



The Beacon

The newsletter of Chapter 54
Lake Elmo, Minn.

MAY 2005

MAY 2005

THIS MONTH'S BANQUET
MONDAY MAY 9TH, 2005

Stone Ridge Golf Club
13600 North Hudson Blvd. Stillwater

- 6:00 Reception, Piano Music
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 EAA Chapter Awards and Recognition
- 7:45 Match the Plane and Owner Contest
- 8:00 Guest Speaker, Rob Ellos, "I know what REALLY happened to Amelia Earhart!"

MY LIFE AS A STUDENT PILOT

BY: CHRISTINE KILLIAN



I'm not sure why most people start flying. I'm not even sure why I did. I had wanted to do it since high school, but I didn't actually get around to it until I was 30. It was just an item on the big list of things to do before I die. When the opportunity came up to get into ground school and start

flight lessons this winter, I was enthusiastic about it but still a bit concerned about the expense and the unknown. I'm currently a post solo student pilot with about 25 hours in my logbook.

I expected to be able to learn to fly an airplane. That's it. At the time, I knew so little about aviation in general that I couldn't have explained myself any more specifically. I had never been anywhere near a small single-engine aircraft before. I expected that I would probably learn about the different parts of an airplane and how they generally worked. I guessed that flight lessons would be similar to my old and grayed-out memories of driving lessons. Learning to navigate between places would probably come up at some point. I guessed that I would have to learn a bunch of government regulations. I guessed that after completing my PPL, I would be able to fly a small airplane around whenever and wherever. I expected that all of this would be costly but worth it for the freedom and the accomplishment.

The flight school provided a nice breakdown of the minimum monetary cost, but I really had no idea what was going to be involved in getting a flying license in terms of time and effort. When we received our books and materials for ground school, it became obvious that this was going to be a significant time layout. I hadn't realized that a pilot must meet legal requirements for currency. It then slowly became clear over time that in re-

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
BY PAUL HOVE

May brings the EAA work party season as we get ready for another AirVenture this fall. Chapter 54 had three volunteers and one prospective member show up for the work party last year. Our party was split up with three of our members going to the seaplane base area and our other volunteer ending up painting in the EAA Merchandise Building. The seaplane base crew removed the windows from the pump house and roofed one of the storage buildings.

Paul Hove
Dennis Johnson
Al Kupferschmidt
Bob Pittelkow
Richard Wicklund

If I have left anyone out let me know so I can submit your name to the volunteer coordinator. Please get in touch with me by May 6th if you wish to come with us. We are meeting at the Chapter House Friday morning May 13th at 9:30a. We will have a van that will seat 7. We may still need another van or car for the remainder of the group. If you wish to join us later at Oshkosh contact me for directions.



Pictured above are Paul Hove, Dick Stright and Jesse Black on the roof with one of the paid staff standing on the truck.

Dale Seitzer passed his Private Pilot Check Ride in April. Congratulations Dale!

Since the Chapter 54 banquet is this month there won't be meeting at the club house. The banquet will be held on May 9th at Stone Ridge Country Club south of the Lake Elmo Airport. Guest speaker Rob Ellos will present "I know what really happened to Amelia Earhart." EAA Service Awards will be presented to selected members. If you plan on attending please notify Betty Seitzer 651-649-1532

BJSeitzer@Landolakes.com

The annual work party is scheduled for May 13th-May 15th 2005. The group has a great time on the trip including a brunch stop at the Norske Nook in Osseo, Wisconsin. Our Chapter is scheduled to stay overnight in the volunteer bunkhouse. Please remember to bring your own sleeping bags, pillows, towels, wash cloths, soap/shampoo....

Valter's Aviation is actively seeking information and tooling for rebuilding Cessna Wings. If you know of any wing jigs that are available give Gatis a call. (651-777-1399).

Hope to see you at the Chapter Banquet or the EAA Work Party at OshKosh!

The following members have indicated to me that they will attend this year.

Dave Fiebiger
Tom Gibbons

TREASURER'S REPORT

BY PAUL LINNEROOTH

April's Financial Summary

Cash on hand	\$ 40.00
Checking Acct.	\$ 4,472.99
Investments	\$ 6,268.74
Total	\$ 10,781.73

Income in April consisted of \$320.00 in membership dues, \$10.00 in gifts received, \$16.00 in calendar sales, and \$253.25 in banquet dinners for a total of \$599.25.

