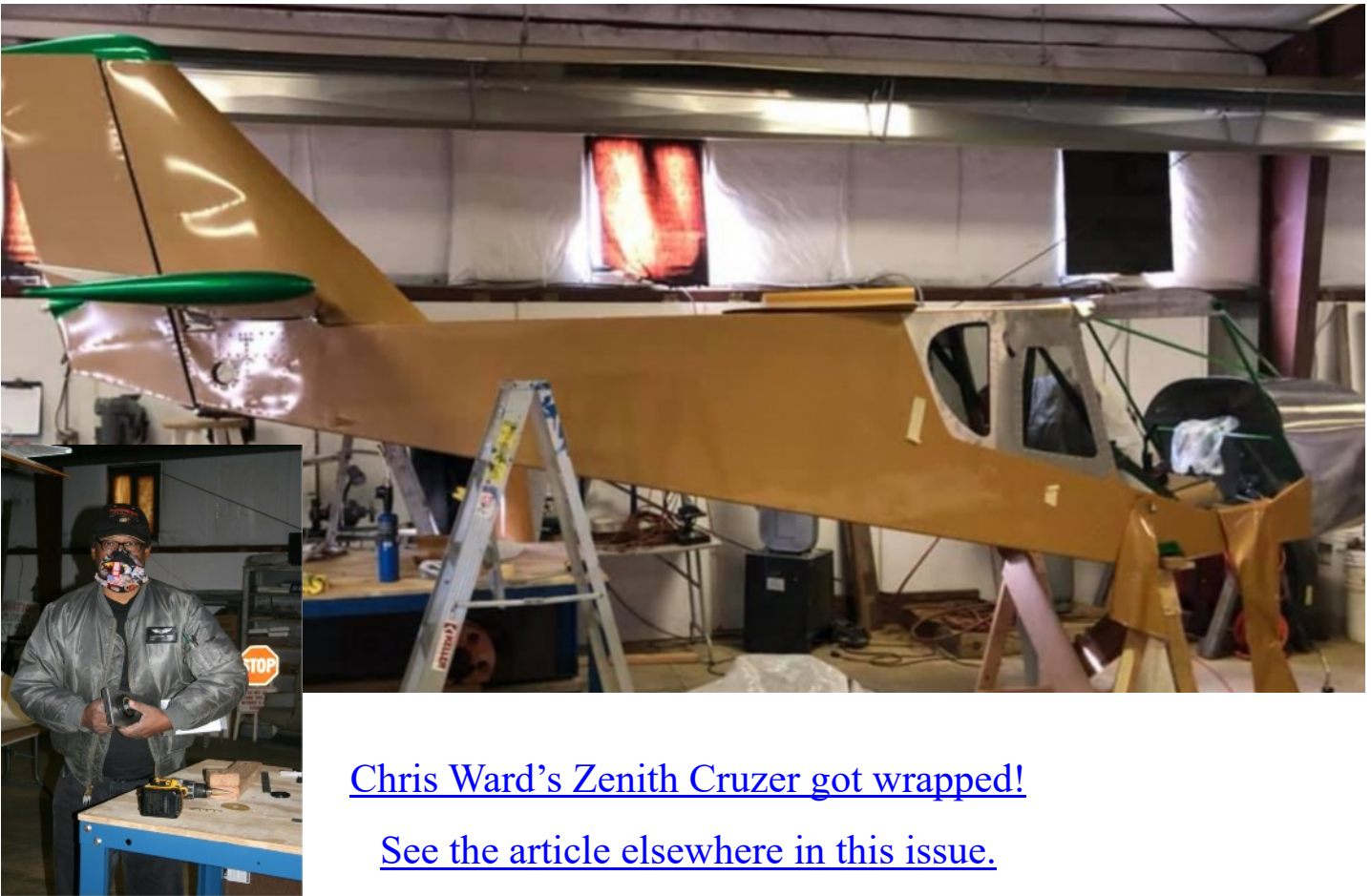

CAA Chapter 32 News

The official publication of Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 32 - St. Louis, MO (Jim Bower, Editor)

March, 2021

THIS MONTH'S MEETING IS AT THE ARC!!
We'll see you at 10:00 on Saturday, March 20
(If you can remember how to find the place!)



