



June 2020



#### CHAPTER OFFICERS

##### President & Newsletter Editor

Mike Baer  
mikebaer150@gmail.com

##### Vice President, Web Editor & Ray Aviation Scholarship Coordinator

Chuck Newell  
cmnewell@sbcglobal.net

##### Secretary

Pam Toleikis  
pamtoleikis@hotmail.com

##### Treasurer

Dave Montgomery  
dav.montgomery@gmail.com

#### Baer✈️Mail



Last Thursday (6/25) we held our June Virtual Chapter Gathering marking our third online event this year.

We continue to refine the format incorporating suggestions from our Chapter members. This month we dedicated the entire meeting to our guest speaker Lt. Col. Al Lense - USAF (RET) 1989-2014.

Lt. Col. Lense was born in Chicago and raised in Windhoek, Namibia in Southwest Africa. A graduate of Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, he spent 24 years in the USAF flying C-21s (Lear-35), C-5s (Galaxy) and a very special C-32 (Boeing 757) ... **Air Force 2**. Now a Captain with Delta Airlines, Lt. Col. Lense shared an evening of fascinating stories about his experiences with these incredible aircraft as well as the personalities (and a few idiosyncrasies) of the politicians, dignitaries and VIPs which included Vice Presidents, Secretaries of State, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and countless others he spent time with over his 14 years flying Air Force 2 during the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations.



This was a very special evening and one I will not soon forget.

Our Chapter Gatherings are open to all Chapter Members. If you are not currently a member but have a passion for aviation and would like to join, please see the membership application on the last page.

Please be safe, stay healthy and enjoy this month's issue of Propwash.

Mike



#### CHAPTER DIRECTORS

Mike Bowers  
aeromike21@hotmail.com

Bill Cameron  
MEC515@sbcglobal.net

Tim Green  
lsa.midwest@gmail.com

Kathy Spano  
paperairplane333@gmail.com

Phil Toleikis  
toleikis@juno.com

## CHAPTER 579 2020 MONTHLY CHAPTER GATHERING SCHEDULE

**January 23**

**February 27**

**March 26**

**April 23** (Virtual)

**May 28** (Virtual)

**June 25** (Virtual)



**July** (TBD)

**August 27**

**September 24**

**October 22**

**November 19**

**December 17**

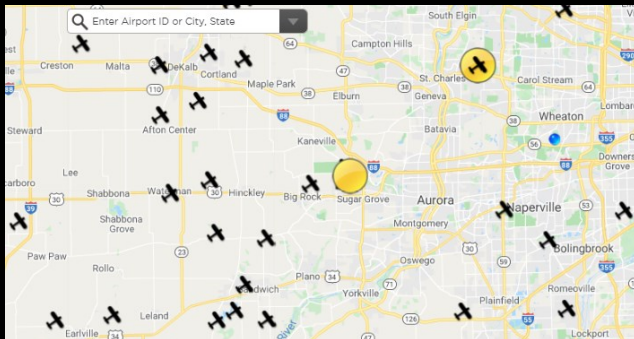
## Aviation Website of the Month



**SocialFlight**

<https://www.socialflight.com/>

SocialFlight is a free Mobile App & Website that provides pilots and aviation enthusiasts with an interactive map of literally thousands of aviation events; Aircraft Fly-in's, Air Shows, Pancake Breakfasts, Conventions, FAA Safety Seminars and much more. SocialFlight users can search for events, add events, chat, upload photos, get email notifications, send event notices to their friends and even add events automatically to their Google or Outlook calendar.



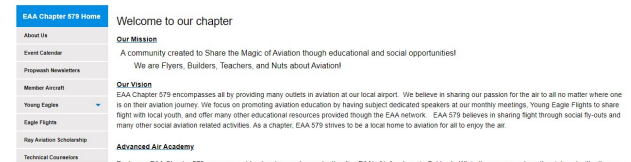
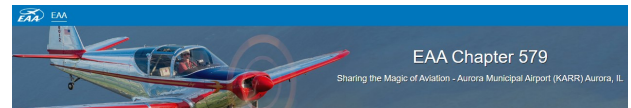
Be sure to follow [EAA Chapter 579](#) on Facebook to get the latest updates on all of our activities.



