

Chapter Monthly
Meeting Second
Friday 7:30 PM.
Breakfast Fly-in
Third Sunday,
April thru Oct.

EAA 279 Newsletter

June, 2005

Volume 2005, Issue 6



CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jim Lane
781-749-6120

VICE PRESIDENT

Position is available!

TREASURER

Alfred Cavacco
508-224-4563 Work
508-224-8209 Home
508-224-5832 Fax

SECRETARY

Kelly Barker
508-230-9194

TECHNICAL

ADVISORS

Tom Hassie
781-848-4899

Tom Boyle

781-749-5266

NEWSLETTER

EDITOR

Tom Boyle
781-749-5266

Information must be
in the hands of the
Newsletter Editor by
the first of the month,
for that month's
issue.

President's Report

Hello Everyone,

It has been an exciting month for our chapter members. The CGS Hawk has had a lot of work done on it this past month. Roger Roy has had his Savannah inspected and it has made its first flight. Al Sherman has pulled his Fairchild 24 out of its hanger for some taxi tests. I hope Al will put the Fairchild on display at our June breakfast. Dan Simmons has spent many hours working on his

SeaRey and Mike Draper has made steady progress with his RV-8 and will receive advice from Joe Gauthier. Joe is a DAR from Connecticut and has consented to be our guest speaker at our June meeting. Tom Constantine has returned in his new PA-12 Super Cruiser from Washington State. Tom will have a lot of pictures from his cross-country for us to look at.

Jim

Secretary's Report

EAA Chapter 279 Regular
Meeting May 13, 2005.

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm
by Jim Lane.

Secretary's report as published in
the April Newsletter was accepted
by motion and vote.

Treasurer's report was given by Al
Cavacco and accepted by motion
and vote.

A motion was made, seconded
and passed by vote to donate
\$100.00 to the "Midwest Cessna"
that is to come through and give
rides to children.

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Old Colony Flying Club

The Old Colony Flying Club meets directly after the regular Chapter 279 monthly meeting on the second Friday of each month.

Flying Club News:

Secretary's Report (cont.)

Fred Kawa gave a presentation on his experiences in Vietnam. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

June Meeting to Feature Two Speakers

Joe Gauthier, EAA #6758, of Cromwell, Connecticut, will give a presentation on "What it takes to get the airplane inspected." Joe's presentation may be subject to the weather, since he plans to fly over from the Hartford area.

Joe has been an active EAA Technical Counselor since 1977. As southern New England's leading flight advisor, he has made the maiden flights of more than 30 homebuilt aircraft.

Joe is also certified as an FAA Aviation Safety Counselor, an EAA Flight Advisor, and as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor. In addition, the FAA's Windsor Locks Manufacturing Inspection District Office recently selected him as an amateur-built designated airworthiness representative (AB-DAR) un-

der the new AB-DAR program.

Appointed to EAA's Homebuilt Aircraft Council in 2002, Joe has constructed two BD-4 homebuilts, a Davis DA-2A, a Lancair 235, and a Thorp T-18. He restored a 1946 Taylorcraft and a 1948 Cessna 140. In 2003, he received EAA's Tony Bingelis Award in recognition of his contributions to the homebuilt aircraft community.

In addition, Chapter 279 member Tom Constantine will talk about his recent cross-country flight in his newly purchased Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser. Tom will have some spectacular pictures he took along the journey. See "The Odyssey" in this edition of the newsletter for a preview of Tom's presentation.

This is a meeting not to be missed!

Chapter Member Hospitalized

Ken Walsh, one of the founders and a lifetime member of Chapter 279, and one of the mainstays of the Nieuport project, was recently hospitalized for major surgery. Ken is now out of the ICU and into a standard room at South Shore

Hospital in Weymouth. According to Ken's wife, Ann, he is "improving every day." Ken is now able to receive visitors and calls, and Ann says he'd appreciate both. Here's hoping for a speedy recovery for Ken.

The Odyssey

The following account of his cross-country ferry flight in his 1947 Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser was written by Tom Constantine.

Arrived in Seattle, Washington on May 23, 2005, passed papers on the PA-12 Super Cruiser (Piper Super Cub with a wider airframe and Lycoming 150) and took her out for another test flight. The next morning at zero dark thirty we loaded her up with baggage, got the GPS all hooked up, a AV MAP and Garmin 296 [the AV Map is incredible] (this is a day/VFR A/C) wet compass and turn and bank---that's it. We took off from Skagit Regional (KBVS) just six miles east of NAS Whidbey Island and headed off following the Skagit River north and east and maintaining a 500 ft/min climb. I must state here that the weather in the pacific northwest had been IFR for almost two weeks and we caught the first VFR day on our day of departure; however, unforecasted overcast to broken was racing in from the north west. The higher elevation of the Cascades were quickly approaching and our little cub was dutifully climbing at 500/mn. We could have crossed over the Cascades at nine thousand five hundred and dodged some peaks, but the broken layer was at ten thousand so up we climbed to eleven thousand five hundred.

