



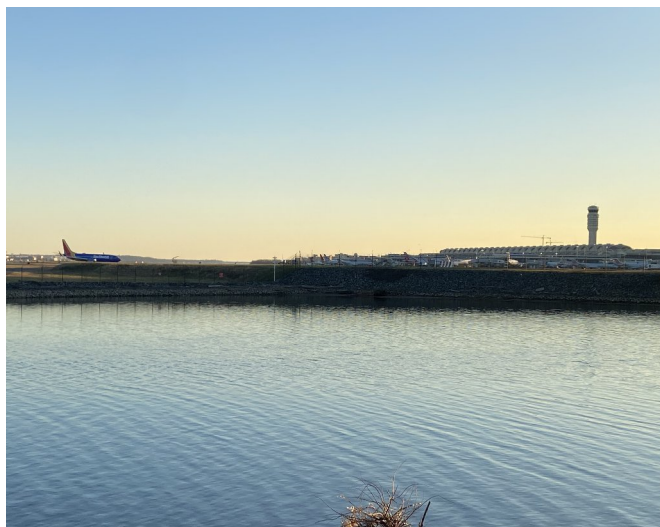
# The Hagerstown Homebuilder

[chapters.eaa.org/EAA36](http://chapters.eaa.org/EAA36) Hagerstown, MD

Vol. 32 No. 1

January

2023



**Happy New Year from Chapter 36!**

# EAA CHAPTER 36

**January 2023**

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**Published by**  
**EAA Chapter 36**  
**Hagerstown, MD**  
**[chapters.eaa.org/EAA36](http://chapters.eaa.org/EAA36)**

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## 2023-24 OFFICERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

<b>2023-24 OFFICERS AND SUPPORT STAFF</b>	
<b>President:</b> <b>Ray Franze</b> <a href="mailto:raymond.franze@gmail.com">raymond.franze@gmail.com</a>	<b>Vice-President:</b> <b>Gary Keller</b> <a href="mailto:garylkeller261@gmail.com">garylkeller261@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b> <b>Dean Popio</b> <a href="mailto:dmpopio@gmail.com">dmpopio@gmail.com</a>	<b>Treasurer:</b> <b>Dean Popio</b> <a href="mailto:dmpopio@gmail.com">dmpopio@gmail.com</a>
<b>Young Eagles Coordinator:</b> <b>Curtis Berry</b> <a href="mailto:cberry@myactv.net">cberry@myactv.net</a>	<b>Tech Counselor - Flight Advisor:</b> <b>Gary Hartle</b> <a href="mailto:g.hartle@comcast.net">g.hartle@comcast.net</a>
<b>Webmaster:</b> <b>Carl Thornwall</b> <a href="mailto:thorn@myactv.net">thorn@myactv.net</a>	<b>Newsletter Editors:</b> <b>The Thornwall Family</b> <a href="mailto:thorn@myactv.net">thorn@myactv.net</a>
<b>Board of Directors:</b>	
<b>Jim Marsden</b> <a href="mailto:jim.mindy@myactv.net">jim.mindy@myactv.net</a>	<b>Joe Boyle</b> <a href="mailto:joeboyle1@myactv.net">joeboyle1@myactv.net</a>
<b>Elizabeth Thornwall</b>	<b>Austin Colby</b> <a href="mailto:austin@colbytech.com">austin@colbytech.com</a>
	<b>Dave Anderson</b>

→→→ **Our next general membership meeting will be held January 3rd** →→→

## The President's Corner



Happy New Year!

I hope everyone enjoyed a joyous, peaceful, safe, and healthy holiday season. A special “Thank You!” to Curtis and Kate Berry for hosting chapter members for the traditional Christmas Party. Per standard operating procedures at the Berry residence, the decorations were amazing and the food was delicious—neither in short supply. And we had a fantastic turnout this year—relying on the delivery of additional chairs to accommodate everyone. The variety of presents during the mystery gift exchange did not disappoint either—we seemed to have everything from a single bottle of skin lotion to beautiful aviation artwork. We missed those who couldn't make it this year and hope you join us next time.

In case you haven't noticed, available daylight is increasing at an exciting rate of an additional minute every few days or so. We recently passed the “shortest day of the year,” so things are looking brighter. Congratulations to NASA and all those involved in the Artemis 1 project who saw the safe return of the Orion capsule after a multi-week trip where it orbited the moon a number of times prior to its return to Earth.

“Congratulations!” are in order for Madison Richardson, our current Ray Aviation Scholar, who accomplished her “First Solo” flight on December 14th. Madison completed this milestone in a little under 12 hours of flight time. She is training with Joe Baginski on the field at Hagerstown. Congratulations Madison!

