
EAA Chapter 32 News

The official publication of Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 32 - St. Louis, MO (Jim Bower, Editor)

February, 2022



“It’s my turn to drive now!”

WE HOPE TO SEE ALL OF YOU AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING! 10:00 AM **FEBRUARY 19TH AT THE ARC. MASKS ARE NOT REQUIRED IF YOU’VE BEEN VACCINATED, BUT WE’RE STILL PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING.**

Newsletter Contributions and Deadlines

Anyone wishing to submit articles, advertisements, rants, etc. to the newsletter should send them to your friendly editor on or before the Saturday ahead of the scheduled meeting. Send contributions to newsletter@eaa32.org.

President's Corner

by Bill Doherty



Welcome to mid-February! We're in the second half of winter now and although we'll still have some cold days and nights, maybe still some snow, spring is on the near horizon. Soon the trees will start showing buds ready to open with new leaves and blooms! And soon the daffodils will push their way out of the soil at my mom's former house.

This spring I expect we'll have a new private pilot in our midst as well. Vassili Georges, our Chapter 32 Ray Foundation Scholar has soloed! I've seen some nice photos taken by Carmelo Turdo of his flight and tail trimming! Congratulations, Vassili!!! That joyful moment you first take flight on your own will stay in your memory forever!

But no need to wait for spring! The online Homebuilders Week was a great success for EAA HQ in January with many tuning in from the comfort of home. So, this month the ultralight crowd gets to show off what they have with Virtual Ultralight Days beginning Tuesday, February 22nd through 24th. There's always an impressive amount of innovation in the ultralight field. Here's a link with more information if you're interested.

<https://www.eaa.org/eaaviation-interests/ultralights/virtual-ultralight-days>

Spring is once again full of activity for Chapter 32. We've been asked to participate with a food tent in a Classic Car Rally at KSET on Saturday, April 23. The organizers of the event have included a fly-in that day as well. There will also be a radio station doing a remote broadcast and various other attractions for family members. There are still a few details to work out but I'm looking forward to the event. Just like airplane aficionados, car lovers put immense amounts of labor and love to restore and/or customize their showpiece vehicles and they're pretty amazing to see.

As we announced in January, our long time Young Eagle/Eagle Flight Coordinator Rick May has decided to retire from this position, so we'll need to assist and support Chris Ward as he is currently our only official Young Eagle Coordinator. We had several people volunteer to assist however we can always benefit from more. If you're interested in becoming a Young Eagle Coordinator please contact me, Chris, or one of the other Chapter 32 officers. We expect to resume our Chapter Young Eagle events in April as we usually do, weather permitting of course.

In line with that if you will be volunteering in any capacity at Young Eagle events, please make sure you are current with the EAA Youth Protection Program. As a chapter we ask everyone working at these events to do this regardless of whether they are in direct contact with our young guests. I feel this is a visible demonstration of our concern for and commitment to their safety. The Youth Protection Program is done online via [EAA.org](https://www.eaa.org/youth-protection-program) and only takes a few minutes to accomplish. We also ask everyone to register as a volunteer or pilot on the Young Eagle Day website. EAA is going more and more to these turnkey online management apps to make things easier for the chapters to know who will be there and their status in the system. This will also make things easier for us to train in Chapter 32 to handle our Young Eagle mission going forward.

International Learn To Fly Day is May 21st. EAA HQ is hoping each chapter will host a Flying Start event complete with Eagle Flights for those attending. I think this is an excellent idea that fits with our intent to have such an event each spring and fall. This is our usual meeting day, but I think as we transition to having Chapter Gatherings this also works well in that pursuit.

I'd like to reach out and have one of these events at our home airport of KSET as we did this past fall, but I'd also like to have one at another airport like Spirit of St. Louis (KSUS) to build our chapter presence there as well. The May event is a good opportunity for this and to build relationships with additional flight schools. EAA's mission is to encourage participation in aviation. I firmly believe in the adage of a rising tide lifts all boats. The more people we educate and bring into aviation, the more activity is generated for all involved at all locations.

June is going to be big. On the weekend of June 11 and 12 we'll have a presence at the St. Louis Airshow and STEM Expo at Spirit of St. Louis Airport. This show will feature the US Navy Blue Angels as well as a growing assortment of historic aircraft. We'll need volunteers to staff our display. We also need to build our presentations to include recruiting for EAA and Chapter 32, information about AeroEducate, Young Eagles, Flying Start, and Aviation Explorer Post 9032. We have much to offer and talk about to visitors!

International Young Eagles Day I think is also June 11th. A rally at the same time as the airshow may be a bit of a stretch for us but we can discuss our options at our meeting/gathering this Saturday.

Remember last year when we jumped in to assist with the tour of EAA's B-25 "Berlin Express"? They were traveling along with "Doc" but had little organized support for the tour. Well, I received an email and a call from EAA's new Tour Coordinator asking if Chapter 32 would be interested in hosting a tour stop again this year for "Berlin Express." Of course, I said YES! The dates they were looking at were in late June. I advised them of the Airshow/STEM Expo, but that weekend is a crew training weekend for the B-25. So, this is currently a heads up to Chapter 32 members that a stop is in the works, maybe in June. Our assistance last year definitely got their attention that Chapter 32 can be counted on to help. More to come on this as plans develop.

