
Pittsburgh-Butler Region Experimental Aircraft Association - Chapter 857

EAA 857 NEWSLETTER



**The EAA Ford Tri-motor 4-AT-E
2006 EAA AirVenture Opening Day**

Presidents Message

EAA 857 Members,

I just returned from visiting my son and his family in Florida and it was cold...we had 28 degrees overnight one night, and we golfed in the 40's. I know...oh boo-hoo! I was happy to miss the 10 below stuff y'all had up here, for sure! I've continued to work on my plane in the hangar by building a tent around the area being worked on so I can raise the temperature enough to work with epoxy. I'll bring the nose strut home to finish the work on it so I get a good cure. The prop shop in Tiffin, OH should be done with my prop in the next few weeks, so I might be flying again in April.

We hope to be able show a short video that was done a number of years ago that features my plane and the original builder. The video was shot at Falls of Rough airport in Kentucky where a large canard flyin takes place every fall. I am also expecting one or two prospective members to attend, so it would be nice to see some folks in person.

Ted Merklin has made some tweaks to our website including placing our membership application on-line. In closing, please tell your board what activities you'd be interested in such as a chapter road trip or fly-out. We will discuss having a chili cook-off at the meeting, so please try to attend either via Zoom or in person.

Phil Kriley

EAA Chapter 857 president





Pittsburgh-Butler Region Experimental Aircraft Association—Chapter 857 Minutes of January 18, 2022 Regular Chapter Meeting

Opening: President Phil Kriley called the meeting to order at 07:01 P.M. and led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting attendees: 7 members were present. 4 members were viewing from live stream on Google Meet. Therefore a quorum for this meeting with 11 total participants.

Previous Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the prior meeting are in the newsletter. Motion to accept the minutes put forth by Kyle Riedel and seconded by Chris McGeary.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept put forth by Kyle Riedel and seconded by Ted Merkin.

Newsletter: The newsletter will be distributed and uploaded to the chapter website. This will be the last newsletter of the year.

Website: Enter <https://chapters.eaa.org/ea857> in your browser to view the site.

Tech Advisor: No report

Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday February 15th, 2022

IMC meeting: No meetings currently planned. Potentially the next meeting will be in April.

Young Eagles/Air Academy: Digital signature will be implemented on iPad's in the future. Our 2 kids registered for the Air Academy are remaining in close contact with Ted Merklin and are very excited to go to camp.

Business: The following items were discussed:

- The airport manager for KBTP is retiring and the position is open currently.
- Current Membership: We have 36 total numbers. 13 members are paid. 17 members are unpaid.
- It was suggested that we should add “how to join our chapter” to our website as well as a general contact info page
- Ray Aviation scholarship application in progress due January 31st.
- Condor Aero Club has a scholarship and was communicating with us about how Ray Aviation scholarship compares to Condor's scholarship.
- EAA Post-Secondary Scholarships are available until January 31st 2022.
- Post super bowl event was discussed as an addition to our events list
- Service awards were presented.
- All members discussed their developments over the last few weeks.
- February 15th and March 15th will be the next meeting dates for 2022. June 11th, August 14th and September 11th are the anticipated Young Eagles events for 2022.

Closing: The meeting was adjourn at 08:12 P.M. Motion made by Ted Merklin and seconded by Chris McGeary.

Respectfully submitted:

Josselyn Slagle, Secretary EAA 857

Looking for Land

by Chris McGearry

As some of you know, Margot & I purchased some land on an airpark (and lake) in Missouri, and we've been trying to line up a builder. However, no location is perfect, and Lost Mine is a bit far from civilization, at least if you're driving.

So, we've been looking at alternatives. Tennessee is a great place tax-wise, but there is (very) little hangar space to be had. I had talked to Dave at Johnson County Airport (6A4) near Mountain Home, TN, and he thought we might be able to get community hangar space there. We were looking there because Watauga Lake is nearby. So, a trip was in order.

