

F-4 Phantom

by Michelle Choquette

Remembering Michelle

by Noel Allard

When Michelle Choquette died of cancer in February of 1998, she left more than a family and a model airplane club behind. I am writing this because I feel that Michelle's life should be worth another round of memories. What I relate here is a

tribute to a human life, lived in great turmoil and pain, yet leaving the world a better place.

Michelle was born October 20, 1950 and grew up in Bricelyn, Minnesota as Mark Smith. Mark received a degree in architectural drafting from the Dakota Vocational Technical College and worked in that field as a draftsman. As an aviation

buff, Mark joined TCAH and became friends with several members of TCAH. He traveled with members Tom Norrbohm and Jeff Kurth and others to airshows and museums in the late 1970s. Mark was married and had a daughter, but knew and related to the friends that inside his body, things were mixed up. An operation was

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TCAH Officers

President, Robert Maderich II
Vice-President, John R. Ross
Secretary, Marty Agather
Treasurer, Dennis Strand
Historian, Tom Norrbohm

Newsletter Info

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month

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Dennis Strand

TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held Saturday April 11, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 1:00 pm. This is the annual Club Awards Luncheon, so come early (12:30) to be sure to get some eats.



From the Prez
by Bob Maderich II

Welcome to Spring, fellow members,

Just a few notes in my message this month.

First, let me thank all of you who donated to the March auction. (and also to those who purchased). We made very close to \$1000.00 and that is great.

Secondly, remember April is the club lunch and the TCAH award ceremonies. I will be in Milwaukee for my annual NNL Milwaukee show, so John, Marty, and Dennis will be holding down the fort. (Get there sometime after 12:30 for the food, drink, and festivities.)

My third item involves a big thanks to Axel for taking on the first "This Day in Aviation History" that we will debut in April. I thought it was a good idea for the historian in all of us.

My last item is about the Club Challenge and the survey results. John is in charge of these and we will be discussing these two at the April meeting.

Have a great time and I will see you all in May.

From the VP
by John R. Ross

Sorry guys you're stuck with me this month, our President will be off attending a Show in Milwaukee. Let's wish him well.

This month will prove to be a busy one, starting with some food. We will be having our annual club celebration and food will be provided. Jimmy Johns will be on hand but to help simplify things we will be doing a BYOB (Bring your own Beverage) and encourage members to bring something to drink. We do have the Pop Machine at the field but we won't have any way of knowing how full or what choices are there, so it might be a better plan to bring something with you. On top of that we will be dishing out the annual awards.

One piece of business we would like to put to rest is a club challenge. I would like to see us put out a challenge and keep the theme open to allow flexibility to members. We can certainly do one that focuses on a single subject or kit but let's choose something and get started. In either event the club exposure can be limited to just prizes to help contain costs. Also I would like to issue a challenge that would run in parallel with this to those that are not interested in building something but would rather do some research and write something. Let's put our thinking caps on and drive something out at the meeting.

Finally, we will spend some time going over the results of the survey. I don't think anyone will

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Airline Chatter

by Terry Love

Qantas parked Boeing 747-438, VH-OJA, msn 24354, on March 8. It was the first Boeing 747-400 delivered to Qantas in 1989. It will be on display at the Historical Aviation Restoration Society as a display.

Virgin Atlantic retired their last Airbus A-340-300 on March 29.

Airbus is boosting the production rate of their very popular A-320 series to 50 airplanes per month.

Airbus Industries earned \$2.65 Billion in 2014.

Cargolux of Luxemborg took delivery of their 30th Boeing 747 freighter. It was Boeing 747-8R7F, msn 35823.

Cathay Pacific will retire their entire fleet of 11 Airbus A-340s by 2016. Cathay Pacific currently has 147 airliners in their fleet. They have 48 Airbus A-350s and 21 Boeing 777s on order.

Air Leasing Corporation (ALC), a leasing company, ordered 25 Airbus A-330s and 30 Airbus A-321s.

Delta Airlines, MD-88, N90202, msn 49540, slid off of runway 13 at LaGuardia Airport in New York City on March 5, and sheared off the right wing. The aircraft will be scrapped due to age, number of cycles, and cost to repair.

American Airlines will phase out the last of their 34 MD-80s by 2017. They will replace them with Boeing 737-800s.

Alaska Airlines began service on March 11 from Seattle to

Washington, DC.

Delta Airlines is further downsizing their Cincinnati hub into just a destination on their route map.

Swiss Airlines ordered 3 more Boeing 777-300ERs. Swiss already has 6.

Boeing 777s. Order is valued at \$990 million - \$330 million per aircraft.

Spirit Airlines plans to hire 1,500 new employees this year.

Jet Blue Airlines will begin service this November from New York City to Barbados and Aruba.