Well, that gets us through June and into summer. More things will be added to the calendar like Movie Nights at the ARC on the last Saturday of the month. I do have a couple favors to ask of you, our chapter family members. First, I'd like to encourage everyone to consider joining a committee within the chapter. This is your chapter. The more involved each member is, the more ideas start flowing and the more fun and information we all start sharing.

In addition to committees, seek out others in the chapter with similar interests to yourself and interact with them. Invite anyone you think might be interested in aviation. We welcome everyone. We have chapter members interested or deeply involved in many aspects of aviation whether it be building from a kit or plans, restoring Antiques/Classics, Warbirds, flying skills, aviation photography, or just simply being around and talking about airplanes.

My second request has to do with our transition from our traditional meeting format to one of Chapter Gatherings as is encouraged by HQ. We'll eventually separate the business meeting to the Chapter Board. All members will always be welcome to attend these. We will keep everything transparent as always and still have the March financial report to our members, but the intent is to get the dry business part of things out of the way of enjoying why we're all in EAA and in Chapter 32. I admit I'm still scratching my head about how exactly to do this, make it smooth, and compliant to our Bylaws and what HQ recommends but I'm sure together we'll eventually figure it out and it'll be really cool.

So, as we do this, we of course need suggestions and input from you about what things you want to have in our Chapter Gatherings. This is a great opportunity for us to learn together about things we love. What presentations would you like to see? Who do you know with interesting stories to tell? Did you make a long, unusual cross-country trip? Or did you or someone you know work as a Bush Pilot somewhere like Alaska? The various interest groups in our chapter would be welcome to do some presentations as well! These are just some ideas off the top of my head of presentations I've seen in years past. Feel free to brainstorm your ideas!

That's your homework assignment of sorts. What do you want our Chapter Gatherings to be? Let's make them entertaining and FUN!!!

That's all I have, here's the link to the February Chapter Video with Charlie Becker if you haven't seen it yet. This came out on January 31st.

<https://www.eaa.org/videos/chapters?playlistVideoId=6294657073001>

I'll see you at the ARC or maybe around the pattern. I haven't flown in a while so I may be out there knocking the rust of my skills. No judging my sloppy landings!

Until then stay vigilant and fly safe!

***Blue Skies!
Bill Doherty,
President
EAA Spirit of St. Louis Chapter 32***

January Meeting Minutes

Dave Deweese



Our first meeting of 2022 began with the Pledge, Bill Doherty presiding. We delayed a week due to Covid and our cancelled Leadership meeting. Note that the meeting was rescheduled for April, we may be shifting our meeting around then.

Bob Murray (our new treasurer) gave the Treasurer's report including checking, savings, and Ray Foundation account balances. Note that all the funds in the latter have been sent to Elite Aviation, the money remaining is seed money from us to keep the account open. Our balance is good now due to dues, remember that national dues change to \$48 in May. Bob has designed a new attendance sheet that will grab information for the new roster, described it, and passed the clipboard around.

New members and visitors: Jacob Garvey is considering getting his license and learning to fly. Dave Hyde was a member years ago and is now back. He's a tech counselor and has an RV-4 that he's going to get flying again. We've got at least four aviation explorer scouts with us today.

Flood report: rivers at 15.2 feet and steady.

Our chapter awards were delayed, new vice-president Jim Hall helped Bill hand them out.

Vasili, our Ray Foundation student, reports that his next session is all pre-solo questions. Everything is going "swimmingly". Assorted advice for the solo: increased performance and less screaming from the instructor.

Chris reports that we've applied for another and are waiting to hear about approval. For future, interested candidates, he advises you get through the Sporty's course, get through ground school, and let him know. Jim also notes that, if you haven't taken a Young Eagles flight yet, let him or Chris know. Lauren started her coursework on Christmas and is about 90% done, and advised to other Ray candidates that it can be done. Chris is working on additional scholarships beyond the Ray Foundation.

Jim Hall reports lots of activities in the Explorer troop. They took part in a (VATSIM?) presentation which gives insight into controller and pilot interactions. There was also an online presentation by a 98 year-old B-24 pilot, who was a self-described poor student until he was motivated by being a pilot, eventually graduating college and mastering the skills necessary for becoming a pilot. There's an upcoming Scott AFB visit in April. Col. Jackson (our Christmas presenter) will speak at Boeing for the February meeting. Elections are upcoming.

Fundraising: we've gotten \$53 this year from Shop With Scrip.

New Business:

Rick May has decided to retire as Young Eagles coordinator, so we've got an opening. If anybody is interested please contact an officer. This also brought up the need for redundancy: if several would like to work together that would be good. Chris can step in, but is already busy with Ray Foundation and Explorer Scouts.

The Airshow happens June 11-12. We need to get a group to develop our presentation. Bill's former boss is still point man for air show planning, Bill's working on getting us a good physical location on the grounds.

Bill and Jim went through an on-line training presentation for Vice President and President. A new initiative is to separate business meetings from social: the business meeting is open to all but only required for the board. We'll probably do those via Zoom (though our by-laws require a quarterly in-person board meeting). The new terminology is "Gathering" versus "Meeting". We're early in this and it will evolve over time.

