

The Flypaper

Promoting Sport Aviation in Central Illinois for More Than 58 Years

Thacker Field Flyout

Retired Capt Bill Thacker opened his airport for a BBQ flyout on September 11 for Chapter 129 members and friends. The event was a bit of an extension of his retirement party from the previous weekend with the Metro Warbirds, headquartered at his home/airport 11LL, his home for 30 years.

Bill recently retired from United airlines after 35 years and more than 23,000 hours. His final flight was an August 31 flight from Hawaii, UA67 KOA to ORD on a 787 Dreamliner, greeted with a traditional water salute on arrival. A fitting finish. And watch for daughter Jessica in the cockpit as she follows in Bill's career footsteps.

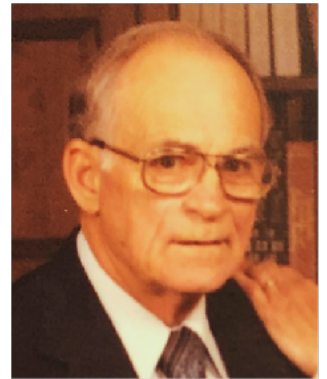
(see Thacker Cookout, Page 4)



The Sept 11 afternoon winds settled down and several members flew in for the cookout.

Chapter 29 and 129 Beginnings

Wilbur Louis Smith was an aviation pioneer, inventor, aircraft builder/restorer, mentor and founding member of two Illinois EAA Chapters. He earned his private pilot license in 1939 and in 1942 enlisted in the Army Air Corp. Being 28, he was deemed too old to fly overseas, so he was commissioned to train younger men. At the end of the war, he returned home to Bloomington, Illinois.



A retail store manager by trade, his hobby was designing and building aircraft. He was a master woodworker. He had helped his friends build a Pietenpol Sky Scout, so it was natural that once Paul Poberezny founded the Experimental Aircraft Association in 1953, Smith would become involved.

Smith designed and built his first experimental all wood aircraft in the family basement. He later flew his airplane to EAA events in Milwaukee to share his woodworking skills with others. He regularly attended the national EAA events, volunteering and sharing his knowledge of aircraft design and construction at member seminars. The aircraft that Smith designed became known as the Smith Termite.

(see Wilbur Smith, Page 3)

You Have Information October!

October Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 21 at 6:00 PM

Member's soups will be the main course. Please bring a dish to pass.

Speaker at 7:00 PM TBA

Fall has fell - bring your favorite soup recipe to share!



Captain Lynn Rippelmeyer

from: Illinois Alumni Magazine – University of Illinois Alumni Association

The first woman to fly a transoceanic jumbo jet talks about breaking through the “glass cockpit” and routinely landing at the world’s most treacherous airport

What a time to join aviation! The 747 had just been introduced in 1972, and TWA started around-the-world service. A sorority sister persuaded me to join her in New York City in her new career as a stewardess. The 747s tended to be crewed by the most experienced pilots, and as one of the youngest, newest flight attendants, I was assigned to an undesirable job—to serve the cockpit. Sexual harassment wasn’t on anyone’s radar then, and the pilots considered it “entertainment” to be generally crude, rude and socially unacceptable.

I learned to ask questions—what are all the switches and dials for, what is your job like? When you got them talking about themselves and airplanes, you could have an intelligent conversation. My initially feigned interest quickly became absolutely real.

The amazing view from the cockpit reminded me of my childhood in Valmeyer, an Illinois farming community on the Mississippi. I’d had a horse from the time I was 12. I would ride to the top of the limestone bluffs for a view of the valley. It looked like a patchwork quilt of

green and
gold
stitched
together by
rivers and



Capt. Lynn Rippelmeyer, ‘72 LAS, retired as a captain with Continental in 2012
(Image by Jenn Duncan)

railroads. There, I would dream of flying.

The idea of becoming a pilot

Captain Emilie Jones and I initially weren’t allowed to fly together—until one rainy day when I had to rush to the airport because no man was available. Just doing my job, I found myself part of the first all-women crew for a scheduled airline—although, we were told to keep the door closed and make no announcements.

didn’t occur to me then. Growing up in the 1950s and ‘60s, there were societal norms and gender rules that you just accepted. But there also were subtle hints that this didn’t have to be; Annie Oakley and Dale

Evans rode horses just as well as men. Raised to believe teaching was my only career option, I majored in education. Yet, as I quizzed those pilots—and later studied a pilot’s training manual one of them gave to me to “answer questions without bothering people”—I realized they weren’t doing anything I couldn’t do.

Thanks to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, American and Frontier were the first to hire women pilots.

