



Basel, February 12, 2019

A silver lining on the horizon...

Dear Connie friends

Our Connie will be able to fly again – that is the good news. However, in order to achieve this goal, patience and financial means are required. A lot of patience, and a lot of money, as well.

At the end of November 2018, chipping was discovered on the leading edge wing spar which was the beginning of yet another downward spiral for our project. Chipping occurs as a result of frequent use. It is also a typical effect of aging in aircraft. Removing both wings will be inevitable, as they need to be completely opened up in order to uncover areas affected by corrosion. If corrosion is discovered, it will have to be removed before our Connie could receive a new permit to fly. This was the verdict issued by the experts.

At the SCFA's closed board meeting in January, the Connie's future along with the future of the Super Constellation Flyers Association were discussed in detail. Invited guests included Dominik Kaelin (Kaelin Aerost-structure; Dominik has been conducting all structural work on our Connie for the last several years) and Robert Kurtz (AeroFEM; Roberts' Engineering Office has served as our Association's point of contact and support during the last two years when dealing with FOCA mandated issues, such as the certification of flap link rods and the wheels/rims).

Both guests commended our efforts and in depth maintenance conducted on the Super Constellation in the last years (a chronological list of all maintenance work since 2009 will be published in the next SuperLetter). Dominik and Robert also explained clearly the dire situation our aircraft is currently in, and provided a list of necessary actions in order to regain a permit to fly:

1. The restructuring of the aircraft wing is inevitable, but doable (pending time and finances)
2. Without the restructuring of the wing, attaining a permit to fly will be hopeless
3. It would be very unfortunate if the hard work put into restoring our Connie over the last years would have been for nothing, and if the «Star of Switzerland» would never fly again
4. Our Connie is the last of its kind in the world that could fly again with passengers

The complete restructuring of the wings, leading and trailing edge spars, including T-beams, will take an estimated four years to complete, and will cost approximately CHF 10 million. If allotments are made for mechanics salaries, hangar rental costs, as well as administrative expenses over the course of a four year period (and a contingency sum is added), we are currently short about CHF 15 – 20 million. In order to begin any type of restructuring work, the entire amount will have to be secured – either in cash, or covered by a bank guarantee.

Canceling the project in the middle of the maintenance restoration would cause additional expenses and would still not get the Connie back into the air. We are well aware of the amount of money, and time, which would be required in order to get our Connie flying again. The obstacles in our way seem nearly insurmountable.

As a result, the board members have also discussed alternatives. The association could move away from its project, and sell the «Star of Switzerland» (this option would inevitably raise the question, «who would purchase an unairworthy aircraft?»). Or, the Connie could be donated, taken apart and its individual pieces offered for sale, or it could be scrapped. All of these options offer only a sad outlook, especially as each of them would be associated with additional costs, and possible earnings would be uncertain, or highly unlikely. The board unanimously feels the urge to attempt the nearly impossible, to restore and continue to operate the Super Constellation. In spite of this, we are well aware of the many obstacles in our way, and the question, «how can we possibly find the funds to continue our project?», is ever present in our minds.

In accordance with these conditions, the board has come up with four plans which were presented to the aircraft owners during the extraordinary general assembly which was held at the beginning of February:

Options 2 and 3 (prepare the aircraft for a «ferry flight» to a new owner, or, donate the aircraft for a «static display»). These are options to keep in mind while attempting to generate funds for option 1 (to restore and continue the operation of the Super Constellation). If neither the means nor a buyer can be found, revert to option 4 (dismantle the aircraft, sell individual parts, or scrap).

33 of 51 associate members (a record number) were present at the general assembly meeting. It was clear from the beginning of the meeting that each of them care greatly about the project and the «wellbeing» of the Connie. After four hours of intense discussions everyone was in agreement – we would do everything in our power in order to continue the Swiss Connie project. No concrete financial offers were made the day of the meeting; but each of the associate members vowed to invest time and effort in an attempt to raise the necessary funds to restore the Super Constellation. In order to achieve this, a last extension of just under three months was set.

The SCFA board is pleased about the overwhelming majority reflecting the enthusiasm and optimism of the associate members. The big obstacles, time and money, were not weighed as heavily as the deep and unwavering wish to once again see and hear the Super Constellation in the Swiss skies in the future.

The board members will maximize their efforts and the remaining time in an attempt to raise and secure funds for the restoration of our Connie. A list of potential donors, investors, and sponsors who will be contacted was put together during the assembly meeting. Other ideas such as crowdfunding or worldwide appeals might be created; they will be discussed with experts in the very near future. If there are any friends or acquaintances of yours who may be interested in our project, please share our story with them – we would welcome any support they would be willing to give.

We would like to thank everyone who has faithfully stood by our side. We are also thankful to everyone who has been lending support, whether it be time, or finances (or both). We will share another update regarding our Connie in the middle of March.

«Fly, Connie, Fly» – we will continue to let this motto be our guide.
With kind regards on behalf of all members of the board,



Hans «Breiti» Breitenmoser
SCFA President