Airventure 2022: Bill would like us to build Chapter 32 Adirondack chairs. He'd like ours to be better than anybody else's and out in front.

Upcoming:

This upcoming week is EAA Homebuilders' Week, January 24-28. Sign up for webinars that begin at 11:30 each day and run continuously.

Bill's thinking about a mid-spring chapter picnic, maybe at a park or airport where we can bring out families and socialize.

Bob Clarke Gets His Airworthiness Certificate



Blast From the Past...The Plane That Flew Itself

From War History Online
Nov 30, 2017 [Shahan Russell, Guest Author](#)

In 1970, a plane got fed up with its pilot so it hatched an audacious plan. First, get rid of the pilot. Second: land. Third: enter history. The result was amazing.

On February 2, 1970 four pilots of the 71st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron were to take off from the Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. They were to do so on Convair F-106A-100-CO Delta Darts and engage in mock combat.

But one plane had ideas of its own. Just as it was about to take off, its drag chute deployed – forcing its pilot to abort.

So then there were three. Major Tom Curtis was to “fight” Major Jim Lowe and Captain Gary Faust. No problem – they’d been through this before. Or so they thought.

The three split up to begin their dogfight. Once they were 20 miles apart, ground controllers gave them all different vectors to ensure that each had a fair chance. From that point on, they could do whatever they felt was necessary to win.

Curtis went after Faust first, so he accelerated to Mach 1.90. The plan was to force Faust past 38,000 feet, Curtis did a high-G rudder reversal – turning and rolling to reduce his thrust, thereby forcing his “enemy” to overshoot him. It worked... sort of. Faust took the bait, which probably annoyed his plane.

Tail number 58-0787 shuddered, then went into an accelerated stall – meaning it suddenly plunked its nose downward. Then it made a beeline toward the ground.

Curtis saw it all. From his angle, it looked as if the plane’s tail was doing a slow circuit around its wobbling nose – disaster! It’s called a flat spin. And once an F-106A does that, it’s almost as good as dead.



58-0787 resting on an alfalfa field in Montana

Fortunately, the men were seasoned, professional pilots. Lowe’s calm voice came over Faust’s radio – carefully going over spin recovery procedures step-by-step. Faust followed them all faithfully, trying to maneuver the plane’s nose at an angle that would break its spin.

So he switched to vertical scissors – using his speed to climb and dive in a spiral while doing a barrel roll. He

then took it a step further by widening his spirals, forcing the other two to break out of their own climb.

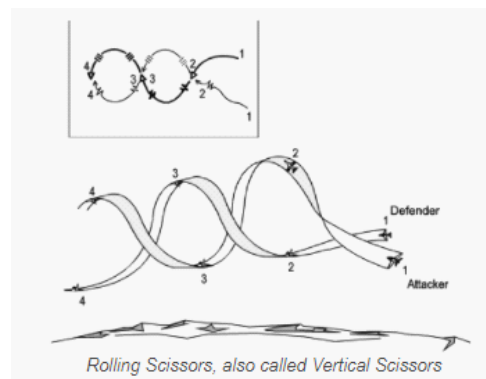
He set the plane’s trim to the take-off position, but

58-0787 refused to respond. Trimming frees the pilot from having to exert constant pressure on the controls, but it did no good. *Nothing* worked.

There was only one thing left to do – activate the drag chute. This wasn’t meant to be used in flight, however. It’s only for extra braking when a plane lands. The hope was that it would slow the plane down enough so Faust could get it at the angle needed to break its spin.

So he deployed it, and off it went... wrapping itself around 58-0787’s vertical stabilizer. Perhaps even more annoyed by that, the F-106A continued its downward spiral of doom. Faust had exhausted all of his options.

And having fallen below the 15,000 feet mark, he had also run out of time. If he was to survive, he had to bail – so he did.



Rolling Scissors, also called Vertical Scissors



It was the signal that 58-0787 was waiting for. The blast that catapulted Faust out was exactly what was needed to push its nose *straight* down.

The plane broke out of its spin, leveled off, and resumed flying in a straight line – albeit with a slight left and right wobbling. Even better, Faust had set the trim to take-off, which was similar to the landing trim position. And best of all, he had moved the throttle to “idle” – putting the plane into a steady gliding descent.

Except that he was no longer in it. Lowe saw it all and couldn’t help laughing, “Gary? You better get back into that thing!”

But 58-0787 was having none of it. Freed of its human, at last, it flew off into the vast blue skies above northern Montana. Curtis and Lowe radioed his position and headed back to base. All three hoped that wherever 58-0787 crashed, it wouldn’t be on anyone below. As for Faust, he was rescued shortly after landing by a group of Native Americans on snowmobiles.

But 58-0787 had no intention of crashing. Traveling at about 175 knots, it reveled in its new-found freedom till it reached the town of Big Sandy (population: 598 in 2010) in Chouteau County. Seeing a lovely snow-covered alfalfa field, it made a slow, steady downward glide till it touched ground.

