

# The Beacon

The newsletter of Chapter 54  
Lake Elmo, Minn.

April 2023



**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of Each Month

7:00pm social 7:30pm Meeting

Ch.54 Phone# 651-515-3464

[www.eaa54.org](http://www.eaa54.org)

### Who's currently who in Ch.54:

**President:** Leif Erickson  
[president@eaa54.org](mailto:president@eaa54.org)

**Vice Pres:** Robyn Stoller  
[vicepresident@eaa54.org](mailto:vicepresident@eaa54.org)

**Treasurer:** Tom Gibbons  
[treasurer@eaa54.org](mailto:treasurer@eaa54.org)

**Secretary:** Ed Trudeau  
[secretary@eaa54.org](mailto:secretary@eaa54.org)

**Education Dir:** Gregg Adler  
[education@eaa54.org](mailto:education@eaa54.org)

**Housing Dir:** Bob Collins  
[housing@eaa54.org](mailto:housing@eaa54.org)

**Membership Dir:** Jim Pearsall  
[membership@eaa54.org](mailto:membership@eaa54.org)

**Young Eagles Dir:** Vicky Moore  
[youngeagles@eaa54.org](mailto:youngeagles@eaa54.org)

**Newsletter Ed:** Marlon Gunderson  
[newsletter@eaa54.org](mailto:newsletter@eaa54.org)

**Webmaster:** Michael McKinnon  
[webmaster@eaa54.org](mailto:webmaster@eaa54.org)

**Directors, Class2:** Jay Schrankler,  
Paul Hove, Bill Schanks Jr.

**Social Media:** Bruce Olson  
[socialmedia@eaa54.org](mailto:socialmedia@eaa54.org)

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### From the Flight Deck (Leif Erickson)



As I write this in the third week of March, I feel like the arrival of spring and summer is agonizingly slow. Like many of you, I am wondering about two things; when will spring ever arrive, and what important and fun chapter activities will summer bring.

But do not despair. Spring and summer will arrive. It is going to happen. Don't bet against it. In its elliptical orbit around the sun, the earth is approaching the aphelion. And, with the earth tilted 23 ½ degrees relative to the orbital plane, the earth's northern hemisphere will tilt toward the sun. For those of us that live in the northern hemisphere, this means warmer temperatures and longer days, defined as the time between sunrise and sunset.

Here is a quick summary of chapter events to look forward to this spring/summer.

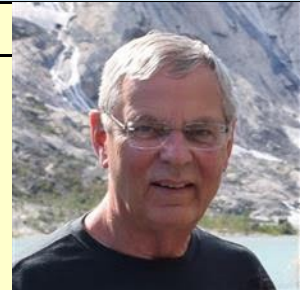
### Summer picnics/cookouts in the clubhouse & on the deck.

Bill Schanks Jr, our Events Coordinator, will plan a couple of events for us during the summer months. At this time, no dates have been designated. But watch the website and your email for notifications and invitations. These are always popular, well-attended events. Enjoy picnic/cookout food on the deck or in the air-conditioned clubhouse. These are family events. There will be a suggested per-person donation to help offset the costs.

If I can find someone to organize it, we will also sponsor a silent auction at one event. This was popular last year and added \$700 to the chapter's income. Volunteer?

### Corn Feed

Chapter 54 will be back in the fundraising business



this year, for the first time since 2019. Jim Pearsall and Bill Schanks Jr are co-chairing the event. This is an important step forward for the chapter. Our mission, as a 501c3 organization, is to use proceeds from fund raiser events to fund scholarships and provide donations to other charitable events that promote general and sport aviation.

The Corn Feed will require a volunteer commitment from Chapter members to be a success. There will be many and varied ways to volunteer. Please say YES when you are asked to volunteer.

### Flyouts

Bill Schanks Jr (you have seen his name mentioned a lot already) will organize numerous weekend flyouts again this summer. They were very popular last summer. Many of the flyouts will be to attend various pancake breakfasts hosted by other EAA chapters. These events are worthy of our support and attendance. Hopefully they will be reciprocated when we host our Corn Feed.

One quick thought. If we organize a chapter flyout to an event, how will other attendees recognize that we are from Chapter 54? My suggestion is for each flyout attendee to purchase a t-shirt or other apparel item with an attached chapter logo. Then we will all be recognized and noticed. Chapter apparel can be purchased by clicking on this link, [All Star Warbirds Custom Embroidery](#). Browse their catalog and select any product you like. Ask to have the chapter embroidered logo sewed onto your garment. Wear it proudly, wherever you go in public. Let's make our presence known.

### Young Eagles

Don't forget about this important chapter activity. YE flights will resume starting on the second Saturday in May and continue through October. YE Coordinator Vicky Moore will need your help, either as a pilot or ground

support. You will hear more about Young Eagles events as the season starts up.

Last summer each Young Eagles flight earned the chapter a \$10 credit. YE credits can be used to offset the cost to send a young person to the AirAcademy or purchase equipment and supplies to support the YE program at the chapter level.

### Farnsworth Hangar Tour

Education Director Gregg Adler will host another hangar tour in late May. The tour attendees will be the 2nd grade class from Farnsworth. Gregg will need plenty of volunteers also. Keeping track of and helping about 120 second graders is not a one-person job. Please respond with a YES and how can I help when Gregg invites you to participate.

### AirVenture Camping

EAA offers each chapter up to six campsites as a "Beach Head" for chapter members to attend AirVenture. All six of our campsites are purchased by chapter members. However, most the purchasers may not attend the full week of events. Therefore, they offer selected dates to be available for subleasing. Bill Schanks Jr is coordinating all the camping arrangements. Contact him about connecting with a campsite owner for subleasing opportunities.

### Member Gathering

Robyn Stoller has a fun line-up of programs for us to enjoy and learn about various facets of aviation. Watch the chapter website for program announcements. Thank you, Robyn.

Thanks for reading. Please volunteer. And have a wonderful and safe summer.

