



The Beacon

The newsletter of Chapter 54
Lake Elmo, Minn.

July 2020



21D RCO 118.625 COM 122.8 AWOS 120.075 Elev. 1932'
Runways **4-22** (2497' x 75') **14-32** (2850' x 75')

Chapter House, South Airport Entrance at the Beacon

Chapter Meetings 2nd Monday of Each Month

7:00pm social 7:30pm Meeting

Who's currently who in Ch.54:

www.eaa54.org

President: Leif Erickson
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From the Flight Deck (Leif Erickson)

Three things I thought I would never do ... in 2020

1.) Live through a pandemic

Live through a pandemic ... of this magnitude. I was reminded that we have faced pandemics in the past. Remember H1N1, SARS, Ebola? They were pandemics, but they did not impact our daily lives as COVID-19 is doing. We did not practice social distancing, obey stay-at-home orders, wear face masks, and practice social distancing for these. And for many of us, to personally be in vulnerable age category.

Now, these have become the new normal. Both for our personal lives and Chapter 54 activities. Remember when we conducted monthly chapter meetings in our Clubhouse? That ended back in March. Remember Young Eagles, and the excitement that created, on the second Saturday of each month starting in May? Remember Air Venture? These events will return, and the new normal in 2021 will become the old normal of 2020. Or as people my age say, "the way it used to be".

Let's put a positive spin on these activities and remind ourselves that our events are not cancelled... permanently. They are merely postponed until 2021.

2.) Participate in, or host, a video conference Zoom meeting

For the last several months, board meetings and member meeting have been virtual. Personally, I had to learn how to; schedule and host a meeting, share my screen, mute and unmute microphones, adapt to hand raising (only one person talking at a time), and stop my video. My home desk and computer are now my new



clubhouse. But the positives; the COVID virus does not transmit through Comcast connections, face masks are not required, and social distancing is not a problem.

Overall, our virtual board meetings have gone smoothly. Except for the lack of a secretary. Instead, we are recording and sharing “notes” of each board meeting. No official minutes. And our member meetings have also gone reasonably well. The first Zoom meeting back in May attracted 23 participants. That is a greater number of member participants than we normally attracted at the clubhouse. Our presenter was in Montana. That would not happen if we were in the clubhouse. Our last meeting unfortunately attracted about half that number of participants. The program, by our Chapter’s new VMC Coordinator Nate Ruedy, was one of the best programs we have offered ... in my opinion. It was participatory and required us to think critically about a scenario, and answer the question “What would you do ...?”

One other advantage of the Zoom meeting is you can participate at home in front of your computer. That gave Norm Weston the opportunity to join and be part of the group. He would not have been able to participate if the meeting were in the clubhouse.

3.) *Be president of Chapter 54 ... again*

I did a two-year term as president back in 2010 and 2011, as I recall. I did not plan on taking on the responsibility again, but no one else volunteered. I was afraid the chapter would fall into disarray and perhaps fold. I did not want that to happen. And, now that I am retired, I have nothing much else to do. I will never be able to build or restore an airplane. But I can prepare agendas and PowerPoints. That is basically what I did for 35 years as a faculty member at Century College in White Bear Lake. Agendas and PowerPoints are not much different than preparing for daily lecture classes.

So, in conclusion, it is sort of a pleasure to be back as President of Chapter 54. No, let me rephrase that and remove “sort of”. There are many changes to EAA and Chapter 54 since 2010 and 2011. In future From the Flight Deck articles I will describe and elaborate on these positive changes. And I should also note the pleasure it is to serve with the dedicated and talented people on our Board. They have been incredibly helpful and cooperative in implementing many changes to how the Chapter operates.

Leif E.

Chapter Meetings, April-June (M. Gunderson)

The Chapter 54 **April 2020** meeting was canceled in the wake of Governor Tim Walz's late March stay-at-home order in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Leif worked hard to shift the May and June chapter meetings to an online virtual meeting format, which worked well, and these will continue until further notice. By mid-May, EAA President Jack Pelton had decided and announced that Airventure would have to be scrubbed for 2020, and similarly, the Chapter 54 (second annual) summer corn feed has been scrubbed.

