

# AEROGRAM

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## MUSEUM STAFF

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Curator

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## Glenn Curtiss and the Distinguished Flying Cross

Rick Leisenring - Curator

One thing that has always intrigued me is a photograph from our archives of Lua Curtiss wearing a Distinguished Flying Cross purportedly belonging to her son, Glenn H. Curtiss. Sadly, in the past, there have never been any details in our files regarding the award or when and why Lua is wearing it.

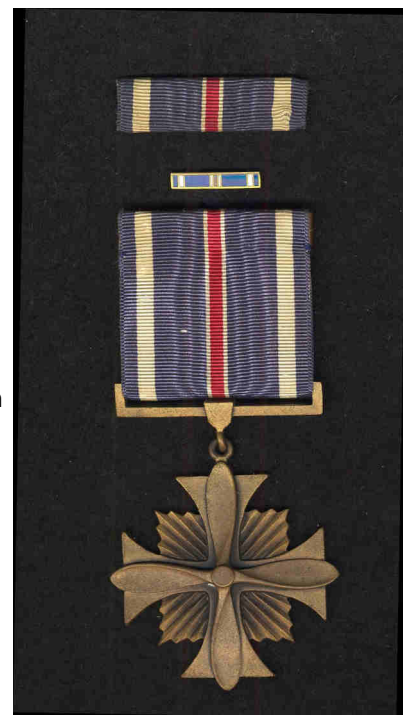
A few months ago we received an inquiry from a member regarding the medal and their belief that they might have one that belonged to the Curtiss Family. This prompted me to start the search again that I had done several times in the past without results. With the magic of the internet and the timing being right, I finally was able to solve this little mystery.

First to come to light was a photograph of Glenn Curtiss's actual Distinguished Flying Cross posted on the Smithsonian's website. This proved one existed but still did not give us actual details.

Knowing the current history of the award made me question how a civilian could have the nation's 6<sup>th</sup> highest award for "heroism in flight". After more in-depth research I found that the Cross was originally open to civilians when it was created in 1926 but was changed to a military award shortly after with the civilian award being an exception, awarded by an act of Congress. The next step was to locate these acts of congress with the help of our friend "Google". As luck would have it, the records of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Congress of 1933 came to light with this proclamation authorizing the President to make a posthumous award of a Distinguished Flying Cross to Glenn H. Curtiss, deceased, and to present the same to Lua Curtiss, mother of said Glenn H. Curtiss:

*"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President be, and is hereby, authorized to make a posthumous award of a Distinguished Flying Cross to Glenn H. Curtiss for distinguished service in the development of American aviation. The Distinguished Flying Cross shall be presented to Lua Curtiss, mother of the said Glenn H. Curtiss, deceased.*

*- approved, March 1, 1933"*



*photo courtesy of Smithsonian Institution*

— continued from page 1 —

With that, the mystery was finally solved and the story behind Lua Curtiss's photograph was also brought to light. This is a press release photo of her, taken just after being presented the Distinguished Flying Cross for Glenn by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

We have an example of this medal in our collection, which we will be using for the permanent display on Glenn H. Curtiss and his Distinguished Flying Cross

*Lua Curtiss in Washington, DC after → receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross on behalf of her son, Glenn.*

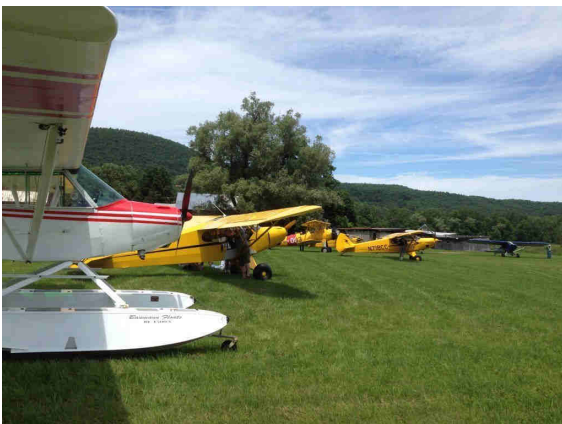


## PIPER CUB PILOTS VISIT THE MUSEUM

We continue to have many visitors to the shop and some who have direct connections to the P-40. One was a lady test pilot, Mary Feik. She had flown P-40s and P-51s, among many other airplanes, while a civilian at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton in 1942. Mary recently came to our museum with the Piper Cub Sentimental Journey group from Lock Haven that makes an annual fly-in visit here.



