



SERVING THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF SINCE 1941

Sacramento County Sheriff's Air Squadron Newsletter

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

September 1951:

"Out of the clear blue of the western sky comes Sky King"

Many Septembers ago, on September 21, 1951, a new half-hour NBC TV show aired Saturday afternoons. For many young viewers, **Sky King** wasn't just entertainment – it was an inspiration.

Many Baby Boomers, couldn't wait to park themselves in front of the TV and hear the announcer say, "Our of the clear blue of the Western sky comes Sky King."



For lots of kids the Sky King TV series was one of the big reasons to enter the world of flying. Every week, somehow or someday, Uncle Sky and his trusty twin Cessna saved the day. Who wouldn't grow up wanting to become a pilot?

Sky King became a kid's favorite show as Schuyler "Sky" King (**Kirby Grant**) and his niece Penny (**Gloria Winters**) flew his

twin-engine Cessna 310 high above the Arizona plains.

Their ranch, known as Flying Crown Enterprises, was also the aircraft's home. Known as "**Songbird**," a total of three aircraft were used during the series. "**Songbird III**" is still flying today and making appearances at air shows. At large fly-ins and airshows, the aircraft is a selfie magnet.

Portrayed as a cattle rancher and aircraft pilot, King usually captured criminals and spies and found lost hikers, often with the aid of his airplane.

The TV show aired until 1959 and went into syndication through 1966. It was an expensive children's show to produce with most of the budget going into aircraft, vehicles fuel and sets.

(Continued Page 3)

Tour

Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station

September 18, 1:30 pm

14440 Twin Cities Rd., Herald, CA

Picnic Lunch at Davis Ranch, 12 noon

13211 Jackson Rd, Sloughouse, CA



It has been 35 years since residents in Sacramento area made history by closing Rancho Seco. But many aspects of the shutdown plant are still present.

Our tour will take us to see this "ghost town" setting and see how SMUD has reinvented the place. Home to a natural gas plant and large solar array.

We will see the nuclear storage site where fuel rods are still kept.

Commander's Column:



Attracting new members

It's getting toward the fourth quarter of the year, and I am reminded that one of our Squadron 2024 goals was to add new members.

Being a member of our Squadron is a privilege and a great form of identification. As proud members, we are the best ambassadors in attracting new members.

Here are some ideas on how we can do this.

1. Encourage people to become a member throughout the year. Even though we collect dues in January, members joining in the last months of a year are allowed adjusted dues.
2. Let prospective members know that they will be able to wear a Squadron logo shirt – this article of clothing is unique and can be worn with pride.
3. Send our friends a copy of our Squadron Newsletter. This is a great way to motivate people to attend our meetings and participate in our activities.

4. Reach out to potential members at area aviation events. We recently participated in the Lincoln Airport Wings and Wheels show and had many people drop by to chat with us. We are also participating in the Sheriff's Foundation Golf Tournament where there will be lots of community leaders and business owners.
 5. Let people know that they do not need to be a Sacramento County resident to participate in our Squadron. Many of our members live outside Sacramento.
 6. We are an easy group to get to know and we want to make it easy for people to join us. A sponsoring member will guide each prospect through the application process and the Sheriff's background check is quick and easy.
 7. Inviting a prospective member to one of our special events is a great introduction to our organization. The upcoming Annual Banquet is fun, educational and a great networking event.
 8. I want to thank each member who has invited guests to attend our meetings. You are a super example to others to do the same. Inviting our friends, airport buddies and aviation acquaintances can lead to others becoming fans of our Squadron.
 9. Inviting prospective members to attend one of our meetings where aviation "greats" are speaking is a tremendous thing. They will come away impressed with the diversity of our educational programs.
 10. Let prospective members know that over the years many well-known Sacramento community and business leaders have been Squadron members. These busy people have found time to attend our meetings and have found great value in our group.
- As a member, you are the best promoter and ambassador for our squadron.

Shawn Britton, Commander

Around the Squadron: Things to know

By Dale Terry



Thousands of people attended this year's Wings and Wheels event at Lincoln Regional Airport, on August 24. Initially under rainy and cloudy skies the sun shone brightly by mid-morning.

Our Squadron was represented at the show with a booth manned by **Andrew Bates** and **Dale Terry**. **Lisa Simpson**, who was also involved with Sacramento 99's booth, and **Tim Pinkney** were on hand to tell our Squadron story to booth guests.

