

*Our Mission: To interpret aviation, particularly that related to New York State, with exhibits and programs that educate, entertain and excite the public*

## ESAM REOPENING ON JULY 31st

After a more than three-month mandatory closing of ESAM and other museums throughout the State, with the Phase IV re-openings announced on July 1st, ESAM anticipated re-opening its doors to the public in mid-July. Unfortunately, however, that date has had to be pushed back until July 31st because of water problems at the museum.

Several restrictions and conditions are required by New York State related to museum operations, such as limiting the number of visitors in any space at one time, social distancing, the requirement that all visitors and staff wear masks, enhanced hygiene and cleaning protocols, drastically reducing group tours/events, and curtailing access to hands-on exhibits to name a few.

Another state requirement for organizations to re-open includes preparation of a written Safety Plan, outlining how the museum will comply with the new requirements and protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In this regard, I am happy to let you know that the plan has been created by a committee chaired by **Joyce Newkirk**, who not only serves as the museum's Treasurer, but Chief Operating Officer, as well. Other members of the committee include: **Tim Burke, Lynn Chevalier, Larry McArthur, Gary Davis, Mike Collins, Aaron Lauber, Ralph Rosenthal, and Kevin Millington**. The museum thanks all who volunteered for the committee, and especially thanks Tim and Lynn for contributing their expertise from planning for reopenings at other venues.

To successfully implement this plan and safely return to business, we will need our ESAM community to pitch in! Joyce Newkirk, Gary Davis and **Jeff Smith** are hard at work cleaning, installing signage and covering over hands-on exhibits that will not be in operation when the museum reopens. A critical part of the reopening plan is a team of volunteer monitors working each day to help visitors enjoy the museum and to assist them in observing the new protocols. As such, we welcome anyone who would like to help out. If you are able to commit time to help ESAM reopen, please contact Joyce. To start with, the museum plans to reopen on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4 pm. Stay tuned for an updated reopening date.

Unfortunately, on the morning of July 11th significant water damage was detected, first in the Community Room ceiling, then in the second floor administrative offices and finally in the Gift/Admissions Shop. The damage in the Community Room and administrative offices resulted from a roof leak. (See photo on page 7.) The water in the Gift/Admissions Shop came from a water line leak.

A number of ESAM members and volunteers helped start drying out the areas that were affected. Thanks to **Gary B. Davis, Rich Bievenue, Peter Bergendahl, Bob Tomlinson, Joyce Newkirk and Bill Denny** for their efforts. In addition thanks to **Dan Wilson** and Rich Bievenue for building a temporary water diversion apparatus until roof repairs are made by professionals.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

First, I want to thank all those members who have contributed to ESAM and those who have responded with special contributions. Your museum has lost the ability to maintain a regular income during the virus cycle. Being closed does not bode well for any business.

I would like to pass this piece of information along to our members who are over 70 1/2 and retired. You can reduce your tax bill when you donate to ESAM directly from your retirement account.

On June 3rd the Executive Committee met and discussed installing the Concorde model in August. Installing the Concorde in August was also discussed at the June 15th and July 20th Board of Trustees meeting. We've targeted August 29th as a potential installation date to commemorate the arrival of the real Concorde in 1987, when British Airways conducted a "Trip to Nowhere" (Bermuda) from the Schenectady County Airport in less than two hours round trip. Our model has the same ID number as the Concorde that made the "Flight to Nowhere" in 1987. Is it coincidence or fate?

Hopefully, when the Concorde is in front of the main hangar, in full view from Route 50-Saratoga Road, it will bring in the visitors and certainly remarks from the general public, "Did you see the Concorde at ESAM?"

We had plans for a major fundraising effort this past Spring and, with Schenectady County's support, hired a professional fundraiser to assist us. Well, you know what happened in March and over the past four months. Not much to brag about. However, **Michele Susko**, our professional fundraiser, will be guiding us over the next few months to reach our goals.

