



# THE GRAPEVINE



*There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."*

Vol. XXXIV,



No. 1, January 2015



## Officers



**President** John Goldsmith 925-447-7362  
**Vice President** Chuck Ray 925-899-5660  
**Trea\$Urer** Mark Palajac 510-557-4020  
**Secretary** Bruce Cruikshank 510-886-6897  
**Program Coordinator** Chuck Ray 925-899-5660  
**Tech Counselor** Dave Dent 925-447-8055  
**Tech Counselor** Gordon Jones 925-447-1549  
**Tech Counselor** Bob Sinclair 925-935-7465  
**News Letter Emeritus** John Meyer  
**News Letter Editor** Jeffry Larson 209-608-5981  
**Flight Advisor** Barry Weber 925-963-0824  
**Young Eagles** Trina Anderson 209-832-1162  
**Librarian** Alan Thayer 510-582-7274  
**Web Editor** Brad Olson 925-866-9289



## Board Of Directors

Bob Farnam 925-449-1513  
 Dave Stiehr 925-351-4438  
 Dave Anderson 209-609-2162  
 Trina Anderson 209-832-1162  
 Ralph Cloud 925-449-1048  
 Dave Dent 925-447-8055

## Meeting And Program

**NOTICE:** Our January meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 8th of January. The meeting will be at the FBO/Main Terminal Building on the grounds at KLVK.

### Calendar:

Month	Date	Speaker	Topic
November	6th	Steve Blonstein/Bob Johnson	West Valley Flying Club — Palo Alto
December	4th	Tim Johnson/Doug Jones	KLVK Tower Manager/Front Line Manager
January	8th	Rich Perkins	Air Force pilot and flight school operator

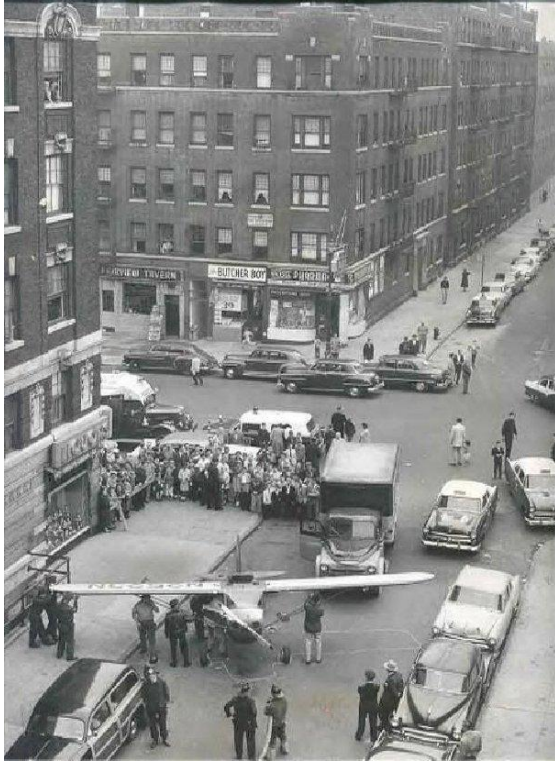
**For Our January program:** Chuck Ray is hoping Rich Perkins is not busy on the night of our next meeting, otherwise it may be some EAA video for the program. Rich has vast experience as an Air Force pilot and flight school operator. As the proprietor of the large hangar on the south side of the airport, he won't know until the day before.

**It is membership renewal time again! The annual dues are \$30. We've also set on the price for the annual dinner at \$30 per person.**

You can pay by sending a check made out to EAA 663 and give it to me the chapter meeting or by mailing it to my address: Mark Palajac, 25 Jacaranda Dr. Fremont CA 94539.

**Mailbag: Van T. Pilot Landed on an Uptown Street**

Tommy Fitzpatrick, 26, drunk and in the dark found his bar near 191st street in uptown Manhattan and successfully landed at the front door....twice. That's Where the Bar Was.



A plane sat on 191st Street in 1956 after its wings were removed for shipment. The pilot landed the craft on St. Nicholas Avenue, rear, as part of a barroom bet.

