OUR NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE AT WORK...AND A CALL FOR TAI MEMBERS TO JOIN US

TAI’s National Youth Committee meets once a month through a one-hour telephone conference call, and the group has been working to come up with a template for an official national youth program. It’s not yet clear whether such a program will be perhaps a single summer camp for local-chapter youth-program participants from all three of TAI’s regions, or maybe a more extensive and permanent bricks-and-mortar cooperative effort with an existing facility such as one of the historically black colleges and universities, or simply a syllabus and curriculum that can be used by local chapters to establish their own youth programs. In any case, TAI feels that it is important that we establish a formal national youth program as an aid to seeking corporate funding and grants.

This is an excellent time to work toward such a goal for the first time in TAI’s history. Awareness of the Tuskegee Airmen is at an all-time high, with considerable media attention to the Original Airmen’s accomplishments; it seems that not a month goes by without the establishment of another Tuskegee Airmen memorial or historical site, and our national organization is striking while the iron is hot. Minority young people all across the country are ready and willing to be inspired by the legacy of the Airmen.

At this point, the National Youth Committee seems to agree that the least of our missions is to give airplane joyrides and try to create pilots. But that the most important thing we can accomplish with a national youth program is to use aviation and its relevance to STEM education to lead young people toward the learning of “employable skills”—capabilities that they can use to get and keep jobs. Vocational skills are no longer being taught in high schools, there is no longer an old-fashioned apprentice system, and we need to develop ways to help minority young people, particularly, to find such training through mentoring, internships and other avenues.
As a national organization and as a network of local chapters, we need to establish relationships and build partnerships with high school administrators, career counselors and education-related community groups--school boards, PTAs and the like. We need to make them aware of our organization’s capabilities, our aims and objectives, and our needs. We need to partner with schools and teachers. As one of our National Youth Committee members--himself an educator--recently noted, “How rare is it to ever see an African-American student participating in a high school or middle school science fair?”

Ultimately, remediation may also be a goal of a national youth program. It’s easy enough to cherry-pick the top level of students and attract the natural strivers and shining stars to our programs, but perhaps more important is finding a way to inspire those kids who are in the bottom half of our student population and who simply need some inspiration to help pull themselves across that crucial borderline between “not good enough” and “onward and upward.” It’s easy to challenge a 3.5 student to strive for 4.0; the hard part is motivating the underperformers to pull themselves up by their bootstraps from 2.5 to 3.0 grades.

Said one Youth Committee member, an airline captain, “It’s hard to get our arms around everything we need to do, but the main thing I see is that we need to seek out kids and motivate them.”

And finally, here’s a challenge to our entire national TAI membership, particularly to those who are reading this newsletter and are by definition interested in youth programs: Until now, our National Youth Committee telephone conference call has been a closed loop, available only to committee members. We’d like to open up that loop to every member of every TAI chapter.

If you would like to participate in a National Youth Committee telecon--they currently take place on the last Saturday of every month at four p.m. Eastern time, though that may change--please e-mail Committee Chairman Chauncey Spencer II (chauncey.spencer2@gmail.com) and ask if there is space available for you on the next conference call. If there is--we don’t want to turn this from a moderated discussion into a free-for-all, so space will be limited--he will provide you with the date, time, conference phone number and confidential participation code.

We want--and need--your help. Join us!

National Youth Committee members and associates are:

Marvin Abrams, San Antonio Chapter
John Gay, Chappie James Chapter
Ben Goff, New England Chapter
Gordon Guillory, Claude R. Platte Chapter
Larry Jackson, Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter
Quincy Magwood, Trowell-Harris Chapter
John Patterson, East Coast Chapter
Robin Rhodes, Lewis J. Lynch Chapter
Tom Sherman, Spanky Roberts Chapter
Chauncey Spencer II (Chairman), Detroit Chapter
Stephan Wilkinson, Trowell-Harris Chapter
Yolanda Wood, Hugh J. White Chapter
Twelve NASA Explorer elementary, middle and high schools in 11 states have been recognized for their contributions to education in STEM disciplines during the 2012-13 school year, and six of them have been given $5,000 grants to help implement further STEM activities during this school year. (NASA Explorer Schools utilize NASA resources to infuse into their classroom lessons STEM content related to the Agency’s space missions and programs.)

