

# CATFISH SQUADRON

## EAA CHAPTER 797



Live Oak, Florida



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## Chapter 797 Meeting:

**September 19, 2020**

The monthly meeting will be on the third Saturday of the month at the Chapter Building at 10:00 AM.

A Pancake Breakfast will be at 8:00 AM. All of our members are asked to share in the fun.



*310 Mounted @ Jimmy Stewart Airport*

## EAA 797 Morning Fly-In Pancake Breakfast

The Third Saturday of the month

**January 18, 2020**

**8:00-10:00 AM**

## The Bottom Line

*Well here we go!* The Directors and I have concluded we should have our September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting with some strong recommendations. We will have it outside and or in our hangar, with the door open, to ensure proper ventilation. We will have hand sanitizer and face masks available. We also strongly encourage wearing the masks and practicing social distancing to the best extent possible as the circumstance allow. Cathy and Doug Cleveland have graciously agreed to organize our pancake breakfast and I encourage as many as possible to fly to this event and show support of all the individuals doing their best in these trying times. I know as I can speak for all we miss the camaraderie, heck I miss the getting together with each and every one. Phil Hancock our Young Eagles Coordinator will give us a recap of the past event and what may be on the horizon. Clark will provide an exciting chapter of the VMC presentation. We will also discuss our new tool bin crib and the support we will receive from the national EAA. Please note we will start the meeting at 10:00AM/

Again I also want to extend my gratitude to all the members that have made so many contributions to the chapter during these challenging times. THANK YOU.

And as in the past if you do need help with something please reach out to your fellow members

for that help. I am confident someone in our chapter will have the solution.

With warm salutations and respectfully submitted,

*Chapter 797 President  
Pete vanSpronsen*

PS: If you have not renewed your membership please do so: At \$1.25 a month, how can you go wrong?



## VMC Club

You will be interested to know that we will be having a VMC gathering at the next EAA 797 get together. As you can expect, there will be changes, but the VMC portion will be as close to “normal” as is possible. The screen and projector will be located in the hangar in order to allow more space among the attending members and visitors.

The VMC Question of the Month has to do with reading a Sectional Chart. The information in this example, can be very useful, especially for those pilots who don't have a lot of time flying in the Western United States.

The “What Would You Do? Video. “The Boldface In Practice”, is especially powerful in that the pilot explains at the last portion of the “What Would You Do” video, what he did in his situation.

Hope to see you on Saturday!

Clark Dechant

## News Wanted!

This is your newsletter. I am very happy to see that several people have stepped forward with their experiences to fill these pages. Let us know how your project is going or where you've been. It's your newsletter, let's make it about you.

*Editor*

## For Sale:

### Fisher Flying Products Celebrity

*Stock photo of a finished plane >*



Fisher Celebrity Kit – It is a wooden biplane.

The fuselage, tail feathers, lower wings, lower ailerons are assembled.

The upper spars, and ribs are made but not assembled. There should be enough wood left to finish.

It has the main fuel tank and 2 wing tanks all aluminum, fiber glass cowling, seat pads, wheels, fabric for covering, the original bill of sale from fisher.

While I have been doing some work on it. It is stored inside my enclosed helicopter trailer. I do not have the hangar space to start assembling the plane, or the time.

Asking \$1500.00 OBO

Continental C-90 engine, it runs but has no logbooks. Without the mags, exhaust, starter asking \$4000.00

Narco AT-150 Transponder w/ AR-850 encoder, both new never install. Have the install kit with pins and instructions. Asking \$500.00

Dennis Wolcott

I completed my Commercial Helicopter add-on rating. I have been going to Gainesville for the last couple of months, flying a Robinson R44 Helicopter. The plan is to continue and get my CFI add on in the Helicopter.

*Dennis Wolcott*



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## Tailwind

I'm sure that I missed something or someone and I welcome healthy criticism. You can send comments, questions, ideas or articles to:

[dave@davesflyin.com](mailto:dave@davesflyin.com)



## Joe's Tri-Pacer

Member Joe Arbie's Tri-Pacer is still for sale. Details: (386) 984-5654



## 310 on a stick...

Ed Conrad forwarded me some pics from Kenny Alsop. It seems that Kenny's old hometown crew has put an actual Cessna 310 up on a pedestal at Jimmy Stewart Airport, KIDI. Looks Good!



