

EAA CHAPTER 1128

Two Harbors Helgeson Airport

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Another lovely autumn evening at the lake finds me at the keyboard next to a toasty fire. It's a luxury now but will soon be a necessity. I have been taking advantage of great flying weather all month and I'm not the only one. Our little airport has been positively buzzing with activity. We have some terrific programs coming up for our chapter meetings which I will list further down the page. Our next meeting will be at the **THHS Community Room** on **Thursday, November 3** at **6:30**. As always a board meeting will convene at 6:00 and all are welcome.

Last Meeting

The October meeting started with the announcement of our upcoming **Airport Christmas Party** on **Friday, December 9** at **Superior Shores**. Mike asked the members for gifts to be awarded by drawing at the party. We reviewed the Supercubs Color tour with pictures from Seth. Dave said the sky cleared after they passed over town and some folks turned north at Silver Bay for Ely while some others continued up the shore. Seth brought the T-shirts we had ordered along with the snappy new chapter ball caps. Mike asked for chapter officer nominations and when none were forthcoming asked the group if they would like to extend the terms of the current roster. That got a unanimous yea vote. We talked Dave Smith into taking over the vacant seat on the board. Bob and Bill told about moving the Pietenpol project into Bob's hangar now that the Tomahawk is gone. Jerry said he flew his Skyhawk to Park Rapids and saw a TBM Avenger on the ramp with wings folded as in carrier ops. Daisy the dog was his backseat copilot. New member Brian Hubbard told us his flying situation and got introductions all around. Seth replayed his Open Hangar event video for Brian's benefit but we all enjoyed the encore screening. Dan Murphy gave a real interesting demonstration of a clever tool for making multi-purpose clamps with safety wire. He even brought photos of how he used this tool on aircraft radiator hoses. When he finished his example everyone said, "Cool, do it again!" He kindly complied. Seth urged us all to bring interesting demos or stories to the meetings and Dan said he could do some welding demonstrations at his shop. Seth ran a "Hints for Homebuilders" segment on static tubing solutions then showed the whole Airventure 2016 video. This was the most animated meeting we'd had in a long time and they just keep getting better.

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For all members of our sister chapters, 272 and 1221 this is your formal invitation to join us at our Christmas celebration. Dick Helgeson started this tradition ages ago, he invited all of his friends and he had a *lot* of friends. It has always been a great party and this year will not disappoint, there will be delicious food, cocktails, fun conversation, a prize drawing and some amateur live entertainment. We'll be looking for you on Friday, December 9 at Superior Shores. Bring a friend, or two.

ETC.

In addition to the Party which takes the place of our December meeting we have a terrific slate of features planned for upcoming meetings. In January we will be treated to the movie, "16 Right"

courtesy of Seth. The theatrical release got good reviews even from non-pilots. Jake Hayes will give us the inside scoop on building a Carbon Cub EX at the February meeting. I can't wait to see that. Dan Murphy wants to gauge member interest in a special meeting in his shop where a welding demonstration may evolve into welding instruction. I could use that, I'm not even good with JBWeld .

I have been logging a lot of airtime lately but I experienced the most outstanding flight of the season from the right seat. I went to the Cities to spend some time with my lovely daughter but I had an ulterior motive. My friend Jim's farm is only twenty minutes west of Minneapolis and I needed to drag him out to the airport. We built a really nice Rans S-6ES together and she had suffered serious neglect lately. We all know how that happens, when demands on our time outstrip time available the first thing that gets cut is that trip out to the airport.

On Sunday morning Jim offered to cook breakfast and I asked if instead we could get a McMuffin on the way to the airport. The mood brightened immediately. Our last encounter with Aunt Laura (all airplanes should have names) was a bit of minor surgery on her propeller. Jim had never been satisfied with her cruise speed or her high oil temps so we added some pitch to the Warp Drive ground adjustable prop. We were optimistic about the results but the weather was absolutely terrible so we couldn't test our theory.

A year passes, months more, finally we arrive to rescue Snow White from her cruel exile. Jim holds the FAA repairman certificate for Aunt Laura so we popped the cowl and performed a careful annual inspection. We both know this girl down to her last 'thin' washer so the work was thorough. When at last she emerged into the sun we were both giddy with anticipation. We mounted up and belted in and the trusty Rotax engine fired right up. The wind was 12kts gusting to 18 but it was right down the runway so Jim accomplished his pre-take-off checks and rolled onto the runway. I was overcome with emotion. We had spent a year of our lives devoted to the creation of this beautiful machine and she became more than metal and fabric, she was our girl. As the power came smoothly on Jim's face was pure concentration but I was grinning like a mad man. Soon the rumble of tires on tarmac was replaced by the soothing sound of wind in the wings as Aunt Laura found her strength.

We flew over farm fields and lakes to our childhood stomping grounds and remarked how things have changed. We saw a lot of boat traffic on Lake Minnetonka and an awful lot of McMansions. The only other air traffic was a falcon at two o'clock high but Jim had initiated a turn before I could call it out. The falcon turned too. It was so nice for me to just look out the windows without a care for the stick or the pedals. I did actually steal control for a few minutes while Jim played with the GPS but my inputs were clumsy and uncoordinated. Aunt Laura and Miss Chaos are cousins but they are completely different in temperament and I was behind the curve. We flew over Jim's farm on the way back to the airport and I think we both were reflecting on how lucky we are because there was a huge happiness vibe in that cockpit.

On the scientific side our experiment with prop pitch paid off in spades. Cruise speed actually bumped the yellow airspeed arc and oil temperature only flirted briefly with the yellow. Even at reduced power settings we never dropped below 100 mph and hit 120 a few times. That's cruising!

Jim had been a little concerned about airman atrophy but he conducted the whole flight with confident control and even when a gust caused a balloon on landing he kept his cool and saved the day. I'm so glad I talked him into building this beautiful angel years ago. Our friendship was always strong but this experience laid down the cement.

Life changing, that's aviation in a nutshell but experimental aviation to an even greater degree. I feel so fortunate to be one of the very few people who experience the third dimension at will and see the world from a higher perspective. To those who think aviation is only for the rich consider this, Jim and I are both poor as church mice and we found a way. You can too if you have the desire.

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