



EAA Chapter 1160 • Pahrump NV

eaachapter1160@gmail.com • <https://chapters.eaa.org/ea1160>

Hello Member,

2024 will be an exciting time for us and this newsletter will help keep you informed of what's going on in your chapter. Read about current and future projects, industry news, and member stories that will inform and entertain!

This is a long newsletter so grab your favorite beverage and settle in for a little while 😊

This month:

- Vicariously accompany Ron as he brings his "new" 1942 Stearman home from the Gulf Coast to the Pacific Northwest!
- More about our Young Eagles Rally (hint: it was good!)
- Want to get involved? See what your chapter committees are up to!
- Close out the year with us at the Christmas Party and White Elephant Gift Exchange!
- Please let us know your best contact number/email.

And, as always, feel free to share this newsletter with your friends and colleagues to help spread the word.

My 1942 Stearman

By Ron Settje

INTRODUCTION

The date was August 23, 1995. It was about 9:12 am in the morning. I was sitting in the aft cockpit of my 1942 Stearman. The engine was not running and the prop was not turning, but I could still hear a deafening pounding in my ears. I realized it was the beating of my heart. At 8 am that morning I had left the Louisiana gulf coast on my way to Lufkin, Texas. Twelve miles from Lufkin, at 3,000 feet agl, I had run out of fuel. I had just completed my first dead stick landing in a pasture in east Texas. I had this big grin on my face once I realized that the Stearman and I were not damaged. So far it had been an interesting vacation and I couldn't help but think how I had arrived at this place and time.

SEEING MY STEARMAN FIRST VISIT

It was July 1991. I had just returned from flying my Cessna 180 floatplane from Ketchikan, Alaska to Fairbanks, Alaska. I had owned the C180 since January 1990 and had flown the floatplane all over Southeast Alaska. During the January 1991 annual I was told that the plane had a problem with corrosion and would have to be grounded so repairs could be made. I had flown to Fairbanks on a ferry permit after finding a mechanic who could make the repairs in three or four months.

After returning to Ketchikan I was reading an aviation magazine and found an article comparing Waco aircraft currently in production in Lansing, Michigan and a Stearman aircraft that was restored by Pete Jones in Cleveland, Mississippi. I was

impressed with the beauty of these machines. I wanted to learn to fly one of these airplanes. The idea of flying an open cockpit biplane had great appeal. I decided to buy one. I couldn't afford a Waco. But after checking Trade-A-Plane prices I realized I could buy a Stearman. Thorough Trade-A-Plane I found a soft spoken cajun who lived in Gueydan (pronounced "gay-don"), Louisiana who reluctantly had to sell his Stearman. Freddie and I were to become friends. I bought the aircraft in August 1991 without having ever seen her.

It would be another three years before I even spent much time thinking about her. My C180 repair project had evolved from a repair to a rebuilt to a restoration project. The project was many times over budget and very much past the promised delivery date. The Stearman sat in Louisiana with Freddie flying her on a periodic basis. My C180 was delivered on wheels in June 1994. I had never flown a taildragger before. Finding a flight instructor in southern southeast Alaska with taildragger experience was no small feat. Most of the flying around Ketchikan is on floats, and wheel flying is done on tricycle gear.

I found an instructor and flew my C180 on wheels for seven hours before my instructor had a stroke. His flying days were over and I had lost my instructor. Meanwhile I had scheduled a three week vacation beginning in the first part of June 1994. I was planning to fly my girlfriend's kids to Idaho and then she and I would visit her parents in Wisconsin. My C180 on wheels had proven to be a challenge.- I was confident that while landing I could keep the aircraft on the runway without ground looping. I left Ketchikan on vacation. I would fly my C180 another seventy seven hours, and return to Alaska, before I could find an instructor

who could give me the taildragger endorsement I needed in my log book. I was also a little over confident regarding my landing and takeoff skills in the C180. But I guess that's another story.

After spending a week in Wisconsin my girlfriend, Nora and I, flew to Louisiana. I landed in Lafayette. We rented a car and drove west to Gueydan. I met Freddie and his wife, Joyce, for the first time. I had spoken to Freddie on numerous occasions via the telephone over the past three years. By now he seemed like an old friend. Freddie was slight of build, in his early forties, about six feet tall, with a little bit of gray beginning to show on an otherwise dark set of hair. Both he and Joyce had that southern soft spoken drawl that you hear about but don't see too much in Alaska. I liked them both. Freddie was born in the cajun gulf coast of Louisiana and had been flying crop dusters in that area for more than twenty years. When he first started hanging around the dirt strips in the area in the 60's he would wash aircraft and perform odd jobs until he got on with one of the crop dusting services spraying in the area. In those days Stearmans were still being used as crop dusters. One of the larger crop dusting services had ten Stearmans. The aircraft in this fleet were all painted the same color - black fuselage with yellow wings and tail feathers. As a youngster Freddie had come to love these old airplanes, but by the time Freddie was old enough to fly, they had been phased out for aircraft that could carry heavier payloads. Freddie vowed that he would someday fly and hopefully own a Stearman.