## Medical Bliss

As it turns out, age isn't the only factor in giving pilots grief with medicals. Even us "young bucks" still have to fight to fly. Here's the story on how I had just completed my 5-year jaunt with the FAA for getting my 3<sup>rd</sup> class, then my 2<sup>nd</sup>, and finally 1<sup>st</sup> class medicals.

My grandfather John Melia (recently passed Mooney pilot many locals might know) had a hereditary eye problem called amblyopia which turns out skips a generation. My father didn't get it but I sure did. Its a vision problem in which the brain never learns to "look" out of one eye. Its correctable to some degree if caught early and a child wears an eye patch, but we didn't discover my vision problem until a routine 7<sup>th</sup> grade medical checkup in Middle School. I went to the ophthalmologist and my left eye was fine at 20/20 but my right was 20/200, uncorrectable. The first words he said to me after my exam was "well, you'll never be a pilot". Of course coming from a family of pilots, those words devastated me for the next 10 years.

Fast forward to circa-2015, I put some thought into the whole flying thing. I made contact with Dave Holmes and he and I started the journey together in getting my 3<sup>rd</sup> class medical during training. I found an AME in Daytona Beach who was a retired ophthalmologist and was familiar with a process called "Statement of Demonstrated Ability" (SODA) for pilots with vision problems. It took some months in mailing paperwork, calling CAMI, the Orlando FSDO, Oklahoma City, etc etc but eventually we got a letter authorizing me to take a Medical Flight Test. Dave and I flew his 152 to Herlong and I flew with a FSDO Inspector with a grand total of 8 hours in my logbook. Quite nerve wracking after hearing "FAA horror stories" from my family all my life. A month later I got my official 3<sup>rd</sup> class medical along with a SODA I had to carry with my medical- no limitations! I solo'ed later that week and the world was fine.

Last year I gave thought into chasing a career into flying and going to the airlines with the hiring boom (before COVID, that was). I started commercial training with Dave Holmes again in my Mooney, and knowing I need a 2<sup>nd</sup> class medical to fly for



hire, I made contact with our own Dr. Carnivale and we began the same process I have done years earlier. Alas, the FAA wanted another medical flight test. Down to Orlando several times (paperwork problems) and we do another flight. A few months later, my 2<sup>nd</sup> class comes in. Whew! Surely the wouldn't let a guy with one eye fly first class, right? Let's try for that. Thinking I just did a flight test, why would they make me do another, Dr. Carnivale and I again did the same song and dance and deferred my 1<sup>st</sup> class to Oklahoma City. Then COVID hit. I got hired and ran up to Illinois for a survey gig.

Months later the FAA comes back and says "sorry, your medical does not meet the eligibility for 1<sup>st</sup> class". But down at the bottom "but you may apply for a Medical Flight Test for consideration". Also attached was a VERY thorough eye exam packet they wanted filled out by an ophthalmologist? I scheduled an eye exam (out of my own pocket, no health insurance) and watched this doctor write A LOT of chicken scratch on these forms I would send to the FAA. I send that in, along with a letter of recommendation from Dave Holmes and Luke Closson (DPE) in hopes it would help persuade them into letting me challenge it.

A few more months go by and a letter from the FAA comes back. They have accepted my left eye is good enough to qualify for 1<sup>st</sup> class and have authorized me to take the Medical Flight Test. Luckily for me, the airport I'm based at for work (KSPI- Springfield, IL) has a FSDO on field. So I give them a call and we get one scheduled. Being it mid-pandemic we had to wear masks but the same dog and pony show as last time. Read a chart, walk outside and read N-numbers on planes, get inside, read the checklist, taxi out, read taxi signs and faraway colors. We get airborne, he wants me to tune different frequencies. We go to a nearby airport and I make the greasiest landing ever. Back up he chops the power and I set up for a desolate roadway. Go around and back to the airport and he submits his approval.

Last week I finally got it. My 1st class medical and 1<sup>st</sup> class SODA with no limitations! Airlines, here I come! (hopefully soon). It's worth noting, in my 5 years in dealing with multiple FSDOs, inspectors, etc, I have felt nothing but 100% support from the FAA. They have bent over backwards to make sure my paperwork was correct and did

everything they could in helping my process. Super nice group of people.