*Mary Feik in the rear seat of a Piper Cub*



Mary said that she still gets in an airplane at every opportunity. The Piper Cubs landed at Kolo Airfield, near the museum. Pilots and passengers toured the museum and had lunch with the restoration shop crew.

### CURTISS MUSEUM OFFICERS

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## IN MEMORIAM



### **Marianne Bellamy 1933-2014**

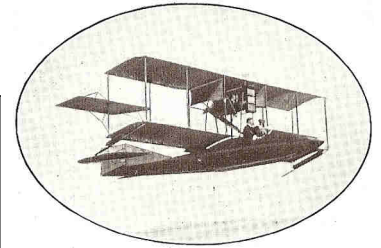
Longtime museum volunteer, Marianne Bellamy, died at home in Lancaster, PA, on January 2. In addition to her volunteer work at the museum, Marianne had been a charter member of the Hartford Ballet Co., and for many years taught ballet and modern dance. She had also served as administrative assistant to the Vice President of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster.

### **R. Brian Grigsby 1933-2014**

Restoration shop volunteer, Brian Grigsby died at home in Florida on March 7. Brian graduated with a Bachelors of Mechanical Engineering Degree with Honors from North Carolina State University and received a Masters Degree in Automotive Engineering from Chrysler Institute of Engineering, Detroit, MI. Brian obtained the rank of Captain in the USAF piloting B-25's, C-119's and C123's (1956-1959). In 1961, he was employed by General Dynamics Astronautics as a systems engineer and worked at Vandenberg AFB setting up the first Atlas F Series Underground Missile Silo site, which led to the first successful launch of an underground missile. In 1963, he began working at Kennedy Space Center, FL as a propulsion systems engineer with Goddard Launch Operations. His duties included the propulsion and mechanical systems on the Delta unmanned launch vehicle until 1976 when he was appointed Chief, Delta Mechanical/ Propulsion Branch. During his career he participated in 125 launches of the Delta Rocket and also served as the technical editor of the Delta Handbook. In 1978, he became the manager of External Tank/Solid Rocket Booster Mechanical Systems for the first six Space Shuttle Launches. He was appointed to the Space Station Task Force, Washington, D.C. in 1983 which developed the original concept and design of what is now known as the International Space Station. Once funding was obtained, he returned to KSC where he finished his 30-year government career as a project engineer with the Space Station Project Office. In this position, he managed engineering activities between Kennedy Space Center and the Canadian Space Agency, and between KSC and Goddard Space Flight Center, as well as with the Washington D.C. program office. Following retirement, he worked for Grumman Aerospace Corporation until final retirement in 1993.



He was an avid boater and antique car enthusiast. He was an ordained Elder and Deacon of Riverside Presbyterian Church and volunteered thousands of hours at the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum over a period of more than 20 years, helping to restore, reproduce and fly antique seaplanes.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept.12-Nov.2, 2014  
**Embroidery Exhibit**

September 13, 2014  
**Seaplane Homecoming**

Nov.14,2014-Feb.16,2015  
**24th Annual Dollhouse & Miniatures Exhibit**

Nov.29, 2014  
**19th Annual Miniatures Vendors Show & Sale**

Feb.21-22, 2015  
**Winter Cycle Therapy Motorcycle Show**

May 9, 2015  
**Old Engine Day**

June 6, 2015  
**Indoor Yard Sale 9-4**

August 1-2, 2015  
**Classic Motorcycle Weekend**

August 17, 2015  
**Curtiss Golf Classic**

Sept.11 - Nov. 1, 2015  
**Quilt Exhibit**

# From the Director - Trafford L-M. Doherty

Time has flown by – I'm in my twelfth year as your Director and it just doesn't seem possible that so much time has gone by. A lot has happened here in those twelve years and I feel very comfortable in saying that we have come a long way toward realizing the potential of the building and the collection. This is a direct result of a lot of effort by our staff and volunteers, but I should add that this process will never be totally complete, because a museum must always continue to strive to improve, if it is to enjoy ongoing success.

