

The WingNut

EAA Chapter 1 Flabob Airport (RIR) Riverside, CA



Volume 62, Issue 7/8

We Make Flying Fun!

July/August

Ray Stits Has Gone West

Ray was born in the small mining town of Duncan Arizona on June 20th, 1921. Shortly afterwards, the Stits family moved to Phoenix, where Ray grew up and his interest in aviation was born. After graduating from high school, Ray worked for several aircraft maintenance facilities in the Phoenix area, cementing his love of aviation and airplanes. Phoenix is where Ray learned to fly.

In 1941, Ray joined the Army Air Corps, and during WWII, all of Ray's service as a line mechanic was stateside. He was assigned to the Mitchell B-24 maintenance group during his enlistment.

After his time in the Army Air Corps, Ray moved to Michigan where he met a welder by the name of Edith and they were married in 1944. Around 1948, Ray started work on the design and construction of the Junior, his first homebuilt project. Shortly after came the Sky Baby bi-plane and the design, construction, and plans for 15 total homebuilt airplanes. Only one, the Skycoupe Model SA-9A, received an FAA Type Certificate.

In the early '50's, Ray and Edith, now with two small boys in tow, moved their family back to Arizona before deciding to move to Riverside. Most of the experimental activities were East, and Ray wanted to be one of the first on the West Coast. Ray struck a deal with Flabob's Flavio Madriaga, the owner of airport at that time, for one hangar at \$15 per month. It's history from there.

There's no argument that Ray Stits was a very accomplished and well known man. Many in the aviation world, regardless of where in the US, knew of Ray Stits. His designs and plans were very popular, and many models of his airplanes were built. Later, in the mid 50's, he developed the Poly-Fiber system, which revolutionized the old style aircraft covering methods of linen and butyrate dope. This long lasting and nonflammable covering system is used by most today. Ray sold the business in the late '90's. Poly-Fiber is thriving and larger than ever right where it began, here at Flabob Airport. To say that Ray was a pioneer and major contributor to the homebuilt industry is almost an understatement.

In 1953, Paul Poberezney founded EAA. Paul knew Ray and invited him to join. Ray's EAA number was 136. Ray would have had an earlier EAA number, but said that his 'letter took 6 weeks' to get to Rockford, IL., where EAA was headquartered. The 'EAA Chapter' idea was Ray's and he was awarded with EAA Chapter 1, founded at Flabob in 1954. Ray and Paul became great friends, and Ray donated time and thousands of dollars helping EAA become the organization that we know today.

Along with Ray's generosity to EAA, he was equally generous to Flabob and many of the young people it's seen over the years. It's well known that he funded many young people's flight lessons, through private pilot and beyond. Ray was instrumental in creating the park-like area in front of the original Chapter 1 Club House. Most notably, the donation of the beautiful hangar appropriately named "Stits Hangar, 16A."

(See STITS, Page 4)





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Calendar of Events

July

- 3rd Famous Friendly Flabob
First Friday @ Five p.m. Family Fabulous
Flying Film Festival
- 4th 4th of July Gathering at Flabob and
Membership meeting
- 11th Young Eagles
- 18th Aircraft Display Days & Car Show
- 20th 26th Airventure
More info at <http://www.eaa.org/en/airventure>

August

- 7th Famous Friendly Flabob
First Friday @ Five p.m. Family Fabulous
Flying Film Festival
- 8th Young Eagles
- 8th Chapter One Meeting 1pm
- 15th Aircraft Display Days & Car Show

September

- 4th Famous Friendly Flabob
First Friday @ Five p.m. Family Fabulous
Flying Film Festival
- 12th Young Eagles
- 12th Chapter One Meeting 1pm
- 19th Aircraft Display Days & Car Show

October

- 3rd Aircraft Spruce Super Sale
- 2nd Famous Friendly Flabob
First Friday @ Five p.m. Family Fabulous
Flying Film Festival
- 10th Young Eagles
- 10th Chapter One Meeting 1pm
- 17th Aircraft Display Days & Car Show



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The Prez Sez...

Well, here we are... only a few days away from the start of Airventure 2015. (July 20-26) This year in Oshkosh promises to be as big and as good as ever... always something new. I hope you all get the email notices from EAA via email. If you don't.... please log on to EAA.org and get connected!!!

