

# CHAPTER 55 EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2008



## Meetings are the 2nd Saturday of each Month

EAA Chapter 55 Hangar - Mason Jewett Airport – 643 Aviation Drive, Mason, MI 48854

Pres: Bill Bezdek 351-0448 Vice Pres: Bill Purosky 214-2729 Treas: Sharron Hacker 740-4647

Secr: George Moore 536-1034 Editor: Warren Miller 214-2656 (all Area Code 517) [www.EAA55.org](http://www.EAA55.org)

## Climb and Maintain Flight Level 55

Several individuals have made outstanding contributions to the Chapter this year. First among them is Doug Koons. He and his son did the majority of the work while working with the volunteer contractors replacing loose roofing nails with gasketed screws and further caulking them with polyurethane sealant. He recently replaced two exterior doors to our meeting room and hangar. And after the remnants of hurricane Ike dumped record amounts of rain he noticed the roof was still not watertight. He and another hard-working member, Bill Purosky, went up to find out what was wrong and discovered that when the building was originally constructed one metal roofing panel was not overlapping the lower panel, but instead was installed under it. In effect, it funneled the rainwater into the building. Why it went unnoticed these many years is a mystery. Doug and Bill fixed it once and for all and then went on to replace the ceiling over the kitchen where the most damage occurred. My heartfelt gratitude goes to those two hardworking individuals. The Chapter owes them a great deal for their volunteer efforts.

I also wish to compliment our newsletter editors, Bonnie and Warren Miller, for their dedicated work on our stellar publication.

A neighboring chapter president called me to say he would pay to subscribe to our newsletter if it was not already emailed to him for free.

Last month I put out a call for ideas about what direction our Chapter should take. What do you want to get out of your membership in our local Association? One question facing us is: Do you wish to continue with our annual MAD event? What form should it take with the loss of funding from CRAA? I requested members call, email or write me with their wishes and desires, but have yet to hear from anyone. The Directors can make these decisions by themselves, but they represent you, the members. We want everyone's thoughts on the subject. I hope you feel the Chapter is not just a place to come for breakfast once a month.

Speaking of Directors, the terms of five are ending and it is time to replace them. Our annual elections are upcoming and the opportunity to join the heart of our Chapter now presents itself.

Vickie sent out an e-mail notice on 25 September. Also, we are seeking a replacement Treasurer. Because Sharron spends each winter in their Florida home she felt she wasn't serving the best interests of our Chapter, and wants to turn over the office to someone who can attend every monthly meeting. Please rush forward and volunteer for any of these positions. Our Chapter owes its success to our volunteer members.

Bill Bezdek, President

## Breakfast Teams

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>
Pete Chestnut	Frank Balluff
Dave Groh	Tom Botsford
Russ Hilding	J. Morris Hickman
Fred Honhart	Steve Houghton
Ernie Lutz	Doug Keith
Terry Lutz	Karen Merindorf
Roger Reeve	Rick Riisberg
Drew Sequin	Tony Schepis
Doug Simons	



September Cooks: Doug Koons, Julie Spalding, Dick and Barbara Bacon

## **EAA Chapter 55**

### **Board of Directors Meeting, September 10, 2008**

BOD members in attendance: Vice president Bill Purosky, secretary George Moore, treasurer Sharron Hacker, Chuck Hacker, David James, Vickie Vandenbelt, Al Spalding. Member in attendance: Doug Koons.

In the absence of president Bill Bezdek, vice president Bill Purosky called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m. EDT (2329 Z).

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Report of August accepted as written.

**TREASURE'S REPORT:** Report of January through August, 2008 accepted as written. MAD net income was approximately \$1877.90. Applicants for appointed Treasurer now being accepted. Sharron Hacker has graciously volunteered to continue to help train the new recruit and to continue until she and Chuck return in the spring of 2009, if necessary to extend her assistance.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**MAD DEBRIEFING:** Mr. Richard Anderson (FAA) noted that although there were no operational issues, there were some problems that need to be resolved, i.e., some of our guests were smoking, some near aircraft and that the NO SMOKING RULE for airport property must be enforced and there were issues with aircraft security. There was much confusion in meal lines as people didn't know precisely where to go; we ran out of coffee on one occasion.

Need to send a letter of thanks to CARDS (RC club) thanking them for coming out and apologize for any inconvenience we may have caused. It was suggested that the plea for waiver of the fee for assembly be documented so that in future years the BOD will have good information as to how to proceed.

