

# THE STROBE



May 2023

Art By Bob O'Hara

Placerville, CA

EAA 512

## Prez Sez...

### MAYDAY MAYDAY

By Jim Wilson

In the air, the words a pilot hopes never to speak and declare an emergency. Mayday is a distress call that first came into the English in 1923 with a lot of flights over the English Channel.

On the ground, we have 9-1-1 and cell phones.

As winter storms began to pile up with one pineapple express or "atmospheric river" after another, we saw record snowfall and rain in the Sierra. Snowpack three times normal followed by warming temperatures now

raise the concern for floods. PLEASE, can we declare the draught is over? Here in the middle of May, weather is starting to cooperate with our desire to fly.

It is time for damage assessment to the local community and the airport. The collapse of a large metal storage shed just 4 miles away on final approach to runway 23 is testimony to the destructive nature of the elements. The snow load of 5 feet of wet snow on a flat roof is enormous. It can even turn a Cessna 172 into a tail dragger and cause runway closures for weeks.

The aerial view on the next page shows the collapsed steel structure in Camino on March 10 that destroyed over 70 vehicles, motorhomes, trailers, cars and boats. The property damage was in the millions.





At the airport, this private hangar suffered considerable damage from an earlier winter storm that dislodged the hangar doors and broke all four skylights exposing the hangar to rain and snow.



Now five months later, this picture reveals the contents of the hangar in full public view. Repairs and clean-up are the responsibility of the owner. To date, no clean up or restoration work has been done.

QUESTION: To whom should this “ground emergency” be reported? Airports Division or Cemeteries Division?

ANSWER: Actually, to both.

This may be the only airport in the country where airports and cemeteries fall under one roof or division providing a sort of cradle to grave “efficiency”.

An article by Rick Durben in September 21, 2020 has great relevance to Placerville airport. The title “The Hangar’s Done. What Can I Put in it?” By Rick Durben Sept 21, 2020.

“For years, it seems that the most common disagreement between airport management and hangar tenants is what the tenant can store in

his or her hangar.

The answer depends on whether the airport is a public use airport that receives Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant money or a private airport (we’ll lump public use airports that do not receive AIP monies with private airports).“

To borrow the Capitol One expression “What’s in your wallet” or hangar? Answer: 4 jeeps, 2 mustangs, 1 AC cobra, 2 fishing boats, 1 Grumman Tiger.

Since PVF is a public use airport receiving federal AIP grant money, the airport owner has to operate the airport for “aeronautical purposes.”

On June 9, 2016, the FAA came out with guidance by issuing its *Final Policy on the non-Aeronautical Use of Airport Hangars* (<https://tinyurl.com/y3o6km23>).

“Non-aeronautical items may be stored in the hangar *if* the items do not interfere with the aeronautical use of the hangar. Put simply, if you can *easily* get your airplane in and out of your hangar, the other stuff you store in there is your business—unless it’s a fire hazard.

In its policy, the FAA explicitly recognizes that a homebuilt aircraft under construction is an aeronautical activity. By the same token, the FAA recognizes that the builder has to be making progress on the project—it can’t be static. The airport owner has the right to incorporate and enforce construction progress targets in a hangar or land lease. The goal is that the hangar will be used to house an airworthy aircraft in a reasonable time.

Consistent with that requirement is the FAA policy that an airport owner can prohibit the indefinite storage of nonoperational aircraft.”

The Grumman AA5 would require major effort to move with its hangar partners and therefore has not been moved in years.

This is not the only hangar that “violates” the hangar use policy. It took one widow 5 years to clear the hangar of planes and stuff in order to sell the hangar. A new

It is a sad commentary that some airports suffer from a malaise of development while other airports thrive, building new hangars to support the airport and creating an economic engine for the community . Just look at Auburn which completed rows of brand-new hangars at the end of runway 25. In contrast, Placerville stopped development more than ten years ago after spending a significant amount of money for a road and taxi infrastructure near runway 23.

What’s been done of late? If you hang out at the airport office on a Sunday morning, you might hear some scuttlebutt. The enormous shortage of hangar space leaves new aircraft owners no choice but to subject their planes to the elements and hazards of outside storage. Just remember the vandalism over the past several years. The airport owner should articulate a vision and move forward with plans to expand airport facilities long overdue, investigate alternative uses for the east end with a mix of shade shelters, T-hangars and box hangars.

Remember the theme of the movie **A Field of Dreams**.

**“IF WE BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.”**



tenant moved in and immediately cleaned, water-proofed and restored the hangar to “near new condition”. This is an example of what can happen when new owners move to the field and rehabilitate their facility and improve the airport.