Again, if you can volunteer a few hours a week or donate a few dollars for support, it will be greatly appreciated.

Best regards,  
*Peter V. Russo, Sr.*  
ESAM President



**Peter Russo**



## AeroNotes

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### Aerosciences Museum

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ESAM is a registered  
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## 2020 ADOPT AN AIRPLANE PROGRAM IS MOVING FORWARD

Recruitment of 2020 "adopters" for the museum's Air Park aircraft is underway. The cost of adopting an airplane is \$15 for individuals. Businesses and groups are also eligible to adopt planes.

By adopting an airplane you are volunteering to wash the plane and perhaps do other minor maintenance on the plane under the supervision of a member of the Restoration Crew. **Gary B. Davis** is coordinating the program. If you are interested in adopting an airplane, please see Gary or contact the ESAM office.

## ESAM ON LINE

While ESAM is working to reopen, we want you to know that the museum has a vibrant on-line presence.

At our website, [esam.org](http://esam.org), we recently started a new series entitled Legends of the Skies. The Legends of the Skies series will highlight the airplanes in ESAM's Airpark. In the first video, ESAM First Vice President **Kevin Millington** leads the viewer through an 11 minute description of the US Navy's F-14 Tomcat (see below). Thanks to **Josh Nagy** and **Bob Vore** for facilitating the video.

The website also includes a series of oral histories, videos of presentations delivered at ESAM, past issues of Aeronotes, and past special events. As we reopen it will again announce upcoming events.

The museum also has a presence on Facebook under the name Empire State Aerosciences Museum. Check us out there too.



ESAM Legends of the Skies - Grumman F-14 Tomcat



Watch later Share





## MODEL BI-PLANE IS RESTORED

**Alfonzo DiBlasio** and **Gary Davis** just completed restoring a model bi-plane that had been outside Gallery I.

The restoration included:

- Disassembling the model
- Repainting the entire model
- Outfitting the cockpit with real instrumentation
- Installing a new seat covering, and
- Installing new controls

They did a great job.

**Right: The restored cockpit of the model biplane**

**Below: Alfonse DiBlasio (left) and Gary Davis (right) show off the model biplane that they restored.**



## SAAB JAS-39 GRIPEN

by Kevin Millington

In this issue, I am profiling one of the best and little known fighters in the world, the Saab JAS-39 Gripen. The Gripen is a lightweight, multi-role, single-engine aircraft, and both single and two-seat variants are in service.

Development of the Gripen began in 1979, as Sweden was looking for a replacement for its aging fleet of J-35 Draken and JA-37 Viggen fighters. Like its



predecessors, the Gripen was designed for performance, flexibility, and the ability to operate from short runways, including highways, with a take-off run of only 1,600 ft.

The Gripen's high performance and multi-role capability is based on its unique design elements and advanced avionics. The aircraft features a delta wing, with a large canard control surface, which provides exceptional maneuverability and a top speed of Mach 2. The plane is also designed to perform both air supremacy and ground attack missions.

First flown in 1988, the Gripen entered service with the Swedish Air Force in 1996. Currently, 270 have been manufactured, and it is in service with the air arms of several other countries, as well, including South Africa, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

With a maximum take-off weight of 30,000 lbs., it is one of the lightest fighters in the world. With respect to armament, the Gripen is equipped with an internally-mounted 27 mm cannon, and can carry the very latest air-to-air and air-to-ground ordinance on under-wing pylons.