Hot dog, hamburger buns, dinner rolls were given to the Tri-County Office on Aging per Sharron Hacker. Sharron Hacker suggested we continue to make donations to charitable organizations of the leftover food.

Vickie Vandenbelt will send a "letter to the Editor" of ICN thanking the community for their patronage at MAD.

President Bill Bezdek has secured a plastic tube for banner storage.

**YOUNG EAGLES:** Doug Koons reports that we flew 207 YE in 2008 and that we now have a total of 2,152 YE to date.

**PILOT FUEL REIMBURSEMENTS:** Bill Purosky: Because of FAA rules re: what may and may not be charged by private pilots (non-commercial), we will not be able to reimburse pilots for the 2008 MAD as the rules are very stringent and reimbursement for not more than 50% of the cost of operating the aircraft during the event only must be done on site during the event. However, for 2009, we will be better prepared to make prior arrangements, as there are some other ways to make the reimbursement that will satisfy the FAA! Bill Purosky has listed the various ways that this may be done legally.

**CALENDARS:** It was moved, seconded and carried that we purchase 50 EAA calendars to help support the Young Eagles program

**2008 CHRISTMAS PARTY:** Julie Spalding has made most arrangements, including securing a reservation for VeVay Township facilities. A few minor details yet to be completed.

**TABLES AND CHAIRS:** The BOD has selected the gray-laminate tables: eight 8' tables @ \$150.79 ea. and one 6' gray-laminate table @ 132.69 for a total cost of 1439.35, incl tax, shipping and handling. David James moved to accept the selection of tables and to allocate \$1450.00 to cover cost. Motion seconded by Bill Purosky, carried. Bill Purosky to order. The BOD is still working on the selection of the chairs, but this, too, will be resolved in the near future.

**TWO TABLES:** from Bill Bezdek's cache have been requested by aircraft builders now renting space in the Builders' Hangar. Bill Purosky moved that we purchase two of these tables for the Builders' Hangar for a suggested price of \$8.00 each; seconded and passed.

**NEWBERRY SCHOLARSHIP FUND:** It was moved, seconded and passed that we contribute \$2,500 to Eastern Michigan University again this year. Vickie Vandenbelt brought up the fact that there is some money left in EMU's fund from last year, so we should not have to contribute the entire \$2,500—that whatever is left in that fund (approx. \$100?) should be subtracted from this year's donation to equal a total of \$2,500. This is a valid consideration and will be taken up at a later time.

**PROPOSED NEW HANGAR LEASES:** A committee, chaired by David James, will review the revised leases received from the attorney, along with suggested changes & corrections from Board & members and submit the final drafts to the board.  
**ROOF REPAIRS:** A done deal.

**REPLACEMENT OF HANGAR AND ENTRANCE DOORS:** Nearly completed, including projected costs as per Doug Koons.

**CHAPTER PROPERTY INVENTORY:** Deferred.

**HANGAR WINCH STATUS:** The cost of new winch to be determined and presented at next BOD meeting -- Bill Purosky.

**DOOR LOCK:** Door between meeting room and storage hangar. Because of requirement of increased security since 9/11/2001, door must be locked. However, a key for this lock may be obtained for members who request a key. Keys to be numbered and list made of those who will have a key.

**FLIGHT AND TECH ADVISORS STATUS:** Still to be determined.

**MEMBERSHIP SURVEY:** Vickie Vandenbelt will work with BOD to develop and distribute to members for completion.

**COFFEE MAKER:** Vickie has made will call to see if replacement part available.

CHAPTER RECORDS: Vickie has archived many documents into the new horizontal cabinet files.

SOCIAL EVENTS: Many thanks to Joe Pirch for supplying the two delicious turkeys for our potluck social following MAD. This event was memorable for the variety of food—very enjoyable.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

NOMINATIONS: Vickie V will chair the Nomination Committee seeking nominations for the 5 Director seats. Each Director will serve a two-year term. Elections will be held at the November meeting.

PROXY: Form to be developed by the secretary, George Moore for those wishing to have a vote by proxy in one’s absence.

2008 AND 2009 BUDGET: Deferred.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: Nominations sought.

2009 MAD PLANNING COMMITTEE: Seeking volunteers for the committee. Intent is to start meetings in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 0150 Z (9:50 p.m. EDT)

**EAA Chapter 55**

**General Membership Meeting, September 13, 2008**

Vice president Bill Puroskey called the meeting to order at 1330 Z (9:30 ET).