In my mind, some of the more significant **exterior improvements** over the years would include placing the C-46 out front (we have Joseph Meade Jr. to thank for that), improving the signs and general appearance of the driveway, paving the rear parking lot, and repainting the building. Systemic improvements include the installation of a new HVAC system (we have Joe to thank for this, too) and a complete rebuilding of our septic system. **Interior improvements** include wiring and plumbing (much of it performed by Restoration Shop volunteers), painting, new carpeting, improved theater projection equipment, and, for a more efficient Gift Shop operation, expansion of the merchandise display area and the addition of a second cash register specifically for admissions. And let's not forget the development of a functional **website** where folks can see what's new, purchase gift shop items, renew memberships, make donations and contact museum staff with questions by e-mail.

That brings us to the subject of **Exhibits**. Obviously, the output of our Restoration Shop is the dominant factor in our exhibit structure. Their magnificent efforts which produced the *A-1*, the *Model E*, and the *America*, also include the restoration of our *Jenny* and *Oriole*. Combined with *The June Bug*, the *headless pusher*, and the *Seagull*, they all serve to establish our museum as *THE* repository of early Curtiss aircraft. No one else has a collection remotely like this one – anywhere! Then, there's the bikes! Thanks to the generosity of a number of individuals and collectors, we have a wonderful and diverse collection of bicycles and motorcycles. And, once again, we have a significant exhibit of Curtiss machines, including our reproduction of Glenn's famous 1907 world record bike. We are, again, unique – a fact that is becoming more and more apparent to the motorcycling community. This is no accident - for quite a while, we have been highlighting this aspect of the collection in our various promotions and as a result, our motorcyclist visitation has been increasing exponentially. Then, there's everything else; the cars, boats, guns, antiques, toys, doll houses, Bath & Hammondsport RR caboose and, yes, the *Hair Wreath*. We shall, for all time, be indebted to our founder, Otto Kohl, who had the foresight to include items in the collection that he deemed interesting – albeit, not necessarily Curtiss-related. The diversity that we enjoy in our collection today dates back to our very beginning and truly separates us from any other museum.

Every day, I see the surprise and delight on the faces of our visitors as they enjoy an experience that greatly exceeds their expectations and it makes me very proud to have been a part of this over the years.



## NEW MEMBERS

### Donor

Robert & Patricia Mincer

### Sponsor

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Tom Wallace  
Terry Northrup  
Bill & Alise Mahr

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Terry Ostrander  
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David & Teal Hardy

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Michael Mentley  
Chis Wiegand  
Mark Davis  
George R. Kahn  
Margaret Schuster  
William Shang  
Walt Hoffman  
Joshua Harkness  
Ronald Brush  
Michael Schmidt

## MEMBERSHIP UPGRADES

### Curtiss Society

Cameron Dunlap

### Patron

Guy & Anita Bennett  
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### Donor

Jim Herron  
Dick & Jennifer Honeyman

### Supporter

Scott Anderson  
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James Carey  
Dot Page

## Golf Tournament Sponsor Teams

Corning Incorporated  
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 Krog Corporation  
 Pleasant Valley Wine Co.  
 Five Star Bank  
 LeChase

Harter Secrest & Emery  
 Bully Hill Vineyards  
 Steuben County IDA  
 Mercury Corporation  
 Meade Foundation  
 Frey & Campbell

## Golf Tournament Supporting Teams

Dick Honeyman - '65 Lakers  
 Al Wahlig - Aqueous Humor  
 Don Rumsey - Flying Colors  
 Tom Snow  
 Becky & Pete Petrucci  
 Tom & Lynn Binnert  
 Jim Barrett - First Flight  
 Stork Insurance