So, October 1st, we headed off under clear skies to Fairmont, WV (4G7), to stay overnight with a friend, and give him a plane ride up over his camp on the Monongahela. Fairmont airport makes a nice hamburger flight. The Copper House Grill is directly across the road from the pilot lounge, and DJ's 50s & 60s Diner is a 2 minutes walk down the road. The airport has self serve 100LL, where we topped up the tanks. Fairmont airport is fun to land on, coming in on 23 right over the river. However, if you have to go around, don't wait until the last instant, as there is a 45 ft high hill on the southwest end of the runway. When I landed there a few years back, there was a Cessna 152 very close to the top of the hill that had engine trouble on takeoff. No injuries, thank goodness. I guess it was a good thing he was taking off on 23. If he had been on 05, he might have ended up in the river.



In any case, we loaded up the next morning and headed off to Johnson County, TN. Flying in there is "fun". The winds were favoring 06, and you want to make sure you fly a tight pattern (stay within 1/2 mile of the airport), as



the mountains to the north and west are over 700 ft above runway altitude. A high cloud base (~8000 ft) and steady winds made this easy. Upon landing, we were greeted by Dave, who topped our tanks off, lent us a crew car so we could check out the local area, and introduced us to an RV7 pilot who happened to be a real estate agent. We made tentative arrangements with him to look at some land around the lake on our way back north later in the week. Mountain City is a typical small town. We found some excellent BBQ there with home-made ice cream for dessert. Dave assured us that, if we wanted to move down there, he would be able to at least find us room in a community hangar, and

possibly some T hangar space. We left there feeling somewhat hopeful. Watauga Lake didn't seem too crowded, and the views around it were beautiful.

We then headed south toward Blue Ridge, GA and a private strip there (57GA). We were hoping to fly directly over the Smokey Mountains, but the ceiling had dropped, so we headed west into the Tennessee Valley and skirted the Smokeys to their west. Even so, we kept having to reduce altitude, and we were down to 3000 ft by the time we were east of Chattanooga. Once we got to the Georgia border (and past the southern end of the higher Smokeys), the ceilings lifted and we turned southeast toward Blue Ridge.

Flying into Blue Ridge is a bit of an adrenaline rush. Even with the GPS location marked on my iPad, I was having a hard time finding the airstrip. I finally spotted the Motorsports Park just east of the north end of the strip (which is down in a holler) and started a standard left hand pattern approach. Way too high! I was at least 100' up crossing the numbers. It doesn't help that there is a 100 ft high hill about 1600 ft in front of the runway. The runway itself is about 30 ft wide and 2500 ft long from south to north (not including the 400 ft of runout at the south end). The first 1400 ft rises about 15 ft. The last 1200 ft rises another 80 ft, and the whole thing is in a narrow valley with about 160 ft total between the trees on either side.



On the second pass, I just skimmed the trees on the approach, with full flaps at 58 kts for maximum sink. We still touched down over 500 ft down the runway, but the uphill roll at the end slows you amazingly fast. The available lots were about 90 ft above the runway, so we figured that brakes wouldn't last long here. We quickly nixed any thought of building here, and I turned my thoughts to getting out in one piece. I set an abort point less than halfway down the runway, and determined that a 20 degree turn to the left upon takeoff would give me the lowest terrain on climbout. As it happened, we were airborne less than halfway down the slope, turned east, and then northeast to stay out of the A-685 Alert Area, then generally south. We weren't sure where we were heading from here, and Margot suggested we land somewhere and figure out what we wanted to do next. I looked at the chart, and saw a nice little airport with fuel about 15 minutes ahead of us. After checking the NOTAMs and TFRs for any surprises, we headed into Madison, Georgia (52A). The winds favored 14, as did the slope of the runway. The ramp was empty, except for an old, tied down Cessna 180, an aging Zenith high wing, and a gorgeous polished Globe Swift sitting in front of one of the hangars. What happened next was pure southern hospitality.



