

The Flypaper

Promoting Sport Aviation in Central Illinois for More Than 58 Years

Heaven in Havana (Illinois, That Is)

~ Story by Jim Cunningham

As my Piper Arrow rumbled gently on the landing rollout at Havana Regional Airport, I wondered how many grass field airdromes have buildings that formerly housed equipment that blasted up to four million watts of radio energy into the atmosphere for radio astronomy experiments. Not many, I'd guess.

In 1956, the National Bureau of Standards established radio transmitting station WWI near Havana, Illinois, a small town on the Illinois River in the central part of the state. The site had facilities that provided "experimental and observatory-type transmissions for radio-wave propagation studies and research and development on radio systems." Ironically the station's high broadcasting power resulted in the creation of an FAA restricted area one mile around the site.

Once the station's work was concluded in the 1960s, the facility was transferred to the Havana Regional Port District with the stipulation that it was to be developed into an airport, although this did not happen until almost 20 years later.

The field was sparsely used and mostly unmaintained. About a dozen aircraft were based there, along with a small FBO, but weather damage and

was restored, and Tom put his skills and experience of building high-end homes to work on renovating the old government buildings.



Jim's Arrow and camp site at Havana Regional Airport (9I0)

neglect took their toll. By the late 1990s the airport was mostly an airport in name only.

Around 2000, two pilots in the area were looking for a location to fly their ultralights and discovered the airport. In classic grassroots general aviation fashion, they used their own funds, time, and hard work to turn the airport around. No government support was used — it was a labor of love by Harvey Tapscott and Tom Galassi, EAA 624794. The 2,200-foot grass runway

It worked. The airport was not only reborn — it grew. Brand new T hangars were built in 2006, runway lighting was installed for the grass runway in 2012, and the Illinois Division of Aeronautics named Havana the Class B Airport of the Year in 2007. Not bad for a disused strip rescued by two determined men.

~See Havana Page 2

You Have Information February!

February Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 17 at 6:00 PM

Member's soups will be the main course. Please bring a dish to pass.

Join us for some hangar flying and our speaker at 7:00 TBA

Winter has officially arrived- bring your favorite soup recipe or a dish to share!



~Havanna from Page 1

EAA Chapter 1420 has called Havana home since 2006 and is an active part of the airport with Young Eagles, Eagle Flights, technical counselors, and more. Chapter fly-in events are well attended. In spring, after the snow disappears, the airport sponsors a fly-in for bird watching. Working with the Recreational Aviation Foundation, pilots and passengers are shuttled to the nearby Emiquon Preserve and Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge along the "superhighway for migrating birds." Havana typically hosts a couple of dozen aircraft that join their feathered counterparts during the event.

Perhaps Havana's more uncommon gatherings, however, are its annual stargazing nights, where University of Illinois Astronomy Club members bring their telescopes to the airport. Dozens of students from the university come with them, and typically 300 people from town join them to enjoy the night sky removed from urban light pollution. They are joined by 30-40 airplanes and their pilots and passengers. Many participants camp on the airport and enjoy dinner and then breakfast the next morning. Airplane rides are offered to any student who wants one.

The night sky was still hours away as I taxied to the parking ramp. Minutes after shutting down, I was putting up my tent a few feet behind my airplane. A short while later I sat relaxing in my chair with a Diet enjoying the wide-open space and sky of the airport. Before long, Bob drove up (you can tell it's Bob by his license plate — "BOBZCAR"). Bob is Bob Martin, EAA 839038, the airport manager who makes a habit of stopping by to greet anyone who flies in and making them feel welcome. Bob had good news. Due to demand, the airport was going to build more hangars — their third set in 15 years. Like the others, they will be insulated and have motorized doors. Plans are also in the works to add a 4,000-foot paved runway (don't worry — they are keeping the current grass strip too). When was the



last time you heard of an airport doing either of those things, let alone both?