*Alex Melia*

## Azalea Aviation Happenings:

Although we have been dealt a blow the last few months with Covid 19, shutdowns, and lifestyle adjustments, that does not mean that we have been standing still. Some things have changed but this time has given rise to other opportunities. Over the last couple months Kyoung and I have been able to take a much-needed vacation out west and spent time with family in Missouri. During this time with family we were able to discuss some of the changes that take place when parents are edging on their 80's. One of our discussions was what to do with one of the family airplanes – the venerable Cessna 180.



This Cessna 180 was first used by MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico in 1969. That happened to be the year that my Dad, mom, sister and I moved to Mexico as a Missionary family for MAF. This Cessna 180 was registered in Mexico as XB-LER. Dad would fly this airplane for a couple years until we were moved to Colombia, Ecuador and Honduras over the next 14 years. According to the logbooks, Dad acquired about 300 or so hours in this airplane. We have family video – Super 8 – of me riding on my dad's lap in the plane as well as several photos and other videos of the airplane in operation.

Around 25 years ago Dad was in search of another airplane project and came upon information that XB-LER was sitting, damaged, in a hangar in

Oaxaca, Mexico. The price was right, so Dad loaded up the camper and trailer and traveled from Wisconsin to Mexico to collect the 180. Over the next few years Dad would work on the plane, repairing the damaged wing, landing gear box and many other items of wear and damage from 6500 hours of jungle aviation. I spent many hours with my Dad helping with these repairs in anticipation of completion. In 2005 – the same year I completed my KR2S – we finally got the 180 flying again. I flew my KR up to Wisconsin and was able to perform the first flight with Dad – me in the right seat. What a joy to feel this bird flying again.



*Dad with ER after the restoration*

Now Registered as N71ER in the USA, this 180 is incredibly special. It has a lot of mods that were done for jungle aviation purposes. Full Robertson STOL conversion, Aux fuel system, added baggage area and door, D-rings installed into the cabin for freight, Rake Brake, and more had to be added to the 337 modifications list for the airplane. We kept the airplane as original as it looked. The paint job is like it looked originally, a bit rough, the interior smells of jungle and lots of sweaty people, but that just adds to the nostalgia.

Over that last few years some of the best times in my life are when I am at my folks' home, now in Missouri, and Dad and I get to go out and Fly "LER". Fortunately, I was taught how to fly Cessna 185s in flight school at Moody Bible Institute's Aviation program. We would spend a few hours flying and Dad would sign off my Biannual Flight Reviews – since he is a CFI.

Well, long story short, Kyoung and I drove out to Missouri a few weeks back to pick up "LER" and bring it home to Georgia. Dad has not been able to fly it as much and needed room for a Super Cub project he has going on. I am sure that it was

bittersweet to see it leave but nice knowing that we can travel back with it and still go flying together.



Many years ago a man said he didn't quite understand why Dad would give up all the wonderful things in the USA and take his family to live a life of service and "poverty" in countries far away and to come back broke. Dad always said that God repays service in ways we cannot always understand. This was one of those ways.

*Bill Clapp*

## In Brief:

I was reassembling the Pietenpol and the cockpit coaming needed to be laced back in. Working with the old lacing was a mistake. It was dry and rotted. Getting the lacing through the holes is another issue. The trick I came up with is safety wire.



I spun a bit through a hole in the lacing and used it as a needle. This greatly simplified the job.

I ran two laces in a continuous figure 8 pattern all the way around. Don't let the details scare you. Your own style is what "makes" the plane.

*Editor*





## Big Piet Reborn

The Big Piet went down over the Tennessee Chia-Pet mountains. Denied the glory of an uneventful engine-out landing by a DHS fence, she lay face to the chainlink just yards past the water's edge. Like a child denied entry to the game for an injury, her gear splayed out haphazardly but her spirit was not broken. Oshkosh 2019 was out of reach, yet she would rise from the fires of trial like the hero in a graphic novel. A superhero.

When Big Piet lost her spinner and threw a blade over Jackson County Tennessee enroute to Oshkosh 2019, a boyhood dream of flying into Oshkosh evaporated in moments. Once the fight for survival was past and the nervous laughter had shrugged off the blanket of denial, it was clear that Big Piet was going to need a bit of work.