Delighted by the snow, it continued to slide, making sure to stay steady and avoid letting either wing touch the earth. But there was trouble ahead. Cutting across the field at an angle to its approach lay a low, stone wall with only a narrow gap in the middle.

So 58-0787 slid to the right, did a 20° turn, slipped through the opening, and continued on into the next field where it finally stopped before an astonished farmer. The man called the sheriff, of course, who called the base.

They asked him to assess the damage, but each time he tried to get close, 58-0787 would jiggle and dance, trying to get away. Finally, the authorities told him to just let the thing be – it would run out of fuel, eventually.

By the time the military got there, it had done just that – almost two hours later. So they took off its wings and hauled it back to base. To their surprise, except for some superficial scratches on its underside, it was still flight-worthy and later put back in active service.

They called Faust the “Cornfield Bomber” after that, but he was not a bomber. Nor did 58-0787 land in a cornfield. It now rests at the National Museum of the US Air Force, restored to its former glory, and no doubt reminiscing about its Montana adventure.

Learners as we Go

"Looks like This Is Going to Be the Year!"

mr. bill

If I just wrote the words, "Hey, the masks DO NOT have to be worn anymore," this would be GREAT!

But as I believe that the above statement will be announced somewhere down the road, as I am very optimistic about this year.



First off, did you see the picture in my article header, it is the "she" and not the "he" of the family! The she is Ms. Jackie, a "let's get this done" right seater who was just not going to sit by and watch that left seater man in her life fly the airplane, took to the skies and started flight instruction in the RV-12. Lady J was taking ALL the actions and motions in and quickly turned them around and showed us that SHE could make it happen. It is amazing what the person sitting next to you and watching your every move flying an airplane picks up and transfers into actual flying motions when given a chance to fly the airplane. Ms. Jackie could get it pre-flight-ed and fired up and taxied out to the end of the runway with NO help from me. She could even take off and climb out! So, we practiced on landings and happen it did!

All photos from mr. bill's article



After my two lessons she was good to 100 feet above the runway and with CFI Doug he tweaked her the rest of the way for some awesome landings and then for her BIG MOMENT, as captured below. She flew by herself and brought the airplane back to the hangar and got her SOLO Shirt! Congratulations Ms. Jackie.



Jackie and her clipped shirt from her solo

In a tag team event Lady Jackie from the EAA 32 group has soloed the family airplane! The other tag team instructor was Mr. Doug T. who was recently hired by the American Eagle family which will have him up flying at American Airlines in less than 4 years. Congratulations to you CFI Doug.

Also on this date, your very own article writer rolled over 22,000 hours of total flight time. Earlier in the week on January 20th, I marked my 33 years of airline flying. Where did the time go? Especially now that all the DFW based Boeing 737 pilots are Internationally Qualified, I am visiting some really neat and remote places below the southern border.



mr. bill accumulating 22,000 flight hours and 33 years in the airline industry with his landing in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico



As your EAA 32 Librarian, I was able last year to drop off the unbound magazines to the same place where Mr. Paul H. Poberezny had his magazines bound. I see that there are a few years that are still unbound in our EAA 32 library, and I will be updating those on this next go around with traveling to Madison, Wisconsin.

January 28, 2022, Mr. Boeing received certification of his newest airplane the Boeing 777X. The extended wing tipped airplane that fold up has those wing tip extensions manufactured parts made in Saint Louis, MO.

I see that last December 09 that the Civil Air Patrol CAP- celebrated their 80th anniversary.

January 26, 2022, was the 69th birthday of our fine EAA organization.

Anybody know whose airplane this was?



N234MM was a Gulfstream I, that was flown by the Disney Corporation. Its call sign later became, "N 234 Mickey Mouse."



I found this while I was in the Phillips 66 gasoline station in Moscow Mills, MO up Highway 61 at the Highway C exit. Octane 91 with NO Ethanol. Looks like I will be using this fuel that is "nice to my rubber seals" in my VW Volkswagen VW aero engines.

More info later.

CONTINUED on next page.

Learners as we Go Continued

SOMEDAY IS TODAY!



Recently I was at a seminar. I was to talk at this seminar. After 1 hour and 47 minutes I was given the floor to discuss the title of the seminar.

One thing I have learned about the youth of today.

IF WE ARE NOT RELEVANT AND INTERESTING AND ACTIVE IN OUR PRESENTATIONS, WE LOSE THEM TO THEIR iPhone REALLY QUICK.

They do NOT like long boring stories about our past because their world moves much faster and is more “flashy” for them. They do not like boring books because they have YouTube videos which shows them HOW TO DO IT in less than 5 minutes.

So, if we are going to reach them it needs to be cool, quick, and exciting and relevant and QUICKLY EXPLAINED things to their “TODAY” world standards.

Q? What is the cost of that of that new Boeing

B-777X aircraft?

A: 442.2 million dollars

If you think that is expensive....

Q? What was the cost of a new Cessna 172S in 2021?