Surprise airplane landings always make headlines. Who will forget Capt. Chesley Sullenberger steering a US Airways jetliner onto the Hudson River in 2009? Then there was a Long Island man who touched down on Rockaway Beach in 2011 and, more recently, a stunt pilot who coasted down safely onto a Suffolk County road.

But the remarkable drunken landings of Tommy Fitz have all but slipped into oblivion. The pilot, Thomas Fitzpatrick, turned a barroom bet into a feat of aeronautic wonder by stealing a plane from a New Jersey airport and landing it on St. Nicholas Avenue in northern Manhattan, in front of the bar where he had been drinking.

As if that were not stupefying enough, the man did nearly the exact same thing two years later. Both landings were pulled off in incredibly narrow landing areas, in the dark – and after a night of drinking in Washington Heights taverns and with a well-lubricated pilot at the controls. Both times ended with Mr. Fitzpatrick charged with wrongdoing.

The first of his flights was around 3 a.m. on Sept. 30, 1956, when Mr. Fitzpatrick, then 26, took a single-engine plane from the Teterboro School of Aeronautics in New Jersey and took off without lights or radio contact and landed on St. Nicholas Avenue near 191st Street.

The New York Times called it a “fine landing” and reported that it had been widely called “a feat of aeronautics.”

The second flight was on Oct. 4, 1958, just before 1 a.m. Again he took a plane from Teterboro and this time landed on Amsterdam and 187th Street in front of a Yeshiva University building after having “come down like a

## FACT NO. 789

Thomas Fitzpatrick had two passions: drinking and flying planes. On September 30, 1956, on a bet after a night of drinking, Fitzpatrick stole a small plane from New Jersey and landed it on an extremely narrow Manhattan street, in the dark, in front of the bar he had been drinking at on St. Nicholas Avenue. Then, two years later, he did it again. In this latter police report, it was noted he said he had to do it again because a man at the bar openly doubted he really did it the first time.



marauder from the skies,” in the words of Ruben Levy, the magistrate at Mr. Fitzpatrick’s ensuing arraignment. Newspapers reported that Mr. Fitzpatrick jumped out of the landed plane wearing a gray suit and fled, but later turned himself in.

Mr. Fitzpatrick told the police that he had pulled off the second flight after a bar patron refused to believe he had done the first one.

That first flight, Mr. Fitzpatrick admitted, was the result of a barroom bet, according to articles in The New York Times. (He died in 2009 at age 79.)

“The story goes, he had made a bet with someone in the bar that he could be back in the Heights from New Jersey in 15 minutes,” said Jim Clarke, 68, who had lived near the first landing spot and recalls seeing the plane in the street. “Supposedly, he planned on landing on the field at George Washington High School but it wasn’t lit up at night, so he had to land on St. Nicholas instead,” said Mr. Clarke, who now lives in Chatham, N.J.

After the first flight, Mr. Fitzpatrick was arraigned on grand larceny charges, which were dropped after the plane’s owner declined to sign a complaint. He was also charged with violating the city’s administrative code, which prohibits landing a plane on the street. Mr. Fitzpatrick was only fined \$100. But after the second landing, a judge, John A. Mullen, sentenced him to six months in jail for bringing a stolen item into the city. The judge told him, “Had you been properly jolted then, it’s possible this would not have occurred a second time.”

Sam Garcia, 68, who as a child saw the plane resting on 191st Street, said, “If it happened today, they would call him a terrorist, and locked him up and thrown away the key.” Mr. Garcia, who now lives in Puerto Rico, said, “I thought maybe they had trucked it in, as a practical joke, because there was no way a man had landed in that narrow street.” After the second flight, Mr. Fitzpatrick told the police that he had held a pilot’s license but that it had been suspended after the first flight and he had never renewed it because “I did not want to fly again.”