SECRETARY’S REPORT: Accepted unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Accepted unanimously.

HANGAR LEASES: David James to chair committee to edit and revise the storage hangar lease and the building hangar lease. This will be submitted to the BOD for review.

YOUNG EAGLES: Doug Koons has submitted the following:

**YOUNG EAGLES FLOWN  
BY MEMBERS OF EAA CHAPTER 55**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF YE FLOWN</b>
2000 and prior	497
2001	234
2002	291
2003	410
2004	106
2005	85
2006	179
2007	136
2008	207
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<b>Grand total to date:</b>	<b>2,152</b>

**PILOT CAREER TOTALS 2008 TOTALS**

**As of 09/12/08**

Ernie Lutz	267	34
Ted Lakin	255	
Doug Koons	190	35
Bill Puroskey	129	31
David James	111	19
Steve Houghton	105	10
Max Hall	101	
Roy Hall	80	
Tom Schwaderer	79	
Mary Schwaderer	75	30
Fred Honhart	73	26

YOUNG EAGLES: Doug Koons reports that we flew 207 YE in 2008 and that we now have a total of 2,152 YE to date. Additional info will be able on our web site.

PILOT REIMBURSEMENT: Bill Puroskey discussed the problem that has arisen re: FAA rules which make it impossible to grant the money we had planned for reimbursement for YE flights. FAA rules are very stringent and therefore our plan to reimburse after the event will not be possible. How we may be able to provide reimbursement is still under discussion. However, we will have a plan that will satisfy the FAA for the 2009 year events.

PROPERTY INVENTORY: Need volunteers.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY: Vickie Vandenberg to create re: MAD, dawn patrol, and social activities.

NEWBERRY SCHOLARSHIP FUND: Given to EMU as usual in the amount of \$2500.00.

TABLES AND CHAIRS: New tables have arrived. Bill Puroskey moved that \$39.95 be allocated to cover additional cost of the tables. Motion seconded and carried. Sample of type of chair we are considering was available for viewing and trial.

MEETING ROOM-STORAGE HANGAR LOCKS: Because of increased pressure by the FAA to double lock aircraft, the door between the meeting room and storage hangar must be kept locked; however, anyone wanting a key will be issued a numbered key which must be returned either upon demand or if the member ceases to be a member of Chapter 55.

2009 MAD: Looking for members interested in planning. Hope to start work soon.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: Nominations may be given to any of the BOD members. One nomination was received during the general meeting and presented by Warren Miller who suggested Terry Lutz.

NEW MEMBER: We welcome Mr. Joe Madziar.

Meeting adjourned at 1413 Z (10:13 ET)

Following the meeting, a very interesting video was presented by Tom Botsford – a history of Michigan’s contribution to the various wars in our national history, beginning with the Civil War, followed by the Spanish-American War through the present time honoring those who have given their lives for our freedom. The video also presented the history of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) which had its beginning in 1866 with a maximum membership of nearly half a million by 1890. The many services provided by the GAR were also shown. Thanks Tom for bringing this historic video.

## **TIDBITS ~ October 2008**

**By Vickie Vandebelt**

NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTORS: Chapter 55 is now seeking nominations for election of five (5) Chapter directors. It is the duty of the Chapter 55 Board of Directors to conduct and control the business and property of the Chapter.

Meetings of the Board are scheduled for 7:30pm the evening of the Wednesday immediately proceeding the second Saturday of each month. Meetings generally last one to two hours depending upon the amount of business to be conducted.

The nominations will be presented to the membership at the general meeting and posted on the bulletin board. Elected Directors shall assume their responsibilities at the December Chapter membership meeting. If there is a member that you feel would be a good candidate for this position, please encourage him/her to allow you to make a nomination.

Additionally, if you would like further information or if you would be interested in serving your Chapter in this capacity, please contact Vickie Vandebelt or Sharron Hacker as soon as possible

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: Elections of the Directors will take place at the November meeting. Our Chapter Secretary, George Moore, will develop and implement a process that will offer absent eligible voting membership opportunity to vote by proxy and that should be presented in the October newsletter and meeting.