Leif Erickson

## From the Right Seat (Robyn Stoller)

### EAA 54 Exciting Programs Coming Up!

**Monday, April 10, 2023, 7:30 p.m.**

Hello everyone,

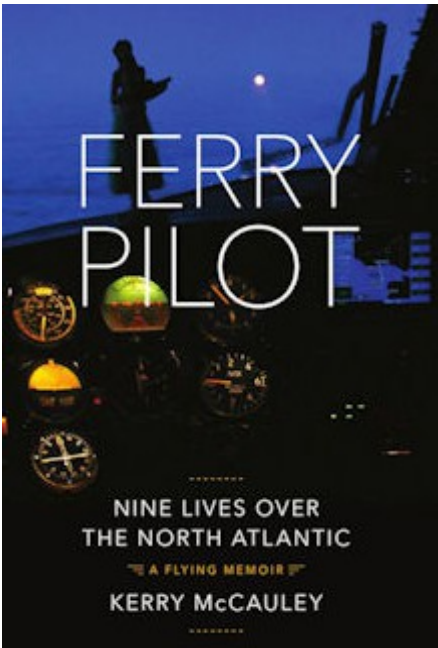
Happy Spring! We are delighted to have a special speaker join us on April 10. **Kerry McCauley** will present a fun and fascinating program on his incredible flying career which includes serving with the MN National Guard and working as an international ferry pilot with over 100 ocean crossings. He is the author of a #1 bestselling book

"Ferry Pilot – Nine Lives Over the Atlantic" and is a professional skydiver with over 20,000 jumps. He will have many amazing stories to share!



Following his program, he'll be glad to sign books for those wishing to purchase one. Refreshments will be served.

Please mark your calendars for this very fun and educational evening with Kerry. (No Zoom option)



Kerry has been a UH-1H “Huey” crew chief and corporate jet pilot. He's flown ~50 aircraft types and has over 9000 hours of flight time, and stars in two seasons of the Discovery Channel's series Dangerous Flights. Kerry lives in Wisconsin with his wife Cathy where they own and

operate a skydiving school along with their children, Claire and Connor. [kerrymccauley.com](http://kerrymccauley.com)

### Also coming up:

#### May 8 Paul Rankin

Things I've Seen from the Air - Paul will share amazing photos and stories from his decades of flying an extensive array of aircraft in the military, as an ATP, and in private aircraft.

#### June 12 Chapter Picnic on the Deck & Silent Auction

#### July 10 Jim Pearsall – What's new at Airventure '23

#### August 12 – Corn Feed

We welcome all members and guests to join us at the EAA 54 Clubhouse, 3275 Manning Ave N., Lake Elmo Airport. Hope to see many of you there!

Robyn Stoller

### Winter Chapter Meetings

The January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting was a snow bird and cryophobic friendly (Zoom-only) meeting featuring **Heather McNevin** presenting her program on Human Factors in Flying, eligible for FAA Wings credit. Heather is a flight instructor with 26 years of aviation experience. She has flown in 60 different aircraft types and has ratings in the DC-3 and B-25, among others. She holds an MS degree in Aeronautics with specializations in Human Factors and Aerospace Safety Systems, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. In Aerospace. Heather has also worked as an Air Traffic Controller for 16 years. Human factors plays a role in many aircraft accidents and a better understanding of it can make us all safer pilots.

Just one example of a human factor in accidents that Heather shared: Normalization of Deviation – this is when something is found to be not as expected and should probably be of concern but has occurred multiple times without consequence so is ignored. The loss of two space shuttles can be attributed to this kind of factor – O-rings that didn't seal correctly at low temperature, and foam insulation that peeled away from the shuttle booster rockets, both of which were known phenomenon from prior operation but had not been appropriately dealt with.

Heather touched on developing a safety mindset which includes flight planning, attention to NOTAMS, visualization of a plan, preparation for emergencies, flying engaged, and defining and adhering to personal minimums. In addition, physical factors such as medication and dehydration play into sound decision making. Heather shared that there are available apps now for flight risk assessment that can give a risk score for a flight under consideration.



The February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting kicked off with Valentine treats and a discussion led by **Bill Schanks Jr.** about plans for a shared chapter camping site at Airventure this summer. **Jim Pearsall** then discussed plans that are formulating for a Saturday August 12 Corn Feed Fly-In fundraiser featuring sweet corn, bratwurst, and hot dogs served by the chapter out by the MAC maintenance building (gray areas to the left). In addition to chapter volunteers, there are specific tasks that the Civil Air Patrol, Boy Scouts, and Johnson HS ROTC cadets may cover for the event (e.g. aircraft and car parking in the yellow and blue areas noted to the left).

The main program for the February meeting was then delivered by newer chapter member and American Airlines pilot **Woodson Lynes**. Woodson quickly disabused his audience of the notion he would be describing the advertized “A Day in the Life of an Airline Pilot”, because that would be 'too short and too boring' and that he would instead describe highlights from his path into - and years in - aviation. Woodson's droll and self-deprecating style proved very humorous and entertaining to the chapter audience contrary to his insistence that he was unqualified to deliver a presentation. Woodson worked at a farm in eastern Washington to pay for his flying and school. His first job in aviation was sweeping floors at a maintenance shop. The shop owner specialized in Citabrias so Woodson was able to cut spars, door wings and completely disassemble a Piper Cub. (As far as Woodson knows, it's still hanging on the wall in the shop!) He worked as a 'ramper' in SJC (San Jose) and SLC (Salt Lake) while building hours to become a pilot. Woodson worked at SkyWest for 20 years and has been with American Airlines for one year, a move that cost him hard won seniority, which plays into scheduling priority, and therefore a bit of a bitter pill to swallow. His school aged son and daughter joined him for the evening as part of the audience and joined in the friendly banter. It was a fun and memorable evening!



Feb. 13, 2023  
Chapter Meeting

Woodson & children

The March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting featured a double feature of presentations by members **Kevin Szalapski** and **Cory Carlson**.



Kevin shared [his fun 12-minute video “Sky Pilots”](#), an aerial tour of the St. Croix River Valley spiced with humor, filmed last summer from the trike he flies out of the Osceola, WI airport.