Several years ago another hangar was finally sold and the contents, a boat and furniture, were removed after more than 10 years.



Auburn Airport East End New Development

A lack of enforcement policy by the airport officials is a contributing factor to derelict planes on the ramp or behind hangar doors, damaged hangars and damaged planes, and hangars that sit empty for years.



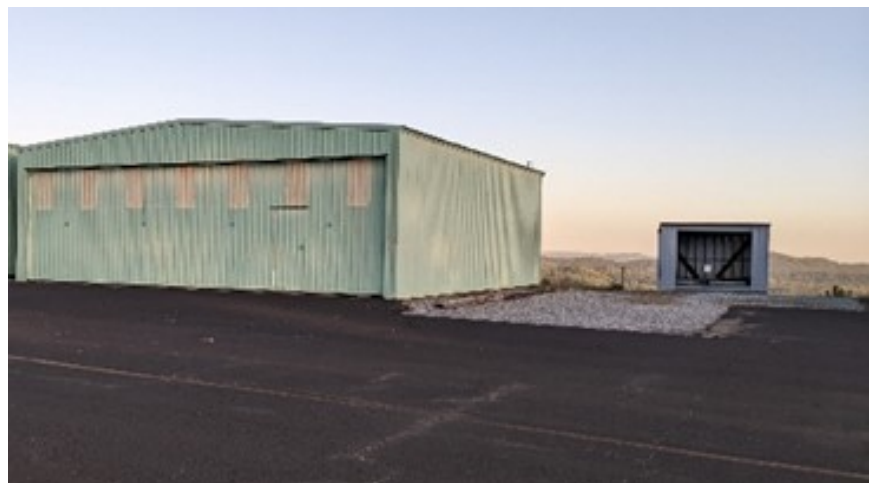
Navion Oil Tanker at Placerville



## Placerville Airport Undeveloped Area



Airplane sold and hangar has been empty for 5 years.





# ONE LAST TIME – Fly Fast, Turn Left Reno Air races September 17th



As you may know by this time the Reno Air Races after 2023 will no longer be held in Reno. If you want to know why please visit the race association website. Hopefully the race association will find another home. Therefore, EAA 512 has organized a trip out to Reno **Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>**. We will be gathering at the Park and Ride at Highway 50 and Ray Lawyer Drive and taking a 6:45 AM luxury bus to the races for the day returning the same evening. The cost will be \$50 per person which covers the roundtrip bus ride. You will be responsible for acquiring your own admission to the races. For event tickets go to [airrace.org](http://airrace.org).

Please reserve your seat on the bus to our Treasurer Judy Gordon at [judieaa512@gmail.com](mailto:judieaa512@gmail.com). Judi will be at the March meeting if you wish to do so in person. **You will only have a seat on the bus when the payment is received.** We cannot refund your money due to the limited seating and cost of the charter, however if we have a waiting list and someone replaces your spot, we can make a refund. **We will close the reservations on June 1<sup>st</sup>.** So first come first reserved. If you have any further questions please contact Tim Sullivan at [timpvf@comcast.net](mailto:timpvf@comcast.net). We hope to see you there.



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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## UNINTENDED SIDE EFFECTS

**I'M SUFFERING NECK CRAMPS** — shaking my head so frequently reading "Super Mini Fortress" (March)! Every few sentences and photos I was, "WHAT? You've got to be kidding ...."

What a fantastic story — what else is there to say? Thanks for bringing it to all of us aviation readers — we can't thank you enough.

**J. B. Rivard**, EAA 1300985  
Mesa, Arizona

**Not Forgotten**  
**NOW IN MY 80s**, I no longer fly but still keep up with the Gone West list of passing EAAs each month. The *EAA Sport Aviation* March 2023 issue lists John Burgin, EAA 5218, as having "gone west."

John played a major role in my 50-year flying career, signing off my Van's RV-4 on behalf of the FAA on May 22, 1989. I flew its initial flight on the following day and some 1,300 hours around the United States and Canada before selling it to a fellow aviator in 2006. The framed pink slip signed by John still hangs on my workshop wall.

**Dr. Charles D. Haynes**, EAA 93373  
Winter Haven, Florida

**Bidding Beth Goodbye**  
**IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE** my disappointment after reading Beth E. Stanton's March Innovation article sidebar indicating her "Farewell." I will miss her natural style, making sometimes-complex information easily understood. Because of that, I found her articles entertaining to the point I would sometimes skip directly to her articles before reading everything else so I could learn what the latest developments might be.

That said, I hope her "new horizons [that] beckon" bring her even more fulfillment than I have enjoyed while reading her articles.

