

# **EAA CHAPTER 1128**

## **Two Harbors Helgeson Airport**

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

It's already below zero tonight after weeks of warm, go figure! Our next meeting will be in the cozy **Community Room** at **THHS** on **Thursday, March 7 at 6:00 pm**. Not 6:30!

### **Last Meeting**

Seth had an overhead view of Sky Harbor and Bong airports on the screen when I walked in. They were discussing the issue of two airports in the same vicinity with the same runway numbers on the same CTAF frequency. Mike announced Bud as our new treasurer and gave a quick review of our Holiday party, 34 guests and a thank you to Jason Smith for delivering the prizes. (Jason was in attendance.) Mike also said we need more people if we are to consider another pancake breakfast in the future. We discussed more BBQs at hangar #40, maybe lunch instead of dinner, maybe Saturdays instead of Thursdays. Someone produced a pilot certificate and showed us that there are words forming the flying wires on the Wright Flyer. Seth said he was working on a master mailing list for the newsletter and other chapter communications. He also suggested a "poker run" and Mike said we can't use the gambling term but could still do the event. Dave said, "Pilots like to gamble, we do it every time the prop starts spinning." Seth also noted we could possibly get a speaker for a meeting from EAA and do it in a ZOOM format. A fly-out to Fagen's Fighters in Granite Falls was mentioned but not scheduled. Brtt Archer, principal of Minnehaha grade school has set up a tour of Monaco Air at DLH for his 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Seth showed a quick clip of Rooby climbing out at our airport. Dave and Garrett stopped in at the Strategic Air Command museum outside of Omaha and took dozens of fine photos. Bud was able to identify every airplane they showed. It looked like a very cool tour.

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Check [www.272.eaachapter.org](http://www.272.eaachapter.org) for Duluth/Superior and [www.1221.eaachapter.org](http://www.1221.eaachapter.org) for Cloquet happenings. Spring is coming and events will begin soon.

### **ETC.**

Our efficient president, Mike Busch has applied for and received insurance coverage for our meetings from March through October at both of our locations. He has also recently fired up the F1 Rocket to confirm proper oil pressure. Mike Shannon has been chasing erratic temperature readings in his Rans S-7 Courier. I fabricated a baffle to block airflow through Rooby's coolant radiator and had the rare opportunity to test it's effectiveness in February. Without digging out all my old logbooks I'm pretty sure I have never logged flight time in February before. This year we took advantage of Climate Change on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and the month isn't over yet.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> was a ride to remember. I was making adjustments to my radiator baffle and hadn't planned to fly due to gusty crosswinds. It seemed a shame to waste such a warm day so I was calling AWOS every 20 minutes or so. As the afternoon went on the wind report dropped from 9 gusting to 18 to 7 gusting to 16. I took that as a trend and rolled her out in the sun. My dad used to call me a

“cockeyed optimist” and that characteristic has gotten me into trouble before. Rooby fired right up with the proper priming and I took that as a good sign too. See the trend? I really wanted to dance with my girl and paid more attention to my optimism than to the facts. When we blasted off of 24 Rooby yawed hard right and we climbed out in an excessive crab. At pattern altitude the wind was more like 20 gusting to 30 so we gingerly bounced around the neighborhood. The sun was bright on the hard ground so some turbulence came from thermal lift as well. After about three tenths on the Hobbes I decided life would be more comfortable on the ground and guided my girl back to the airport. The wind sock was flipping around pretty good but it seemed to favor the bare sod of runway 33 and I always prefer the forgiving nature of grass in crosswinds so I set up a long final over the trees. Just trying to get lined up with the runway was challenging so I left the flaps up and concentrated on my pedal work. There is a line of trees on both sides of the strip but those on the west side seem closer and the crosswind swirled over them like river rapids over large rocks. As we descended we started getting slapped around from every direction at once. I felt like a basketball in a Harlem Globetrotters game, up, down, back and forth, over the shoulder and between the legs. I was stirring a five gallon bucket of paint with the stick and pedaling like a bicycle thief just trying to stay over the runway. At one point we went sideways so fast we almost touched the trees on the east side. That's when I hit the throttle for a go around. I didn't really want to go flying anymore but it was my only option. The paint stirring and crazy pedaling didn't ease up much in the pattern and a glance at the windsock confirmed my sense that the winds were getting worse, so much for optimism. The second time coming down final I kept some power in assuming more speed would mean more control and I crossed the threshold with a determined set to my jaw. I basically flew her right down to the ground and at a rare moment when her nose was pointing the same direction we were traveling I pushed the stick forward and planted her main wheels firmly on the turf. I was still pedaling like mad to keep her aiming down the runway but I pulled the power and slowed down. When her speed decayed enough that the tail wheel dropped she lifted her upwind wheel a little and shook it like a cat getting out of a bath tub but the drama was subsiding and I broke into a devilish cackle. They say you need to keep flying a taildragger until she is tied down and this was one of those days. Fortunately the wind between the banks of hangars was muted enough that I felt safe getting out but I wasted no time tucking her away.

When Bill Amorde signed my certificate at the end of my Private Pilot check ride 33 years ago he said, “This is your license to learn.” and I haven't stopped learning since. Some lessons are a little more dramatic than others. This time I learned that optimism isn't always a positive trait.

I hope your lessons come a little easier and.....

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