

# Chapter 194 News

## March 2025

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If you weren't at the January chapter meeting, you missed a really good presentation by the guys at Warbirds of Glory Museum. They are restoring the "Sandbar Mitchell" B-25, as well as educating young kids about aviation and aircraft restoration.



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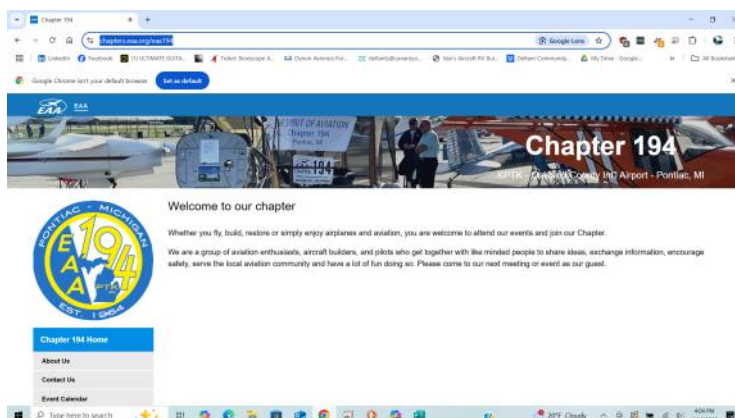


## Social Media and Chapter Website updated

ED—In a sudden act of insanity, I have volunteered to handle the chapter social media and website activity. Both categories had gone a bit stale and inactive, which I will attempt to change. Our website had not really been utilized since the rekindling of chapter 194. We now at least have some content, and that will continue to increase going forward.

I've been really impressed with EAA's support materials for web editors, there are numerous tutorial videos on how to manipulate, customize, and otherwise handle info going in the site. It took a bit of studying as working with the main app to modify the website, isn't the easiest to figure out without some hand-holding.

Go to <https://chapters.eaa.org/ea194>



There's a couple of interesting options that we should consider using, and I'll try to detail those as follows:

- 1) Members Aircraft—a lot of chapters are highlighting members planes on a photo page, and I think that's a great idea. Please send one or two shots of your airplane, or project, and we can set up a similar page. Send to [hmanvel@gmail.com](mailto:hmanvel@gmail.com). It would be good to know what everyone is flying/building/restoring!
- 2) EAA Build Log—Are you aware that EAA has a very capable online build log for aircraft projects? A sample of one of our members log follows. There are a lot of local folks utilizing this service, and after having logged my build for 15 years by handwritten notes, I'm looking forward to using in if and when I get to my next project.

Our website has the ability to automatically bring in content from the build log, if it is a chapter member's project. I know of two members so far, maybe more of you could get into the log, I'd like to add that feature to our site in the future. go to [eaabuilderslog.org](http://eaabuilderslog.org)


Please send pictures of your planes/projects to [hmanvel@gmail.com](mailto:hmanvel@gmail.com), we will include them in a new section of the website!

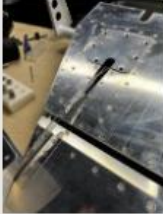
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Screenshots from the EAA buildlog site, showing two chapter members' projects/planning. The site is free for EAA members. Quite a deal.


**Vans - RV-14A**


 Oakland Troy Airport (8 m.)




**Builder: Casey Ramotowski**  
**Last Updated: Feb 8, 2025**


**Kolb - Firestar**

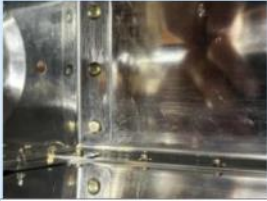
 WATERFORD, MI (21 miles)





**Builder: Martin Filiatrault**  
**Last Updated: Dec 8, 2024**


Aug 03, 2024   VS2 Bucked internal rivets - (1.5 hours)      Category: Empennage


  
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IMG\_3657.jpeg

  
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Here's a page from Casey Ramotowski's build log. The site will provide all the build stats you might need, and complete documentation capability. Really cool!

## Jim Allen Memorial Brick

The chapter is making arrangements for a brick in the memorial wall at Oshkosh, for Jim Allen. The cost is \$550, we're hoping for donations from chapter members to support this. As of this writing we're not quite half way there. Please consider donating to this great cause. The deadline for the chapter to kick this off is **May 15th**. Come to the Wednesday meeting with cash!

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**Susan Kuntzman – YE Coordinator**

## Young Eagles 2025 Flight Plan

Chapter 194 embraces its flagship events with enthusiasm and commitment to the young people that show a genuine interest in aeronautics. Young Eagle rallies give youth an experience that is not possible anywhere else. There is nothing like experiencing flying in the right seat, at the controls, guided by a seasoned pilot that makes it all look easy. The volunteers once again mentor the next generation. A lifelong friend and pilot left me with a memory I will never forget. He said, children make up 10% of the population but are 100% of our future.

