamon and frosting and are baked to perfection each and every time. The water at the bakery flows crisp, cold, and clean - my guess is that it comes straight from the glacial streams flowing from the mountain tops all around. According to their website, owners Roberta and

Cragg Courtney aim to offer options for individuals of any dietary preference: low-carb, gluten free, etc. Don't feel like you need to pack a lunch when you visit this destination because they've certainly got something for everyone. Unlike some of the other spots in town, the Stehekin Bakery is open for the summer months only from mid-May to mid-October. It's a nice 2-mile walk from the docks – or you can take the courtesy shuttle which operates from Stehekin Landing. Don't miss this stop, whatever you do!

**Rainbow Falls** Located on Rainbow Creek and a short bike ride from town, the Rainbow Falls tower above at an impressive height of 392'. The falls have two tiers of cascading water; the upper tier 312' higher than the lower. With a drop so dramatic, it's no wonder the trail below is named the "Mist Trail". Recently added by the National Park Service, this quarter-mile trail has stairs and handrails that allow visitors to climb 30' closer to the top to catch a better view of the falls through the towering Ponderosa Pines. Be sure to watch your step and hold on to the handrails, as the trail's name very well suits its nature. Getting to the falls couldn't be more convenient, as a bus offers rides from Stehekin Landing, equipped with a tour guide to narrate your short journey along the way and answer any questions you may have.

**The Orchard at the Buckner Homestead Historic District** Each fall, the 160-acre historic Buckner Homestead is a popular destination for apple pickers and history buffs. During your visit, you can gather all you care to eat (not to mention, all your plane can carry) of these crisp and delicious beauties while taking in knowledge of the town's rich history, which spans decades back to 1889. Remembered best for their generous hospitality, the Buckner Family appears to have set the example for the warm sentiment visitors feel from the locals of today. They were remembered for welcoming in strangers from the cold dark nights with food and a warm place to sleep. Today, the Buckner Homestead is managed and maintained by the National Park Service. You can [read more about its history and the family](#) who shaped this perfect little town here.

**Golden West Visitor's Center** Another must-see on the historic tour of Stehekin is the Golden West Visitor Center which highlights the ambitions of early settlers of the area, particularly the Argonaut Hotel, a vision of George Hall. The hotel was built on what is currently termed the "Mud Flats" in the winter months and is located at the northernmost point of Lake Chelan.



*The Argonaut Hotel (Hotel Field). Photo from Stehekin Heritage Blog.*

In 1892, M. E. Field, a miner on his way to Okanogan, was introduced to Stehekin after a friendly resident assisted him with mishap with his wagon. After a change in plans and settling in Stehekin, he acquired the property from Hall and was believed to have finished the project, renaming it to Hotel Field. It became a destination resort for

railroad excursions, drawing the interests of visitors as far away as New York. At the time, mining activity was increasing in the area, so the hotel was often used to lodge miners. In 1915, Hotel Field was sold to the Great Northern Railroad Company and relocated in anticipation of the Chelan Dam project, which would raise the lake level by 21', submerging the flats and flooding the hotel site. Salvaged materials from the hotel went into building the Golden West Lodge, which later became the Golden West Visitor's Center.



*The Golden West Visitor's Center. Photo borrowed from the National Park Service*

**Overnights in Stehekin** There is a lot to see in Stehekin, and three hotels in town if you choose to stay the night: North Cascades Lodge at Stehekin, Silver Bay Inn Resort, and Stehekin Valley Ranch. The Lodge is the first place you'll see when you arrive at Stehekin Landing, and the subject of many photos as the welcoming sign greets

visitors on the docks. Each hotel offers a variety of amenities from tours and guided hikes, gift shops for souvenirs, and tasty meals to enjoy as you relax on the patios and enjoy a Stehekin sunset over the mountains.

Popular spots for meals include the [Stehekin Pastry Company and Log Cabins \("The Bakery"\)](#), [The Garden](#), [North Cascades Lodge](#), [Stehekin Creekside Cabin](#), and the [Stehekin Valley Ranch](#).

## Fun and Games

Whether you stay for a few hours or a few nights, Stehekin offers activities that can satisfy a wide range of interests. You can rent a bike or side-by-side, take a kayak tour, or get a massage. If the time is right and your ambitions serve you, you can explore the numerous trails on horseback, partake in the questionable fun of jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft



in a Stehekin Skydiving adventure, take up fishing, or enjoy a hike on foot through the wilderness.

Even if you opt not to partake in the many activities afforded in Stehekin, as you make your way down the single-lane road through town, take note of the license plate tabs on the vehicles you see. Because no roads lead to Stehekin from the outside, all vehicles were transported via ferry on a one-way ticket. I've heard the locals don't even bother to register the vehicles once they arrive, so you can make a game of finding the earliest arrivals. So far, the oldest tags I've stumbled upon were on an old Ford pickup, legal through 1982!



**Departing** Something every seaplane pilot should know about Stehekin is that the wind tends to pick up in the afternoon, gathering force as it travels from the north through the mountain-lined, valley corridor. It is not uncommon for glassy water to turn to whitecaps in a matter of mere minutes, usually around 3:00 pm, so we tend to plan our trip to arrive early and leave before the winds pick up. Pilots should be aware of windshear and turbulent airflow caused when the air passes over the top of the jagged mountain terrain. A steep canyon turn is required after taking off in the northerly headwind, so be prepared to give yourself enough water to get off the lake and make the turn safely. *To get a feel for how the weather changes in Stehekin, [click here to view their live weather cam.](#)*

**Closing Thoughts** In preparing this reflection on one of my favorite seaplane destinations in Washington, I wanted to offer a few photos that showcase just how spectacular this little town is. Of course, these are just my experience of the area. You can see more photos provided as submissions to a recent Stehekin photo contest [here](#).

If you travel to Stehekin after reading this, please be sure to keep in mind that places like this exist because respect, generosity, and kindness are reciprocated between local residents and their visitors. Take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate these things when you see them and pay it forward if you can. Don't forget to be a good neighbor: smile and wave and lend a hand, whenever possible. Wishing you nothing but blue skies and smooth waters on your future Stehekin adventure!

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### Submissions Welcome

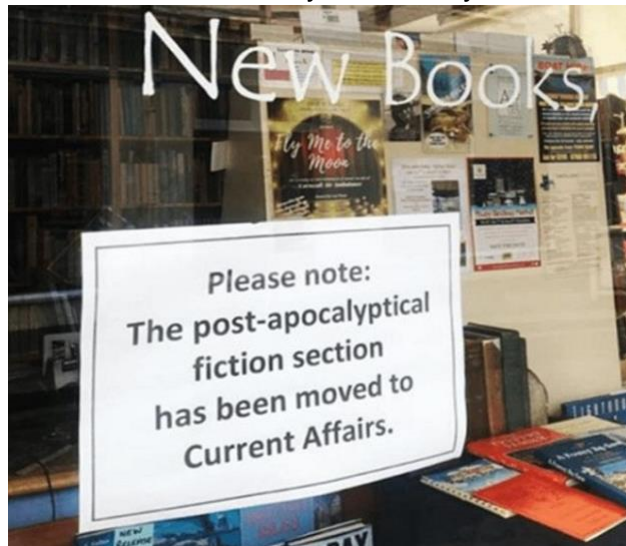
Do you have a destination to share? Submit your piece to the WSPA Newsletter Editor and our newest board member, Scott Cooper ([pilotcooper@gmail.com](mailto:pilotcooper@gmail.com)).