Sky King (continued from page 1)

Sky King featured low-level flying, highlighting the desert flashing by in the background. The show's opening was dramatic with an air-to-air shot of the Songbird banking sharply away from the camera, its engines roaring and the announcer voicing "Out of the clear blue of the Western sky comes Sky King." These opening shots were filmed in El Mirage Lake, California.

All 72 episodes were rerun on Saturday afternoons for many years. In real life, Kirby Grant was a child prodigy violinist who studied music and became a professional singer and bandleader. Later he found his way to Hollywood. He launched his flying career at age 18 as a barnstormer. In the early years of the show, his personal airplane was used – a Cessna T-50 – known officially as the "Bobcat," but made famous during WWII as the "Bamboo Bomber" due to its spruce spar beams and plywood wing leading edges and wing tips.

When the series ended in 1962 Grant became an icon to the aviation community making many personal appearances.

Kirby Grant died in a car accident in 1985 while he was on his way to watch the Space Shuttle Challenger launch at Cape Canaveral. He was to be honored by the astronauts for encouraging aviation and space flight. He was 73.



For those who remember the show, in Season 1 Penny's brother Clipper also was in the cast.

During the Sky King run, Winters and Grant performed as a song-and-dance team at state fairs. At the State Fair of Texas in Dallas, people waited in line for autographs. In the line were astronauts Gus Grissom, Pete Conrad, Alan Shepard and Wally Schirra – with their children.

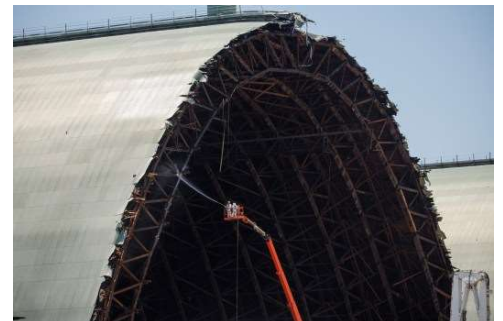
Moffett Field historic hangar project makes progress

Many members will remember our 2023 tour of the Hangar 1 restoration project at Moffett NASA Field.

Hangar 1 interior work is now almost completed with an official opening scheduled in early 2025.

Work is also under way at Hangar 3 which we saw in the distance across the airport. Both historic Hangars 2 & 3 are to be demolished. While Hangar 1 was built with steel framing, Hangars 2 & 3 were both wood framed and thus vulnerable to decay.

Both Hangars 2 & 3 were built in a hurry, without rigorous research and testing. The U.S. desperately needed blimps to conduct submarine surveillance operations along the Pacific coast during WWII.



It has taken quite some time to demolish these historic structures, moving in a systematic and controlled manner – slicing the building from north to south.

A quicker strategy using explosives was deemed to cause too much stress in adjacent structures. Hangar 3 will be gone in March 2025.

Safety Brief:

HALO Emergency System



By Hunter Jefferson, CFII

We all understand that knowing our emergency procedures can be a matter of life and death in an emergency. But what if you're a passenger on a single pilot IFR airplane and the pilot has a heart attack midflight at altitude?

I would sure be scared!

At work the other day, I saw a Piper M600 at the Stockton airport and while checking it out, I noticed it was equipped with a HALO system.

Neither my mechanic nor I knew what that was, so I did some research. At first, I thought it was some sort of parachute system now common on Cirrus aircraft. But after a little research I found it is far advanced than a parachute.

In early 2020, Piper received type certification from the FAA for the first Garmin Autoland equipped aircraft. The system includes an Auto throttle, Emergency Descent Mode, Electronic Stability and Protection, Surface Watch, Safe Taxi, Flight Stream, and much more.

But most importantly the Garmin Autoland uses digital technology to safely land the aircraft at the nearest suitable airport if the pilot is incapacitated.

The system can be engaged by pressing a button or upon an emergency descent activation.

HALO considers weather, terrain, runway length, glide path, wind, fuel on board, and time to destination before taking over the controls and guiding the aircraft to the nearest runway for a precision landing. The system alerts ATC of the situation and makes frequent reports.

PIPER AIRCRAFT HALO SAFETY SYSTEM **CERTIFIED** ON M600/SLS



In doing this, the aircraft will fly at 230kts to an Initial Approach Fix and reduce the airspeed to 140kts prior at the IAF. If the speed is not acquired, the aircraft will perform one holding pattern to slow the aircraft. Once ready, the aircraft lowers the landing gear, flaps to takeoff and makes the approach.

