

HISTORY OF IAC CHAPTER 34

1970s



The original charter for IAC 34 is signed by Carl Bury on April 16th 1974. Carl would go on to become the IAC's third president in 1978. He is credited with improving the internal administration of the IAC and conceiving ideas to improve fundraising. During his tenure the IAC's merchandising program got its start.

The club started with 29 charter members. This was the Western-Reserve Chapter and met in Peninsula, Ohio in a local library.

The first fly-in for the chapter was on May 18, 1974. Called a "Fly Together" at Wadsworth Airport at noon. In 1975, the chapter sponsored dinner in March on Friday the 14th with guest speaker Paul Poberezny, EAA's president and CEO. The evening included a dance band, and all area EAA chapter members were invited to attend.

IAC chapter 34 had five Aerobats, two Citabrias and a Stearman available with instructors which helped build interest in the club. The club set a goal that each member should bring in one new member during the first half of the year. Chapter members attended a Sandy Shoes contest in Ft. Pierce, Florida January 11-12, 1975 and Kokomo, Indiana June 27-29-1975.

By July 1975 the chapter had planned and executed the first contest of their own in Medina, Ohio at the Freedom Field Airport. The contest was sponsored by the chapter and the Medina JCs. Sportsman through Unlimited categories were flown with a cash prize of \$2000 to be split between the winners.



Wadsworth Municipal Airport 3G3

The airport was a private field owned by Robert Free, an Ohio real estate broker. "I bought an airplane and needed a decent place to keep it, so I bought an airport," said Robert in an interview with a local paper in 1976. By 1977 the airport was under bank foreclosure. Robert had tried to sell it due to increasing property taxes combined with payments on a \$1.8 million mortgage. The City of Medina ended up taking over the airport and renaming it Medina Municipal Airport which is an active regional airport.



Medina Municipal Airport 1G5



IAC 34 members, John Mehaila had chapter patches made and Rick Roberge scheduled the Fly-Togethers.

To increase attendance at meetings, a chapter member brought a door prize to each meeting.

The chapter officers in 1975 were Rich Roberge, Evertt Dyer and Dan Bookwalter.

Over the years, the chapter held contests at Medina, Middlefield, Portage, Millers and London as well as Columbus, Ohio. "Chapters put on IAC demonstration flight at the EAA Fly-In in Marion, Ohio. They flew different sequences and demonstrated the IAC maneuvers. (Quote – Barb Hadden, IAC 34 member in the 1990s.)

1980s

During the 1980s, the club continued to have meetings at the peninsula Library, Berlin Airpark and the Portage County Airport. Practice sessions were held at Barber Airport, Alliance, Ohio occasionally. Some of the contest locations in the 1980s were: 1986 North Benton, 1987, Berlin Airpark, and 1989 Alliance, Ohio.



An annual club banquet was held each February with a White Elephant auction/sale as a fundraiser for the chapter.