### FROM AOPA Pilot September 5, 2008 = TSA CALLS ON GA PILOTS TO STOP UNAUTHORIZED

AIRCRAFT USE: The prevention of unauthorized aircraft use is an issue at the forefront of concern for the Department of Homeland Security. This week, the Transportation Security Administration released specific recommendations for general aviation pilots and fixed-based operators all designed to prevent the unauthorized use of aircraft. These recommendations include securing aircraft, like using a secondary locking mechanism (hangar, prop lock, throttle lock, etc.), and being alert for and reporting suspicious activity to the TSA’s 866/GA-SECURE hotline. Much like AOPA’s Airport Watch Program, the recommendations center on practical, commonsense security precautions. Read more & secure downloads at [www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org).

## **Young Eagles**

**By Doug Koons**

Nothing to report for the month of October.

## **Notes from Cape Jubj**

**By Terry L. Lutz, Chapter 55 Flight Advisor**

There are times when you set out to write a story, but the direction the story takes is completely different than what you had imagined. When I began talking to Leo Chagnes, I thought we would be talking about the jet-powered VariViggen he had built (how long it took, how fast is it, etc). Interestingly, my interview began to focus more on the person rather than the airplane. I think you will all be interested to learn about Leo’s lifelong devotion to aviation, which represents a small slice of French aviation history.

Leo began his life in aviation while working for Dewotine in St. Martin du Touch, not far from the present day manufacturing center for Airbus. He worked on the Dewotine 520, which was the best fighter the French were operating at the outbreak of WW II. Riding his bicycle early in the morning from his home in Toulouse to St. Martin, a distance of about 12 km (about 7 miles), his job was mostly metal work and installing fuel tanks in the Dewotine 520.

One summer, he was camping with his family in the area of Cannes, and his family provided him with an airplane ride as a birthday present. Leo was so impressed with what he had seen and felt, that he left camp and traveled to Marseilles for a second flight. He asked the instructor “How can I become a pilot?”, to which his instructor replied “Get your medical certification, and join an aero club!” (after WWII, club flying was - and still is - the most common way people enter aviation in France).



The aeroclub Leo joined was the Aeroclub Languedoc, located at the Aerodrome Lasborde near Toulouse. In France, big airports are called Aeroportes. Small airports are called Aerodromes. He was 30 years old when he learned to fly. At that time, the Aeroclub flew Stampe biplanes. Leo completed his flying training and received his PPL (Private Pilot License) in 1958. While the Stampes he flew were good airplanes, they required frequent maintenance and repair. Leo was good with his hands, and with aircraft experience, aircraft repair would eventually become a major part of his life.

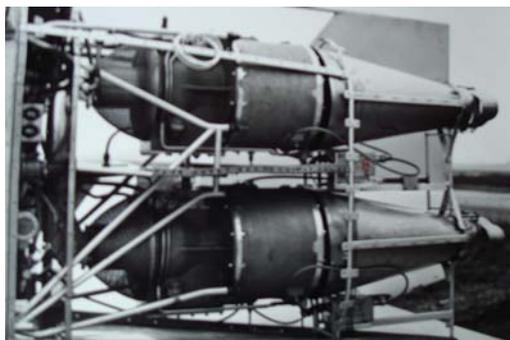
His first homebuilt airplane was a Druine Turbulent, a small low-wing monoplane with a 35 hp Volkswagen engine. As you can see in the photo, it was an open cockpit airplane with a tailskid and no brakes. The engine cylinders hung out in the breeze, and the distributor popped out from the top of the engine. The Turbulent proved to be a very successful airplane, and in 1957 Leo received an award from the French Air Ministry for craftsmanship.

Work on the Turbulent did not stop there. He later modified it with aluminum wheel pants, full cowl, brakes, and a sliding canopy. In 1970, Leo changed the airplane again by installing a nose gear and a 70 hp engine with dual magnetos. This put the cruise all the way up to 100 kts. Registered as F-PIHT, the airplane is still flying at the Aerodrome Lasborde on the outskirts of Toulouse.

Leo proved to have the skills necessary to build, repair, and rebuild airplanes, so the Aeroclub Languedoc offered him the position of ground engineer for the club. He was working and flying and building all at the same time and in the same place. In addition to doing all the repair and maintenance work, he found the time to build a Piel Emeraude, which is a two seat side-by-side low wing airplane with excellent performance. He also found a Fieseler Storch STOL airplane with the original Argus engine, and converted it to a Salmson radial engine.

The word about the quality that Leo put into his repair work and airplane building began to spread, which brought work in from Marseille, Bordeaux, and Paris. In 1965, he formed his own company to rebuild airplanes. It was not an FBO or repair shop as we know it in the US. Instead, it was simply an individual enterprise to handle the ordering and the billing, and keep it separate from his personal finances. Leo became a licensed aircraft mechanic in 1975, which allowed him to sign off repairs.

