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Pittsburgh-Butler Region Experimental Aircraft Association - Chapter 857

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# EAA 857 NEWSLETTER

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## **EAA CHAPTER 857 20TH ANNIVERSARY!**

EAA Chapter 857 conducts our first meeting on October 17, 2000.

President Bob Santolla Presiding

## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

EAA 857 Members,

We will be conducting the October meeting at KBTP in the conference room. Thanks again to Bob Santolla for hosting the last two meetings at his hangar at Butler Farm Show, complete with burgers, dogs, and hot sausages and chips!



The October meeting will be a presentation by NOAA Representative Jason Frazier on the subject of aviation weather resources. We will conduct this via a virtual Google Meet live stream and Frank Szczerba and I will give you the meeting link to use prior to the meeting, for those of you who may not wish to attend in person at the airport.

Thanks to Chris McGeary for submitting this months conclusion to his and Margot's Western USA trip, featuring the return from Oregon across the upper tier of states to western Pennsylvania!

Thanks also to Bob Santolla for his article recognizing that this month is the 20th Anniversary of our EAA Chapter 857 established in October 2000.

Please note that we will be taking nominations for Chapter Officers and a Board Member at this October meeting. We will need a quorum of at least 9 members on hand at the KBTP meeting room to enact this business of the chapter. We will take a vote of all members at the final meeting of the year in November.

Finally, be aware, that chapter dues will become due and payable on January 1, 2021.

Please everyone take care of yourselves and your families! See you Tuesday!

Ted Merklin,  
President, EAA Chapter 857



## **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 MEETING**

**Opening:** President Ted Merklin called the meeting to order at 19:00 and led the members in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. This meeting held in person at Bob Santolla's hangar at Butler Farm Show Airport.

**Meeting Attendees:** 14 members and 2 visitors were present.

**Program:** Bob Santolla presented an excellent program on Painting your Aircraft Project.

**Previous Meeting Minutes:** Reviewed and Approved the minutes of the August 18, 2020 held at Butler Farm Show.

**Treasurer's Report:** Reviewed and Approved the current bank balances.

**Newsletter:** The newsletter was distributed September 13, 2020 and uploaded also to the chapter website.

**Website:** Go to <https://chapters.eaa.org/ea857> in your browser.

### **Business:**

- **Membership status:** We have 34 paid members. New Member Carl Baker joined in August.
- **Young Eagles:** Repeated the request for any pilots willing to fly YE individually at this time. There is a new Young Eagle Workshops program being promoted by national EAA. An introduction webinar is planned for 9/24. We will investigate it.
- **Air Academy:** Candidate Zach Jordan had a reservation for late June Basic and desires to go in 2021, however he will be 16 eligible for the Advanced camp but is waitlisted now. We have \$220 in YE Credits we can apply in 2021. EAA has provided registration paperwork to Zach for the 2021 Basic Session Camp.
- **Tech Advisor:** Double check everything, forgotten or ignored details can cause accidents. Recent accident findings were reviewed wherein certain maintenance procedures were technically questionable.
- **Chapter room:** We will need to purchase rolling carts for the transport of tables and chairs before May 2021 before the first fly-in / YE events.
- **Chapter Activities:** Several Fly-outs for Lunch activities were held at select local airports.
- **PA Charitable status:** We were issued an exemption for registering as a public charity in PA due to our low level of monies received in year 2019. (<25K). The state issued a correction to the letter noting the reference year 2019.
- **Nominations for Chapter Officers:** Nominations will be taken in October with a vote in November.
- **October Meeting:** Will check with Jason Frazier from the NOAA office regarding a virtual presentation.
- **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn at 20:10 was made by Chuck Potts, and seconded by Phil Kriley.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Schubert, Secretary

## **A COVID CROSS COUNTRY ADVENTURE (PART 3)**

by Chris McGeary

So, where were we? Ah, yes. We had just packed up our camping gear after sleeping on the Pacific coast in southern Washington State. Hardboiled egg, bagels with cream cheese, smoked salmon and capers for breakfast and coffee made by heating water in an aluminum beer can over the fire. We hit the road, driving inland from the coast around North Bay, through the town of Aberdeen and north through the strangely named town of Humptulips and up to Lake Quinault and hiking trails into the Washington rain forest. This is where the big trees are, due to the humid winds blowing in off the Pacific and dumping large quantities of rain on the region. The hiking was amazing, with huge trees and moss everywhere. We found what is billed as the largest known Sitka Spruce. After hiking much of the day, we headed back to an AirBnB in Aberdeen that was supposed to have a washer and dryer. Well, they did, but the washer was broken, plus the place was a bit scary, so we opted out and headed back toward Astoria.