Expenses for the same period were \$1,794.95 and included \$57.01 for newsletter publication, \$133.83 for utilities, \$82.11 for banquet mailing expense, and \$1,522.00 for EAA Air Academy scholarships.

THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM

A photographer from a well-known national magazine was assigned to cover Southern California's wildfires. The magazine wanted pictures of the heroic work the fire fighters were doing as they battled the blazes. When the photographer arrived on the scene he realized that the smoke was so thick that it would seriously impede, or even make impossible, his obtaining good photographs from ground-level.

He requested permission from his boss to rent a plane and take photos from the air. His request was approved, and via a cell phone call to the local county airport, necessary arrangements were made.

He was told a single-engine plane would be waiting for him at the airport. He arrived at the airfield and spotted a plane warming up outside a hangar. He jumped in with his bag, slammed the door shut, and shouted, "Let's go!"

The pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind, and roared down the runway. Within just a minute or two of his arrival, they were in the air. The photographer requested the pilot to, "Fly over the valley and make two or three low passes so I can take some pictures of the fires on the hillsides."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm a photographer for a national magazine," he responded, "and I need to get some close-up shots."

The pilot was strangely silent for a moment; finally he stammered, "So, you're telling me you're not the flight instructor"?



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Chapter member meet on the second Monday of every month at the Chapter House, Entrance B at Lake Elmo Airport (21D). The House is at the base of the airport beacon. The newsletter is printed on the first Monday of every month. Parts of the newsletter may be reprinted with appropriate credit.

21D RCO 118.625
21D Unicom: 122.8
TPA: 1932'
Runways: 4-22 (2497' x 75')
14-32 (2850' x 75')

EAA CHAPTER 54 PRESENTS

SPRING BANQUET

May 9, 2005

Stone Ridge Golf Club
13600 North Hudson Blvd.
Stillwater MN 55082
651-436-4653

PROGRAM

- 6:00 – 6:30 Reception Piano Music
- 6:30 Dinner Plate Service
- 7:30 EAA Chapter Awards and Recognition
- 7:45 Match the Plane and Owner Contest
- 8:00 Guest Speaker, Rob Ellos, "I know what REALLY happened to Amelia Earhart!"

Menu

All dinners are served with our StoneRidge bread basket, your choice of house mixed green salad or Caesar salad, fresh vegetable and freshly brewed coffee, decaffeinated coffee, tea and soft drinks. Prices include room fee, 20% service fee and 6.5% state tax.

Chicken Breast Minnesota \$29.00

Double Breast of chicken filled with wild rice, Jarlsberg cheese and fresh spinach with sherry supreme sauce, and traditional buttermilk potatoes

Char Grilled Sterling Silver Top Sirloin Steak \$32.75

Char grilled 10 ounce top sirloin steak with hunter sauce and topped with mushrooms, peppers and onions. And Swiss scalloped potatoes

Fresh Atlantic Salmon Filet \$31.50

Oven roasted herb roasted salmon filet with tomato basil sauce served with jasmine rice pilaf.

How to confirm your reservation -- Please make your dinner selection and give or send your check, made out to EAA CHAPTER 54, to Dale Seitzer, 1451 Englewood Ave, St. Paul MN 55104. Deadline: May 2, 2005. You may call 651-329-2229 with questions or email dalemseitzer@yahoo.com.

HELLUVA FLYING STORY

By: OYSTER

Here's a personal story of an F-18 Hornet's recent recovery by barricade . . . at night . . . on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. [Note : the barricade is a 20 foot high net that stretches across the carrier's deck to 'catch' airplanes during extreme emergencies.]

Oyster, here. This note is to share with you the exciting night I had the other month. It has nothing to do with me wanting to talk about me. But it has everything to do with sharing what will no doubt become a better story as the years go by. So....

There I was .. 'manned up' a hot seat for the 2030 night launch about 500 miles north of Hawaii. I was taxied off toward the carrier's island where I did a 180 degree turn to get spotted to be the first one off Catapult #1. They lowered my launch bar and started the launch cycle. All systems were 'go' on the runup. And after waiting the requisite 5 seconds to make sure my flight controls are good to go, I turned on my lights. As is my habit I shifted my eyes to the catwalk and watched the deck edge dude and as he started his routine of looking left, then right. I put my head back against the head rest.

