



The Denton Flyer

Newsletter of EAA Chapter 661, Denton, TX

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Next Meeting:

Chapter 661 will meet at US Aviation, 4850 Spartan Drive, on the field at KDTO. The meeting will be up the stairs, the first door on the right, in Classroom Bravo. The meeting will start at 1200, on **Saturday, 6 August**.

This month is all about Oshkosh! We'll be sharing pictures and stories from our time at the big show.

At The Last Meeting:

At the meeting in July, we heard from Brian Kelley, flight controller for Love Field as well as a long-time AirVenture controller. Brian gave a great presentation on flying into what, during the week of AirVenture, is the busiest airport in the world.



This is *Your* Newsletter:

Buck would like to remind all of you that this is *your* newsletter. Send your stories and pictures for

publication. Don't worry about spelling and grammar. We'll fix that right up for you!

Name Tags and T-shirts:

Chapter **t-shirts** are available at Victory Aviation, located at 4858 Lockheed Drive on the Denton Airport. Their phone number is (480) 748-8981. If you haven't been there before, it can be a little weird to find, enter through the main door and find yourself in a hangar, you're on the right track. Turn left when you enter the hangar and their shop door will be down on your left.

Got your **name tag** yet? Why not? Don't think you can sit on the back row and go unnoticed. We know who you are. Stand up and be noticed! Request a name tag from Stormy and decorate it as you choose. Wear it to every EAA event. Don't leave it on the refrigerator. Also, if you chose the magnet over the pin on back (most of us did), don't leave it in the airplane near the whiskey compass. Just sayin'.



A New Bird Joins the Flock:

By Tony Jones



The Burt Special Today

If you were at the July meeting of our EAA chapter, you heard that I was lucky enough to purchase a new (to me) airplane. This is the first of what we hope will be a recurring column in the newsletter in which owners share their aircraft's background and history.

N161RB, "The Burt Special," began life out in California, where Bob Burt, huge Waco aircraft fan, resided. He set out to design and build his own version of a miniaturized Waco, and he more than succeeded in that goal.

The aircraft was built in Bob's garage, primarily with hand tools, and was completed in the mid 60's. If you look closely at the aircraft, you can easily find the lines and lineage of Waco airframes throughout.



Initially Bob built the Special with a Continental C-85 but quickly switched over to a Lycoming O-290 for increased performance. After flying what was then N11Z for several years, Bob had an accident

that led to the airplane being hung in the rafters of a hangar out in California.

Next, enter Ray Beeninga. Ray had seen the Burt Special flying in years prior and tried to find who was selling these beautiful little biplanes. Ray learned that it was not a factory built, not a kit, nor even a plans-built aircraft. It was one man's dream and effort that created this lovely little airplane. Ray eventually learned that the Special was possibly for sale and was able to buy it from Bob. The airplane needed some care and attention, so Ray completed a restoration of the airframe and got it back into flying shape. Ray would go on to fly the airplane for many years as would many of his friends.

The aircraft became known as a phenomenal trainer for moving into the Pitts world. It's short coupled gear and excellent flying qualities allowed people to fine tune their skills before flying their Pitts for the first time.

Ray eventually sold the aircraft to a gentleman who had an off-airport landing due to some water in the fuel system. Ray heard about the incident and thinking that the Burt Special had been totaled, was devastated that a small piece of aviation history was gone forever.

After a few years (visualize spinning newspapers), Ray learned that the airplane hadn't been totaled, but had been rebuilt, flown for a while, passed hands a few times, and finally purchased by a museum. Ray had found the little biplane again, hanging above some tractors at the "Days Gone by Museum" of all places!

The museum wasn't willing to sell the little biplane, but they were willing to trade for it. They wanted a shiny airplane to replace the Burt Special and since Ray wasn't about to give up on bringing it home, he found an old Ercoupe no longer in flyable condition to trade for the Special.

Ray brought the airplane home to Oklahoma and completed a full restoration of the airframe in 2018. He changed the tail number to N161RB to honor when the aircraft was built ('61) and the two men that made it all possible, Robert Burt and Ray Beeninga.

After a brief stint with an owner near Tulsa, the Burt Special made its way into my life. I can report

this little biplane has excellent flying qualities with a neutral stability in all axes. You just point it somewhere and it goes there. It will keep you honest on the ground with that short gear stance though!

The early data from Bob Burt said it would climb out at 1500 FPM and I can attest it will absolutely do that and more even on a warm summer day. My goal is to continue to act as a caretaker of the airframe, slowly improving any areas that need attention and generally treating the aircraft as it should be treated as I fly it around to share its legacy and the legacy of the early homebuilders. Someday, I may even try and put it back into an aviation museum so it can share its story with generations to follow. If you would like the opportunity to see the airplane, I am happy to share it and its story with anyone and I am also happy to have volunteers to help wrench on it! If you see the little Burt Special around the area, please swing by and say hello.

Editor's note: Assistant editor Heather Fahle had a chance to sit and chat with Tony recently, and agrees that you should meet Tony and talk to him about his plane and his flying career. I love that EAA allows each of us to get to know these fascinating people and their aviation history.

Members of the Month:

By Tony Jones, Membership Czar

Happy August to everyone in EAA 661. I know it has been a brutally hot July, so I hope you have been able to find time early in the mornings to get some flying in before the brutal heat kicks in and melts our poor airplanes.