Astoria was still shut down, but Seaside was wide open. We got the last room in a beautiful old BnB there in the center of town. What a magnificent sunset! Nice breakfast in the morning and a walk on the beach, watching folks dig for clams at low tide. Then it was back to Astoria airport to pack up the plane and return the car. The destination for the day was Sandpoint, Idaho. We left Astoria flying east and then south along the Columbia River toward Portland. FlyQ with ADS-B weather was showing solid clouds ahead over the Cascades, with clearing to the east, so we climbed to 11,500 to get above the cloud layer and headed east. We flew past the top of Mt Adams poking through



the clouds, and within about 30 minutes we could see the ground again. Eastern Washington is pretty dry and high, so we stayed at 7500 ‘ until we were north of Spokane. The clouds started getting thicker again, so we ended up doing a bit of a dance to make sure the hole we were planning to let down through had plenty of valley beneath it. Fortunately, the tools we have today make this much easier. Having a couple hours of extra fuel and knowing there was low country less than 30 minutes flight to the southwest served as Plan B if things clouded over here in the mountains.



Once we got below the clouds, we followed the river valley east to Lake Pend Orielle and Sandpoint Airport (KSZT). Sandpoint was regularly featured in scenarios in my ground school knowledge tests, and it was cool to finally fly there. The country there is absolutely beautiful, with the lake on southeast and Mt Casey to the north. I swear that Sandpoint didn’t even know there was COVID in the country. Hardly anyone was wearing a mask, and when we went out to dinner, the restaurant was as crowded as ever. It was the one meal out where we really felt uncomfortable on the trip, but, given that it was raining hard, any outside venue was out of the question.

The place we stayed, Talus Rock Retreat, was just gorgeous, and the owner’s husband was a pilot (he had a Mooney), so we talked for awhile about flying in the mountains. There had been some high winds in the area a couple months before, and about 10% of the trees on the property had blown down, so they were doing lots of cutting and burning. Really big campfire burning when we went to dinner, and it was still burning in the rain when we got back. In the morning, we had a nice breakfast before heading back to the airport. Skies were overcast, so I talked to a local pilot to inquire about suggestions on how to proceed east. His recommendation was to go across Lake Pend Orielle and follow the Flathead River valley east to the Mission Valley. From there we could either go south over the pass to Missoula or go north to Kalispell. He said the river valley was wide enough to turn around everywhere except for a ten mile stretch. There are a couple of small airports scattered down the valley in wide spots, so if things got uncomfortable, one wouldn’t need to backtrack far. We decided to go for it.



The flight was just beautiful, with brilliant greens and the mountains on either side of the valley sticking up into the clouds. We could look up the valleys on either side and wonder where they led to. The overcast stayed high enough and we got into the Mission Valley with no issues. However, once there, the passes to the east and south did not look inviting, and there was rain to the north. There was a little town and airport at the south end of the valley, with self serve fuel. This was St. Ignatius, Montana (52S). We set down there and found that, yes, it had self serve fuel, a 12’x12’ pilots lounge (with a futon!), a permanent porta-potty and a crew car (an old Taurus wagon on a battery minder).



The last person who signed in to use the car was from October 2019, but it started up, and everything worked. We headed up to Connie's Country Cafe, about 10 miles north up the road. Standard cafe comfort food and fruit pie (not as good a Carroll County but not bad). The futon could have been a bit less lumpy, but at least we didn't have to break out the camping gear. Hey, if you don't have any challenges, it's not an adventure!