Our monthly chapter gathering this month will return to PIA's Hagerstown campus (where we met in November). During this gathering we will present scholarships to two students who were selected by the scholarship committee to split the funds for the Walter Green Memorial Scholarship, as well as receive \$1,000 each from the Richard Shoup Memorial Scholarships. The only downside to awarding the Walter Green Memorial Scholarship is the realization that its time to begin raising funds for the next award.

By the conclusion of our chapter gathering in January, EAA Chapter 36 will have awarded \$47,500 in scholarship funds since 2019. An exceptional feat.

Don't forget to send in your annual chapter dues if you didn't sign up for the 3-year or Lifetime membership options in recent years. You can find the amount for local chapter dues below as well as our chapter's new address in case you prefer to send 'em in by mail. Digital payment options aren't far behind and we'll let the chapter know once that goes live.

Hopefully by now many of you participated in EAA's annual survey. We get credit for participation in EAA's Chapter Recognition Program. I also sent out, recently, our own survey via Google Docs (see the link below). Slightly redundant, but usually much more involved and localized (*unique*) to our chapter and activities. While some new, additional questions were added, it's good to ask many of the same questions due to our growing membership and hearing input from our new members. Your feedback and input are valuable to providing vectors for the direction of your chapter.

I look forward to seeing what 2023 brings our chapter in the form of new members, new and continued activities and adventures, and member accomplishments throughout the year.

Until next time ....

Safe skies!

# Chapter 36

## News and Events

Take the EAA Chapter 36 survey at the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1c43xfHfVWyGJfvpFOWHXi1sT6bv-SGjE9oHviZRa2jA>

EAA Chapter 36 Member Survey - Dec '22 / Jan '23

Knowing where we are to help us know where we're going

chapters.eaa.org/EAA36 (not shared) Switch account Draft saved

Name (Optional)

Your answer

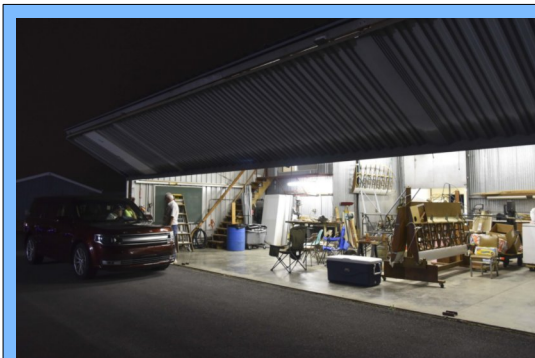
How long have you been a member of EAA Chapter 36?

Less than 2 years

2-3 years

3-5 years

<b>Current Fuel Prices</b>		
as of December 29, 2022		
<b>Airport</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FS</b>
Hagerstown	\$6.75	\$7.50
Frederick	\$6.85*	\$7.60
Martinsburg	\$6.29	\$6.69
Winchester	<b>\$5.69</b>	<b>\$6.19</b>
Cumberland		\$6.55
Carroll County	\$6.65	\$7.45
*Currently Unavailable		
<a href="http://www.airnav.com">www.airnav.com</a>		



Weekly Build Nights at the Chapter 36 Hangar,  
Monday nights at 7 p.m.

### January



**Chapter Meeting**

This month's chapter meeting will be held at the Hagerstown campus of the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics (PIA) on Tuesday, January 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.

## **\$ Chapter Membership Dues \$**

### **Current:**

Individual - \$30  
Individual (3) - \$75\*

Family - \$40  
Family (3) - \$105\*

Lifetime (I) - \$350  
Lifetime (F) - \$500

Honorary – Free

*\*(3) = three-year membership*

### **What does local chapter membership support?**

- PIA scholarship fund
- Youth flight training scholarship
- Youth RC project
- Young Eagles events
- Pancake breakfasts
- EAA national chapter dues & insurance
- Young Eagles Workshops
- Movie Nights
- Technical Counselor access for member build projects
- Flight Advisor access for member build projects
- Flyouts and other social events
- Member accomplishment celebrations
- Pedal Plane projects
- EAA youth camp sponsorships
- Banquet Awards
- VMC/IMC Club events
- Build project aircraft and supplies
- Hangar rent and utilities to support activities
- Tools and Accessories
- Machinery
- Online seminars
- Speaker presentations
- Volunteer opportunities
- Host annual Poker Run
- Marketing / Promotional activities

**List may include activities that are proposed but not presently active**

### **Dues are payable:**

- By cash, check or credit card at any of our events
- By mail – send cash, check or money order to:

EAA CHAPTER 36  
18515 Henson Blvd Hangar 6A  
Hagerstown Regional Airport  
Hagerstown, MD 21742