Roberta and I are headed to Airventure... and we seem to be the only one's we know from the chapter that are going. Many of the 'regulars' are not attending this year for many reasons...and for reasons unknown. BUT.... if you are going... please give us a call, as we'll be camping in Camp Scholler... at the corner of Stits and Schaik roads. We'll be easy to spot this year because of the banner we'll be flying... EAA Chapter 1, Flabob Airport, Riverside CA OSHKOSH HEADQUARTERS! Please give us a call and stop by!! As your president, I've committed to attend many seminars and events specific to the chapter. For example, Roberta and I are going to the 'Chapter Leaders' seminar and several Young Eagles events. The airport's 'kids' who participate in the 'Build-A-Plane' project are attending as well, so Flabob will be well represented!! The MUST attend for anyone going to Airventure this year, is on Friday morning... July 24th, at the BIG arch... where Ray Stits will be honored with a memorial brown stone. The ceremony begins at 9 AM, and if you're in OSH, it sure would be good to have a Chapter 1 presence!! Thank you to all who attended Ray's memorial. It was a fitting tribute to Ray, and the board members were happy to see full seats and tables. Ray will be missed!! We lost another Chapter 1 member, and staunch Flabob supporter in Al Gester. Al's wife took sick and died recently, and the same day, Al failed, and didn't wake up. Al's memorial was Monday, July 13, and because of work, I was not able to attend. If you didn't know Al, he was VERY involved with the kids, especially Air Academy, after school programs, and was always promoting our Young Eagles events. Al was a full colonel in the Air Force, and retired after many years of service!!

A few of us attended Cable's EAA Chapter 448's Young Eagles Event last month. A great group of people there have done a great job on reinvigorating the chapter. They flew 20 young eagles, and their program is something to envy. They went a step farther and had 6 stations where the YE's went and learned, got their check-list marked as 'attended' and then went to fly. In doing so, it gave the kids something to do while waiting for their ride... and not just sitting around. It got the kids MORE involved, and it got more VOLUNTEERS involved! We sure could do something like this... we have a great big hangar at our disposal, and with a few more volunteers to 'man the stations'... we could sure add a lot to their experience, while adding to our own experience. So...the call for volunteers still is active. Ron Headlee is our Volunteer Coordinator, and he can be contacted through the chapter website under "Meet your Board"!!

We are making plans to reignite our EAA Chapter 1 Fly in on October 24. I have made initial contact to all of the local EAA chapters in SoCal, Southern NV, and AZ, and they are all on board with our 'together is better' mission. We've all agreed that after Airventure is the best time to get together and meet... discuss mutual obstacles, how to motivate members to volunteer, event support, etc. Debbie Cheney, who's on the board of Chapter 1, is our Events/Programs coordinator, and she has some great ideas and plans for the event. She's currently working on the flyer, so we should have something to send to you all so that you can print it, give it away, but at a minimum, put it on your calendar under the category of 'Do Not Miss'!! Young Eagles continues to be our strong suit... last month, we flew 45. We have a great supply of pilots who LOVE to fly the kids. It's something to experience, even if you're on the ground helping out. The enthusiasm and excitement of the kids is very contagious, and consider yourself personally invited to come, help out, and join the fun.... next YE event... Aug. 8! I'll send you all a recap of Airventure separately on our return!!

Fly Safely, Fly Often!!!
Jim O'Brien
EAA Chapter 1 President



Ray continued to fly almost to the very end. One of his proudest accomplishments was flying 1,988 Young Eagles. He was quite upset that his records and EAA's records didn't match and he had flown over 2,000 Young Eagles. Regardless, 1,988 is a BIG number and quite impressive since the Young Eagles program only started in 1992.

Over the years, Ray has received many awards, including the prestigious FAA recognition of Master Mechanic, AND Master Pilot Award (50 years of continued flying without an accident).

The folks at Oshkosh have also recognized Ray by awarding him with the EAA August Rasket Award (1962) and enrolling Ray in the EAA Homebuilder's Hall of Fame (1994). If you've ever camped at Oshkosh, you've probably driven on, ridden the bus on or walked along Stits Road. This year at AirVenture, EAA is placing a permanent 'brownstone' memorial at the big arch near the main entrance. The ceremony is Friday, July 24th at 9:00 am.

