

# THE RITE FLYER

MARTIN AIRFIELD

## Weather Ahead - Options by Gene Benson

### Coming Up ...

#### Meeting :

Monday , May 9th, 7:00 p.m. General Meeting at Martin Field

#### Program: TBD

#### Board of Directors

May 7th, 7:00 pm

#### Next Meeting:

June 13, 2022, 7:00 p.m. at Martin Field.

#### Chapter Website:

[chapters.eaa.org/ea604](http://chapters.eaa.org/ea604)

### 2022 Officers

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Last month in this space we addressed the importance of maintaining our proficiency in attitude instrument flying to help avoid the loss-of-control-inflight (LOC-I) accident. This month, I want to expand that theme and include an added strategy.

Let's look at a scenario that plays out frequently. A pilot has basic competency in attitude instrument flying but is not as proficient as a pilot who routinely flies in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC). Our pilot may or may not be instrument rated. Having a bit of additional ink on a pilot certificate does not guarantee proficiency. Today, the pilot has begun a flight that will likely include a segment in marginal VFR conditions. There will be one passenger who is a non-pilot. The total flight time should be about three hours, twenty minutes. The pilot is conscientious and has done due diligence to ensure that both pilot and airplane are in good condition to fly.

The takeoff and climb to cruise altitude go well. The weather is good for about the first hour of the flight, but some fair-weather cumulus clouds are beginning to appear ahead. Our pilot is using a tablet that provides basic navigation and weather information. The pilot was hoping to remain clear of clouds, but a check of the weather ahead shows that the cloud bases are lower than expected. The pilot will have to fly at about 1,500 feet AGL to remain below the clouds. To maintain VFR minimums, the pilot would need to fly 500 feet below the clouds, or at just 1,000 feet AGL.

The pilot earned an instrument rating about two years ago but has not flown in clouds since that time. A flight review was completed ten months ago, and the pilot successfully demonstrated basic attitude instrument flying skills. A decision must be made. The pilot believes that there are three workable options. The flight could

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## Calendar Items to share

#### Week Days

10:00 a.m. Coffee Club, Martin Field Pilot's Lounge, **The Pilot's lounge is approved for meetings**

#### May 22

Little Goose Dam Airstrip (W16) work party starting at 9:00 am

#### May 28

EAA 1639, Hermiston Or, Last Saturday Breakfast, 7:30-11:00 am \$5 donation

#### Jun 18

Desert Aire Regional Airport Annual Fly-in Breakfast, 8:00-12:00



## Weather Ahead - Options *continued*

be aborted with a return to the departure airport. The flight could be continued below the clouds, but at an altitude that makes the pilot uncomfortable. An IFR flight plan could be filed to get through the clouds at a safer altitude.

The pilot decides that even though not technically in compliance with IFR recent experience requirements, the most viable option is to file an IFR flight plan. The tablet has all the IFR charts and approaches necessary so a call to ATC yields a clearance including instructions to climb to 6,000 feet. The airplane climbs into the cumulus cloud bases at about 2,800 feet and continues to climb to 6,000 feet per the clearance.

The pilot has little experience in flying in clouds and is not aware of how much turbulence there can be even in fair-weather cumulus clouds. The airplane is not equipped with an autopilot and the pilot is working hard to maintain altitude and heading. Even a few seconds of looking at the IFR Enroute chart on the tablet produces significant deviations in both heading and altitude. The ambient light is decreasing, and this causes the pilot to realize that the clouds are thicker. Light rain begins to stream across the windshield and side windows but rapidly increases to a moderate intensity. Maintaining airplane control is now a full-time job and checking weather on the tablet is out of the question. To add another complication, the passenger asks for an airsickness bag. Too late. Vomit is everywhere.

We will hit the pause button here and look at the pilot's present options.

Option #1 is to stay the course and pass through the present weather. Better weather ahead was forecast in the weather check done just before takeoff. Let's look at the pros and cons. On the pro side, if the pilot can get the airplane through the clouds successfully, they will arrive at their destination on time and the pilot will be praised for the skill shown in dealing with the weather. After a bit of vomit cleanup, all will be well. But on the con side, the pilot may reach task saturation and lose control of the airplane.