If any of these schools fall within the purview of our various local chapters, they might be fertile ground for the creation of cooperative TAI/school programs, since reaching out to local educators and facilities is one of the most effective ways we can develop to increase the benefits of our own youth programs.

The schools are (with the first six listed being winners of $5,000 grants)...

Cardinal Gibbons High School, Raleigh, NC
Northland Preparatory Academy, Flagstaff, AZ
Stoney Creek High School, Rochester Hills, MI
St. Mary’s Visitation School, Elm Grove, WI
Corpus Christi Catholic School, Chambersburg, PA
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Germantown, TN
Forest Lake Technology Magnet, Columbia, SC
Academy of Information Technology and Engineering, Stamford, CT
Woodrow Wilson Middle School, Glendale, CA
Mack Benn Jr. Elementary School, Suffolk, VA
Franke Park Elementary School, Fort Wayne, IN
Ferndale Middle School, High Point, NC

CAN WE COOPERATE WITH NASA EXPLORER SCHOOLS?

The Raisbeck Aviation High School, in Tukwila, Washington (a suburb of Seattle) has moved into its new, state-of-the-art, $43.5 million facility. Raisbeck has been in operation in temporary facilities since 2004 and is the country’s first college-prep high school devoted to preparing students not only for college but for careers in aerospace. The school is located on Boeing Field (officially King County Airport), home to more than 150 aerospace-related businesses--Boeing’s own flight-test division and new-aircraft delivery center, engineering companies, corporate aviation departments, charter companies, aircraft and avionics repair centers, flight schools and FBOs. The smaller companies employ some 5,000 aviation professionals, and Boeing is staffed by 5,000 more.

Says Leslie Barstow, the airport’s community-relations manager and vice-chair of the high school’s mentor advisory board, “The simple proximity [of this aerospace center] allows students more opportunity to form relationships with business owners and to increase their skills, such as learning the fly, and perhaps to obtain a job.” Some of Raisbeck’s students become interns at such companies.

Mike Borfitz, a certification manager at Aviation Partners Boeing, was one of the school’s first mentors, and he explains the importance of offering internships to students: “When they go off to college, they are more likely to come back and work in the local area with a greater understanding of what the industry and the specific businesses are all about. It’s really about making the Aviation High School a part of the [aerospace] community.”

Sounds like a school that might be open to the establishment of a TAI “youth club.” Something for Seattle’s Sam Bruce Chapter to explore?
An excellent new HBO documentary, “Glickman,” reveals an interesting fact about a nearly forgotten Tuskegee Airman. “Glickman” is about Marty Glickman, the athlete and pioneering radio and TV sportscaster. And no, Glickman wasn’t a Tuskegee Airman, he was a Jew, the son of Romanian immigrants, a graduate of Syracuse University, an Olympian, briefly a pro football and basketball player, and ultimately the man who established much of the style and dazzle of modern-day sportscasting.

When Glickman was 18, he was selected for the U.S. Olympic track-and-field team that competed in the infamous 1936 Olympics in Berlin—the one hosted by Adolf Hitler. Glickman was part of the U.S. 400-meter relay team, but the day before their event, Glickman and another Jewish member of the relay team were replaced by African-American Jesse Owens and a Gentile runner, Ralph Metcalfe. The U.S. finished second to Great Britain, but they might well have won the gold medal with Glickman as part of the team.

It is strongly suspected that Avery Brundage, president of the United States Olympic Committee and a known enthusiast of Germany’s Nazi regime, had finagled the last-minute change in order to avoid insulting Hitler, who of course was history’s most evil anti-Semite. (There apparently wasn’t much Brundage could do about Owens, who won four gold medals and spiked Adolf’s claim that Germans were part of the master race and that blacks were their inferiors.)