Once landed, it slows to a complete stop and a video on the G3000 screen tells the passengers how to exit the aircraft safely.

Impressive!

Another item incorporated in the HALO system that I thought was amazing is the Hypoxia Recognition System with Automatic Descent Mode.

When autopilot is engaged above 14,900' the system monitors the pilot interaction for signs of hypoxia. (although I'm not sure how this is acquired) If needed, HALO can pilot the aircraft to a lower altitude to allow for recovery.

Although this is the first of its kind for general aviation aircraft, I can surely see this soon as a requirement by the FAA.



JIM PHILLIPS: VIEW FROM THE LEFT SEAT

(Ed. Note: Long time Squadron member Jim Phillips and his family have been residents and ranchers in Northern California for over 150 years. His wealth of aviation experiences includes involvement with notable businesses and their owners.)

The "Nut Tree" ... and me

On July 3, 1921, an upscale roadside stand opened – Nut Tree – on the east side of then Highway 40 (now I-80). It became famous for its fresh fruit and refreshments from the owner's (Ed and Helen Power) 135-acre farm.

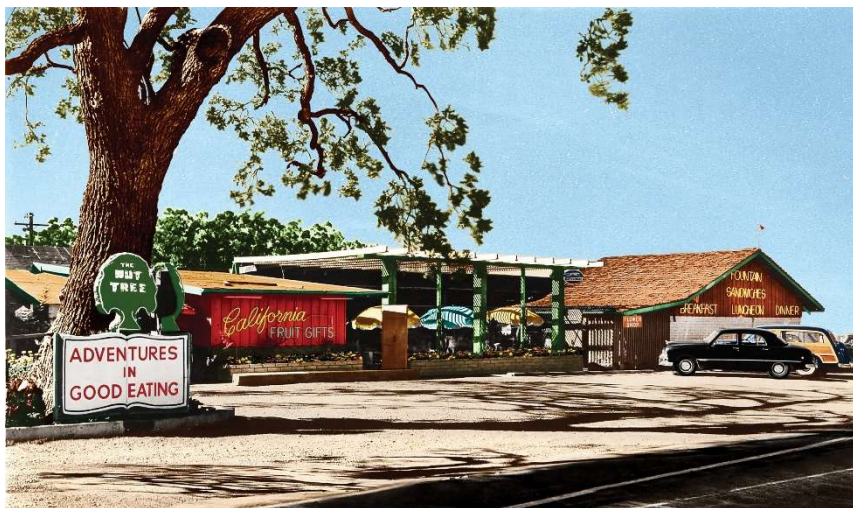
Bowing to economic pressures, the Nut Tree closed in 1996 after 75 years to make way for a shopping center. But in its hay-day it was a place that charmed travelers for decades.

The name Nut Tree originated from a large Black Walnut tree that was planted on a Vacaville farm in 1859. The tree's seed had been carried on a year-long wagon trip from Iowa to California during the Gold Rush.

My father was a long-time state Assemblyman from Oakland and Berkley who later created the California Youth Authority. Our family moved to Sacramento so that Dad would be involved in setting up the CYA. During those years, my mother, sister and I would often travel from Oakland to Sacramento – and just like many other highway travelers, stopped for refreshments at Nut Tree.

In 1955 the Power family graded a dirt strip on the Nut Tree property for his personal use. Pilots wanted to land there for lunch, and so the runway was eventually paved with taxiway and runway lights.

One interesting building located on the Nut Tree property was Helen Power's grandmother's house, the Harbinson House. It was built in 1906, and the Powers restored the home as part of Nut tree allure.



Nut Tree hosted many organizations which held meetings at the restaurant. These meetings often featured aviation's famous pilots including Chuck Yeager and Bob Hoover.

Air shows were scheduled at Nut Tree. I attended one show where Hoover was a scheduled performer. Bob Hoover was flying his P-38 Mustang. He

During my professional years, my company provided air conditioning equipment and maintenance at the site. During those years I got to know all the owner's family members well.

Ed Power made sure that there was a section of the store dedicated to aircraft with model planes, maps, sectionals, books, periodicals and more. I spent many hours in the store browsing through lots of interesting articles.

announced that he had to fly north for a few minutes to cool the engine oil. Before long, I saw Hoover's aircraft screaming into view at a 90-degree bank: yes, the wings vertical – flying straight and lined up with the Nut Tree runway – the fuselage acted as a wing for the last couple of miles.

I miss the old Nut Tree and remember it fondly as I travel I-80 and pass the property.