This month's Member of the Month is a little different in that we have a husband-and-wife combo which makes it a "Members of the Month" column. I asked Bill and Heather Fahle if they would be kind enough to sit down with me and talk airplanes, and being pilots, that did not take too much arm twisting! We met at DTO on a brutally hot evening this month and sat down for a very enjoyable conversation about their backgrounds, how flying brought them together, and of course their beautiful Bonanza.



Bill and Heather are the epitome of what EAA is all about. They are fun loving, energetic, and a blast to visit with and swap stories with. They both got into flying from very separate perspectives, and neither knew that it would lead to their marriage many years later. Heather had a rather unusual entrance into aviation. She fell in love with flying while she pursued her passion for skydiving. After countless rides up just to jump out of the airplane she came to the realization that one of her favorite parts of skydiving was the flight up, and maybe she should learn more about this flying thing and actually log a landing with all those takeoffs. Skydivers are just a different breed!

Bill is a guy who knows what he wants and just goes and does it. He had never even thought of flying, but after a flight on Muse Air to go back home during college he was hooked. Shortly after that Bill was completing his first discovery flight and then went on to earn his private. Life took over for Bill and Heather as life does, and both slowly faded from flying while handling the daily routines of families and careers.

Fast forward to years later when Bill and Heather met at a party. They quickly connected, and on a subsequent date, realized that they were both pilots. Heather had me laughing recalling herself explaining to Bill that "yes, I fly, and no that doesn't mean on Delta!"

In 2018 Bill was busy mountain biking and Heather decided to get back into flying. Well, Bill saw how much fun she was having and thought "I want to get back into this flying thing myself." After getting current, they decided it was time to stop renting and track down their "forever plane". In 2019 they found a 1975 V-tail Bonanza. They both went on to earn their instrument ratings, Heather doing so in

the Bonanza, and they continue to fly the wings off the airplane. They have some months where they have flown more than me, and I get paid to fly!

One of the best things about this husband-and-wife duo is their selflessness in spending time and money to fly for good. They often can be found flying missions for Angel Flight and Pilots N Paws. They are a phenomenal example for other pilot couples on how to approach the complex issues of managing a marriage in a cockpit. They work to be very professional in their approach to flying together and I'm sure their fluffy little flight engineer (a cute little beagle) wouldn't have it any other way. Please take time to chat with Bill or Heather next time you see them. They are wonderful conversationalists with funny and engaging stories.

As usual, fly safe and keep the shiny side up.

How it Really Happened:

By Heather Fahle

Monthly Meeting July 2

This is the casual version of the minutes that we keep for each meeting. For those of you looking for the formal version of the minutes, see Stormy Weathers.

The July meeting of EAA Chapter 661 saw roughly 30 pilots, builders, and other aviation lovers. The special guest was DAL and EAA controller Brian Kelly here to give a briefing on the approach to AirVenture this year. We learned a lot from Brian and are happy to do our part to be as safe as possible flying into OSH.



Besides the usual faces, we had young Tyler from California in attendance. Tyler is 18 years old and got her PPL last year at age 17. She is here on a 9 week internship from UC Berkley! She had been practicing slow flight earlier in the day in preparation for landing at OSH. Shirts will be available at Victory Aviation on the south end of the field!! Let Stormy know if you'll want one so that we can make sure that there will be plenty available.

Janet requested that those of you flying to AirVenture this year take lots of pictures and send them to Stormy for the newsletter and slide show. Tony Jones, our membership coordinator, is also working to put together a monthly builders' gathering. The idea is to help each other on projects, learn from each other, and share builder ideas. Reach out to Tony if you are interested, falcondriver20@gmail.com.

Michael Farlow will be stepping down as the head of the chapter's Young Eagles program and his handing the reins to the capable hands of Harper Carr. Congratulations to Mike as he heads off to his career in the airlines and to Harper as he takes on his new role!

Milestones celebrated:

- Tony Jones just bought his first plane, link to article.
- Sunny passed his Private Pilot written test.

After the meeting, the group headed east on 380 to "The Crazy German" restaurant in Aubrey. Much fun (and food) was had by all.

See you around the airport!



Some Oshkosh Pics:



After the Meeting:

What do you do after the monthly meeting at KDTO? It's typically still early Saturday afternoon when the meeting breaks up. Let's meet up for lunch and swap lies and "there I was..." stories. Wait! Aren't those the same things? It will be like the hundred-dollar hamburger without the avgas expenditure.

We are thinking about trying out the Horny Toad Café. If you feel so inclined, talk to Tony Jones before or after the meeting. We wouldn't want you coordinating your lunch plans while El Presidente is speaking.

Help Wanted:

Buck Rivets launched this feature a few months ago and is still looking for submissions. The idea is to give you a place to ask for help with something on your plane. Perhaps you are looking for those who are building (or have built) something similar. We have quite an array of skills among our membership here in Chapter 661. This section is a way to reach out to your fellow chapter members. If you have a request to go in the "Help Wanted" section, send email to our Chief Editor, Buck Rivets at flynwx@pobox.com. It could look something like the following:

RV-8 builder with short arms seeks bucking bar holder to help forge permanent relationship between solid rivets and sheet metal.

Christmas?

We're still accepting donations for our silent auction fundraiser that will happen in conjunction with our Christmas party. Please reach out to Heather Fahle if you have items to donate.

Some Airplane Pics

