

Progress report, May 2026

This month we removed the skin from the top of the aft fuselage, above the engine pylons. Three more fuselage skins are in the process of being removed as shown in the photo below. Removal of the skins is the only way for us to do visual inspections of the structure and to give access for future X-ray inspections.



Two Aft Fuselage Skins Now Removed



Latest Skin Removal - Top of Fuselage

Areas of suspected corrosion, circled in the following photo, will be exposed with the removal of these skins. Visual and X-ray inspections will be conducted to verify the condition of the

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underlying structure. Then, if required, repairs or replacement of the structure will be accomplished.



Skins Being Removed – Arrows at Areas of Concern

On May 22, 2026 the landing gear and several actuators were loaded onto Chris Marshall's truck by Chris, Ron Forshee and Dick Kovich to be driven to Florida by Chris and his wife, Darla, where they will be restored. The landing gear will be restored by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) in Daytona, Florida. The landing gear actuators and a box of miscellaneous smaller hydraulic actuators will be tested and rebuilt by Noble Jet in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. A huge **Thank you** to both ERAU and Noble Jet!!!



23-003 Landing Gear and Actuators

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Box of Various Hydraulic Actuators



Chris Marshall (in truck) and Dick Kovich Loading Nose Landing Gear

After receiving the landing gear on Tuesday, May 26th, ERAU wasted no time in getting started! By the end of the day on May 27th they had cleaned the exterior of each landing gear and prepped them for disassembly and inspection!

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Landing Gear, Cleaned and Ready for Disassembly

60 Years Ago

May 23-26, 1966, 24-100 N427LJ, a standard, production Lear Jet Model 24, with 4 people on board flew around the globe breaking or setting 18 international world records including the around-the-world mark! The 1st business jet to circumnavigate the world! They covered the 22,992.8 statute miles (19,976 nm), with 17 refueling stops, in 65 hours 40 minutes elapsed time (50 hours 20 minutes flight time). There were absolutely no problems with the airplane during the flight, a testament to the quality of the Lear Jet! The CJ610-4 engines consumed over 11,000 gallons of fuel and “purred like kittens” throughout the flight and did not use “a drop” of oil.

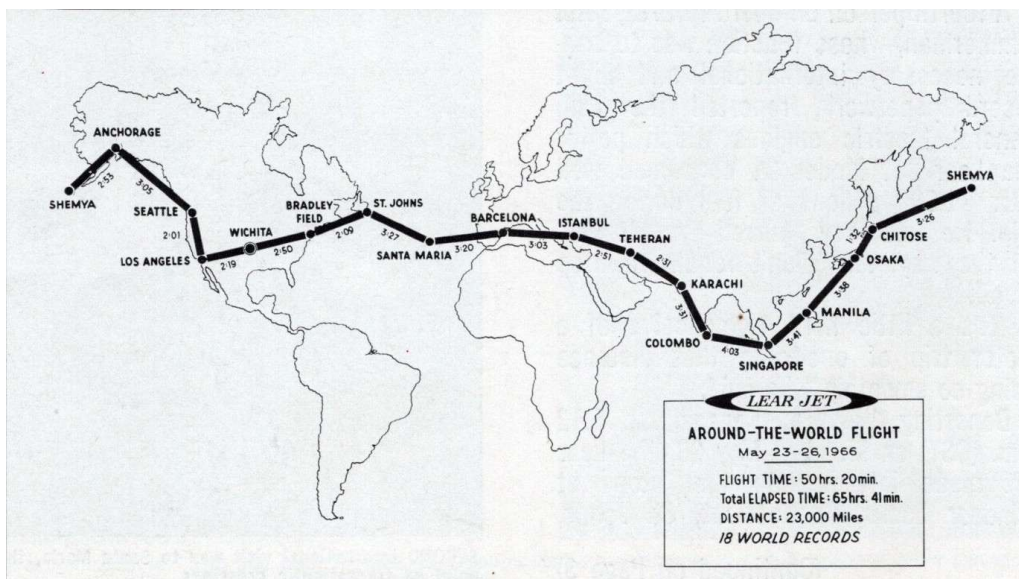
The crew was Hank Beaird, John Lear, son of Bill Lear, Rick King, all qualified Lear Jet pilots and John Zimmerman, Midwest Bureau Manager, American Aviation Publications [previously aerospace editor for the Wichita Eagle and Beacon newspaper], as official National Aeronautic Association (NAA) onboard observer and timekeeper who handled all of the international and flight record paperwork. The flight was sanctioned by the National Aeronautic Association (NAA).