Cory then spoke on “Scratch Building a Sonerai – 50% done, 90% to go”. Members may recall Cory's previous and initial project update from the May 2021 chapter meeting and in the [July 2021 newsletter](#). Cory is a systems engineer working for Boston Scientific. Prior to that, he worked for 15 years in avionics, mainly G3X autopilots with Garmin. Cory lives in Stillwater and usually gets in the air by renting from Lake Elmo Aero. He also owns and flies a Falcon 4 hang glider.

# TrickAir & Iceport 2023 Winter Flyins

February and March frozen lake fly-ins at Jackson Sea Plane base (TrickAir) and Mac's Twin Bay (Iceport) were big successes this year. Here are some photos shared by **Leonardo Correa Luna**, a recent addition to the pilot ranks flying out of 21D and a talented photographer; also check out [this nice video](#) of Leonardo's flight from 21D to Iceport '23 in his Cessna 170 by Nick Halseth, and [this AOPA article](#) Leonardo wrote about the event. Also this [Nick Halseth video of Trick Air '23](#), and [this Flying Magazine article](#) that Leonardo wrote about the TrickAir Flyin.



## Emeritus & Lifetime EAA Chapter 54 Member Profile: Dan Bergstrom (by Bob Collins)

### Can you tell me about the time when you first realized you wanted to fly and how you made that happen?

I have wanted to fly for as long as I can remember. My first airplane ride was at age 15, cost \$3. At age 16, I got a job at the local airport in Camden, AR as a line boy and got paid in flight time....not cash. First solo at age 17 in a Cessna 150 with 9 hrs. of dual. Karen and I bought our first airplane at age 22 and have had one ever since.

### How did you first get involved in Chapter 54 and in what various capacities have you served?

I flew from Benson's Airport in White Bear Lake for 28 years then moved over to Lake Elmo Airport in 1998. I joined EAA 54 at that time and started helping with chapter projects and giving Young Eagle Flights. When I retired from 3M in 2009, I began helping Dave Fieberger with taking care of the Chapter 54 clubhouse and gradually took on more of that work as Dave got older.



### Getting people to step up is one of the hardest things for chapter leadership to make happen? What is it about you, do you think, that makes you among the first to volunteer?

Because of my long-time interest in aviation, I made time to volunteer.

### Can you describe some of your favorite memories of being in Chapter 54? Is there a particular one or two that stand out?

I have enjoyed giving Young Eagle rides through the years. Fly-in breakfasts to different airports during the summer have always been fun.

### What other Chapter 54 member - past or present -- has most impacted your membership?

Hard to say, I have enjoyed getting to know and learning from many EAA 54 pilots. If I have to pick out one person it would be Jim Montague. Jim was a nice guy, a good pilot and one of the best mechanics I have ever known. He taught me how to work on aircraft engines and got me started on the path to getting my A&P mechanic rating.

### How do you assess the future of Chapter 54? What would you like the next generation to experience in the chapter?

I think EAA 54 Chapter has a good future ahead. The new Lake Elmo runways and hangars will bring new pilots and potential members to the Chapter.

### Please tell me about the planes you've flown and how you acquired them? What was your favorite?

- Our first airplane was a 1946 11AC Aeronca Chief. It was a good tailwheel trainer and also a good ski airplane, lots of fun in the snow.
- Our second airplane was a single-seat Sonerai I racer that I built in 1976. It was fun, fast and could do basic aerobatics.
- Our third plane was a 1946 Luscombe 8A that needed its fabric wings recovered. I liked doing the fabric work and that led to the next airplane.
- Our fourth airplane was a 1949 Piper PA-16 which was a complete rebuild project.... New fabric, rebuilt engine, new Cleveland wheels and brakes and a lot of other things. This was our first airplane with a radio, lights, a starter and a good heater. It was a nice flying plane with a back seat for our two little boys.
- The fifth airplane came about as a result of watching the movie *The Blue Max* too many times. I bought an open cockpit homebuilt Spezio Tuholer that I flew for 13 years. It was fun to fly open cockpit in the summer and it became a great ski plane in the winter after I added a (convertible) bubble canopy. I recovered the Spezio before I sold it.
- Our current airplane is a 1982 Wittman W-8 Tailwind that we have owned for 20 years. It will cruise at 160 mph and has a good rate of climb that gets us up into the smooth air above the clouds in the summer time. The Tailwind had been painted with auto paint back in 1982 which was a very bad idea so I recovered it with Stits fabric in 2008. It looks a lot better now.

At the time, each one was my favorite.

### **Can you recall your favorite flight?**

Flying the Tailwind home from Sacramento, CA back to Lake Elmo in August of 2002 was a nice flight. Everything worked well on the plane and the weather was good almost all the way home. Good memories of that flight include crossing over the top of Lake Tahoe, Reno, the Great Salt Lake and the Rocky Mountains.

## **Emeritus & Lifetime EAA Chapter 54 Member Profile: Al Kupferschmidt (by Bob Collins)**

### **How did you come to be a pilot in Lake Elmo?**

I moved to Lake Elmo in 1972 to a new house that was only a half mile from the airport. I had two friends that were into flying; one was building a Pitts and the other had a Luscombe and they got me started. So I went up to Elmo Aero at Lake Elmo airport in February 1974 and started my first lesson. I pushed hard from the start and soloed a month later - March 1974 with 40 hours of flight time. I had my checkride in November 1974 and became a licensed pilot. I am retired military, so I had the GI Bill to push hard to get flight hours. I went for my commercial and instrument rating starting in 1976 and had my checkride and got the ratings in 1977. I rented for eight years and then bought a 1978 7GCBC Citabria with 436 hrs on it in 1986. I had my tail wheel endorsement and learned in them at Elmo Aero. I have owned it for 37 years.