## Aviation News:

### Young Eagles Year-End Wrap-Up

<https://www.eaa.org/ea/news-and-publications/ea-news-and-aviation-news/young-eagles-youth-education/2022-12-16-year-end-wrapup>

### Avoiding “Flap Sink”

[https://pilotworkshop.com/tips/sinking\\_flaps/](https://pilotworkshop.com/tips/sinking_flaps/)

### Hyde Field Closes, Bringing ‘The DC3’ Down to Just Two

<https://www.flyingmag.com/hyde-field-closes-bringing-the-dc3-down-to-just-two/>

### The story of the crew of a badly damaged American B-17 that was saved by a Luftwaffe Bf 109 pilot that escorted the crippled bomber over the North Sea

<https://theaviationgeekclub.com/the-story-of-the-crew-of-a-badly-damaged-american-b-17-that-was-saved-by-a-luftwaffe-bf-109-pilot-that-escorted-the-crippled-bomber-over-the-north-sea/>

### National Guard Helps Santa Visit Frosty Alaska Village

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-military/2022/12/11/national-guard-helps-santa-visit-frosty-alaska-village/>

### Is Flying Through Snow Considered 'Known Icing'?

<https://www.boldmethod.com/learn-to-fly/weather/is-flying-through-snow-considered-known-icing-conditions-in-flight-winter-icm/>

### Teen Takes Milestone Young Eagle Flight in L-39 Albatros

<https://www.flyingmag.com/teen-takes-milestone-young-eagle-flight-in-l-39-albatros/>

### Museum Spotlight: National Museum of the U.S. Air Force

<https://www.flyingmag.com/museum-spotlight-national-museum-of-the-u-s-air-force/>

### Pilot Cited Visibility In Maryland Power Line Crash

<https://www.avweb.com/aviation-news/pilot-cited-visibility-in-maryland-power-line-crash/>

### AirVenture 2023 Tickets Now Available

<https://generalaviationnews.com/2022/12/22/airventure-2023-tickets-now-available/>

### Congressional Action Underway to Fix LODA Requirement Issue

<https://www.eaa.org/ea/news-and-publications/ea-news-and-aviation-news/news/fixing-loda-requirement-issues>

### Christmas in the Nation

Pilots deliver a ‘mountain of donations’ to the Navajo reservation.

<https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2022/december/pilot/christmas-in-the-nation>

### Update: Early Analysis Wings Over Dallas Midair

A Bell P-63F Kingcobra (N6763) and Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress (Texas Raiders-N7227C).

<https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2022/december/15/update-early-analysis-wings-over-dallas-midair>

### Fighter Pilot Who Tailed a Civilian Plane Blamed for Destroying F-16

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2022/12/02/fighter-pilot-who-tailed-a-civilian-plane-blamed-for-destroying-f-16/>

### How to Avoid Junk Instruction

<https://www.flyingmag.com/how-to-avoid-junk-instruction/>

### Flying for Our future

<https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2022/december/13/flying-for-our-future>

### Living Legend: WWII Fighter Pilot Gets Honorary Promotion

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2022/12/05/living-legend-wwii-fighter-pilot-gets-honorary-promotion/>

### How Often Should I Fly After the Check Ride?

<https://www.flyingmag.com/how-often-should-i-fly-post-checkride/>

## Upcoming EAA Webinars

Full list: <https://www.eaa.org/ea/news-and-publications/ea-webinars>

Date	Time	Title	Presenter(s)
1/4/23	7 p.m. CST	<a href="#">System Awareness</a> <b>Qualifies for FAA WINGS and AMT credit.</b>	Mike Busch <i>How often do you look at your ammeter when you're in cruise flight? How about your oil pressure gauge? If you're honest, your answer should probably be "not often enough." Situational awareness requires being aware of your aircraft systems, too. In this webinar, Mike Busch (A&amp;P and CFI) discusses two recent lightplane flights that were cut short because the aircraft's Lycoming engines lost oil pressure, lost power, and seized. One of the pilots made it to an airport, the other didn't. Mike will deconstruct both flights and talk about some important lessons all pilots can learn from them.</i>
1/10/23	7 p.m. CST	<a href="#">The Ford Tri-Motor and EAA's "Tin Goose"</a> <b>Museum Webinar Series</b>	Chris Henry and Ben Page <i>The Ford Tri-Motor was America's first true airliner. This aircraft carried businessmen and young people on their first big adventure. Today, EAA continues to operate this airframe, and people are still feeling that grand sense of adventure when onboard.</i>
1/11/23	7 p.m. CST	<a href="#">LODA – Letter of Deviation Authority for Flight Instruction</a> <b>Qualifies for FAA WINGS credit.</b>	Prof. H. Paul Shuch <i>Although commercial flight operations in experimental aircraft have long been restricted, an owner of an experimental could usually pay for and receive quality flight instruction. Recent changes have made that process more difficult, though not impossible. Prof. H. Paul Shuch discusses in this WINGS webinar how flight instructors and aircraft owners can now apply for a letter of deviation authority (LODA) to facilitate safety and currency through professional flight training.</i>
1/18/23	7 p.m. CST	<a href="#">Engine Dehydration: Cheaper Than an Overhaul!</a> <b>Qualifies for FAA WINGS credit and AMT credit.</b>	Matthew Dock <i>Corrosion is possibly the greatest cost to aircraft owners. Most aircraft owners don't realize that the relentless impact of long-term corrosion could require a premature and expensive engine overhaul or even scrapping. There are direct correlations between humidity and corrosion rates and between corrosion and engine wear. Even when ambient humidity doesn't feel uncomfortable, the humidity level inside your engine can accelerate costly corrosion. This webinar will discuss techniques, procedures, and equipment that can reduce corrosion inside aircraft engines. Matthew Dock is a registered professional engineer, aircraft owner, and A&amp;P/IA mechanic.</i>