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## Flying Funnies

*Courtesy of Perfect Day to Play*

Some humor to cheer you up during this stressful time. Stay safe everyone!



What I want...    What I can...



All images from <https://perfectdaytoplay.com/travel-meme-covid/>

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## An Odd Shape Spotted in Loch Ness

*Courtesy of the Maritime Executive*



Image courtesy Kirsten Dawn Ferguson / RNLI  
BY [THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE](#) 10-19-2020

On Saturday evening, the RNLI crew for Loch Ness received an unusual request for assistance. The lake is known as the home of the fabled Loch Ness Monster, and the vessel in need of help did look unusual and rather serpentine - but it was something different. A World War II-era Consolidated PBY Catalina floatplane, decked out in U.S. Army Air Force [livery](#), was adrift on the lake.

The crew of the Catalina ran into engine trouble while attempting to take off from the loch on Saturday, and they called for assistance at about 1750 hours. The RNLI volunteer lifeboat crew responded and got under way. With the plane sitting in the middle of Loch Ness and drifting, it was decided the safest way to help would be to establish a tow and move it to safety.

After some troubleshooting, the lifeboat hooked up a tow rope and slowly pulled the plane to safety in Urquhart Bay. With a wingspan of more than 100 feet, the flying boat was too wide to bring into a berth, so they headed for a mooring buoy as the best option.

"Towing the Catalina would prove to be no easy feat. Fixing points are few and far between on such an aircraft, and the best option was underneath the tail, which barely

cleared the bow of the lifeboat. Nevertheless, with some care, we managed to establish a towline," said crewmember David Ferguson.

Darkness was approaching fast, and the crew used searchlights to keep track of their destination. They made the seaplane fast, and they helped its crew get safely back to shore on the other side of the bay.

Once the aircraft was secured, the four crew onboard could safely disembark the aircraft. The lifeboat escorted the aircrew back across the bay and returned to their station.

PBY Catalina tail number 433915 "Miss Pick Up" belongs to the Catalina Society of Duxford, UK. She is one of a declining number of airworthy flying boats of her kind, and she is operated by a group of volunteers and shareholders.

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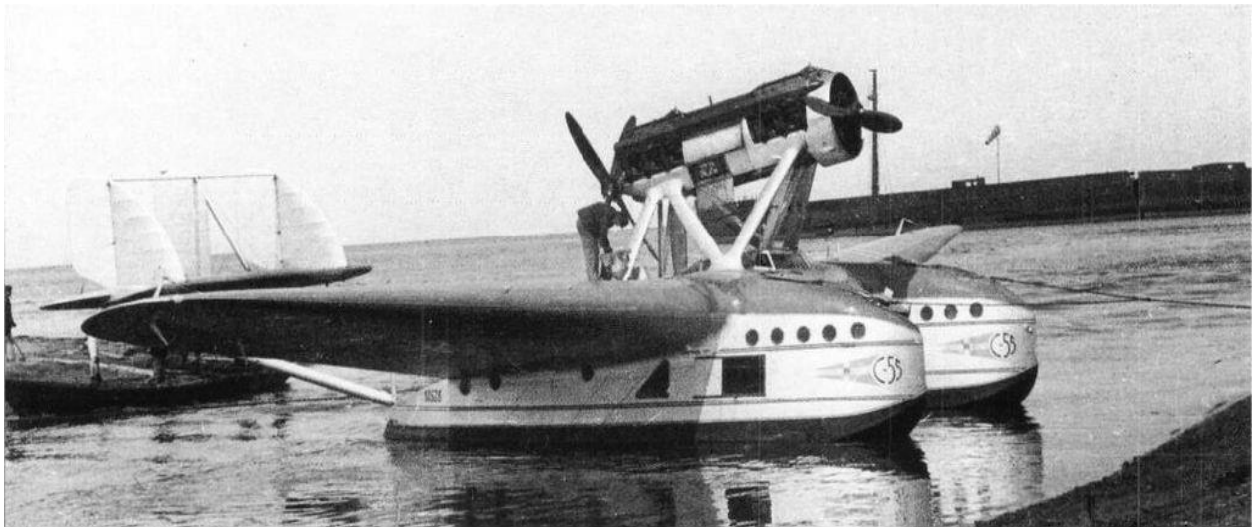
## ***History Corner: Balbo's Trip to the Chicago World's Fair - Seaplane Squadrons!***

***Kevin Franklin, WSPA Board of Directors***

Hi Everyone! Welcome again to the Seaplane History Corner! Today's topic is Balbo's Trip to the Fair.

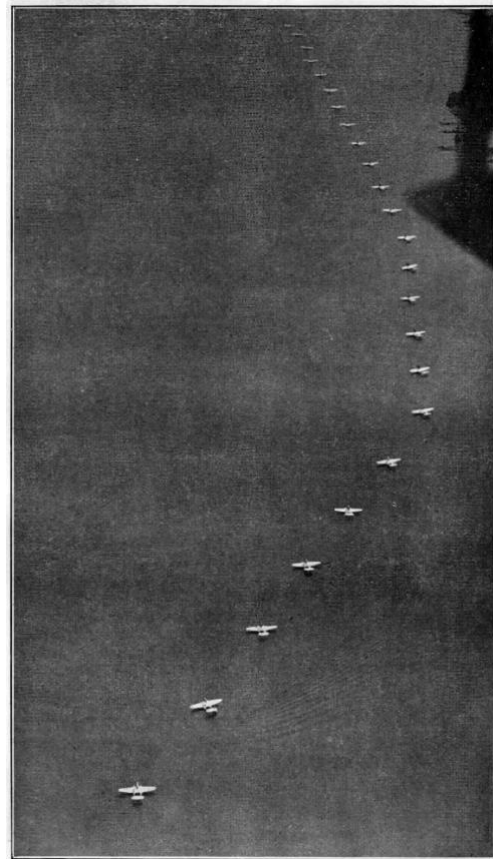
Italo Balbo was a great deal of things; he was considered Musollini's #2, and there are entire books written on him. For this history post, as we are *SEAPLANE* focused, I'll keep the scope limited to his famous and historic, Transatlantic Seaplane Flights.

### **Balbo's 1930 Trip from Italy to Brazil**



12 Savoia-Marchetti S.55 Flying Boats made the trip, along with a host of warships. The S.55, first flown in 1924 made many amazing flights, but due to age did not serve in WWII. This photo is of the Passenger Variant.