The Hornet cat shot is pretty impressive. As the cat fires, I stage the afterburners and I am along for the ride. Just prior to the end of the stroke .. there's a huge flash and a simultaneous BOOM! And my night world is in turmoil.

My little pink body is doing 145 knots or so and is 100 feet above the black Pacific. And there it stays -- except for the airspeed, which decreases to 140 knots. Some where in here I raised my gear. And the throttles aren't going any farther forward despite my Schwarzzenegerian efforts to make them do so.

From out of the ether I hear a voice say one word: "JETTISON!" Rogered that ! And a nano second later my two drops and single MER [about 4,500 pounds in all] are Black Pacific bound. The airplane leapt up a bit but not enough. I'm now about a mile in front of the boat at 160 feet and fluctuat-

ing from 135 to 140 knots. The next comment that comes out of the ether is another one-wor-der: "EJECT!" I'm still flying so I respond, "Not yet . . . I've still got it."

Finally, at 4 miles ahead of the boat, I take a peek at my engine instruments and notice my left engine doesn't match the right. (Funny, how quick glimpses at instruments get burned into your brain.) The left rpm is at 48% even though I'm still doing the Ah-Nold thing. I bring it back out of afterburner to military power. About now I get another "EJECT!" call. "Nope! It's still flying."

At 5 1/2 miles I asked tower to please get the helo headed my way as I truly thought I was going to be 'shelling out'. At some point, I thought it would probably be a good idea to start dumping some gas. But as my hand reached down for the dump switch, I actually remembered that we had a NA-TOPS operation prohibition against dumping fuel while in afterburner. But after a second or two [contemplating the threat of the unnecessarily burden] I turned the fuel dump switches on. Immediately [I was told later] a sixty foot Roman candle began trailing behind.

At 7 miles I started a (very slight) climb to get a little breathing room. CATCC control chimes in giving me a downwind [landing pattern] heading, and I'm like: "Ooh, what a good idea" and I throw down my tail hook.

Eventually I get headed downwind to the carrier at 900 feet and ask for a Tech Rep [Manufacturer's Technical Representative]. While waiting, I shut down the left engine. But in short order, I hear Scott "Fuzz" McClure's voice. I tell him the following : "OK Fuzz, my gear's up . . . my left motor's off . . . and I'm only able to stay level by using minimum afterburner. And every time I pull it back to military power, I start down at about a hundred feet per minute."

I just continue trucking downwind, trying to stay level, and keep dumping fuel. I think I must have

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been in afterburner for about fifteen minutes. At ten miles or so I'm down to 5000 pounds of gas and start a turn back toward the ship. I don't intend to land but I don't want to get too far away. Of course, as soon as I am stuck in that angle of bank, I start dropping like a stone. So I end up doing a [shallow bank] 5 mile [radius] circle around the ship.

Fuzz is reading me the single engine rate of climb numbers from the 'book' based on temperature, etc. And it doesn't take us long to figure out that things aren't adding up. One of the things I'd learned about the Hornet is that it is a perfectly good single engine aircraft, flies great on one motor. So why do I now need blower [afterburner] to stay level?

By this time, I'm talking to the Deputy CAG (turning [duty] on the flight deck) and CAG who's on the bridge with the Captain. And we decide that the thing to do is climb to three thousand feet and 'dirty up' [gear and flaps down] to see if I'm going to have the excess power needed to be able to shoot a night approach for a landing.

I get headed downwind, go full burner on my remaining motor, and eventually make it to 2000 feet before leveling out below a scattered layer of puffy clouds. And the 'puffies' are silhouetted against a half a moon which was really, really cool. I start a turn back toward the ship, and when I get pointed in the right direction, I throw the gear down and pull the throttle out of after-burner.

Remember that flash/boom that started this little tale? [Repeat it here] Boom! I jam it back into afterburner, and after three or four huge compressor stalls [and accompanying deceleration] the right motor 'comes back'. I'm thinking my blood pressure was probably 'up there' about now, and for the first time, I notice that my mouth has dried up.