### **How did you get started in Chapter 54?**

I was involved with Chapter 54 on an invite from Bill Schanks. From that first meeting I never stopped my involvement. The meetings were at Speed Holman Downtown Airport in Saint Paul in a lunch room. We moved to Lake Elmo Airport to someone's hangar and lost that place. Then we used my church basement in Lake Elmo. We knew we needed our own clubhouse and there was a building in Amery, Wis. The deal was if we took it down, it was ours. We did, but we sold the wood. We had a lead on a portable school room from Stillwater schools. We bought it and moved it to 21D. With a lot of hard work, you are sitting in it.

### **What are some of your favorite memories of the chapter?**

There were the Sunday flyouts for breakfast and the Friday night pot-luck suppers and, as always, Chapter 54 work parties at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh.

### **What other Chapter 54 members - past or present -- have most impacted your membership?**

Some of the old Chapter 54 members are still here; some have Gone West. Dave Fiebiger worked a lot on the clubhouse. Jerry Sarracco and Bill Schanks and many more. I like them all.

### **What planes have you flown in your flying life?**

I got a start on a 150, 152, then on to a 172 and 172XP, some 210, Citabrias, Bellanca Viking, some Pipers, a TriPacer, Piper Navajo and Beech Bonanza, and some Baron time, Swift, Van's RV-6,7. On a work party, we all got a ride on the Ford Trimotor. I was in the right seat and the EAA pilot let me fly it for 15 minutes around Oshkosh. When I was in the Air National Guard, I got to sit in an SR-71 Blackbird on display. I had a little time in a Cirrus SR-22. I have had trips with the Guard in a C-130 all over the world, many rides on helicopters - Hueys, Jet Rangers, Blackhawks.

### **Do you have one memorable flight?**

I have over 3,000 hour and had lot of good flights only one bad one. I have stayed flying a long time. I am now 84 and I am in a new club: The United Flying Octogenarians. All are over 80 and still active flying .

### **Describe the future of Chapter 54?**

I feel that it is in good hands, and it will be here in the future.

## What should we know about you?

I have tried a lot of things in my life- old cars fast cars, boats, 4x4 trucks, camping, snowmobiling, ATVs, motorcycles, hunting, lots of traveling, volunteering 23 years on the Lake Elmo Fire Department and Rescue, and four years in the U.S. Navy and 17 years in the Air National Guard. I worked for the telephone company for 34 years.

## Emeritus & Lifetime EAA Chapter 54 Member Profile: John Renwick (by Bob Collins)

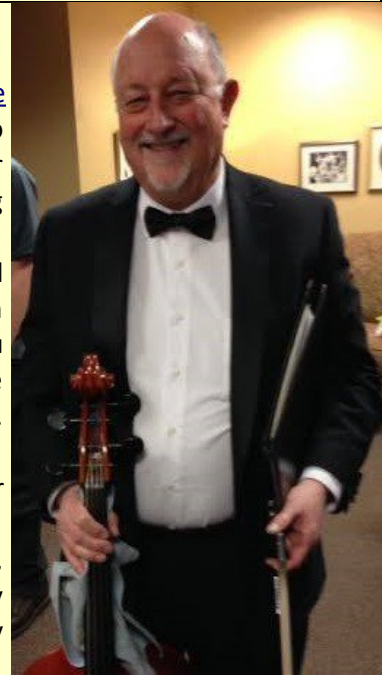
### Can you tell me about the time when you first realized you wanted to fly and how you made that happen?

I think I've wanted to fly from age 4 or 5, starting with a children's book: [The Little Airplane, by Lois Lenski](#) (1938). I really wanted to be Pilot Small. In 1967, not wanting to go to Viet Nam, I joined the Navy, trained in computer maintenance. Shortly after arriving in Navy housing at NAS Barbers Point in Hawaii., the Barbers Point Navy Flying Club was formed on the base, and I jumped at the chance to learn to fly. My then wife, Eleanor, whom some EA54 members will remember, became their office staff and bookkeeper. I wasn't the first to get my license there, but I was the first both to begin flight training and pass my checkride there. In 1970, with all the beautiful weather you could ever hope for, it took me 3 months, 53.6 flight hours, and \$620, all included. The Cessna 150 I learned in was \$6.00 wet, and the instructor charged me \$3.00, per hour. Don't we wish we could go back to those days! :)

In ground school, my instructor loved to say, "now, when you're up there in your J-3 Cub,...." I didn't know what that was, but I found one on the ramp at Honolulu International Airport, while working on my Commercial certificate. I got a checkout in it, which was like learning to fly all over again. I wanted one of my own. One drowsy Sunday morning, someone called, telling me that the local rock station KKUA was giving away two free tickets to the Ice Capades, and if I called, I could have them and be entered in a drawing. I asked Eleanor if she wanted to see the Ice Capades. She said yes, of course. I said OK. We saw the Ice Capades, and I won the drawing -- a new Datsun. I sold that, paid the taxes, and bought my own J-3 off the field at HNL. I paid \$2200 for it. That J-3 is still with me. In Honolulu I met Jack Gentry, who was restoring Cubs at HNL. He told me how to box a J-3 and ship it. His goal was to fly a J-3 to all 50 states -- I don't know if he ever did. I shipped my J-3 home when I got my Navy discharge, and hoped I could someday accomplish Jack's goal. Once home, the J-3 became a long-term restoration project, progressing as I could find the money.

I moved to the Twin Cities in 1981, and looked at the local EAA chapters, hoping to find a home for the Cub. Lake Elmo seemed to be the most Cub-friendly field in the area, and of all the chapters I visited, EAA54 seemed the most welcoming. Gerry Laundry was president. Meetings were at the 3M hangar at STP, adjourning to the Savoy for beer and pizza. Rosemary Frank was secretary. Gene flew anybody who wanted a ride in his Breezy. Bill Schanks and Dick Becker were building an Acro Sport. I wish I could remember more names! They may come back to me. The Cub was finally restored in 1989, and moved to a hangar Daryl LaMire sold to a partnership at 21D (destroyed in a windstorm in 2000). I was back in the air! My first trip out of MN was to OSH in 1990. Still thinking about flying to all 50 states, that was three. IL, OH, MI in 1991, 3 more.