Virgin Atlantic will operate their new Boeing 787 Dreamliners on the London to Hong Kong route.

Delta Airlines marks 75 years of flight attendant service. On March 16, 1940, the first flight with flight attendants left Atlanta for Dallas with five stops along the way. They served fried chicken.

Ryan Air, the ultra-low cost airline of Europe modeled after Southwest Airlines, is coming to America. American destinations will be New York, Boston, Chicago, and Miami from London's Stanstead Airport.

Air France is parking most of their Boeing 747-400s. The last one will retire in 2016.

Sun Country Airlines will add this summer Minneapolis to Savannah, and Minneapolis to Gulf Port. This will bring the total cities served to 37.



Treasurer's Report

by Dennis Strand

\$999.00; this is the amount that the club took in at our annual auction in March. We also had four people renew their membership. This brings our total membership, including "life" members, to 77.

Our expenses this month included web site costs, gift certificates, and a trophy. The current club balance is \$5262.55 as of 3/15/2015.

I will be unable to attend the April meeting, but the Treasurer's Report will be in the newsletter as usual. Everyone please enjoy the food and socializing at the next meeting. If someone wishes to join or rejoin the club, you can send payment to me; Dennis Strand, 833 Manomin Ave., St. Paul, MN 55107. I will bring your membership card to the May meeting.



LS P-3 Orion

by Frank Cuden

My latest completion is the LS 1/72nd scale kit of the P-3 Orion in the Canadian CP-140 version of the kit - a separate issue. The model has different wing tips on it. Decals came from "Canuck Decals." This is the third LS P-3 kit I've built and it is very nice. The "soot" on #3 prop is a build-up from the APU unit adjacent to it on the lower fuselage.

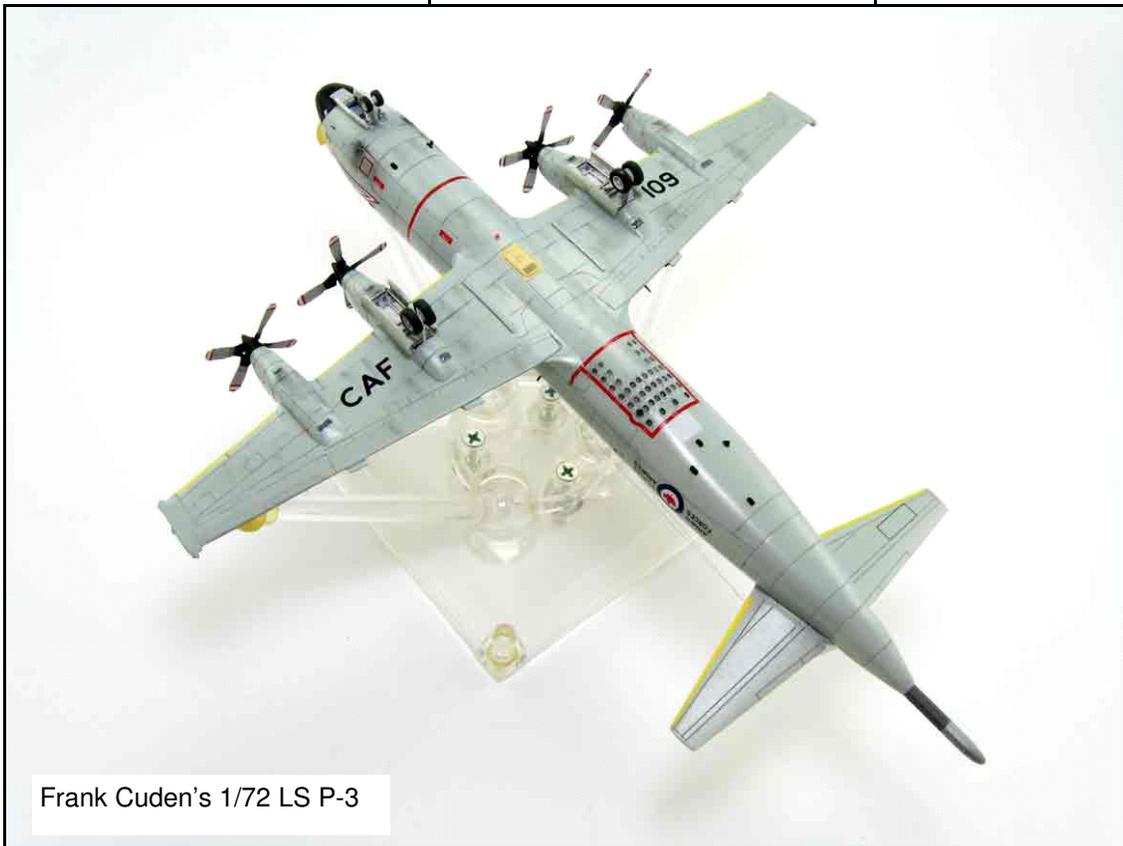


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be surprised by the results and we just want to share some of the thoughts expressed in the survey.