Ray is survived by Edith, his wife of 71 years; his son Don; grandchildren and many family members across the country. David Stits, the oldest son and Viet Nam veteran of the 82nd Airborne, was sadly killed in a plane crash years ago.

Ray Stits is and will be sorely missed.

- Jim O'Brien, EAA Chapter 1 President



Air Mail

Featuring Letters from our Members



Hello Jim,

I'm so sorry to hear of Ray Stits' passing. He was one of a kind and a great friend. I knew him and worked in his Stits Poly-fiber tent at Oshkosh for many years, starting in the early 80s. And of course I joined Chapter 1 when Ray had the membership drive to build the largest chapter. We last saw each other the year Chapter 1 had the "runway" laid out in a prominent spot on the OSH convention grounds. I regret that I was not able to free up the time to visit Flabob in response to the standing invites from Ray, his late son Dave, and Jim Pyle, another Chapter 1 friend. It becomes "too late" quicker and quicker as time passes.

EAA would have never become what it is now if not for Ray's influence and establishing the prototype chapter. I knew Paul Poberezny too, for over 48 years, and he himself told me so many times. Ray's vision made it easy to grow the organization on a national and international scale. I doubt if Ray or Paul would consider themselves "great men" but they did great things which will continue to benefit the rest of us for many years to come.

Tailwinds, Ray. You will be missed.

Christopher Kinnaman, President, Acro Sport Inc
EAA # 36270

From the (new) Editor's Desk



Greetings fellow members! I just wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks to our former editor Leon Grumling for his 10 years of excellent service, and also for the kind words he extended in the last issue of the newsletter. If I can manage to perform my duties half as well as he did, then I will be satisfied indeed.

As always, I encourage you, our members, to send us your thoughts, story ideas, pictures, anecdotes, and even a criticism or two (constructive only, please!)

Feel free to drop me a line via email at

editor@eaach1.org

- GY



Young Eagles

Middle School Outreach Program

By David Cheney – YE Outreach Coordinator

The first group of Middle Schoolers was divided into two; half worked on building and assembling paper airplanes from provided drawings, while the other half made trial flights with their completed projects, adjusted their craft for stable flying, and whooped and hollered while attempting to win the “furthest flown honors” with their classmates - all the while learning about aerodynamics and the basic fundamentals of flight! Members of the second group took turns flying a pair of RC helicopters; honing their skills while trying to hover, practicing stable flight, and seeing for themselves the characteristics of lift as provided by a rotor wing aircraft. The third group developed flight plans for trips to Las Vegas and Catalina Island using an aviation plotter and a Los Angeles Sectional, while learning how their own personal I-Phone or I-Pad can be used



as aviation GPS navigational devices as they visited the Charting and Navigation Booth. Members of group four rotated through a pair of computerized flight simulators equipped with a working control yoke, engine controls, and rudder pedals while taking flight in a DC-3 based

out of Flabob Airport! And lucky members of group five sat mesmerized while listening to a former Vietnam F4 fighter pilot, POW, United Airlines Captain, and current instructor for a STEM program specializing in aviation and aerospace, as he shared his aviation experiences, and then as he spoke from his heart as he counseled the kids on staying in school and in setting a straight path for their life's journey – this while visiting the Aviation Career and Pathways Booth.

These are just a few of the sights and experiences from our first EAA Chapter One Middle School Outreach Program!

The YE Outreach Program was a joint project between EAA Chapter One and the Riverside Unified School District Prime Time Program which is headed up by Janet Downey. Prime Time is an after school program for children wishing to experience diverse learning opportunities outside of the normal school curriculum.

We visited a total of six Middle Schools on a weekly basis from April 29 through June 3rd. Participating middle schools were Central, Sierra, Earhardt, University Heights, Gage, and Chemawa.

Each of the visits was split into two 60-90 minute assemblies; one for the attending 7th grade students and the other for attending 8th graders.

(See OUTREACH, Page 6)

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(OUTREACH, Continued from Page 5)

Total attendance varied by school, ranging from 80 to 150 kids!

