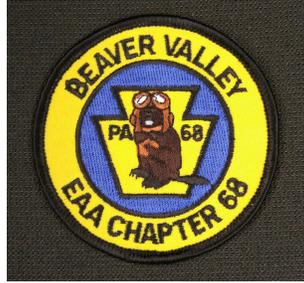


# Newsletter



*Beaver Valley EAA Chapter 68 founded 1958*

November 24, 2020

Vol.4 Issue 45

The November monthly meeting was on November 3, and was held at the Air Heritage hangar.

The main feature of the November meeting was to officially elect new officers whose terms will be completed at the end of 2020. The positions for Chapter president, secretary and one board member were determined. The incumbents (who were the odds on favorites) were unopposed and the members present legitimized the election with a “show of hands” vote. It was unanimous. Tony, Kenny and myself shamelessly pulled off another victory!

I want to offer my thanks to all who participated.

After the business was completed there was a brief presentation about the equipment needed for oxy acetylene welding by Stan.

Next month’s meeting place is to be at Roy Early’s shop (house, not hangar)\_on December 1 at 7:00 P.M. Directions are posted in this newsletter after Tony’s comments below.

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This photo was shown to me at the November meeting. Can you guess who is under that helmet? And what is he attempting to fly in?

This is one of the members of the chapter. The date was May 8th, 1974, not sure of the airport though.

He's not just a member of the chapter but one of the two remaining founders.

That should narrow down your choice.

The airplane is a Cassutt built and flown by Kenny Gray. This was taken on the day of Ken's first flight in this homebuilt airplane.

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### *The Prez sez...*

Last month I called this year, 2020, as the year when nothing happened. On second thought, I believe that we all can agree that 2020 is the year we would all rather forget. Unprecedented challenge, upheaval, strife, danger, and change all converged to make this the year we will always remember. There have been others: 1929, 1941, 1963, 2001, just to name a few. These numbers immediately conjure up the accompanying images of the stock market crash, Pearl Harbor, Kennedy assassination, and 9/11 terrorist attack. Add 2020 to the list. Covid. The miniscule virus that stopped our economy, changed our world, and forever altered our lives. The ancient curse that we should all live in interesting times came to all of us, wave after wave, again and again. It continues.

Whatever lies ahead will continue to challenge and alter the way we live. We mask, we distance, we Zoom, we sequester, and we wonder when we can get back to normal.

Philosophical angst alert! No ennui here—just day after day when you would rather not watch the news, and sorry that you did.

Organizations and institutions suffer because the routine is different. Meetings cancel because there is no place to meet. Conventions, celebrations, and concerts all have to wait. Churches, schools, and our workplaces all suffer the same fate.

This will end.

Once upon a time, there was a repressive government that forced its will on the people, taxed the citizens, seized property, trampled on rights, and brought armies to do its will. It took a roomful of twenty and thirty year olds in Philadelphia to draw on their education and intelligence to draft documents asserting freedom from tyranny. When they did, they changed the world and created something never seen before.

What does all this have to do with Chapter 68?

The past year has not been easy. Trying to maintain a semblance of normalcy is a continuing challenge. Normalcy went out the window a long time ago, and the fight is now one of survival. Trying to maintain a sense of community, camaraderie, and friendship that is the strength of our organization is difficult if not impossible when certainty is subject to the whims of change.

What we are not seeing is that old galvanizing force. The same force that became apparent in that room in Philadelphia long ago during a very dark present and an even more uncertain future will make itself known again. When life hands you lemons, you make lemonade. The darkest time is just before the dawn. Even the Dark Ages brought forth the Enlightenment. I am confident that we will see our way through all of this and that we will be better, stronger, more vibrant than ever.

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I am privileged to be President of this Chapter. I draw on the talents of all members past present and future for inspiration and dedication to further our cause. We will all accomplish great things together in the future.

Please remember that our next meeting will be on December 1 at 7:00 PM. We will meet at Roy Early's house and visit his expansive workshop, heated, where he is building his SX project. We all dream of speed, comfort, and capability and this will be our chance to see that dream up close. Thanks to Roy and Vyda for their hospitality. We can also look forward to Vyda's chili recipe and refreshment. Hope to see everyone there on Tuesday December 1<sup>st</sup>.

This will be the last newsletter for this year, so let me close by saying that I hope that the upcoming holidays will be spent with family and friends in safety. Happy Thanksgiving! Merry Christmas! I look forward to a Happy New Year that will exceed all of our expectations!

*Tony*

**Directions to Roy Early's house at 4545 Dutch Ridge Road, Beaver Pa. 15009**

Take the Brighton Exit off I376 and go toward the State Police barracks, then turn left on Dutch Ridge Road.

Sometimes GPS sends people to a road off Dutch Ridge called Yankee Ct. Roy's house is on Dutch Ridge. After crossing the bridge on Dutch Ridge it is the third house on the left, the house number is on the mailbox post. There is a gravel area by the end of the drive, by the mailbox, if some want to park there and in front of the garages. Vida is going to make chili and a sandwich ring. If you can please bring a folding chair.

Roy's phone number is 724-513-7350



On the lighter side...

Who said it's not Rocket Science???

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8 ½". That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Well because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the U.S. railroads.

So why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge that they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

Ok, then, who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all made alike in the manner of wheel spacing.

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The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8 ½” is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. And bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a spec and told we have always done it that way and wonder what horses ass came up with that, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses.

Now the twist to this story...

When you used to see the Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there were two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's. The SRB's were made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's would have preferred to have made them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the assembly building at the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to a tunnel in the mountains. The SRB's had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horse's behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what was arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a horses ass wasn't important.

Reminders.....

The monthly regular meeting will be held on December 1, 7:00 P.M. at Roy Early's house and shop.

Officers: President Tony Pavilonis, Vice-President Dave Brunberg, Treasurer Dewey Clawson, Secretary Stan Kocuba

Board Members in addition to the current officers: Ed Campbell and Kenny Gray.

Newsletter Editor: Stan Kocuba

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