

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR FRATERNITY

Part 4 – Early Fraternity News Reporting

By: James McCarthy

For the next several installments of our history I plan to rely heavily on the most definitive documents I have been able to locate regarding the operations of our Fraternity. The archive of our Fraternity business records is very loosely organized and much of the early days are missing. Much of what I find is documented in – the *Slipstream*. I will follow a generally chronological path from our early operations to the present trying to hit upon interesting and important events.

I was somewhat surprised to find that the newsletter we are familiar with today was first published in 1974 and not back in 1958 when the Fraternity began. Prior to this first publication, the news and activities were chronicled in a publication that was edited and published by founder and president Russ Brinkley, the “*Quadrant Aerographic*”. This was a small, 4 page, newsprint, subscription-based monthly newspaper he started in 1961 in Harrisburg, PA. It was directed toward providing aviation industry news stories specifically of “service to general aviation East of the Mississippi River.” Subscription pricing was a modest \$2 per year.

Along with industry news there were notices of aviation events throughout the Eastern half of the US, reviews and information on new types of avionics



## Quadrant Aerographic March 1966 Edition

equipment of the day, and many advertisements from Aircraft distributors and aviation equipment and service companies.

The news of the **Silver Wings Fraternity** was published as one of the articles within the *Quadrant Aerographic*. The title of the monthly article was “**Silver Wings Slipstream**”.

It is unfortunate that only a few of the *Quadrant Aerographic* editions survive today. A very incomplete collection of surviving copies are reported to be stored in the archives of a library in New York. As a result, the activities of the Fraternity from inception until the *Slipstream* newsletter began in March 1974 are quite illusive.



Excerpt of Silver Wings Column with “Slipstream” Banner

From the one copy found in the Fraternity archives, March 1966, we learn that the National Fraternity officers met in Miami in January. They determined that the Convention for 1966 to celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup>



**Max Schmidlapp**

anniversary of the Fraternity would take place in August in “the popular Ohio city” (*Cincinnati*) and “headquarters will be at a leading mid-city hotel equipped to provide all facilities...”. Special room rates had been secured at “**\$8 for single and \$12 for double.**”

The “distinguishing garb” for the event would be **derby hats and bow ties** and the “password” for members would be the phrase “**Give her the Lunkenheimer!**”. This was a reference to the Cincinnati based Lunkenheimer company’s engine primer used to “assist in starting gasoline engines”. The event was dedicated to honoring early aviation pioneer, racing pilot, WWII transport pilot and Cincinnati businessman **Max Schmidlapp**. Max and

his racing pilot friends were fond of celebrating in derby hats and bow ties.

The Board of Directors were anticipating a large turnout for this Convention as they were launching a 6-month membership drive. It is unknown the size of the membership in 1966, but a review of the available membership records shows a large increase in new membership during the following decade. This seems logical as the large number of pilots trained for WWII would be reaching eligibility for membership (*25 years since first solo*) at about this time.

In the next installment we will be looking at the first edition of the ***Slipstream*** newsletter, February 1974. This publication was initially written, edited and published by Russ Brinkley. This first edition should give us a look at the organization, goals and objectives, and significant activities of the Fraternity during the period of rapid growth of aviation in the 70’s and when the Fraternity reached its 16<sup>th</sup> year of continuous operation

----- 0 -----

Additional Sources for Part 4:

- Quadrant Aerographic, Vol. 6 NO. 1, March 1966
- Lunken Airfield, by Cheryl Bauer, Stephan Johnson, Arcadia Publishing 2012, pp. 66