This next part is great. You know those stories about guys who deadstick crippled airplanes away from the orphanages and puppy stores and stuff and get all this great media attention? Well, at this point I'm looking at the picket ship in front of me, at about two miles, and I transmit to no one in particular, "You need to have the picket ship hang a left right now. I think I'm gonna be outta here in a second." I said it very calmly but with meaning. The

picket immediately pitched out of the fight. Ha! I scored major points with the heavies afterwards for this. Anyway, it's funny how your mind works in these situations.

OK, so I'm dirty and I get it back level and pass a couple miles up the starboard side of the ship. I'm still in minimum blower and my fuel state is now about 2500 pounds. Hmmm. I hadn't really thought about running out of gas. I muster up the gonads to pull it out of blower again and sure enough...flash, BOOM! I'm thinking that I'm gonna end up punching out and tell Fuzz at this point "Dude, I really don't want to try that again." Don't think everyone else got it, but he chuckled.

Eventually I discover that even the tiniest throttle movements cause the 'flash/boom thing' to happen so I'm trying to be as smooth as I can. I'm downwind a couple miles when CAG comes up and says, "Oyster, we're going to rig the barricade."

Remember, CAG's up on the bridge watching me fly around doing blower donuts in the sky and he's also thinking I'm gonna run outta JP-5 fuel. By now I've told everyone who's listening that there a better than average chance that I'm going to be ejecting. The helicopter bubbas - God bless 'em - have been following me around this entire time.)

I continue downwind and again, sounding more calm than I probably was, call the LSO. "Paddles, you up [listening]?" "Go ahead" replies "Max" Stout, one of our LSO's. "Max, I probably know most of it ,but do you want to shoot me the barricade briefing?" So, in about a minute he went from expecting me to 'punch out' to have me asking for the barricade brief [so he was hyperventilating.] But he was awesome to hear on the radio though, just the kind of voice you'd want to hear in this situation.

He gives me the barricade brief. And at nine miles I say, "If I turn now will 'it' be up when I get there? Because I don't want to have to go around again."

"It's going up right now, Oyster. Go ahead and turn." "Turning in, say the final bearing." "Zero six three," replies the voice in CATCC. "OK, I'm on a four degree glide slope and I'm at 800 feet. I will intercept glide slope at about a mile and three

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quarters then reduce power." When I reduced power : Flash/boom ! [Add power out of fear.] Going high! Pull power. Flash/boom ! [Add power out of fear.] Going higher!

[Flashback to LSO school "All right class, today's lecture will be on the single engine barricade approach. Remember, the one place you really, really don't want to be is high. O.K.? You can go play golf now."]

I start to set up a higher than desired sink rate the LSO hits the "Eat At Joe's" wave-off night lights." Very timely too. I stroke the AB and cross the flight deck with my right hand on the stick and my left thinking about the little yellow and black ejection handle between my legs.

No worries. I cleared that sucker by at least ten feet. By the way my fuel state at the ball call was [now low] at 1.1. As I slowly climb out I punched the radio button saying, again to no one in particular: "I can do this." I'm in blower still and CAG says, "Turn downwind." After I get turned around he says, "Oyster, this is gonna be your last look [at the boat in the dark below] so you can turn in again as soon as you're comfortable."

I flew the DAY pattern and I lost about 200 feet in the turn and like a total dumbs___ I look out of the cockpit as I get on centerline and "that 'NIGHT THING' about feeling that I'm too high" GRABBED ME, and [in error], I pushed down further to 400 feet [above the dark water].

I got kinda irked at myself then as I realized I would now be intercepting the four degree glide slope in the middle, with a flash/boom every several seconds all the way down. Last look at my gas was 600-and-some pounds [100 gallons] at a mile and a half. "Where am I on the glide slope, Max?" I ask. And I and hear a calm "Roger Ball." I know I'm low because the ILS [needle] is waaay up there.

I can't remember what the response was but by now the ball's shooting up from the depths. I start flying it but before I get a chance to spot the deck I hear: "Cut, cut, CUT!" I'm really glad I was a 'Paddles' for so long because my mind said to me "Do what he says Oyster!" and I pulled it back to

idle. My hook hit 11 paces from the ramp. The rest is pretty tame. I hit the deck, skipped the one, the two and snagged the three wire and rolled into the barricade about a foot right of centerline.

Once stopped, my vocal cords involuntarily shouted, "VICTORY!" The deck lights came on bright, and off to my right there must have been a ga-zillion cranials and eyes watching.