In 2007, Saab began development of a larger, more capable version, including single- and two-seat variants, and designated JAS-39 E and F. The new version is not only larger, but has substantially more internal fuel, due to relocation of the main landing gear from the fuselage to the inner wings, resulting in a combat radius between 800 and 1,000 miles, and has in-flight refueling capability as well. It is powered by a General Electric F404 turbofan, providing 22,000 lbs. of thrust, and the ability to "super cruise", or fly supersonic, without the need for use of the afterburner. Perhaps the most notable improvements are in its avionics, featuring an active electronically scanned array radar and a very advanced and capable electronic warfare and countermeasures suite. The first Gripen E was delivered in 2016, and several countries are evaluating it as their next generation fighter, and a much cheaper alternative to the more expensive 5th generation fighters, such as the F-35 Lightning. Saab is also advancing development of carrier-based and unmanned versions.

## EARLIEST AERIAL ADVERTISEMENT?

The museum has received photostatic copies of a number of newspaper clippings about the Gelatine, an early twentieth century airship owned by **Charles B. Knox**. The clippings include what is purported to be the earliest aerial advertisement. As shown to the right, the advertisement is for a public Fourth of July flight at the Tri-county Firemen's Celebration in Canajoharie, NY in 1906. Alas, an "accident that happened to a valve" prevented the flight from taking place and resulted in a charge that the event was "the biggest fake ever advertised in the Mohawk Valley."

Mr. Knox, owner of the Charles B. Knox Gelatine Company of Johnstown, NY, responded to the charge by returning the \$500 that he had received for the flight, even though his contract authorized him to be paid whether or not the flight took place. Mr. Knox asked that the returned money be used first for a fire alarm system for Canajoharie and then for the balance to be donated to the local fire companies.

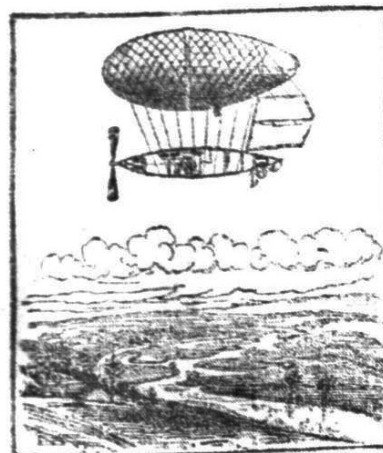
The Gelatine did get off the ground on July 7 but apparently that flight was not as good as hoped for. Success, nevertheless, did come at the Oneonta Fair in September 1906 when the Gelatine made two "very successful demonstrations of aerial navigation".

"The gas bag was filled at noon and a storage bag also filled to be drawn upon when the airship's reservoir needed replenishing...Then the crew about the airship became active and...the ship was attached to the gas bag, properly weighted with sand bags and made ready for flight. Innumerable cords, which are at the ends of the strands forming the net about the gas bag attach to the skeleton frame of the airship. The six horse power gasoline engine, which drives the propeller, rests in a frame a little ahead of the center and the propeller draws rather than drives the ship through the air, being at the front end. A large rudder in the rear, operated by cords, steers the machine. **Aeronaut Elmer Van Vranken** gave his personal attention to the details for making ready and took his place on the ship before it was taken from the inclosure to be released. He has no seat to rest upon and the ride cannot be called a pleasure trip. Mr. Van Vranken's duties are numerous and it is necessary for him to climb about the framework while in the air.

The ship was rested on two horses on the open space east of the main building until the engine was started and adjusted. When the propeller was speeding properly, the aeronaut gave the word to release him and the marvel of air transportation glided upwards."

See more about Charles Knox in our Gallery I display.

## AIR SHIP GELATINE



WILL MAKE A FLIGHT AT  
**CANAJOHARIE**



**JULY 4th, 1906.**



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**GROUNDSKEEPER EXTRAORDINAIRE**

Restoration Group volunteer **Mike Cole** has been helping keep up the museum grounds this Spring, mowing and clearing leaves and



**Mike Cole and his Equipment**

**SUMMER DAY CAMP CANCELLED**

ESAM's popular summer day camp for young aviators is cancelled for 2020. The camp runs in conjunction with Schenectady County Community College which is only operating on-line activities for youth this summer. We plan to have our summer camps back next year.