But what about that Tuskegee Airman? Wilmeth Sidat-Singh was a Syracuse classmate of Marty Glickman’s. His parents were both African-American, but he took the last name of his mother’s second husband, an Indian doctor who adopted Wilmeth after the death of his biological father. Sidat-Singh and Glickman were friends and played together on the varsity football team; Syracuse was one of the first largely white colleges to include blacks as starters on their major teams. Sidat-Singh, in fact, was Cornell’s quarterback.

Many assumed that Sidat-Singh was Indian, but when Syracuse was scheduled to play the University of Maryland, just south of the Mason-Dixon line, the Terrapins discovered that Wilmeth was black, and Maryland refused to play unless Sidat-Singh was forbidden to take the field.

In the film “Glickman,” Marty reveals a secret that troubled him for the rest of his life: Glickman, also a football star, wrestled with his desire to support his friend Wilmeth by himself refusing to play, but he ultimately didn’t have the courage to go through with it. Glickman played, Sidat-Singh didn’t, and Cornell lost. (The next year, when the rematch was played in Syracuse, Wilmeth led his team to a lopsided win over Maryland.)

Lt. Wilmeth Sidat-Singh went on to become a Tuskegee Airman and won his wings. He unfortunately drowned in 1943, during a training flight after an engine failure and ditching into Lake Huron.
Intelligent and involved parents talk to their children, and they talk a lot: by the time their children are three, they will have typically heard 30 million more words directed at them than have the children of uninvolved parents.

We all talk about how to improve schools, but the fact is that children spend only about 15 percent of their time in school over a typical year. We should be more concerned with improving parents, and one way to do that is to encourage parents to interact with their kids as much as possible. Says Annie Murphy Paul in her excellent blog The Brilliant Report. “Parental involvement--checking homework, attending school meetings and events, discussing school activities at home--has a more powerful influence on students' academic performance than anything about the school the students attend.”

A big part of the academic advantage held by children of well-off families comes not from the fact that their parents buy them fancy educational toys and iPads and send them to test-prep tutoring but that they not only talk to their kids but with their kids. One recent UCLA School of Health study concluded that two-way adult-child conversations were six times as powerful in promoting language development as was having the adult to all the talking. It’s not only because conversation give kids the opportunity to try out language for themselves but because it gives them “the sense that their thoughts and opinions matter,” Paul writes. “As they grow older, this helps [them] develop into assertive advocates for their own interests [rather than] avoiding asking for help or arguing their own case with teachers.”

It matters, of course, what you talk about. “Children who hear talk about counting and numbers at home start school with much more extensive mathematical knowledge...[and] the amount of talk young children hear about the spatial properties of the physical world--how big or small or round or sharp objects are--predicts kids' problem-solving capabilities as they prepare to enter kindergarten.”

Yes, talk is cheap--a cheap way to make your kids smarter. It has been estimated that “schools would have to increase their spending by more than $1,000 per pupil to achieve the same results that are gained with [increased] parental involvement.”

Mrs. Noel Parrish, widow of the commander of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II, at the 2013 National Convention, in St. Louis, with our two youngest TAI members--Damien M. Long II and his brother Quinn, both six years old.
It's often forgotten that Tuskegee Airmen flew not just their iconic Red Tail North American P-51 Mustangs but North American B-25 Mitchell medium bombers (as well as Bell P-39 Airacobras, Curtiss P-40 Warhawks and Republic P-47 Thunderbolts). The Airmens' B-25 unit was the 477th Bomb Group (Medium), activated in June 1943 and soon renamed the 477th Composite Group when it began operating P-47 fighter-bombers as well as B-25s. The 477th was scheduled to enter combat in July 1945, but the conflict in Europe was over and the Pacific war would end in mid-August 1945 after two atom bombs were dropped on Japan. The 477th and its Tuskegee Airmen pilots and crews never did see combat during World War II.