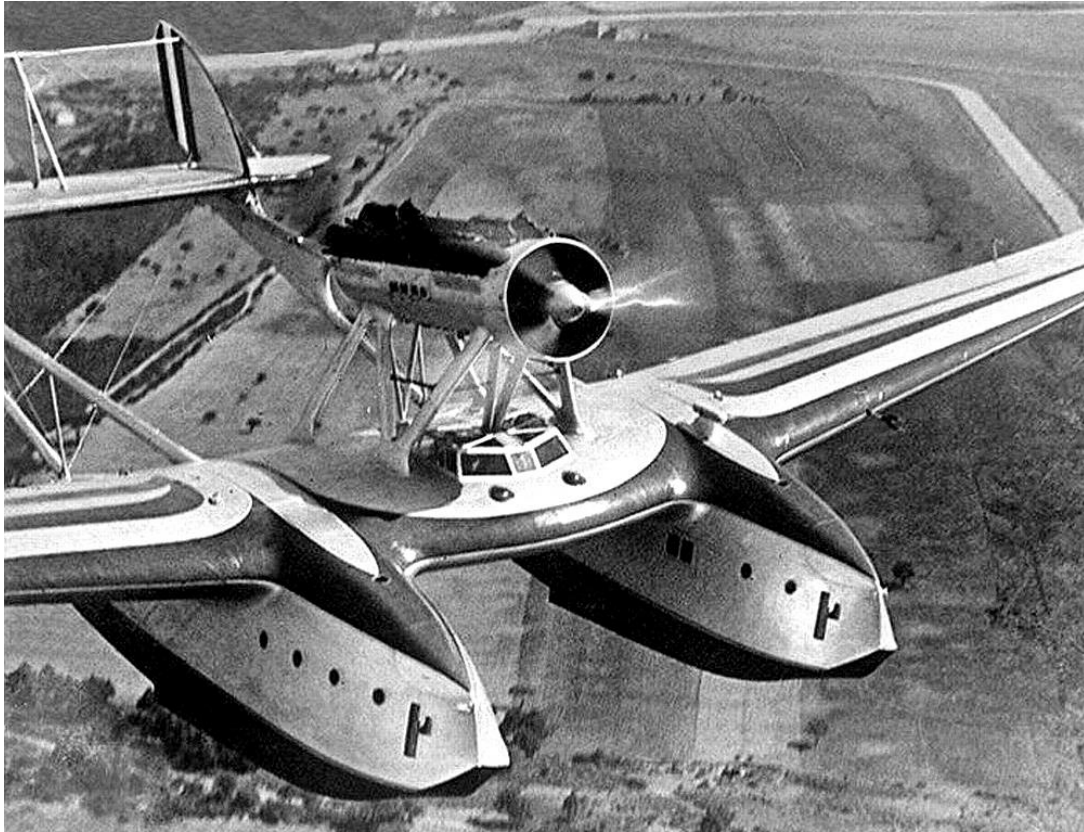


(Servizio Fotografico R. A.)  
LA II SQUADRA ATLANTICA ALLA FONDA

In 1930, Balbo led a formation of a dozen, Savoia-Marchetti S.55 flying boats from Orbetello Seaplane Base in Italy, to Rio de Janeiro. Supported by Italian Warships, the one-way flight flew along the coast of Africa and then across to Rio.



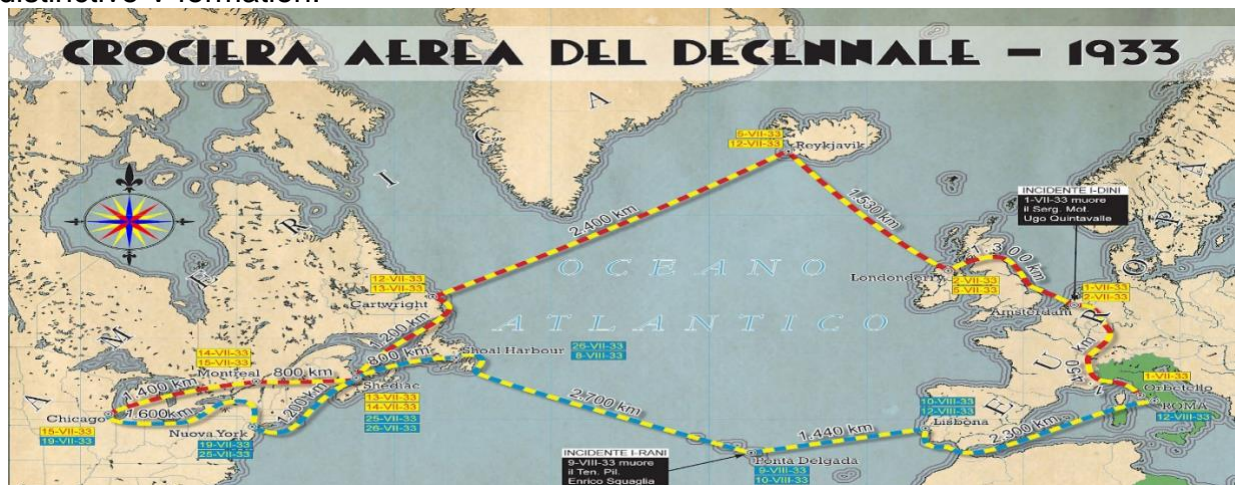
The last surviving Savoia-Marchetti S.55 Flying Boats in Brazil at the TAM Museum in Sao Paulo. Nicknamed "Jahu" this crossed the South Atlantic in 1927.



The S.55 was a very unique interwar plane, note cockpit is in the wing between the two hulls.

### Balbo's 1933 Trip from Italy to Chicago

Up to 1933, there had been 78 individual flight attempts to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and only 28 of them were successful, which makes this flight of 24 Aircraft extremely impressive. In dramatic fashion, most of the 48-hour flight was flown in a tight and distinctive V formation.



By Emanuele Mastrangelo at Italian Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48202338>



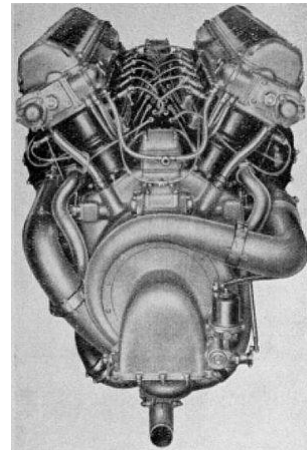
Gli apparecchi alla fonda



Veduta aerea della Squadra Atlantica



Balbo flew to the Chicago World's Fair, called *A Century of Progress* in 1933. At a time well before Google Maps and satellite photos this trip required sending people abroad to scout water landing areas for the Seaplane armada.



1933 Cruise Photo, and the Isotta Fraschini Asso XI Engine

**North Atlantic (Outbound) Route:** *Orbetello, Italy* → *Amsterdam* → *Derry* → *Reykjavik* → *Cartwright* → *Shediac* → *Montreal* → *Chicago*

**South Atlantic (Return) Route:** *Chicago → New York → Shoal Harbor → The Azores → Lisbon → Rome*



*General Stelio Calder stops at Shediac, New Brunswick, with his huge armada of 24 Italian Flying Boats en route to World Exposition, Chicago, July 13, 1933*

