



# The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

January 2024

Scottsdale, Arizona

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! Last monthly meeting way back in November Chapter 1217 member Scott Redfield did an excellent presentation on his career as a corporate pilot, the planes he flew and the interesting passengers he flew. He had given me a bio that listed the planes he flew which in itself would have been an interesting program. As it turned out his story of flying everyone from Princess Diana to Henry Kissinger was amazing. I received several calls from people wanting to get a video copy of his presentation. We don't do that you need to show up in person.

This month's speaker is someone I have been trying to get to talk for probably four years. Ultralights have come a long way and Mark is going to walk us through the evolution. It's very interesting that he worked in flight safety and risk mitigation for the airlines and the FAA his entire career and now builds and flies an ultralight. When I first saw his plane takeoff at fifteen miles an hour, I was amazed. Even if you don't have plans to build an ultralight it will be a good informative presentation, you might even learn something!

I managed to figure out where all the pieces went on my Wickham B after it being down for a year and a half. The big holdup was resealing one of the gas tanks which was a horrible job. During the inspection it was discovered that one of the elevator trim tabs had excessive play. It turns out when the paint shop reassembled it they had dropped a bushing and the bolt was loose in the fitting. After the tail was off it was also discovered the actuator rods were in upside down! On the 120th anniversary of powered flight it took to the air for a successful hour-long test flight.

I also had the honor of taking Chapter member Paul Good's great granddaughter up in my RV-8. It was nice to meet a young person who wasn't on their phone and had a real passion for flying. At only 17 she has already decided she wants to learn to fly.

Also, we had a fun Chapter outing when Jack Pollack bought a new plane project out in Buckeye. Brian Mitchell drug his helicopter trailer and I took my enclosed trailer on a really cold morning in January to retrieve it.

See you around the aerodrome!

*Curtis*

## JANUARY MEETING CANCELED

For the January meeting we had a great guest speaker lined up. On Wednesday the tenth I received an email from the Paradise Valley Community Center that they have canceled all reservations to do renovations and construction. After an afternoon of trying to locate a suitable place we thought we found one but they couldn't accommodate us with a weeks-notice so we have to pull the plug on our January meeting. This is very frustrating.

## CHAPTER HOLIDAY PARTY

The Christmas Holiday Season was topped off last month with our annual Chapter Holiday Party hosted by Bill Unternaehrer. It was great to see so many members of our aviation community get together and share stories, food and a glass of Christmas cheer.

In the post-COVID world we are living in, it seems that fewer and fewer people want to attend in-person meetings and events. Thanks to everyone who came out and enjoyed themselves.

**FEBRUARY**  
**16-18**  
**2024** | BUCKEYE  
MUNICIPAL  
AIRPORT

**ALL-NEW  
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**BUCKEYE, AZ**



## 2024 BUCKEYE AIR FAIR

February 16th through 18th are the dates for this year's Buckeye Air Fair. More than 30,000 spectators made Buckeye Air Fair 2023 a huge success. The 2024 Air Fair will feature an airshow, vintage and military aircraft, action-packed demonstrations, Aviation Academy exhibitions and so much more. AOPA has turned this into one of their regional Fly-Ins so expect more of a general aviation theme than when it was the Copperstate Fly-In. Some events and exhibits include:

Jon Melby Fearboss Aerobaics

GhostWriter Chipmunk,

The A-10C Thunderbolt II

Karl Gashler and Barry Hancock Yak 50 formation aerobatics

NextGen EagleAerobatics Leland Krache

Aerial Extreme Skydiving Team

Admission is free but the parking is \$15-. If you want an upfront VIP experience with a VIP tent and private enclosed toilets it is only: One Day Pass: \$80; Two Day Pass: \$105

Flight procedures and pilot information can be found at [www.aopa.org/buckeye](http://www.aopa.org/buckeye). If you have specific questions about the Fly-In, please contact AOPA at 800-872-2672.

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Thompson at 623-349-6613.  
[jthompson@buckeyeaz.gov](mailto:jthompson@buckeyeaz.gov)

## CACTUS FLY-IN

The 66th annual Cactus Fly In will be held on Saturday March 2nd at the Casa Grande Airport. Gates open 8:00 am.

No charge for fly-in antique, classic and experimental aircraft and preregistered classic/antique vehicles (max-50 display cars). For an exact schedule and more info go to [www.CactusFlyIn.org](http://www.CactusFlyIn.org)—

## YUMA AIRSHOW 2024

The 2024 Airshow is scheduled for March 9, 2024 and is slated to include performances and demonstrations by the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Band, Marine Corps Mounted Color Guard, Aftershock Jet Truck, Tora Bomb Squad, U.S. Airforce F-22A, U.S. Marine Corps F-5F, and various other performances and static display aircraft and equipment.