## Ray Aviation Scholarship Update: Madison Richardson



Hello, my name is Madison Richardson and I am the Ray Aviation Scholar for 2022. After applying in late June for this scholarship I was pleased to hear back in late August that I was the recipient. It felt so surreal to be given this large sum of money at such a young age to chase a huge dream of mine. My dream is to become a fighter pilot, I hope to be selected to attend the United States Air Force Academy and feel that this scholarship will help to increase my chances. I know that the selection process is very strict to get into the USAFA so my backup plan is to attend an aviation college and enlist in the Guard to continue to pursue my dream to fly as a career.

I turned 16 on October 25, so we were able to officially submit my application to the EAA for their final approval. Once I knew I was officially approved I took my first lesson at our lovey home airport of KHGR on November 14, 2022. It was the best experience ever, I got to do basic maneuvers and get the feel for the plane I am flying, which is a 1974 Cessna 172N. My flight instructor Joe Baginski, who has logged over 12,000 flight hours, was very supportive and helped me make sure I knew what everything that the aircraft did and how it worked during stalls, slow flight, turns, landings, etc.

I continued to fly weekly, if not multiple times a week, all through November and December. During my lessons we did many, many landings, and loops around the pattern. We also took a lot of scenic trips to Franklin County Regional, and we even flew to Martinsburg once. I was able to log some real IFR time and experience shooting an ILS approach into KHGR. I can say that this was a very eye opening and exhilarating experience and really showed me the importance of earning my instrument rating.

On December 14, 2022, after my third loop around the pattern with Joe I was told to “make this next one a full stop and taxi me back to your mom.” Now, for all the fellow pilots reading this newsletter you can probably guess what was next. At 11 flight hours and exactly 1 month after I began flight training, I heard “that sentence”. I taxied back to the fuel pump and Joe said, “Go solo, you got this.”

With my stomach flipping upside down with joy and nervousness I taxied to the runway, made my call to the tower announcing that I was a student solo and took off on my first SOLO flight. It was the most exciting and nerve-racking experience I think I have ever experienced, and at the same time it was a life changing moment that I will remember forever! I am so thankful for everything this chapter has done for me so far and I am looking forward to all my flying adventures in the future! Safe Skies!





## 25 Years Ago Today – January 6, 1998

### Thanks to Jay Kanagy

The regular monthly meeting of the Hagerstown Chapter 36, EAA., Inc. was held in the meeting room at Hagerstown Aircraft Services (formerly Alphin's) located at the Washington County Regional Airport on Tuesday, January 6, 1998. The meeting was called to order by the Acting President, Ken Bercaw, at 7:30 P.M. with twenty-three Members and guests present. Acting President Jack welcomed everybody. He introduced Gene Kretzer, Manager of the ATC Tower, who talked to the members for a few minutes and then passed out a Customer Satisfaction Survey and asked the pilots to fill it out and return it to the tower. Ken reminded the members that everyone that pays dues is a member of the operating committee. The Operating Committee and Board of Directors will meet in the EAA Hangar Lounge, January 27, at 7:30 P.M. Tonight's program is on Workshop Safety.

#### BUSINESS MEETING:

At last year's Banquet, the members voted to hold it again in March. The menu and reservation form are again in this issue of the Newsletter. Please note the date has been changed to the second Saturday, Saturday, March 4, at 6:00 P.M. We need 50 reservations to get the \$12.00 price. The list of previous winners for the various awards were listed in last month's Newsletter.

Ken appointed a Fly-In Committee: Dean Truax, Bobbie McBee, Don Myers and Bob Scott. They are to make recommendations as to date, place, etc.