[Chris Ward's Zenith Cruiser got wrapped!](#)

[See the article elsewhere in this issue.](#)

Newsletter Contributions and Deadlines

Anyone wishing to submit articles, advertisements, rants, etc. to the newsletter should send them to your friendly editor on or before the Saturday before the scheduled meeting. Send contributions to newsletter@caa32.org.



President's Corner

by Bill Doherty

Greetings everyone from the threshold of Spring! With the recent rain, overnight the grass has turned green and

soon the sound of lawnmowers will be denying me sleep in the afternoon. That's O.K. with me. The temperatures are warming up and we're all antsy to get going again so I say, **LET'S MEET!** As before in the pandemic, if you don't feel well or have a fever please stay home and take care of yourself. If you plan to attend, social distancing is still in vogue and face coverings are required attire even if you've received all the vaccine shots.

According to the Weather Channel app on my phone, next Saturday is predicted to be a high of 58 degrees. While that's not quite where we'd like to see the temperature, it's close enough. We've much to do. First of all, we need to see each other again so we can catch up with one another. Then we can set our minds to Young Eagle season, workshops, scholarships, and service awards from last year. Speaking of workshops, Bob Murray will present the first part of the electrical systems workshop via Zoom on Thursday, March 25 at 7:00 pm. Oh, and there's this convention in Wisconsin we may want to attend and plan for coming up in a few months. It seems like forever, doesn't it?

Last year I passed my Private Pilot check ride just before what would have been the beginning of AirVenture, Oshkosh. As an act of our defiance toward COVID 19 and to show support for EAA, we took our annual Oshkosh group photo in front of the ARC and sent it to EAA HQ. This year I will finally be attending as a pilot and I hope many of you will be there too.

We always need more pilots and have established Chapter 32 as a successful chapter in nominating candidates for training scholarships. Young Eagles is one of our primary means of outreach to the community to both introduce EAA to our youngest generations and to provide that memorable first flight experience. This is extremely important that we do this. As this program has evolved, the access to and availability of aviation to young generations has declined in our society. Airports close, those left have higher fences and monitor anyone loitering around. Just sitting and watching airplanes for its own sake may draw suspicion. Flight sim apps offer many an access point to flying and these are now surprisingly realistic in their visual depictions.

But actually getting in an airplane and flying for the first time is something truly special. In the summer of 1979, I had my first flight. As many of you may know Dave, Don, and I are not the first Doherty's in the chapter. Our father, Bill Doherty was a chapter member and built his version of a Pietenpol in our garage. So, from birth I've been around airplanes. But, for whatever reason although I loved them, I would NOT get in one and go flying. I'd sit in the Piet in the garage and pretend I was fighting World War I in an open cockpit fighter plane. I loved going to Creve Coeur Airport when Chapter 32 had a hangar there (the site of which is now under Hwy 364). Dad had part ownership of a Stits Skycoupe, N7544U and would often go there to work on it while I searched for toads in the surrounding fields. I'd help him with the plane as much as an 8- or 9-year-old could and would also sit inside and pretend. But not fly. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Segue a few years...

In 1979 that changed. I was 14, about to turn 15. A couple years prior, Chapter 32 had restored the Lindbergh Monocoupe that was later on display in the terminal at Lambert. I worked on that plane with my Dad and the group many times. At Oshkosh '78 a Curtiss Robin won Grand Champion Antique. It was a special plane because in 1930 two pilots, Dale Jackson and Forest O'Brien set an endurance record with it over Lambert Flying Field. They spent 19 ½ days in the air. They obviously had to take fuel from another plane along with performing maintenance on the Challenger engine in flight while it was running. There were catwalks alongside the cowling so one of them could climb forward and grease the rocker arms of the cylinders.



Someone in Chapter 32 convinced the owners of the plane to bring it to St. Louis and tour it around to several airports. They arrived one afternoon at the now aban-

done Arrowhead Airport. I was there along with my Dad and Howard Henderson. The plan was to bring the Robin to Spirit of St. Louis Airport for the first round of display. The catch was they had no radio in the plane and handhelds weren't as plentiful as they are today. They asked for a chase plane to act as radio escort. Howard had his Thorp T-18 based at Arrowhead so he volunteered. He pulled it out and as he finished pre-flighting it he asked if anyone wanted to ride with him.



