

The Upwind Flyer

Your *Scentinel* for Chapter Happenings

January 2020



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You Want To Set a World Record for What, Now?

By Rob Peterson

On a college field trip Six Flags amusement park in Chicago, I first saw kids playing in pedal planes. It was "Aviation Day" at the park and some organization had about a half dozen planes for kids to pedal around. You know how a Mustang taxis in S-turns because the pilot can't see where he's going? ...and almost always with the canopy open and an arm hanging over the side of the cockpit to catch a breeze on a hot day? That's how the young kids were taxiing that day, not due to limited visibility over the nose or the need to feel the cooling prop blast, but because they had probably never pedaled a tail dragger, and their arms just don't fit in the tiny cockpits. In any case, I thought those kids looked pretty cool and decided that I should build a pedal plane...someday.

Someday came closer a few years later at Oshkosh when I saw the Aviation Products tent selling plans for those tiny tail draggers. My wife encouraged me to buy a set of plans for the Gee Bee. That's right, she ENCOURAGED me to do it, and we didn't even have a baby on the way yet! Soon I had ordered the hardware, aluminum, and decal kits and set to work building the plane in our basement while my wife set to work on making the baby (I helped her with that a little). The plane was completed shortly before our son was born, and he enjoyed it for many years. It remains in the family, hopefully to be passed down for generations.

I had no intentions to build another plane until 10 years later when I saw plans for sale in the New England Air Museum. Thinking it would be enjoyable to build another one just for fun, I bought plans and kits for a J-3 Cub. That was it. As Tom Hanks once said about collecting typewriters, "Owning one doesn't mean anything. But once you own two...now you're different. Now you're a collector."



Gee Bee (Rob Peterson)

When the Cub was finished, there had to be another. But rather than buying kits to build the same plane that hundreds of other people already had, I wanted something unique. So I began modifying kits to build different planes, adding custom decals and paint schemes of historic racing planes.

This cycle of designing and building continues. I'm usually researching two planes while I'm on

been more wrong.

Guinness doesn't hand out world records for "gatherings" but said they would create a new record category for a pedal plane parade. "Sounds good," we thought, but the devil is in the details and there were a lot of details. Guinness wanted a minimum of 100 planes, and they had to pedal a minimum of 2 miles and stay within 2 vehicle lengths of each other (about 9 feet). So 2018 became a successful UNofficial world record with 29 planes, but the following September the Brits took back the title.



Pedal Planes Facebook group (Rob Peterson)

the road for work and building two planes while I'm home. Research takes 6-12 months and building takes 5-9 months. So it takes about 12-18 months to get two planes from an idea to a finished product.

In 2016, I discovered a Facebook group dedicated to pedal planes. After joining I posted a few photos and quickly discovered I had been made a group administrator to help Scott Shea, the page owner, handle the workload of the approximately 200 members. Then I was contacted by Andy Ovans in the EAA Membership department in Oshkosh. Andy had seen that a group in England has set a "World Record" for the largest gathering of pedal planes and wanted to know if I was interested in trying to beat their unofficial record. I was in, but why not try for an Official Guinness World Record? We were both naive enough to think all we had to do far get enough planes to show up and Guinness would hand us a new record. We could have not

In 2019, Andy left his job in Oshkosh and moved to Florida, so I took over planning the next parade. I started by pleading with Guinness to lower the requirements to a more obtainable level. They didn't give me everything that I asked for, but they did lower the minimum to 50 planes and parade route to 1 km, still a high bar but low enough to take a shot at an official record. But the deeper I got into planning, Guinness seemed to keep inching that bar a little higher. The parade route would have to be surveyed and pre-approved; the start and finish lines would have to be clear-



Patently waiting for the parade to begin (photo courtesy EAA)

ly visible; uncut video must be submitted or the start and finish line; the need for volunteers kept growing, and on and on.

Meanwhile, the size and scope of the event seemed to have grown far too large to hold the parade right under the EAA's nose, without involving them, as we had in 2018. I got in touch with Dick Knapinski in EAA Media Relations, and in short order the vast resources of the EAA were at our disposal. On parade day I was able to drive a moving truck with 15 planes (4 on



The parade (Rob Peterson)

loan from EAA 333) literally through the front gate to unload, had a dedicated parking spot, and was chauffeured around the grounds like a king. EAA security and parking also made special accommodations for pedal plane owners to pick up and drop off at the entrance to the grounds.

We had 56 planes participate in the parade. According to our official stewards and witnesses,

50 successfully completed the route. Following the event, I submitted 417 pages of documents and photos as evidence for Guinness to review. This review process takes a minimum of 16 weeks, so we are still waiting for the official results, which are definitely not a foregone conclusion. Remember the devil is in the details, and the rulebook for our attempt is 45 pages of details.