We had gone into the pilot's lounge, and we were looking at weather, trying to decide if we wanted to go further that day. The fellow who owned the Swift had come out of his hangar and we struck up a conversation. We asked whether he thought anyone would mind if we pitched our tent over the hill from the ramp. He said: "I'll do you one better. Let me call the airport manager." Bobby (the manager) showed up in about 10 minutes, and told us they had a room right there at the airport, if we wanted a place to stay. Turns out, about 50 feet from the pilot's lounge they have a lovely little single bedroom and bath. They rent it out to pilots for \$70 a night, including use of the crew car to go into town. Unfortunately, the crew car was down for maintenance, but the owner of the Swift (Jim Jones, no relation to THAT Jim Jones, but he used to sell cyanide) gave us a ride into town, along with a short driving tour of some of the highlights.



It turns out that Madison was on the route of Sherman's March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah, and they got lucky. Because of some friends in high places, Sherman's men were prevailed upon to spare the town, though the rail station, cotton gin and clothing factory, along with supplies were destroyed. So, today, the streets are lined with beautiful antebellum homes, along with a charming town square. We spent a couple hours walking the streets, had a great dinner, then walked the mile and a half back to the airport. If you are traveling between here and Florida, and need a place to stay over, or simply want to check out one of the most charming small towns we've seen on the east coast, we highly recommend a stop in Madison.

The next morning, we packed up, fueled up, and headed to Jekyll Island (09J). The night before, we had booked a room for a night at the Jekyll Island Club Resort to find out how the other half lives. When we got there, we found that Jekyll now has avgas! You no longer have to make the hop over to St Simons. And, when we asked about renting bikes, they said to just grab a couple for as long as needed. They even had fat tires for riding the beach!

We had lunch in a gazebo at the airport, checked in at the Jekyll Club, then then began biking around the island. Jekyll is a





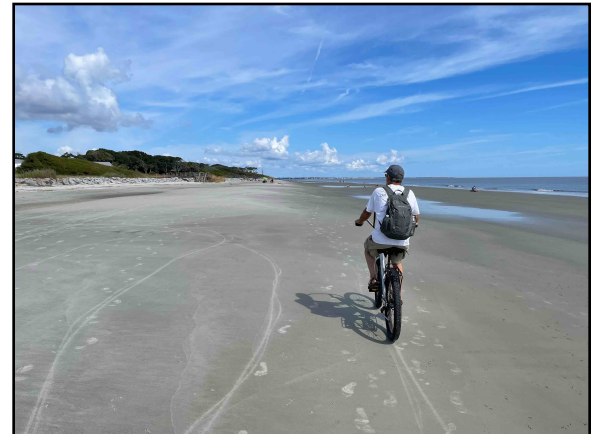
great place for bicycles, as it's flat, with lots of dedicated bike trails. You can even ride on the beach for the entire Atlantic side of the island. We had a very posh breakfast at the Club Resort, then bicycled across to the Holiday Inn for our second night. The Holiday Inn is right on the beach, with cabanas and a beautiful sunrise view.

The next morning, we returned the bikes, topped off the plane, and headed back toward Johnson County airport to look at some properties with the realtor we had met. ...and what a surprise! More clouds over the Smokeys, plus a line of rain moving from Augusta toward Charleston. Gotta



love ADS-B weather (at least for the big picture). We could see that it would be difficult to outrun the rain, so we dodged west toward Macon, climbed over the clouds at a narrow spot and then headed north again.

The upper cloud tops were at about 8000, so we cruised over at 9500 looking for holes big enough to get down. We finally found one about 5 miles south of the airport, allowing us to get down into the valley the airport was in. Our "out" if we couldn't find a hole near the airport was clear skies to the northwest (verified by checking the current METARs for airports in southern Kentucky) and a solid 2 hours of fuel remaining.



The realtor showed us some properties, but between the high cost of any land with a decent view, limited water access and the 20 minute drive to the airport, we decided to stick with our original choice. So, 2 hours later and full tanks, we launched out of Johnson County for home. The ceiling had lifted enough so that we were able to climb out to the northwest over the ridge there, rather than having to fly down the valley to the southwest. Sure enough, 15 miles later, the skies opened up and we had clear skies for the remainder of the 2 hour trip back to Butler.