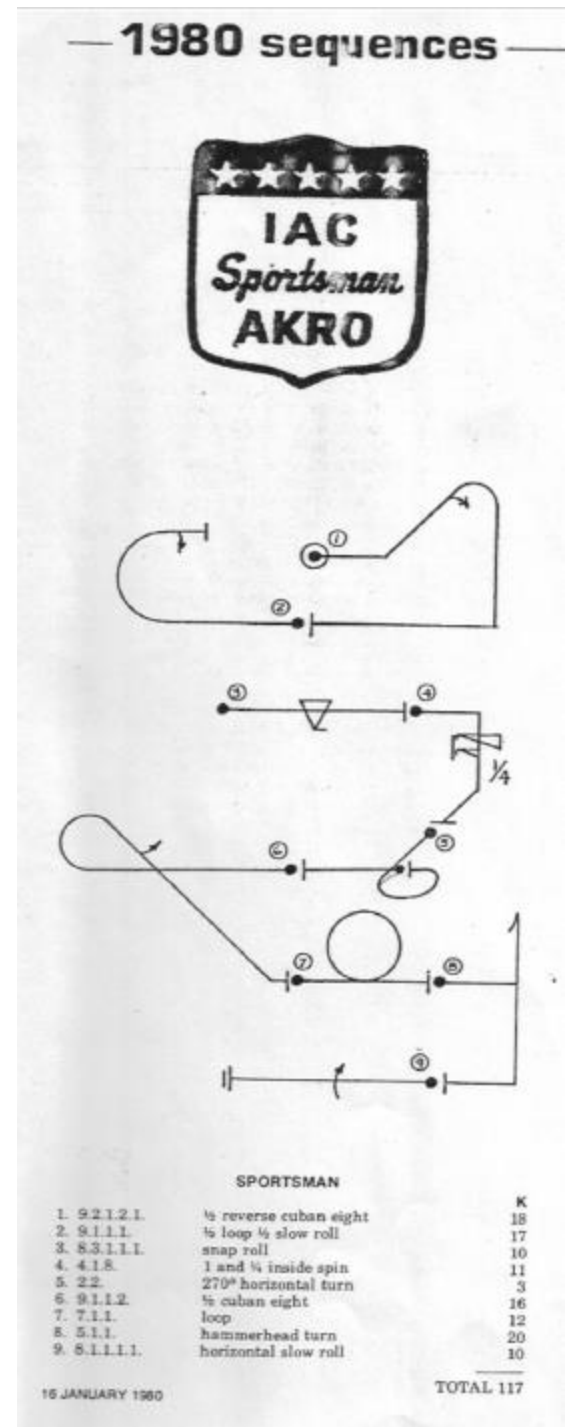
“The chapter did meet in Alliance and Ravenna (Portage County) at one time when we rotated President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and newsletter editor positions. The chapter had a certain sanctioned contest weekend, the one prior to Father’s Day in June for many years and flew that contest at Medina, Middlefield, Porage, Millers, usually getting thrown out after on or two years... Then the folks at Salem (IAC chapter 61) got our weekend and we had to go to Father’s Day weekend”.

(Quote – Forrest Barber January 1986_

When I first joined the IAC, I had the notion that Sportsman was for the poor and inexperienced new member to the sport and the 65hp non-inverted airplane would work. Hah! Was I surprised to learn that I had to do a 45-degree climbing maneuver (holding the line) called a Reverse Cuban. Try that once in your old Cub, Luscombe, or Taylorcraft and score more than a five and I’ll kiss your foot anytime you select...Forrest Barber.

1990s

The 1990s proved to be some of the most dynamic years for the chapter. President Ken and his wife Barb Hadden, who served as the newsletter editor, had the drive, time and interest to introduce more chapter activities. Supporting them were Dick and Sue Packer, Sue was the Secretary for many years. Some activities included were: Interclub contests, Flight of Champions, Smooth Patch Days, volleyball, and snow skiing trips.



The chapter experience an all-time high in membership. (the membership list from 1995 showed over 150 members. In contrast, the membership roster in 2014 listed 50 members.

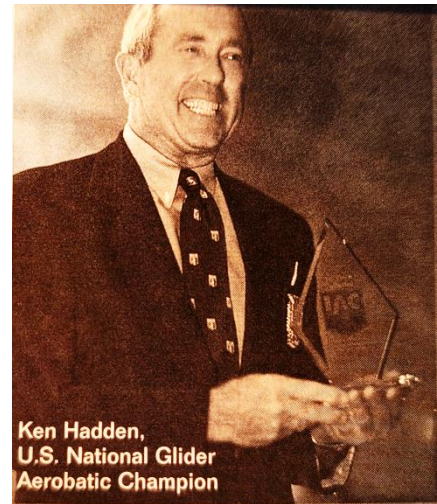


**Center Ken Hadden (back row with white baseball cap) Barb Hadden standing in front of Ken wearing a blue shirt.
Dick and Sue Packer are standing slightly behind Barb on the left side of Ken.**

The annual aerobatic contest moved from London, Ohio (1990-1992) to Columbus' Bolton Field where it stayed from 1993 to 2003. The contest at Bolton was well attended with not only power pilots, but with gliders as well. At the 1995 contest there were 13 competitors in Basic (Primary), 19 in Sportsman, 23 in Intermediate, 7 in Advanced and 9 in Unlimited. There were 5 competitors in the Unlimited Glider category and a Four Minute Free contest was held, which attracted nationally known pilots such as Phil Knight, Matt Chapman, and Robert Armstrong.