Hawaii in the bag, Alaska was the next big challenge. At Oshkosh in 1990-something-late, I was parked in the Antique area next to a father and son who had flown a J-3 from Anchorage. Hello! I can do this! In 2002 the Cub got a C-90 engine upgrade and extended baggage for the trip. My flying partner was an English airman, aircraft restorer and builder, and great friend, Steve Markham. He's now world-famous because BBC world News picked up his story. Just google "[Markham Spitfire](#)" to enjoy what he's accomplished. The two of us flew to Anchorage and back in 2003. 11 days up, 7 back, due to weather delays and winds. What an incredible trip! My favorite flight ever, I had a high for about a month after returning home. If you want to fly to Alaska, I think you probably can. Just plan for at least 3 weeks. That's all we had, and it was barely enough at Cub speeds, with the normal weather delays. After the J-3, I fell in love with the late Dennis Hoffman's Cessna 170. I've owned two of them, flown many incredible miles, including a return to Alaska, and after the J-3, they will remain my favorite aircraft. In 2004 I bought Jim Montague's last Swift, because that's almost the only way most of us can get to fly one of those beautiful classics. An aviator's airplane – does everything you ask for! (So be very careful!)





### **How did you first get involved in Chapter 54 and in what various capacities have you served?**

I'm grateful to 21D and EAA54 for giving me a home for all this fun. My only official role in EAA54 has been to manage the membership database and mail requests for annual dues. That started around 20 years ago, when Paul Liedl, who had been doing the job, just asked me to take over, and showed me how. That's the way you get people to chip in: you ask them, and tell them you want them, and you think they'd be good at it. Simple! :-)

### **Can you describe some of your favorite memories of being in Chapter54? Is there a particular one or two that stand out?**

Membership in EAA54 has been plenty of fun. Gene Frank giving open-air rides in his Breezy. Phil Prokop letting us fly the NWA 727 simulator in Eagan (who still remembers that?) Giving Young Eagle rides to kids, some of whom knew exactly how to operate the controls because they'd been doing it on their computer at home. The great pancake breakfasts we used to have. Teaching Private Pilot ground school. Picking up trash on the highway with Gerry Sarracco's crews. All the fly-outs to breakfasts at Minnesota and Wisconsin airports. Hanging out at the airport with friends every day, meeting for lunch and conversation. Friday and Saturday breakfast meetings at Gorman's. That's Chapter 54 -- a great social club around a common interest.

### **Can you recall your favorite flight?**

My eyes are failing, and I no longer fly. I didn't get the J-3 to all 50 states, but I logged almost half of them. No regrets -- it was all an incredible experience!

### **How do you assess the future of Chapter 54? What would you like the next generation to experience in the chapter?**

I'm excited about the chapter's most recent leadership. It seems revitalized in the last couple of years. Lots of younger people have joined, and they have good new ideas. Thanks again, EAA54, for honoring me with a lifetime membership. I've loved being a part of it for more than 40 years now!

## **New Member Profile: Jeff Dale (by Bob Collins)**

### **When did you first become interested in aviation and flight simulation?**

On some level it pains me to admit it - but Top Gun is the earliest thing I can remember aviation wise. My brother and I would fly matchbox jets around the house in mock dogfights and what not. There was also the 5-stop trip to Houston we took when I was a kid (80's) and at some of the ground stops since we were the only passengers staying on the whole trip, we got to go to the flight deck and the pilots showed us that the 737 talked to them. Years later in the mid-'90s my Dad moved to Japan and we got to enjoy 10 trips aboard the Queen of the Skies which included looking through the door of the flight deck during the flight. I loved those trips; I always had this sort of peace in my soul when doing those super long flights and was always captivated by how the waves seemed to stay still descending into Narita or San Francisco. I've crossed the Pacific another 4 times on 777s but it just isn't the same. I played various flight sims as well as a kid but aviation was never more than something I thought was "cool".

The first time I thought about learning to fly involved MSP, funny enough. Returning home from Afghanistan the pilots offered riding in the cockpit to anyone on board. On our leg from MSP to our final destination (a military airfield out west), one of my troops and I enjoyed sitting in the jump seats about mid-cruise all the way through the landing. I keep the details vague because today I wonder how kosher this was with the FAA. I've flown extensively around the world but watching the sun rise over America from the flight deck, seeing the earth curve and various isolated storm clouds move about, watching the pilots work through the descent and actually seeing a passenger plane land from the front - well - the US could fix its pilot shortage if that was a more common experience. That was the first time I ever thought to myself, "it would be pretty cool to do this".



In 2017 I had been looking for a new video game to play. There was a whole lot of life in between that flight home from Afghanistan, including marriage and a son! I had done some arcade style flight games but had seen some YouTube videos for DCS and saw a deeper level of simulation and decided to give it a shot. After about an hour of tinkering around and learning to cold start a Su-25T I had to run to BestBuy to buy a cheapo HOTAS (Hands on Throttle & Stick control). I putzed around for a week or two with the "lower fidelity" aircraft but quickly moved onto the study level with the AJ5-37 Viggen. I was hooked: once I learned to cold start and take off - the freedom to go wherever, climb, dive, and race over treetops captured me. I was hooked, and I was surprisingly hooked by the need to study: learning the four fundamentals, learning various procedures, I began making YouTube tutorials as well to teach others the Viggen for DCS.

In 2019 I joined a virtual squadron for the F-16 (a pre-existing favorite) and took it even further: learning to fly according to someone else's activities as well as learning departure and arrival procedures, ATC radio calls and maintaining a specific flight plan were all major learning curves - and this shifted "flying" from a fun pass time into something I was actively engaged in. My study went beyond manuals for specific aircraft and turned instead to general flight instruction books, flying memoirs and so forth. There's plenty of days where I struggle in the "air" compared to my more experienced (and often licensed) pilot peers - but learning to do it better and achieve that is what has driven me and makes it enjoyable. A close friend also got me into MSFS 2020 during the pandemic and I started flying in FSE. I didn't think this would appeal to me, to begin with if you're going to fly passengers use a 737, right? I was wrong, I actually really enjoyed it. Not only did it open my eyes to the number of FBOs near my house but people in DCS always thought I was strange building scenarios where fuel management was a critical factor. FSE changed that - how can I fly this route most efficiently? I also found I really like small GA aircraft, and started working to identify as many of them flying low over my house on approach to KFNL.