During World War II, the B-25 was perhaps the most effective twin-engine medium bomber in any air force, axis as well as allied. It was reasonably fast, carried a substantial bomb load, and was safe and easy for newly trained pilots to fly. Nearly 10,000 were built, and dozens are still flying in the hands of civilian warbird enthusiasts—including the one in this photo, painted in the colors of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, which operated B-25s against the Japanese in the East Indies.

One of the B-25’s most famous missions occurred early in World War II, when 16 Mitchells took off from an aircraft carrier that had steamed within range of Japan, and they bombed several Japanese cities, including Tokyo. The B-25s did little actual damage, but the blow to Japanese morale was considerable—much like what Americans might have felt if Japanese bombers had appeared over Los Angeles. The Japanese had never dreamed that Americans could attack their home islands, particularly only four months after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The carrier operation, carefully planned by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, a famous former air racer and record-setting Army Air Corps pilot, was itself a feat that nearly any pilot would have said was impossible—the equivalent of launching a Boeing 767, say, from a 2,000-foot airstrip for Cessnas and Pipers. But Doolittle proved that it could be done by using partial flaps, special short-field takeoff procedures, and lots of practice. (All of it on dry-land runways, however; the actual takeoff against Japan was the first time any of Doolittle’s pilots had been aboard an aircraft carrier.)

The 477th Composite Group itself made history that proved to be equally important.

While based at Freeman Field, Indiana, the officers of the 477th, led by future Detroit mayor 2nd Lt. Coleman Young, demanded entry to the base’s whites-only officer’s club. A dangerous confrontation between the Airmen and MPs and officers followed, though it never progressed further than some pushing and shoving.

One hundred and one Tuskegee Airmen were arrested, and three of them were court-martialed. Just one guilty verdict was handed down—against Lt. Roger C. Terry for “jostling” a white officer—but the Freeman Field Mutiny made enough news that it would be yet another important step toward the integration of the U. S. armed forces.
Last month (September) NASA signed an agreement with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to infuse the agency’s STEM curricula and capabilities into the BGCA's activities nationwide. “This collaboration will foster a new generation interested in STEM careers,” said Democratic Rep. Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania. “Coupling [NASA’s] expertise with BGCA’s unparalleled work in youth mentoring, leadership and development will be impactful for millions of our nation’s students.”

Leland Melvin, a NASA associate administrator and former Space Shuttle Astronaut, said, “By involving students in hands-on activities related to our missions and research, we are inspiring America’s next generation of rocket scientists and space explorers.”

BGCA reaches a youth audience of almost four million, many of them from underserved sectors of the community. By making relevant STEM education content available to them, NASA is cultivating a future technology-oriented workforce that will draw from the nation's diverse population...or, to put it more plainly, they’re looking beyond just tomorrow’s white scientists.

At the same time, NASA’s Langley Research Center has agreed to provide gifted students at the Governor's School for Science and Technology, in Hampton, Virginia, the opportunity for hands-on guidance and experience in STEM disciplines with the goal of inspiring future scientists and engineers. Students will be mentored by active Langley researchers, who will assist them with STEM projects and college-level work. NASA sees these students as part of its future workforce, and the Hampton Governor's School--one of 19 such magnet schools in Virginia--was created specifically to help build a skilled workforce with technical training.

TAI’s youth programs may not have an audience of four million, but substitute the phrase “Tuskegee Airmen youth programs” for other references above to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and the relevance is obvious. And the Langley program addresses a need that in days gone by was satisfied by the good old-fashioned apprentice system: the training of young people to enter a job market with employable skills, which is something in which our TAI youth programs should be participating.

Has our youth-programs leadership contacted NASA for grants and active support? If not, maybe they should.
Auburn University, in Alabama, has the second oldest university aviation program in the country, as part of its Raymond J. Herbert College of Business. A new FAA regulation now allows Auburn graduates to attain an Airline Transport Pilot certificate with 1,000 hours logged rather than the 1,500 hours required of non-Auburn applicants. (They of course still have to be at least 23 years old and pass the ATP written and flight tests.) Considering the time and dollars it costs to log 500 hours particularly of multi-engine and turbine time, that equates to an enormous cost savings for future airline pilots who have graduated from Auburn.