**Rick Gaylord**, EAA 837605  
Placerville, California

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**COMMENT**  
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Letters to  
Editor, P.O.  
to editing

8 *Sport Aviation* May 2023

Beth Stanton, from Modesto, has been writing articles and columns for years for Sport Aviation. She recently wrote that she's leaving that position for a new job. Many people wrote in to EAA National lamenting her departure. Out of all those letters, Rick Gaylord's was chosen to be published in the May issue.

Many people will miss Beth Stanton's columns in "Sport Aviation", but our own Rick Gaylord expressed it best. That must be why his letter got printed on page 8 of this month's issue. Congratulations, Rick!

**Thank You to Our Wonderful  
Volunteers who help out when  
there is a need and make a  
difference in our  
aviation community!**

EAA National just concluded their “2023 Pilot Your Own Adventure” writing contest. This was my entry into that contest. It did not win...

## Unconventional Dreams

Rob Bulaga, EAA 88971

I was a lazy runner in high school. Whether on the cross-country course or while running the mile in Track, I was slow enough to allow lots of time for day-dreaming. And my day-dreams were invariably about personal flight. My goal, upon graduation, was to be able to design, build, and fly unconventional aircraft. In college, I studied aeronautical engineering. My college had an associated flight school, so I picked up my private, commercial, and instructor ratings by the time I had my Bachelor’s degree. It was at the college airport, while working on my commercial, that I discovered an issue of “Sport Aviation”. I’d found kindred spirits! Proof that you could design, build, and fly your own concepts.

Like all of us, life threw detours; getting married, buying a house, having kids. At least, I did keep flying on weekends, towing gliders and banners. When I finally got around to building my first dream, it was a human powered ornithopter. (*Can we say “Lunatic Fringe”?*) The Kremer Prize was still up for grabs, so I fabricated a small (33’ wingspan), light (33 lb empty weight), foot launched, flapping wing (the outboard 5’ on each wing flapped) aircraft. Needless to say, it wasn’t an outstanding success. I did enjoy a few extended glides. What the ornithopter did do, however, was cement my reputation for working on unconventional concepts.



**Daedalus Ornithopter**

My day-job was working for a major aircraft manufacturer, designing fighter aircraft and exotic drones. My reputation, though, landed me side-hustles improving the aerodynamics of race cars, dragsters, motorcycles, and even bobsleds. It was an easy step for me to enter the world of HPVs (human powered vehicles). Pedal-powered,



land vehicles were easier to create than aircraft. I did, however, acquire skills working with composites, which would come in handy when I returned to building flying machines. (*Note that the canopies on these two HPVs are from a Monnett Monerai.*)

**Lightfoot & Wildfyre HPVs**



Between my penchant for unique aircraft and my experience with high-speed, twin-tail fighters, I ended up working on modifications to the BD-10 that created Peregrine Flight International's PJ-2. That program, unfortunately, ended with a fatal crash. My involvement, however, led to numerous contacts and opportunities in grassroots aviation. I've worked on over two dozen, unconventional concepts that have flown; including such aircraft as the Icon A5, XTI TriFan, and Opener Blackfly. I've worked on over a hundred additional concepts that have died on the vine, mostly due to financial shortcomings.



**Peregrine PJ-2**

Perhaps the most unconventional aircraft, though, have been the SoloTrek XFV / Springtail EFV family. These aircraft were intended to be a more practical follow-on to the Bell Rocket Belt. The Rocket Belt had an endurance of 21 seconds. We logged 1.1 hours on our longest flight in Springtail, and that used less than 1/2 tank of fuel. Besides developing the structures and aerodynamics for this vehicle, we had to create, from scratch, the onboard

flight control computer and stabilization system. Flying this unstable machine was like standing on a giant beachball in the middle of a swimming pool; like balancing a broom on the palm of your hand. Constant pilot input was required. Three people actually flew these machines: an astronaut, a retired Naval pilot, and me. Of the 75 hours we logged on these machines, I got to fly 70% of them.



**SoloTrek XFV**

**Tethered Flight Test**

*(Yes, this is me at the controls in these pictures!)*



**Springtail EFV**

In 2005, DARPA, in their infinite wisdom, cancelled the Springtail program. The aircraft was still a long way from being practical, but I did get to fly one of the most unconventional aircraft ever built.

Since then, the whole eVTOL revolution has taken off. I'm no longer part of the lunatic fringe. Unconventional has become mainstream. I continue to consult on, design, build, and fly strange aircraft, the latest being the FlyKart 2 in the GoFly competition.



**FlyKart 2**

As Jules Verne said 150 years ago in *Around the World in Eighty Days*, "Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real." Thanks to some pilot training and the EAA, that lazy 16 year old kid's imaginings continue to become reality.