**ESAM Community Room as it  
recovers from water damage**



**Above Top:** A Restoration crew reinstalls the Concorde's left wing tip. Pictured from right to left are Restoration Group volunteers Mike Cole, Dan D'Amour, Dave Tripp and Peter Bergendahl. Not pictured is Rich Bievenue who is operating the forklift.

**Above Bottom:** Both wingtips are installed. Restoration crewmembers enjoying the installment of the Concorde's wings are Rich Bievenue, Alfonse DiBlasio, Dave Tripp and Dan D'Amour. Not pictured is Gary B. Davis who is taking the photo from on high.



## THE NATIONAL WARPLANE MUSEUM

The **National Warplane Museum (NWM)** approached ESAM about exchanging information in our respective newsletters. ESAM is pleased to publish the following information about the National Warplane Museum and has provided them information about ESAM for their newsletter.

The National Warplane Museum is located in Livingston County, Geneseo, NY.

The NWM has a fine collection of both fly-able and static display aircraft, World War II vehicles, and an extensive collection of artifacts and memorabilia. Their mission has been in support of awareness and education about WW2 and the Korean conflict.

The Museum is located on a 6,000 ft. long grass runway. This is the location for our yearly Geneseo Airshow in July (the show has been postponed until September this year with no specific date set as yet).

Their flying C-47 is an actual combat veteran having delivered paratroopers of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne over Normandy on D-Day. It also participated in Operation Market Garden, immortalized in the film A Bridge Too Far. The museum offers rides in this historic airplane as well as other aircraft in our collection.

The Museum has an operable DUKW which is an amphibious vehicle more commonly known as a Duck, jeeps, and a wide collection of WW2 uniforms and insignia.

Located in the Finger Lakes, Geneseo is an attractive college town with great restaurants and accommodations. Other attractions in the area include award winning wineries and Letchworth State Park, the Grand Canyon of the East.

Please note that because of the virus, the museum is currently closed. However, once open it can provide visitors with tours or you can self- guide. Most of the aircraft are not hidden behind ropes or barriers which allows you to get up close and personal.

More information about the National Warplane Museum is available at:

[www.nationalwarplanemuseum.com](http://www.nationalwarplanemuseum.com) and  
on Facebook at National Warplane Museum-Geneseo Airshow.



**Top: C-47 W7 in flight**  
**Above: C119 at the National Warplane Museum**

## JUNKERS JU 88 MODEL INSTALLED IN WORLD WAR II EXHIBIT

Art Harvey's JU88 model is now installed in the World War II German bomb sight exhibit. Thanks to Trustee **John Kolwaite** for installing the model.

The detail is extraordinary. For example the "bent" pitot tube is placed at the proper angle below the left engine, the gunner's head is turned toward the visitor and a just-released bomb is depicted in the air below the aircraft. The model is a thing of beauty and enhances an already excellent World War II exhibit.

Other parts of the World War II exhibit include: a B-25 top gun turret; a B-24 Norden bomb sight; a German BZA-1 dive bombing system; stories about New York State World War II aviators; various World War II airplane parts; and artwork of the Enola Gay signed by members of the crew who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

**Right and Below: Two aspects of the JU88 model in the World War II exhibit**



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We are pleased to acknowledge and welcome the following  
**NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS**

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## **HAPPENINGS AT ESAM**

### **MUSEUM HOURS**

**General Museum Admission** – \$8 per adult; \$6 per senior and military; \$5 age 6-16;  
under 6 free when accompanied by an adult

free admission to active duty military personnel and up to 5 family members

**Simulated Reality Vehicle (SRV)** – Ride: \$5

**REOPENING ON JULY 31ST!**

## **ESAM Membership Application**

Please check one: NEW MEMBERSHIP ☐ RENEWAL ☐

### **ANNUAL DUES:**

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☐ Galaxy Club \$500  
☐ Friend of ESAM

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\$1,000 ☐ Small Business \$100

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