



# STRAIGHT SCOOP

Volume XV Number 4 April 2009

To promote the acquisition, restoration, safe operation, and display of historical aircraft  
and provide an educational venue for the community

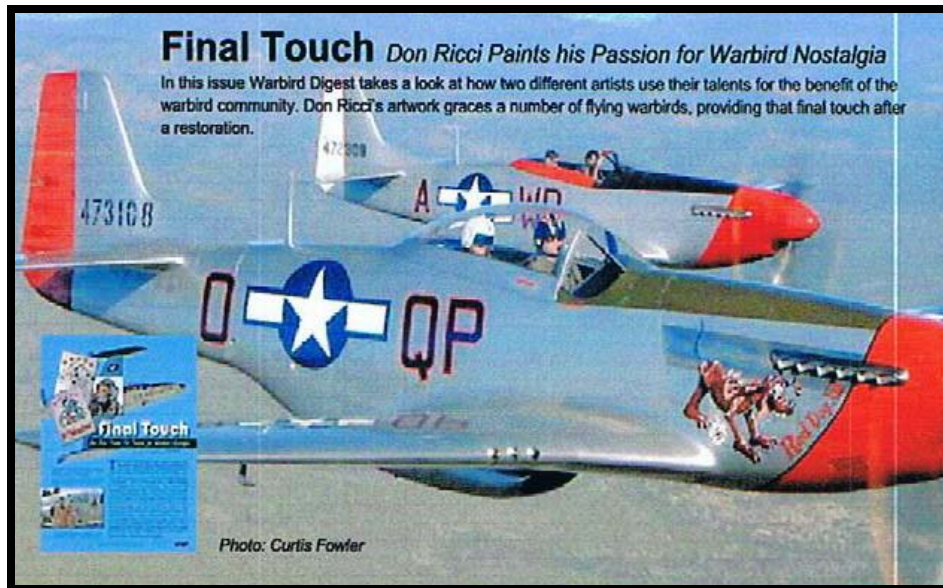


Photo courtesy of Warbird Digest

Article courtesy of the Warbird Digest

## *The Final Touch*

***The Northern California Nose Artist and his passion for war bird nostalgia.***

by Pacific Coast Air Museum Member Don Ricci

The early morning rays break through the last small patches of the low hanging fog that lingers over the airfield. In the quiet of the morning hours I sit with brush in hand feeling the warmth of the rays. The quiet mornings on the tarmac hold a special place in my heart. I listen to the quiet din of birds chirping in the grass next to the taxi ways and the clanging of the hangar doors responding to the gentle breeze that meanders down runway 32 at the Charles M Schulz Airport in Santa Rosa, California. It is a quiet peacefulness and tranquility at an airport that I think anybody who loves aviation can relate to. Sitting in front of me sits a beautiful P-51D Mustang with her graceful lines, the huge Rolls Royce stacks poking out of the nose, and the 50 Cal ports on the leading edge. Yep, there is no doubt this beautiful beast. She's 100% war bird. We sit together on the tarmac, just the two of us. As I place my hand on the huge 4 bladed prop, a connection is formed and I'll never be the same.

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## The Pacific Coast Air Museum

**Location:** At the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport, North of Santa Rosa, West of Highway 101, at 2230 Becker Blvd, off North Laughlin Road.

**Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. 10:00am—4:00pm.

**“Climb Aboard”:** A selected aircraft is available to “Climb Aboard” the third weekend of each month (weather permitting). Please visit our web site at [www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org) or call 707-575-7900 for details or further Information.

**Member Meetings:** Normally held on the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00pm, at the Sonoma County Office of Education, near the airport at the intersection of Airport and Skylane Boulevards. Interesting speakers are featured at each meeting.