GCP Liquor  
 Bill & Lori Reed  
 Neil & Laurie Fagan  
 Valicenti Advisory  
 Hardinge, Inc.  
 Terry Northrup  
 Allen Engineering

## Golf Tournament Donations

Corning Enterprises  
 GCP Liquor  
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 Ray Poehlein  
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 Crooked Lake Ice Cream Parlor  
 Park Inn  
 Switzerland Inn  
 Fagan's Furniture

Frisky Wine Tours  
 Snug Harbor  
 Lakeside Restaurant  
 Cameron Dunlap  
 Mike Doyle  
 Finger Lakes Wellness Center  
 Linda Carl - Park View Wine  
 Pam Knapp - Browsers  
 Costa Flying Service  
 Corning Incorporated  
 Dennis Carlson  
 Finger Lakes Distilling  
 Steve Sprague  
 Terry Pennise - Cinnamon Stick

## Golf Tournament Winners



Champions: Five Star Bank



Net Champions: '65 Lakers

## GALA UNDERWRITERS

Dale & Barbara Pedersen  
 Guy & Anita Bennett  
 The Rev. Lew Brown  
 Jim & Janet Hallahan  
 Jim & Doris Lally  
 Jack & Sue Barker  
 Robert & Lynn Domras  
 Dick & Susan Rogers  
 Tom & Peggy McAvoy  
 Sam & Terry Pennise  
 Art & Kay Wilder  
 Bob & Ruth Davis  
 James & Delight Scouten  
 Martha Treichler  
 Alan & Joan Parsons  
 Mardo Doherty  
 Kirk & Barb Vieselmeyer  
 Dennis Carlson  
 Rachel Nicklaus  
 Chuck & Gwen McCausland

## GALA CONTRIBUTORS

Tom Babcock  
 Roland Avery  
 Candy Smith  
 Don & Vanessa Rumsey  
 Joe & Judy Yedinak  
 Linda Carl  
 Terry Pennise  
 Pam Knapp  
 Ray Poehlein  
 James & Delight Scouten  
 John Wahlig  
 Brett Steves  
 Pete Hoffmire & Joe Gavin  
 Trafford Doherty  
 Brent & Martha Olmstead  
 Dr. Frank Wine Cellars

## RESTORATION SHOP DONATIONS

Linda & Ron Beyer  
 David George-Nichols  
 Lt. Benjamin George-Nichols  
 Bea Schwoerer  
 Walter Bowe  
 William & Lana Grauer

## Restoration Shop - Art Wilder

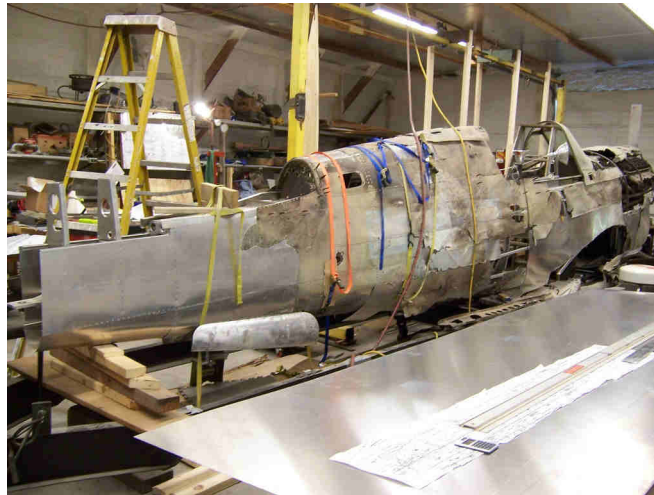
The 1928 Travel Air biplane on loan from Dick Rogers is complete and on display. The Curtiss connection is that after the Curtiss and the Wright companies merged in 1929, they then purchased Travel Air in 1930. The original bill of sale for this airplane was signed by Walter Beech. This restoration is done in bright red fuselage, silver wings and tail. Just about everyone in the shop was involved in this project at one time or another (including my wife, Kay) and we are all very pleased with the results.