I started each assembly with a 20 minute interactive presentation of Chapter One's Young Eagle Program with an invitation for all of them to visit Flabob on a YE Saturday and take flight with one of our YE pilots. Afterwards the kids were divided into equal groups that rotated through each of the five aviation booths – this was the heart and soul of the program where we had the opportunity to connect individually with the kids, and to provide them with a fun



and interactive means of learning about aviation and the immense opportunities the industry can provide.

A program with the scope such as this could not have been made possible without the help and commitment of the talented volunteers that provided their services. Kathy Rohm worked patiently with the kids as they made their paper airplanes indoors and then enthusiastically took the kids out to the school courtyards to test their creations in flight! Tyler Howell took time from his school studies to instruct the kids on how to fly the flight simulators that were provided by the school district. The kids really connected with Tyler as he shared his own YE experiences as well as the many aviation achievements he has garnered at his young age. On the one week Tyler could not attend, Debbie Cheney filled in and established her own personal connection while sharing her personal aviation achievements with the young girls in attendance – yes, girls can also fly an airplane!! The RC helicopters were provided by the school district, and the booth was staffed by a different school administrator at each one of the schools. I staffed the Charting and Navigation booth and was continuously amazed at the genuine interest the kids displayed, their focus on what I had to say, and the

variety of sincere questions they had regarding what it is like to fly an airplane!

Tony Marshall of Shades of Blue staffed the Career and Aviation Pathways Booth. Tony made the drive down from Apple Valley on each of the days he attended. His commitment and passion for the education and success of our youth is very evident in everything he says and does while interacting with the kids. But nothing is more evident of this than the respect, focus, attention, and eagerness to learn each of the kids reflected back as they listened to Tony speak! It happened on more than one occasion where kids sat in their chairs transfixed on Tony well past the official end of the assembly and while other kids were filing out of the building – we were truly fortunate and thankful to have Tony join us in this project, and to have his exceptional professional pilot replacements in attendance when Tony could not make the trip!

In closing, what an exciting and rewarding opportunity it was for all of us who participated to share our aviation and life experiences with a substantial group of young and moldable middle school aged children! In regards to aviation, today's kids do not have the same access to an airport and the varied aviation opportunities residing there that many of us had in our youth. This, plus differences in socioeconomic status, changes in how kids today are entertained and mentally stimulated, and the lack of ability to travel far from the home without committed support, have all conspired to keep many kids on the sidelines rather than to explore new and exciting opportunities such as aviation. So we did the next best



thing, we brought aviation to them; and I believe all of us, the students as well as the participating volunteers, benefitted immensely from the experience! This is just the beginning; there will be more to follow! # # #



How Do We Encourage New Aviators?

By Michael Janik - www.airfactsjournal.com

I want you to picture yourself in a situation for a moment. You are a young, inspired student devoting the bulk of your day to lectures and studying. You spend any time you are not studying or sleeping trying to afford to put yourself through college with your part-time job. You face hefty tuition bills, increased living expenses, and very little financial assistance helping you stay on your feet. Sounds like the story of many college undergraduates across the nation, right? But there's a twist to this one: what if you had to do all this for a career that would only be a stepping stone towards what you really want to do?

The story I just told you is the story of me. And I am only one of many.

I'm a private pilot and engineering undergrad. I worked 30 hours a week to become a pilot during high school, and I haven't flown since last summer. My days consist of studying, working, sleeping, and eating. The goal at the end of this is to become an engineer, but not for a lifetime. I want to fly for a living.

We always talk about trying to get more people involved in aviation. We proclaim the future of aviation lies in the hands of the youth, and we must give them opportunities to become pilots. We argue that flight training needs to be cheaper and we need to create more aviation programs so it is easier for them to succeed. We need scholarships and free flight training. But what kind of solution is moving the finish line closer to the start?

The reason why aviation is such a unique community, one filled with storytelling and tales of hardship and intense heart-wrenching desire, is because there is a certain battle that is fought between aviator and aviation. The battle to succeed in the face of failure. We cannot just hand the opportunity to become pilots to our youth; you have to work to earn the golden epaulettes on your shoulders.

There is almost a kind of marathon that must be run from the day a pilot becomes addicted to flight until the day they obtain their certificate. During this marathon, we have the choice of making it easier for them. Either we can pick them up and carry them to the finish line or we can help them finish properly.