Whatever had held me back gave way. My arm went up and I said I'd go. My Dad's jaw must have hit the ground. Finally, Billy was gonna fly! He'd neglected to bring his camera. I climbed in, strapped in and Howard started the engine. I noticed how the instrument panel vibrated as the engine came to life. I remember feeling and hearing the seams in the concrete runway as the tailwheel rolled over them on take-off. Bang, bang, bang. We accelerated, then the tail lifted, and the tailwheel became silent. For a split second we were level and then we climbed. The ground dropped away and for the first time in my life I felt the sensation of flight. To me it felt as in a dream. I was hooked in an instant!

The flight was short, and we stayed slow, zig zagging a bit so the 1929 vintage Robin could keep pace. Word spread fast among the chapter members and my family that I flew and had a great time. When the Robin would move from one airport to another I was often asked if I wanted to go. It had three seats, one for the pilot up front and two side by side in the back. I think I flew in it more than anyone else in the chapter except Al Lowe who had been checked out in it and did the flying while it was in St. Louis.

In August of 1979 there was another special visitor to St. Louis. NASA was repositioning the test shuttle Enterprise atop the 747-carrier aircraft. They made a stop at Lambert for a weekend. Chapter 32 had been invited to bring the Robin to Lambert and display it next to the 747. We were proud and excited to do so. Talk about a contrast!



The 747 arrived along with a NASA T-38 chase plane. They parked on the north side of Lambert at what is now Signature Flight Support (I think). It was a location for Rockwell International at the time, the contractor for the shuttle. The pilots climbed out of the T-38 and walked past Dave and me standing on the ramp. Dave remarked



one of them was Deke Slayton. I didn't know who that was at the time until Dave informed me, he was one of the original Mercury Seven astronauts. My first brush with greatness. We were also given a tour of the 747 including a peek out an escape hatch in the cockpit. What a view to poke your head out and see a Space Shuttle mere feet away from you.



President's Corner (continued)

As the weekend ended and the Robin needed to be repositioned to St. Charles Municipal Airport (3SQ), I gave up my seat for my Mom to get a ride in it along with Dave. I really wanted to see what it was like to leave in a plane from Lambert. All was not lost. Phil Chastain had his PT-26 on display along with the Robin and offered me a ride in the back seat. My first ride in a warbird! We took off in formation to provide radio escort and flew that way to 3SQ. It was a beautiful site to watch the Robin next to us and peel off for landing in the late afternoon sun.

This is my cherished memory of the summer I first flew. Inside the lobby of a corporate flight operation at Spirit there's a large black and white photo on the wall from 1930. It's an aerial shot of a large crowd surrounding the Robin just after Jackson and O'Brien landed. I noticed it as I gave a pilot his ticket after I finished fueling one of their big jets. I read the caption, pointed at the plane in the picture and said, "I've flown in that plane." He chuckled and walked away. Oh, well. Jealous, I guess.

While we haven't figured out yet how to get another spaceship here, we can provide cherished memories for the next generation and for some a means to begin their journey as well.

I look forward to seeing you all in person again.

As always, check out the EAA.org website for upcoming webinars and other programs. Here's a link where you can find this month's Chapter Video with Charlie Becker, a Chapter 32 Alum.

AddThis Sharing Buttons

<https://eaa.org/videos/chapters>

That's all I have this time. I'll see you at the ARC or maybe around the pattern!

Until then stay vigilant and fly safe!

*Blue Skies
Bill Doherty,
President
EAA Spirit of St. Louis Chapter 32*

February Meeting Minutes

Dave Deweese



February's meeting was once again held in Zoom, Bill Doherty presiding.

Bill mentioned Charlie Becker's latest video and the Chapter Leadership webinar series. He advises that on April 23, 24, 25: restarting Leadership Academy at OSH. There will be a food service presentation on March 24 which is relevant considering COVID. May 15 is International Learn-To-Fly day and chapters are encouraged to hold an Flying Start event: this will make the chapter eligible for a drawing for two wristbands. AirVenture is definitely on for 2021, they're looking for

volunteers. They're taking signups for chapters that would like to staff a pancake breakfast in the social pavilion - we would need 10 people. Dave Doherty proposed a pancake breakfast along with a flying start event.