S.55 on the Water in Shediac Bay New Brunswick, July 13, 1933

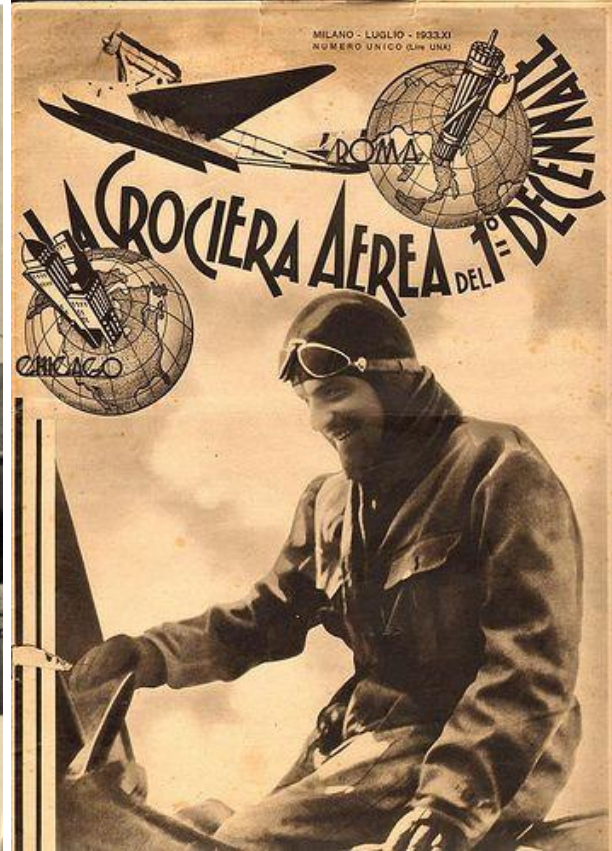


SHEDIAC - IL CAPITANO DEL DESTROYER "SAGUENAY", CAP. MURRAY PORTA IL SALUTO DEL CANADÀ AL MINISTRO DELL'ARIA GEN. BALBO

A unique photo, Captain Murray, of the Canadian Destroyer Saguenay brings a greeting to Balbo from the Canadian Air Minister



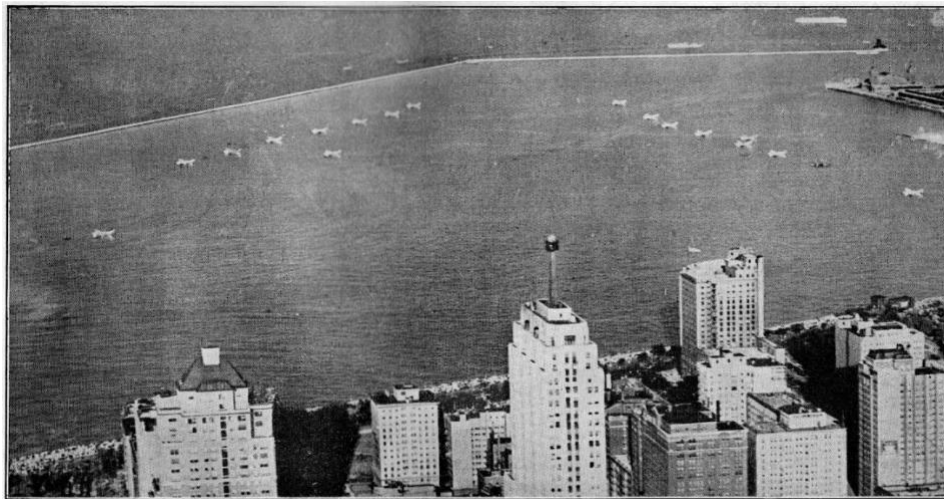
**A CENTURY OF PROGRESS—CHICAGO, 1933**  
 Arrival of General Italo Balbo and the Italian Air Armada at A Century of Progress Exposition, Chicago, July 15, 1933. At the right is the Italian Building on the Avenue of Flags, in the foreground a Brink's Express armored International Truck.



Balbo received a hero's welcome in Chicago, including a ticker-tape parade; they even named a street after him in Chicago which is still named Balbo Drive today. Balbo also received a parade in New York, and lunch with President Roosevelt in Washington. A year later, Musollini sent a 2,000-year-old Roman monument which remains in Chicago today.



*Chicago, 1933*



GLI IDROVOLANTI DELLA CROCIERA AMMARATI SUL LAGO MICHIGAN

*Chicago, 1933*

# BALBO THRILLS N.Y.

Story on Page 3



**THEY'VE COME TO AMERICA!**  
 — Like a mythical dragon, floating through the sky, the snake outline of Gen. Italo Balbo's air armada shot out of the west late yesterday, craved down the Hudson and glided to rest on the surface of Jamaica Bay. Here they are soaring over lower Manhattan.

**HERO OF HEROES**  
 — Gen. Italo Balbo, whose exploits gave birth to trans-oceanic flight and whose leadership made it possible, waves to crowd as his air armada reports. Beside him are Gen. George Foy, chairman of the committee.



gettyimages 25  
 New York Daily News Archive



gettyimages 25  
 Bettmann

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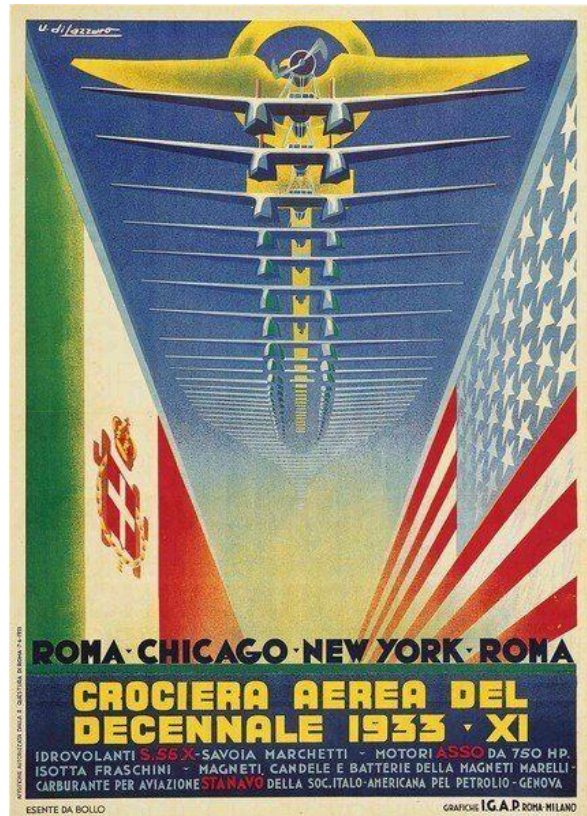
Aviators of the day were immensely famous.





An interesting historical Photograph, Chief Blackhorn and Balbo of the Sioux at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Balbo presented the Chief with a fascist medal, while the Chief presented Balbo with a headdress

A propaganda poster celebrating the historic flight. In extravagant fashion, over 60,000 people attended celebrations at Madison Square Gardens





*The Tickertape Parade in NYC*



*1933, Longueil Montreal, Quebec*



The above photo but Zoomed in, note the Flag on the anchor buoy, an impressive attention to detail. I think we all can relate to cans full of Fuel and Supplies!