The Newsletter policy will remain the same for members - dues not paid by March, no more Newsletters.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS, PROJECTS:

Mini-Max - Don Wilson reported it is coming along. The fuselage is almost complete, thanks to Walter. Tomorrow will be working on the fuselage and landing gear.

Don Myers received a letter of support for the Young Eagles.

Potomac Fly-in - Dean suggested holding later in the year, possibly the third week in September. He doesn't see anything scheduled for that date. Maybe we don't have haze and thunderstorms.

Rick Saunders presented the program for the evening - Extra Thoughts to Safety. OSHA stresses the wearing of: 1. Steel toed safety shoes; 2. Hearing protocol - plugs, muffs; 3. Eye protection - safety glasses or goggles; and 4. Respiratory protection - usual respirator. Use different cartridges in your respirator for different chemicals. Make sure your respirator fits – is comfortable and gets a good seal. If you can still smell the chemical, it is not a good fit. Replace the filters when you can smell the solvents. Be clean shaven so it fits good. If you have a beard, you must use special hoods. Protect your skin by wearing long sleeves, long pants or coveralls. protect your hands by wearing gloves - light weight goatskin is good. Don't wash your hands with thinner. Heavy rubber gloves will resist solvents for a time. Don't use cotton work gloves with solvents. If you must clean with solvents, use surgical gloves, but they will break down after a time. If you wear contact lens, take them out and wear regular glasses as fumes can irritate your eyes with contacts. Accidents can still happen, so keep water or eye wash handy. Rick suggested changing the filter in your respirator one a month. MSDS safety sheets list every solvent and paint. Look at the labels on the cans. Don't ever use any solvent without protective gloves. If cleaning parts, handle with pliers - avoid putting your hands in any cleaners.

Hancock Fly-in in September; Young Eagles Day, June 14; and Chamberfest and Young Eagles Day the third week in July - 18 and 19. Washington County Pilots Association dinner on February 7 at the Elks Lodge. Fifteen dollars per person with reservations to be made to Gerald Zimmerman.

Alphin has been sold - it is now Hagerstown Aircraft Services.

Pete Humphrey is our Safety Advisor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Submitted by June Green.

## Members' Pages

### Ray Franze

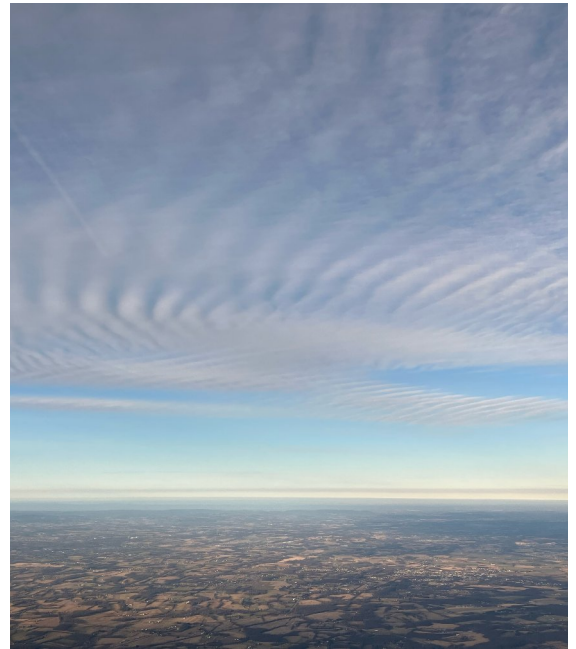
I was in Alexandria, VA for three weeks for work. My hotel room overlooked the Potomac and the office complex was right on the river. So I had a steady diet of DCA departures and arrivals. And Gravelly Point, one of the greatest locations for airplane spotting, was just four miles from my hotel. Needless to say, I enjoyed my surroundings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQYztG4oKnQ>



## Dave Anderson

Local flight with Craig Fuller's granddaughter Olivia who is a naval aviator. Many of the EAA folks will remember Craig who built 3 aircraft including an RV-10 and RV-12. Olivia flies a P-3 for the Navy and is a CFII and A&P. Aviation is certainly in the blood and she attributes the passion for aviation to her grandad.



## Pete Walters

Start the grandkids early. An Amelia Earhart shirt AND doll.  
A great way to turn 5.



## Elizabeth Thornwall

Yukon Sourdough DC-3 giving tours at  
Frederick (KFDK).



Elizabeth is now working part time as a flight  
instructor at Bravo Flight Training.