### “Straight Scoop”

The museum newsletter, “Straight Scoop” is published monthly and is available on line on the museum’s web site. Members are highly encouraged to submit articles for possible publication. The deadline is the 26th of the month prior to publication. All articles in the newsletter are covered by copyright. If you wish to submit articles or use any of the content, please contact:

Chris Tart, Editor  
1064 Maple Drive  
Windsor, Ca 95492  
707-836-9226  
[sctartusaf@yahoo.com](mailto:sctartusaf@yahoo.com)

### Membership Renewals:

\$30 per year individual; \$45 per year for families. Send renewals to the museum at the address below.

### Address Corrections:

Please send to:  
Pacific Coast Air Museum  
2230 Becker Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, Ca 95403

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*Presents*

# ***Hot Dog Thursday!***



***\$5.00 donation includes  
Admission, Large Hot Dog,  
Chips and Soda!***

***11:30 - 2:30***

***FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH***

***April 2nd - May 7th - June 4th***

***July 2nd - August 6th - September 3rd***

*2230 Becker Blvd - Cross Laughlin Rd Santa Rosa, CA 95403 707 575 7900*

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The quiet peaceful din is quickly disrupted by the distant sound that makes my pulse quicken. At first it is just an idling rumble and quickly becomes a roar. As the sound gets louder, I step three steps closer toward the active. I know it isn't much but that is three steps closer to a sound that flows through my veins. The closer it is, the more recognizable it becomes. Anyone who is a war bird fanatic knows it well before they see it. It's the unmistakable roar of a radial motor unleashing horsepower. As I look down the runway, I see the huge spinner and monstrous red nose of "Steadfast", the beautiful Yak-3U owned by Will White-side. I see Will lift the tail off the ground and I see her take to the air. He brings the gear up as I watch the graceful climb out. As he flies overhead, the symphony of noise raining down from the huge R-2000 hits me like a hurricane. I can't help but to look directly into the eye of the storm with a grin on my face taking it all in. Man, there is nothing else like this. I am wallowing in the nostalgia.

With my quick fix of nostalgia, I turn to the beautiful P-51 in front of me and steadily place the first brush stroke of what will become the final touch on this P-51. The nose art that will turn this P-51 from aircraft number 473108 to "Red Dog XII". It's a pure honor and dream come true for me. That first brush stroke is a more of an event than a task for me. Applying that first spot of paint on a million dollar aircraft is a rush for me and a tremendous responsibility I take very seriously. I still have that huge smile on my face. I can't believe how lucky I am to be doing this. I put my I pod earphones back in my ears and as Glen Miller plays, I am truly "In the Mood".

I was approached by the owner, [Duane Doyle](#), to complete the nose art on "Red Dog XII" after he saw one of my pieces "Miss Maria" at the Pacific Coast Air Museum where I am a restoration coordinator and assistant crew chief to their F-4C Phantom. "Miss Maria" is an F-84 Thunderstreak that sits static display in the museums collection. Duane saw her one day after having some work done on his immaculate T-2 Buckeye at Aerocrafters here at the airport. He's had the idea of putting some nose art on his P-51 and he looked me up with the help of a fiend of mine from Aerocrafters, Lynn Hunt. It was a phone call I was ecstatic to get. Duane and I met and hit it off from the get go. He had a small 5 by 7 black and white photo of the "Red Dog" nose Art that was flown on one of WWII legendary pilot, Louis H Norley's fighters. His idea was to recreate this nose art as close as possible to the real one. After many hours and a lot of research we came up with the design and sizing for the project. It took about two weeks of work and came out perfect. When he came to pick her up he fell in love with the end product. Duane offered to take me on a jaw dropping hour flight in this beast and it was a pure dream come true. Not only is Duane a class act but a great stick and rudder guy as well. He just became one with that Mustang. It isn't often that an artist gets to fly in one of his canvases. Watching her taxi and fly off was bitter sweet to me. On one hand, watching the aircraft fly with your handy work on the side is exciting and it is such an honor. On the other hand, with all the time I spend with the aircraft, I can't help but form a connection with it. It becomes like one of my kids. That is how much heart I put into my work. When it fly's off, you feel a little sad. I'll miss working on it, that's for sure. As testament to how much Duane likes the nose art, I have gotten to paint art on almost all of his beautiful collection of aircraft, from his T-2 Buckeye "Out of Control" to his T-28 "California Dreamin'". We are currently in the design phase for his Dehavilland Beaver nose art called "Damn Beaver". Should be a blast doing that one!