MSFS also changed the calculus. It was one thing to love flying the Viggen which doesn't fly anymore. There is no way I will ever solo an F-16. Getting a PPL and flying a DA-62 though isn't impossible. What I thought drew me in: whipping over treetops MO.98 might have been what hooked me; but the peace and freedom of flight calls to me. For three years I've looked to the sky trying to figure out how to get there beyond a simulator.

### **Do you have a favorite airplane, real or virtual?**

Well, I am a big Viggen fan. When you get into the history of the aircraft and know about its systems it becomes quite the advanced fighter of its time. It isn't the prettiest bird when you first look at it, but she grows on you. The JAS-39 Grippen, which replaced the Viggen in service, is also a favorite of mine. The F-16 is also a fan favorite, opposite the Viggen when you look at it for the first time it just grabs your eyes - she's one sleek bird. It also helped they used to come over my old home 500/500 which always prompted a sprint out of the house to go catch a glimpse. The best-looking fighter in my eyes, somehow capturing my childhood "this is what a jet should look like" of course has been the Panavia Tornado; which on a side note I am excited to eventually see in DCS and build a new two-seat pit to fly with my son in the back seat. Probably because my grandfather flew on B-29s in WWII, or maybe because if you've ever seen one of them doing 500 knots at 500' as a kid: the Bone (B1-B) might actually be my favorite. If one of these ever somehow came to DCS (never will) I would build a "simpit" for it without thinking twice. I've never had the pleasure of a A-380 ride, but I am not sure anything on the airliner side will ever be cooler than the 747.

### **What's your most memorable flying experience?**

I already told of my most memorable flying experience, but I'll sprinkle a few in here for length and reading enjoyment. There was my first trip across the Pacific, a great first-class trip in Row 1. It was great to begin with because I was 11 and this is when airplanes still had one big projector screen at the front. The flight was heavy turbulence the entire way but prime seating also meant the flight attendants could hand me drinks and ice cream from their jump seats. I had an iron stomach back then so it was like a five-hour roller coaster ride to me, not so much my middle brother and dad at the back of the cabin.

The first 747 ride over the Pacific, a week later, was also super notable for obvious reasons (yes, DEN-SFO-HNL-SFO-NRT). Hands down the worst flight I've ever taken was a C-130 from Bagram - Qatar: canvas net seats, someone else's knee in between your legs and your luggage in your lap; though after three days sleeping at the pax terminal I was happy just to be on anything out of country to go on R&R.

A different MD80 trip to Hawaii previously held this position when my youngest brother learned he was allergic to nuts 10 minutes into the 5 hour flight, resulting in a clothing change for me after landing. Lastly a fun family fact: I am forbidden from reading anything &quot;learn to fly&quot; when we travel as a family because the one time I did our plane had to divert with a landing gear deployment failure. I learned my wife didn't appreciate my point that we were diverting to Grand Rapids instead of O'Hare so that we wouldn't potentially close a busy runway - she used to not like that I can tell when things are not going correctly, but a number of flights since then and she actually likes that I always know what's going on with the aircraft from our seats.

### **Can you tell us more about yourself?**

I'll be 39 this October, married with a hockey nut for a son (7 in Aug). Originally from Colorado; we moved last July to Minnesota because we visited once and fell in love, though I typically tell people it was for my son Eli to play hockey, which isn't so much a lie either. My wife is a teacher and I work for a small IT Solutions company.

I got my IT training in the Army after realizing there wasn't a huge demand for Field Artillerymen on the civilian side, though I was also an Engineer to start my career. Served for 10 years and had I stayed I would have retired last year, though I wouldn't have met my wife if that was the case, so it was worth it. Did three overseas tours and have written a few books on the topic. What usually surprises people is I have a dual concentration BA (Studio) from Colorado State University, and my work has been in galleries in the US and Europe (and most recently at the St. Paul JCC). A lot of those skills go into producing content for a YouTube channel which includes Viggen tutorials. Two younger biological brothers, one lives in Vietnam and the other is a college baseball coach.

The topic most people are always interested to know: I am a simpit builder. Maybe because the \$50 HOTAS I had was so bad, or maybe because as a little kid my dad's Toyota Camry was the "Raccoon AirJet" that my brother and I would make believe was a flying superhero jet who's buttons and dials were irresistible. Nothing changes your flight sim experience like skipping the mouse and actually pressing various buttons to change states (makes cold starts more fun!). Eventually a mere button box just isn't good enough when you can build something you actually sit in, and then that turns into something that gives tactile feedback, and then you see you can make it better and now here I am working on designs for "Version 6". Of course, a sim pit is cool, it's maximum immersion - but there's real airplanes to fly too! Leif asked - at present I don't have plans to build a real plane (my wife might read this...). My favorite thing about building a simpit however was how much further it took my hobby. I've had to learn electronics, a little bit of CAD, how to use rotary and laser CNC machines, dust off decades old carpentry skills, 3d printing, programming and a bunch of skills I probably forgot I learned along the way. It's something that requires dozens of hours of planning and preparation, design and re-design followed by experimentation. I designed everything myself and had to use various methods to get the real measurements from the F-16's cockpit from public sources, mostly taking known values and measuring them against photographs. For the most part I've been within .25" to the real thing (might have some real Viper parts lying around now). I've met amazing people who share the hobby and have seen some amazing work that I strive to match. I'm getting away from 1:1 and moving towards custom panels and solutions that meet my needs (multiple aircraft controls in one cockpit), so I had to learn extra design factors like DSUZ to ensure my panels can be interchangeable in my pit or if I make some for someone else.

### **How'd you make your way to EAA Chapter 54 and what are you hoping to get out of your membership?**

My original membership to EAA was to get access to CAD at member pricing but I also reasoned it was worth it to further my PPL goals. Why 54? The website was more up to date, there was more activity going in newsletters and what have you and my intuition hasn't been wrong so far because it has been nothing but welcoming.