## Tony Vallillo – Part 2

I offer you a series of articles that I wrote for the website [www.flightsim.com](http://www.flightsim.com) some years back about the Thorp T-211 and my flight in it from Oregon to Connecticut after I bought it back in 1996. This is a low and slow saga, close to the experiences of many of our members, and might perhaps be of interest to some. – Tony



Two early Indus Thorpedo's at Oshkosh, at the Light Sport airplane pavilion. The first Thorpedo's were just straight T-211's either refurbished or built new from the stock of parts fabricated in 1966. A bit later on, Indus modified the airplane with a Jabiru engine and some plastic parts, and several had smooth wings



Indus website today, after production ceased in this country. It looks like efforts are being made to build the airplane in China, although it is not clear if such airplanes will be available in the American market. The Thorpedo did not sell well against the sleeker and sexier looking composite designs from Europe, not that any of those sold all that well either!

Unfortunately, the airplane was still star-crossed. The light sport world turned out to feature mostly slick composite designs that, although still slow (as the regulations required), looked like they were going Mach one standing still! The Thorpedo, even with its plastic wingtips and cowl, still looked like a 1946 design. To make matters worse, some flight schools that had acquired a few for rental and instruction began complaining that the airplane could not hold up under the abuse of renter pilots and students, which created a largely undeserved reputation as a less than robust design. As of today, Indus is no longer producing airplanes, at least in this country, although the original corporate concept had involved simultaneous production and sales in India. A web site now indicates that production may begin in China, so we shall see what we shall see.

Starting in the late 1980's I had been hearing a great deal from Dave about his adventures with Thorp and the SkySkooter. He had a picture in his basement workshop, where he was busy building a Glasair III, that depicted a youthful version of himself in the cockpit of a T-211 about to take to the skies. He regaled me with tales of how he and Thorp used to try to sandbag the great Jim Bede with the Skooter, hoping to promote a race between the Thorp and Bede designs; a competition that, according to Dave, Bede always managed to duck!

Dave did a good bit of the certification flight testing in 1966, and one of his stories involved the fact that it proved to be nearly impossible to get the little airplane to spin, which is a requirement of certification (spin recovery, that is!). It turned out that Thorp had to add weights in the tail cone aft of the cockpit in order to move the center of gravity beyond the normal aft limit. Only then could the Skooter be forced into a spin of sorts (as opposed to a diving spiral, which it could be induced to do at normal limits). It had to be held in the spin with pro-spin controls, and the minute that the controls were released it popped out of the spin.

I began to be intrigued by these tales and others from Dave's vast repertoire. So much so that when an opportunity came up to actually fly in a Skooter, I jumped at the chance. John Thorp had gone West in 1992, and by early 1996 his widow was selling the T-211 that he had owned at the end of his life, serial number 3, which had been built in 1946 and modified to the T-211 standard, with the 100hp engine, in 1966. Dave eagerly availed himself of the opportunity to own this piece of aviation history, but a big obstacle loomed large - Dave had lost his FAA medical certificate some years back, as the result of several heart attacks. He would need a licensed pilot to fly with him at all times. Enter yours truly.



Dave's airplane as it was delivered to us at Oshkosh in 1996. The little Skooter drew a crowd, then as now. Dave is in the Tee shirt and ball cap, extolling the Skooter's virtues to an interested party. Your humble author, more pragmatically, is preparing himself for the rigors of the impending Argosy under the right wing!

Dave and I both went to Oshkosh every year, so it was a simple matter to arrange delivery of his "new" toy at the airshow. The plan was to pick up the airplane at Oshkosh and fly it home to Connecticut. This would be more interesting that it might appear, because the airplane had essentially no navigation instruments in it, nor did it have a transponder. I suggested to Dave that he invest in the transponder, which he did. As for the nav gear, we had a Garmin 95 handheld GPS unit to find our way home.

Flight planning was relatively simple - we just drew a course line from Oshkosh to our first fueling point a half hour or so south, and thence across Lake Michigan and south of Detroit and Cleveland to Youngstown Ohio, where we figured we would have had enough of flying for one day and would put up for the night. After that it was straight across northern Pennsylvania to Scranton, and then on to Dave's chosen home airport of Simsbury Connecticut.



Dave in the left seat, ready to crank up and go on the first leg out of Oshkosh

The trip to Oshkosh that year was a bit more of a logistical challenge than it normally was, since I would be flying home from Wittman field instead of driving down to O Hare and riding home on the jumpseat of some American jet. I made arrangements to return the rental car at Milwaukee, and Dave picked me up there and returned me to Oshkosh to begin the long flight home. We flew out on Saturday, intending to depart just prior to the closing of the airport for the afternoon airshow. After a through preflight by both of us we mounted up, me in the right seat and Dave in the left. Dave got us started (a simple evolution in the Skooter) and we joined the long conga line of departing aircraft for the journey to runway 18.