The next morning, the cloud base had risen a couple thousand feet, and we were able to easily get over the pass to the southeast toward Helena where the skies opened up to a clear morning. We climbed to 7500', then on south of Billings and north of Bighorn Canyon. If we can figure out a way to do it, we want to kayak in Bighorn Canyon. Someday, maybe.... Then we were over the high plains of Wyoming, north of Sheridan and Gillette and then Devil's Tower, famous from Close Encounters of the Third Kind. Unfortunately, you have to stay at least 3 miles away from Devils' Tower, so we settled for flying by. We had a tailwind most of the way, and as we descended into Black Hills Airport (KSFP) in Spearfish, South Dakota, it started to really build up and come around to the northeast. The airport has some good sized hills



just to the west, north and east, and this made for some interesting cross winds and turbulence as we flew the right hand pattern into 13. Once safely down, we got our car and asked if they would hangar the plane for the night, especially since the winds were continuing to pick up.



We drove down into Deadwood, South Dakota and grabbed lunch at a gas station turned cafe and glass blower. Outside seating, good sandwiches, plus we got to watch some of the glass blowing prep. After a short walk about town (too much gambling and not much else open), we got back in the car and set out to explore the Black Hills. The Black Hills are pretty in their own way, with lots of fir trees and tumbling creeks. We headed south towards Custer and the Crazy Horse Memorial. We ended up spending several hours there. It has a museum with many Native American artifacts from all over the US. Additionally, it includes Native American art and stories about Crazy Horse, his growing up and his clashes and negotiations with other tribes and the US Army. Another area is dedicated to the building of the monument, with pictures and artifacts from the dig. It was a very different view of some of our nation's heritage. Leaving there, we swung by the Mt Rushmore National Memorial, which was free, but also partly closed off. Then back to Deadwood and an overnight stay in one of the houses from the 1890s.

We got an early start the next morning, heading for Mackinac Island (KMCD), with a fuel stop at Buffalo, Minnesota (KCFE). KCFE was selected both for its reasonable fuel prices, and the fact that the 25-35 mph surface winds were blowing pretty much down the runway (again, one of the advantages of ADS-B along with a good app, is that it allows you to check METARs as you go to match up runway and wind directions). As we taxied to the fuel pumps, I heard a "Nice Landing, Chris" on the CTAF. Turns out, someone else in the area has a red and white RV-9A and is named Chris. Who knew? Our tailwind steadily increased as we flew across Wisconsin, and we made good time into Mackinac. For those of you who haven't been, Mackinac Island doesn't have cars. Yes, there are fire engines and construction equipment, but the taxis are horse-drawn, as is the UPS delivery wagon. Bicycles and walking are the most popular modes of transportation. We stayed in an



AirBnb studio apartment near the shore south of the airport, and walked into town to rent bicycles, which was a good idea, as the bikes the apartment had for rent were the single speed "cruiser" style bikes you find at places like Put-in-Bay. If you're going to explore the interior of Mackinac Island, a multiple speed bicycle is a must. The Grand Hotel was not yet open, and most of the shops were also closed, so there weren't many people about, and we felt comfortable walking and cycling the streets. Mackinac has an 8 mile long paved bike trail going completely around the island pretty much at lake level. There are also hiking, biking and horse trails winding all over the interior, and most of the historic sites are inland. Early June was flowering time and the sweet smells of blossoms were everywhere! We had a wonderful dinner on the outside patio of The Gate House restaurant our second night after turning in our bikes, and we walked back to our apartment at dusk.

The next morning we woke to the wind howling. Fortunately, it was howling right down the runway. Unfortunately, I hadn't gotten fuel after the flight in from Minnesota, so we only had about 2 hours left in the tank, and there isn't any fuel at Mackinac Island. Note to self: ALWAYS top off the tanks before leaving the plane (unless there extenuating circumstances)! We should have landed on the mainland and topped off before heading in to Mackinac. We took off and headed over to Mackinac County (83D) to get fuel. I figured that it would be less windy there since it was on the mainland. Big mistake! We bounced around a bit, but got down okay and started taxiing back to the fuel pumps which were at the downwind end of the airport. However, as I tried to taxi up to the pumps, the wind would catch the tail and spin us around. After two 180s, I finally got the message, taxied up to a set of tie downs and parked the plane. We then headed inside, borrowed the crew van to grab lunch, then settled down to kill some time talking to the airport manager. It was mid afternoon before the wind died down enough to get gassed up and head south.