Essentially, the FAA is recognizing that quality of flight time trumps quantity. In a recent study carried out by Auburn and several other schools in cooperation with regional airlines, it was found that the best new hires typically had between 500 and 1,000 hours of flight time and came from collegiate aviation programs.

**Shortcut to an ATP--An Airline Transport Pilot Rating**

Auburn professional flight management student Kris Frost preflights his Cessna Skyhawk before a lesson. He’ll be ready for his ATP in two-thirds the time required of most other applicants.

**Kentucky Institute For Aerospace Education--A High School Network**

Tim Smith is the CEO of the Kentucky Institute for Aerospace Education, which he has grown, during the pasts five years, from an aviation-pathways program at a single high school, in Frankfort, Kentucky, to a network serving 23 high schools throughout Kentucky and even into Tennessee.

From an article by Maxine Scheer in Aero-News.net:

“Dr. Smith, who has a PhD in education, is the real deal. He understands how kids learn through hands-on experience, was persistent and effective in engaging the support of his school district, and has grown the program into a four-year curriculum of aviation-themed learning in the areas of flight and aeronautics, aircraft maintenance, aeronautical engineering, aviation operations and management, and space-systems engineering. ‘We focus on the skills that will make the students college and career ready,’ says Smith.

“[Smith]...has recently launched a campaign for establishing a permanent building, the Kentucky Aerospace Institute, at the state-owned Capitol City Airport in Frankfort.
The new National Museum of World War II Aviation, on Colorado Springs Airport, south of Denver, has started a STEM education program tailored for young people all the way from Kindergarten to 12th grade. The museum is an exhibition of restored World War II aircraft and artifacts, and the airplanes and exhibits are utilized to give hands-on lessons in aviation technology while simultaneously teaching the kids about a war that too few of them know anything about. The program is free for public, private or home-schooling groups; teachers accompanying their classes are required to take a preparatory class on the courses before attending.

The museum is co-located with (and funded by) WestPac Restorations, one of the country’s leading restorers of World War II aircraft to both flying status and museum-quality exhibition standards. (The photo below of a rare Grumman F7F-3N Tigercat shows their most recent project.)

Unfortunately, the program is not accepting students from extracurricular groups such as TAI youth programs, but it’s a good example of what can be done using an aviation museum’s resources. It suggests the possibility of any of our chapter youth programs contacting a nearby aviation museum to see if such a program can be established, even on just a once-a-year basis.
On Friday, October 4, the legendary Charles “Chief” Anderson was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, part of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, near Dayton, Ohio. Though never himself a Tuskegee Airman, Chief Anderson helped to develop the Civilian Pilot Training program at Tuskegee, Alabama, that gave flight instruction to the first of the Original Airmen cadets as the initial step toward their becoming Army Air Force officers and pilots. The CPTP was originally begun in 1938 to train private pilots who would then be ready to join the Army Air Corps (as it was then called) if the country went to war, but by 1944, it had trained over 435,000 military cadets.

Anderson is perhaps best known for having given First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt a ride in his Piper J3 Cub trainer, after which she created a stir by announcing that obviously, African-Americans could fly—a fact that was until then widely doubted. If any single act assured the success of the Tuskegee Experience, it was that one.

Interestingly, the famous photo taken after Anderson and FDR’s wife landed is oddly inaccurate, in that it shows Mrs. Roosevelt in the Cub’s rear seat. J3 pilots know that passengers (and students) ride up front in a Cub and that the pilot in command flies from the back. Perhaps Eleanor Roosevelt found it too difficult to climb into the cramped front seat, perhaps they switched seats for the photo because it gave the photographer a better view of the First Lady, or perhaps it was done because the non-flying public would assume that a passenger rode in the back. Whatever the reason, the classic photo has come down through history showing Mrs. Roosevelt as the pilot and Chief as her passenger.
The San Francisco Bay Area, which includes Silicon Valley, is the source of much of the engineering craziness that finds an outlet at the annual Burning Man Festival in the nearby Black Rock Desert of Nevada every August. This past September 16-22, a different kind of engineering craziness took over the Burning Man site—the Education Rocket Safari, in which a group of Bay Area high school students joined aerospace-industry experts and university students and educators to launch small (and not-so-small) rockets and learn about professional launch activities, vehicle tracking and recovery and mission payload operations.

