

# **EAA CHAPTER 1128**

## **Two Harbors Helgeson Airport**

**[www.1128.eaachapter.org](http://www.1128.eaachapter.org)**

It is lovely at the lake tonight but it seems strange sitting down to write while it's still daylight. Long days mean lots of opportunity to spread our wings and I am loving it. Our next meeting will be on **Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup>**, in **hangar #40** starting at **5:00** to beat the bugs. It will be our first Chapter **BBQ** and Seth will bring just about everything. If you would like to provide a side dish it will be appreciated. Free food means good attendance, spread the word.

### **Last Meeting**

Our June meeting was a delight not only because it was the first in ages but the weather was perfect so we sat in the sun at Seth's hangar. Jon gave the treasurer's report, we have \$3641.48 in chapter coffers. Mike welcomed the members back including Dale Nordwall, recently returned from Florida and apparently selling one of his planes. He also said our other snowbird friend Nancy Smith was back in the northland and ready to exercise her CFI rating. We chatted about setting up some fly-in type events and Dave told us about upcoming fly-ins at New Richmond, Superior and Cornucopia. He also told us about a military museum in Granite Falls that might be a fun, if long fly-out. It was decided our July meeting would be a BBQ. Mike told us about a FAAST (FAA Safety Team) webinar and got sign ups. Ashley reported through Mike that our Chapter Patches were in progress and coming soon. Mike said he had been tirelessly badgering AT&T for better cell coverage at the airport but being a megalithic corporation they have not been very sympathetic. Seth gave a report on the Airport Commission agenda including moving the AWOS sensors, getting aviation radios for the plow truck drivers, getting a snow blower attachment for the tractor and goose abatement. Mike had a couple gifts so he did a "guess the number" and awarded Dale with a What To Do spinning arrow on a board where the arrow always lands on Go Fly and Seth won a Minnesota shaped cutting board. Mike Shannon said he was going to launch his award winning floatplane at dawn and a couple of early risers volunteered to help. (I hope they get good video this year, I want to see how Mike's clever trailer carries his girl to flying speed then just rolls to a straight stop all by itself.) We talked about our projects, Bud was working on his flaps and I told about my great stroke of luck learning that Mike Shannon had two brand new fuel tanks that would represent a huge upgrade in my creation. Dave told us about drag racing at Wayne, Nebraska. (Airplane drags are completely different from auto drags and even more entertaining.) No one was in a hurry to adjourn so we gathered around the cookies and told flying stories.

### **ETC.**

I saw Jim Hayes' Cherokee back in his hangar and I only peeked through the door but she looks great. I'm sure he is happy to have her back. Nancy Smith was hauling the Sun Dog out of her hangar while I was at the gas pumps the other day. She was getting ready for a student. Scott Udenberg has been getting some airtime in his Cessna and feeling good about his progress. Seth has probably been way too busy selling cool treats to do any flying but having Bill Fieldson's old Sky Hawk in his hangar must be a great motivation. I saw a Pilatus PC-12 parked on the ramp with its big cargo door open and I was green with envy. As I did the pre-flight on Miss Chaos I got to watch it depart and I was greener.

One of the greatest things about building your own airplane is the depth of knowledge you accumulate. The FAA recognizes this and allows qualified builders to do all of their own maintenance without big brother looking over their shoulders. That came in handy this week. I went to wipe some dirt from Miss Chaos' gear leg fairing and found it oily and smelling of fuel. That got my attention. Flying immediately took a back seat to wrenching, (fortunately, I enjoy both.) The cowl came off and I found traces of fuel mixture here and there but no great volume and no smoking gun. Without a specific target I decided to update all of the fuel components under the cowl. I hadn't replaced my fuel filter in quite a while and since that requires removing hoses I just removed and replaced all of them. In a certified airplane the parts cost alone would suck up a couple of mortgage payments but in my world that just meant opening a drawer in my workshop. It was a lovely day to play with my tools and by the time I was finished the whole engine compartment looked all new. To test my work I jumped in the cockpit and pumped the squeeze bulb to fill the new lines with fuel. When I hopped back out I was devastated to see raw fuel dripping all over my work but this time there was a smoking gun. The drip was from the overflow relief tube on the carburetor so I knew the carb was too full. I popped the bowl off and was rewarded with two hands full of gas, yup too full. That meant to me that the float valve was not closing properly so I gave it a wiggle and a flush and replaced the bowl. When I pumped it up again I did not get a shower so I cleaned up and put the cowl back on.

Now the best part of maintenance, the test flight! After a thorough pre-flight inspection Miss Chaos sprang to life and settled into a contented purr. The cumulus clouds that had dominated the sky earlier were spreading out leaving plenty of room for thermal generating sunlight. Our departure was more like a rocket launch with 1200 to 1400 feet per minute climb rates. We weren't getting slapped around by all that power, just lifted, it was glorious. I looked down on full summer, so much green everywhere. Houses and roads and even rivers were all hiding in the bottom of the broccoli bin. The one test I had in mind for this test flight was to create a negative G force briefly to see if the float valve would shut. I had completed this exercise on initial test flights years ago so I had a frame of reference. It was easy enough to reverse gravity with a firm push on the stick but it was hard to concentrate with all of the dirt on the floor rising up into my face. I finally pushed long enough to hear the hesitation in the motor so I put a check on the test card and went back to dancing. Through all these years of flinging Miss Chaos about the sky I have always been vigilante to keep some positive G force because I know the motor will starve quickly without it. Apparently I have been successful because I had no idea how much dirt and sand had accumulated on the floor of the cockpit. Time to get out the old vacuum.

We found more lift as we sailed along and arrived back at the airport with altitude to spare so as I turned base for the grass runway I just slammed in opposite pedal and went into a mad slip. I didn't giggle, I cackled! There was no traffic so I kept some power on and just made the slightest touch on the grass before pouring the power full on and racing down the runway right on the deck. Trees were flashing by in my peripheral vision so when the pointer on the airspeed thingy was cranked I yanked, and banked. A P-47 pulling out of a strafing pass, "Take that, freight train!"

I let my heart rate settle on the downwind leg and prepared for a safe, sane, 'normal' pattern. I couldn't do it. Trees along the road on the north edge of the airport are pretty tall and I just love slicing a wing past them in a steep bank on final for the grass runway. This time when the tires brushed the turf I let them stay and we taxied back in full taildragger swagger.

Miss Chaos has been pure joy in my life for a long time now and the fact that I was able to build her to my specifications and am able to maintain her safely is due to the fine work of your EAA. Without the constant advocacy and bridge building of EAA's team our passion could easily be regulated into history. Please continue to support them with your membership and come eat a burger with us on Thursday.....

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