Freddie had his chance in the late 80's when he and the two other pilots heard that Lefty Gardner had three crop dusting Stearman's for sale. Lefty was a WWII fighter pilot and one of the original founders of the Confederate Air

Force. Lefty was currently flying a P38 called the "White Lighting" on the airshow circuit in the US. Lefty had used these Stearman's to spray mesquite in west Texas. The Stearman's were at Old Mercedes Field in Mercedes, Texas.

Freddie and his pals jumped in a C172 and flew down to Old Mercedes Field. They bought the Stearmans. Freddie went through his Stearman. He took the fuselage down to bare metal and filled the tubes with hot linseed oil. He then rebuilt the aircraft installing a metal fuselage. The hopper was removed and the forward cockpit was installed. The high lift wings and large 600 hp 1340 Pratt were left on the Stearman. He painted the fuselage black, the wings and tail feathers were a bright yellow.

The evening of June 17, 1994 disappeared into the past very quickly. Nora, Joyce, Freddie and I had chatted about everything under the sun. I came to Louisiana to see my Stearman. We agreed it was too late that night but that Freddie would, the next morning, take me to the grass field where the Stearman was hangered.

The next morning dawned bright and clear. At least clear for the Louisiana gulf coast in June. The horizon always seemed to disappear in a haze at about ten miles. It was also hot and humid, about 95 degrees, also normal for the gulf coast. We turned off highway 14, a two lane asphalt road that runs east/west in southern Louisiana and headed south down a two lane dirt road. I didn't see anything that looked like an airstrip but shortly we pulled off the road next to a one story corrugated metal building with three bays and a small office on its north side. After exiting the car we walked around to the back of the building and saw the airstrip for the first time. The runway was about 1200 feet long. Stretching in front of the hanger was a flat area

about 35 feet wide that ran the entire length of the airstrip. Next to that was a ditch that was about seven feet wide and about eighteen inches deep. On the other side of this ditch was the main runway for the airstrip. The entire airstrip was covered with a thin layer of grass with patches of sand. It appeared that very little maintenance was done on the airstrip runway or adjacent structures.

As we walked around the hanger a Grumman Agcat was on downwind for the runway. The Agcat was painted all yellow and was in need of a wash. The power plant was a radial 985 Pratt & Whitney 450 hp engine. The pilot easily planted the Agcat on the runway and waved as he sped by down the runway. After bleeding off speed and coming to a stop he back taxied down the runway and crossed the ditch at an angle and then pulled up in front of the fuel pump that was located south of the hanger.

Ketchikan built an airport on an adjacent island near the city in 1973. The asphalt runway is 150 feet wide and 7,500 feet long. There is an FAA FSS station there. There is so much traffic that two way radio communication is required to enter

the zone. Five to seven jets, along with numerous amphibian float and wheel planes land there every day. No radio calls were required to land at this small grass strip. There were no asphalt runways. All navigation was done by dead reckoning. This seemed like flying at its best, like it was done in the 40's and 50's. This was a different kind of flying, and I had already decided that I liked it.

A few moments later the hanger doors for bay number two were pushed open. Inside the bay sat a black and yellow Stearman. Sitting on wheels she was almost eleven feet tall. The wings span thirty two feet and the fuselage is twenty five feet long. The big radial Pratt & Whitney engine, and a metal prop, were up front sitting on her nose. Compared to my C180 on wheels she was absolutely huge. But she was beautiful. And she was covered under a fine layer of dust.

<to be continued.>

To read the full story, click [here](#)

What are we up to?

Your chapter committees are on a mission to bring aviation to every interested person in Pahrump! We have programs for all experience levels and all facets of aviation.

See what we're up to below, and then call us up to help out!

- Flying Start
 - EAA Flying Start is a chapter hosted program which welcomes, inspires, and educates aspiring aviators about their pathway to becoming a pilot. Read more [here](#)
- Eagle Flights
 - EAA Eagle Flights program is a hands-on introduction, where you'll fly with a local EAA member pilot who will give you a thorough introduction to flight. Read more [here](#)
- Young Eagles
 - The EAA Young Eagles program takes you from a free introductory flight for youth into the world of aviation. Start your aviation flight plan today! Read more [here](#)
- Fundraising
 - Raffles, Lotteries, Breakfasts, BBQs, and more to help pay for all this flying fun!
- Marketing
 - Increased social media presence means more questions, more stories, and more fun! Follow us on Facebook and share with all your friends!
- Model building
 - We starting 'em young now! By building and flying models, the kids won't even notice that they're learning about aviation!
- Project Airplane
 - This year, older kids will have the opportunity for hands-on projects by taking old project planes out of storage and getting them into the air!
- Flight Simulator
 - It's not a game! Everything a kid learns in a simulator has real-world application. We'll be using Microsoft Flight Simulator to get kids off the ground, virtually.