The **May 2020** Chapter meeting, which was a virtual meeting via Zoom set up by Leif, featured Pat Moran speaking about his career as a Coast Guard pilot and a 3M corporate pilot. From Sartell, MN, the 3rd of 7 children, Pat went straight into the Coast Guard Academy studying Oceanography and was initially working on an icebreaker out of Seattle and also had a posting at McMurdo station south of New Zealand. Having pursued a pilot's license while at the academy, Pat shifted to flying, training at Cape Cod

and taking a 4 year stint in San Diego flying Coast Guard Jets. He then pursued an Avionics engineering graduate degree at the CG Monterey graduate school, followed by a 3 year posting in Washington D.C. Over the course of his career he accumulated about 3000 hours in a Falcon 20 at about 1000 feet over the ocean, much of it in drug interdiction missions. Pat retired from the CG after 15 years of service and went on to a 22 year career flying the G4, G5, and G550 for 3M, initially mostly domestic, but shifting to long global trips in the latter half of that career. Aside from an adventurous career, Pat also shared an overview of Coast Guard history, starting out in Pensacola in 1917 with CG pilot #1 Elmer Stone flying the Atlantic in the gigantic NC-4 amphibian, leading up to the current workforce of 90,000 piloting several hundred aircraft (C-37As, HC-130s, HC-144s, and Gulfstream VC-37, and many helicopters) and several hundred Cutters and many smaller boats.

The **June 2020** Chapter meeting, also via Zoom, featured Nathan Ruedy and Tom Stehler in an

interactive program discussing a question and a flying scenario from the VMC club. Nathan is a Southwest Airlines commercial pilot and joined remotely from San Antonio where he was overnighing after scheduled flight stops in SFO, Burbank, and Phoenix that day. Nathan is the flight training director for Lake Elmo Aero and VMC/IMC club coordinator for Chapter 54. Tom is also a commercial pilot having recently completed the undergraduate Flight Program at Purdue University and was undergoing training with an airline when the pandemic sidelined that activity and brought him to Lake Elmo Aero as a flight instructor. Nathan and Tom lead the chapter through the [VMC club](#) question and scenario of the

month which involved interpreting an Airport Facility Directory entry that included “GCO, ARTCC – 6 clocks, FSS—4 clicks” and a flight scenario where a Warrior was departing a 2800' undulating grass strip in northern Massachusetts with rising terrain on one end and a 30' obstacle not far off the other end and found itself 7 knots short of takeoff speed at the last chance to abort.

Chapter members were also joined by Gordon Duke and Daisy Saenz of Lake Elmo Aero, and charter member Norm Weston. John Renwick also demonstrated membership renewal via the new [Ch.54 website](#). This was a lively & entertaining meeting.

The Rest of the Story (Marlon Gunderson)

The first part of my 2016 Airventure trip was printed in the [August 2016 Newsletter](#). We've been saving part 2 to run as filler in the event of a pandemic.

[After post-daily-airshow arrival at OSH] I pushed my SkyRaider through the UL area to just east of the Red Barn and found Dale Seitzer camped with his Sky Ranger and my camping supplies left with him after delivery by Dave Volker earlier that day (thanks Dave!). Dale and I were camped two rows south of Ch.54 member John Renwick, on honeymoon with Elaine and his Swift, which took the outstanding Swift award this year, to compliment what I'm sure was an outstanding honeymoon. Just after setting up my tent, a loud noise turned our attention to a twin engine WWII bomber sliding down runway 36 adjacent to us with its nose gear collapsed while being chased by a fire truck. That led to a quiet sky for the rest of the evening.

My SkyRaider was a magnet for owners and fans of the type and I enjoyed meeting new and old acquaintances who stopped by to yak. One fella, Hans Hofmaier, who stopped by has a four stroke HKS powered SkyRaider he flies out of Vancouver Island, often flying on wheel penetrating skiis from sea level to land on snow in the mountains north of Vancouver. He collapsed his gear in a hard landing on one of those flights, which led to probably the only helicopter rescue of a SkyRaider from a mountainside.