The gear had found room to collapse and break my impact by pushing the lower longerons inward. This canted the firewall downwards and drove the cowling into the ground. The right side of the lower rudder belcrank had dug in and bent. The wing leading edge had gently slapped the fence barely denting it. The four point harness had certainly saved me from kissing the panel, as the steel tube fuselage had certainly spared her from major damage.

Bill Clapp got my text and was only 45 min away, so he was able to quickly divert to 1A7 with the Saberwing. He had the luxury of scouting the area before landing, yet the strength of the surface winds were still surprising despite his observation of the river waves. His immediate experience with the conditions was a godsend, relieving me of much explanation for why his Piet was on the wrong side of the fence.



The next day was spent being interviewed by the authorities dotting “i”s and crossing “t”s. Of course, it rained. The second day was spent getting the plane disassembled and loaded hastily onto a trailer. There was a hangar space available and we picked up the trailer on our way home from Oshkosh. We planned to rebuild and fly her up next year. We all know what happened to 2020.

Once back at Adel, Ga, the front fuselage bays were stripped, the engine removed and the project



assessed. A quick call to other builders of “Big Piets” revealed that the gear collapse via longeron displacement was not unique. Their experience confirmed our planned course of repair. We cut the lower longerons and sleeved them with a larger tube with greater wall thickness. Then replaced the lower cross tube and began reassembly. All the work was done on a custom support holding the fuselage level and straight. While we were at it, upgrades ensued. We added a steel strip to create a hard point at the first station beyond the firewall. The fabric replacement would end there and a metal boot cowl would be fashioned. The original configuration was a little aft in the CG, so metal spools were added to push the mount out 1.125” from the firewall. ( 1” at the top, 1.25” at the

bottom)

This also removed a degree or so of downthrust.



The firewall accessories were mounted or moved as needed for the new engine. The new engine is a rear start Corvair conversion, and it bolted into the original mount. The additional space from moving the mount forward worked out very well with the new engine.

The Azalea Corvair conversion is different from the original builder's platform, and some things are done differently as a result. The starter is mounted where the original oil cooler had been. A cover plate is placed over the oil cooler mount to block it off. The oil filter was up on top of the engine spun horizontally onto the accessory housing cover plate. This made an oil change messy. The filter was relocated to the lower firewall. This makes an oil change simpler and allows for a connection point for the oil cooler lines. The oil cooler lines run from the filter up to an oil cooler mounted below the front "fifth bearing". A short shroud concentrates air from a cowl opening through the cooler. The original oil cooler got its air from the rear of the left mailbox through a 1/2" slot.

This upgrade is summarized as follows: larger oil filter for more filtering capacity and upright position for a cleaner replacement, larger oil cooler surface placed directly in the airflow. For those that have looked at the installation on the Pietenpol FaceBook group, there have been no air entrapment issues with the oil cooler mounting. It is cooling more consistently at a lower temp. For posterity, we retained the hand-made stainless steel bolt-on intake manifold and the heads that match.

The Corvair conversion is an Azalea product and the Piet is being marshalled as a product demonstrator and display. Towards that end, the new cowling is designed to show off the engine while providing the needed streamlining. The lower cowl is a somewhat Jay Leno chin that fits onto the original mounting points installed by the original builder. Like the intake, we attempted to keep Barry Davis' influence in where we could. His initials are still on the rear of the mailboxes. I did remount the

mailboxes with hinges to make plug replacement and inspection simpler. They now tilt inward after removing a couple of accessible screws. The front starter and top mounted oil filter made removing the mailboxes in the field a tedious job to simply check a spark plug.



The top cowl was kept extremely brief and basically covers the engine to firewall interface. In the initial acquisition of the Big Piet, many delays occurred. These delays led the employees to refer to the plane as "The Phantom". Remember the superhero status? Big Piet is the Phantom's alter ego. Why repair the paint when you can give the plane a personality beyond the original? Like Peter Parker bitten by a radioactive spider, like Bruce Banner bathed in Gamma radiation and the Fantastic Four gaining superpowers from the storm-in-space, the Big Piet has emerged from her trials faster, fairer and better than before as *The Phantom*.

*David Poirier*

## **Gary Meuer; DARF**

I am a DARF and have certified a few hundred homebuilts , light sport, and experimental lightsport aircraft. I will be down there at Obrien airpark east in November for the winter. I am a chapter member.

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