A Washington Heights native, Mr. Fitzpatrick was living in New Jersey at the time of the flights, but still hung around with friends who were regulars in the bars, recalled Fred Hartling, 76, who remembered Mr. Fitzpatrick from the neighborhood. Mr. Fitzpatrick was a good friend of Mr. Hartling’s older brother Pat, Mr. Hartling said. Mr. Fitzpatrick was a charismatic, adventurous type who would “butter up my mother” to let him sleep over at the Hartlings’ apartment or convince her to let Pat go out to the bars, he said. “Tommy had a crazy side,” he said. “The whole group of them, my brother’s friends, were a wild bunch.”

According to an obituary about Mr. Fitzpatrick published in a New Jersey newspaper, he was a Marine during the Korean War and received a Purple Heart. He worked as a steamfitter for 51 years, it said, had three sons and lived in Washington Township, N.J. He remained married for 51 years to his wife, Helen, who, when contacted recently, hung up on a reporter who asked about the flights. Mr. Hartling, now a retired logistics engineer living in Charlottesville, Va., said Mr. Fitzpatrick “pulled off a miracle” by landing the plane.

It “landed on a street with lampposts and cars parked on both sides,” he said. “It was a wonder – you had to be a great flier to put that thing down so close to everything.”

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING, EAA CHAPTEER 663, h12/4/2014, 7:30 PM, TERMINAL BUILDING KLVK.

Chapter president John Goldsmith called the meeting to order.

Two guests introduced themselves, Bradon Johnson and former chapter member Lance Schlicher and his wife. Lance has a complete BD-4 project complete with Continental E-185 he would like to donate to some worthy cause.

The minutes for the November meetings were approved as published in "The Grapevine".

Treasurer Mark Palajac reported \$4,902.11 in chapter funds with 20 already signed up for next year. Mark was collecting checks for next year's dues \$30 and annual dinner fees also \$30 per person.

Trina Anderson mentioned that 221 Young Eagles were flown this year, which included 104 flown at the rally at Turlock with other chapters involved. Husband Dave flew 32!!!!!! Good work Dave. Expect rallies next year at Byron, Tracy and Livermore airports.

Dave Dent has arranged to have Darren Pleasance, a Google Executive and member of the EAA board of directors make a presentation at our annual dinner January 17th 2015.

Business: Tool man Bob Farnam has ordered the Rotax carburetor synchronizer.

Jeffry Larson identified the winner of the last "What Is It" contest. Dave Flournoy came up with Supermarine Spitfire. Really? Jeffry wants to start a new contest. Inspired by the West Valley Flying Club's CA Passport program. He's open to suggestions about how it would work. Monthly points are given for visiting each new airport? The count starts at the beginning of the contest? Send your ideas to Jeffry. Ralph suggested that the chapter as a whole fly to as many airports as we can in one day!

Announcements: The next board meeting will be 12/18, and the next general meeting will be 8TH NOT THE 1ST OF JANUARY 2015.

The annual dinner will be Saturday Jan, 17th, price to attend, \$30 per person.

Barry Weber sold the trailer, for \$650! Thank you Barry.

John presented the mailbag on the big screen.

From the members: Dave Dent's maintenance tip: With infrequent flight comes the possibility of internal engine corrosion. He suggested motoring the engine with the starter motor until you see oil pressure to recoat the internal parts, or just turn the engine over by hand. Running the engine for short periods just induces acid build up.

Ralph reported that the new administration building will be in operation some time in January. Our current meeting place will be available until further notice.

John mentioned that chapter member Paul Weiss passed away November 7th at age 76 from a fast developing cancer.

Break and the Program: Chuck Ray introduced Doug Jones, tower supervisor here at Livermore. Doug made an excellent Power Point presentation showing how things look on the ground from a controller's point of view. He explained the rules and procedures that are used around the Livermore airport and the Bay Area. There followed an extended question and answer session. Thank you Doug Jones.

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, EAA CHAPTER 663, 12/18/2014, 7:32, JOHN'S PLACE.

John Goldsmith, Mark Palajac, Dave Anderson, Ralph Cloud, Bob Farnam, Chuck Ray and Bruce Cruikshank were present.

Treasurer Mark reported that 43 members have renewed with 3 new renewals this day. The chapter funds stands at \$5,216.40. So far there are 18 dinners coming to the annual dinner.