Committee	Members	Phone
Flying Start	Hans	702-232-1908
Fundraising	Gladys	281-602-9702
Marketing	Larry, Hans	702-499-8229
Model Building	Bob	775-469-3052
Eagle Flights/Pilot	John, Peter	702-449-3147
Project Airplane	Lee	760-608-2765
Simulator	Larry, Ron, Tom	702-499-8229
Young Eagles	Larry, John	702-499-8229

Sound like fun? We think so too! Call, email, or come by for Saturday Coffee and find out how you can help!

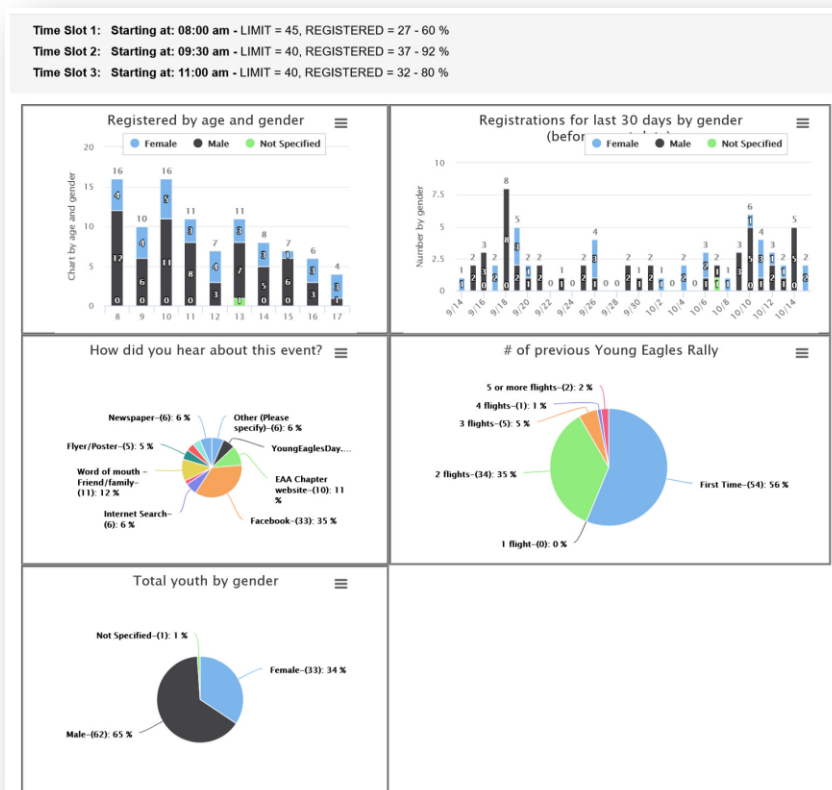
2023 Young Eagles Rally

The Young Eagles Rally had an amazing turnout. The new shades kept everyone comfortable!

We flew 65 kids around the valley, served a delicious breakfast and BBQ lunch, and gave our several RC plane kits to the lucky raffle winners.



Here are the charts from EAA's official site. We did good!



We did a lot of social media advertising this year, which allowed us to see the great feedback from people who were there and people who wish they'd been there!

- My son did the flight (many!) years ago, and it was great. Thank you.
- We would like to get involved. KJ is almost 12 and loves all things planes!
- I am looking for assistance are: Is there an A&P on the field that is open to working with an owner on a project? Can you suggest any contacts that may be will to rent space for a project? And last, when are your chapter meetings (and would a visitor be welcome to drop in)?
- Amazing! My son loved it!
- Excellent event and a great time:)
- Thank you soo much for doing this. Our kids couldn't wait to go flying , they were counting down the days. They made memories they'll remember for thier lifetime. Our daughter now wants to be a pilot..Thanks so much to the pilots, and all the other volunteers that help to make this happen. It's very much appreciated.
- My kiddos had such a great time! This was their first time. Thanks so much!
- It was exciting this morning to see the planes flying around the Pahrump Valley knowing the children are experiencing the thrill of flying. The bonus was watching the solar eclipse, too.
- ...and around 200 more just like this!

We're shaking things up and we'd love you to be a part of it!

Come by (almost) every Saturday for coffee and hangar talk!

Come to the next meeting, January 13, 2024!

Call, email, text, smoke signals, carrier pigeon, Morse code, or any method that works for you!

Meetings and events are listed [here](#)

That's all for now!

See you at the Christmas Party on December 16th!



EAA Chapter 1160

Pahrump NV

eaachapter1160@gmail.com