I confirmed that last month's minutes were uploaded and included in the newsletter.

Don gave the treasurer's report including savings, checking, and Ray Foundation account balances.

Jim Hall (reporting from the ARC, working on Chris's Zenith) debriefed us on scholarship candidates. They've got a few interested parties, Jeff's going to provide Young Eagles flights to two of these. Explorer post is not chartered at the moment but are nearly ready, one step will be to get a bank account set up separate from EAA32. Jim asks if the membership is still interested, Bill believes we are. Jim's looking at the fall as a general target time.

Rick May has received some materials for Flying Start and Young Eagles Workshop Days. He's ordered kits that should cover around 40 participants. He asked when we might want to restart live events. April 10 is a possible start date for Young Eagles, May 15 for Flying Start, 6/12 is international Young Eagles day. Don asked if HQ has any suggestions, Rick reports that chapters consider local guidelines. Bill mentions that he sees pilots and crews wearing masks at Spirit, Jeff mentions masks at Parkway along with personal distancing - he suggests one passenger per plane. Bill proposed April and a smaller event. Rick suggests pre-registration via the website and general time slots, that implies we know how many pilots we'll have in advance. Rick will send an email out to the pilots to see who's available 4/10, assuming good weather. Jim Hall reminds us to check if we're up-to-date in the youth protection program.

Don asked about holding the March meeting at the ARC, Bill says it depends on the weather as he'd like to open the doors for air circulation. Don checked on the building this week, Jim says they'll have the heat on today as they'll be installing a windshield. He'll report the tank percentage and send to Don in case we're close to needing a refill. (At around 20%, during the off-season it's a few hundred, in winter it can go as high as 600.) We'll tentatively plan on a March meeting, but we can fall back on Zoom

Arthur Graves is preparing to move his plane to the ARC, we need to move the Thatcher. Arthur is bringing his in on a car-hauler, he offers to help move the Thatcher between moving the fuselage and wings. Jeff advises that the snow right in front of the hangar doors is like ice and may need to be cleared away..

Fundraising: Mike Schwarzkopf says we have three members using the shop with scrip program bringing in about \$17.00: a good start. Should move even better when things open up. Mike will also start handling the Dierbergs cards, let him know if you need any.

We've got two new members in spite of the lockdown. Dave Mahadev was on the call and introduced himself: he's an instrument rated pilot and is collecting tools for a build. Dave McGougan's friend Jeff is interested in joining as well, he'll invite him in March. Dave also has a younger neighbor to recruit. This led to a discussion of getting the membership process online, currently all we have is the application as a pdf. We have some options, Jim Bower advises that Andrew Mallek has ideas.

Don will send out a list of paid members at the end of the month. Dues are due! We have two renters for our hangars, Chris is interested in a spot and Don says there's one other. Ron Wright's space is now empty. Dave Doherty reports that repairs are nearly complete on Hangar 7. We're charging \$90/month for a spot there when we can fit in 3 planes.



Learning as we Go

“The Answer My Friend, Is Blowing in the Wind”

mr. bill



THE LESSON

Looking back at some of the cool things I learned in high school during the Flight Training Class while in my senior year was how to tell the wind direction and velocity from a flag that was at the bank across the street from my high school. Everyday we would come into class and determine the wind direction and velocity by the extension of the flag. Those learned skills still serve me today. In fact, as I drive out to St. Charles County-Smartt Field, driving up Highway 94 there are several flags that can be seen to help us pilots determine the strength of the wind for the day. The BEST flag is the EAA 32 Aviation Resource Center-ARC flag and its tall pole that is probably the best indicator of the real time winds at the airport.

The ASOS-Automated Surface Observing System, which measures the wind and temperature at a local airport is 6 feet off the ground. There are many times I am flying with pilots that the surface wind at Smartt Field is determined to be 7 knots (8 mph) by the ASOS system. But when I look at the EAA 32 flag pole and its flag, the flag is straight out (20 mph wind) which tells me the winds, above the friction of the surface, are much stronger than what is being measured at six feet above the surface by the ASOS. Nice to know that when you are flying around in the traffic pattern trying to set up for that perfect landing.