One day I trekked down to the south 40 to see the Taylorcraft that Hans had flown from Vancouver Island to Oshkosh. It is a typical old Taylorcraft, but it includes a graphic on the side that shows the route



Hans took from Vancouver to Oshkosh in 2004 which was via the west coast of both north and south America nearly to

Tierra Del Fuego, then via the east coast of south America, up the Amazon, across Venezuela, island hopping from Trinidad, Virgin Islands, P.Rico, Haiti, and the Bahamas, to Florida, up the east coast to Quebec, and then west to Oshkosh. The Taylorcraft graphic was titled Spirit on a Shoestring. Hans has an unlimited supply of stories from that (9 month long) flight.

I intended to fly back home on Friday, but a stationary front and an east wind from Lake Michigan brought low ceilings, occasional drizzle, and IMC in the morning, with only marginal clearing prior to the airshow. It looked like it was clearing to the north in the afternoon, so I packed up during the airshow leaving my camping supplies with Bettie Seitzer for the return trip (thanks Bettie!), and was number two to depart from the UL strip at 6:45pm after the airshow. Fisk confirmed that I was departing traffic as I overflew them heading north at 300' AGL underneath the arrival streams. Skies cleared as I headed north for a beautiful evening flight with a tailwind into Wausau arriving about 15 minutes before sunset. I refueled

from their mogas pump and borrowed a courtesy bicycle to ride a mile to Grand avenue where I stayed at \$38/night dive motel for a good night's sleep and a shower. In the morning, I had a good skillet breakfast next door, and then clear skies and a tailwind flying straight west 140 miles back to 21D with a short precautionary and ultimately unnecessary fuel transfer stop at Boyceville. The 50hp Rotax went through 26 gallons of fuel in about 7 hours of flight time on this round trip. Ten minutes after landing, Dale Seitzer arrived direct from Oshkosh in his SkyRanger after a perfect flight. I went home to greet the missus and

have lunch, after which I received a phone call from Hans Hofmaier saying he had just fueled up at Valters and would take me up on my offer to spend an afternoon on Lake Elmo. I picked up Hans, we went for a swim in Lake Elmo, then a bike ride through the park reserve, more swimming, a few beers, some BBQ and sweet corn. Hans did some flight planning after sunset, got a good nights sleep and breakfast before I dropped him back at 21D for his continued trip west in an aging Taylorcraft hoping to make Fort Peck by sundown.

Book Reviews (Dave Syverson)

W. Scott Olson, an English professor from Concordia College at Moorhead, Minnesota, has authored several general aviation books of diverse appeal concerning his experience in learning how to fly and the adventures that his interest has carried him into. This review concerns two of the author's aviation books; Never Land and Prairie Sky. Olson's aviation training took place out of an FBO at KFAR, a short distance from Concordia College. Anyone familiar with the Red River valley quickly recognizes much of the geography and history lessons included in these books. Yes, it is true the land is so flat you can watch your dog run away from home for five days, but there is much more to it through a pilot's eyes and the grace of altitude.

Never Land, while it concerns the author's personal journey in aviation, creates linkages to history, geology, meteorology, geography and philosophy in a way that exceeds the technical aspects of flying. Olson's call on aviation identifies two reasons why people fly; 1) To get somewhere and 2) everything else that has nothing to do with the destination.

Times have changed; one historical account in the book concerns the early air mail routes involving a new employee of an early airline seeking to fly the firm's Hamilton Metalplanes. He was simply handed a pistol and told to guard the mail while he was selling passenger tickets and collecting money for the flight. There were no ticket counters back then and although the 17 year old, eventually to become pilot for the airline, had no idea even how to load the pistol, was required to carry it in the aircraft because "the postal regs said so". While not within the prevue of the book, there is some extended history regarding the Hamiltons where Jack Lysdale of Minnesota aviation history purchased one of them when they were retired

from airline service, fully restored it and located it in his hangar at Flemming field. Jack's son, Gary Lysdale, continued to maintain the aircraft and eventually it was auctioned off to the Washington Seaplane Association. The Hamiltons were designed to operate off wheels, skis or floats; not exactly what we think of aircraft intended for an airline! A set of floats was located in Alaska and married to the plane for a while. This particular Hamilton, the solitary example remaining, has seen more than one trip to Oshkosh.

Ever wonder if a person can set a National and International speed record in a slow airplane? Olson includes his story of how he did just that in a C-152, just to do it!