**Travel Air completion**

Concentration will now shift to fabric covering the Fledgling. Tip floats are being worked on by John Wilder, and Bill Parker is well along with the main float. As many of you know, the Fledgling was a donation from John Desmond of Heritage Air Museum. We are sad to report that John passed away mid August at the age of 90. John lived in the Chestnut Hill part of Philadelphia and owned the Desmond Hotels in Albany, NY and in the Philadelphia area. He also owned a small airport called Heritage Field and owned and operated an automobile and aircraft restoration facility in Chalfont, PA. John became a good friend and supporter of the Curtiss Museum.

Our P-40, which is located in the back building shop, continues a slow but sure restoration. Repeat visitors are noting progress. The right wing is taking shape in its 9' x20' vertical assembly fixture. The elaborate construction of this 7-spar wing is being done by several of us, including Roy Hepler, Dick Siegrist, Bob Brown, and Harry Strong. We are salvaging many parts from the original wings.



Components of the P-40 landing gear, which we intend to be operational in the final display, are being refurbished. These parts come apart very reluctantly after spending 40+ years in the Florida swamp. Brian Richardson is building a fixture to machine the repaired bevel gears which give the main gear the 90-degree twist that lays the wheels flat and back into the wings. Roy Hepler has the horizontal stabilizer skin segments ready to rivet (the sound of music in the metal airplane section of our Shop).



We have added some special, donated equipment to our Shop; Hardinge Turret Lathe from Jim Lally's PCB Corporation, Bending Brake from Mercury, and surface grinding and radial drill press from Martha Ryan's grandfather's shop.

### MEMORIALS

#### In Memory of Brian Grigsby

Joe & Ann Fitzgibbons  
Grant & Gail Simons

#### In Memory of Jeanne Curtiss

Peter & Joyce Daniel

#### In Memory of Marcel "Bud" Rouin

Martha Rouin

#### In Memory of Marcia Meade Coon

Benchmark Environmental  
Engineering & Science  
PLLC

### MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS

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Judith Wilbert  
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Kevin House  
Keith Hoffman  
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John & Katie Van Zanten  
Charlie & Nancy Bauder  
Terry Northrup  
Don & Donna McIntire