Look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.





Frank Cuden's 1/72 LS P-3



Michelle's A-10 and B-58

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contemplated to change his sex. That did happen in the early 1980s at the University of Minnesota Hospital. The operation was complex and painful to the person that emerged as Michelle Chouquette. Member Mark Copeland comforted Michelle in the hospital by bringing her model kits to assemble.

Michelle rejoined TCAH in 1981. After her operation, she seemed to revel in her new person, and flaunted her femininity in her makeup and dress. In fact, other TCAH members noticed the new "babe" that haunted the hobby shops. Some of those in the club who knew her before the change chose not to get too near her, but as she began to bring incredibly detailed models to meetings, the majority of the membership accepted that she had changed her sex, and that was that. In general, we all felt that, no matter what, her exuberance and skill as a model builder were who she was and

accepted her.

We did not focus on her changing from the "babe." Not able to work outside the home because of her mental state, she relied on welfare and the generosity of her mother and friends to keep her going. She also had time to spend on model building, keeping her mind off the internal struggle with her body. In the years that followed, she focused intensely on model building, eventually working as much as sixteen hours a day and often through the night at her kitchen table, scratch-building and vacuum-forming. The routine, unfortunately, along with meds that were changing her hormones, resulted in a large gain of weight. Choquette, the new name, in French, meant "small joke" was a sign of how she felt about herself. Indeed, she attempted suicide numerous times.

But, Michelle was a skilled craftsman. She often created the fanciful "next variant" of certain military aircraft, much to the awe

and surprise of TCAH members. On occasion, a new contest category had to be opened to account for her models. Michelle's modeling then drifted to 1/32 scale, where she could build with incredible detail and scratch techniques that none of us could match. Her model of an A-10 Warthog was her favorite and astounding in its detail. Scratch-building was her uniqueness. One has only to look at her B-58 Hustler and F-4 Phantom to see what she could do with styrene plastic and imagination. Perched on mirrors in a display case at South St. Paul, one can see that even the wheel wells and bomb bays are carefully detailed. Michelle was quoted to say she had spent as many as 5000 hours on the B-58. I didn't know there were 5000 hobby hours in a year! Her drafting skills showed in the engineering of shapes and structures. Her C-130 Hercules included a completely detailed, though unseen interior. Jack Mugan took some of her models to the Dayton's photo studio

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where they were photographed to be included in Fine Scale Modeler Magazine articles. With that, Michelle's reputation became worldwide.

As her health went away, TCAH member Jim Linneberg became a close friend, driving her to doctors appointments and clinics, and even accompanied her to Europe for a change of scene. As cancer took over her body, Michelle began giving her models away to members who

had befriended her. Frank Cuden became the temporary caretaker of the Warthog. The TCAH was gifted many more when she couldn't model any longer. Michelle Erin Choquette died of cancer on February 5, 1998. Most of her models were put on display at American Wings Museum at Anoka County Airport, but when that closed, the models were moved by TCAH members to their present site at Fleming Field. Today, the public and TCAH members are fortunate to have the opportunity

to see the work of this amazingly skilled artist.

The display case is like a Mecca to me – when I visit South St. Paul, I have to go look at the models, and then I am almost moved to tears. The display case is a monument. My mind races to comprehend how a person, whose brain and body were so wracked with internal struggle and pain, could have left so beautiful and lasting a legacy.



Two of my favorite monsters—PzKpfw VI Tiger and *Tyrannosaurus rex*
Both models are 1/35th Scale
by Bob Arko

Directions to the Club Meeting Location

Where: South St. Paul Municipal Airport, a.k.a. Fleming Field, located on the southern extremity of South St. Paul, south of 1-494, west of Concord Street and East of Highway 52.

If coming from the western Twin Cities going east on 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn right (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left there will be a McDonald's; to your right front there will be a Walgreen's.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .6 miles. Along the way you will encounter three more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2

- miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

If coming from east Twin Cities on westbound 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
 - Turn left (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left front there will be a small strip mall; to your right there will be an Amoco station.
 - Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
 - South Street W and go approximately .4 miles. Along the way you will encounter two more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
 - Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2 miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building
- The terminal is on the right with

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The group is open to aviation enthusiasts from teenagers on up who are interested in aviation modeling, photography, collecting, art and writing. For more information contact Larry Donovan at 651-501-4755.

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:30pm.

See above for the new meeting locations and directions.

Mail Newsletter material and address changes to the treasurer.

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