**Chapter 579**

Sharing the Magic of Aviation  
Aurora, IL - Home Airport: Aurora Municipal (KARR)

Check out our chapter website at [EAA579.org](#) for detailed information about our Chapter







## CHAPTER 579 2020 YOUNG EAGLE RALLY SCHEDULE



Due to the ongoing health risks associated with COVID-19, our May and June Young Eagles Rallies were cancelled.

Our top priority when flying Young Eagles is and always has been safety. Chapter 579 will follow the guidelines of the CDC, State and Local officials in determining when and how we will resume our Young Eagle flights. Be sure to follow us on Facebook for updates and please be safe.

### Rally Dates

~~May 17 (Cancelled)~~

~~Jun 28 (Cancelled)~~

Aug 23

Sep 27

Oct 25

### Rain Dates

~~May 31 (Cancelled)~~

~~Jul 12 (Cancelled)~~

Aug 30

Oct 04

Nov 01

Launched in 1992, the Young Eagles program has dedicated more than 25 years to giving youth ages 8–17 their first free ride in an airplane.

It's the only program of its kind, with the sole mission to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation.

Today, more than 2.2 million young people have enjoyed a free introductory flight through the Young Eagles program.

Join us in offering each child, tween and teen the opportunity to experience the Spirit of Aviation by becoming a Young Eagles volunteer today!



12345







Young Eagles Flight

EAA Student Membership

Sporty's Learn to Fly Course

First Flight Lesson

Scholarships

## The EAA Flight Plan

Your route from Young Eagle to licensed pilot.



### Young Eagle Questions?

Ask our Young Eagle Coordinator Sebastian Saavedra

[youngeagles579@gmail.com](mailto:youngeagles579@gmail.com)



Chapter 579 has two celebrities in our ranks!!!

Our very own Bob & Jean Porter are featured in the current issue of Sport Aviation



# AN AERIAL LOVE STORY

## THE PORTERS AND THEIR SWAP MART ERCOUCPE

BY BUDD DAVISSON

LISTENING TO BOB AND JEAN PORTER, EAA 315438, of Batavia, Illinois, talk about their swap mart Ercoupe, as some call it, makes you think of the old Johnny Cash classic “One Piece at a Time.” The lyrics have Cash, as a production line worker, sneaking a Cadillac out in his lunch box one piece at a time.

*I'd get it one piece at a time  
And it wouldn't cost me a dime  
You'll know it's me when I come through your town  
I'm gonna ride around in style  
I'm gonna drive everybody wild  
'Cause I'll have the only one there is around*



## IT'S A PEOPLE STORY

When it comes to the Porter Ercoupe, by the time the story of their search for parts catches up to today, you realize it's much more than simply an airplane reborn a piece at a time. It's a story of two people who are so close to one another that they are actually one person. Their tale is a form of a mechanical love story in which their lives are united via a nearly dead Ercoupe. It is also a clear-cut tale of how determination, a willingness to learn, and creativity can overcome virtually any obstacle placed between a person and aviation.

The story of their Ercoupe actually begins when they were in high school together in Northwood High in the small Wisconsin town of Minong. “We didn't exactly see eye to eye in those days,” Bob said. So, it definitely was not love at first sight.

When Bob starts talking about his and Jean's high school days, you're reminded of another classic, Longfellow's Evangeline, where lovers crisscross paths in the search for one another in the wilds of 18th century Nova Scotia and Louisiana. Bob's family moved often, and he wound up in another high school and lost contact with Jean. Then, years later, old Northwood High friends set them up on a date, and the odyssey began, one that would find them breathing life into a pile of parts that was, at its core, a tattered and torn 1946 Ercoupe. They reunited in 1962 and were married a year later.



“When I graduated, I went to work as a furnace operator in the powdered metal department of a local manufacturer,” Bob said. “Thirty-five years later, I retired from that same company having worked just about every job in that department with most of them being on the line in one capacity or another. At the end, my stock options let me retire.” There was no aviation in his family as he grew up, but for whatever reason, the bug was always there — and his wife knew it.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT

“In 1974, the kids and I surprised him on his birthday,” Jean said. “We took a trip to the airport, which we did often, but this time I had made arrangements for him to get a ride in an airplane. He absolutely loved it, but we both knew we didn’t have the kind of money that learning to fly would take. However, he talked about it all the time.”

Even though they had kids in college, Bob and Jean would talk about what they wanted to do when he retired, and aviation was always part of those conversations, Jean said.