The get-together was organized by the Maverick Civilian Space Foundation, the world’s prime supporter of civilian space exploration through STEM education projects, competitive rocketry challenges, and the support of civilian space-technology research. These activities extend all the way from organizing model-rocket activities to supporting serious university-level rocketry such as the University of Maine’s Delta P sub-orbital sounding-rocket project. The launch and FAA flight qualification of the full-size UM rocket was the highlight of the week.

Go here for a look at an excellent PBS documentary on the work of Maverick-supported amateur rocketeers. “We’re involved with the Mavericks because we are seeing the future of satellite technology getting smaller and smaller, even to the point where you can hold an individual satellite in your hand,” said Jim Juve of Wyle, a leading aerospace-technology company that supports the Education Rocket Safari. “That means you can use smaller and cheaper rockets to get those satellite into space. And that opens up the rocket-launch industry to a new class of companies that are entrepreneurial, creative and highly motivated. We see the seeds of this here with the high school and university students during the Rocket Safari.”

Hello from Korea, everyone. I hope that your summer ended well and that you’re enjoying the fall. I recently had the opportunity to spend time with several Original Tuskegee Airmen and was encouraged even more to continue their legacy. So I am happy to share some great news: Legacy Flight Academy 2014 will be conducted at the U. S. Air Force Academy, in Colorado Springs, Colorado!

A couple of members of the planning team were able to secure this support when we briefed an Air Force general and several colonels about the program. They were very supportive and look forward to contributing to our success. My other major activity has been planning to engage the National Black McDonald’s Operators Association as a primary sponsor for LFA, and we look forward to good news from there too.

Currently, we have people focused on the marketing and solicitations aspects of the program, but several more areas need attention (student affairs, budget and legal, flight ops, etc.). The plan going forward will be to identify items to be accomplished every month and to put forth a request for assistance. I will start sending these messages this month, but I still would prefer that individuals commit to being responsible for specific aspects of the program. If there is an area you’d like to focus on, please let me know. In the meantime, please “Like Us” on Facebook and keep an eye out for continued updates to our webpage. The marketing team has been working hard to spread our name and has done a great job, so let’s help them out.

Blue skies,
Keny

www.legacyflightacademy.org
From National Youth Committee Chairman Chauncey Spencer II comes this inspirational account of an African-American pilot and businessman:

Jamail Larkins is a role model for young people who want to be entrepreneurs. At age 15, he launched his own business. By 19, he had created the DreamLaunch Tour to tell youths to reach for the stars.

The successful owner of a business that provided flying lessons and leased planes, Larkins was flying high in 2009 when Inc. Magazine declared his firm the number-one company run by someone under the age of 30. In 2010, Larkins Enterprises was called an “emerging firm” by Black Enterprise.

When the recession hit in 2009, Larkins expanded his operation from selling, financing and leasing planes to providing aircraft management services, crews, pilots, insurance, and coordinating maintenance and charters. “We take care of all the hassles for the clients,” Larkins said. “We hired more people over the past couple of years. It was challenging, but we hung in there.”

Staying on course is also an important part of Larkins’ game plan. At age 20, Larkins became the first official ambassador for the Federal Aviation Administration for aviation and space education. “It’s been seven years, and [I’m] still going strong,” Larkins told BlackAmericaWeb.com. In 2004, Larkins met with the head of the FAA and agreed to spread the word for aviation and space education, taking his “Navigating the Journey of Life” presentation to middle and high schools, telling students that the same techniques pilots use can be applied to the challenges young people encounter in everyday life.