The Young Eagles Team is learning the updated event site, defining the parameters to sponsor a Ray Scholar, and continuous improvement for Young Eagles to take the next step in their quest to embark on a career in aviation. Our Rally schedule is as follows: May 3<sup>rd</sup>, backup date will always be the next week. June 14, and September 13. Pilots will sign up prior to the URL being released. The number of YE flights is totally dependent on pilot / plane availability. 3 possibly 4 is a realistic number of flights, that each pilot will fly. The goal is for everyone to have a great time. I often think that EAA should consider their tag line to be the Spirit of Volunteering. Let's never miss a chance to recognize and admire the generosity that our volunteers put forth to make an event a memorable experience for our participants. Non-flying volunteers are critical to our success and safety, so if you would like to volunteer at this season's event, please take the Youth Protection training and background check. This is not mandatory for ground volunteers, but I feel it is a good credential to have when interacting with youths. We will adhere to the (2) deep protocol when escorting participants on the ramp, and into the aircraft. The commitment for ground volunteers is about 4 hours.

The Chapter is also working on event volunteer identification shirts, so that parents can easily identify Chapter members for information and guidance.

I will be the main contact for YE event information. Please talk it up with your friends, boy / girl scout troops, church youth groups, colleagues and neighbors with children. The sky is the limit, let's enjoy the ride.



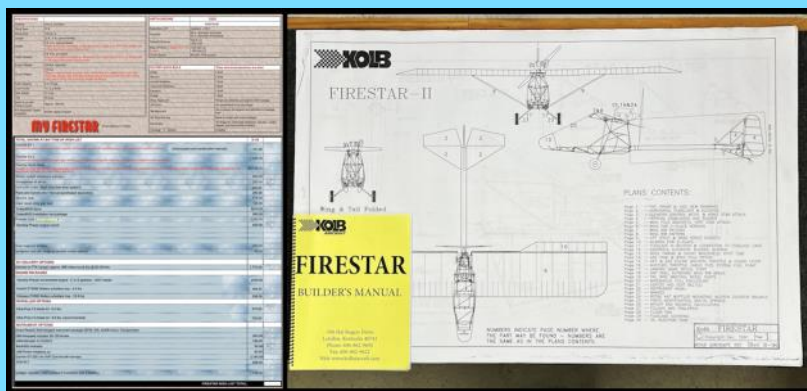
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## Part 2 of Firestar

Upon my return I continued my planning. I captured screenshots of the Kolb website wish-lists and created my own custom build sheet. Kolb does not offer blueprints or build manuals in digital form; hard copies are usually supplied with the first kit ordered. I requested to buy them separately and they agreed to back the cost out of the first kit when I ordered it. After I received the blueprints and manual, I had the blueprints scanned and digitally archived for my own use. I contacted Kolb and sent them a thumb drive with the digitized blueprints and they granted me single-use copyright permission with the agreement that I would never sell them myself. If you want blueprints or the builder's manual in any form, you must contact Kolb directly.

I also played with digitizing their logo for future use. Their website doesn't support any forms of e-commerce and they don't seem to sell any brand merchandise aside from the kits and plans. I made a pitch to provide free consultation for development of brand merch to sell; hats, T-shirts, stickers, etc. I also shared the link to my Kolb-related videos and asked for their opinions. When I talked to Charles May at the factory he expressed interest in generating some online promotional content. Initially I got no response, but a recent phone call to Charles revealed that he had received the blueprints but hadn't reviewed them yet. He was pleased with the YouTube video and we discussed doing a proper factory tour video in the future that would be a much more effective promotional tool for the company. He was also enthusiastic about the possibilities of selling merch and encouraged me to create samples for them to review. I'm definitely going to follow up on this; it could lead to something big.

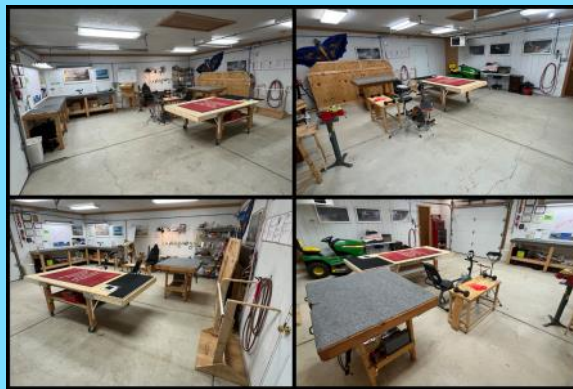


Further research into various aspects of the build led me to visit Grand Rapids Technologies, located in Podunk, Slovakia. That's a lie. They're actually located in Wyoming, MI. That's the truth. Wyoming is within the greater Grand Rapids area. GRT is an avionics company that is