At that point, there was a line of thunderstorms running down eastern Michigan and into Ohio, and we were battling a 60 knot headwind just to the west of them. Normally, I would figure on a bit under 3 hours to get to Butler from Mackinac, but 3 1/2 hours of flying only got us to Hardin County (I95) in western Ohio, and by the time we landed around 6pm they were closed, no fuel and no pilots lounge. I got on the phone and started calling other airports in the area, trying to find anyone with self serve fuel. I finally lucked out when someone said that Putnam County (KOWX) had self serve fuel. It did mean backtracking about 30 miles, and the surface winds were starting to pick up, but we got back there and fueled up, though I ended up lying on the wing a couple of times because it felt like the plane was going to get blown over. Given that it was getting close to sunset, and there was still a line of thunderstorms between us and Butler, we decided to call it a night. We tied the plane down securely and retreated into the pilots lounge, availing ourselves of their couch and lounge chair (and bathrooms!). Maybe too much adventure? Good thing there were still a few items in the picnic basket. Tuna salad/avocado sandwiches for dinner, and stuffed hardboiled eggs with fruit and cheese for breakfast.

We awoke the next morning to clear skies at Putnam County, and clouds off to the east, and great tailwinds at altitude. Butler was showing clear skies as we left, with points east also clear, and eastern Ohio overcast. 7500' got us over the clouds, and we got to just north of Butler before we found a big enough hole to let back down through. ...and we were home, 3 weeks to the day from when we left.

According to FlyQ, we put a total of 41.1 hours on the plane during the 3 week period, and flew a total of 5,751 nm, averaging 140 knots. We landed in 15 states, and flew over 8 more. Would we do it again? In a heartbeat! So many places to explore.



## EAA CHAPTER 857: 20 YEARS LATER

By Bob Santolla

Tuesday October 17, 2000 at 7:00 pm the first meeting of the newly formed EAA Chapter 857 was called to order by founding President Bob Santolla. Thirteen people were in attendance and they became the first charter members of EAA Chapter 857. That was 20 years ago as we celebrate another Chapter milestone.

In those beginning years the Board of Directors consisted of Bob Santolla-President, Dave Folker-Vice President, Debie Santolla-Secretary and Treasurer. I would like to take you back in time and tell you a good story about EAA Chapter 857's history and how the Chapter grew in 20 years.

Our journey starts at the Beaver County Airport where the idea of combining the hangars of Chuck Patten, Dan Eckles, Dave Folker, and Bob Santolla was formulated. There was no large hangar at KBVI that would house all of our airplanes and projects but we had heard that the Zelenople Airport then called 3G8 may offer a solution for us.

The four of us which we named the "Four Amigos" met with then airport manager Tom Haney and discussed our ideas. Timing is everything, as Haney told us that the large older hangar was going to be re-sided with new metal sheeting and the roof would be replaced and the entire hangar insulated. The 60 foot by 60 foot building could house all of our airplanes and projects. We negotiated the rent and utilities and found our new home. That was April 2000 and the big "move" was set for May 2000.

As the hangar was being readied I suggested to the Four Amigos that we should inquire about building an addition attached to the hangar to be our workshop and meeting area. With further conversation with Tom Haney and then Airport Authority President Chuck Smith we agreed with a hand shake and were given the go ahead to build a 16 x 32 foot addition. During construction, pilots from the local airport stopped by to introduce themselves and then pitched in and offered their help.



The Zelenople Airport with it's few tenants but close knit aviation community was ripe for an EAA Chapter. The Four Amigos agreed to the use of their newly constructed building as a meeting room for an EAA Chapter. Now it was time to find one.