Too many interesting stories to consider spoiling them and well worth the read.

Prairie Sky continues along the lines of exploration and discovery of what goes on with what we see from the sky.

Ever wonder what the formula is for how far the horizon is away from a particular altitude? How many square miles you can see from 8,500'? That curiosity on the part of the author provides an answer.

Olson was fortunate enough to ride with the NOAA aircraft which play a big part in predicting the potential for flooding. He goes on to explain how the whole system works to determine SWE, or snow water equivalent, which plays into additional factors allowing for pretty accurate predictions of how much trouble people in the Red River Valley have to contend with during the melt season and spring; and the now, all too frequent major floods.

One of the quirkiest airports with opposite ends of the runway in different countries is described in a flying adventure to the Turtle Mountains of North

Dakota. Of course they aren't really mountains, but the forest and hills of the area is quite different from most people's understanding of North Dakota. Then there is the food at the grill described as "a heart attack in a bowl".

When it comes to aeronautical charts, few of us are familiar with "Falcon View", described in the book, which is a department of defense aeronautical chart system. A comparison of a VFR sectional indicates a simple "building" symbol west of Cavalier ND; while the Falcon View version indicates the building as an over the horizon radar site. The prairie is sprinkled with many artifacts of the cold war and the "START"

treaty; you can find them if you know what to look for. In many cases an old imploded missile silo is only marked by the remaining chain link fence.

For those of us who grew up in the Red River Valley, Prairie Sky describes ways of looking at the weather, geology, landscape and historical events in a fresh way from the perspective of piloting an aircraft.

I found both books to be informative but most of all entertaining and inspiring. Inspiring because the author causes a person to think about reasons to go out and fly, especially regarding things they might not have thought about previously in quite the same way.

Pic of the Month: Dan and Karen Bergstrom serving the chapter and the community.

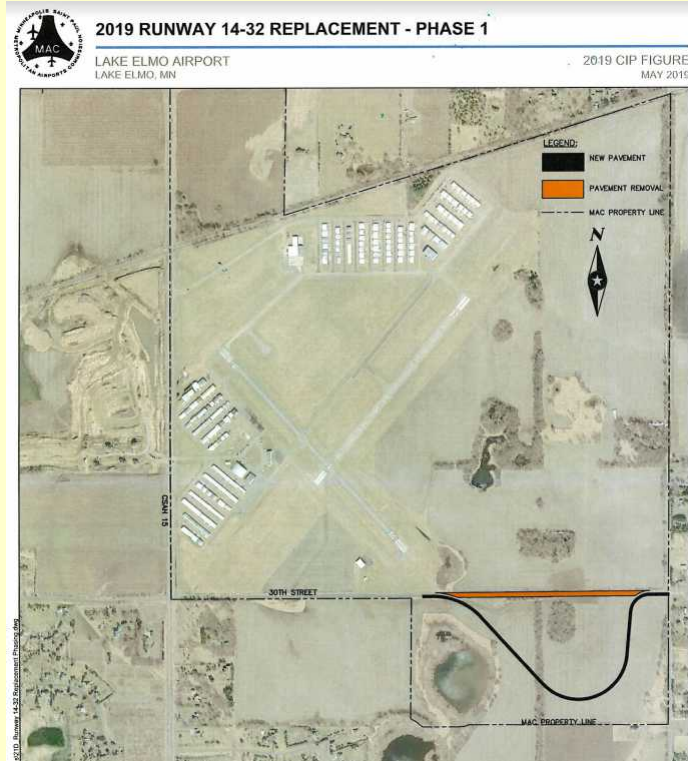


The Editor's 2¢ (M.Gunderson)

I live one mile west of the Lake Elmo airport. Sitting out on the deck on these nice summer days, I get to watch you guys flying the pattern, often directly

over my house. I sometimes wave at airplanes I recognize just in case you're looking my way. Working from my home office during the pandemic, I

keep my handheld on and tuned to 122.8 to listen for voices I might recognize. My second story office overlooks Lake Elmo and this spring there has been a float plane regularly landing and taking off here, no doubt a trainer from Lino or Surfside. I'm surrounded by aviation even when I'm not aviating. Needless to say, I'm pleased by my choice of home location.