Mooney Safety Foundation Pilot Proficiency Seminar Part 2: Always something to learn

By: Frank Szczerba, Sr

Friday started bright and early, with breakfast at 6:30 AM. The food at the Doubletree was notably better than the usual hotel fare, and we had a chance to swap some airplane stories before registration.

We had instructors from all over, including a group that came in from Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey, one from Flagstaff, and even one from Massachusetts! These instructors all had a ton of experience, with tens of thousands of hours between them. They are all volunteers who are passionate about aviation, safety, and sharing their knowledge and experience. That passion was evident throughout the weekend.

The Mooney Pilot Proficiency Program was first held in May of 1990, modeled after the American Bonanza Society Pilot Proficiency Program. Over the last 30+ years the Mooney Safety Foundation has hosted seminars each year around the country, with typically 20-30 pilots attending each seminar. In 2021 the schedule kicked off in late January in Lakeland, FL, followed by Santa Fe, NM in April, Ft. Worth, TX in June, Springfield/Chicopee, MA in September, and wrapping up in Wichita, KS in October.



Our session had a lower turnout than usual, with 15 registered and 1-2 who were unable to make it due to the weather. While most of the attendees were from the midwest, we had a couple of pilots from Virginia, and even one from California who was taking delivery of his Ovation in Tennessee a few days after the seminar. The 201 (M20J) was the best represented, with 7 registered owners, but we also had 2 turbo charged M20Ks (like a J but with a Continental TSIO-360), 4 long bodies including 3 M20R Ovations and one M20TN Acclaim, as well as two short bodies: one M20C and a wood-wing M20A.

Meeting the instructors

One of the instructors I got a chance to meet was Will Wobbe, a Mooney CFI from Northern Virginia and a Flight Service Specialist for Leidos Flight Service. Will was a previous winner of the Mooney Safety Foundation scholarship for flight training, and it was clear the scholarship committee made a great choice. I had contacted Will to do my checkout when I was purchasing 7DT, but he wasn't available because of some personal commitments. I told him about finding my plane at Oshkosh and about the other Ovation I'd had my eye on but missed out on because it went to another buyer. As it turns out, that plane went to a client of Will's. It really is a small world.

The ground school curriculum on Friday was intensive, covering general topics like weather, human factors, and runway incursions, but also a ton of Mooney-specific knowledge including model histories, systems, and maintenance, tips and gotchas, and model-specific "IFR by the Numbers" guidance, which uses specific Power + Attitude + Configuration = Performance setting for every phase of flight to reduce workload. I'd learned this approach while completing my IFR rating in a Piper Arrow and was already a true believer. Now I had the information I needed to apply this method to my own airplane. Will gave the most cogent and thorough description of ICAO flight plans and equipment codes I've seen yet. In the end I received 9 FAA Wings Knowledge credits for the ground portion of the weekend.

Classes continued right through lunch, with boxed lunches distributed between lessons. We wrapped up around 5PM and were paired up with our instructors for the flying part of the curriculum. These pairings were based on the model-specific experience of each instructor, taking into account the avionics we each had as well as any specific areas of emphasis we had requested. Because of the smaller than usual class size, many of the instructors were paired with only a single student, and none had more than 2 to fly with.



Dinner Friday

at the Hangar One Steakhouse. The steak was excellent (this is Kansas, after all), and the upstairs "control tower" bar offered a great view of the airport, but we didn't stay too late, as Saturday was to be an early start and a busy day.

Pre-dawn preflight on Saturday

The weather Saturday was as beautiful as it was ugly on Thursday. I made the short walk from the hotel to Yingling Aviation before dawn to preflight and update nav

I was paired with Fred Gibbs, a former FAA FSS manager from the eastern region from the 70's through the 90's, and now an active CFI in Flagstaff. Fred owns a Balanca Viking and has a ton of experience in various Mooney models, as well as familiarity with the Avidyne avionics in my plane. Fred used to live in eastern PA, and knew many of the same airfields I used to fly into when I lived out there.