The Smartt Field pilots have several visual aids to assist in the determination of the wind direction and velocity.

In this photo you can see the flag on the flagpole, the orange windsock located in the middle of the airport, and you can see the Portage des Sioux powerplant smokestack. A closer examination of ALL THREE INDICATORS tells an interesting story. The orange windsock was showing 270 at 15 knots. The flags were showing 220 degrees at 15 knots. And the powerplant looks to be 270 at 15 knots. Quite the difference. The orange windsock might have had a little blockage from the new hangar that has been built in that area.



The best indicator is the EAA flag because it is up higher in the FREE air above the surface of the airport.



We must remember as pilots that the closer we get to the surface of the runway the more the winds turn to the left on the compass. Usually with surface winds of 270 degrees, the winds will turn to the right, as we ascend. The winds will be 300 to 330 degrees, turning right, as we climb up with altitude.

The same holds true for the decent. The other day with a pilot we were practicing an ILS approach to runway 29 at Saint Louis Lambert Field. At 3,000 feet the winds were 360 at 35knots (40mph.) As we descended down the glide slope the winds were decreasing which required us to take OUT the 30 degree crosswind correction we were using to fly the 302 track of runway 29. The winds at the surface (6 feet) were 300 degrees at 7 knots (8 mph.) Quite a change in 3,000 feet.

What is really cool is to watch balloon pilots find the different winds at the altitudes above the surface to maneuver around the area they are flying over.

MY YOUNG EAGLE FLIGHT

Looking through some old photographs I can across my Young Eagle flight from March 31, 1974.



Using my public school math skills it was determined that I was 15 years old when my father's supervisor from his work took me for a Spring flight in his Piper Cherokee. Now some 47 years later and some 21,500 hours under my belt I certainly do appreciate that Young Eagle Flight. I know one thing that flight did for my family. It confirmed within me, that I wanted to follow an aviation career. It assured my parents, mainly my Mom, that her son would be able to make it. That flight along with the Mentoring of several men, a father (who dreamed of flying), a funeral home director (who had a Commercial, Instrument, and Multi-engine Ratings and his own Cessna 172 aircraft,) and a college roommate, who obtained his Private Pilot Certificate in High School, like myself, have helped make it through this thing called LIFE.

All photos from mr. bill's article

SOME INFO:

- Use caution this year with your medical certificates. Last year the FAA was granting EXTENSIONS on the medical certificates. This year NO EXTENTIONS for Covid-19.
- The Eclipse Jet is no more. After 264 jets and the company changing hands, it was finally shutdown by a bankruptcy judge.
- The Honda Jet seems to be the new hot rage with 170 built.
- Please note that the paper Sectional Charts and the Terminal Area Charts will now renew every 56 days.

So, if an FAA person asks if you have current charts, you best have bought them within that 56 day window. Good time to have the Foreflight Chart App on your phone which updates the charts for the US of A, whenever there is an update. I have used these on my phone and iPad for years. For \$99.00 a year, cheaper if you are with AOPA or if you are a Flight Instructor, you have the latest, updated charts.

- And be careful over Kansas in the newly designated airspace above FL 390 (39,000 feet) because there is a special corridor, the KANSAS SUPERSONIC TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR that a scale model of a SST jet can practice going faster than Mach 1, (760 mph,) the Speed of Sound. Up to Mach 3! It runs right over Wichita, KS. And who would that be.....

[On the runway | XB-1 Rollout - YouTube](#)

[Introducing the New AS2 Supersonic Jet | Aerion Supersonic - YouTube](#)

Q? What is the price tag for a Boeing 737-800NG?

A: \$ 99 million dollars.

Q? What is the price tag for a Boeing 737-8MAX?

A: 121.6 million dollars.

Chris and Victoria Ward's Zenith CH750 Cruzer Build Project

"It's a Wrap"

by James Hall

On Tuesday, March 9th Chris and Victoria Ward's Zenith CH750 Cruzer wings were sitting on a nearby stand in the EAA 32 Aviation Resource Center at Smartt Field; they had previously been vinyl wrapped some time ago with a beautiful gold flake finish and bright green accents. Still, it was incredible this time to see the bare aluminum riveted fuselage cleaned of fingerprints and being cloaked in the glistening gold vinyl wrap that would further transform their project into an avian work of art.