My wife, the one who used to be very encouraging, is now very ...understanding. And the Facebook page that had 200 members now has over 7,700. As we wait for the results of our tiny pedal parade, my designing and building continues. I'm currently building a Gee Bee Model X and Model C Sportsters while designing a two-seat Twin Beech 18 with for a family in Florida. I need to design and fabricate a custom pedal crank from a 1/2" steel rod, so if anyone has experience with welding and hot bending steel, I'm looking for a mentor.

Below are links to some great videos that EAA created. The first is a parade video and the second is an interview about the record attempt.

[Pedal Plane Parade - 2019](#)

[Pedal Plane Interview - 2019](#)

We will keep you updated on the status of the record attempt here in the Upwind Flyer.

Annual Chapter 333 Membership Renewal

This is a reminder that annual chapter membership dues are due in January. Your Board of Directors voted to increase annual dues to \$30 in order to meet chapter operating expenses and to **offer each member a personalized nametag** for in 2020! You may have seen these on other folks at Oshkosh or at other chapter gatherings, now you can have your own EAA Chapter 333 nametag.

Mail your payment to Renaud Guibert at the following address:

EAA Chapter 333
c/o Renaud Guibert
1905 Landmark Court
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

President's Log

By Eric Gettel

My initial reaction to being asked to take on a leadership role in the club was that I'd be a fine Treasurer. I didn't imagine that I'd be suitable for the role of president. After all, Chris Gordon has for years done a terrific job leading the chapter and has far more aviation experience, local knowledge, and contacts than I'll foreseeably ever have. These are big shoes to fill. Take a look at the *Year In Review - 2019* article in this issue and you'll see that this chapter has plenty of proud and even extraordinary accomplishments.

Once agreeing to run for president, one of the first things I did, along with fellow nominees Renaud Guibert and Larry Sissom, was attend the EAA Chapter Leadership Boot Camp in October at the EAA 13 hangar in Ray, Michigan. The event was an information fire hose. Of particular note is that a chapter must continuously work on keeping the membership fresh. The EAA claims an overall 80% annual membership renewal rate and a 55% first-year renewal rate. It does not take long to for a chapter to lose half of its members.

According to the EAA, the strongest antidote against losing membership is to *do something*. As you can see in the *Year In Review - 2019* article, this chapter is pretty good at doing something. As a result, I think we do better than 80% annual membership retention, so I'd like to focus my attention at making the chapter known and appealing to potential new members.

The EAA suggests using a number of tools including: a web page, social media, and newsletters. It is in this domain where we can make improvements. I am taking the lead on reinvigorating the effort invested in these tools. This newsletter format is one piece of that initiative.

Make no mistake, these initiatives are difficult to maintain. We will eventually need to appoint a chairperson to lead the maintenance of these initiatives.

I have experience with newsletters. For a couple of years in the mid '90s I was the newsletter editor for the Detroit region SCCA. We would publish a 16-24-page magazine 10 times a year. I'd spend an entire evening affixing address labels on hundreds of copies and bundle the issues with rubber bands and sacks in the particular way the post office requires. While the board grew weary of the cost, I believe the membership generally loved it.

The ubiquity of the .pdf these days forever obsoletes the newsletter printed in multiples of 4 pages. More time can be spent on content. The EAA also says to *be interesting*. An interesting newsletter is a marketing tool suitable for distribution to the membership, friends, media, and the general public. I'm calling on you to contribute articles, photos, and information because the whole of us is far more interesting than any one of us.

I'd like to have regular columns that include topics like a Membership Meeting Recap, Builder's Updates, Trip Reports and so on. If you like to write, find a fellow member or aviation personality and conduct an interview.

The publication timetable calls for contributions due on the 20th for distribution on the 25th of the month prior to the newsletter's date.

Special thanks are due to Rob Peterson for stepping up and writing the great article about this year's attempt to create a world record for the largest pedal plane parade. Special thanks are also due to Chris Gordon whose proofreading skills put this newsletter over the top.

I'd love to get an article from you! 🍷



EAA Chapter Leadership Boot Camp in progress (Eric Gettel)

The Year in Review 2019

By Chris Gordon and Eric Gettel

Reflecting on chapter accomplishments over the prior year helps maintain a sense of community. In 2019 Chapter 333:

- Held 12 general membership meetings featuring 4 guest presenters and one offsite at Scio Flyers. These events included:
 - ❖ January - EAA Flight Test Manual introduction and discussion of flight test mindset and recent accident
 - ❖ February - Bruce Bongiorno on designing and building a personal flight simulator
 - ❖ March - Chris Dackson on VFR pilotage in his Stearman
 - ❖ April - John Sullivan and John Harte on soaring adventures in Namibia
 - ❖ May - Discussion of 737 MAX accidents and MCAS
 - ❖ June - Summer potluck
 - ❖ July - Summer potluck at Scio Flyers
 - ❖ August - Summer potluck
 - ❖ September - Crowd-sourced AirVenture and summer aviation adventure recap
 - ❖ October - Ray Hunter on Yankee Air Museum Living History Flight Experience Program
 - ❖ November - Annual Meeting and Elections
 - ❖ December - Holiday Party!
- Held 10 board (Business) meetings.
- Held 10 IMC Club meetings promoted by FAA Safety Team including an ARB Controller-Pilot Communications Forum
- Hosted the Annual Pancake Breakfast in the AvFuel hangar in June. Over 1,100 people were served including over 300 children under the age of 7. The Yankee Air Museum Waco, the MI Flight Aviation Robinson R44, and Solo Aviation were hauling rides consistently all morning and into the afternoon, we had a constant stream of inquiries at the

Board of Directors

Chapter Leaders for 2020-2021 were unanimously elected at our Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, November 14:

Chapter President - Eric Gettel
 Chapter Vice President - Beth Wichterman
 Chapter Secretary - Larry Sissom
 Chapter Treasurer - Renaud Guibert
 At-Large Director - Chris Gordon
 At-Large Director - Rob Peterson
 At-Large Director - Mark Powell

2020 Ray Aviation Scholarship

Chapter 333 is Looking for an Administrator/Coordinator

The Ray Aviation Scholarship Fund is a scholarship program that is supported by the Ray Foundation, managed by EAA, and administered through the EAA Chapter network. Through the generous support of the Ray Foundation, EAA will provide up to \$10,000 to deserving youths for their flight training expenses.

Since active chapter involvement in mentorship, support and administration of the scholarship is a key success factor, the chapter must affirm its ability to perform by reapplying for the scholarship on an annual basis. Chapter 333 applied to for a scholarship in 2019 and was not selected. To try again in 2020 we are required to identify a Scholarship Coordinator.

The coordinator must meet the requirements and fulfill the subsequent duties outlined in the position description guide [linked here](#). If you would like to be the EAA Chapter 333 Ray Scholarship Coordinator, please contact us at ea333president@gmail.com.

The Unscented by Eric Gettel

There once was a pilot named Louie
 Flying with technique rather screwy.
 On a blustery day
 Good form flustered away
 Landing his RV like a Huey.

EAA 333 info table thanks to Mark Powell's first-time effort to connect with future Young Eagles, and Scio Flyers brought a sizable air force of R/C aircraft to display. Check out the link for a feature story about our 2019 pancake breakfast from Ann Arbor Community Access TV program FYI. [Pancake Breakfast on Community TV](#)

- Went to Airventure in July led by member Rob Peterson for the PedalVenture attempt to set a record sanctioned by the Guinness Book of World Records for the Largest Parade of Pedal Powered Model Planes.
- Restarted the chapter's Young Eagles program with a July rally led by member Mark Powell. Thanks to a dedicated crew of ground volunteers, 7 generous pilots, and the new online registration software, we flew 30 Young Eagles in less than 3 hours!
- Applied for one of the 100 Ray Aviation Scholarships. Over 230 EAA chapters applied to participate in this program; our application scored well but just outside the top 90 required to receive a scholarship. Special thanks to Mark Powell for all his work spearheading the application as our Scholarship Coordinator.
- Hosted a Fall Color Tour fly-out event in Oc-

Calendar of Events

For 2020, the chapter has realigned its meetings schedule to fall consistently on the second, third, and fourth Tuesday evenings of most months.

Jan 14	Chapter Gathering, 7pm AA Terminal Basement
Jan 21	Business (Board) Meeting, 7pm EAA Welcome Center
Jan 28	IMC Club Meeting, 7pm AA Terminal Basement
Feb 22	Michigan Aviation Safety Forum
Apr ___	A2GA2 Adopt-A-Road Cleanup
Jun 14	Pancake Breakfast
Jul ___	Young Eagles Rally
Jul ___	A2GA2 Adopt-A-Road Cleanup
Jul 20-26	EAA AirVenture 2020
Aug 29-30	Thunder over Michigan
Sep ___	A2GA2 Adopt-A-Road Cleanup
Dec 8	Holiday Party



2018 EAA pancake breakfast (Chris Gordon)

tober led by Beth Wichterlan.

- Continued to preserve and maintain the historic Ann Arbor Airport terminal building, where the local chapter of the [Questers](#) historic preservation group registered participants for their regional convention in October.
- Continued to maintain two hangars available to members for aircraft and aircraft projects, currently home to a Diamond motorglider, two Rans light sport aircraft, two Sonex projects, and to a member salvaging a LongEZ and tools from a hangar fire.
- Sent 3 members, Renaud Guibert, Larry Sisson, and Eric Gettel to the EAA Chapter Leadership Boot Camp in the EAA Chapter 13 hangar at Ray Community Airport in Ray Michigan.
- Elected a completely new slate of officers for the Board of Directors to lead your chapter into 2020!