One need not bring much in the way of camping gear to enjoy Havana. Thanks to the efforts and funding of its caretakers, the buildings boast conveniences found at few other airports. A lounge and a meeting room/dining area with full furnishings are available, but creature comforts don't



Keith Doornbos's Cub, Ben and Tanya's Archer, Jim's Arrow, and Jack Holand's Citabria

stop there. A full kitchen stocked with kitchenware is ready for use along with a refrigerator full of drinks and snacks that are offered for modest donations. First-time visitors usually marvel at the building's décor. The elegant tile floor looks like it belongs in luxury hotel lobby instead of a refurbished half-century old government building. That's Tom's doing — leftover construction materials from custom houses he builds found their way here and were installed with his superb craftsmanship.

Not in the mood for cooking your own dinner? Borrow the airport's courtesy van for a ride into town to enjoy a great meal that you wouldn't expect to find in a town of 3,200. Like most airport courtesy vehicles, this one has "personality." Put some gas in it on the way back to help out the airport.

Before you turn in, take advantage of the two bathrooms to clean up and even take a refreshing shower. You're not going to bed anytime soon, however — the real fun of camping with your airplane here starts when the sun begins to hang low in the sky. Havana Regional Airport, like the rest of central

Illinois, defines the word "flat" and is wide open from horizon to horizon. The sunlight turns gold, and silence is broken by the occasional soft hum of a light airplane — fellow pilots out enjoying the smooth evening air. Sometimes they'll land for fuel (Havana's prices are some of the best in the area) and you can walk over to the fuel pump and investigate a new airplane and make new friends.

As the sun nears the horizon, the fading light turns amber and orange. It gleams and glints off the wings and windows of the parked airplanes that now cast shadows longer than the machines themselves. Get your camera out — this kind of lighting makes for magazine-quality photos of your aircraft, even with

a phone camera and no photography skill.

After the sun fully sets, the runway lights in the grass come alive, the opening act for what happens next. Most of us live in urban settings of some sort, environments where there are at

least enough lights to blot out much of the heavens. That's not the case at Havana Regional Airport, where the night sky is speckled with stars that seem to number in the thousands. Look to the skyline when the moon appears — the infinite horizon allows you to see it as never before, with the distortion of the atmosphere acting like a magnifying glass,

~ see Havana Page 6

understatement. This year, both chapter 129 and chapter 29 will work more closely together at YE events to offer more flights and to continue to encourage youth in aviation-related fields. To get the year started, our first two events will be held at CMI. All members from either chapter are welcome to attend. This familiar location close to home will help me get my feet wet and back in the groove of hosting events. Please put March 19th and April 9th on your calendar if you are willing to help out either on the ground or in the air. The month of May will bring us to Bloomington on the 14th. Fingers crossed we have beautiful weather to jump start the season. These events will run from 9am-11am but please plan to arrive early for pilot briefing and a refresher on paperwork (which is always changing as EAA is trying to go paperless-minus the log



Hello fellow
chapter
members.
THANK YOU
for a
successful
2021 Young
Eagles
season. To
say I look
forward to the
2022 season
is an

books and certificates). Monthly young eagle event dates have been set but locations are yet to be determined. For example, we would like to return to Mattoon for one event. This is a wonderful location for several reasons. Pre-covid we hosted an event at Mattoon and they did a wonderful job accommodating us. The view for the public was perfect with a relaxed, yet safely roped off ramp. The FBO had a large hangar open for us to work out of with restrooms available. Youth outside of our local area had access to rides without having to travel far. We found many first-time flyers registered and attended this event and we would like to open it up to the youth in that area again this year. Another reason Mattoon is a great location, we were able to end the day together grabbing lunch at the airport café.

We need you on Saturday, August 6th in Rantoul. The Boy Scout Merit badge is always a busy day and we need as many pilots and ground crew as possible. If you volunteered last year, you know exactly what I am talking about.

BUSY BUSY BUSY and with limited work stations for ground crew. I think we had one small table and a little bit of shade from a pop-up tent – remind me to set up in front of that large hangar to get some shade off the building for 2022. If I remember correctly, we start flying at 9am and go until noon but I will get those details to you closer to the date. If you are flying over to Rantoul, please bring a friend that is willing to volunteer on the ground. Whether you are a pilot, ground volunteer, or cheer us on from home, I truly appreciate all that you do to promote youth in aviation. I look forward to working with all the wonderful volunteers.

