

- Homepage
- Local Coupons
- Coupons.com
- Sports
- Obituaries ▼
- Classifieds
- Opinion
- Politics
- Letters to the Editor
- Celebrations
- Features
- Family Times
- Subscriber Services
- Contact Us
- Area Schools ▼
- Knoxville Alumni
- Knoxville Little League
- Knoxville Raceway
- Chamber of Commerce
- Red Rock Area
- City of Knoxville
- Marion County Government
- Business Spotlight
- Marion County Iowa Democrats

CNHI/SE Iowa

December 27, 2011

A learning opportunity

Former Ottumwan begins path toward Naval Air Station museum

CHELSEA DAVIS
Courier Staff Writer

OTTUMWA — Stephen Black wants to see the passion he first felt for aviation in the eyes of today's youth.

Black, of Des Moines, went to his first air show at the Ottumwa Naval Air Station as "just a little guy."

"That day, I decided I wanted to go for a ride in an airplane so myself, my siblings and my dad all went up flying," Black said. "I was hooked."

From that day forward, Black's eyes were on the sky. His goal was to one day fly rockets, but he didn't have the 20/20 eyesight required. Despite his best effort, Black couldn't convince the U.S. Air Force recruiters to let him apply.

"I was born at the wrong time," he said. "I ended up making a switch to computer science. My first love, though, is flight."

Today, Black owns three planes: a Beechcraft Musketeer, a 1940 Stinson 10 and a 1932 American Eaglet project.

Black said after hearing Bob Taylor with the Antique Airplane Association, among others, talk about the Administration Building and how "something should be done about it," he decided over Labor Day weekend in 2010 that he would tackle the project.


"Even though the base closed in 1947, the military was active out here until the early 1980s," Black said.

The last task completed in the building was urban assault training in the 1980s, which left a mess of debris and holes in the drywall and roof.

"So often, this country's full of things like this and you'll get a lot of people that will want to see something done but they just won't do it," Black said.


The next thing Black knew he was in a meeting with local engineers, Ottumwa Airport Maintenance Supervisor Tom Francis, City Planner Dave Shafer and others to check out the

Related Photos




The Administration Building has not been in use since the 1980s and has since fallen into disrepair, with the windows boarded up and a hole in the roof. Stephen Black and his non-profit organization, Friends of NAS Ottumwa plan to renovate the building for a future museum for educational purposes.

Chelsea Davis/The Courier



This postcard depicts the original Administration Building at the Ottumwa Naval Air Station in 1943. Stephen Black has begun collecting these along with stories of those who went through training at the NAS as his non-profit organization, Friends of NAS Ottumwa, progresses toward renovating the building.

submitted



This postcard depicts the original Administration Building at the Ottumwa Naval Air Station in 1943. Stephen Black has begun collecting these along with stories of those who went through training at the NAS as his non-profit organization, Friends of NAS Ottumwa, progresses toward renovating the building.

submitted

Discussion

Add a comment on this story

48°

H: 51°
L: 39°

CLICK FOR MORE WEATHER

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING WORKS

Weather Sponsors

zip2save.com

circulars coupons deals

Hyperlocal

Maps, Menus, Store hours, Coupons, and more...

Find a business

Location

SEARCH

Popular Searches
Powered by Local.com

insides of the building.

Snyder & Associates, an engineering consulting firm, found that the building was structurally sound, despite its less-than-appealing exterior.

After Friends of NAS Ottumwa became incorporated this July and was then confirmed as a non-profit organization this November, Black proceeded to contact those interested across the state and the country, including the NAS Wildwood Aviation Museum in Cape May, N.J. to talk through how they restored a hangar that was "an eyesore, worse than this."

"All you need is a good structure," Black said.

At last Tuesday's Ottumwa City Council meeting, the council approved the non-profit's purchase of the building for a mere \$100.

"We realize this could fail," Black said. "We don't want it to but ... when you learn to fly airplanes you think about what could go wrong and what are you going to do about it. You do that with anything in life. Ask yourself: What if this doesn't work out? What's the alternative?"

There are just a couple steps left before the group can get started on its first priority of repairing the roof. The Federal Aviation Administration has to approve the plans and Black has to complete a quit claim deed with the city to turn ownership rights over to the non-profit.

But he said a grassroots effort will be needed to raise funds, which will be followed by a lot of grant writing.

"People have to dig into their pockets," Black said. "Enough people have to show they care."