You could hear a huge cheer across the flight deck. After I open the canopy and the first guy I see is our huge Flight Deck Chief named Richards. And he gives me the coolest personal look, and then two thumbs up.

I will remember all of that forever.

P.S. You're probably wondering what gave motors problems. When they taxied that last Hornet over the catapult, they forgot to remove a section or two of the rubber cat seal. When the catapult shuttle came back [to hook me up], it removed the cat rubber seal which was then inhaled by both motors during my catapult stroke. Left engine basically quit even though the motor is in pretty good shape. But it was producing no thrust and during the wave-off one of the LSO's saw "about thirty feet" of black rubber hanging off the left side of the airplane.

The right motor, the one that kept running, had 340 major hits to all engine stages. The compressor section is trashed, and best of all, it had two pieces of the cat seal [one 2 feet and the other about 4 feet long] sticking out of the first stage and into the air intake. God Bless General Electric!

By the way, maintenance data showed that I was fat on fuel, I had 380 pounds of gas when I shut down. Again, remember this particular number as in ten years [of story telling] when it will surely be 'FUMES MAN, FUMES I TELL YOU!'

Oyster, out

ality, a good pilot must go beyond the government minimums and keep responsibly proficient. This all means time, effort and money.

I didn't realize that there is no end to what can be learned in aviation. It doesn't stop with the rather shallow PPL treatment of aerodynamics, aircraft systems, flying techniques, principals of flight, weather, effective communication techniques, navigation, or flight planning. For one who likes learning everything there is to know about a subject, aviation is a potential lifelong pursuit, as I'm convinced that its depth is infinite. I personally don't see how anyone can be satisfied with earning a PPL and then stopping.



Even so, I was surprised by the volume of information required to learn for the PPL. Nothing about it has been difficult -- it was just more than I expected. I expected that as with most things I've undertaken, even graduate education, I would be able to mostly sit back, absorb, and regurgitate instead of actively working. I was completely wrong about that. This is an entirely new domain of knowledge for me, and a good pilot must completely understand each aspect of it. Just learning the jargon so that I could effectively communicate has taken effort.

Aside from the cerebral part, flight lessons brought an additional set of challenges. By the second lesson or so, it was clear that there's no such thing as learning a flight maneuver or operation by rote. Driving a car around the block repeatedly is a boring experience -- the corners are always the same, the car is always the same, and the other traffic is predictable. Flying

an airplane around the traffic pattern is a novel experience each time. The challenge becomes trying to learn a new skill real-time as it takes place in a rather unforgiving environment.

For each flight lesson, I've been confronted with knowing that there is a correct solution for the current situation, but it's just barely outside the boundary of my experience and knowledge. Overload is common -- for everything happening in this situation, what is important and what isn't? Rather than being frustrating, however, lacking this filter has been a motivator to learn more. I've found that immersing myself as much as possible in this learning process has helped with progress.

I am enjoying being in this state where I don't know enough to know what I don't know. Only experience will help this, and I'm looking forward to a time when I don't have constant moments of astonishment each time I'm in the airplane -- "If *that* can happen, what *else* can happen?" It hasn't been entirely fun and stress-free, however -- my confidence has risen based on how well I've been able to predict and react, and it's fallen due to mistakes or just unexpected events. As such, there is nothing more boring than perfection. Even so, flying provides a fantastic platform for self-critique and improvement.

My first few weeks as a student pilot have been a rare experience. I went into it not knowing anything at all about airplanes or what it meant to be a pilot. After being established in life and a career for a while, it has been a humbling (and character-building, I hope) experience to be confronted with my absolute lack of preparation and knowledge.

I expected the community of pilots to be insular. I didn't expect it to be so small, inclusive, and incredibly outgoing and helpful to a new student pilot. I didn't expect that taking this on would change my life profoundly and change all of my priorities. I didn't expect to be so lost to this after my first half-hour discovery flight lesson. It has been good to be so surprised.



EAA CHAPTER 54
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LAKE ELMO, MN 55042

CLASSIFIEDS

This space is left available for members who have aviation related stuff (or just about anything else within reason) to Buy, Sell, or Trade.

NEW MEMBERS

Please let us know when there are new members joining the organization. We would like to hear about who they are, where they came from, and what they are working on.