And since I am a teacher, here is your homework: please visit YEday.org to either register as a volunteer (ground or pilot) or if you have been previously registered please log in to check your status and to be ready to log in for our first event next month.

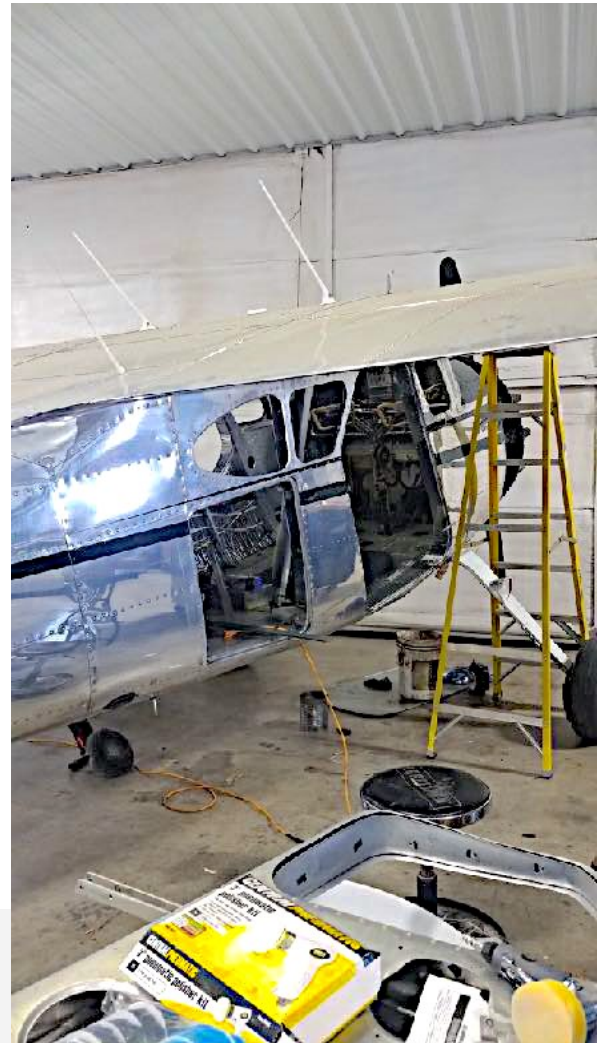
Please contact me if you have questions. 217-778-3900 or rhenderson797@gmail.com

- Log in or create and account (all adult volunteers)
- Click on your profile in the upper right-hand corner



- Check that EAA Dues are paid and current (all pilots, optional for ground crew)
- Youth protection training is complete and current (all volunteer pilots and at least 2 ground volunteers working the event must have completed training)
- Background check is completed following youth protection training – verify you are current

Builders Update



Bill Thacker reported: 'Snowed in at 11LL! Finishing autopilot install on my son Jacob's Cessna 172 and installing an interior and autopilot in a Cessna 195. Stop by anytime though probably best to call for a runway condition report first!'

Tidbits and Winter Reading

Be sure to check out these great podcasts!
Interviews with A10, U2 bush pilots and
astronaut homebuilders.

THE GREEN DOT

A podcast for those who fly for the love of it or are simply fascinated by the world of flight. The Green Dot features EAA news, general

aviation topics, history, personal experiences from the hosts and a variety of guests, and anything fun, interesting, or cool in and around the world of flight. <https://www.eaa.org/eaanews-and-publications/eaanews-and-aviation-news/eaan-the-green-dot-podcast>



Chapter Video Magazine

February 2022



In February's Chapter Video Magazine, Charlie Becker discusses:

- [EAA Virtual Ultralight Days](#) online event happening February 22-24
- Upcoming Chapter Leadership Academies and Boot Camps you can [register for](#)
- Starting your planning early to participate in [Learn to Fly Day](#) on May 21
- Submitting your rally to [YEDay.org](#) for International Young Eagles Day on June 11

Find EAA's Chapter Videos at:

<http://eaa.brightcovegallery.com/chapters/detail/videos>



February Webinars

Cylinder Rescue

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, AT 7 P.M. CST

Presenter: Mike Busch | *Qualifies for FAA WINGS and AMT credit.*

[Register >](#)