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## FRAT (Flight Risk Assessment Tool)

Our lives, along with the lives and well-being of our passengers, family and friends depends on our decisions. Unfortunately, our humanness can often cause us to make a bad decision. Our cognitive biases can influence our decision in regard to the perceived importance of the flight, our inflated assessment of our abilities, our underestimation of the risk, and other factors. By moving our decisions from the subjective to the objective we can largely avoid those human influences that work on an unconscious level in our brains.

The FRAT is used extensively in business aviation. Customized for each kind of airplane, it lists items that are not open to interpretation and assigns a numerical risk value to them. For example, a surface wind greater than 15 knots might assign a risk value of 2, while the pilot having flown less than 5 hours in the past 30 days might assign a risk value of 3. The assigned risk values are totaled and compared to a previously determined total value. If the risk value for the proposed flight exceeds the predetermined total value, the flight must not go. Sometimes it may be possible to make a change to the flight so that the risk value is reduced. For example, perhaps having any part of the flight occurring at night might have a risk value of 5. If the flight can be scheduled and executed such that no night flying is involved, the total risk value would be reduced by 5 and might now fall within the acceptable range. That is not to say that we should be looking for ways to circumvent the FRAT risk score. But if we can find ways to actually reduce the risk, we are making the flight safer.

There might also be some items which solely assign a no-go to the flight. That might include the pilot taking any medication containing diphenhydramine (Benadryl, etc.).

Nothing contained in a FRAT or any other tool should be construed as permission to violate any regulation. The sample FRAT contains the following in the Aircraft Section: "Has not had an annual inspection in the past 12 months" with a risk value of 8 assigned. Flying an aircraft that does not have a current annual inspection seems contrary to regulations, but there are circumstances in which it is legal. For example, the FAA can issue a ferry permit to allow a pilot to relocate an airplane from where it is located to a place where an annual inspection can be performed. The flight is legal, but it carries a higher risk because of the lack of inspection. A few other items have similar conditions.

For the FRAT to be effective, it must be developed well before a flight is scheduled when there is no external pressure. Then it must be followed to the letter with no deviation allowed for any reason.

## General Meeting April 11, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by President Jim Edwards. Jim introduced Meredith Moore and her mother, Andrea Moore as our Ray Scholar and new members to our chapter. Meredith gave a brief update on her progress toward a Private Pilots License.

We discussed the upcoming Fly-In at Martin Field hosted by EAA Chapter 604. Information flyers were printed and Dave Cheney will distribute them to area FBO's. Matt donated a grill to the Chapter and Jim E. will bring one for the lunch at the Fly-in. Tim will purchase the supplies for the event. A donation can will be available for those who would like to contribute to the cost.

Bill Herrington announced that we earned the Bronze award from EAA this year. We can display the approved logo on all our publications if we wish. Congratulations Chapter!

Under **Old Business**, Jim talked about the possibility of the Chapter renting a hangar in the future. We are on the list at both airports. The cost of our insurance will be higher if we rent hangar space but the cost was not determined at this time. We talked about finding space to work on the Fly Baby project. Dave Cheney reminded us that there is a space in the first hangar large enough to build an airplane where we currently have our Chapter tools. It could be used for the project if we get permission from Tarragon. It has its own access to the outside. Matt Harris will pursue this when he returns from his training and vacation.

**Chapter Project:** Ron Wanttaja, from Seattle, will be here for our May meeting to look at the project plane and talk with us about its potential and the value of making it the active Chapter project. He will be our program at the May meeting.

**Member Build Projects:** **Troy W**—he is preparing for paint. He noted that preparation is 90% of any paint job and takes a lot of time. **Jim E** is sanding and preparing for paint as well. He said there is a lot of sanding. **Charlie M** ordered gas gage fittings, he is doing something to the gas tank and cowlings (but I can't read my notes.) He is looking for scales to do a weight measurement.. Dave C said he has some modified beam scales that have been used in the past. **Don B** is replacing some wheel bearings and raceway due to them falling apart on a recent flight. **Tim A** has been working between the cabin and the firewall, working on the engine mount. He ordered the landing gear from the kit manufacturer. **Matt H** says the fuselage is 90% complete. New control cables arrived and the prop arrived. He just needs time to work on it again. **Dave C** is rebuilding the Cessna 175 after its engine failure. He is waiting for the new IO-360 he will put in it.