## The Return to Rome

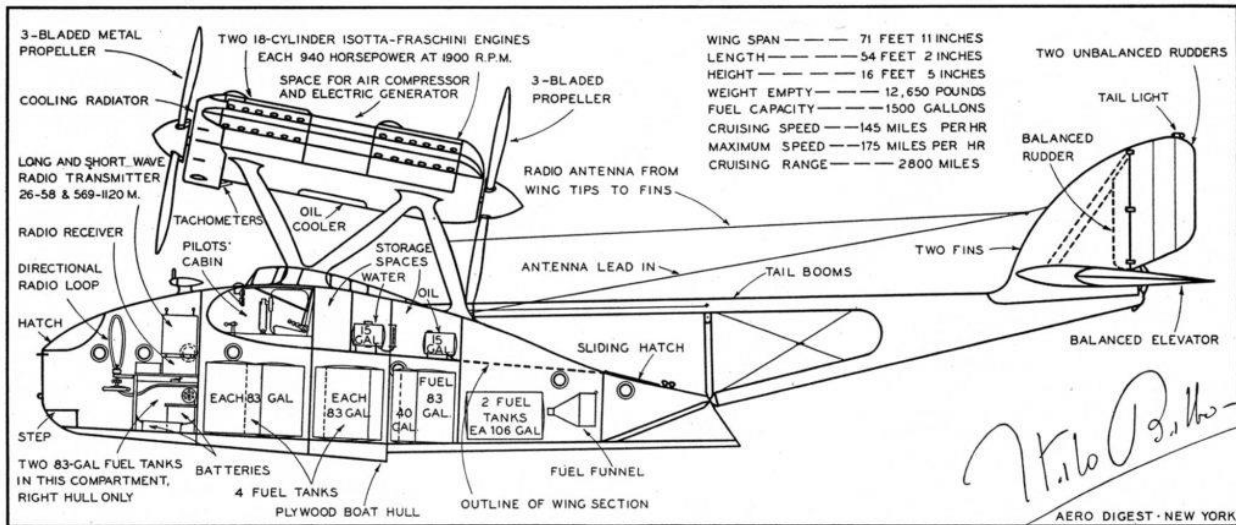


Diagram of the S.55, note the storage for the Fuel Funnel and water tank.  
 Not shown in diagram - Transatlantic bathroom solution.



General Balbo, somehow dressed in a perfect suit, stands on his plane on Lake Michigan.

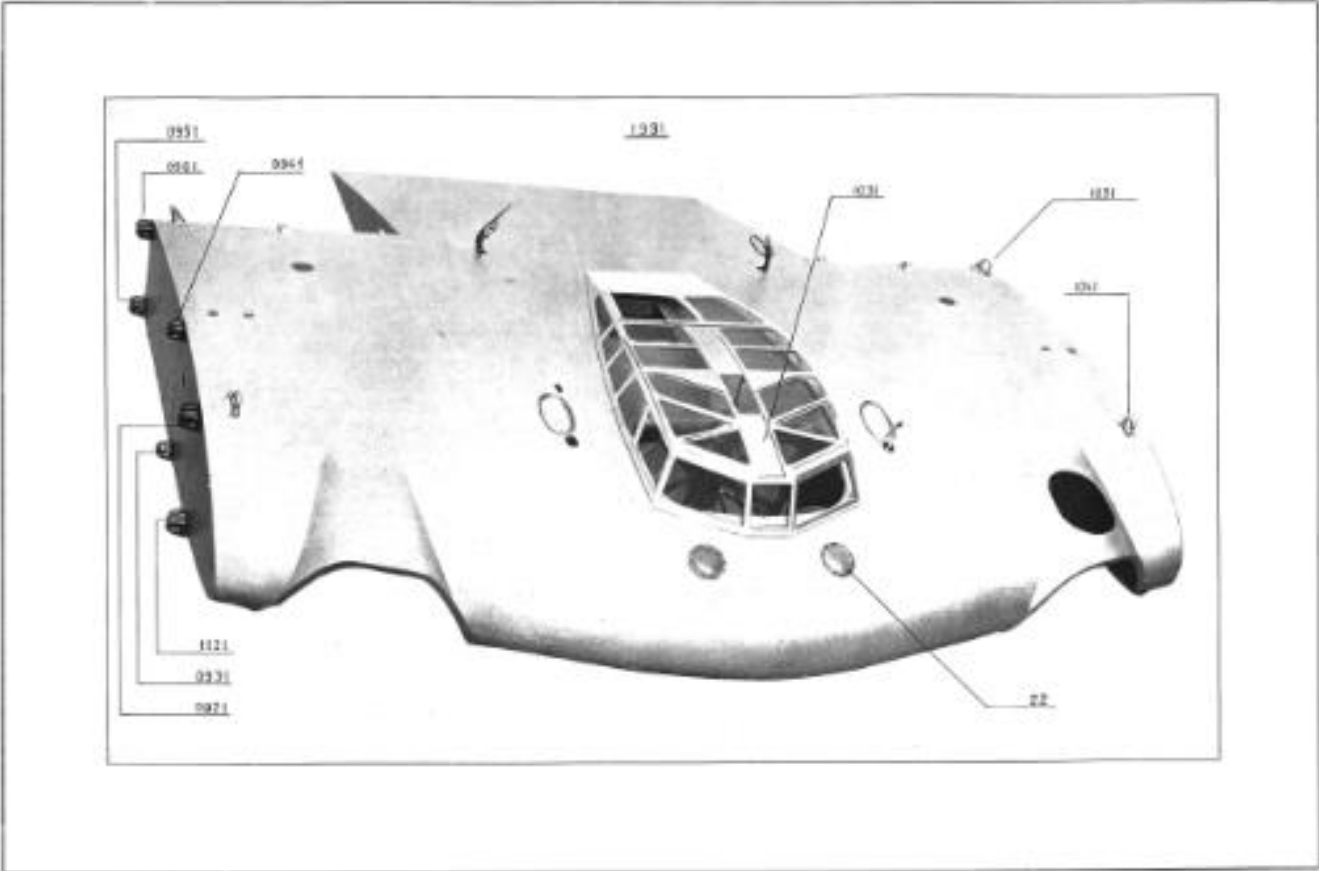


Balbo e Cagna all'arrivo alla baia degli Esquimesi

Adoring Fans met the Italian Armada of Seaplanes at every stop. A reflection on a better time in history, no mention of noise complaints or city ordinances in any newspaper article.

S. I. A. I. — Idrovolante "SAVOIA MARCHETTI", S. 55 - X- I. F. Asso 750

Tavola N. 9



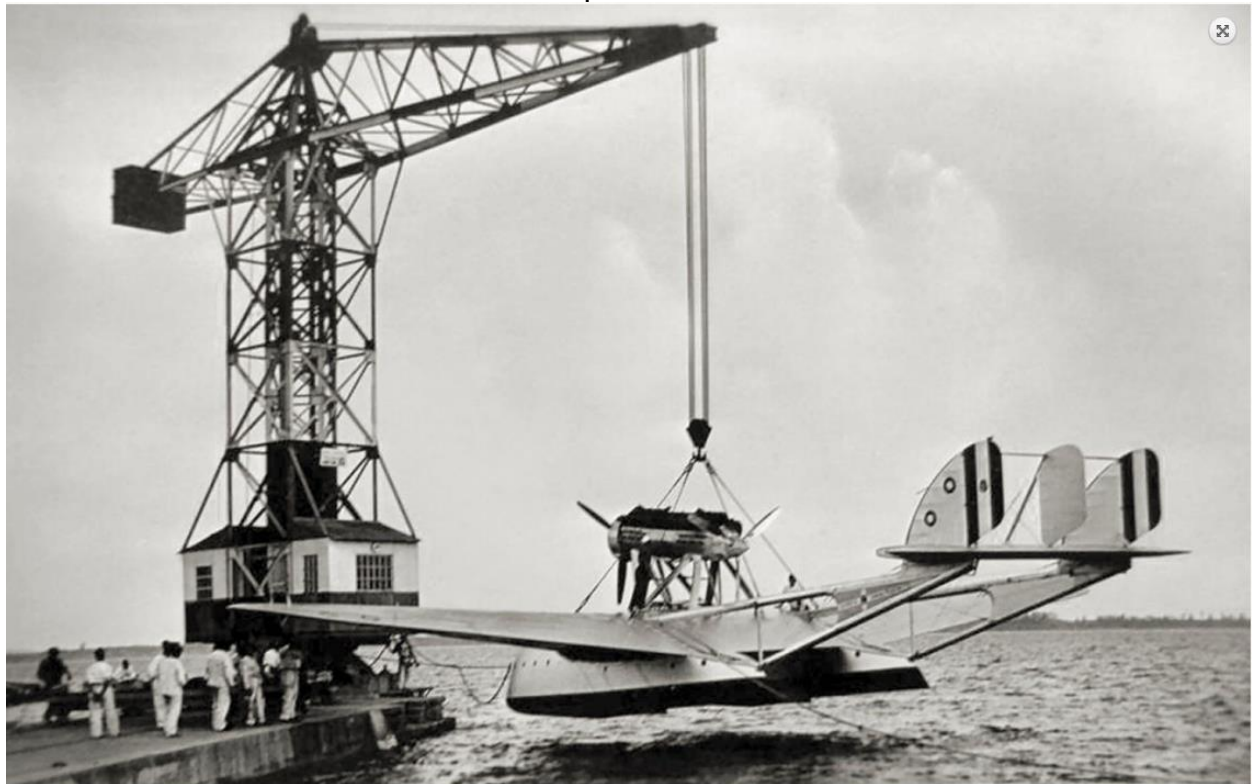
A rare diagram from the SM Parts Manual shows an abundance of windows in the wing mounted cockpit