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I consider myself so lucky to be doing this. There aren't many of us out there that do nose art. Many are done by artists that specialize in other forms of art and are hired to try to paint something on the nose of an aircraft. I like to think of my self as specializing in nose art and take a great deal of pride in that. I have a passion for war birds and being able to work with them as a crew chief with the Pacific Coast Air Museum in Santa Rosa, the aircraft to me is more than a canvas. To me, it is more than just putting paint on the aircraft. I feel that it is done in a tradition that started way back in WWII by those crew chiefs on the flight line that placed elaborate images and names on the sides of aircraft. Many times the nose art was inspired by icons of the day from patriotic slogans, cartoon characters, good luck charms, to the ever popular and my all time favorite, the Esquire pin up girl. These men trusted that she was going to get them to the target and get them home safe. That is what these artists did for the crews back then.

I



### Speaking about Nose-art

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I am fanatical about it and many times pour over my reference material and photos from the past. I take a great deal of pride in what I do and believe I am in a way walking in the shoes of [Hal Olsen](#), [Dave Hetteman](#), [Jack Gaffney](#), and [Matthew Ferguson](#) who during WWII increased morale of the crews by personalizing the aircraft for them. These aircraft were not inanimate objects to the crews. They were living breathing things that they depended on to get them home. In personalizing the aircraft with nose art, the crews formed more of a connection with the aircraft. “She” was no longer an aircraft, “she” became “Memphis Belle”, “Shady Lady”, or “Sack Time” for example.

As I reproduce nose art or come up with an entirely new concept for an owner I feel I am doing my part to continue an American tradition. It is a tradition with its roots deep in aviation history. I take pride in doing it just as they did on the flight line in WWII. I believe in doing it with respect and honor to those that did nose art before me. With every brush stroke and blending of colors I do, it is done with that thought in mind. I believe in holding true to the nostalgia that is nose art in its finest form. Every brush stroke and blending with the airbrush is done to give the piece richness and character. It takes a long time, but the end result is so worth while. Back in WWII the nose artist had to paint with what ever they could get their hands on. Many times the work was done on the tarmac of primitive airfields using house paints to oil based paints thinned with aviation fuel and some even had to use home made brushes. Lucky for me I have the ability to use the best oil based enamels on the market. That makes a huge difference.

The rewards for the nose art far out way the hours of concentrated work. Some pieces require well over 40 hours of work and at the end having the client see the transformation his or her baby has gone through is worth all the blood sweat and tears. I work together with the owner throughout the design phase and every step of the way in the process. Photos are taken and emailed daily if the owner can't be there with me while the work is being done. I want the piece to be 100% just what the client wants and I will accept nothing less. When it is a new piece we create, I thoroughly enjoy combining the personality of the aircraft, the owner, and its history to come up with the design.

My most recent piece, “Ace Maker”, came from collaboration with the owner of a Canadian built T-33 Shooting Star. [Greg Colyer](#) of Northern California's T-33 Heritage Foundation loved the fact that his T-33 was known as the “Maker of Jet Aces” and the concept for the art grew from that. He recently flew “Ace Maker” in the 2008 Aviation Nation Air Show at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas and it was a hit. As payment for the art, Greg offered to have me as his “back-seater” in the T-33 for 5 days of living like a fighter pilot at Nellis, “The Home of the Fighter Pilot”. After I picked myself off the floor I jumped at the chance! For a guy whose dreams of becoming a fighter pilot were dashed by an eye injury at the age of 17, this was a dream come true. He had my name put on the jet and gave me the call sign “Da Vinci”. I got a huge kick out of it. There was nothing like strapping into the T-33 with live ejection seats and taking to the air. The 5 days at Nellis was one of the best trips of my life full of great flying and the sounds of F-15's in full burner under the Vegas sun. Life doesn't get much better than this.