24-100 departed from the Lear Jet factory ramp, Wichita, Kansas, Monday, May 23, 1966 at 5:12 pm CST and returned to the factory ramp 65 hours 40 minutes later on Friday, May 26th at 10:51 am CST.

“Every company in the world would have bet 10-1 against this plane”Bill Lear

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24-100 N427LJ was the first Lear Jet Model 24, the first ever airplane certified to the then new FAR Part 25 for Transport Category Aircraft and the first business jet to circumnavigate the world. She remained in service until 1999 having accumulated almost 13,000 flight hours. Her fuselage is currently at Dodson International Parts, Inc. (DIPI), Rantoul, Kansas.



Around the World Route

Now the rest of the story: In 1966, the main emerging competitor for the Lear Jet appeared to be the Jet Commander, produced by Aero Commander, in Oklahoma. Several months before the Lear Jet around-the-world trip was made, Aero Commander announced to the world that radio personality Arthur Godfrey, a pilot, would be sharing flying duties aboard a Jet Commander that would be circling the globe in the summer, setting a number of world speed records. Never one to miss a promotional opportunity, Bill Lear, who knew Godfrey, said let's take a Lear Jet 24 around the world, without fanfare, then when Arthur returns from his trip, we'll simply say, "Congratulations and welcome back! We made the trip earlier and, by the way, we made it considerably faster". Pre-flight preparations were quietly made (mostly by Hank Beaird and the assigned crew) for all operational aspects of the trip, including some 17 refueling stops along the way. Bill Lear set the time to beat at 69 hours and for every minute under the 69-hour mark, a bonus was to be paid to the flight crew. Details of making the flight official with the National Aeronautical Association (NAA) were left to the Lear Jet Public Relations department, Jim Greenwood and Al Higdon.

The crew also made a checklist of items to take along. Note that the last item on the list, shown below, was a 50ft. clothesline! A company spokesman explained jokingly by "if the trip takes more than 69 hours, they'll use the rope to hang themselves".

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FOOD AND SUPPLIES CARRIED ABOARD LEAR JET N427LJ

2	Pkg	Rye Krisp crackers
4	Cans	S&W solid white tuna, 7 oz.
4	Cans	Swanson's boned turkey, 5 oz.
6	Cans	Skinless sardines, Empress brand
5	Pkg	Gum, Wrigley's Spearmint
1	Jar	"Tang" pwd. orange drink, 7 oz.
1	Pkg	Hershey's miniature bars, ass'td.
10	Ea	Hershey "Krackle" bars, 1 oz. ea.
1	Ea	Salt
1	Ea	Pepper
1	Box	Kellogg's Pop Tarts, 11 oz.
6	Cans	Fruit, 8-3/4 oz. ea.
1	Carton	Cigarettes, Viceroy
1	Carton	Cigarettes, L&M
1	Btl	B-1 vitamins
1	Btl	Aspirin, 100 tablets
1	Tube	Borofax boric acid ointment
1	Tube	Sperti
1	Btl	Empirin codeine tablets
1	Btl	Preludin tablets
1	Tube	Medicated "Chap-Ans"
1	Btl	Vick's Sinex
1	Can	G-12 insect spray
1	Can	Germicidal disinfectant spray
1	Can	First aid spray: antiseptic
1	Tube	"Ting" antiseptic cream
1	Tube	Bronze lustre sunburn preventive cream
4	Sets	Plastic knife, fork, spoon
50	Ea	Hot drink cups, plastic-lined paper
2	Pkg	Wash 'n' Dri towelettes, 22 units per pkg.
1	Box	Kleenex tissues, 2-ply, 200
1	Pkg	Handkerchiefs
1	Pkg	Stimudents toothpicks
1	Ea	Can opener
1	Can	Boraxo hand cleaner, 4 oz.
1	Pkg	Air vent bandages
1	Ea	Comb
1	Ea	Nail file
2	Ea	Pencils, lead
6	Ea	6D size flashlight batteries
1	Ea	2-cell flashlight
50	Ft	Flexible plastic clothesline

A last-minute decision from Bill Lear: "Let's take this trip public, really working the media to get the most out of it". Jim Greenwood and Al Higdon when into overdrive and made the trip a public relations success!

The crew reported a bit of tense drama when a Russian MiG curiously flew alongside them for about 5 minutes on the other side of the world. They waved at the MiG pilot and he waved his wings in salutation. The Lear Jet returned the salutation and the MiG departed.