A: \$486,000

Dave McGougan's Kitfox Project

Here are a few pictures of my plane after getting back to work. Notice that the emphasis has been the forward cowl panels which did not come with the remnants I bought. Actually neither did the top cowl. I had to buy it from Kitfox, for \$350, before shipping. The ring cowls did come with the plane. Checking with Kitfox I found that the cost would be about \$450 before shipping, and was for a model 4, which might work but would have to be heavily trimmed. It was easy call to piece it in and save \$500 plus. They need a couple small details before I pull em off and paint them. This is step number one in the quest to get the engine installed. I have been buying small parts I will need to make the engine installation complete and fast. Also note the one photo shows the mock up of the instrument panel in place. I needed to see how it fits and to get a few other measurements. It's slow motion but it is progress.

Dave McGougan



Aviation Explorer Post 9032 Activities for 2022 (Scheduled and Proposed)

Boeing is the chartering organization for 'Learning for Life', Aviation Explorer Post 9032 and EAA Chapter 32 is continuing to supply additional AE Post Advisors and as an Aeronautical Information mentor source.

- AE Post 9032 VATSIM Demo with AE Posts 9 & 218 on Thu, January 6, 2022 6:30pm (VIRTUAL) Presented via Zoom Meeting; 28 participants from 2 different Aviation Explorer Posts 9 & 218 (both youth members & advisors), including EAA members; also pilots and former Air Traffic Controllers did demos, asked questions and learned about the "Virtual Air Traffic Simulator" (an online flight simulation network). – Andrew Mallek, AE Post 9032 Advisor
- **AE Post 9032 Advisor Virtual Meeting Wed, January 12, 6pm – 7pm.** online via google meets.
- AE Post 9032 invited to a Zoom Meeting w/ AE Post 9 on 1-17-2022 at 7:30pm
"Our distinguished Guest on Monday night (Jan. 17th) will be Capt. Howard Levinson USAAC (US Army Air Corp.). Capt. Levinson is 98 years old and was a B-24 Pilot in WWII. He and his crew flew a specially outfitted B-24 Bomber on reconnaissance flights over the islands in the Pacific during the war to map out the uncharted islands and other targets. He has some pretty good stories to tell about his flying career and some great pictures of his time in the Pacific." - **Mike Rogers, AE Post 9 Advisor**
- AE Post 9032 Election information Wed, January 19, 6pm - Boeing Building 100. Find out about open positions, how to run, and expectations for officers!
- **AE Post 9032 invited to Zoom Meeting hosted by AE Post 218, w/ AE Post 9 held on 1-27-2022 @ 7pm** "Aviation Explorer Post 218 out of Racine, WI has invited us to join their Zoom session with **Alicia Martinez, Chief Pilot Flight Operations from United Airlines in Chicago.** She'll talk about her time as a commercial pilot and United's Aviate Program, pilot recruitment. If you are considering commercial piloting, this may be a good opportunity!" – Andrew Hedlund, AE Post 9032 Advisor
- AE Post 9032 invited to a Zoom Meeting w/ AE Post 9 on 2-7-2022 at 7:30pm
"This meeting will cover a discussion of the FAA's Private Pilot's Written Test that every student pilot must pass before they can get their pilot's license, including comments from some of our own Explorers that are studying for, or have already taken, their exam." - **Mike Rogers, AE Post 9 Advisor; forwarded to Post 9032 members by Chrissy Kujawa, AE Post 9032 Advisor**
- **AE Post 9032 Elections! Wed, February 2 CANCELLED due to Snow; Rescheduled for Wed, February 9, 6pm - Boeing Building 100.** Concurrent with Post Advisor Meeting.
"Run for a position, or just come to listen and vote. This will be for a shortened 4 month position as elections will occur again in May. If you have a slide you would like to present when running for a position, please email it to me." – Chrissy Kujawa, AE Post 9032 Advisor
- **AE Post 9032 Col Jackson Presentation Wed, February 16, 6pm - Boeing Building 100.** Colonel Jack Jackson (USMC Retired) Presentation.
Highly decorated Marine Corps veteran who flew more than 600 missions in Vietnam and has flown virtually every type of aircraft in the U.S. military arsenal. After his service, Jackson worked as a chief test pilot for McDonnell Douglas, then Boeing (including the Harrier Jet), before being elected to two terms in the Missouri State House of Representatives.

Upcoming AE Post 9032 events on the 2022 planning Schedule:

- AE Post 9032 proposed visit for March 2nd @ 6pm to Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) For an Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) classroom tour and maybe some simulator time at SWIC