I asked Leo how he came to the decision to build the jet-powered Vari Viggen. He said that a friend of his worked for MicroTurbo (the engine manufacturer), and was putting pressure on him to put a jet engine in the Druine Turbulent. Leo promptly refused. His friend made a trip to the US and came back with the plans for the Vari Viggen in his hands. Leo took one look at the plans and said "If you give me the engines, we will build it!" He started the next day. It was 1976 and construction would take 4 years, with first flight in March 1980. It was a real challenge, because Leo does not read or speak English!



The MicroTurbo TRS-18 engine is a centrifugal flow turbojet engine producing between 220 and 326 lbs thrust, depending on the model. The engine is very appealing for small aircraft applications, since it weighs only 82 lbs, and is only 12 inches in

diameter. The engine is certified and man-rated, so it can be used in a certified airplane. Two airplanes were certified with the TRS-18, the twin-engined Microjet 200 trainer, and the Caproni C22J two-place side-by-side sailplane. It is the engine used in the BD-5J, which is probably the most successful application. At the time Leo installed these engines in the VariViggen, their value was about \$180,000 USD. Today, you can buy one in good condition for around \$50,000 USD. Weak points are high fuel consumption and high thrust at idle power, requiring a thrust attenuator to slow the airplane for landing, and allow a good go-around capability.

The VariViggen design has a large cutout at the wing trailing edge to accommodate the propeller arc. Leo contacted Burt Rutan to find out if it was possible to close up the cutout. Burt came back and said that if the cutout were closed, it would require a slight increase in the area of the canard. Leo did all the integration work with the engines, including the starting/generating systems, start functions, instrumentation, and fuel system.

I found Leo's design for the thrust attenuators was superb for reliability and system safety. Basically, you have two sets of throttles, one ahead of the other. The aft levers control thrust at the fuel controls, and the forward levers close the thrust attenuators, which reduces thrust even further. With the aft levers at idle you can reduce thrust even further by moving the thrust attenuator levers aft. If at any time you need full thrust, you push the throttles forward, which also forces the thrust attenuator levers forward, opening the thrust attenuators automatically. The airplane carries 271 liters of fuel, and has a flight time of about 1 hour. That puts the fuel consumption at about 220 liters (58 gallons)/hour. You have to watch the fuel very closely and have an airport on the nose and in range all the time.

Leo says the airplane flies great at cruise, but high AOA should be avoided because of lateral/directional instabilities. This makes some sense, because an aft mounted propeller provides some directional stability, and if you remove it for the jets, things will get a little worse. The airplane flies at 200 knots on two engines, and sits at 150 knots on one engine. In 1980, Burt Rutan came over and flew it, with the comment "Flies great, enjoyed it very much!"

The jet-powered VariViggen is for sale, and Leo would like to see it go to someone in the US where it could be flown and seen a lot more. For more information you can contact me directly at [terry.lutz@attglobal.net](mailto:terry.lutz@attglobal.net)

Leo's most recent project was a scratch built replica of a Breguet XIV biplane, the same type flown by Jean Mermoz and Antoine de St Exupery when the French airmail service Aeropostale was started (and you thought they only made T-shirts!!) The fuselage was built by the Lycee de St Exupery, a technical school in Toulouse. Leo meticulously built the wings, beginning with the ribs. You can still see the jig in his shop. He donated the engine, and designed the flight controls and electrical system. First flight of the replica was in Nov 2003.



At 83, Leo is still flying and fixing airplanes. He is once again repairing a Stampe biplane, which flipped over after a forced landing in a soft farm field. The center section is complete and he will be starting the wings shortly.



Next month, I will have a special report for you about an upcoming flight in the A380. If all turns out as planned, you will find it extremely interesting. Until then, fly safe, enjoy the beautiful Fall weather, and lend a hand to your fellow pilot when you can. Thanks to my Dad, Dick Wilkie, Roy Thelen, Mike Arntz, and Lloyd Brown who helped me a lot on my airplane when I was in Michigan the last two weeks.