In an interview two years ago, Larkins said he received e-mails and letters from students who said they had been motivated to pursue their dream careers. He even inspired a couple of budding entrepreneurs, including one student who started a t-shirt business and another who launched a magazine for teenage girls.

“What we’re doing is having an impact,” Larkins said recently. “I still get e-mails” from some of those he encouraged over the years.

His message isn’t only about starting a business or becoming a pilot. There are jobs for engineers, mechanics, airport operations and airline managers and a range of other careers in aviation.
commercial and military aviation. And with as many as a quarter of current aerospace workers soon becoming eligible for retirement, there will be openings in the foreseeable future for job seekers.

Larkins said the interest in his message usually falls into two categories. There are the “students asking specifically about aviation. The majority ask, ‘What’s it actually like being a pilot?’ On the business side, that’s a little more dynamic and harder. It’s not just one straight answer. It’s how to set up a business, how much do you make.”

As a child, he read everything he could get his hands on about aviation and how to fund flying lessons. He started flying at age 12 and soloed at 14. (He wrote to 100 companies listed in the back of an aviation trade publication to fund a trip to Canada, where he was able to solo two years earlier than the U.S. would allow.)

At 15, Larkins started selling flight training books and videos by mail and then online and, over time, began buying and selling airplanes and grew his operation into a $7 million airplane leasing business. When the recession hit a few years ago, he said, he had to diversify to survive.

An aviation business major at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, Larkins founded the DreamLaunch Tour, which is sponsored by the university and Careers in Aviation Inc. It incorporates information about aviation careers, aviation youth programs and how to achieve dreams. Then he was tapped by the FAA to become its personal ambassador for aviation careers. Flying solo running your own business is not for everyone, Larkins says. “It’s not for someone who wants a nine-to-five existence with a secure paycheck,” he said. “If clients call me at 11 o’clock at night and I don’t pick up the phone, someone else will.” But Larkins said he tells students that the hard work he puts into his business, especially after the recession hit, applies to every other walk of life. “I had to put the hustle back into the game,” he said. “If the opportunity doesn’t present itself, create it.”
Painter Chris Hopkins, a member of the Air Force Art Program, has done a series of 37 fascinating paintings and sketches of the Tuskegee Airmen that are currently on display at the National Museum of the U. S. Air Force, outside Dayton, Ohio. The paintings are oil on canvas, the sketches charcoal on paper, and they depict a wide range of Airmen both wartime and present-day as well as 332nd Fighter Group activities both on the ground and in flight. The Hopkins exhibition, “Red Tails Silver Wings,” will be moving on to a gallery in Temecula, California and then the Rosa Parks Museum, in Montgomery, Alabama. In February 2014, it will go on display at the African American Museum of Fine Art, in San Diego.

“Butterflies” and depicts a 332nd FG pilot on the wing of his P-51D, showing the inevitable combination of bravado and bravery that must have preceded every combat mission. Each sheet is 28” high by 22” wide, and the image is 23.5” by 17.5”. You can also see the rest of Hopkins' NMUSAF exhibit at that website.

Two more paintings that Hopkins will be printing for limited-edition sale are shown here. One depicts Airman Capt. Roscoe C. Brown Jr. and the other shows Lt. Alexander Jefferson during his imprisonment in a German Stalag.

Hopkins is himself active with the Pacific West Aerospace Academy/Tuskegee Airmen (though it is not affiliated with TAI), in Seattle. The Academy sponsors aviation-oriented career-enhancement events for minority youths, and Hopkins is a member of the board of directors as well as being an art instructor and advisor. (www.pacificwestaerospaceacademy.com)

One of the most spectacular of the paintings, shown here, is available as a limited-edition print (500 copies will be signed by the artist and issued) for $190 including shipping from http://www.chrisharperart.com. The painting is titled

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN ART

A 1911 Bristol Boxkite replica, recently completed for the 100th anniversary of the Australian Air Force. It was built to the original plans except for the engine, which is a 110-horsepower Rotec radial; original Boxkites were powered by 50- or 70- horsepower LeRhône rotaries.