

January 2009

Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 33

A monthly publication of the Dr. Alexander M. Lippisch Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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## VORTAC vs. Wind Farm

By Keith Williams

A wind farm of about 100 wind turbines is under construction a few miles from Corpus Christi. Some of the foundations are in and the some of the turbines themselves are in Corpus Christi waiting to be delivered to the sites.

Sometime recently, the FAA discovered that these turbines would be surrounding the Corpus Christi VORTAC! They concluded, rightly, in my opinion, that the turbines might or might not cause a navigation problem. The way to find out was to raise the issue and put it out for public comment. (/ The public/ is going to help them decide whether or not the 398' towers and rotating blades distort the navigation information?????? I don't think so!) And so they did.

In the end, I'm betting the VORTAC will be moved or simply removed. Here are some points from the article supporting my conclusion:

- The lease for the VORTAC expired more than one year ago. The FAA is offering \$4,000 (presumably per year but possibly per month) to renew it.
- The landowner "would like a different tenant". The article says that it "gets limited use locally for approaches".
- GPS may make the VORTAC unnecessary
- Farmers are paid between \$10k and \$12k/month per turbine for lease of the land on which they set
- The wind farm is big business: a \$300M project!
- The business folks, including county officials, have contacted Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson.

This article covered two-thirds of the front page of the business section! It even had a picture of the VORTAC. They must have been very low on business news or the pro-wind-farm business community conned them into publishing it with mostly a pro-wind-turbine spin.

It isn't every day a VORTAC makes front page news, so thought I'd make sure my friends up north were aware of it.

# Read Back: Skygods, the Fall of Pan Am

By James Meade

Those of us who remember the 1960's remember when being a Pan Am captain was like being next to god. First officers sat in the right seat, kept their mouth shut, and watched. Their time would come. Flying for Pan Am was about the best airline job you could get. What wasn't so obvious was that that era was the zenith of both the company and the captain. The book *Skygods The Fall of Pan Am* by a 26-year Pan Am pilot Robert Gandt, explains why both institutions began a decline.

Pan Am was founded by Juan Trippe who started out running mail in Latin America and ended up with great oceanic passenger routes. The routes were pioneered in the '30's in the Martin flying boats that Trippe called Clippers. They set the standard for luxury in long distance passenger travel before World War II.

Trippe was a visionary who saw the practicality of passenger jet aircraft when his peers were blinded by costs and other problems. Trippe was a master manipulator who played Boeing off against Douglas, Pratt & Whitney off against British jet engine makers. In the end, he usually got what he wanted, which was a transatlantic passenger jet that was feasible, unlike the fated British BOAC Comet.

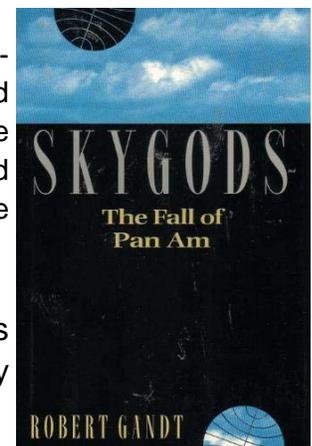
Charles Lindbergh was a consultant for Pan Am and was very actively involved in specing airplanes and solving problems. He was in on the rise and saw the beginning of the fall of Pan Am. Gandt says he was very respected by the pilots who were impressed by his deep personal knowledge of flying and aircraft systems.

The skygod captains had their downfall, as well. The crusty kings of the cockpit were crashing airplanes and killing passengers with their autocratic approach to cockpit management. A first officer was not welcome to comment on anything and was discouraged from being an effective part of a crew – "just sit there and watch me fly" was the attitude. Gandt goes into considerable detail to document some of the foibles that finally brought a new perspective to cockpit management.

From the heady days of Pan Am dominance to their demise is a sad story and one that is well told. Inept management, disputes with government, labor issues, plundering the plums of the corporation and awful publicity from crashes were some of the causes of Pan Am's downfall.

This book points out how much of early aviation was based on the dominance of certain personalities. Juan Trippe, Charles Lindbergh and many lesser stars guided Pan Am. Great challenges and great risks were overcome and we all basked in the glow of Pan Am clippers winging their way around the world. The fall of this skygod from glory was a cautionary tale that most of us ignored and now we can watch the problems of current airlines.

This is a good book to bring back old memories and remind us of how things were and why they became as they are today. It was published in 1995 by William Morrow and Company.



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December 22, 2008

EAA Chapter 33  
C/O Larry Wood  
140 Northwood Dr.  
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Our very best,

  
Deb Dunkhase  
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*Thank so much!*

# Last Meeting - Holiday Banquet

The Coe Collage Alumni Hall once again turned out to be a delightful venue for our Holiday Banquet. The Food was delicious, the service was excellent and the atmosphere was exhilarating.

As promised, KCRG-TV9 Meteorologist Josh Baynes talked about how weather forecasts are put together for TV-News. He also talked about the transition from analog TV to digital TV which will happen this early this year, what we need to do to get ready and what new services will become available as stations begin to make use of the bandwidth available with the new digital signal. You can learn more about digital TV at <http://www.kcrg.com/digitaltv> or you could drop Josh an email at [Josh.Baynes@kcrg.com](mailto:Josh.Baynes@kcrg.com).

Many thanks to John Anderson and Janet Blackledge for arranging the hall and the catering and also to Max Dirks for arranging our speaker.





## Next Meeting – Dan Mann of the Eastern Iowa Airport

To kick off 2009 we have arranged a meeting with Dan Mann : A.A.E., Airport Director of the Eastern Iowa Airport. Some members may remember a couple of year back we met with Dan and he gave us an over view of the construction which was planned for the airport. So this January Dan will update us on how the construction is going and what still need to be done.

We will meet in the Administration Building at the Eastern Iowa Airport on Friday January 9th at 6:30. For those of you who want to fly-in, you can park at Landmark Aviation and it is a short walk to the Admin Building. For you drivers, you can turn into the main airport entrance (Arthur Collins Parkway) then turn right onto Crossfield Lane and you are there.

## Fly Market

**FOR SALE:** My 1958 172. I have owned the airplane for 30+ years. I am changing to Sport Pilot so can't use the 172 anymore. Airplane is based north of Cedar Rapids, Iowa at my private strip. The airplane is low time and clean. All logs available. Fresh annual on 6/30/08 shows compression to be: (77, 78, 78,77,77, 78)/80. Autogas STC, Cleveland brakes, new Gill battery 2006, mufflers rebuilt 2005, new intake hoses 2005. Airtex interior, good paint. TTAE 2620 SMOH 823 Radios are basic. New ICOM A200. Dave Yeoman 319-377-4188



## Chapter 33 Calendar

**Jan 9 6:30pm** Chapter Meeting, Dan Mann, Eastern Iowa Airport Director, Admin Building (CID)

**Jan 31 11am-2pm** 12th Annual Chili Fly-In, Greenfield Municipal Airport

**Feb 20-21** 18th Annual Midwest Aviation Maintenance Symposium and Trade Show, Sponsored by: The Iowa Chapter of PAMA, Iowa DOT Office of Aviation & Des Moines FAA Flight Standards District Office, Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines, Iowa



In The January 2009 Issue...

VORTAC vs. Wind Farm, Read Back: Skygods, the Fall of Pan Am



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