The N427LJ arrived back in Wichita on May 26, 1966, the day after the Jet Commander was scheduled to depart, to a crowd of over 2,000 people including the Governor of the state of Kansas and the Mayor of the City of Wichita. Bill Lear kept his promise giving each crew

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member \$660 cash bonus money. There were zero mechanical incidents with the airplane and within hours of its return, Lear Jet N427LJ was dispatched on a routine business trip to Detroit.

Godfrey and the Jet Commander made their announced trip as planned. It took longer, set no records, and all-in-all, was quite anti-climactic.



Welcome Home !!!



After Record Flight – L-R: John Zimmerman, Bill Lear, John Lear, Moya Lear, Hank Beaird. Rick King

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Rick King, Hank Beard, John Stevens (Wichita Mayor), John Lear, John Zimmerman

A&P Mechanics - We Need YOU

We have a current need for volunteer A&P Mechanics to supervise the other volunteers as they work on various 23-003 restoration projects. We need A&P coverage commitment for 3 days a week from 9:00 am to noon. This can be one person for three days or three different people, one day each. It does not involve Return to Service activities. Since we intend to fly 23-003 N200Y, we must follow the protocols for all maintenance accomplished on the airplane.

You don't have to be a former or current Learjet employee to volunteer!

To volunteer please contact our volunteer coordinator, Brenda Parks, through her email: Brenda.Parks@ClassicLear.org

Wanted: Project Manager

The CLJF is looking for a volunteer to become the Project Manager of our 23-003 N200Y restoration project. If you are interested in helping to make 23-003 flyable again, please let us know and we will contact you with the details of the position.

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RECHARGE!

VOLUME 1

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NUMBER 36

Documents Needed

We need help locating a complete set of these documents to support the restoration of 23-003:

- Airplane Accessory Kits (AAK)
- Airplane Modification Kits (AMK)
- Service Kits (SK)
- Service Bulletins (SB) – pre ATA code
- Service Bulletins (SB) – by ATA code

CLJF Merchandise

Introducing the All-New Classic Lear Jet Foundation Store

We're excited to announce the launch of the **completely redesigned Classic Lear Jet Foundation Online Store** on **June 8, 2026**. <https://store.classiclear.org>

While many of you have supported us through our previous online store, we've spent the last several months building an entirely new shopping experience from the ground up. The redesigned store features expanded product offerings, improved navigation, new mission collectibles, updated apparel, and exclusive items created specifically to support the Foundation's preservation efforts.

Most importantly, **100% of the profits from every purchase directly benefit the Classic Lear Jet Foundation**, a registered **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**, and support the ongoing restoration of **Lear Jet 23-003 N200Y** — one of the most historically significant Lear Jets ever built.

What's New?

- Completely redesigned online shopping experience
- New apparel collections for men, women, and youth
- Exclusive Century Mission and Polar Mission merchandise
- Limited-edition flown mission patches with certificates of authenticity
- New drinkware, accessories, office items, and collectibles
- Expanded selection of aviation-themed gifts and memorabilia
- More ways than ever to support the restoration of Lear Jet 23-003

Whether you're a pilot, aviation enthusiast, collector, or longtime supporter of the Lear Jet legacy, every purchase helps preserve an important chapter of aviation history.

From commemorative mission patches and challenge coins to apparel, drinkware, books, and collectibles, each item in the store has been selected to celebrate the remarkable history of Lear Jet 23-003 N200Y while helping fund its future preservation.

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Mark Your Calendar: The redesigned store officially launches June 8, 2026.

Visit the store, explore the new collection, and help us continue the restoration of **Lear Jet 23-003** N200Y. <https://store.classiclear.org>

Thank you for your continued support of the Classic Lear Jet Foundation and for helping us preserve the innovation, craftsmanship, and pioneering spirit that made the Lear Jet an aviation icon.

The Classic Lear Jet Foundation - Aviation History Worth Preserving

Kansas Aviation Museum!

The Kansas Aviation Museum (KAM) gift shop, Amelia's Landing, carries some of the most popular Classic Lear Jet Foundation merchandise! You can visit the KAM gift shop at 3350 George Washington Blvd, Wichita, Kansas 67210 or by phone 316-683-9242. See their open hours on their website: <https://kansasaviationmuseum.org/>

Remember that your purchase will support the restoration of 23-003!!

Classic Lear Jet Foundation – Contact Info

Website: <https://classiclear.org>



Scan QR code:

Facebook: Classic Lear Jet Foundation

e-mail: info@ClassicLear.org

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