## **CLASSIFIED**

### **FOR SALE**

Telex ProCom 200 noise-canceling headphones with boom microphone. New in original box. Must attach plugs for your particular radio to plain wires. Price negotiable. Contact Bartlett Smith 517-676-2146

Burning barrels; 55 gallon drums like new. \$5.00 each. Contact Dave Groh 517-676-4416

Generator; Generac 4000w. \$350.00. Contact Greg Hover 517-676-5126

2 Lots (approx .40 acres each) in Sugar Springs Residential Community approx. 10 miles north of Gladwin MI. Located on 3500 ft. grass airstrip with many extras. Only \$15,900.00 for both. Contact Doug Simons 517-626-6790

Wicks one inch seat cushions, blue, with front map pocket. Set of 2, like new. \$120.00. Contact Patrick Salow 517-565-3178

New surplus hardware. Save 30%-50% on hose clamps, Dzus, continental rocker hose clamps, spark plugs, prop clamp bolts, and

much, much more. Contact Dave Groh, Yesteryear Aviation 517-676-4416

### **WANTED**

Plane ride around Mason area. Will pay for fuel. Note left on board during MAD from Gary; 517-749-8586

An Ultra Light in the \$5,000 price range. Note left on board during MAD from Gary; 517-749-8586

Copy of Flying Magazine - February 2006 issue. Contact Fred Honhart as he needs this issue to complete a set to donate to the library.

### **FREE**

Sporty's Electronic E6B Flight Computer. Like new. Retail value \$90.00; will give to anyone who would like to check it out. Contact Vickie Vandenberg 517-589-5051

Collection of EAA Sport Aviation magazines; complete 1959 thru 2000. Organized in boxes by years w/some indexes by Bergeron. One condition—entire collection must go. Contact Bart Smith 517-676-2146

**FOUND:** Vivitar camera in case; left at rented house in Osh Kosh. Contact Vickie Vandenberg 517-589-5051

**WILLING TO LOAN:** Jigs & Fixtures for a Zenith 701. Contact Chuck Hacker 517-740-9222

**FOR SALE:** Avon Products & Natural Beauty Soaps. For a copy of the latest brochure, contact Deanna McAlister 517-596-2506 or visit [www.naturalbeautysoaps.net/deanna](http://www.naturalbeautysoaps.net/deanna)

**INSERT YOUR AD HERE!** Contact Warren or Vickie for the next edition!

## **DAN SCHIFFER'S F4U CORSAIR**

**By Dick Wilke**

This summer some of us have seen a big blue gull-winged fighter plane circling the pattern, making approaches, and refueling at Mason Jewett Airport. This is none other than Dan Schiffer's latest acquisition, a post WW-II F4U Corsair. Dan and his group, including his cropdusting cousins, Al and Mike Schiffer, and a friend from Mississippi, purchased the airplane from Jim Read's warbird museum at Valparaiso, Indiana. Dan explained that these airplanes seldom come on the market, and his group was allowed first choice because they had assisted the museum by flying their airplanes. The airplane had been scheduled to be at a number of events in 2008, and the group agreed to honor those commitments.

When I called Dan to ask if he might be able to have the Corsair at Mason Aviation Day on August 17, he graciously scheduled it for our event. Dan moved the airplane, with wings folded, to a spot north of our Chapter 55 meeting room, and gave the crowd a very interesting talk about the airplane from our control tower. Dan's airplane has the huge 2450 hp Pratt

and Whitney radial engine and the later four-bladed prop. The engine requires 140 octane avgas, but since this is not available, they fly it with 100 octane avgas, with a rating of 2000 hp. The Corsair was the highlight of Mason Aviation Day event, and we owe Dan a big vote of thanks for making the airplane available, and telling us all about it.

Dan's Corsair was also at Gratiot Community Airport (AMN) for a warbirds gathering the following weekend, and Ed Crouse and I flew up on Sunday, August 24. This was an amazing fly-in, with Steamans, including Dave and Debby Groh's, lots of AT-6s, at least four P-51s, and a Hawker Sea Fury which is flown by astronaut Hoot Gibson. Several formations overflew the field, and a steak lunch was served, and the Corsair got a lot of attention on the part of visitors.

### **LT. BURTON HENRY, USMC**

**1921 - 2008**

**By Dick Wilke**

Last weekend I went to Pentwater for a gathering of family and friends to celebrate the life of my friend, Burton Henry, who flew the F4U Corsair in the South Pacific in WW-II. The group met at his VFW, and many of his veteran friends were there, including a B-24 tail gunner, and a P-51 and P-40 aircraft mechanic, so the was lots of spirited conversation.