I took lessons to get my private and commercial licenses, and then I started flying charters while still a flight attendant. On a trip to visit my sister at Southern, I came across a kiosk in the St. Louis airport for Air Illinois. Thinking I’d rather fly than drive, I asked if I could ride along in professional courtesy. I learned that to ride for free, I’d have to interview for a job—and they had enough flight attendants. What they needed were pilots. I said, half-jokingly, “Well, then, I’ll interview for that.”

(See Rippelmeyer Page 6)



Wilbur Smith (cont)

Smith sold plans for the Termite, and built wing and tail assemblies for it as well.

These items were sold mostly to other EAA members through his small company, "Wilbur



The original Termite at the Oregon Space Museum

Smith's Termite Aircraft". The original Termite is on display at the Oregon Space Museum in Eugene Oregon.

In 1956 Smith, along with other aviation friends, felt a need to establish a local EAA chapter. In March of 1957, EAA Chapter 29 based in Champaign, Illinois was approved. Smith was a charter member, and later served as president of the chapter. As a founding member, he also served as a lead volunteer with the chapter events including pancake breakfasts, fly-ins and fly-outs. When there was a chapter event, Smith was there to help. From 1959 until the late 1990's Smith volunteered each year to help with planning, setup, fly-in activity and seminars at EAA Air Venture.

Many of the EAA chapter 29 members lived in Bloomington and regularly traveled to Champaign for chapter events and meetings. In 1962, Smith and others from the Bloomington area fulfilled EAA requirements to start a Bloomington EAA chapter. It was designated as EAA Chapter 129. Smith was their first president and served in all

leadership positions over the next 40 years.

In the 1980's Smith, along with Marion McClure, Bob Ryburn and fellow EAA members volunteered their time and expertise to restore the Tilbury Flash Midget Air Racer that had been owned by Art Carnahan. The Flash was designed by Owen Tilbury, a Bloomington Engineer, and with Art Carnahan flying it, took second place in the 1933 Chicago American Air Races. The aircraft was later found stored in a barn in McLean County. Smith was selected to restore the wings because of his expertise in woodworking. The beautifully restored Tilbury Flash now hangs from the ceiling of the terminal building at Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington.

The Illinois Aviation Hall of Fame honors the memory of Wilbur Louis Smith for exemplifying the spirit of the EAA by designing, building and restoring aircraft, sharing his skills and mentoring others, and supporting aviation events both locally and nationally.



The Tilbury Flash Midget Air Racer restored by Smith and EAA Chapter members. It hangs in the Cira Terminal building



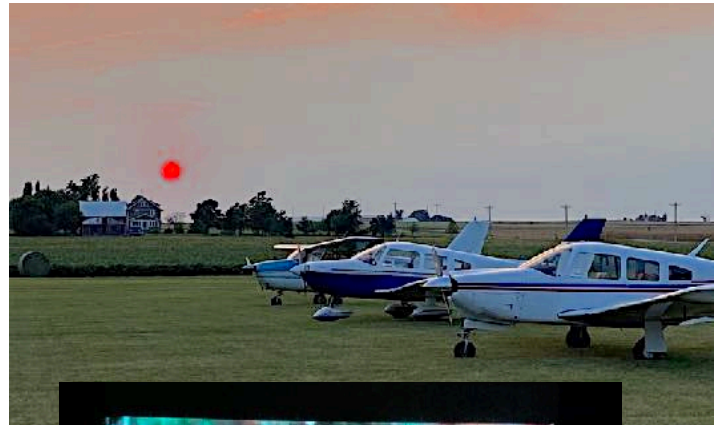
Thacker cookout (cont)

The afternoon winds settled down and a number of members flew in to 11LL with lots of food to share. Bill supplied pork sandwiches. Bill's huge hangar is a virtual history book of aviation and his flying career. It accommodated us all well for dinner and browsing - and the occasional flying story.

After dinner, several planes took to the air giving rides and providing a few low passes at 11LL.

And no event at Thacker Field is complete without an outdoor movie. The Aviator movie was the choice for this evening under the stars.

Thanks for hosting us Bill, I'm sure we will be seeing more of you in your retirement!



Lost and found - Left behind at the cookout. Contact Bill to claim.



Wanted

Your stories, events, travel adventures, builder updates for our next issue of **The Flypaper**.

Email them to: cmbates50@gmail.com

The 100 Octane Advantage

(This is a declassified article by the British Society of Chemists (Declassified in 2014))

It seems that the German and British aircraft both used 87 octane gasoline in the first two years of the war. While that was fairly satisfactory in the German Daimler-Benz V-12 engine, it was marginal in the British Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine used in British aircraft. It fouled the spark plugs, caused valves to stick, and made frequent engine repair problems.

