



The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

June 2016

Scottsdale, Arizona

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! At the May Chapter meeting Jerry Clark traveled from Las Cruces, New Mexico to tell us about the Samson Switchblade flying car being developed in Oregon. Jerry doesn't work for the factory he is a guy that ordered one for himself and wants to spread the word about this amazing new flying machine.

I heard the story recently of one of our former guest speakers and all around good guy having a landing mishap on his test flight of his newly restored Monocoupe after a tailwheel bungee came loose. The plane ran off the runway and flipped over. The really scary thing was the pilot couldn't release his seatbelt when he was hanging from it under load. Luck was on his side and with the help of a couple of friends they were able to get him out. Then a couple of weeks ago a very experienced pilot did a perfect ditching of a P-47 Thunderbolt only to have his seat belt jam and he couldn't get out before the plane sunk.

Maybe these two accidents should get you to take a really close look at your seat belts in your plane to see if there is the possibility of them jamming when under load. I have even seen an escape tool firmly attached in the cockpits of some airshow planes to cut the seatbelts. It is a good thing to learn from the misfortunes of others so we can prevent history from repeating itself!

See you at the June meeting!

Curtis

JUNE CHAPTER MEETING

The next meeting of Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 will be held on Thursday, June 16th, starting at 7 pm, at the Scottsdale Aviation Business Center, 15041 North

Airport Drive. This month's guest speaker is Mike Sommars from the Arizona Wing of Ageless Aviation Dreams Foundation. Many of you have probably seen his black and white checkerboard 450 Stearman flying around the valley and wondered what it was up to. Mike is involved in a great program and he will tell us all about it.

The Ageless Aviation Dreams Foundation is a non-profit organization established and dedicated to honoring seniors and United States military veterans. The primary focus is on individuals living in long-term care communities. Their mission is to "**Give Back To Those Who Have Given**". Through its donors, the Foundation provides Dream Flights in a Boeing Stearman biplane, the same aircraft used to train many military aviators in the 1940's. For more information visit www.agelessaviationdreams.org/

Guests are always welcome!

NEW MEMBER

At the May meeting, Bob O'Grady joined Chapter 1217. Bob has a beautiful white, red and blue Starduster II biplane that he hangs at Deer Valley.

AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR

It has now been an 18-year tradition of Chapter 1217 members attending the Oshkosh AirVenture Fly-In to get together one evening and compare sightings and stories. This year on the first day of the Fly-In, we will have our annual AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR AND FISH FRY at WENDT'S ON THE LAKE. Come and join us for some traditional Wisconsin food and libations. That's on Monday, July 25 2016, around 7 pm.

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If you want to plug it into your GPS, the address is N9699 Lake Shore Road, Van Dyne, WI 54979-9703, phone (920) 688-5231; www.wendtsonthelake.com. They are located 3.8 miles south of the seaplane base.

JERRYS TAYLORCRAFT FLIES

After several years of work Chapter member Jerry Lane has made the first flight on his restored Taylorcraft BC-12D. This particular ship was the last of many owned by Jerry's father John Lane in Ohio. After John's passing, Jerry inherited the project which was scattered over three hangars and located 2000 miles from Phoenix. The story of

dealing with his Dad's half done restoration and engine overhaul is worthy of a **Grisham** novel as Jerry went through every component and part on the plane and tried to figure out what his Dad was thinking. Father-Son projects are best done while both parties are still around.

After finishing the plane there was the monumental task of getting the paperwork, STCs, and logbooks up to modern day standards. Jerry is an A&P mechanic and had a helpful IA to work with local FAA FSDO in getting a seventy year old plane legal and back in the air. Congratulations Jerry!



Jerry Lane's Restored Taylorcraft BC-12D Ready for an Evening Flight

THE END OF THE LEGACY

Lancair has announced that it will no longer be offering "Legacy" kits after 15 years of production. In a post on the company's website, Lancair said that the final kit will be a retractable Lancair Legacy "Reno Race Version." Closing down the Legacy production line was a "tough but necessary decision," according to Lancair.

"We have come to a point where a significant investment will be necessary to continue the

production and after 15 years we feel it is time for something new," the company said. "Lancair has always been the leader in performance and that is not going to change anytime soon. This decision has ignited a fire storm of enthusiasm and excitement around Lancair. What is next? While we are not ready to even suggest what we are thinking, you can be sure that it will not disappoint

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those who have come to expect innovation, performance, and beautiful designs.

"Like other Lancair models that are not in production, Lancair will continue to offer both technical support and parts for the Legacy models." Lancair says that there are still three kits available, including the final Reno Race variant.

75 YEARS OF RYANS AND STEARMANS AT GILLESPIE FIELD.

El Cajon, California is now part of the sprawling city of San Diego but it hasn't always been that way. Back in the early 1940's it was a sleepy farming community that became the new home of Camp Gillespie that was named in honor of Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, a Marine officer who played a prominent role in the effort to

separate California from Mexico in the 1840s. Throughout World War II it served as a parachute training center and an aux field for El Toro.

The Ryan Aircraft Company was at nearby Lindberg Field. A constant stream of brand new Ryan PT-22s passed through Gillespie Field mixing with the Stearmans from El Toro that filled the skies every day training future military pilots.

This year the third weekend in May marked the 75th anniversary of Gillespie Field and the call went out to invite as many PT-22s and Stearmans to show up for the Fly-In. The show was a great success. Billie Walker wrote the following article about the Fly-In and Danny Don supplied all the great Ryan pictures.



Ryan PT-22's In Formation Over Gillespie Field during the 75th Anniversary Celebration



The Ghost Ship on Way to Gillespie Field near San Diego

FLYING THE GHOST SHIP N-2XF

By Billy Walker

Stearman's seem to attract some pretty terrific people. From this special universe I have been blessed with some friendships that seem as lasting as humanity. Aviation, in general, has been the catalyst. However, the Stearman World seems special in that way.