In October of 1997, IAC chapter 34 president Ken Hadden died at the age of 57 in a crash of an Extra 200 while practicing an airshow routine at his home airport in Radnor, Ohio. He had performed in airshows nationally in powered aircraft, was a U.S. National Aerobatic Champion glider pilot and traveled the world representing the United States in international aerobatic glider competition as a U.S. Team member.

The chapter, family and friends mourned the loss of their dynamic leader.



The chapter and the annual contest made a soft rebound from the loss under the leadership of Brian Howard, an award-winning judge who would later go on to become the IAC's Rules Committee Chair. Brian ran the Ohio Aerobatic Open as contest director from 1997 through 1999. Although the contest never regained the same volume of pilots which reached a high of 61, a steady stream of pilots continued to enjoy the comradery of a friendly environment and well-run contest. Typically attracting anywhere from 25-35 pilots annually.

2000s

The 2000 January newsletter started off the new decade with a letter from IAC 34 president Randy Dodge greeting club members and sharing the vision for the year, "...this is everyone's chapter...". Randy outlined a plan of consistency and member participation as key to helping the chapter continue to grow and evolve.

Early in 2004 about 5 weeks before the annual contest, the Bolton Airport board presented the chapter with a dilemma. Increase our contest insurance from 1 million to 3 million coverage or cancel the contest. The contest was canceled and the IAC 34 leadership decided to find another home for the contest when they discovered that there was a housing project going in under the location of the aerobatic box.

From 2005 to 2013 the home of the Ohio Aerobatic Open was Marysville, Union County airport Ohio (KMRT). While the airport personnel were quite friendly and glad to have



The Ohio Aerobatic Open was held for 8 years in Marysville, Ohio.

the contest there and associated aviation activity, the airport board of directors were not as enthusiastic. They limited practice and/or contest use of the airport to a total of six times a year and began asking for formal presentations annually to the board on the contest and chapter activities. Seeing the way the wind was blowing and feeling less than welcome, the chapter began looking around for a better situation.

The chapter leadership held a second, fall contest, at the Bellefontaine Regional Airport (KEDJ) in 2011 to test the waters on a new location with the encouragement of Steve



IAC Chapter 34 calls Bellefontaine, Ohio their home since 2014.

Buchenroth, owner/operator of Midwest Corporate Air. Steve and the airport personnel were thrilled to have the aerobatic activity located at the airport, especially Steve since he had a Pitts Special S-1 of his own.

In 2014, held the annual Ohio Aerobatic Open at their new home at Bellefontaine Regional Airport. Today the chapter continues in the spirit of educating, training and providing enjoyment for all our chapter members. In addition to the annual contest, the chapter now celebrates International Aerobatics Day with a day of practice in the aerobatic box, and coordinates with the flight school at Bellefontaine to do a presentation for spin training and safety.

Chapter activities and officers can be found on the IAC 34 chapter website:

<https://chapters.eaa.org/iac34>

Author, Lorrie Penner, 2024 IAC 34 Treasurer. Lorrie has been a member of IAC34 since 2002. She has served as the IAC 34 Secretary, webmaster, and newsletter editor. She has also served at the IAC national level in volunteer roles as Secretary, IAC Achievement Award Chair and IAC website content management. She served as the IAC's Executive Director for 3 years and editor of Sport Aerobatics magazine for 5 years. 10/29/24