I ride bicycle from my home in all directions for exercise. I can now ride one mile to the airport without braving MN-95 / Manning Avenue by biking through the two new neighborhood developments west of the airport, and when it's not too wet to be flooded, through the mountain bike trails running through the woods of Lake Elmo's Reid Park.

I've been tracking progress on the Lake Elmo Airport improvement project during my bike rides to the east on 30th Avenue. The 30th Avenue diversion is now essentially complete with smooth new asphalt that my bike really likes; it only remains to shut down the straight through road and connect to the new curve at each end. This Phase 1 Activity was scheduled to complete the end of July, so it looks to be pretty much on schedule. We should start seeing Phase 2 work on the replacement primary runway during the second half of the year.

I joined the '**Midwest Airshow, Fly-in and Flight Club**' Facebook group last year and have found it to be a good source of information and entertainment. News broke recently that the city of Isle has chosen to

keep the airport open there, in part due to the efforts of many of you who wrote to the city in support of the airport. The Sky Harbor airport in Duluth is now reopened with a new and re-aligned runway, and some poor sap flying there in an Icon A5 sunk his half million dollar toy in the bay when a portable wireless speaker forgotten on the top of the aircraft went through his prop, taking out all 3 blades.



Nick Stolley posted some nice pics and video of his Citabria exploring unconventional flight attitudes. Nick is a former Ch.54 member, including a stint as Secretary in 2002-2003 just out of high school. Nick went on to flight training and military service and is now flying for Sun Country Airlines and has a home at Webster Sky Harbor airpark a little southwest of LVN. We should prevail upon Nick to speak at an upcoming Chapter meeting to bring us up to date on his adventures these past two decades.

I learned of a Sat. June 6 '*Airport Social Distancing Coffee and Donuts*' event at the Amery airport from the aforementioned Facebook group and made it my destination that day. It was a low key affair with good free pastries and a friendly group. I met and chatted with Paul Isakson, the tall gregarious bearded ringleader at the Amery airport, who is also the mayor of Amery and retired owner of the local hardware store.

On my flight to Amery in my Cozy, which included a hop to Cumberland to fuel from their UL94 Swift pump, I tested out my new Garmin autopilot for the first time. It was a little sluggish in upset response on the way up so I dialed up the gain at Cumberland and it seemed about just right on the way back. I watched the stick jockey around by itself dealing with the light turbulence of the late morning on the way back. I have been tolerating a failing vacuum pump and inoperative HSI for the last few years, not a big deal

since the Cozy and I are only VFR rated, but decided it was time to fix that situation and found that a Garmin G5 for experimental application is cheaper than repairing or replacing the vacuum based components.

A \$1200 non-STC'd version of the G5 Primary Flight display is driven with pitot and static air pressure inputs plus has an internal GPS and solid state and microelectromechanical attitude and heading reference system that can drive an auto-pilot and provides in one reliable instrument everything that a conventional 6 pack provides.



I kept my discrete passive ASI and Altimeter as a backup in case of electrical failure, and used the freed up panel space of the 4 vacated gauges to add the G5, a second COM, an audio panel/intercom, and a Garmin GMC-507 auto-pilot panel controller module. The 507 controller is \$1100 and the roll and pitch servos are \$750 each, but this compares really well with the \$12,000 installed price of this GFC-500 system in the STC'd applications now available for Cessnas, Pipers, and Beechcraft.



I also installed an Aera-660 portable GPS, tempted by Garmin's \$100 discount last Christmas. This unit comes with a terrain and IFR approach database, can drive the auto-pilot with entered vertical and lateral flight plans, and provides a synthetic vision display. It is of course not IFR certified, but for a list of \$750 it will do much of what the IFR certified and panel installed \$4500 Garmin GPS 175 will do.

For a second COM, I bought a Becker AR4201 for \$300 from Germany where a lot of these are sitting around after tuning requirements in the EU were reduced to 8.3 kHz from 25 kHz a few years ago.

But enough about me. Send me your stories, pics, and book reviews for the next newsletter!

And join us at the July chapter meeting via Zoom online. Leif will be emailing a link and meeting invitation to the chapter 54 google group.

Blue skies everyone!