Dave said there are no dates set for rallies next year. The chapter gets credit for flying 221 YE's flight this year. The Turlock rally, where 104 were flown, was Trina and Dave's event with our chapter getting the credit. Several non-chapter valley pilots made it happen. Thank you all.

Tools: Bob Farnam showed off the Rotax carburetor synchronizer tool. After a short discussion about adapters for the compression tester, it was decided to let users get adapters to suit their own plugs. A Christie Battery tester was given to the chapter; Bob is looking for information about its use.

Chuck Ray is hoping Rich Perkins is not busy on the night of our next meeting, otherwise it may be some EAA video for the program. Rich has vast experience as an Air Force pilot and flight school operator. As the proprietor of the large hangar on the south side of the airport, he won't know until the day before. Allen Silver of Silver Parachutes is coming in February, and Tim Ong will talk about ocean powered science robotic vehicles/devices he has designed in March.

John will reregister Barry Weber as our Flight Advisor and Dave Dent, Bob Sinclair and Gordon Jones as Technical Counselors.

Annual Dinner: Mark has confirmed Bone Head Barbeque as our caterer, same as last year, with a \$500 deposit. The main courses will be beef brisket, and turkey, with the same side dishes as last year. Ralph is delivering plates, utensils, water, appetizers and desserts. Harry Crosby will bring the wine. Set up starts at 5:00, helpers welcome; the wine flows at 6:00; dinner is served at 7:00. The speaker will be Darren Pleasance one of the directors of the EAA.

The next general meeting will be Thursday January 8th, not the 1st. A short meeting of the chapter directors will follow the general meeting.

Around the room: There was a discussion about the future of the meeting place. Ralph mentioned the current administration building will be torn down as soon as possible, and hopefully we will be accommodated somehow in the new administration building.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Cruikshank, Secretary.

## Feedback/Questions/Suggestions

Any and all feedback is welcome. Please take a few minutes to send suggestions, tips, corrections or any other feedback to: [jeffrylite@comcast.net](mailto:jeffrylite@comcast.net).

Cool videos found on the internet.

[Hope you didn't wind up in the Doghouse after presenting your Christmas present.](#)

[Worst parking job in North America – You'll never get this 4 minutes back.](#)

[F35B Carrier Landings](#) – Thanks to Bruce Cruikshank

[Fly like a bird in a paraglider](#) – This is pretty – Thanks to Chris Uhlik

[How not to load a pickup on a trailer, x2](#) – Way to go guys....

## What is it? From last month Sponsored by:



David Flourney was the 1<sup>st</sup> to respond with the correct answer – Supermarine Spitfire. There were multiple correct answers.

This was the final edition for the What is It contest. Totals will be announced at the Chapter Dinner this month.

### CONTEST NEWS:

I've decided this will be the last "What is it" Contest. Starting in 2015 would like to start a chapter event similar to the West Valley Flying club's "[CA Passport](#)". The [video](#) got me thinking that as a relative rookie pilot just shy of 300 total hours, I was surprised at the number of airports that I recognized and had visited. The idea is to get more members flying to different airports, but as a chapter achieve all 240 CA airports by the end of 2015.

Not wanting to steal their idea outright, but consider the 240 airports a "chapter goal". Points could be awarded for each airport visited, the most remote airports being higher scoring, but the overall goal is to have a pic on the website that has each dot change color when it has been visited. Maybe extra points if visiting an airport for the 1<sup>st</sup> time or even points for the xth time visited. Extra points if you talk x number of buddies into flying there too.

I would like to recruit a small group of volunteers to help scope out some rules and a points tally for each airport. My thinking is that if we lay this out right, keeping in mind how it might work for other states as well, it might be something that EAA will get behind. Once we have those ironed out, I will contact Aircraft Spruce and others to see about lining up sponsorship and prizes.



Regaling others with tales of narrow escapes and superior skill makes you a better talker than a flier.





16610 Von Sosten Road  
Tracy, CA 95304

[jeffrylite@comcast.net](mailto:jeffrylite@comcast.net) or  
[President@eaa663.org](mailto:President@eaa663.org)