- AE Post 9032 event, Boeing F-15 Manufacturing Tour on Wednesday, March 9th 2022; 4:30-6:00pm; meet at Boeing Building 100
“This event will be a 1 hour tour of the F-15 manufacturing line at Boeing! This event is signup only, first come first serve. The event maxes out at 25 people so we will try to get as many students in as possible before allowing parents and advisors. Please use the form below! If you will have trouble getting a ride to Boeing at 4:30pm please let us know and we can try making arrangements.” – Chrissy Kujawa, AE Post 9032 Advisor
- AE Post 9032 tour, of the 126th Air Refueling Wing at Scott Air Force Base on April 14th 2022
Arranging for a KC-135 day time tour and meet-up with an aircrew of the 126th Air Refueling Wing at Scott AFB is offering up April 14 or 28 for a day time tour - Libby Yunger, member of EAA Chapter 32 and the Ninety-Nines coordinating with Mark Sutherland, CMO, Missouri Partnership; they are both AE Post 9032 Advisors
- AE Post 9032 tour, of the Missouri Wing of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) Museum, Aircraft and Hangers located at Smartt Field (St. Charles Regional Airport) Date: TBD
- AE Post 9032 participation in Spirit of St. Louis Air Show & STEM Expo on June 11-12, 2022
“Featuring the US Navy Blue Angels; B-29, ‘Doc’; Boeing B-17G, ‘Yankee Lady’; CAF Red Tail P-51 Mustang; Matt Younkin/ Beech 18; Aerobatics including: Skip Stewart; Phillips 66 Team. Static displays include Hawker Hurricane; Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX ‘Half Stork’; Sky Soldiers; etc. The STEM Expo and the Patriots Landing will host many more exhibitors also.”
- **AE Post 9032 hoping to participate in Aviation Explorer Camp at EAA AirVenture 2022 from July 25-31, 2022.** Waiting on information re: capacity for this year.
- AE Post 9032 proposed Zoom Meeting and Q&A with John Maggos, an Air Force T-38 instructor pilot; Date: TBD
This aviation briefing offer was sent to Andrew Mallek, AE Post 9032 Advisor. "A few weeks ago I believe you gave a VATSIM demo to some aviation explorers. I'm reaching out as an Air Force T-38 instructor pilot to see if you'd have any interest in one day doing a Q and A session on zoom or something. I don't have any operational experience as a First Assignment Instructor Pilot but my coworkers are former Viper, Strike Eagle, Raptor, and Hawg drivers so we can get 1 or 2 of them on there as well. Let me know if you have any interest and we can try and set something. Topics for these types of things can include: is military right for me; how do I get there; how to share the NAS with civilian traffic; how do I get XYZ; etc.

Editor's Corner

My new year's resolution this year is to attend more meetings. Of course, I broke it in January, but I'll try to do better. I like to find interesting stories as I cruise the interwebtubes, and this issue of the newsletter features two of them. I hope they're news to most of you, and one of them is in the category of "cautionary tales". Both of them are almost too strange to believe, but there are a lot of stories out there that will be entertaining and enlightening to our members. Please share anything you might have with all of us. Thanks.

Jim Bower
EAA Chapter 32 Newsletter Editor

Seawind Saga: Pilot Who Crashed in Lake Michigan Had 7 Crashes in 7 Days

BY MARDI LINK mlink@record-eagle.com
Jul 25, 2021



CHARLEVOIX — A small amphibious airplane is on the bottom of Lake Michigan after crashing during the Fourth of July weekend — but fasten your

seatbelts because the pilot says how it got there is one barnstormer of a story.

Dennis Collier, a licensed Traverse City pilot, paid \$110,000 for the 2010 Seawind on a Saturday, ended up in the drink a week later, and on the way crashed — by his own account — seven times, in seven days in four states.

“Oh yeah, it’s a hell of a story,” Collier said, of his plan to fly solo from the west coast to Boyne City. “From California to the U.P., everyone kept telling me I was lucky to be alive.”

Collier wanted to capture the experience while it was fresh in his mind so he wrote a first-person account, in case it had any motion picture potential.

The Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Michigan State Police all performed various response and investigative functions at his crashes, too, so their information adds to the narrative.

Then there’s the 88-year-old pilot who built the airplane and sold it to Collier, the inhospitable sage grasses of New Mexico, the airport manager who once worked for Virgin Galactic and the Michigan State Police troopers who helped with hydraulics.

With that baggage packed, let’s prepare for departure.

On June 25, Collier flew commercial, landing at Los Angeles’ LAX where Lynn Swann, the retired pilot, airplane builder and self-described “grumpy old man” who’d advertised the Seawind 3000 for sale, was there to meet him.

The two aviators drove east from Los Angeles to the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and Brackett Field Airport

— coincidentally, the filming location of “Airport ’74,” where Charlton Heston saved the passengers. It’s also the filming location for the sequel to “Airport.”

It was here where Collier got his first gander at his new-used Seawind.

At the time he was just excited about the purchase, though later said he didn’t think the condition of the plane had been properly conveyed to him.

Collier said in his diary he did notice instrument and other repairs were needed, and surmised Swann used Collier’s \$4,000 deposit to make some, but not all, of these.

Swann says that while the plane hadn’t been flown for two years, a pilot friend had taken it for a test flight and the aircraft was ship-shape, with only 20 hours of flying time on the engine.

“I went to get some supplies and told him he could wait for me or take off,” Swann said. “I came back and he was already lined up to take off. And I figured, OK, cool.”

Collier said nope, it wasn’t. Not for him, not cool at all.

Crash #1

“I radioed to the tower for a test flight over the airport,” Collier wrote. “Climbing to 500 feet above pattern altitude doing left hand turns staying within the airport’s landing pattern. After the first turn I noticed the nose up without inputs ... I set up for landing after the third time around.”



**Seawind 3000
(NOT the one in the story)**

FAA records show Collier landed “gear up” and while he escaped injury, the Seawind got pretty banged up.