Yuma Airshow 2024 aims to provide safe, entertaining experiences that will showcase the doctrine and cutting-edge technologies of the Marine Corps as it prepares to fight the conflicts of the future.

For more information about Yuma Airshow 2024 and 2025 visit [www.yumaairshow.com](http://www.yumaairshow.com)

## WICKENBURG FLY-IN

The annual Wickenburg Fly-In and Classic Car Show will be on Saturday January 20th from 9 AM to Noon at the Wickenburg Airport. Pilots that fly their planes in get a free breakfast and coffee! This is a free event and open to the public.

## NASA X-59 ROLLOUT

Rollout of the X-59 Quesst Supersonic Flight Demonstrator is scheduled for this month.

NASA unveiled its X-59 quiet supersonic technology (Quesst) demonstrator aircraft on January 12 during a public ceremony at Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works facility in Palmdale, California.

Lockheed Martin has been developing the X-59 alongside NASA since 2016, and the first flight of the supersonic aircraft had been anticipated to take place last year. However, in October, agency officials delayed the inaugural flight to 2024, citing "several technical challenges identified over the course of 2023," including "intermittent issues with some of the safety-redundant computers." A firm date for the first flight will be scheduled following a pending flight readiness review.

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**Chapter member Mike Friedrichs new plane an Aeronca Champ**



Audrey Emerson is all smiles after getting to go for a ride in Curtis Clark's RV-8. She is the great granddaughter of Chapter member Paul Good. Her Dad Scott, right, he's building a RV-14





**Great idea using UHaul packing boxes to make wing cradle**

## **X-59 ROLLOUT Continued**

Earlier this year, the Quesst team moved the X-59 out of the assembly room and onto the flight line, a space between the hangar and the runway, to proceed with ground testing in preparation for the first flight. The X-59 aircraft was then relocated to the paint barn at Skunk Works in mid-November for a fresh paint job and new livery that will be revealed at the rollout.

NASA and Lockheed are developing the 100-foot-long X-plane to demonstrate the ability to

fly faster than the speed of sound without generating a loud sonic boom—the main reason why commercial supersonic flight over land is currently prohibited.

NASA says the aircraft will produce a much quieter “thump” as it breaks the sound barrier, and the agency intends to fly the aircraft over communities in the U.S. in 2024 to collect data on how residents perceive the noise. It will then share that data with regulators who may want to reconsider bans on commercial supersonic flights.

## **Coming to EAA AirVenture Oshkosh- Aeronca Nation 2024, hosted by the Vintage Aircraft Association**

Parking spaces are being reserved for Aeroncas and Champions, but spots **MUST** be occupied prior to Sunday night, July 21. After that, empty spaces will be filled with other aircraft on a first come, first served basis with

### **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS**

To park in one of these spots, you **MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED** Parking volunteers will be checking the list and **only** parking those aircraft that have registered prior to arriving.

To register, email **AERONCA.NATION.2024@gmail.com**



**Jack Pollack's is happy with new Aircoupe**



**Drivers on the 101 did a double take as Brian Mitchell drove by with Jack Pollacks new Aircoupe on his trailer**

## **Southern Cross**

Southern Cross is a flying close replica of the famous record breaking Southern Cross Fokker FVIIb of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith from the 1920s and 1930s.

Built as a tribute to Smithy in South Australia by a team led by John Pope OAM in the period 1980 to 1987. The aircraft toured Australia during the 1988 Bicentenary raising money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

She is a faithful replica built to modern standards using the traditional aircraft construction of steel tubing and timber with heat-shrunk and doped polyester (Irish Linen on the original) for the fuselage and an all wooden (spruce and plywood) wing. She is the largest "close replica" aircraft in the world and has the largest one-piece wing ever made here in Australia.

On the 25th May 2002 at Parafield South Australia she lost a main wheel strut on takeoff. Landing on the one good wheel and the tail, the pilot kept the damaged undercarriage off the ground by keeping its wing high in the air. When the aircraft stopped the high wing came down and broke roughly 3 m of the wing tip.

After considerable negotiation HARS acquired the aircraft from the SA Government in 2010 and a dedicated team of engineers has successfully returned it (after much rebuilding) to full airworthy status.

### **Technical Specifications**

**Engines:** 3 x Jacobs R-755 A2, 7 cylinder air-cooled radial, 12.4 L, ~300 bhp each

**Maximum takeoff weight:** 5,700 kg

**Length:** 14.3 m

**Wing span:** 22.1 m

**Height:** 4.3 m

**Cruising speed:** ~155 km/h (max ~185 km/h)

**Ceiling:** 8,500 ft

**Range:** 7.5 hr endurance

**Crew:** 2 x pilots



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**COOL PLANES FOR SALE**

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