**Young Eagles:** Susan gave an update on plans for the event and encouraged all to volunteer somewhere. She had the flyers ready for the Schools and has compiled a list of businesses to place flyers with.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned for refreshments and the program.

Don Gibbard,  
Secretary

## Young Eagle Rally



Time is moving quickly in this new year and before you know it, it will be June 5, 2022. If you are not aware of what that day is, it is the scheduled Young Eagle Rally for EAA Chapter 604 and will be held at Martin Field, College Place, Washington.

This has been a signature event for our Chapter and if weather cooperates this year, we hope to serve 150 young people from around the Walla Walla Valley. That means we will need lots of volunteers. If you have a plane or can rent or borrow one, we need you as a pilot. Our plan is to have 10 pilots to keep the flights moving and to give ample time for breaks and fuel stops. If you cannot fly, we have plenty of ground work to do. We need escorts, registration, advertisement, setup, and flight line personnel. Susan Chlarson is our Coordinator and she can find something for you to do. Please do not wait and expect someone else to volunteer so you don't have to. This takes the entire Chapter to make this a success.

## 2022 REFRESHMENTS

JANUARY	Bill Herrington
FEBRUARY	The Chlarsons
MARCH	Board
APRIL	Don Bais
MAY	Charlie Miller
JUNE	Matt Harris
JULY	Don Gibbard
AUGUST	
SEPTEMBER	
OCTOBER	
NOVEMBER	
DECEMBER	CHRISTMAS PARTY

## Weather Ahead - Options *continued*

Option #2 is to declare an emergency. On the pro side, immediate help will be available regarding a heading to reach better weather, possibly even VFR conditions, with no need to reference the electronic charts or weather information. Since the pilot's workload will be decreased, the likelihood of losing airplane control will be significantly reduced. The con side is very small. Contrary to popular belief, the pilot will not have a mountain of paperwork. There might be an inquiry into recent experience requirements, but the likelihood of certificate action or a violation is very low.

Which option will the pilot choose? That will depend on several factors including the pilot's personality, level of risk tolerance, and decision-making skills. Hopefully, the pilot will realize that the decision to be made is also made on behalf of the pilot's family, the passenger, the passenger's family, and those who are beneath the airplane's flight path.

The logical choice should be easy. The pro side of both options has the pilot arriving safely at the destination. The con side of Option #1 is nearly certain death for both the pilot and the passenger while the con side of Option #2 ranges from none to a slap on the wrist. We hope our pilot chooses wisely. What would you do?

*(reprinted from Vectorsforsafety.com, May 2022)*



gathering intended to get pilots and planes out of the hangars and have someplace to go. The weather held out for us and the day was perfect for the event. Jim Edwards and Tim Anderson did a great job managing the food and no one went away hungry. Thanks to all who pitched in the make this event happen.

## Little Goose Work Party 2022

After a two-year hiatus, Wa DOT Aviation Division is restarting the State Airport maintenance program. In the past we have supported Little Goose Dam Airstrip (W16) for it's annual cleanup and that is scheduled for Sunday, May 22 this year. You are invited to join us on the work (and/or comradery) with Mr. Paul Wolf of DOT. He is planning to start about 9 am, but later arrivals are ok. Just inspect the runway carefully for workers prior to landing.

Specifics are:

CTAF 122.9/Elevation 681'

Rt pattern for Rwy 25/Lt for 07

3400' runway, slight uphill grade to west

If winds are up, anticipate wind sheer at ridgetop height

Runway surface condition is unknown (expect gravel) but no hazards are obvious

Watch for powerlines on 07 base

Bring water, lunch, hat, sunblock, boots & clothing for May weather

Bring protective gear (gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection, etc.) if you have it (DOT has some)

If driving, strip entry gate is ~1/3 mile past dam on right

There are campsites on the river for RVers.

NO cell coverage

Bill Herrington

509-539-9768

Our first Fly-in was a great success according to all who attended. By my count we had 18 plane fly in including several from Walla Walla. We served lunch to 35-40 guests. There were others from the community who came by to look at the airplanes and to talk to the pilots. The event was a casual