EAA Chapter 68 from the Beaver County area was invited to view the newly completed meeting room and a membership vote was scheduled to move the established Chapter from Beaver County Airport to the Zelenople Airport. Unfortunately Chapter 68 membership voted down the move and it was back to finding another EAA Chapter.

I contacted the National EAA Office in Oshkosh and spoke with Troy Tolle who managed the National Chapter program and advised me that EAA Chapter 857 was in an inactive status and was formally located in western Pennsylvania. Troy encouraged us to reactivate the Chapter and he would give all his support and help to bring it back to life. Within a few short weeks and a little bit of paperwork, EAA Chapter 857 was ready to begin its second life and word got out quickly that a new EAA Chapter was forming.



Chapter 857 grew steadily and began hosting Fly-In breakfasts. Many flew in or drove because they had heard we put on the best dog-gone breakfast for miles around. Soon plans were made to build a picnic pavilion to host the fly-in breakfast and lunches. Chapter 857 along with a local flying club pooled our money and the Airport Authority matched that amount and all pitched in and soon we had picnic pavilion that was second to none! A sleepy little General Aviation with a funny name of Zelenople was getting attention.



It feels like a short time ago but the reality is 20 years has past, and in those 20 years Chapter 857 has had a rich history of achievements. The number of Fly-In breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, member projects being completed, and flying is a very large number indeed. But the most important achievements were the numbers of Young Eagles that have taken their first flight and young adults that were able to attend the Air Academy during the summer season. The Young Eagle flights total over 3000 and over 30 campers from ages 12 thru 18 spent one week with people their age with an interest in aviation. Some of these young adults went on to become pilots for the airline or the military and thanked the EAA Chapter for giving them an opportunity to prove themselves.

The real thanks goes to all the dedicated members of Chapter 857 who rose to the challenges of leadership roles whether it was working the ramp, flipping pancakes, flying Young Eagles, putting out monthly newsletters and raising the money to sending these young aviators to the Air Academy, they all gave a 100%. Without their help these accomplishments would not have happened.

Having an EAA Chapter at your local airport, everyone wins. A place where aviation enthusiasts alike can meet and share stories, ideas and most importantly knowledge. A community that supports the three important F's, 'Flying, Fellowship, and Fun!



## **VARIEZE PROJECT IS AVAILABLE**

New member Frank Feczko has determined he will not be able to proceed with his Varieze restoration project pictured below. If you are interested see Frank or Ted Merklin for his email contact information. Frank can provide you with further history on this aircraft.





**EAA 857 - Chapter Meetings and Events for 2020**

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM  
in the Conference Room at the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport.

<b>Chapter Meetings</b>	Tuesdays	January 21	
		February 18	
		March 17	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
		April 21	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
		May 19	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
		June 16	ZOOM Meeting
		July 21	at KBTP
		August 18	at Farm Show
		September 15	at Farm Show
		October 20	at KBTP
		November 17	
<b>EAA 857 Chili Cook Off -</b>	Sunday,	February 9	
<b>International Young Eagles Day -</b>	Saturday,	June 13	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
<b>EAA 857 Fly-In and YE -</b>	Sunday,	August 9	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
<b>EAA 857 Fly-In and YE -</b>	Saturday,	September 13	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>

**2020 National Events**

Sun 'n Fun -	May 5 - 10	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
Sentimental Journey -	June 16 - 20	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>
AirVenture Oshkosh 2020 -	July 20 - 26	<b>[CANCELLED]</b>

**EAA 857 Chapter Officers for 2020**

Use [contact@eaa857.org](mailto:contact@eaa857.org) to email the Chapter President.  
Your request will be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

<b>President</b>	<b>Ted Merklin</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Phil Kriley</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Frank Szczerba</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Rick Schubert</b>
<b>Newsletter / Web Page</b>	<b>Ted Merklin, Ed.</b>
<b>Young Eagles</b>	<b>Phil Kriley</b>
<b>Technical Advisors</b>	<b>Chuck Potts     Bob Santolla</b>
<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Dan Hood     2020-2022</b> <b>Bob Santolla     2020-2021</b> <b>Gary Marsico     2020</b>