### **"She Flew Bombers"**

Jeanne Slone who read from her historical novel *She Flew Bombers* at the March Pacific Coast Air Museum Member Meeting, is doing a one time presentation with Florence Wheeler, WASP, class of 1944 at the Healdsburg Library, Saturday, April 11th at 2:00pm.

In addition to meeting and hearing Jean, if you missed her presentation you can attend and meet with a former WASP and see her memorabilia.

### **May 1st Bus Trip**

There are still some spots left on the May 1st bus trip to see the new space exhibit at the Aerospace Museum of California and the California State Railroad Museum. We can now take guests of members on this trip. The \$50 cost includes bus transportation, box lunch and admission to both museums. To sign up, stop by the museum admin office on Tuesdays or Thursdays and see Dave, Duane, Mike or Phyllis. **TO ALL WHO ARE GOING ON THE TRIP, THE BUS LEAVES THE PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM AT 7:00AM SHARP ON MAY 1ST!**



## Summer Aviation Program

The Pacific Coast Air Museum is offering its 2nd annual Summer Aviation Program . A few of the topics the students will examine include the science of flight, navigation principles, the history of flight, and being a pilot in the Museum's "Flight Lab". The class will host several guest speakers representing many areas in aviation and the class will have an opportunity to visit the airport's control tower. The daily 2 hour class will meet June 8 - 19, 10:00 - 12:00 in the Museum's board room. Enrollment is open for student's grades 7 -12. Tuition for the two week course is \$25.00. To obtain an application or additional information, contact [Allan Morgan](#), Instructor, at 431-2856 or stop by the Museum's Gift Shop.



## Guest Speakers for the April Member Meeting

The Lady Jo, a P-51D Mustang, locally owned and flown, will be the topic for our guest speakers at the April 15<sup>th</sup> member meeting. Located in the hangar adjacent to the Museum's T-28, the Lady Jo is often seen flying locally as well as at air shows and the Reno Air Races each September.

Our speakers will be [Daryl Bond](#), the Chairman of the Board of All Coast Forest Products, Inc. of Cloverdale and the owner and restorer of the Lady Jo; Rob Gordon, a Sergeant with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department, an Airline Transport Pilot with many years of private, instructional and corporate flying experience, and the pilot of the Lady Jo, and; if his flight schedule permits, [Dan Vance](#), a First Officer for American Airlines, an experienced race pilot and the owner and pilot of Speedball Alice.

This is sure to be an interesting event. Daryl will talk about his acquisition and re-building of the aircraft and Dan and Rob will talk about flying the plane and racing it at Reno.



**NEW MEMBERS**

03/03/2009

Cody Harrington – Windsor

Valentino Family – Santa Rosa

Ruthie Martin – Fulton

03/10/2009

Tom &amp; Peggy Rhode – Santa Rosa

Craig Rohibough – Ukiah

Susan King – Santa Rosa

03/12/2009

Watkins Family – Windsor

03/17/2009

Ralph Medsger – Santa Rosa

John Mero Family – Santa Rosa

03/19/2009

Chris Bingham Family - Geyserville

**Charitable IRA rollovers are back!**

The provision allowing IRA owners over age 70½ to transfer up to \$100,000 of their IRA directly to a qualified charity or non-profit organization like the Pacific Coast Air Museum has been **RETROACTIVELY** extended through the end of 2009.

Call your tax advisor or accountant for details.

The Pacific Coast Air Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

## Executive Director's Update

The rumored requirement for everyone with an airport gate card to go through a security background check and be issued a badge (at \$15 a copy!) has been delayed for museum members with a gate card issued through the museum. It may well happen at some point down the road, but for now - - no badges. If you have need to drive or tow on the main airport ramp or any taxiway, call Airport Operations for an escort. Jon Stout and I are working on a waiver for the Air Show.