Black said his main goal is to see Iowa's aviation history passed on to the next generation.

"This was a training base and educational center for teaching pilots the disciplines necessary for flying aircraft, which gets into physics, sciences and math," Black said. "I want to see busloads of kids coming out here and seeing that."

The organization's next meeting will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21 in the Terminal Building at the Ottumwa Regional Airport and is open to the public as Black said they are still looking for more board members.

Web Extras:

Go to www.nasottumwa.org for more information or search for the group on Facebook: U.S. Naval Air Station Ottumwa, Iowa.

Facebook Like Confirm 1 0

Mail Facebook Twitter RSS Print Text Only

CNHI/SE Iowa

Features

Anchor of botched newscast busted for drunken driving

First, Annie Stensrud's broadcast became fodder for late-night comedians. Now she's dealing with more serious critics after a drunken driving arrest.

December 28, 2011

Osky man nibbles back arcade glory



Tim McVey, of Oskaloosa, spent much of this past Saturday and Sunday pursuing the world record high score in the classic arcade title, "Nibbler."

After nearly two days of playing the game, McVey now holds the world record high score with 1,041,767,060 points.

December 28, 2011 | Photo

Police say Ottumwa teen planned school

In the Spotlight!
Share your message! Contact us today for details:
641-842-2155/jexpress@iowatelecom.net

Community Calendar

Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue

- Dec 30 Utopia - The Iowa Musical Revue
- Dec 28 David Zollo
- Dec 30 AI-Anon Steps to Serenity AFG

All Movies Dining Tickets

+Add Event

Events by eviesays.com

AP Video

Raw Video: North Korea Funeral Procession

shooting spree

The 16-year-old charged last week with conspiracy to commit a terrorist act was allegedly planning a Valentine's Day shooting at Ottumwa High School.

December 28, 2011



Raw Video: Screaming, Crying During NK Funeral

Father of slain Indiana girl a Centerville resident

Dawayne Maroney, the father of slain Indiana nine-year-old, Aliahna Lemmon, currently lives in Centerville.

December 28, 2011



One Week Out, GOP Contenders Rumble Through Iowa



Up to 120 Sears, Kmart Stores to Close

Viral video: Clerk punches would-be robber

A clerk at a gold-buying store in North Carolina punched a would-be robber in the face Friday, knocking the man out after he barged in with a gun and demanded money.

December 27, 2011

State winds up with safe's \$178K

The abandoned safe had lots of claimants, but the money wound up going to the state. The safe's original owner's son says she's fine with that.

December 27, 2011

Oskaloosa library's online book clubs up and running

Looking to expand your reading habits? The Oskaloosa library can help.



December 27, 2011 1 Photo

A learning opportunity

Stephen Black wants to see the passion he first felt for aviation in the eyes of today's youth.



December 27, 2011 3 Photos

OHS student charged with terrorism

Emily Six, 16, allegedly planned to act against Ottumwa High School and its students. Details are limited and the investigation is ongoing, but authorities say there, "is no further threat."



December 23, 2011 1 Photo

CHS jazz band secures state championship berth

After a second-place finish at the district jazz festival Dec. 10, members of the Centerville High School jazz band can breathe a little easier.



December 23, 2011 2 Photos

More CNHI/SE Iowa Headlines

Facebook

Find us on Facebook

Knoxville Journal Express
 You like this. · Admi Page · Insights · Err
 You like this. · Admi Page · Insights · Err

111 people like **Knoxville Journal Express**. 110 people like **Knoxville Journal Express**.

Dave Larissa Lora

Facebook social plugin

Hyperlocal Search

Find a business:

Location:

SEARCH

Maps, Menus, Store hours, Coupons, and more...

Popular Searches
Powered by Local.com

Poll

The Knoxville City Council is

embarking on a new year, with a new member. What do you believe should be the council's top priority in 2012?

- Increased housing options
- Streetscape
- Economic Development/Jobs
- Blight Removal
- Other

[View Results](#)



Site Map

Contact Us

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

[All](#) [Movies](#) [Dining](#) [Tickets](#)

[+Add Event](#) Events by [ev/says.com](#)



© 2011 Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc. · CNHI Classified Advertising Network · CNHI News Service
Associated Press content © 2011. All rights reserved. AP content may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.
Our site is powered by Zope. Some parts of our site may require you to download the Flash Player Plugin.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [AP News Registry privacy policy](#)
[Advertiser Index](#)