# JOHN AGEE OBITUARY

EAA Chapter 512 Member out of Cameron Park, CA

John M. Agee MD

August 22, 1944 - April 13, 2023

Posting from The Sacramento Bee

Sunriver, Oregon - John M. Agee, MD, retired Sacramento hand surgeon, passed away following hospice care. Texas born, John was raised in Lake Charles Louisiana by Pete and Anne Phillips. John lost his WWII veteran father while still a boy. Encouraged by his new family, John's engineering mind grew from RC model aircraft to orthopedic medicine at Louisiana State University and to bioengineering with the establishment of his Hand Biomechanics Lab (HBL).

Along the way he served in the U.S. Air Force, trained under his hero mentors, Drs. Paul Brand and Daniel Riordan, and loved and was proud of his family.

Through HBL, John researched and found solutions for carpal tunnel syndrome, joint replacement and wrist fractures. Earlier in his career his passion for scoliosis care began and continued for many years.

Outside of medicine, John most liked flying, building his airplane, boating, tinkering in his own machine shop/ aircraft hangar, all things efficient, brilliant people, the wonder of God's creation-the human body, and most of all walking his beloved canines, Oscar, Sparky, and Mutzy.

In lieu of flowers, John's family requests that donations be made in his name to support their Fund for Pediatric Orthopaedic Hand Surgery at Shriners Children's Northern California Hospital. No public services are planned.

<https://donate.lovetotherescue.org/>

RiordanManskeEndowment





# Reminders!

## May 17-Wednesday-General Meeting & Picnic Potluck

Potluck 6pm

Meeting 7pm

## May 20-Adopt-A-Highway 8:30-11:30

\*Meet at McDonalds in Cameron Park for briefing

## June 2-Friday

EAA Hangar clean up & breakfast prep 2-4pm

## June 3-Saturday

Pancake Breakfast 8-11am - **Volunteers welcome!**

Display Day 9-1pm

## June 4-Sunday

Display Day 9-1pm

## June 6-Tuesday

IMC/VMC Safety Discussion

## June 10-Saturday-Pilots Needed!

Young Eagles 8:30-12

## June 14-Wednesday-Volunteers needed!

Board Meeting 7pm

## **Attention ALL:**

Have you recently been on an aviation adventure?

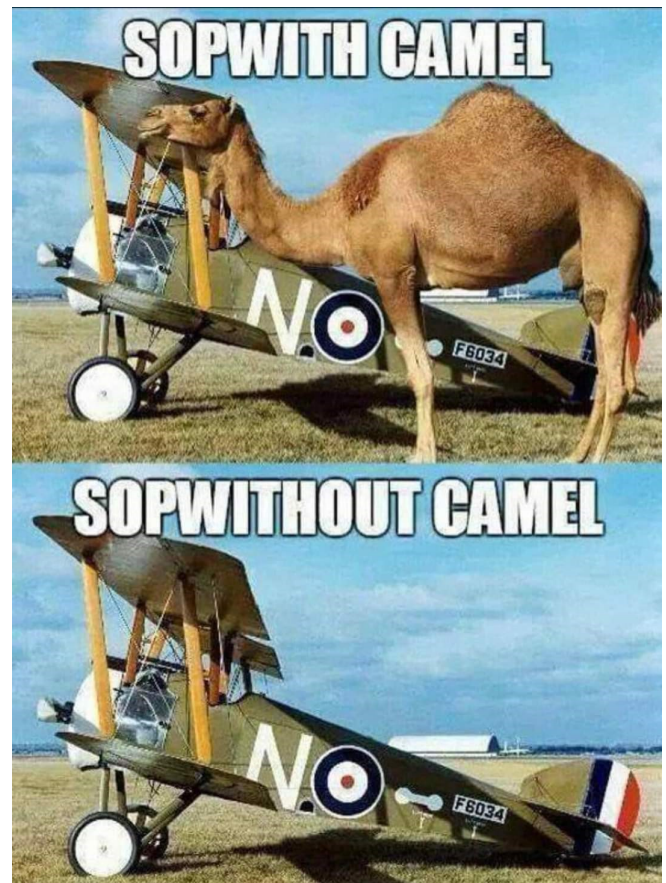
Are you making progress on an aircraft building project?

Please share your experiences and photos. We'd love to hear from you!

Sincerely,

The Editor

More\_right\_rudder@yahoo.com



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### ***Help Wanted!***

***Greg Stein is looking for help  
facilitating the IMC/VMC  
meetings the first Tuesday of  
each month.***

***Please contact:***

***greg.stein777@gmail.com***

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