Fred went out to fly Friday evening with another student who wanted to get night current. Meanwhile, I joined Will and his student, Jim, an M20J owner from Indiana, for dinner





Just a small bit of the aviation memorabilia inside the Hangar One Steakhouse

We then headed over to McPherson Airport (KMPR) for some pattern work. Next, I went under the hood to hand fly the RNAV 31 into Hutchenson (KHUT) followed by the ILS 1R back in Wichita using the autopilot. We taxied back into Yingling and shut down having registered 2.0 on the Hobbs, headed inside to recycle the coffee and debrief.



Saturday's lunch was a Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steak Burgers

Over lunch I got to know Stan better. Stan is a machinist and an inventor, and he told me about the projects he's currently working on. He splits his time between the city and a private airpark in Southern Missouri, MO56 Lost Mine Airpark near Branson. He mentioned recently meeting a couple from north of Pittsburgh who were looking at property in his airpark. He remembered that they flew a Vans RV, and were also avid boaters, but didn't remember their names. I said "it's not Chris and Margo McGeary, is it?" It was. Again, it's a small world.

databases, then had breakfast with Fred at the Doubletree while we discussed the plan for the day. We started the engine around 9AM and headed out from 19L for some air-work, starting with steep turns and stalls. This was my first chance to really explore the low speed characteristics of the Ovation. During my checkout we had recovered at the first chirp of the stall horn.

Fred went back out to fly with his other student, while I hung out at the FBO chatting with other students. After a TikTok/Instagram "celebrity" sighting, another student and I decided to go get lunch. Stan owns an M20J and was also waiting while his instructor flew with another student. We chatted with the front desk attendant to get recommendations, which led us to take the courtesy car to Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steak Burgers. Freddy's is a local 50's style burger and shake chain. Not fancy, but good.



After lunch we put in another 2.0, with 1.1 under the hood including approaches into Kingman/Clyde Cessna Field (9K8), Hutchinson, and Wichita, with some holds thrown in to complete the IPC requirements. I made a couple of simulated engine out landings at Hutchinson. On the first attempt I expected the "glide like a brick" performance I was used to in the Arrow, and found myself way too high over the runway threshold. Lesson learned, I was able to follow that up with a couple of nice power off landings and a short field landing. These greatly increased my confidence in the airplane.

We returned to Yingling, finished up the paperwork, and Fred signed off both a Flight Review and IPC for me. This marked my second Flight Review in a month, though this one felt a lot more valuable than the first.

That evening we were treated to dinner at Chisholm's American Beef & Ale House at the Doubletree (steak, of course, this is Kansas), where we swapped more stories and shared our takeaways for the weekend. Even the 10,000+ hour instructors had something they learned. This is one of the things I love most about aviation, there's always something new to learn.

If you have the opportunity to attend one of these type-specific trainings, I'd highly recommend it. Our own Mike Neumann is putting together something similar for Piper Comanche owners, to be hosted here at KBTP later this year.



EAA 857 - Chapter Meetings and Events for 2022

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

Chapter Meetings	Tuesdays	January 18 February 15 March 15 April 19 May 17 June 21 July 19 August 16 September 20 October 18 November 15
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IMC Club -	3rd Wednesdays,	To be Announced.
EAA 857 Chili Cook Off -	Sunday,	Feb 20
International Young Eagles Day -	Saturday,	June 11
EAA 857 Fly-In and YE -	Sunday,	August 14
EAA 857 Fly-In and YE -	Sunday ,	September 11

2022 National Events

Sun 'n Fun -	April 5 - 10
Sentimental Journey -	June 21 - 25
AirVenture Oshkosh 2022 -	July 25 - 31

EAA 857 Chapter Officers for 2022

Use contact@eaa857.org to email the Chapter President. Your request will be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

President	Phil Kriley
Vice President	Kyle Riedel
Treasurer	Frank Szczerba
Secretary	Josselyn Slagle
Board Members	Ted Merklin 2022-2024
	Mark Beighey 2022-2023
	Dan Hood 2022
Website / Newsletter	Ted Merklin