My goals are pretty simple: get my PPL, but in the process surround myself with other aviation enthusiasts (my wife is not one) who want to talk about flight, aircraft, and just about anything else aviation. I am hoping to find supportive people that will make my journey into the sky better and more memorable. Also hopefully, a community that wants to do that while also enjoying a BBQ. We've been in St. Paul seven months now - and I've been working to establish my roots in the community: EAA Chapter 54 looked like the most fertile soil to do so. It helps that my wife finally agrees it's something I should pursue even if she wonders how we'll pay for it. Until we do I can't think of a better way to learn than hang out with people who love aviation like I do.

## LEACC / RAAC (Marlon Gunderson)

### Lake Elmo Airport Advisory Commission Meeting

The Lake Elmo Airport Advisory Commission first 2023 quarterly meeting was held on February 27<sup>th</sup> at the Baytown Township Hall. The full power point presentation from the meeting is available at [this link](#). A new slate of airport user representatives was welcomed for the next 2 year term:

- Dag Selander, FBO owner/operator at 21D
- Luke Peterson – Echo Lane Columbia flyer
- Jim Thomas – Alpha Lane Mooney flyer
- Doug Weiler of MN RV club fame.
- Donovan Chase (Ch.54 member) RV flyer
- Paul Evenson (Ch.54 member) Turbo Aero flyer
- Marlon Gunderson (yours truly) Cozy flyer



Airport user Luke Peterson was re-elected co-chair of the LEACC for the next 2 year term. Luke is a Lancair Columbia owner/pilot and hangar neighbor on Echo Lane who recently aquired and rebuilt the hangar that collapsed from snow load a year ago on Mike Lane (southernmost lane).

Community Representative Mary McComber was elected as the other co-chair.

Elden Lampract was spotlighted as an airport user. Eldon keeps the RV4 that he built in 1989 in his hangar next to Luke's on Mike Lane. Elden is retired from a lab career as a veterinary pathologist and has family farm ties to this area.

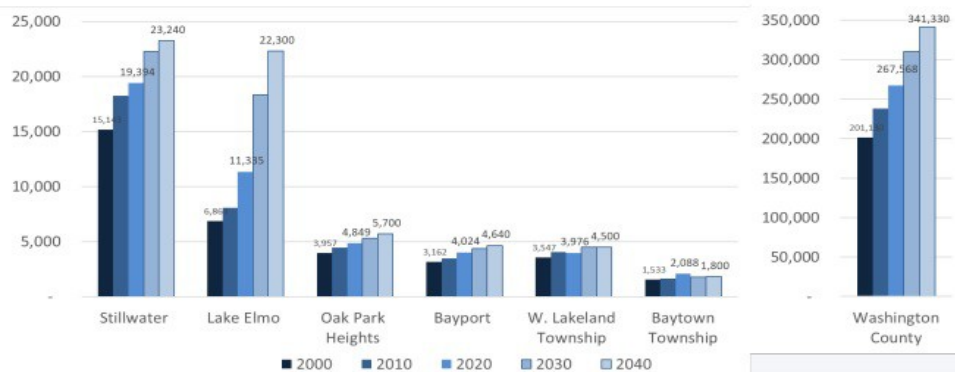
Population trends were shown for surrounding communities, seen here, with Lake Elmo accounting for the majority of the expected growth in the next 2 decades.

Noise complaint data for 2022 was presented in context with prior years. The number of households generating airport noise complaints was same as 2021 with 10 households, and total complaint events would have been the lowest in five years had it not been for

one new household in Lake Elmo that called to complain over 600 times, making it a very high complaint event year.

The next LEACC meeting is scheduled same place for Monday May 22<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. These are open to the public so anyone should feel free to attend if they wish. Please confirm meeting time/place via [the MAC LEACC webpage](#).

### Population



### Reliever Airport Advisory Commission Meeting

The March 14th [RAAC](#) meeting featured **MAC CEO Brian Ryks** who briefed RAAC members on the impact of the pandemic on US airports in general and MSP MAC in specific. US Airports sustained losses of \$40B from 3/2021 to 3/2022 due to greatly reduced travel, and MSP MAC has had \$310M in losses since 2019. During this time MAC scaled back on capital spending by about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (~\$100M/year) of that planned, but also took advantage of almost no traffic to reconstruct MN Hwy. 5 into terminal 1. A big expansion of the (Delta) G concourse has just completed, which is quite plush, including a rotunda, more seating and concessions, and a big Delta Sky Club expansion. You may have read in the press recently that the MSP airport was awarded the top ranking for customer experience by the Airports Counsel International for it's size class (second largest class, 25-40M passengers/yr) for which MAC is justifiably proud.

MAC Director of Commercial Management, **Eric Johnson**, then briefed the RAAC on non-aviation related developments occurring in the reliever airports; these are commercial developments compatible with adjacency to an airport that help to generate income for the reliever airports. Such developments currently include 3 acres of shops and a restaurant on a corner of the Anoka airport property, a 13.5 acre Boise-Cascade rail yard on the northwest side of Airlake airport, a 10 year lease extension for Holman's Table at Holman Field (STP), and the beginning stages of negotiations for ~10 acres of community solar

garden north of the railroad tracks at Lake Elmo airport (I hadn't realized that MAC owns that land).

The airport managers or their proxies then gave reports of developments at their airports which included a 65% likelihood of flooding at STP, which will trigger raising of the levee wall, and phase 4 (final) work on the Lake Elmo airport improvement plan which will wrap up this year, including reconstructing the old runway as a taxiway, additional lighting and signage, installation of a new compass rose and additional runup area, and work on service roads including the north-south connector.