I met Burton at a Jazz Club concert in Sarasota, Florida. I was reading Sport Aviation magazine during the break, and he asked if I was interested in airplanes. I said yes, and that I was building an experimental airplane in Michigan. He said he was originally from Shelby, but now Pentwater, and wintered in a trailer park near us in Bradenton, so we started going to the concerts together.

Burton told me that he had started flight training in the Civilian Pilot Training program in a J-3 Cub while attending Muskegon Community College. His instructor was Cecil Sinclair, who had been the test pilot for most of the Ford Trimotors. To continue in the CPT, Burton had to enlist, so he signed up for the Navy, and was called into service that October. Entering flight training, he and his high school sweetheart were married the day after he got his wings in Pensacola.

Although he had trained in PBYs, when he got to California they needed fighter pilots, and he and his buddy signed up for F4U Corsairs. After the first flight, he told his wife that he didn't know if he was going to do that again! However, he continued with the program, flying 250 hours before shipping out to the South Pacific. His first "hop" was to Rabaul, New Britain, where they bombed and shot up the big Japanese base. He once had to ditch in the sea when he lost oil pressure, and was rescued by Phillipino fishermen, and spent time with a guerilla regiment, before being picked up by a Navy PBM, and returned to his squadron. He flew another 250 hours in combat.

After hearing his story, I asked Burton if he would like to tell it to my EAA Chapter 180 at Sarasota/Bradenton Airport, and he said "yes". One of our members filmed his talk, and I sent the DVD to EAA's Timeless Voices, and also had copies made for his family. I am very grateful to have met this true American hero, and his fine family and friends.

**THE FOLLOWING PAGE BEGINS  
AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY  
BARTLETT SMITH ABOUT  
MASON JEWETT AIRPORT .**

**DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS,  
THIS ARTICLE WILL BE  
COMPLETED IN NEXT MONTH'S  
ISSUE!**

## *Mason Jewett Airport*

*by Bartlett Smith*

Even though World War II was in full progress some government leaders were looking forward to the future when the Allies would successfully finish the hostilities and start the transition to a normal post-war life. Arthur Jewett, as mayor of Mason, was advised by those people that when the veterans returned an airport would be an important asset to any city or town. Aviation had become a fact of life during the war. The military trained pilots would be seeking continuation of their learned aviation skills, as well as many veterans would have a strong desire to learn to fly. An airport would also provide an attraction for industrial expansion to a city as well.

With this in mind Mr. Jewett purchased the 180-acre Elsworth Fletcher farm south of Mason on Eden Road on December 16, 1943. The house was on the west side of Eden Road while the farm fields and large barn were on the east side of the road. The north border of that farm abutted the south borders of the Ingham County Park and the Jewett farm property.

An east-west grass surface runway of 2,800 feet was constructed in early 1944. This runway was parallel to the farm fields' north boundary and about four hundred feet to the south. Fifty acres were used for this runway while the remaining area was farm cropped. The interior of the hip-roof barn was removed and the concrete floor cleaned allowing the storage of three or four planes. A small building was moved in adjacent to Eden Road, which became the office with restrooms. An underground refueling system operated from the office was installed. Just to the north and the west end of the runway a single hangar building, capable of housing six planes, was completed. Now Mason had its own airport!

The first plane to land on the partially completed runway was a Civil Air Patrol plane from Lansing with Dick Lyons as a passenger. A Civil Air Patrol Squadron was formed at Mason. At this time the Mason Flying Club Number One was formed by Harry Spenny, Maurice Rickley, Harold Barnhill, Marvin Rice, Rudy Bowman and Dick Lyons. They purchased a two place Porterfield plane. For storage in the new hangar the members picked up stones on the new runway and helped with the development of the fledgling airport as did the Civil Air Patrol Squadron members.

The first students to fly from the new airport were instructed by Ralph Martin from Eaton Rapids. In October 1944 Stanley Keck became the first operator of Jewett Flying School. Stan was originally an experienced instructor from Pennsylvania but had recently been stationed at Romulus Michigan in the Air Corps Ferry Command. As student-flying training increased the school purchased used training planes. A second runway was constructed at the east end of the existing runway. This 2500 foot north-south runway formed a lopsided "T" with the east-west runway.

With the end of the war in 1945 the airport and school qualified for a contract with the Veterans Administration to provide flying training to returning veterans. At this same time they became dealers for new Piper aircraft and others.