Swann said it would have been worse if he hadn’t installed a block of wood under the front of the plane, and that two inches of solid oak took the brunt of the impact. Collier said Swann and his “hangar buddies” helped make repairs after which, Collier said, he felt abandoned.

“Having a sinking feeling that this was it, I had to go,” Collier said.

Next stop — a layover in New Mexico and Collier’s first night landing in 20 years.

It was 3:22 a.m. and the descent did not go well.

Crashes #2 and #3

“The airplane stalled and came down hard and to the left of the runway and into the weeds and bumpy sage grasses,” Collier said.

Dawn broke the next morning on an ugly view.

Collier, who had again escaped injury, learned he’d wiped out a sign and some runway lights and did a number on the Seawind’s tail. Plus, staff with Four Corners Airport in San Juan County had called the FAA.

A test flight ended in another runway incident, said Mike Lewis, airport manager.

“We’re square,” Lewis said. “We called the FAA and filed a report. From what I understand, the damage wasn’t anything that would make the airplane unflyable.”

FAA spokesperson Tony Molinaro said the agency does not comment on ongoing investigations, though Collier said he did talk with an investigator.

“After a lengthy explanation of landing in the dark without a landing light the FAA was satisfied with my explanation,” Collier said. The investigator said at least he hadn’t been “busting any airspace parameters,” Collier added.

FAA records show there is restricted airspace between California and New Mexico, including over Disneyland, the White Sands Missile range and the Nevada Test and Training Range at Edwards Air Force Base — more popularly known as “Area 51.”

Collier said he didn’t see any UFOs but did spend a few days in New Mexico.

Which, come to think of it, sounds like a movie title, though if Hollywood comes calling Collier said he prefers, “7 Days, 7 Crashes” and has his heart set on Tom Hanks in the lead role.

Collier recorded in his diary how a local airplane mechanic found him an empty hangar where he could park the Seawind, then loaned him some tools and gave him a ride to a hardware store to fetch supplies.

Collier, who said he’d flown regularly years ago, previously built his own plane.

"I'm a mechanic" he told himself, "I can do this."

On July 2, Collier was airborne again.

Crashes #4 and #5

“My plan was to go north along the western slope of the Rockies to avoid the approaching front from Taos, New Mexico to Chicago and east was not the way to get over the mountains,” Collier said.

He ran into a rain squall but the plane performed well enough for Collier to engage the auto pilot, using rivers and highways as navigational aids, turning east after about two hours in the air.

Slicing through the sky over America’s breadbasket, however, Collier again encountered trouble.

The left wing’s servo (hinged tab) was stuck, he said, and the nose of the plane kept pitching up. When it got worse, Collier put a rag between his knee and the yoke (steering wheel) and pushed as hard as he could toward Nebraska.

There was stalling, there was skipping through the rough and there was crisscrossing the runway but after four attempts, Collier said he landed at O’Neill Municipal Airport in Holt County.

“I forced it to the ground and off into the grasses and eventually back onto the runway and taxied to an awaiting golf cart, and an airport manager and wife team that got me to calm down from shaking,” Collier said.

That team was Al and Natalie Sibi — who both said they suggested Collier to separate himself from his purchase — he on a commercial flight, the Seawind on a flatbed but both bound for Michigan.

When that idea didn’t fly, the Sibis put Collier up, fed him, found a hangar for him to use and loaned him a jack and some tools.

CONTINUED on next page.

A test flight ended in another crash, Collier said, but he went back to work on the plane and found and fixed some crossed wires.

By July 3 at 7 a.m., Collier was more than ready to put Nebraska below and behind him.

"I opened the hangar door and attempted to push the Seawind out," Collier said. "Getting a few feet, I decided to just fire it up and get going. Taxied out to the runway and with full power lifted eastward into the morning sun."

Sibi said he's known many pilots with "get-home-itus" and Collier was one of those.

Takeoff, the climb and the autopilot cruise over South Dakota and Minnesota at 7500 feet went fine. Five hours out of Nebraska, he passed Escanaba and saw Schoolcraft County Airport in Manistique, about 5 miles off.

Then, something went "clunk."

Crash #6

The hydraulic pressure gauge was registering zero, Collier said, and the fuel gauge showed an uneven supply.

He radioed the airport to ask whether there was a spotter on the ground who could look up as he passed and let him know if the landing gear was down — no response.

The engine sputtered, the gauge showed less than four gallons of fuel and Collier said he was pretty sure the landing gear under the nose wasn't down.

"I landed it with both mains and held it off as long as I could and then the nose hit and the plane skidded down the runway a few hundred yards to a stop at the edge of the pavement but well before the end of the runway," Collier said.

No injuries, the damage was repairable and while Collier didn't see anyone around — no golf cart reception this time — the terminal was within walking distance and the doors were unlocked. Collier said he went in, sat down and considered his lot.

His plane was dinged and out of fuel, his cellphone was shut off and he hadn't seen a soul.

Cue the angel choir — because there, across the street and gleaming in the sunshine, was a welcoming log-themed motel.

Holiday Motel Manistique co-owner, Pat Mead, let Collier use his phone, knew a store that sold hydraulic oil and drove Collier there.