A rare photo of the inside of the cockpit



The Orbetello Seaplane - base full of S.55s

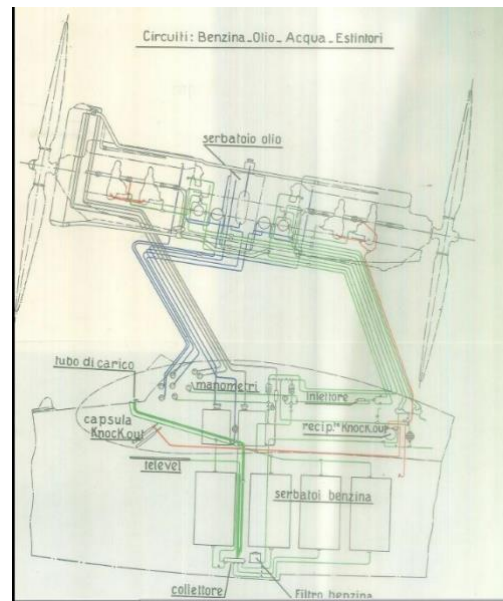


The crane at Orbetello Seaplane Base lifting a S.55



Orbetello Seaplane Base Today. In the Lagoon town 80 miles North West of Rome in Tuscany is now used for rowing and sailing, like Sandpoint or Lake Union.

A rare photo from the Maintenance manual shows the controls from the cockpit to the exposed engines





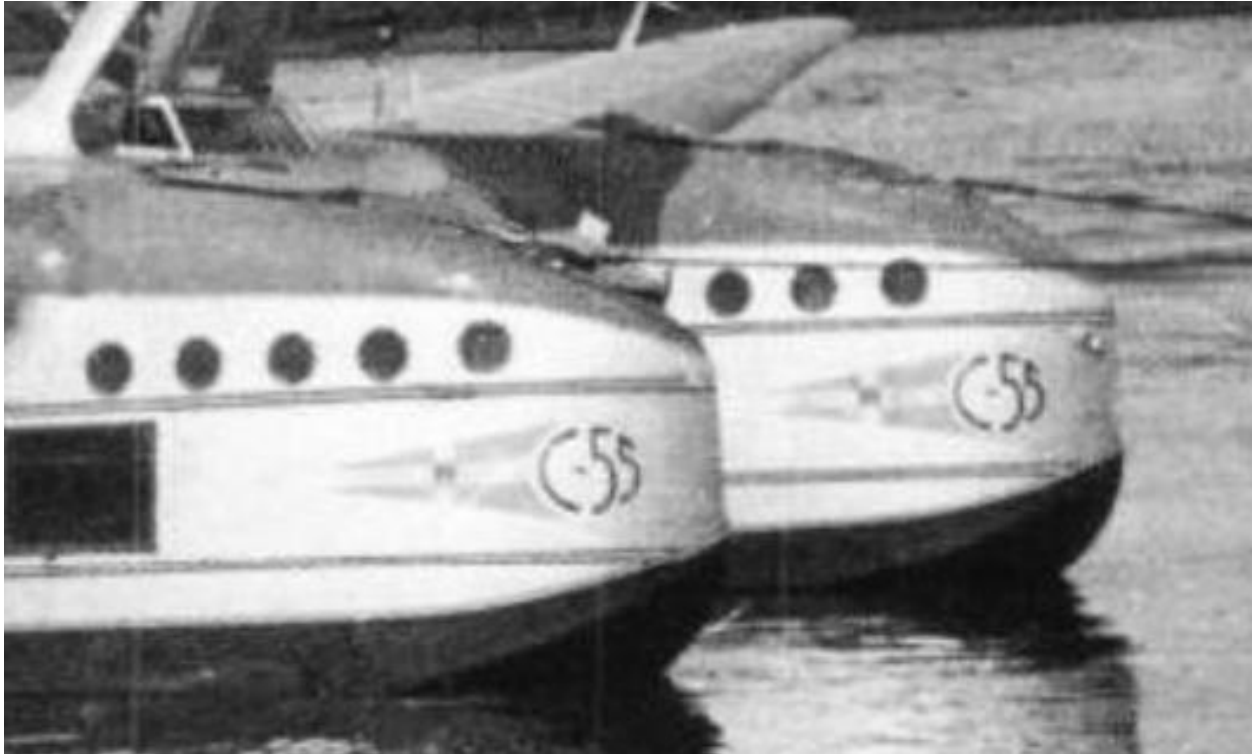


The author assumes raising the Italian Flag concluded the Water Landing Checklist.



Vintage Model Kit Art showcases the Formation Flight [The Italian Armada]





*Very stylized "C-55" Text on the nose captures the Art Deco vibe. The portholes on the two hulls give this away as the S.55P the Passenger Variant, in service with Aeroflot. Which could hold 10 Passengers.*



The S.55 had a max speed of 127mph and a maximum range of 1,400 miles.

Balbo, a controversial figure, died in a friendly fire accident in North Africa during the Second World War. Some speculate this may have been an assassination from a jealous Benito Mussolini - you'll have to do your own research to decide that.

Further Reading:

<http://www.savoiamarchetti.com/> - Savoia Marchetti Historical Group [Italian Website]

<http://eaavintage.org/outstanding-italian-armada/> - EAA Vintage Article

<https://www.historynet.com/italys-consummate-showman-italo-balbo.htm> - Historynet Article

<http://www.crociadeldecennale.it/tappe.php?idtappa=15&idlang=2> Rare photos

<http://www.crociadeldecennale.it/tappe.php?idtappa=1&idlang=2>

*Note: all images owned by their respective owners.*

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## CHECKLIST: What is it? And how to use it.