In late May of 1946 the writer returned to Mason after several months in the European-African area as an Air Force pilot. I was pleased to find Mason now had a thriving airport with a very active training program. New training planes and a second instructor, Ralph Avery, had recently been added to the school. Privately owned aircraft based at Jewett Airport were on the increase. Because of this five individual t-hangars were constructed along Eden Road south of the barn and office building.

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Another former Air Force pilot was using Jewett Airport to continue his flying skills. Bob Starr, who had been a P-51 pilot in the Asian Theater, took a refresher course at the school. This enabled him to take the FAA flight check to obtain his flight instructor rating. Soon he was instructing at Mason.

It is interesting to note that at one time four brothers were pilots flying at Jewett Airport. They were Harley, who had been a member of the original Mason Civil Air Patrol Squadron, Glenn, Roy and Bob Starr.

Stanley Keck left Mason the end of December 1946. Frank David from Charlotte took over the management Jewett Flying School He hired Margaret Crane and Bob Starr as instructors. The end of March 1947 Frank David left the business. The school was continued on by the instructors.

The writer decided to take a break from college at the end of spring term at MSU to return to flying. After taking refresher instruction from Bob Starr I received my flight instructor rating on May 14, 1947. A few days later I started instructing at Jewett Flying School. The first new student I started and soloed was Hugh Silsby Jr., a childhood friend.

The "G.I. Program" attracted many more veterans to learn to fly and the school flourished. Looking forward for diversified business one of the Piper J-3 trainers was converted to an aerial crop duster in the summer of 1947. Bob Starr got the required waivers and flew the dusting jobs, usually insect control or fertilizer applications in the early mornings or evenings.

With usual winter slow down of student activity the writer left in January 1948 to ferry Dr. Joseph Ponton's plane to his winter home in Arizona. Upon return I accepted the offer from Emory-Rearick Aviation of Owosso to operate their school at Chesaning.

In the spring of 1948 Laylin Jewett completed courses at Northrup Institute in California to obtain his aviation mechanics license. He returned to Mason to establish an aircraft maintenance shop at Jewett Airport. With the potential increase in activity the writer also returned to the field on the first of July.

Renovations were made to the barn hangar to provide a modern heated work area with necessary facilities, tooling and equipment. The addition of aluminum overhead doors allowed easy access to the efficient shop.

The activity of the crop duster increased. With these increased demands on his time Bob Starr purchased the crop duster in August to operate as his own business.

A new Stinson Station Wagon four-place plane was purchased by the school in October 1948. This was to make the training fleet more versatile but also to be used for charter service. A kit was purchased to make a quick conversion to an ambulance plane This resulted in many interesting charter flights and transporting patients to medical facilities such as Mayo Brothers in Minnesota, Occasionally even non-living passengers were flown. Listed below are two of the more interesting of the ambulance flights.

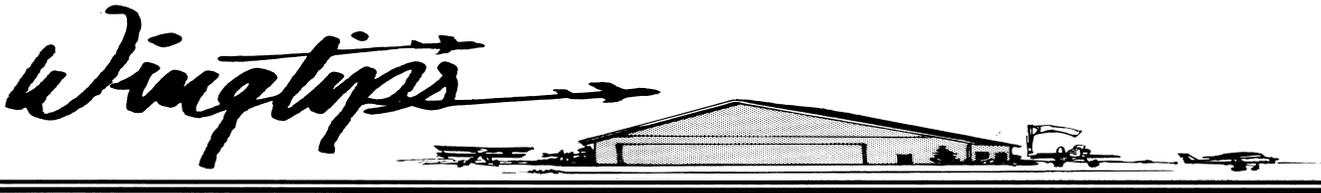
A little girl from Albuquerque, New Mexico came to Mason to visit her grandparents in the summer of 1949. While here she contracted infantile paralysis. In October 1949 she and her mother were flown home in the Jewett Airport ambulance plane. It was necessary to land at the Air Force Field at Albuquerque. Air Force personnel were giving the Governor of Michigan, Kim Sigler, an instrument training course at that field. He recognized me from our previous meetings at fly-ins and greeted me like a long lost friend.

(A few years later on a flight from Chicago to Lansing the Beech Bonanza he was flying under low clouds hit a guy-wire on the Kalamazoo TV tower. Both he and his two passengers were killed.)

## POCKET CALENDAR

12/12/08 Chapter 55 Christmas Party

For additional listings see [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org) and [www.mdot.state.mi.us](http://www.mdot.state.mi.us) and [www.flyins.com](http://www.flyins.com)



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