

# **EAA CHAPTER 1128**

## **Two Harbors Helgeson Airport**

[www.1128.eaachapter.org](http://www.1128.eaachapter.org)

Well, summer has finally come to the lake. I kinda expected spring but what the hey? Aviation is being committed at an alarming rate all over the northland and it's about time. Our next meeting will take place on **Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30** in the **Community Room** at **Two Harbors High School**. School will be out but Seth sweet talked somebody, I don't know why.

### **LAST MEETING**

The May meeting was an incredible glimpse into the world of a Vietnam prisoner of war. David Wheat gave us a vivid description of his years as a 'guest' of the infamous Hanoi Hilton. His F-4b was hit by anti aircraft fire on October 17 1965 and he was picked up by the North Vietnamese a few hours later. He spent eight years enduring the worst of human conditions yet he was able to relate his experience to us clearly and calmly. The room was respectfully silent as he spoke and he happily answered questions when he finished his remarks. What an amazing survival story. I took copious notes so if you want some details, just call me. Ray Morse's wife showed her collection of POW bracelets and we all shared stories of the Vietnam era.

Our new by-laws were passed unanimously and Mike made announcements about the chapter 1221 pancake breakfast, the Bong Heritage Museum tour and our Young Eagles event. He also talked about hands on demonstrations for coming meetings. Seth mentioned our coming pancake breakfast, fly-in movie and fall color tour commitments. He screened photos of our gang at the EAA Leadership Academy and Mike doing 'Hints for Homebuilders' segments at Oshkosh. Mike told us we could get discounts for many museums (not just aviation related) by going to [www.eaa.org/passports](http://www.eaa.org/passports). It was still chilly as we filed out, seems like months ago!

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Chapter 272 had another Young Eagles event at Sky Harbor assisted by chapter 1221 and did their Oshkosh work party on May 16-18. They also have a Boy Scouts Aviation merit badge day coming up on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Chapter 1221 members flew to Brainerd to meet with AOPA president Mark Baker and hear him address local pilots. Their fly-out schedule is still the envy of many.

### **ETC.**

Our Young Eagles day happened last Sunday and it was a big success. Many chapter members pitched in but the driving force behind the event was the Ferrari family. The *whole* family! Twelve kids and eight adults enjoyed rides in Jerry West's 172 (piloted by Mike Busch), Matt's new Cherokee and a Cirrus SR22 straight from the factory flown by Lis Hendrickson. Jake Hayes had his dad's Cherokee at the ready but it wasn't needed. Mike Shannon and I had our Rans birds climbed on and appreciated by all the kids. Frank Kolo from 272 and Bud Gorman directed ramp traffic. Ann and her beautiful daughters managed the mayhem smoothly. Gusty crosswinds did not spoil a single landing.

In another kid friendly event Bud Gorman's daughter Nadine brought her class of 23 from Minnehaha elementary for a tour of Helgeson International on the 19<sup>th</sup>. They got to see Bud's radio

control expertise and many got some stick time on the buddy box. Then they toured Mike's rocket project and saw Bud's new Aerolite 103 ultralight. We should all be proud of our chapter's commitment to reach out to the next generation.

Several chapter members volunteered to repair winter damage to the RR tie fence around the airport and it looks great now.

On May 17<sup>th</sup> I was honored and thrilled to take Bud's Aerolite 103 for it's first flight since re-assembly. She flew well and reminded me how much I love Ultra-light aviation. More importantly it gave me the opportunity to assess her handling with an experienced eye and give her new owner some suggestions about his first flight. That is what EAA is all about, members helping members to safely enjoy our mutual passion.

And when EAA wants to impart some wisdom about composite construction techniques, who do they call? Our very own chapter president, Mike Busch, that's who. He's too humble to admit it but he is one of the top resin-ators in the country. You can find his 'Hints for Homebuilders' videos at [www.eaa.org/videos](http://www.eaa.org/videos). You can also catch some of his expertise at our next meeting. Be prepared to learn and to laugh.

Our Vice president, Seth McDonald has passed his FAA medical and will begin flight instruction soon. Give him encouragement when you see him and advice if he asks, that's our mission.

I stopped by the airport after work last Thursday like I do every day after work. The warm sun and wet ground combined to fill the blue sky with cumulus clouds as big as a ballpark and the wind on the ground was a little gusty. I went flying anyway. I figured it would be a bumpy ride and I was not disappointed but when your airplane is as stout as a brick and your harness is cranked down tight, it can be fun. The vertical speed slammed from 600 feet per minute down to 800 fpm up constantly. Finally I got under a big, juicy cloud and cranked into a tight 360. Even with Miss Chaos' petite wingspan at an aggressive bank we climbed like an express elevator. I saw 900 fpm up on the VSI and soon we were at cloudbase. The wispy tendrils of mist hanging down clued me in.

I flashed back to my first hang glider instructional flight. I was strapped into a tandem harness with a gifted pilot named Paris. As soon as we pinned off from the Dragonfly tow plane Paris snagged a mid-afternoon Florida thermal and up we went. It was another world. Noise, stress, even gravity seemed trivial concerns as we floated silently up into the concave cloud bottom. I have had some amazing moments away from the planet but that afternoon, four thousand feet above the orange groves was the closest I've ever been to heaven.

My reverie quickly evaporated as I slipped out of the thermal and went over the falls back toward reality. It was so bumpy I had trouble keeping my thumb on the transmit button to announce my approach to the airport. All the air on downwind was sinking fast and I had to apply full throttle a couple of times to stay out of the trees. On short final staying on the center line was challenging but not scary, we've done this before. Finally a brief pause in the washing machine spin cycle and Miss Chaos planted her dainty wheels with an un-dainty plop. Oh how I love my girl!

I'm really glad I decided to aviate on a day that wasn't perfect for aviation. Turns out it was a perfect day to learn. And remember.

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