Everyone and their dog seemed determined to get out prior to the show, so the wait was not short, but in due course we were directed to line up and wait on one side of the runway by hand signals from FAA controllers

who dressed and acted more like the launch crew on an aircraft carrier. We had the radio on, but at Oshkosh much of the communication is non verbal. A flagman cleared us for takeoff with a flourish that would not have been out of place at Indy on Memorial Day, and we went charging down the runway mere seconds after another airplane that had lined up on the other side of the runway.

The pre-briefed drill was to stay low, below 1000 feet, until we were some distance away from Wittman, to avoid the incoming traffic which was flying over our heads. Once sufficiently removed from the vicinity, we could climb at will. Since we were only going a few miles, we leveled off at 3500 feet and I began to enjoy the view. One of the minor trepidations I had about the flight was just what the state of Dave's flying skills would be, since it had literally been a decade or more since he had taken the controls of any airplane. As it turned out I had nothing to worry about - Dave's flying was excellent, especially considering his years on the ground. All I had to do was keep a general eye on things and offer strategic advice if it became warranted.

The flight to our first stop, Sheboygan Wisconsin (KSBM), was a mere 30 minutes flying time from Oshkosh. But I was already becoming impressed by the blistering lack of speed displayed by the possibly misnamed "Sky Skooter"! Although I had flown on occasion in Cessna 172's and was thus no stranger to lack of speed, the Skooter seemed to be flying through some sort of aeronautical glue, especially to someone accustomed to true airspeeds considerably in excess of 400 knots. And so it was that while we were refueling at Sheboygan, when an obviously uninformed bystander opined that the Skooter looked like it was "as fast as a bullet", I replied laconically: "...yes it is, if you took the bullet out of the gun and just threw it!"

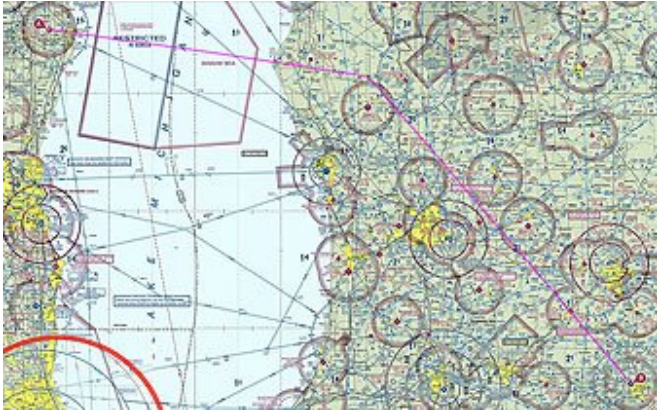


In flight. This is my airplane, not Dave's.

The next leg, across the lake, was an interesting one indeed. You may wonder why a dedicated non-swimmer such as I would even consider an undertaking like flying across one of the Great Lakes. Well, as strange as it may seem I have always been somewhat fatalistic about water crossings in airplanes, even small ones; and although I would sooner gnaw my own arm off than ferry a small airplane across, say, the North Atlantic, I have considerably less trepidation about bodies of water like Long Island Sound, or even Lake Michigan. Indeed, a crossing of Lake Michigan at its most narrow point would cut more than an hour off our flight time to Youngstown, and perhaps as much as two hours. The lure of such time savings, especially in an airplane with the blistering speed of the SkySkooter, was certainly enough to embolden me to consider a short maritime adventure!

We set off from Sheboygan and headed toward the lake, but a short distance away. It was my intention to give at least a nod toward the concept of "gliding distance from land", and so I advised Dave to make the crossing at 9500 feet (the actual service ceiling is 12,500 feet, but consideration of Dave's cardiopulmonary condition led me to select a slightly lower altitude). At this altitude, I told myself, we should have only about 10 miles without the capability to make shore (I had yet to discover that the Skooter has approximately the same glide ratio as the Space Shuttle!). So up to 9500 feet we went, a laborious process that took over 20 minutes.

Alas, when we arrived at the giddy heights, we discovered that haze prevented us from discerning any sort of horizon. We could see straight down, but that was all. The visibility was VMC; that is, at least 3 miles, but over the water three miles did not give us a visible horizon line. The difficulty that this brought on lay in the equipment on the instrument panel of this bird - there were no gyro instruments of any kind, not even a turn coordinator (with which I would have been perfectly comfortable). I informed Dave that we must descend to an altitude at which a visible horizon is apparent, and thus lose whatever measure of comfort we might have enjoyed at 9500 feet.



Our approximate route from Sheboygan to Jackson, over Lake Michigan

Down we went, and it turned out that we had to descend all the way to 2500 feet to get a decent horizon. By now we were far enough out to "sea" that we might as well continue ahead, and so we did. The engine, as they always seem to do in these circumstances, began to "sound" rough, but fortunately I was wise to this oft-reported characteristic and was able to ignore it. "Put your trust in God and Pratt and Whitney" is the old saw, and it worked once again as land hove into sight after about 15 minutes of being surrounded by nothing but water.