We can buy them new running shoes, train them to run better, and teach them how to eat healthier. These are the proper ways to win a race.

If you are already a pilot, you can play your part in this journey. I cannot stress how important it is that every

new aviator have a mentor. I was bitten by the bug when I was a young boy, and since that day I have been inspired by numerous family members and friends at the airport along the way. I would not have the drive to push on—the inspiration to continue—without the memories of hanging out at the airport, watching airplanes, talking to pilots, seeing airshows, or the occasions where I was able to actually go for a flight in a friend's airplane for free. I still have moments where I remember these events with great detail, and they inspire me to push on.

It doesn't matter if you just finished your training yesterday or have been flying since WWII. You don't have to be rich; you don't have to even have access to an airplane. We just need mentors. We need somebody who we can go to when we are stuck feeling like we may never be able to follow our dreams of flight. Talking to somebody who has been through the journey helps encourage us to press on. If we do not have that kind of support, we run the risk of losing even more people from aviation.

Remember, we are a community of aviators, and we cannot fly alone.

As I continue my journey, some days I wake up wishing I could just drop out of college and go back to flight school to become a CFI. I cannot do so just yet. I cannot afford to get a degree and go to flight school at the same time, so I must continuously fight to keep the magnetos alive until I can. Therein lies the battle that many aviators just like me must fight in the shadows—we must lead ourselves to a stable position in the future before we can join our brothers and sisters in the sky.

I follow the advice of my private pilot instructor even when I am on the ground. He had a similar story: going through college and graduating, only to work a job he hated in order to save up enough money to do what he really wanted to do—fly for a living. I was his first student, but he taught me more than any seasoned pilot with decades of experience and tens of thousands of hours could. He taught me that no matter how long you have to wait, you will do whatever it takes to return to the sky.

By no means should aviation stop encouraging new aviators. The experiences I had at the airport are what carved my passion for the sky. Pilots should help new aviators succeed, but we should not deny them the right to a proper race.

(See AVIATORS, Page 8)



Finishing a marathon wins medals; medals you can wear with honor and pride for a lifetime. There is no pride in easily won medals.

For all of us who cannot afford to follow our dreams just yet, we are still in the race. The aviators that have a backstory, those who spend long nights hearing airplanes pass over their heads only wishing they could be up there alongside them, are the aviators who press on even harder. Those who work for it and achieve greatness in flight will not only relish in it for the rest of their life; they will share their story in hangars around the nation.

And it is these stories that encourage the aviators of tomorrow to keep on running.

###

Young Eagles Update

As always, a great big 'Thank You!' to all of our volunteers and pilots for making things run smoothly on Young Eagles day!

Youth Flown in June:

33

Pilots That Flew:

Auck, Allyn
Carrier, Michael
Cheney, Deborah
Conley, Larry
Landolt, Gregg
McKinley, James
Meeker, James
Teets, Allen



Youth Flown in July:

48

Pilots That Flew:

Cheney, Deborah
Conley, Larry
Craig, Irvin
Landolt, Gregg
McKinley, James
Meeker, James
O'Brien III, James
O'Brien Jr., James
Teets, Allen
Van Dam, Larry



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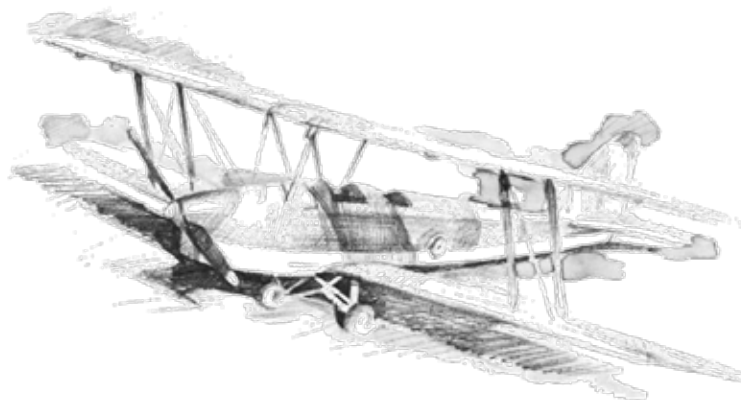
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