



## REFLECTIONS ON ANOTHER 2008 TRANSCONTINENTAL FLIGHT

By Ruth Richter-Holden

(JetBlue Airlines, new occupant of TWA's famous JFK Terminal 5, sponsored a transcontinental flight by a formerly TWA owned (1940-45) Lockheed 12 A "Electra" which was the centerpiece at the dedication of the restored and expanded terminal. Lockheed owner, Ruth Richter-Holden, daughter of Paul E. Richter, one of TWA's founders, when asked to share her feelings on the event sent the following—Ed.)

You stumped me with... your request and I find it for me a bit like, "please describe the sky."

Wow, thoughts on 'Coast to Coast 2008'. Mystery and memories. Words can't express and/or condense the thoughts; the mystery of this adult-child living this improbable dream and literally reliving childhood memories; 70 years condensed into 9 days. Just as I can't describe "The Spirit of TWA" i.e., the TWA L.E.12A, the TWA people, my TWA family that was and still feels like my family.



First aircraft to arrive at the new JFK Terminal 5

How to describe my feelings of flying the old TWA aircraft across the old TWA route like the child co-pilot of my Dad in a DC-3?

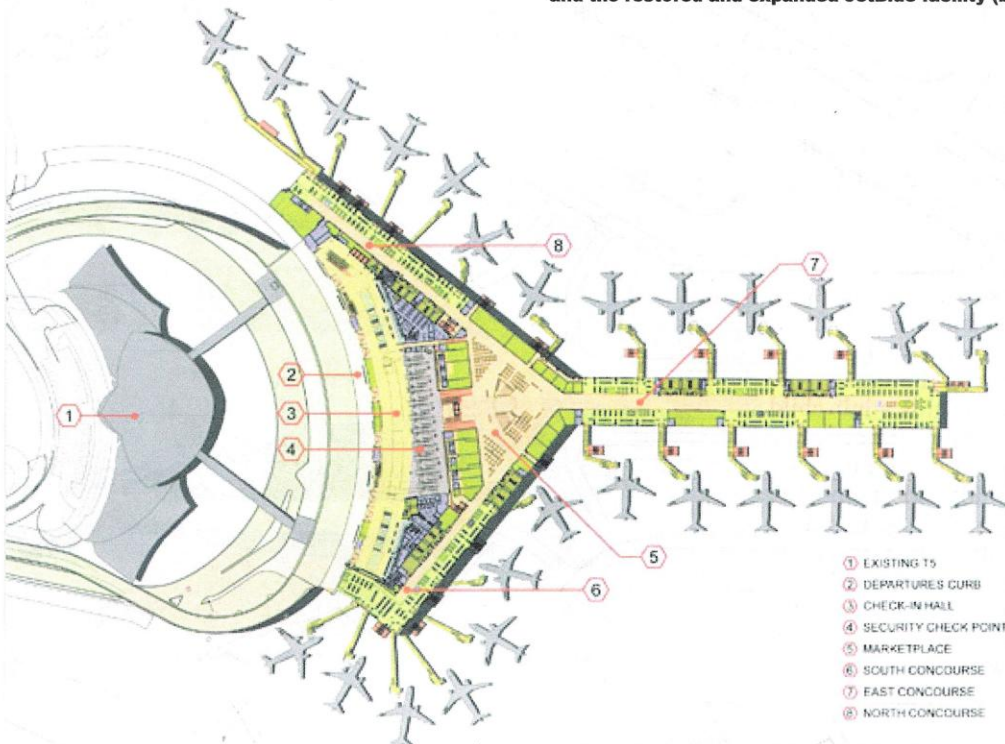
Coast to coast 2008? Much was the same as 1938. 13 hours each way. the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon, the Meteor Crater, TWA 10 Richards Rd, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Allegheny, the Delaware, the Hudson haven't changed. Always a child when flying, the thrill on every take-off hasn't changed, just like the child in a DC-3 or DST with Paul Richter.

Coast to Coast 2008 in 'the Spirit of TWA' aka. L.E. was magical, like bringing the past fast-forward to the future, finding the spirit of TWA is the spirit of JetBlue. This adult-child was and is overwhelmed with gratitude to JetBlue for making it happen and to the JetBluers and TWAers warm welcomes.

My 1st family and memories are TWA and flying, thinking that everyone lived that way. Though never a doubt that magical old #240 would arrive at JFK, there was a momentary (thought of), "What am I doing over the Rockies in a 70 yr. old airplane?" That moment passed to the awesomeness of the mystery of NC18137 finding me after 68 years and the surprise of JetBlue's T-5 honoring TWA with the Lockheed, a symbolic 'Spirit of TWA'.



**TWA Terminal 5 at Idlewild /JFK, Eero Saarinen, 1962 and the restored and expanded JetBlue facility (below).**





PAUL RICHTER



The Paul Richter family receiving The Award of Merit at the Friday evening dinner.

Paul Richter on the cover of the July 1986 **TARPA TOPICS**. Paul was awarded the 1986 **TARPA Award of Merit** at the St. Louis convention that year.



See the reprint of Barry Schiff's **AOPA PILOT** article in the March 2007 **TARPA TOPICS**

edly, "how did all this happen, am I dreaming. is this really happening?" How is it that a path opens in a sky of weather just along our route?

I still wake up each morning with wonder.

We're in the midst of L.E.'s annual, never a happy time since she's been flying beautifully and hate messing with a good thing but we always find a multitude of things to fix, replace, redo etc. not related to airworthiness or priority. How I wish we could make her perfect but we just try to keep her in the air. Can't say that the current 'political-financial' mess is helping.

Wishing you (all) happy days and ordinary miracles,  
Ruth

A myriad of thoughts and feelings: Flight-planning with old TWA schedules and carrying Dad's flight case, thinking that he, Uncle Larry Fritz, uncle Tommy Tomlinson, uncle Jack Frye and so many others would sure get a kick out of this flight, never doubting that they were aboard. I fly with 'the old men in the sky'.

Not in my wildest dreams would I have foretold this 'circle of life'. None of these ramblings seem notable or quotable and most of my thoughts/feelings were repeat-

P.S. Just for another insight...attached (below) Capt. Curt "Rocky" Walters' e-mail sent to friends after we arrived at JFK.

*The Spirit of TWA has arrived*

*Hi all,*

*My excitement of the last 4 days will live with me forever. From the small airports across this great country to the immensity of JFK this has been an experience that only, and I mean only, walking on the moon could top. What fine people I have had the privilege of meeting. I have always been proud to be an American and what I have seen and the experiences I have had only reinforces how humbled and grateful I am to be in this nation. I would also like to report to you that I have just toured the new JetBlue terminal and it is nothing short of awesome. As a side note, Ellie was the first aircraft arrival at the new terminal. The Irony is delightful. Ok, that's all for now, big day tomorrow then even bigger trip back home....*

*Tailwinds,*

*Rocky*



"Ellie's" co-owners Ruth Richter Holden and Curt "Rocky" Walters

**"Spirit of TWA"  
A Flying Legend**

For complete details of the flight, a video, many color pictures, a narrative and the articles from *AOPA PILOT* and *TODAY'S PILOT*, visit Ruth's web site :  
[WWW.SPIRITOF TWA.COM](http://WWW.SPIRITOF TWA.COM)