“The thought developed in my mind that I really wanted my husband to be a pilot,” she said. “I wanted him to do and be something that was obviously close to his heart. So, I started saving, and just before Christmas 1986, I went out to the airport and bought 40 hours of flight time for him.”

Christmas morning came, and Jean and the kids gave Bob his special Christmas present. “When he opened it, he was looking at a little red case with a Cessna logo on it,” Jean said. “When he opened the case and realized what it was, he didn’t say a word. He just sat and stared for the longest time. For a few minutes, I thought I was going to spend that afternoon with him in the ER. It was glorious! His reaction was everything I had hoped it would be. However, I don’t think either of us knew how aviation was going to come to be such a huge part of our existence. It literally changed our life together.”

## ENTER THE ERCOUCPE

“As he was learning to fly, he started talking about how it would be cheaper if we owned our own airplane,” Jean said. “Then he soloed and got his license. At the time, we didn’t know how hard it would be for him to be qualified to fly but really couldn’t afford it.”



They started looking at Trade-A-Plane and other places for airplanes that would fit their budget, but there didn't seem to be any.

"Then we saw an ad for a guy who had an Ercoupe for sale not far away in Frankfort, Illinois," she said. "It was really cheap, and we knew it probably needed work. But it wasn't until we saw it that we realized how much work it would need. It was a mess! I said it looked 'scabby.' The wings, tail, and engine were off, and the fuselage was standing up on its firewall. There was a second fuselage, but both were nothing but shells. Still, Bob looked at it and said that even though a lot of stuff — and I mean a lot of stuff — was missing, we could nickel and dime our way through it."



Bob said it took them five trips with a trailer to get everything home because, among other things, there wasn't one airplane but about one and three-quarters. Plus, there were loose parts all over the place, and it took them time to make sure they had them all. Because there was no inventory, they wouldn't actually know what was missing until they got them home and tried to figure out what pieces of this particular puzzle were not to be found.

"The first thing we ran into was a space problem," Bob said. "The shop wasn't big enough, and the fuselage and fuel tanks were in the garage. This put Jean's car outside, and that wasn't going to work. So, I bought a barn kit, and we spent a little time building that and getting it ready. Then we started on the airplane. And I mean we, not me. For instance, Jean started scraping paint off the fuselage and tail with a credit card. The paint came off in sheets. In fact, we gave the kids rolls of masking tape that they stuck to the airplane and pulled the paint off with the tape. It wasn't adhered to the primer under it at all."



## GET 'ER DONE!

After seeing how rough the airplane was, they knew that if they tried for perfection, they'd never get it back in the air. So, their immediate goal was to get it in the air in totally safe condition and take care of details later. For that reason, they flew for a while in primer before painting it.

"The airplane had been landed short of a runway so the nose gear had been shoved back under the belly," Bob said. "That required replacing the bottom half of the firewall and straightening out the top half. The belly skins probably could have been straightened out, but one of them had a really ugly hole in it. Someone who definitely was not mechanically inclined cut a jagged hole in one skin with a pair of tin snips to put in a fresh air vent for the cockpit. So, I wound up replacing several skins down in that area. Fortunately, our son had graduated from St. Louis University with an A&P [mechanic certificate] and then went on to Parks College to get a dual degree in aviation. He did the sheet metal work and shot the rivets while I bucked them. He provided a lot of mechanical help for our project."

The engine mount also needed repair. "I had three of them, none of them good," Bob said. "So, I took them up to Wag-Aero, and they salvaged a complete set of mount assemblies from the three and built a new mount using them. It cost about a third of what buying a new mount would have cost."

They made lots of trips to Wisconsin to a fellow who had 14 or 15 Ercoupes he was parting out. They picked up an instrument panel and floorboard there.



“There was zero interior in the airplane,” Bob said. “Fortunately, before we attacked that problem, a gentleman called and said, ‘I think I have your interior.’ He had bought a damaged airplane from the same guy we did and realized our interior was mixed in with his parts. That was really nice of him. I redid the side panels with upholstery from Airtex.”

They also got a phone call from someone who had been the final flight inspector for Ercoupes at the factory when they were in production. He wanted to buy their airplane.

“We had just started on it but had gotten so close to being able to register it that we weren’t interested,” Bob said. “In conversation with him, it turned out he wanted to make it into a piece of yard art. That didn’t sit very well with us at all.”