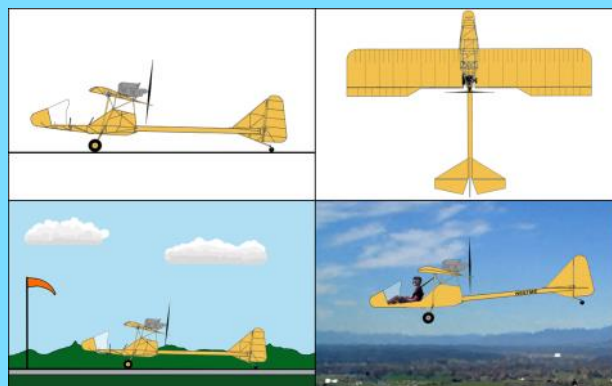
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producing their own EFIS systems as well as working with other manufacturers to sell integrated avionics suites. Although not as big as Garmin, their reputation is growing and they put out good products at competitive prices. I visited their facility and met with their sales manager, Jon Francois. We discussed what I had in mind for my Firestar and he generated a quote on the spot. Avionics are never cheap, especially if you want to be able to fly in any airspace. The package we designed gave me almost the same capabilities I had in the RV-8 at about 1/3 of what it cost me to have Aerotronics build the RV-8 panel. We'll have to see what the actual cost will be when I'm ready to buy and install it, but I really want to have the capability it will provide.



I won't be able to make any firm decisions on any of this until I know what the verdict will be on regaining my 3rd Class Medical Certificate next February. But there are still a lot of things I can do to prepare for whatever the future holds. I retrieved all my tools, the C-frame table and the engine table from the hangar and brought them back to the shop. I lengthened the engine table to create a proper build table that would also store the blueprints flat on the table underneath. The shop was cleared of all storage items (except the lawn tractor) and prepared for use as a proper shop again.



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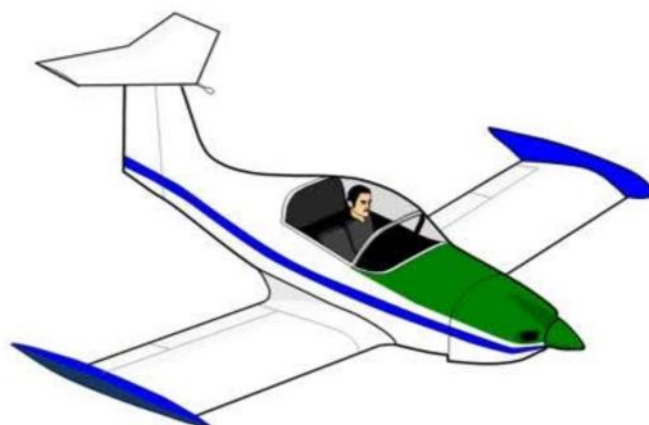
Ed.— My first Homebuilt obsession began around early 1980, and it was with a Polliwagen. Promotional literature promised a high altitude cruise of 230 mph using a turbocharged Volkswagen engine. It was sleek and sexy, what I didn't know at the time was that it had not yet flown! By some stroke of luck I moved away from that dream and built the Defiant. I saw this article by Ron Wanttaja (prolific aviation writer and retired Aerospace Engineer) recently and he gave me permission to publish it.

## THE POLLIWAGEN—BY RON WANTTAJA

The animal kingdom is a rich source of aircraft names, from the Sopwith Camel, to the Curtiss Hawk, to the Vickers Vildebeest, right up to the F-16 Falcon.

Not a lot of frogs on the list, though.

The Polliwagen (named for its pollywog-like shape and its use of a Volkswagen engine) scratched a lot of homebuilder's itches in the '70s and '80s. Composites were in; Rutan Variezes and Long-EZs were being produced in shops all across the world, and the Glasair was in an embryo state southeast of Seattle.



But many of these new airplanes required traditional powerplants. People wanted to use Volkswagen engines, but also desired higher performance.

Joseph Alvarez's Polliwagen promised it, with a design cruise speed of 170 MPH. After several years of developmental work, it was officially introduced at Oshkosh 1980. By the end of that year, over 500 sets of plans had been sold. In the years to come, about 45 Polliwagens were added to the US registry.

But as of January 2021, only two of those 45 Polliwagens are still on the US registry.

So what happened?

Most pilots looking at the design for the first time have one comment: "That seems awfully short-coupled." The short length of fuselage aft of the wing can produce some issues with pitch control. This seemed to be an issue with the Polliwagen.

In May of 1995, Mark Hall wrote in the newsgroup rec.aviation.homebuilt: "I got a chance to fly in the prototype Polliwagen at Tullahoma in 1980. I have flown in a number of homebuilt aircraft, but this is the only one that I refused to allow any other member of my family fly in... The demo pilot was supposedly an airline pilot with tens of thousands hours experience, yet he seemed to have his hands full with this little monster."