



September 2020

WHEN: SEPTEMBER Thursday 10th MEETING ~7pm	WHERE: KMIW EAST HANGARS	PROGRAM: BROWN BAG HANGAR FLYING
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WHAT'S FLYIN' THIS WAY !!!

What a difference a month makes, eh?

Our next meeting is tentatively set for this coming Thursday the 10th around 6:30-7:00. We will try and make up a little for the past few months by optionally bringing your choice of dinner, a snack, or whatever you are hungry for.

Bring a chair and a good story and we will have a good time with other aviation minded friends.

Obviously no sharing and we will be social distancing as much as possible.

Maybe a few can get some air time if the weather cooperates.

WHAT FLEW BY !!!

The cliches speak for themselves, but hopefully everyone is successfully re-couping from the "Derecho" storm of August 10th. There was some damage at the Marshalltown airport of which I'm sure we will hear more about at the next meeting.

Some have been able to get out and fly in the past three weeks. The FOGz have been able to do some BYOB's on various mornings. Getting some air time is the best way to get above the weirdness of this year.

Haven't heard much else about what is going on other than Roy Bradbury wanted to let everyone know that he has a bumper crop of Aronia Berries and they are free for the picking for the next couple of weeks or so. His address is 1851 Yates Ave which is north east of the city. He says there are signs starting at the intersection of Hwy 14 and Garwin Rd just north of the river.

I had mentioned last month that there didn't seem to be a Blakesburg flyin this year. As it turns out, there is/was this past weekend. If anyone attended, a report would be interesting to share with the chapter.

Hopefully there will be more to share next month.

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CALENDAR

It appears from the Iowa Department of Aviation calendar, that all Iowa fly-ins, for the rest of the year, have been cancelled.

If you know of one that has NOT been cancelled, let the editor know and we will spread the word.

Member News

Voisin 35 Update...

There is nothing new to report on the Voisin other than it got dirty during the Derecho storm. I had just moved it to the garage to begin final assembly the two days before the storm hit. The west wall of the garage caved in about three feet and of course, lots of rain, dirt and debris blew in. No damage to the airplane, but everything is on hold while I deal with insurance and cleanup. Truck got totalled when a 200 year old tree took aim. Photo below. Still waiting on settlement with insurance. I'm sure they are very busy and there are many who received much greater damage than my wife and I did, so I know we have to be patient.



Haven't heard about any damage other than Dan Adams hangar door got blown off. Hopefully no damage to the airplane. And lots and lots of tree damage.

I Didn't Know That!

One thing I enjoy about being an aviation enthusiast is you can enjoy it in many ways. For example building and flying, but I get a lot of enjoyment from watching, sharing, reading or what ever when it comes to this interest. With these many ways of enjoyment I get a lot of chances to say "I didn't know that". This story is about some "I didn't know that's" that just happened.

As in many cases the story has something to do with Oshkosh. Of the many things I enjoy doing at Oshkosh, one is slowly strolling through the antique/classic area and look at the beautiful airplanes from by gone eras. The Beech Staggerwing has always been a favorite. Just sitting quietly on the ground it looks to me like it is in motion. Well, I just had a couple of "I didn't know that's" relative to the Staggerwing. It came from reading some aviation history.



The time frame is the 1920's and 1930's. The book I read was "Fly Girls", an interesting book about the trials and tribulations of women in the early years as they tried to, and successfully I might add, join the men-dominated activity of aviation. These were the days of Amelia Earhart, someone we have all heard of. A lot of the story involved the National Air Races, which tended to be centered around Cleveland but were actually held in many different locations like Los Angeles, New Orleans and New York and even in Chicago during the World's Fair. Des Moines even bid on the chance to hold the races. The races included a cross country race. My "I didn't know that" has to do with the 1937 Bendix race. The Bendix race, sponsored by a man named Bendix thus the name, was a cross country race. Since the late 1920's it was an all men's race. But finally in 1937 women were allowed to compete with the men. Of course the men were expected to win. One of the favorites was the famous Roscoe Turner pictured below.



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Another favorite was Benny Howard and his Mister Mulligan that had won the race the year before and had beat Roscoe by a mere few seconds. Not bad for a cross country race from California to Cleveland. At one time I thought the Howard DGA that we see so many outstanding examples of at Oshkosh, were products from the famous Howard Hugh's. Nope, it was the result of the success of the Bendix race plane known as Mister Mulligan and Benny Howard. Now "I didn't know that". I did know that the DGA stood for "Damned Good Airplane". Here they are lined up at Oshkosh followed by the Mister Mulligan of the 1930's race days.



There were women entered for the first time but not expected to win. Of course the most famous female pilot of the day, Amelia Earhart flying her soon to be lost at sea, Lockheed Electra. I liked this picture with her, the Electra and her favorite car.



In 1937 there was another favorite. The Northrop Gamma, a specially built aircraft designed and built just for racing and piloted by race pilot Joe Jacobson. Here's a picture of the Gamma.



One of the other female pilots was Louise Thaden. She had been in in the headlines in years past but had forgone the dangers of early flying to raise her two children. Here she is in her early days with her Travel Air.



Louise joined the race in 1937 in a more unusual way than the other contestants. Walter Beech had sold his Travel Air company just before the depression hit. Still interested in aviation he started a new company, Beechcraft, I think you have heard of them. He and his designer came up with a revolutionary new design, their Model 17. I have no idea what happened to models 1 through 16. The model 17 had a unique feature, it was a negative stagger biplane configuration, IE the Beech Staggerwing. The 1937 version didn't look exactly like the ones we see at Oshkosh. For example it had a faired in fixed landing gear. Here's a picture of the plane they eventually entered into the 1937 Bendix race.



Walter Beech actually was concerned about entering their model 17 in the Bendix race. He felt a bad showing would hurt sales. But his wife, who started out as his secretary,

wanted to enter Beechcraft in the race. So she led the charge. You see she was a strong willed woman. Her name was Olive Ann Beech. She is only the second Olive named person I have ever heard of, the other was Popeye's girlfriend. Here they are; I think I see a resemblance.



The short story for the race goes this way. Roscoe Turner, who resided in California, had to fly to New York where the race was to start. He crashed on the way there because of a failed throttle, but lived a nice long life. Benny Howard decided to take his wife along who was also a pilot. He wanted to beat Roscoe's transamerica flight record so he pushed his airplane. He lost his propeller over Arizona and crashed. He and his wife lived but Benny lost a leg ending his race career. Joe Jacobson in the Northrop Gamma was getting ready to take off in New York but did not wish to take a parachute. Race officials said he must use one and actually stole one from a nearby plane. It was a good thing, because while flying in turbulence a wing broke on Benny's Gamma and he parachuted to safety. Now it was anyone's race with the favorites out. Later that day, after 14 hours of flying, Louise Thaden arrived in Los Angeles, the winner of the 1937 Bendix race. The two "I didn't know that's" were I did not now a female had won the Bendix race and that a Beech Staggerwing had won the Bendix.

I better be careful she eventually became President of Beechcraft. Anyway, Olive wanted a female pilot. In short she settled on Louise Thaden, who came out of her early retirement from aviation to fly the race. Of course Walter, along with so many others, said she did not stand a chance, no woman would.

Here's Louise with the Bendix trophy. Way to go girl!!!!