**Bruce Hinds, Vice President WSPA & AIS Guru**

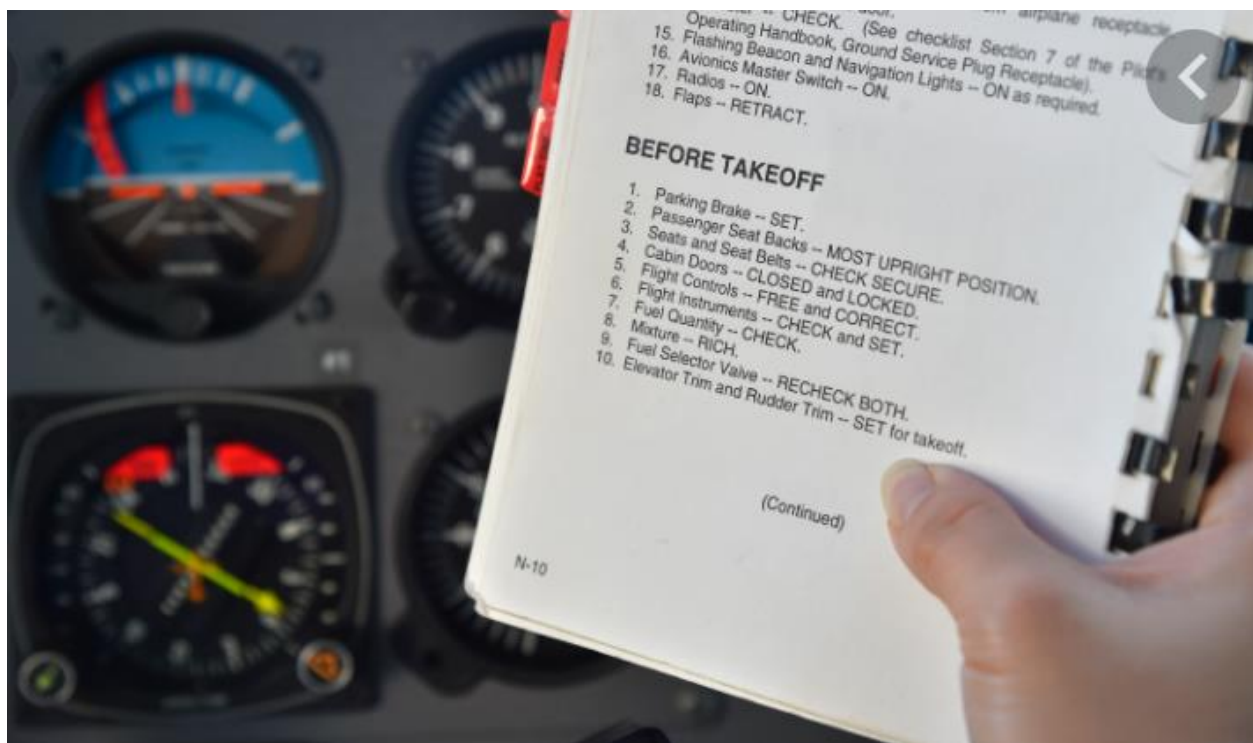


Photo by Bruce Hinds

Seems simple enough, right? We all know what they are. Indulge me for a while though. During my time with the airlines I was privileged to work in Flight Standards and Training. It was an exciting time, we were bringing new aircraft into the fleet from other airlines along with their pilots, introducing glass cockpits, and while I was there,

we developed the Advanced Qualification Program (AQP). AQP, in part, was the study of the mix of different personalities on the flight deck and how they would manage tasks. A big part of those tasks, of course, were the checklists.

This was particularly challenging since the airline was also growing like crazy with mergers and everyone thought their procedures and checklists were best; everyone was resistant to change. We not only had to completely rewrite it all to get some cross-fleet standardization, but the real challenge was developing something the crews would actually use. That's right! Line checks and sim rides showed pilots having difficulty with them and reports from the line indicated that pilots were skimming through the list or doing parts of them at best. In essence, I don't think it was too much different that what GA pilots have to deal with when confronted with the procedures in the aircraft manufacturer's flight manual. Who uses that?

What we found was that if a checklist is too wordy, too long, doesn't follow a good sequence, is cumbersome or awkward to use; items will get skipped, missed, or the darn thing just won't get used. We saw it in the simulator, we saw it on the line checks, we heard about it from crewmembers, and if you read the accident reports, you'd see it there. Sometimes the checklists were read and answered properly, but the items were not accomplished! So, as good a list as you may have, and use, it's nothing without the proper discipline.

There was a 727 accident in Dallas years ago – they tried to take off with 2 of the 3 engines – remember that one? They realized one had not been started, so they tried to light it on the run, but still didn't have the takeoff flap position set. They crashed off the end of the runway. A DC-9 in Houston landed wheels up, gear handle was down, and they did the checklist! What went wrong? Yes, they did read the checklist, but even though they read that the hydraulic pumps were on high, they were not. And even though there were supposed to be 3 green gear lights, obviously there weren't. The result? The bottom of the fuselage was ground down to the spar exposing the baggage compartments and bags were strewn all over the airport. Oh, they had no flaps either and hit the runway going about 200 knots! Amazing nobody was hurt....

Okay, this may be the extreme, but if this can happen with the pros, it just goes to show how careful and diligent we must be. Our checklists were in a constant state of development, or "living documents."

Surprised? Let's think about it for a minute. I'll use the common example of a student pilot, from their first flying lesson they are taught to hold a book in one hand with a finger on the page, as you walk around a simple little airplane checking every nut, hinge, fastener, oil, windscreen, fuel, tires, prop, blah, blah, blah. Then once inside there are more pages of things to look at and check as we are sweating our brains out, all before we can get the big fan going to cool us down. So, here's a question for you, and let's be honest: After your first solo when you were on your own, did you skip an item or two on the checklist? Did you skip an entire checklist? "Kick the tires and light the fires... I'm out 'a here!" Especially flying alone it's hard not to lose your place on a list. By the

way, these are not checklists at all. These are "Do Lists" you read it and do it. Manufacturers like the term *Procedural Checklists*, what's that?

To make things easier, we've all been taught some kind of an acronym like the famous "GUMP" check. In essence, the GUMP was to be used in addition to a normal check just prior to landing, not instead of! I've seen many pilots use just that! I guess it's better than nothing, at least it's something. Why do they use it? It's simple. It is a checklist and it is not a *do list*.

Do lists don't work in the real world, they are impractical and prone to mistakes. We get distracted easily looking up and down in addition to flying the airplane and talking to ATC and our passengers. This is a big part of the problem. However, if we were taught to memorize the items on a checklist, or better yet, follow a pattern around the cockpit doing each of the items, and then and only then read the list and proper response as we look, touch and/or verify, then and only then is it in fact, a true checklist.

The airlines develop a Flow Pattern. Every item that needs to be checked is in a memorized flow pattern that starts when you walk up to the aircraft. There are "flows" for everything from the walk around, to the after landing and parking checks. Everything may not appear on a checklist, it would be much too wordy, but what does appear on the checklist are all the "killer items." Whether it will kill you, your bank account, or get you in trouble.

Okay, so if you haven't developed a "system" that you use, you need to do this. You may be asking, "how do I write a good checklist?" It's fairly simple but it takes some time, chair flying, and forethought. Start with whatever checklist you may have and look for some others. Ask your type club, search on the internet for information, or dig in the original flight manual. If you have owned your airplane for any length of time you are aware of what requires more maintenance or attention than normal. If you are fortunate enough to have all your work done for you, look at the maintenance records. Where does your money go?