A great example is, of course, Galesburg. Certainly Oshkosh, Blakesburg, Sun n' Fun, Copperstate and Cactus fly-in's come to mind. Yet, special in my heart is the annual Allen Airways Fly-In.

Thursday, May 19th aircraft began arriving there from all over California, Arizona and Nevada. We planned for a departure Sunday, May 22nd.

Friday's formation clinic fizzled, but the maintenance seminar was well attended and informative. Our Coast & Bay flight was scrubbed due to a runway closure. Unfortunately, the Planes of Fame 450 Stearman had a bit of a mishap landing. No

one was hurt but the maintenance folks will get some additional experience with the repairs. Smaller groups made the flight down the coast, notwithstanding the disappointment of folks not seeing a huge gaggle of 23 ancient aircraft gracing the San Diego skies.

Several smaller groups of three, four and five ship fly-overs along with DeFord's Spitfire made the song of the day. That Allison V-12 made such beautiful music to complement our growling radials.

Dinner was excellent followed by an extraordinary speaker; Dana Tibbits, telling us about her legendary grandfather, Vice Adm. Frederick "Trap" Trapnell. Trap was arguably the greatest ever Navy test pilot back in the 30's, 40's & 50's. Her book "Harnessing the Skies" was co-written by her father. Already, this book about her grandfather has received rave reviews and promises to be a great read.

Saturday, Bob Simon briefed us for the Pauma Valley lunch flight. This was well

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attended. I chose to make a few smoke-on passes in the Ghost Ship. Ah yes! Noise - smoke - speed!

On the way back, I spotted DeFord's Spitfire heading towards Pauma Valley in the opposite direction. With plenty of clearance, I rolled the Ghost Ship inverted as we quickly passed. I should have turned on the smoke as Bob never saw me.

Saturday night's BBQ was well attended and enjoyed with San Diego Air & Space Museum's Gordon Permann, speaking on

early lighter-than-air ship development in San Diego. A great evening until I slipped off the Ghost Ship's wheel pant as I was installing the Tonto cover. Spent the night in the ER and rode back to Arizona in Mike Braegger's UPF-7. That's another "WOW" airplane! On May 23rd, I was sitting here reflecting on having just returned from Bill & Claudia Allen's magnificent museum where they, again, proved to be aviation's premier hosts to a gathering of Stearmans, Ryans, a Laird, and, yes, even Bob DeFord's homebuilt Spitfire.



The Ghost and Stearmans in Formation over California Hills

A memory sure to bring future smiles will be my having had the honor of flying Larry Dustman's Ghost Ship to KSEE, Gillespie Field near San Diego for the Allen Airways extravaganza. The Ghost Ship gives a whole new meaning to the word "unique!" It takes you way beyond a "WOW!" This airplane does it all: MANEUVERABILITY - NOISE - SMOKE - SPEED! Well, compared to other bi-planes it is a speedy hot-rod VERTICALLY and HORIZONTALLY! I've flown more than 250 airplane types since I soloed on my 16th birthday in back in 1957.

The Ghost Ship has become my all-time favorite. I've flown a Mustang, owned a Douglas A-26C (which would out run a stock Mustang) along with a plethora of unique airplanes. Yup! The Ghost Ship has become my "THE airplane!" Back in the '20s and '30s Boeing built the F4B fighter for the US Navy. The Army Air Corp's version was the P-12. Curtis built a similar fighter called the Goshawk.

John Pike, a well respected Stearman restorer, engineered and built an amazing

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replica of the F4B or, perhaps, the Goshawk, from Boeing Model 75 "Stearman" parts. N-2XF is certainly a look-alike. So much so that many have thought "The Ghost" was an original F4B! However, one ancient aeronaut,

Brian Baker, thinks it looks more like a Curtis F11C "Goshawk!" I tend to agree.

Billy will continue his discussion of the features of The Ghost in next month's newsletter.



PT-22s in Formation over Gillespie Field

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ThunderAds

FOR SALE, ETC.

Completed RV-7A tail kit.

Completed and zinc chromated. Nate D'Anna
602 891-4771 Email Natedanna@q.com

RACE PLANE MECHANIC NEEDED

Someone with airplane building experience to help finish a Reno race plane. We are about 75% done building a twin engine Unlimited Reno racer. You would need to move to, or be willing to travel to, Port Angeles, Washington at least 4 days a week. At least one year's employment guaranteed. Salary negotiable depending upon qualifications. Must be a self-starter who can think on one's own. You will be working under an experienced A&P IA. Some Composite experience preferred. This is an exciting project. Contact: jd_crow@yahoo.com

T-34 MENTOR PARTNERSHIP.

This is a turn-key, established partnership in a very nice Beech T-34. Plane is hangered at Falcon Field. Contact Lynn Miller 602 448-7487 or 602 585-0795 e-mail Lynnmillier777@gmail.com

CESSNA 172'S FOR RENT

Two IFR Cessna 172s for rent at Chandler. Owned by Chapter member Pat McGarry. Contact Chris Hoel for more information and to schedule birdqanqft@gmail.com

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Very clean, 4000TT, 22 hours SMOH, \$41K with new annual, Goodyear hangar, Joe Hobbs joseph.hobbs@cox.net for more information

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CURTISS REED PROPELLER

Model 55511. 82" SAE 1 taper shaft. (Warner, Ranger, Maytag 604) Make me an offer, I want it gone. Patrick McGarry: 602-430-0140

ESTATE SALE

Chapter member Marty Williams has flown west and his family is selling his Zenith 701 kit. Contact his son Keith at 480-998-4873.

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