Mustang: The History of EAA's P-51s

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, AT 7 P.M. CST

Presenters: Chris Henry and Ben Page | *Museum Webinar Series*

[Register >](#)

ATC and You: Getting the Most Out of Flying in Controlled Airspace

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, AT 7 P.M. CST

Presenters: Bob Obma and Brad Wilco | *Qualifies for FAA WINGS credit.*

[Register >](#)

Become a Better Chapter Leader – Secretary/Treasurer 2022

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, AT 7 P.M. CST

Presenters: John Egan and Charlie Becker

[Register >](#)

EAA Virtual Ultralight Days

FEBRUARY 22-24 | 1 - 8:15 P.M. DAILY

Ultralight industry leaders will bring their expertise to enthusiasts everywhere through free and interactive webinars during this new three-day online event. Topics covered include introductions to gyroplanes and powered parachutes and paragliders, caring for your engine, a variety of maintenance tips, and more.

To register, go to:

<https://www.eaa.org/eaanews-and-publications/eaan-webinars>

Wanted

Your stories, events, travel adventures, builder updates for our next issue of **The Flypaper**.

Email them to:

cmbates50@gmail.com

~Havana from Page 2

bending its features and making the motion of its rise visible to the naked eye. Soon it is up high enough to bathe everything on the field in ghostly pale light.

Now and again a bright star appears on the horizon and moves up and over with artificial speed, for it is an artificial creation — a satellite. What is its mission? Communications? GPS? Or is it the ultimate flying machine — the International Space Station? Other lights appear and move more slowly, flashing in steady, regular pulses. If you listen carefully, you can hear a sigh as they pass over — airliners that you'd never normally hear flying so high. Meteors occasionally flash out of nowhere and disappear in the blink of an eye.

It's hard to crawl into your tent and bid this amazing environment farewell, for it will be gone when you awaken. But if you're flying in the morning, a decent night's sleep is required, so into your sleeping bag you must go. The cool country air is good for sleeping, although the night is occasionally disturbed by the howl of coyotes that sometimes sound as if they right outside your tent (and sometimes that's because they are). If it's too hot or too cold, feel free to bring your sleeping bag

to the terminal building and sleep in heated/air-conditioned comfort.

If you're planning on sleeping in, forget it. Every farm around the airport has at least one rooster. They crow within an hour or so of sunrise, plus or minus. If they get you up too early, don't stay in your tent — head out for a sunrise that's a reverse of the sunset the evening



before, and is just as spectacular. Make use of the kitchen to prepare your morning caffeinated beverage of choice and some breakfast to go with it. All too soon it's time to pack up your camp and preflight for departure. If it's early, you'll have to clear the dew off the windshield and windows.

As usual, the evening and morning went by far too quickly, and all too soon my friend and I were packed up and running through engine start checklists. Engines turned over, we waved, then headed to the runway. Climbing out after a soft-field takeoff, I looked back. The airport didn't look like much, just a green field in a patchwork of many. If it weren't for "HAVANA" painted in large letters on the main building, you might never notice this special little corner of the aviation universe. One need not fly a thousand miles across the country for an aviation adventure like the ones you see in the aviation magazine spreads — thanks to the grassroots efforts of people in aviation like those at Havana, an aviation adventure may be in your own backyard.

Photography by Jim Cunningham or courtesy of Havana Regional Airport

Join us at the EAA Chapter 129 hangar for our Gathering of Eagles breakfasts Saturday mornings 7:00 am to 9:00 am for some great food and some hangar flying at its best.



2022 Annual Dues

Yep, it's that time of year again. Our chapter relies on our dues to pay for our EAA corporate insurance and fees. Please get your annual \$30 fee to me at your convenience.

Chapter 129 Officers

Charlie Bates-President, Treas
Jason Jording-VP
Josh Andracki-Sec'y, Social Media
Ben Schneider-Board Member
Don O'Neill-Board Member
David Pfister-Board Member
Rachel Henderson-Young Eagles Coord
George Wilts-Tech. Counselor
Mike Todd-Web Editor
Wayne Aldrich - STEM Coordinator

EAA CHAPTER 129
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL, ILLINOIS