Once you have more than you need, make a very long list, include everything and start from there. I can't tell you what's important for your airplane, they all are different. You need to look long and hard and think about each item, put them in a logical sequence and ask yourself if it should be on your list, then start cutting it down. Be careful though, every item requires some serious thought. "Control locks" for instance, it may sound silly, "of course I won't take off with the control lock on!" Fact is, it's been done. Fact is, if you do - you are dead. Boost pump, fuel selectors, flaps, certain things can hurt you if left out. Make a short killer item list, then add other things you need or want. Don't make your checklists so professional looking that it's a big production to change. "Oh, I had it printed and it's all laminated!" Yes, I've heard that. It should get changed several times until you get something you like to use. A few months down the road you may change it again. Think of it as a living document. Make it easy to work with. I like printed card stock. It's strong enough not to wrinkle and you can write all over it and print a new one, when necessary. I cut my card stock to Rolodex-sized cards that I can flip for each phase of flight.



Set these items in a flow, just like you were taught to do your first walk around. Start at one place and work your way around the airplane, or the cockpit. Your run-up should be completed when you grab the run-up checklist. Read down the list, the item and Response. Yes, response is important, not that you did it, or "checked" like we've all seen in the movies. Item and Response.... DG... Set! Set to what? Mags .... ~~checked!~~ What was the drop, difference? Was it the same as last time? If you don't note it, I doubt you will remember what the drop was last time. So, you get the idea. If you have any questions about your airplane and what's important, check with a CFI who has plenty of time in your type aircraft and develop something you will use. Remember, it's only good if you use it.

Regarding the wheels in the water plight of all seaplane pilots, seaplanes are always safer with the wheels up unless landing on an improved service (runway). It's always the first thing I do after takeoff! Yes, even staying in the pattern or going to another airport. On my landing checklist I use the question "WHERE'S THE GEAR?" (highlighted in yellow) and the response is a long one... Wheels are up for landing in water, Red Light indicates UP, and they are confirmed up in the mirrors! Or, a similar diatribe for a land landing. It may sound silly, but it hasn't failed me yet. I'm lucky, I have a spouse that loves to go with me and is diligent about the use of the checklist. Alone, I'll admit, there has been occasion that I've forgotten or been distracted. "On darn, look at that, I forgot the boost pump." Not much of a problem unless I had to go around and the engine driven pump failed. Unlikely?...Yes. Deadly?...Yes! Hm... I didn't think I could ever forget the wheels though.

Here's an example that happened on a property we have with a grass strip near a lake. We took off, while climbing to about 800' I selected the gear up and hit the electric pump, turned cross wind which is a perfect base leg for the lake. I thought about the checklist. For my airplane, landing is about the same as take-off with the exception of flaps and gear, I felt the flaps go down and I had just put the gear up! "We're good!" When we touched the water, we slowed down really fast, MUCH faster than

usual and it sounded different, much different..."water spray in the prop!" I looked out as we were coming off the step to see what all the noise was about, and I was shocked to see the gear NOT UP! It hadn't fully retracted. We were very lucky. The main gear was in a trailing position. "Holy Water Spray Batman," that could have been a disaster. How did this happen? I selected the wheels up, turned on the pump and heard the gear come up.

No checklist! I figured the gear was up, it's habit, that's what I always do, right? As it turns out, the contacts of the pressure switch in the hydraulic system were a little dirty, and the pump cut off prior to the full cycle of the gear. Had I used my landing checklist..."Where's the gear?" Yes, with the fully worded response.... "Wheels are up for landing in water, Red Light indicates UP, and they are confirmed up in the mirrors! I wouldn't have made that mistake. I was lucky that time. It's so easy to screw up, so be careful... Get something that works for you and use it.

I'll close with a quote from Aristotle. "We are what we continually do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit." Let's develop good ones.

# MEMBERS

## *Providing lift to WSPA's efforts*

Updates since August 2020



### **New Dual Memberships Since August 2020:**

Steve Kirsch, Seattle, Washington. Rebuilt a 182P and is planning to keep it at KPAA or S60.

Matt Smith, Fox Island, Washington. No aircraft info provided.

Oliver Huebler, Bellevue, Washington. No aircraft info provided.

### **New WSPA Only Members Since August:**

Mark Long, Sequim, Washington - SeaRey LSX.

Hans Koenigseder, Eugene Oregon - Cessna T206H.

Steve Taylor, Bellevue, Washington - Republic Seabee.

### **New Lifetime Members:**

Clark Crawford, Hansville, Washington. WSPA Member since 2015. Became a Lifetime Member October 2020. He previously owned a 1946 Stinson 108-1 on floats.

### **Donors to the Open Water Fund:**

Thank you, Steve Kirsch!!!



# WSPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Washington Seaplane Pilots Association is managed by a board of volunteers, each with varying levels of aviation knowledge and experience. The actions of the board represent the interests of its members.

It is the intent of the board to carry out meaningful actions that advance the mission and goals set forth by the organization. [Click here to read more about each member](#), and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

## BOARD MEMBERS

## EMAIL

## PHONE

President Stephen Ratzlaff	<a href="mailto:stephenr@orderport.net">stephenr@orderport.net</a>	(206) 250-1625
Vice President Bruce Hinds	<a href="mailto:brucehinds@earthlink.net">brucehinds@earthlink.net</a>	(360) 710-5793
Treasurer Jack Jacobson	<a href="mailto:jackjacobson100@gmail.com">jackjacobson100@gmail.com</a>	(206) 769-7436
Secretary Don Goodman	<a href="mailto:donaldjg56@gmail.com">donaldjg56@gmail.com</a>	(360) 303-7076
Industry Rep. Chuck Perry	<a href="mailto:chuckp@kenmoreair.com">chuckp@kenmoreair.com</a>	(425) 879-0774
At Large Kevin Wyman	<a href="mailto:kevin.wyman@gmail.com">kevin.wyman@gmail.com</a>	(206) 419-0349
At Large Kevin Franklin	<a href="mailto:kevin@nickelboat.com">kevin@nickelboat.com</a>	(206) 383-2553
At Large Jamie Madonna	<a href="mailto:jmadonna@ahtins.com">jmadonna@ahtins.com</a>	(206) 669-5880
At Large Amy Fenwick	<a href="mailto:amykfenwick@gmail.com">amykfenwick@gmail.com</a>	(562) 508-7939
Newsletter Ed., Scott Cooper	<a href="mailto:pilotcooper@gmail.com">pilotcooper@gmail.com</a>	(206) 409 0293

For general questions, send us an email to [admin@washingtonseaplanepilots.org](mailto:admin@washingtonseaplanepilots.org)

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If you have questions, photos, or interesting stories you would like to share, we'd love to hear from you. Contact our Newsletter Editor, Scott Cooper, and you may find your story show up in a future issue.

As a reminder, in a recent newsletter, we appealed to those with knowledge of the history of the WSPA to reach out and share any insights on the events and actions of the board of the past. Our board is relatively young in our relationship to this organization, and we would like nothing more than to recognize the efforts of our founders and carry out the vision they imagined for our members.

**Thank you to this edition's Sky Writers: Steve, Kevin, Amy, and Bruce.**