The two professional installation team technicians from Cool Touch Graphics, located on Walsh Ct. in nearby St. Charles, first prepped the aluminum skin by wiping it down with an alcohol based cleaner to remove any residue.



After measuring the length needed for the first wrap of skin down the fuselage side they cut the first piece off a 60 inch wide roll and stretched it out on the aluminum as they began using squeegees to smooth out wrinkles and air pockets beneath the material.

Care was taken to cover the surface as smoothly as possible. Vinyl material was overlapped around edges and pulled tight using a blow torch to activate

the glue and seal it to the surface while taking time to push it down around every rivet.

Trimming off the surplus vinyl was done before moving on to the next surface and repeating the installation process. Any raised metal bracing on the fuselage was also edge wrapped allowing complete coverage. Nearly invisible overlaps were done on top, bottom and side surfaces; and around any cut-outs where there were protrusions. It was a careful process by the team that had done it many times before.

They shared that wrapping the complete airframe was a first; allowing that they had done the wings on a 'Red Bull' aircraft in the past. Normally, the vinyl wraps have been completed on show cars, boats, motorcycles and commercial trucks/ vans. Vinyl wrap has also been used on a 70 foot long locomotive for a commemorative veterans display.

It takes a number of hours to get it just right and the results show the time is well spent. A follow on visit will complete the vinyl wrap on this plane to finish a few remaining components when they're ready. The aircraft "N" number graphic will be applied in the future. Ask Chris how he chose

N711VW as his number (hint, this is not going to be a VW powered aircraft).

Quite a few curious visitors dropped by during the wrap and asked questions about the process. Cool Touch Graphics has a good website and encourages anyone interested in their work to call them. The price of doing a vinyl wrap is competitive and should be tailored to suit your design ideas and the project you're completing.

Installation time varies according to the complexity of your job. Their website states that it is expected that a vinyl wrap will have a life expectancy of 5-8 years, if cared for. It's definitely worth investigating vinyl wraps. The results are beautiful and fully customizable to your desires.



Young Eagles News

Rick May

Young Eagles Rally Saturday April 10th

After discussions during last month's meeting, it was suggested that we perhaps try to get our Young Eagles program going again for 2021. With many of our pilots and key volunteers in attendance we agreed that it would be a good idea, still maintaining the primary safety practices that have become a part of all our lives for the last year. So here we go, we will be holding our first 2021 YE event on Saturday April 10th at the ARC. This will probably still be a limited version. For starters I did list this event on the national Young Eagles Day website www.YEDay.org and limited it to 30 flights but I don't see the limit on the registration form (8 YE's registered as of 1 pm 3/12). Laura has listed the event on our #32 site with reference to registration at the national site. The national YEDay site is also designed for pilots and ground crew to register to participate in the event. If you take a look at it you will see what is all there and places to go for registration. If you have any questions send me an e-mail rmay5154@aol.com or a call at 314-503-6042.

Other information for all to know is, (1) while the start time on the site says 8:30 to 1:00 we should try to get there earlier if you can. I will be there probably around 7:30. (2) We are not planning on cooking so every one should bring something to sustain themselves be it food or drink. (3) Laura is not planning a scout merit badge class at this event. She has suggested if things work out, she/we may start the classes again in June. 4) We are planning on trying to keep social distancing in mind, mask wearing and 1 YE at a time in the aircraft. It has been suggested if siblings are in attendance they could possibly fly together. I am going to leave that up to the pilots as they are always the final word on a flight. As was the one event we had in 2020 this will also be a "try it and see" event. If things do go well at the event we will try and proceed with additional events throughout the year. As a reminder in years past we would do Young Eagle events the 2nd Saturday of the month at the ARC subject to weather and other circumstances so we will see what happens in April.