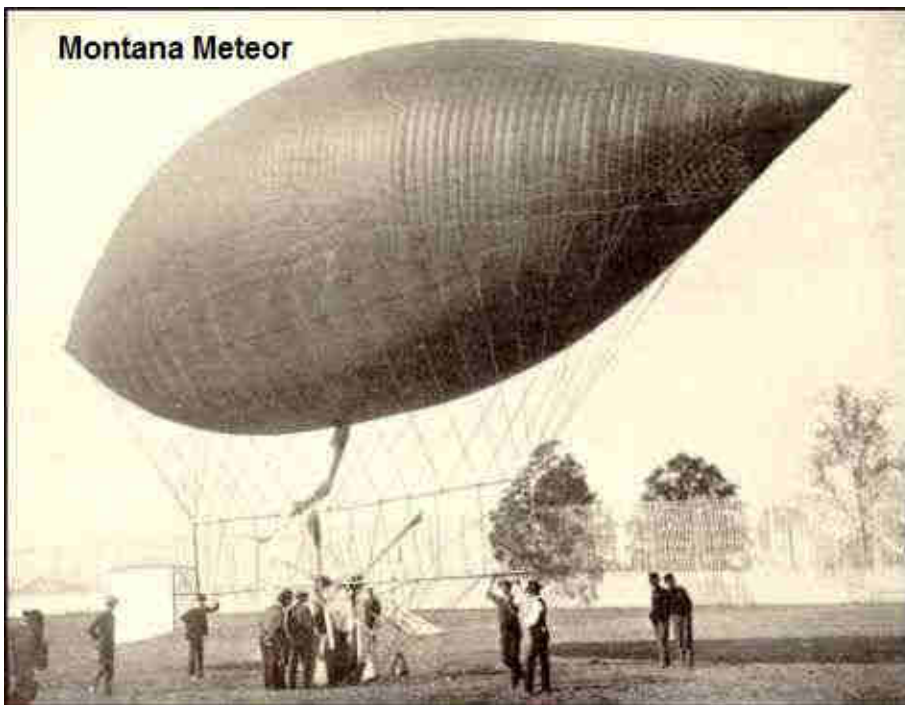


## CURATOR'S CORNER - RICK LEISENRING

Seems as though spring and summer kind of made the scene at the same time this year with lots of hot days intermingled with as many wet days. Whatever the conditions, it hasn't slowed our visitation down! The Corning Embroidery Guild's *Hand Wrought: An Embroidery Art Exhibit*, opening on September 12<sup>th</sup>, will run through November 2, 2014.

*Warehouse 53 – A Museum Exhibit of Adventures in the Cinema!* was featured on Henry Dormann's television show *Friends & Neighbors* which airs on WETM-TV and WETM-2. The 15-minute segment aired on Saturday July 26th. This, like the *Getaway Guy* program on YNN, has a very large viewer audience which not only gives the exhibit, but the museum as a whole, great exposure. Our two art shows featuring Ruth Connell and John Wahlig also made the headlines and went extremely well. Both accomplished artists put on a strong show and we heard nothing but praises for the quality and content of their work.

New displays and exhibits update – We are in the process of upgrading the lighting in a few of our older display cases. Currently, a local history case and the vintage camera collection cases have been upgraded with new lighting. Also being added to the camera display are professional graphics, tags and shortly to come, new case fronts for better viewing.

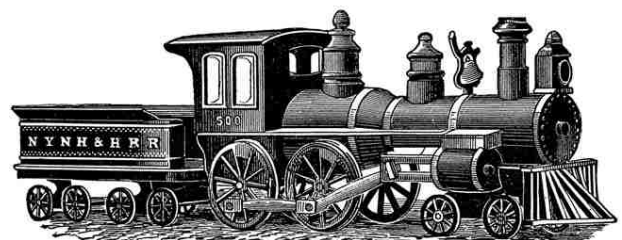


We've been discovering so many "new" tidbits of local history lately, that I thought I'd periodically add a new feature to my report called "By the Way:". Much of it stems from the large amount of research being conducted for various authors and television programs. So here is the first one!

According to the Hammondspport Herald of Oct. 21, 1903, Glenn Curtiss and Charles Kirkham made a trip to Frankfort, NY, to install an engine on an airship constructed by a Mr. Benbow. It was to compete for the prize of \$100,000 at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis later in 1904. This was T. C. Benbow and the airship was the *Montana Meteor*, one of two others that competed against Capt. T. S. Baldwin and the *California Arrow*

there. Now, most of you know the story of how Capt. Baldwin used a Curtiss engine on the *California Arrow*, won the competition in 1904 and brought Curtiss nation-wide recognition. What is not generally known is that others before Baldwin tried Curtiss' engines on their flying machines and very possibly, one of two of Baldwin's rivals (T.C. Benbow) was also using a Curtiss engine at the St. Louis Exposition.

MINIATURES VENDOR SHOW  
AND SALE  
SATURDAY, NOV. 29, 2014



GLENN H. CURTISS MUSEUM  
8419 State Route 54  
Hammondsport, NY 14840

Phone: 607-569-2160  
Fax: 607-569-2040  
Email: info@glennhcurtissmuseum.org  
Web: www.glennhcurtissmuseum.org



## SUMMER 2014



### MUSEUM HOURS

#### WINTER

Nov.1-Apr. 30  
Mon.-Sun. 10-4

#### SUMMER

May 1-Oct.31  
Mon.-Sat. 9-5  
Sunday 10-5

Museum closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Easter Sunday
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

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The Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, 8419 State Route 54, Hammondsport, NY 14840

Basic \$35       Sponsor \$125       Patron \$500  
 Contributing \$50       Donor \$250       Sustaining \$750  
 Supporting \$80       Benefactor \$1000       Curtiss Society \$1500

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**Additional tax-deductible donations will be used for museum improvements including up-grading facilities, restoration shop and new exhibits.**