There was also a lot of work to do on the engine. “When we got the airplane, the engine, a Continental C-75, was partially disassembled but the jugs were still on it. My son inspected and reassembled it for us, but it took three tries to get the carb straightened out. Then, shortly after we started flying it, we had to replace one cylinder and then did the other three a year or so later.”

Jean said they really look forward to cruising the Fly Market at AirVenture every year.

“Bob is funny because he’s like a kid in a candy store,” she said. “Every single time he walks through the area he comes out with bags of stuff. Sometimes it’s little things, like hardware. Then, there are bigger things, like our battery box and a factory-new wiring harness still in original packaging.”



They flew the airplane for the first time on July 7, 2001. They quickly found that in the course of getting any vintage airplane back in the air, the builder/restorer is constantly running into design features that the factory could have done better but the present-day pilot just has to live with.

“One of the drawbacks to the Ercoupe is that the canopy windows open in the center and slide down into the fuselage sides, allowing the rainwater to collect in the lower parts of the fuselage,” Bob said. “It’s impossible to keep the interior dry when it’s raining. Everything gets soaked. So, Jean, being good with a sewing machine, came up with a waterproof, super light-weight — just a little over a pound — cover. She personalizes them with N-numbers or whatever the customer wants. It has become a little side business for her.”

## DISASTER: THE SECOND TIME AROUND

They were really having fun in the airplane when disaster struck again.

“On May 20, 2014, it was tied down on the ramp at the Aurora airport and a heavy hailstorm trashed her,” Jean said. “The hail was so large that two hail balls would cover a man’s hand. It was really awful, and I can’t begin to tell you how that made us feel. We had had so many adventures in it that it had ceased to be a machine and had become a member of the family. And I mean that. The insurance company came out, took one quick look, and totaled it. That was a real shock and forced us into doing some serious thinking.”

“We had a tough decision to make,” Bob said. “We could either take the insurance money and just walk off, or we could buy her back and rebuild it for a second time. We stewed about it for a while, but I think both of us knew what we’d do right from the start. We couldn’t walk off and leave her. Too much of our DNA was in it not to make her whole again. There were 14 big holes in each wing panel, and the nose bowl and top cowl were all beat up. Same thing for the elevator, horizontal stab, and ailerons. We could tool the dents out of the cowl, but we replaced the other heavily dented panels and components. I dollar-patched the holes in both wings, but the whole airplane needed to be repainted. This time, however, we were smart enough to have a local painter strip and paint it. I did some of the prep work myself, but not the nasty stuff.”

Bob said the hardest part about repainting it was coming up with a color and a scheme.

“I was pretty much leaving that up to Jean because she’s more creative than I am,” he said. “But even she was having trouble doing it. Then she saw a ‘Coupe belonging to a friend and decided, with a few modifications to the scheme at the nose and a different color, that’s the way we’d go. It was a great choice. We missed AirVenture 2015, the 75th anniversary, because the painting wasn’t finished.”



## THE MAGIC OF LOW AND SLOW

Although few in the aviation community think of an Ercoupe with its 95 mph cruise speed as being a serious cross-country machine, you'd have a difficult time convincing the Porters of that. The act of being in the air is pleasurable to all of us, but the Porters realize that the more time you're in the air, the more time you have to enjoy it. Cruising low and slow lets you appreciate the wonder of viewing America from a vantage point few citizens can enjoy. Why rush it?

"We've covered a lot of ground in the airplane," she said. "We went to Wayne, Nebraska, for the Ercoupe gathering, which is about 450 miles. Then we took a little side trip following a trail to North Dakota to where Bob's great-grandfather, who was a cook in the Army at Fort Rice in 1864, participated in the rescue of a wagon train in trouble at Fort Dilts. Along the way, we had lots of adventures like a stuck valve that had Bob showing a young mechanic the 'rope trick' to free stuck valves, squeaking into an airport as the last sunlight disappeared and making a new friend of a gentleman who took us to a hotel in his truck, when he finished working on the '57 Chevy he was restoring."

Jean said it's hard to convey all the fun they've had in the airplane.

"It's not just the flying that has allowed the Ercoupe to enrich our lives," Jean said. "The people the airplane has introduced us to are probably just as much of our enjoyment of the airplane as the flying. Maybe more. We have met so many wonderful people in so many different parts of the country that it's impossible not to smile just thinking about them."

They said the adventures and the people they met along the way have changed them for the better.

"Our experiences in the airplane have made us try to be the kind of people everyone has been to us," Jean said.