I am hopeful that 2021 will start to look more like the normal we had prior to a year ago. (or whatever the new normal is going to be) Like probably most of you I know I would sure like to be able to spend more time with all, at the airport and enjoying all that aviation has to offer and our mutual interests. I hope to see a lot of you at the meeting this coming Saturday for the beginning of what could be a new season of fun, flight, friends and all that other cool stuff. Please feel free to contact me, questions or thoughts rmay5154@aol.com

Young Eagle Workshops, Eagle Flights, Flying Start Program

Perhaps some of you are aware of the above programs that EAA has to offer, I think we are familiar with the Eagle Flights at least. **YE Workshops** is pretty much a combination of a ground school pre class and basic flight understanding. It also fringes on building. It can be up to a two-day event with up to 8 module training programs with power point presentations and hands on projects for each. Think "Kid Venture" or 'Scout Merit Badge class. While primarily designed for ages 11-17 it can be adapted for a narrower age group. Here are the modules:

0	Introduction	1	About Air Planes
2	Aerodynamics of Flight	3	Compass Headings
4	Flight Instruments	5	Weather Basics
6a	Aviation Communications	6b	Traffic Patterns
7	Sectionals & Pilotage Charts	8	Aircraft Building

The **Flying Start Program** is designed for adults with a more mature thought of flying and is typically a 2-hour presentation (plus flight) that expands the attendee's knowledge of aviation, potential involvement and up to and including flight instruction. **Eagle Flights** and/or Young Eagle Flights would definitely be a part of both programs.

Some of us have been looking at both of these programs with suggestions of chapter #32 holding either one or both of the events (if probable) in 2021. It has also been suggested either of these programs might be held in conjunction with an additional local EAA Chapter

Program material supplied through headquarters has been obtained, including both videos power point and pdf files, as well as printed and hand out material. What else is needed to try and make one of these things happen? YOU If anyone would be interested in participating in this type of “growing aviation” as a chapter please let me know. Pilots, builders, instructors, aviation professionals, all have something to offer. Discussion?

Aviation Explorer Post 9032 Status Update as of March, 2021

A dial-in Aviation Explorer Advisor meetup was held on March 9th. Attending were Andrew Mallek and James Hall.

There will be another scheduled AE Advisor Zoom Meeting at 7pm on April 13, 2021

The first item to reconstitute Aviation Explorer Post 9032 will be recruiting Aviation Explorer Advisors from EAA Chapter 32 membership to again have enough commitment to fill the mentor roles to make it successful.

- Sign-up sheets for AE Post Advisors will be at the March 20, EAA Chapter 32 meeting (live, or virtual?)
- Renewal of the charter for AE Post 9032 with the Greater St. Louis Area Council (GSLAC) can begin once we have Advisors willing to help and then we can set up a flexible schedule for training and youth recruitment.

Other items discussed: future AE Scout activities such as presenting youth with speakers (and aviation related site visits) in aviation industry employment positions (airline pilots, flight instructors, maintenance personnel, traffic control, engineering, etc.).

Hands on activities to include model aircraft builds and assisting actual aircraft assembly

Online flight simulators

Andrew has noticed that a few AE youth have joined in with the Microsoft Flight Simulation “Discord Server” virtual aviation group

Possible participation with EAA32 YE events when scheduled in the future

Andrew has reached out to Katie Clark (EAA Aviation Explorer Camp Coordinator) for AIRVENTURE and is waiting to hear back to see if it will be a part of the Oshkosh experience this year

There will be a need for AE Advisors to help with the registration process to re-charter again with GSLAC and complete the proper forms.

Future activities for Aviation Explorer Post 9032 will be part of the planning process.

Space Available, Military Air Travel

Steve Stengen

As a civilian employee these days, of the United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), I occasionally think back to the old Army days in the 60's, immediately before the Viet Nam War, and there was one trip in particular, where I wonder how it was finished. These days, troops ride in comfortable contracted jet planes, to ride around the world.

I was ending an overseas tour in the Far East and I decided to use up some of my leave to see some of the wonders of the world; for free. Back then, TRANSCOM was called the Military Airlift Command (MAC). If there was "space available" or "Space A", a military person was allowed to fill a seat on a military aircraft, at no charge. Flights were often irregular and not very dependable.



Using the MAC flight availabilities, I planned a grand trip from Taiwan, to the Philippines, to Bangkok Thailand, Rangoon Burma, New Delhi India, Perth Australia and back to Taiwan.

It was July 1964, just before the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the weather was hot-steamy and generally uncomfortable. As we left Taipei in the late afternoon, on an Air Force General's four engine prop C-54, the stench of the metropolis' open sewers began to fade.

