

EAA CHAPTER 1128

Two Harbors Helgeson Airport

www.1128.eaachapter.org

It's clear and calm at the lake tonight. The woodstove is cooking and the moon is getting big. I hope it stays calm for a while, it has been awfully windy for very light airplanes. My flying season is winding down so I want to get in all the air time I can.

Our next meeting will be at **6:30 on Thursday October 4th** in the **Community Room** at **Two Harbors High School**.

LAST MEETING

The September meeting was landmark for our little chapter. For the first time in our seventeen year history we had a meeting in a room designed for meetings. Our VP and webmaster Seth had a video playing while members arrived and he kept the big screen going for the whole meeting. Everyone had comfortable seats, beverages and snacks. Brett said the cost of the room can be waived if we involve students and that is one of our main missions.

President Mike opened the meeting with a round of introductions since several new faces were in attendance then turned the proceedings over to Seth. He showed the Oshkosh 2012 promo video and the Piper Cub mass arrival footage. Seth is on the Airport Commission so he gave the assembled an update on airport business.

Mike talked about the cooperation between the three local EAA chapters; 1221 in Cloquet, 272 in the Twin Ports and us. He pointed out the team effort with the Grass Roots tour and the Ford Trimotor visit as benefits of our brotherhood. When he mentioned the goose problem at the airport Brett told us about the school's solution for their playing fields. They found metal wind vanes shaped like dogs, big dogs. The geese no longer foul the sports fields, the athletes are happy and their shoes smell better.

Seth gave us an overview of the chapter website and talked about the importance of members completing their chapter survey cards.

A gripping amateur video showed one man's solution to engine failure on takeoff and sparked a discussion about the "Impossible Turn". Two members related personal engine failure stories to color the conversation. Continuing in the multi-media milieu Seth put test questions from the private pilot written test on the wall and we all called out the correct response. Or what we thought was correct. That led to more delightful discussion.

I didn't note who brought it up, (sorry!) but local Boy Scout leaders are looking for a mentor/teacher for their Aviation Merit Badge. I didn't jump up at the time but I would be interested in doing that and if another member or two would like to join me, all the better. Scouting is a great program.

The treasurer gave his report of income and outgo and came up with a total of \$1415 in the chapter coffers.

The Supercubs.org Color Tour came up and little detail was available but we agreed to serve coffee and treats when it did happen.

Mike reminded us that the October meeting would be here again (as noted above) and that the November meeting will include elections for chapter officers. President, Veep, Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Young Eagles Coordinator are all up for grabs so start taping your campaign ads. This is a fun chapter and that was a fun meeting, let's do it again next Thursday.

Chapter 272 has always been the Duluth Chapter to me but since their beautiful clubhouse is in Superior now I have taken to calling them the Twin Ports Chapter. Whatever you call them they continue to do great things. The Jeff Skiles visit and the Trimotor Tour stop are the latest Headline Events but their Young Eagles commitment will be their lasting legacy. Bravo!

Chapter 1221 has filled the summer with Fly-in BBQs and Fly-out adventures and will no doubt continue into the ski season. They are a friendly bunch and welcome all to participate so if you have wings or not, by all means join them when you can.

ETC.

The Color Tour happened on September 22 but the weather did not cooperate. Instead of 40 plus bush planes we got one Super Cub and three Cessnas. You gotta give those guys credit, with north winds gusting near 30 I wouldn't even open my hangar door. The last arrival was welcomed by a hawk that left a big dent in his wing leading edge and blood everywhere but he didn't seem too shook up. He told me that was probably the tenth bird strike he had suffered in fifteen thousand hours of flying but the first in a light airplane and the most intense.

Long time readers of this column might recall the tale of the terrible landing in my 2003 Oshkosh report. Miss Chaos' tail spring bent far enough to come in contact with the rudder but the aircraft repair guys came to my rescue with tools and expert advice and we flew home with a straightened spring and a crooked smile. Last week that repair came back to haunt me. I was rolling out on my last landing of the evening when suddenly the aft fuselage just dropped to the ground. A quick inspection confirmed my fear, the tail spring had snapped where it was bent and straightened in 2003. The loose wheel had made rubber smudges and a small hole in the fabric of the rudder but no other damage was evident. It was fortunate that I had landed on the grass but that meant I was as far away from the hangar as I could get without leaving the airport. I remembered landing with a flat main tire a few years ago and the agony of dragging my girl home on foot while holding the right wing up. I did not need a repeat of that trial by fire so I cooked up a way to lash Miss Chaos' tail to the luggage rack on my Taurus and just towed her slowly back. A close inspection of the rudder revealed a slight bow in the bottom arm (less than 1/8th inch) and a couple small wrinkles in the fabric. I just cleaned it up, put some white duct tape over the hole and pronounced it airworthy. Luckily Rans is still making S-9 kits and had a spring in stock so a few days later my girl was ready to dance again. I took the opportunity to inspect all the parts, clean, re-grease and even replace a couple of worn plastic washers so I feel good about the whole experience. While I was at it I looked closely at the entire control system. I disassembled the stick, shimmed out a bit of slack and put everything back together with new lube and new nylock nuts. Because I hold an FAA issued Repairman Certificate for this plane all it cost me was the new tail spring. I even found an old can of the same red paint I had used on the original spring.

They say you are never really finished building a home built airplane and this is true but rather than a drag I find it very satisfying. I have more intimate knowledge of this one machine than any certified mechanic could possibly have and that enhances the experience for me. Providing I don't repeat the terrible landing of those many years ago the next thing to break is likely to be the pilot and I'm OK with that. I'm looking forward to many more years of dancing with my aerobatic baby and I feel safe in her arms.

We are uniquely blessed in this country to have the opportunity to create our own dream flying machines and I say to anyone who has ever considered it, "Do it!" You will not regret it.

Happy Landings!