As we said, two people, shoulder to shoulder, beat the odds in every way possible, to live the three-dimensional life that was so important to both of them. They're making the rest of us feel like underachievers. They're also making us jealous. Congrats, guys!



"However, I don't think either of us knew how aviation was going to come to be such a huge part of our existence.

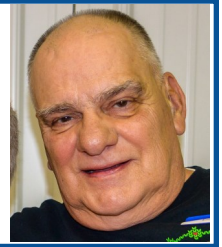
**IT LITERALLY  
CHANGED OUR  
LIFE TOGETHER."**

— Jean Porter



# Beat Billy

By: Bill Cameron



## May Solution:

1. Name this plane:



This is/was a PAYEN PA-22 "Flechair" (Arrow) that was designed and built by Nicolas Roland Payen in 1935, it was to be powered by an early form of ramjet that did not have sufficient thrust. The plane was built to race in the 1939 Coupe Deutsch de la Meurthe air race, the race was cancelled due to the start of the war. The plane was captured by the Germans, repainted and called PA-22 V5. The plane was destroyed in an air raid in 1943, it had made one test flight in 1942, After being re-engined with a Regnier 180 hp 6B-01.

2. What is this and what is it on?



You are looking at a mechanical visual landing gear position indicator on the wing of a Russian made MiG 17. Gear down, pin up, gear up, pin down. The plane is located at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savanna, GA.

## June Challenge:

Since we are soon to have a new "TOP GUN" movie we are going back to the 1986 version. When Maverick rolls the Tomcat inverted so they can flip the MiG pilot the bird, was this scene based on fact or was it strictly from the inventive mind of the script writer?



Till next month, always look on the bright side of life and just remember that no one expects the comfy down chair!

BILLY

Send your best guesses to [mikebaer150@gmail.com](mailto:mikebaer150@gmail.com) and we will announce the winners next month.



The Aurora Municipal Airport (ARR) Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) will be resuming normal hours of operation from 0700-2100 beginning 05 July 2020.

The NOTAM for ARR ATCT reduced hours will expire on 04 July 2020 at midnight. Please share this information with all necessary parties and respective users.

I would like to thank all of you for your assistance, patience and understanding during this unprecedented time. For the health and well-being of my facility and its employees, thank you.

Katrina E. Smith  
Air Traffic Manager,  
Aurora ATCT,  
Air Traffic Services  
Central Service Area



## CHAPTER INFORMATION

EAA Chapter 579 is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed for educational purposes and is incorporated in accordance with the State of Illinois Not For Profit Corporation Act.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Chapter meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, January through October and the third Thursday in November and December at the Chapter's headquarters at SimplyFly at the Aurora Municipal Airport, starting at 7:30 pm. Please check our Facebook page for schedule updates. Family members and guests are always welcome.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership dues for EAA Chapter 579 are only \$20 per year and are due on the first of January for the upcoming year.

579 Chapter members are to be current members of the EAA, Oshkosh, WI.

Individual membership to the EAA is \$40 per year. Family memberships are available for an additional \$10 per year. Both include a twelve month subscription to *Sport Aviation* magazine.

A 579 Chapter Membership Form is included as the last page of this newsletter.

## ADVERTISING IN PROPWASH

If you would like to support Chapter 579's educational mission by advertising in Propwash, please contact:

**mikebaer150@gmail.com**

<u>Size (Page %)</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annually</u>
10% (business card)		\$50
25%	\$10	\$110
50%	\$20	\$200
100%	\$30	\$275
Classified Ads	Free for members	



## EAA Chapter 579 Membership Application

Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ EAA Member #: \_\_\_\_\_ New Applicant:\_\_\_ Renewal:\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday (MM/DD): \_\_\_/\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

I would be able to help in the following area(s):

Advertising \_\_\_ Chapter Meeting Presentation \_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_ Fund Raising \_\_\_

Hospitality \_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_ Photography \_\_\_ Scholarships \_\_\_

Social Media \_\_\_ Speakers \_\_\_ Videography \_\_\_ Web Site \_\_\_ Young Eagle Rallies \_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Membership Category</u>	<u>Annual Dues</u>
Regular (Individual)	\$20
Regular (Family)	\$35
Youth (Under 18)	\$15
Life	\$500

Please complete this form, attach check payable to EAA Chapter 579 and mail to:

EAA Chapter 579  
422 Clinton Ave.  
Oak Park, IL 60302