

EAA CHAPTER 1128

Two Harbors Helgeson Airport

www.1128.eaachapter.org

Stars are shining through a super clear and very cold sky tonight at the lake. I hope you covered your plants. It looks like the weather will hold for one last BBQ meeting so come out to **Hangar #40** on **Thursday, October 6** at **5:00** with an appetite.

Last Meeting

Temperatures in the upper 80's and clear skies were the order of the day. Jon reported \$4163.96 in chapter coffers. We did another review of our big July fly-in. Seth suggested replacing bottled water in the future with a big cooler. The kind football teams dump over the coach when they win. A win for the environment and our bottom line. It was suggested that there could be one for juice as well. Also maybe an electric cooler for the milk instead of bags of ice. The sign at the end of the road could be placed earlier than it has been. The turnout was good, we made over \$1100 and the Hot Rod display turned out to be a good idea. We discussed a color tour and possible dates. Mike reminded us that Jim and Cathy Nelson's Jimbolaya party was coming up. The Chapter Holiday Party was mentioned and Mike said he would make arrangements with Blackwoods for our now familiar venue. We lamented our low active member count and talked about ways to promote the Chapter. It was noted that Jon's story last year in the North Shore Journal brought some favorable attention. Someone suggested we reach out to the Silver Bay Pilots group. Mike asked for possible speakers for our meetings and Seth said he would check with HQ for input. Great burgers and brats were consumed with DQ treats for dessert but the sweetest treats were the airplane rides after we adjourned. Ryan, Bud, Seth, and I all fired up our trusty rides for a little evening aviation celebration.

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The Nelson's Jimbolaya party was lightly attended due to clouds. Not in the sky but right on the ground. As Mark Marino once said, "I had to file IFR just to drive over the high bridge." Both of our sister chapters were well represented and we had Jim's beautiful airplane to drool over.

ETC.

Seth is getting very close to check-ride time hoping to get in all the instruction he needs before Nancy snowbirds. He completed a solo cross country today, one more chore off of the list.

Dave Smith added another Cessna 180 to his stable and she is tall and strong. He and Carmen painted the floor of their recently insulated hangar but they are not delighted with the result. All three Cessnas fit though and that's the main thing.

Mike's new titanium landing gear is coming together thanks to heroic efforts by Scott Udenberg and Mike Shannon. Our chapter members are so capable and generous, when I asked a handful of them to help hang Rooby's wings every single one of them showed up. In the middle of a weekday. I used temporary hardware to make the job go quicker but when I said I could put in the correct fasteners without assistance they all stayed to help, amazing. The people I have met through aviation all seem to

be bright, friendly, caring individuals and we have a great group here.

When Rooby's wings were secure I took a step back to take in the scene. I had never seen all the parts together before and she took my breath away. I had the brief thought that all the work was done before I snapped back to my senses. This was not the first time I had been in this situation, or the second, or the third and I knew the list of little details yet to address was as long as Rooby's slender body. And tending to this work was literally painful. Her high wings were not quite as high as I thought so every time I moved I banged my head and all the easy access to her insides became a fight between my back and my knees over who was going to take the brunt of ungainly posture. When the frustration mounted all I had to do was step back, look at the life I was creating and imagine our future together. My motivation came back in a surge. The other day I had the singular thrill of finding all of the items on my to-do list had been checked off. I rolled her out on the ramp, climbed in and turned the key. She spun like crazy but refused to start. New to-do list. Now I was banging my head figuratively. Eventually I discovered an error in the engine wiring that I had done a couple of years ago. That corrected, she fired up immediately and I was beside myself with joy. I had lifted her up by the heels and slapped her on the butt and she cried like the newborn that she was. I wasted no precious daylight putting her cowl on, collecting my ropes and taxiing out to the ramp. Secured to the steel ring with my best Boy Scout knots we performed the one hour Rotax break-in procedure without a hitch. All the gauges worked and gave me numbers that I wanted to see but it was a very intense hour. As I loosed her bonds in the dwindling daylight I thought, "Now I'm finally done, Rooby lives!" Then she refused to start, again. New to-do list, again. It was a long, slow haul back to the hangar but Ryan came by and with his help we found the lithium battery had failed.

Now the story starts getting good. With a new battery comes new life. We have been taxi testing and feeling each other out. For four years I have been manipulating metal and fabric and wires with the goal of creating a new partner. I talked to her even though her parts were inert. Now she is finally talking back and she has a lot to say. All of my senses are involved in this communication and all are delighted. She is showing herself to be an agile and powerful dancer with a keen sense of humor. You must be tired of my relentless anthropomorphism but I feel her life vibrating through my whole being. I'm falling in love again, don't tell Miss Chaos. Today we fast taxied on two wheels and basically flew the length of the grass runway without losing touch with the turf. She really wanted to climb to her rightful place in the heavens but I resisted her charms. I have way too much blood, sweat and tears invested to toss it all away on a momentary impulse. We will rehearse our dance until it is second nature and we can anticipate every potential misstep. When pastor Mike pronounces us officially joined we will be ready to consummate the bond. I'll save you a piece of the cake.

Instant gratification risks falling into routine. Results of planning and persistence can satisfy on many levels and that satisfaction can endure. The FAA only allows us to build our own planes because of the educational benefit. I learned something every single day during this journey and loved every minute of it. The beautiful thing is the learning never stops. I'm so hungry to learn more I built my own school.

I hope you have something that inspires this kind of passion in your life. If you don't, try building an airplane. Or four.

.....Happy Landings!.....