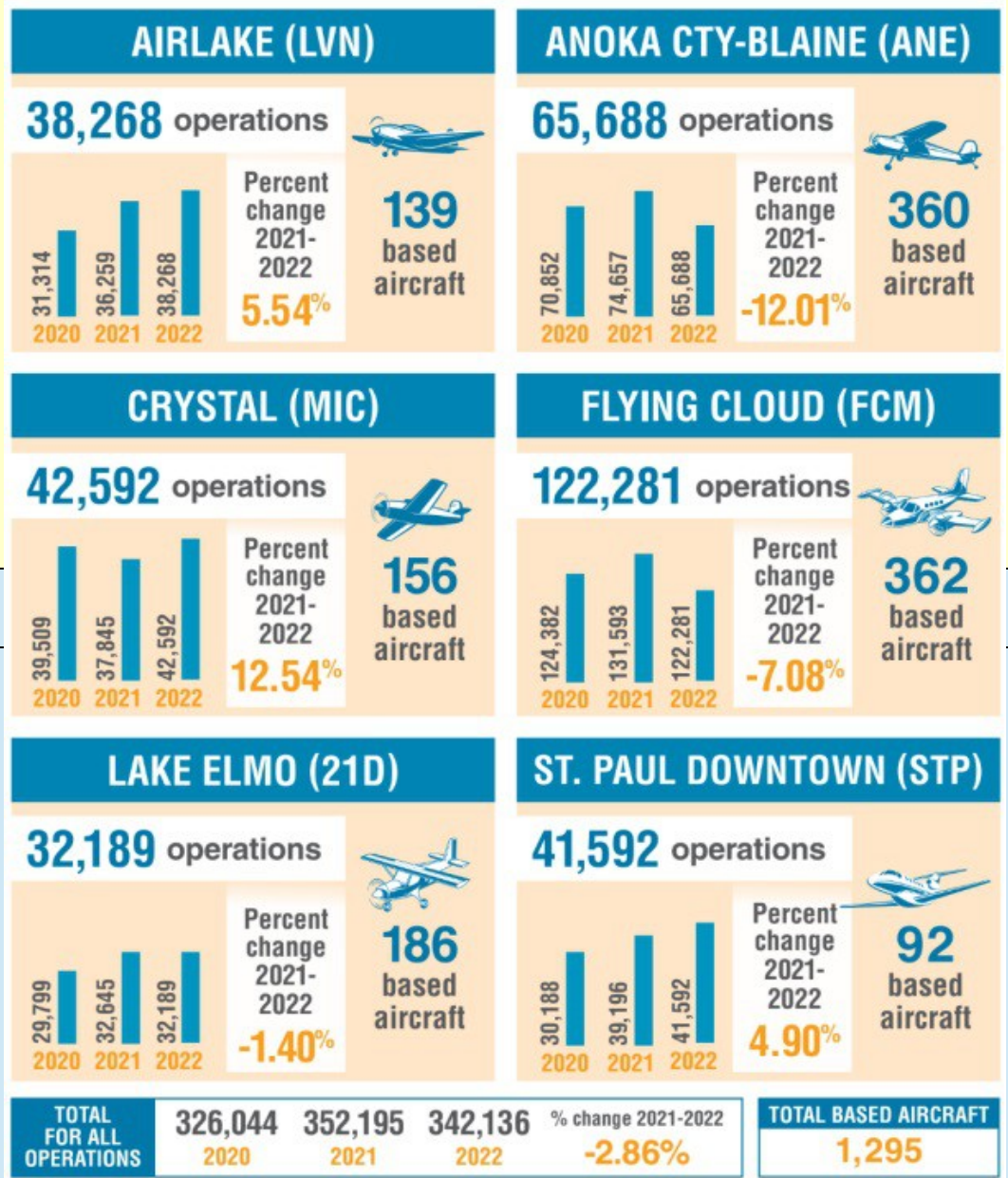
**The Editor's 2¢  
(Marlon Gunderson)**

Bob Collins



I want and need to give a shout out to Bob Collins for the enormous burst of work he has done recently for the chapter, including the member profiles you see here in this newsletter, his work on the chapter house including reorganizing the space and cleaning up as the member meetings are adjourning, and the amazing revamp he has done this winter to the website. If you haven't visited the website recently or seen the updates, you're in for a treat. Check out the research put into the [new chapter history section](#) – I learned a huge amount about the early days and characters who got the chapter rolling. The newsletters are now organized by decade with highlights mentioned about each issue to help you search them. There's a great

# RELIEVER AIRPORTS 2022



Source: MN DOT Dept. of Aeronautics, Opsnet, MACNOMS



photo gallery and fantastic photos of the young eagles events, a list future meeting plans, an aircraft projects page, and a chapter video page, among other updates. Please thank Bob next time you see him! I'm looking forward to more member profiles in future newsletters, and if you want a preview of a profile of Bob himself, and insight into Bob's skill at getting someone's story, check out [this great interview podcast](#) done recently with and about Bob. We're lucky to have his talent in, and contributions to, our chapter.

#### **New 21D hangar tenant: Leonardo Correa Luna**



This winter, I noticed some great flying photos showing up on the 'Midwest Airshow, Fly-In and Flight Club' Facebook group by a talented photographer, particularly his photos of the TrickAir and Iceport Flyins (see earlier photo section). At some point I figured out he (Leonardo) was flying out of Lake Elmo and I reached out to ask if I could feature some of his photos in this newsletter, which he graciously approved.

In the process I learned that Leonardo is new to the area and keeps a Cessna 170 in a 21D hangar on Kilo Lane. Leonardo is from Uruguay and is a commercial pilot with more than 12000 flight hours and has been Captain and Instructor for 7 different airlines in 6 countries. He has previously lived in Livermore, CA, and Mount Pleasant, IL, and he keeps busy on the side with photography and writing – see his recent articles in [AOPA](#) and [Flying Magazine](#) previously mentioned in the photo section about the winter flyins. His work has also been in Air & Space, Warbirds Digest, Flyer, Elle, Snap, Getty Images, and others. Check out more of his great photography and learn more about him at his website [leonardocorrealuna.com](http://leonardocorrealuna.com). And say hello to Leonardo if you cross paths at 21D or another local flying destination. Better yet, ask him to take your photo....I'll wager it will be a keeper.