"A lot of pilots stay here," said Kara Mead, who, in March, bought the motel with her husband. "He did take him to get the hydraulic oil. Owning a motel, you get requests sometimes that don't have to do with booking a room."

Collier arrived back at Schoolcraft Municipal about the same time as the Michigan State Police. He on foot, MSP in a cruiser with lights and sirens.

Lt. Mark Giannunzio, an assistant MSP post commander, said troopers were dispatched to the airport to check out a report that someone's landing gear wasn't working properly. At the scene, MSP turned the incident over to the FAA, Giannunzio said.

Collier writes in his diary that troopers interviewed him and loaned him a phone to call the FAA — "once again I was on the phone talking to them explaining what had occurred."

FAA spokesperson Molinaro said the agency couldn't comment on this investigation, either.

The troopers drove Collier out to the Seawind and held up the nose so he could add a quart of hydraulic oil.

Later, when reflecting on his journey, the faces of the two troopers would be added to those of all the people who'd helped him along the way.

"Everyone cares," Collier said, of the general aviation community. "They take you under their wing and into their hangar."

After a week of bumps, clunks and official inquiries from air and land authorities, Collier was finally near his goal — landing his plane in Boyne City.

He checked the fuel gauge and looked inside the tanks and realized the gauge was flipped. The tank that read empty was full, the tank that read full was nearly empty. Perhaps the pump failed, Collier thought, maybe that was the source of the "clunk."

He called a relative who offered the use of a credit card, Collier refueled and taxied to the runway.

Crash #7

The plan was to head south, over Lake Michigan, Beaver Island, Charlevoix and land at the Boyne City Municipal Airport. Per his promise to the FAA, Collier wrote in his diary he'd leave the landing gear down for the 25-minute flight.

It was July 3.

As luck would have it, President Joe Biden was visiting and Collier had to wait for the TFR, or temporary flight restriction, to be lifted before he could depart.

Back in Nebraska, Al Sibi said he was still thinking about what aircraft accident investigators call the "Swiss Cheese Model": Every airplane mishap puts a hole in the slice until the plane is more holes than cheese.

At 7:22 p.m., [Flight Aware](#), an air travel database, shows the Seawind over Manistique. At 7:49 p.m. the plane disappears from radar.

That was about the time Collier said the engine sputtered and he smelled something burning.

He'd just passed Beaver Island, was out over open water and turned back, hoping to land at the island's airport.

But the wing flaps weren't responding and the hydraulic pressure gauge read nil. Collier said he had no choice but to attempt his first water landing.

"I glanced back over the water and realized I could judge my altitude with the glittering of the sun over the small ripple of the water," Collier said. "Time seemed to slow and I was transfixed on the beauty of the sun over the water ... I could see it coming and it was really close."

But, per his promise to the FAA, the landing gear was still down.

"The gear caught the water and the plane went forward and with a big splash went nose down vertically and into the water."

For a few seconds, Collier said he was staring straight down into the deep. Then the plane popped up, Collier sent out a distress call, checked himself for injuries — again, none — and tried to focus.

The plane was built like boat. It would float, right? He'd wait for rescue, get the plane towed to shore and fix it again.

Grounded

Collier isn't sure how much time passed before he saw a U.S. Coast Guard rescue boat headed his way. By then, the cockpit was full of water, the plane was sinking, his shoes, hat, landing light and new headset were floating away reminiscent of a scene from "Titanic."

"I was holding on, all alone, thinking about my family," Collier said. "It was terrifying. It was a time of realizing I might not make it."

A Coast Guard helicopter circled overhead. Collier by now was perilously perched on the tail. He lifted his head from his hands and gave them a wave. Minutes, later he was aboard a rescue boat.

When news the plane had crashed and sunk reached New Mexico, Lewis shared a theory: the hull of the plane had likely been breached during one of the crashes.

Collier gave a statement to MSP, was checked by a Charlevoix Hospital emergency room physician and released in the wee hours of the Fourth of July.

He said he was happy to be alive.

From the front desk of the motel, Kara Mead said she was happy for him.

"We didn't know about Nebraska, but he told us the rest and I'm just glad he's okay," she said.

If this were a movie, a director might be tempted to employ poetic license and have Collier somehow, some way, fly off into the wild blue yonder as the credits roll.

But Collier said the Seawind wasn't insured. And the experience was so traumatic, he doesn't see himself piloting an airplane again.

John Masson, U.S. Coast Guard spokesperson, said they've seen no evidence of pollution in Lake Michigan and the fuel was low so the plane, which is in about 300 feet of water, is unlikely to ever be raised.

Whether Collier incurs fines or faces legal action is up to the FAA, Masson said.

The FAA's investigation is ongoing and is expected to take several weeks to complete, Molinaro said.

Collier recorded his version of an ending in his diary. He's standing outside the hospital in Charlevoix, and the final lines read like this:

"I wondered about the day. Flying all the way from a disaster in O'Neill NB and a nose landing at Schoolcraft and almost dying. Let alone the episodes in NM and CA. It was over. I'm alive. And I'm home."

Editor's Note: Here's a bit of Monday Morning quarterbacking, but I think I would have taken the advice of the person who suggested a flatbed might be the best way to get that airplane home. But what do I know?

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