Then came the WWII lend-lease program and American aircraft began to enter British service in great numbers. If British engines hated 87 octane gasoline, the American General Motors built Allison 1710 engines loathed and despised it. Something had to be done!

Along came a French-American named Eugene Houdry. Never heard of him?

Small wonder, very few people have. Eugene Houdry, born in France, resettled in the USA, and developed one of the earliest catalysts to convert crude oil into high octane fuel. As a scientist for Sun Oil in their Southeast Texas Refinery, he invented the "Cracking Tower" that produced 100 octane aviation

gasoline. This discovery led to great joy among our English cousins and great distress among the Germans.

A Spitfire fueled with 100 octane gasoline instead of 87 octane was 34 miles per hour faster at 10,000 feet. The need to replace engines went from every 500 hours of operation to every 1,000 hours which reduced the cost of



British aircraft by 300 Pounds Sterling. Even more, when used in 4 engine bombers. Luftwaffe pilots couldn't believe they were facing the same planes they have successfully defeated over France a few months earlier. British Spitfires that couldn't catch them a year ago started shooting their ME-109 E and G models right out of the sky.

The planes were the same – but the fuel wasn't.

Of course, the matter had to be kept secret. If the Germans found out that it was a French Invention, they'd simply copy the original French patents. If any of you have ever wondered what they were doing in that 3 story white brick building in front of the Sun Oil Refinery on Old Highway 90 in Beaumont, TX that was it. They were re-inventing gasoline.

The American Allison engines improved remarkably with 100 Octane gasoline but did much better when 130 octane gasoline came along in 1944. The 130 Octane also improved the Radial Engine Bombers we produced.

The Germans and Japanese never snapped to the fact that we had re-invented gasoline. Neither did our "Friends" the Russians. 100,000 Americans died in the skies over Europe. Lord only knows what that number would have been without "Super-Gasoline". And it all was invented just a few miles west of Beaumont, and we never knew a thing about it.



Captain Rippelmeyer (cont)

On arrival, the owner—a big guy with a military haircut holding a coffee mug proudly branded Male Chauvinist Pig—greeted me with, “So, you think you want to be a pilot?” Joke’s over, I thought. Two weeks later, I got the call. “We’ve already hired a woman as a captain. You’re going to be a first officer. Can you be here in two weeks?”

Captain Emilie Jones and I initially weren’t allowed to fly together—couldn’t be a crew without a man—until one rainy November when I had to rush to the airport because no man was available. Just doing my job, I found myself part of the first all-women crew for a scheduled airline—although, we were told to keep the door closed and make no announcements.

Flying the Twin Otter at Air Illinois gave me the experience I needed to apply to be a pilot

at TWA. I became the first person to transition from flight attendant to pilot when I was hired as a 727 flight engineer, one of the first three women hired there. When I was furloughed after only a year, I accompanied my fiancé to an interview at a cargo carrier, Seaboard World Airlines, which flew 747s. The office secretary initiated an interview for me as well. When the chief pilot asked, “How would you like to be the first woman to pilot a 747?” I asked if it were possible. The TWA pilots had convinced me a woman could never fly a “heavy”—an aircraft weighing over 300,000 pounds. He looked at me and said, “It’s hydraulics. I’ll show you.” And he did. In July 1980, I became the first woman to pilot a 747. Four years later, in 1984, after yet another furlough, I was flying at another airline, People Express, (It’s a very unstable

industry.) I became a 747 captain, the first to fly the jumbo jet transoceanic. Again, just doing my job, I landed at London’s Heathrow Airport and was greeted by the press. News coverage went around the world. I was even named one of the U.K. Women of the Year for it.

I ultimately relocated to the Houston area to raise a family as a single mom. I selected the day run to Toncontin International Airport in Tegucigalpa because I could drop my kids off at school, fly to and back from Honduras, and pick up my kids on the way home. When I asked for that route, I had no idea that the airport is one of the world’s most dangerous to land an aircraft. What may have seemed like nerves of steel was more just a woman’s heart, making the choices a working mother has to.

Saturday Gathering of Eagles

Join us at the EAA Chapter 129 hangar for our Gathering of Eagles breakfasts Saturday mornings 7:00 am to 9:00 am for some great food and some hangar flying at its best.



Cooks Needed!

Chapter 129 Members,
Please sign up to help with
our Saturday breakfasts.
The sign up sheet is on the
counter.



Chapter 129 Officers

Charlie Bates-President, Treas
Jason Jording-VP
Josh Andracki-Sec’y, Social Media
Ben Schneider-Board Member
Don O’Neill-Board Member
David Pfister-Board Member
Rachel Henderson-Young Eagles Coord
George Wilts-Tech. Counselor
Mike Todd-Web Editor