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we have a few spaces left for the May 1<sup>st</sup> bus trip to see the new space exhibit at the Aerospace Museum of California and visit the California State Railroad Museum. We can take guests of members. Price is \$50 per person which includes the bus, box lunch and entry fees to both museums. If you are going on the bus trip, please note that the bus will leave the museum at 7:00am (0700) sharp on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tickets for our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual All You Can Eat Shrimp Feed Fundraiser at Finley Center, Saturday, June 6th, are now on sale. We've hired a great New Orleans chef, Maria Vieges, to prepare her great Cajun style shrimp, two different kinds of pasta, Caesar salad and garlic bread. Your \$45 ticket includes a glass of wine or beer. \$450 gets you a reserved table for eight with two bottles of wine on the table. See any Board member or Dave or Duane in the office to buy your tickets. We can handle 300 people, and once we sell 300 tickets, there are no more. We're also going to have the best raffle we've ever had, with some amazing prizes.

Tickets for the Friday night, August 14<sup>th</sup>, "Performer and P-38 Reception" will go on sale at the Shrimp Feed. It'll take place on the Flight Line, in the large Kaiser Air hangar at the north end of their brand new ramp. The performer's aircraft will be there for you to see up close, as will the P-38 and possibly some other rare war birds. Tickets are \$40 each and includes snacks catered by Sam's For Play and a glass of wine or beer. Again, tickets go on sale on Saturday, June 6 at the Shrimp Feed, in the museum admin office, at Kaiser Air and at both Sam's For Play restaurants.

Our Air Show planning is going along very well, and we are far ahead of where we normally are at this time of year. See [www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org). Click on the Air Show tab, and [www.wingsoverwinecountry.org](http://www.wingsoverwinecountry.org) for details. Steve Hoxie has some key openings on his Air Show staff, so let him know if you are interested ([swhoxie@gmail.com](mailto:swhoxie@gmail.com)).

We are planning some exciting improvements to our aircraft display area at the museum. A committee of [John Rutigliano \(Chair\)](#), [Jim Cook](#), [Dave Pinsky](#), [Larry Rengstorf](#) and [Tony Bassagnani](#) has developed plans for a wooden footbridge with handrails to go over the ditch where the single metal ramp is now and a beautiful gravel walkway around the aircraft display area. We hope to gain Board approval and start construction in May. When complete, it will be a beautiful enhancement to our current museum location.

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Thanks to the diligence and hard work of Ray Smith, we have a beautiful Aircraft Layout Plan printed up and available for each visitor to our museum. It shows them the aircraft on display, the name of each aircraft, and the location of each display aircraft and outdoor artifact. It's a great addition to our museum and really enhances the experience of our visitors. Thanks Ray!

Don't miss our April 15<sup>th</sup> Member Meeting at SCOE. Daryl Bond, the owner of P-51 Mustang "Lady Jo", and Rob Gordon, who flies "Lady Jo" are presenting a program about the restoration of Lady Jo - - a fascinating story.

Don't forget to get your Shrimp Feed tickets now!

Smooth landings,

Dave

Climb aboard our "Top Gun" aircraft on April 18th and 19th



F-14 "Tomcat"



F-5 "Tiger II"



F-16N "Viper"



Visit PCAM  
April 18 & 19th  
Top Gun Weekend  
Climb Aboard  
F-14 "Tomcat"  
F-16N "Viper"  
F-5 "Tiger II"

### REMEMBER THESE DATES

- April 1st @ 8:30am Board of Director's Meeting at the Museum
- April 14th @ 12:00pm Executive Director's Staff Meeting at the Museum
- April 15th @ 6:00pm—Air Show Planning Meeting at SCOE
- April 15th @ 7:00 pm - Member Meeting at SCOE
- April 18th @ 11:00am—New Member Orientation at the Museum Conf. Room

**PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM**

**2230 Becker Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, Ca 95403**