

EAA CHAPTER 1128

Two Harbors Helgeson Airport

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It's overcast and calm at the lake tonight. Much cooler than last week thank heavens. A loon flew over just now, cackling the whole way. Local folklore says that means rain, could be true tonight.

This month our meeting will be on the second Thursday instead of the usual first Thursday. We will be meeting at the High School again and they won't be open till then. **September 8, 6:30** is the time and the **Community Room** near the front door is the place.

Last Meeting

On a warm August evening we sat down in the Airport A/D building and talked flying. We went over the numbers for our pancake fly-in. The treasurer announced our new total as \$5416.92. We decided to eliminate soft drinks from our menu for the next one. Mike told us that Jake's Carbon Cub had flown and the performance was as advertised. Steve's Tailwind is back in his hangar and Mike is doing the restorative surgery. Bud is taking instruction from Nancy Smith and enjoying steady progress. Seth is also logging student time when he can get away from his busy business. The banner advertising our fly-in movie was up on the county road. Stories from this year's Oshkosh were shared and Mike told us about some good and not-so-good old days at Cirrus. The B-29 "Doc" had flown and Mike was proud to see his friend flying chase in his F1 Rocket. Conversations continued on the grass after we adjourned.

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Chapter 272 hosted an FAA Safety Seminar at their hangar in August and they will have their biggest weekend of the year September 8-11. Hosting EAA's Ford Trimotor, serving pancakes and flying Young Eagles will keep them all hopping and they would welcome any help from us.

Chapter 1221 recently flew out to Voyager Village as they continue their busy summer flying schedule.

ETC.

The Nelsons will be serving up the 'Jimbolaya' at Chauncey Nelson Memorial airstrip on September 17 this year. This event is always a good time with lots of fly-in traffic and good food. If you plan on coming consider bringing a dish to share, there's no such thing as too much food when pilots are involved.

I had the good fortune to witness an important test flight last night. Test flights are never advertised but I was in the right place at the right time. Mike Busch and Bob Payne had spent most of the day tweaking the big Continental on Mike's F1 Rocket and the results were spectacular. Bob took off to the east and by the time he came by the A/D building he was moving! The speed was even more impressive when he revealed during the debrief that he had never fully opened the throttle. Mike has been frustrated all summer with avionics and engine tuning issues so it was really great to see his lovely bird take wing. Congratulations Mike.

The reason I was in the right place at the right time is that I had been flying too. Miss Chaos

took me up for our usual figure eight around Kane and Marble lakes. We collected some waves from boaters and a few more from shore. It's always nice to observe the home neighborhood from a higher perspective and we briefly shared the airspace with a Great Blue Heron. We danced under a few puffy clouds on the way back and were rewarded with free altitude. Lessons learned flying hang gliders pay off in the powered world too. All the little lakes seemed fat and happy after a wet summer and the broccoli bin of treetops was ripe for the picking. The navigation trick of heading towards the inland sea brought us finally back to earth at Helgeson's Heaven. I couldn't help but smile after another unforgettable hour in the warm summer sky.

Oshkosh was outstanding again this year but Fifi developed an attitude and spent most of her time on the ground. She was the second bird to launch at the beginning of the show and gave me one carefree lap in the cool morning air. We made a sweet landing and taxied to take off again but this time she seemed to lose her enthusiasm. Her song failed to reach the fever pitch of a normal take off but we were off and climbing so I elected to continue. All the way around the pattern I finessed the throttle but she stubbornly refused to give me her best. Upon landing we quit the dance floor and I went back to camp for tools. I installed a new set of spark plugs even though the old ones didn't look bad and pulled her out for another run. Big waves from the bleachers as we taxied by gave me confidence but they gave Fifi nothing. This time I got a really bad deja vu harking back to when the Dragonfly spit out a crank bearing at Superior Dragonflyers. I ticked off emergency landing options all the way around the pattern but we made it back without incident. Really disappointing! For the six previous shows we had flown every good weather day and last year that was every day.

I talked to the Rotax professionals all over the grounds and considered getting into the carburetor tuning but in the end decided to just keep her on the ground. Any flight after maintenance is a test flight and Oshkosh is not the proper venue for test flights. Our good friend Paul put it best, "She has given you two warnings already." I took his words to heart and enjoyed the rest of the convention from ground level. Fifi's heart now sits on my bench stripped to her smallest parts and I haven't yet found a smoking gun but I will put her back together with care and do the test flights on a long runway without ten thousand pilots watching. Stay tuned.....

.....Happy Landings!.....