I didn't expect such luxury, as the last plane I rode on, about 6 months prior, was a C-47 with the hard wooden drop-down



benches, used by airborne troops headed for the drop zone. Our destination that day was Clark Air Base, in the Philippines. As we drew closer to our destination, it began to get bumpy, dark, and stormy. Finally, the pilot turned on the fasten seat belt sign as we began our decent. Next to the window on the left side of the plane, I could

see storm clouds in front of the lightning, not far away. A few minutes passed and I could see the lights of a town below, but then another minute later I could see flashes and explosions just below. My first reaction was that the Philippine military was holding exercises. Then suddenly our pilot pulled up and right but said nothing. The climb was short as we headed in another direction. As passengers, we all looked at each other, with a bit of surprise. A few minutes later we began another decent, all the time looking out the window. The storms continued to brew in the distance and again there were lights glowing below. The pilot continued his silence. But, whoa.....There were reflections with those lights,,,,,Reflections from water, then I realized those lights came from ships in the ocean, all lined up in a row. Others noticed it too. One guy exclaimed "hey, are we going to land in the ocean"? Suddenly, there was a solid bump from the aircraft, we had landed on firm ground. Evidently, the runway extends out into the ocean. A voice came from the cockpit that said we had landed at Subic Bay, Philippines (NAS Cubi Point), an American Naval base. As it turned out, those flashes I had seen at "Clark" was a Boeing 707 that had crashed in front of us and 97 military and crew, were killed.

The next leg of the trip, was to Tok Lei Air Base, Thailand and was to take place in a couple days. In the meantime, I got to see a bit of the people and country. That was the day after the 707 crash and sadly another plane, a Philippine Air Force Sabre Jet, from Clark AFB, crashed on Huk Mountain, also known as Mount Pinatubo, the volcano that years later destroyed Clark AFB. The pilot was killed when he flew into the side of the mountain in a storm.



I arrived at the terminal early in the morning, for the flight to Tok Lei. The 3 passengers loaded up on a C-119, Flying Boxcar, full of cargo. As the pilot was doing his runup at the end of the runway, we lost a magneto. The repair cost us a day. Again, the following day, we tried, but the outside temperature was too hot, and we were really loaded up. We ran out of runway and the pilot turned us around. The cargo master reconfigured the load and removed some of the cargo and we tried for the third time. Being a bit superstitious, I began to worry as we seemed to crawl down the runway. The cargo master was hanging out of the right-side door, observing our progress. Suddenly, we were flying, and the cargo guy closed the door and yelled into my ear, "we took some of the fence with us".



The Boxcar even then, was old and slow and it seemed like forever to get across the South China Sea, and over South Viet Nam. The pilot told me to come up and sit in

the left seat, while he took a break. We followed the Mekong River at about 500 feet, taking pictures of the pagodas and boat trains, as they traveled up and down the river. The War hadn't officially started yet and it all seemed beautiful and peaceful. Finally, we reached the area of our destination, but when the pilots attempted to reach the tower, there was no answer. Since guerrillas occupied the nearby jungle, the crew became alarmed. But, as it so happened, the whole outfit was out playing or watching a baseball game near the runway. Another scary incident arose here, as we disembarked, motor oil was observed running out of the left engine. Why? Well, there was string of bullet holes in the under the left wing and in the engine compartment. So much for sightseeing!

When I finally arrived at the military station at the Bangkok Airport, I was told the flights to Rangoon had been canceled, due to some political turmoil in the country and foreigners, for now, were not being allowed in. That caused me to miss my diplomatic flight from Rangoon to India and the Taj Mahal, and other sites. India was also the place where I was to catch a another diplomatic flight to Australia, so I was disappointed again. Nothing else was available at for another week if things settled down in Burma.

Since the Olympics were scheduled in Japan, I decided to turn around and go back to Taipei and use the leave in Tokyo. On a flight from Bangkok to Okinawa in another military C-54, the pilot announced, *"folks, if you look off our left wing, you will see two MIG fighters. We don't know where they are from or what they want, but we are on an international route off the coast of North Viet Nam. We've contacted the good guys and they have fighters on the way"*.



Steve Stegen

EAA CHAPTER 32 NEWS
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