Once across, we turned the nose of the Skooter toward our next planned stop, Jackson Michigan (KJXN), just about halfway between Battle Creek and Ann Arbor. After a short stop there for refueling and a bite to eat we were off again bound for Youngstown Ohio (KYNG), an airport that I had occasionally visited to watch airplanes in the distant past of my youth. It was early evening when we arrived at YNG, after a total of 4.5 hours of flying from Oshkosh. Dave gave me the leg into YNG, and I was able to get an idea of how this ship handled. All in all, it was a great day of flying.

The next morning we flew from YNG to Scranton/Wilkes Barre in northern Pennsylvania, and then on to this Skooter's new home at Simsbury Connecticut (4B9). Simsbury is a tiny little airport in the shadow of Bradley International Airport in mid-Connecticut. Its runway is a mere 2200 feet long and a skinny 50 feet wide, and calls for a certain degree of pilot skill to avoid coming to grief either off one side or off the end. Fortunately Dave's pilot skills, refreshed as they were from four legs and nearly 9 hours of flying, were more than adequate to the task, and the home field landing was uneventful. It took several hours to solve the Tetris puzzle of how to shoehorn the SkySkooter into a small hangar already occupied by a Piper Cub, but Dave and the hangar's owner had already done the engineering studies and after considerable in and out pushing and shoving both airplanes were securely housed within the hangar's confines, an outcome that, at several times, I thought would be unattainable!





This is the photo that got it all started - N112T as it appeared in the original advertisements, including the one I saw in Trade-A-Plane

This exposure to an airplane that heretofore had been just a photo on a wall, and the subject of various verbal reminiscences, proved to be infectious. The little plane flew very nicely -by no means a Pitts, but much more fun to fly than the Cherokees I was in the habit of flying in those days. This got me thinking about owning an airplane once again, and inevitably that led to a subscription to Trade-a-Plane. Lo and behold, within 2 months a SkySkooter appeared in the pages of that journal, and it looked to be the cream puff of the fleet!



The SkySkooter awaits my inspection

N112T was out in Oregon, at a small airport at a town called Independence. After conferring at length with She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed about the financial feasibility of airplane ownership and obtaining her surprisingly enthusiastic concurrence, I contacted the seller. The airplane, as it turned out, had been completely disassembled and restored by him, and was said to be in immaculate condition, an assertion borne out by the pictures the owner sent to me. Now as I indicated earlier, there were only around 6 Skooters in the USA at that time, and probably only three or four that were airworthy and in registration. I had neither the interest nor the financial wherewithal to undertake an actual restoration, so 112T seemed to be the best of all possible worlds. I immediately made plans for Dave to accompany me out to Oregon and take a look at the bird. What better pre-buy inspection could there be, I reasoned, than one done by the original test pilot himself? So off we went.



Dave and the owner checking it over carefully - everything checked out AOK!



The instrument panel of 112T when I first saw it. It had no transponder, but it did have a Loran, which eventually was removed to make room for the new transponder.

We discovered that the owner lived on an airpark located on the Independence airport. He turned out to be an aeronautical engineer, and he had done all of the restoration himself, under the supervision of an FAA mechanic, which is a perfectly legal and actually fairly commonplace arrangement. The airplane was superb; a symphony of polished aluminum with orange and blue accents strongly reminiscent of the livery of the original American Airlines DC-3's. The owner had stripped all the paint off the airplane and done all of the polishing himself; a task that I would later discover, through my efforts to keep up the appearance of the airplane, to have been little short of the labors of Hercules. Dave spent an entire day examining every nook and cranny of the little bird, and at day's end pronounced it fit and well worthy of serious consideration. By that time, after considerable scrutiny of my own, I had developed a case of the wants for that plane that was obviously not to be denied.

We all went out to dinner that evening and it was at that point that I offered to buy 112T at the very reasonable price the owner had indicated. The only haggling that ensued involved my request that he throw in the two David Clark headsets that were in the airplane - a request to which he agreed. A handshake sealed the deal, and we drank a toast to the Skooter.



The cockpit. Cozy, but surprisingly not cramped. My only wish is for just a bit more of a reclining angle in the seatback.



It took (and still takes!) many an hour of hard labor to keep it looking like this!

After Dave and I flew back to Connecticut, I set about arranging the financial side of the transaction. This done, I contacted the seller and set a date for me to return and complete the deal. And then began the planning for the Silver Argosy!

Continued in the next installment - Low and Slow across America.

You can also read it here: <https://www.flightsim.com/vbfs/content.php?15720-Silver-Argosy-Part-2>