About a half hour prior to passing the Cascades it became overcast at ten thousand and all we saw was mountain peaks poking through the clouds. We drove on eastbound and then suddenly we saw a vast expanse of open flat land. The mountains ended in almost a sheer drop to the plateau below and we headed east to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Upon our arrival at Coeur d'Alene we discovered we now had some radio issues. The R/T was putting out a loud carrier on transmit that it completely blocked any voice communication. At the present this problem was intermittent so we had no problem getting into Coeur d'Alene. At this point we had neither

seen nor heard another aircraft. Upon our arrival huge towering cumulous and thunderstorms were developing around us and we decided to stay at Coeur d'Alene for the night.

I continuously refer to we. My companion is Matt Benard, a twenty six year old camera man for channel 56 in Boston and will be a CFI in two weeks. Matt first started flying with his dad when he was six years old. His dad was a Beech 18 pilot, ferrying stuff to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands, when Matt was a kid, a corporate pilot, and now is a sixteen year Airbus driver for UPS. Matt and I switched off piloting duties on each leg. The rear seat bubba did paper navigation/fuel---time/distance on the sectional in the event of power/GPS failure. One of the saving graces of this long flight is that our true course was virtually 90 degrees during the entire journey. This however would soon change due to weather around the Great Lakes.

So---back to the story. We got a ride into Coeur d'Alene by the day cook at the local food emporium at the airport--stayed in a pretty nice motel and got a ride back to the airport the next day by the line chief at the FBO where we hangared the plane. We took off the next day, with only a cup of motel coffee in our stomachs, at 0700, headed east into the Rocky Mountains. I might also add that when we checked weather, the weather bureau said they couldn't tell us, because there are no weather reporting stations in that part of the Rockies. What you see is what you get!! We looked into the sky and decided it was a go and off we went. The only thing that I can remember about this leg is that the Rockies were spectacularly beautiful. I sat in the back and took pictures and admired the beauty. We flew the whole mission through small valleys, cuts and over passes and I don't think we got over seven thousand feet. I think the highest pass was six thousand five hundred feet. Again as we

The Odyssey (cont.)

passed out of the Rockies we faced a sea of prairie that never ended. The prairie extended as far as you could see and we were about 3500 above ground level. Our destination on this leg was Cut Bank, Montana (KCTB). We landed at Cut Bank and the only thing that was there was a Beech 19 turbo prop freighter and a USAF UH-1N. We shut down and walked into the FBO, such as it was. We talked with the USAF security team, who apparently were flying around inspecting the security of missile silos (our nuclear deterrent) All VERY young kids, who seemed to enjoy being stationed in the middle of nowhere. I cannot emphasize how barren this part of the country is. Shortly thereafter, a beat up pickup pulled up. It was the "caretaker" of the airport. He said he had saw us land and came right out. He was quite the character and told us some flying stories and took our picture because he couldn't believe we were flying a cub coast to coast and wanted our picture on his display board. Almost all of the airports in the isolated areas of USA now have self serve gas pumps-so many times you may land, gas up and take off and not see or speak with another person. Cut Bank was a B-17 training base in WWII. It has long runways and not much else. The winds weren't favorable to the runway so the caretaker said, "just take off on the taxi way," but we decided to use the runway----just in case. Off we went on the next leg to Glasgow, Montana. Again we haven't seen or heard another airplane except for the USAF helicopter.

The winds have now picked up to thirty miles an hour from the west and we are making a ground speed of 115 MPH and at times we we have hit 130 MPH. The winds increased all the way west to the point they were gusting in excess of 40 MPH from the west in Minnesota. The radio problem persists.

Several hours later we land at Glasgow, Montana. The FBO folks were great, let us borrow their loaner and we go into town for lunch about 2PM local. We go back to the

airport and Matt insists that we physically stop at the NOAA office located at the field. It is brand new with every bell and whistle. The receptionist says they don't normally do pilot weather, but they will make an exception. The three folks working were very gracious and gave us a great brief including expectations of higher winds and thunderstorms to the east. When we were refueling we had to hold the wings as the thirty mile an hour winds were rocking the plane like a joy ride. As soon as we topped off the tanks we were headed east with a thirty knot tail wind. I believe this is one of the times we hit 130-132 MPH ground speed. We pulled into Bismarck, ND around 7:30 P, hangared the A/C and got a room for the night. The next day I had a radioman look at the radio and they couldn't duplicate the discrepancy----which was a shame because it persisted on and off the entire ferry.

After we fueled we headed off again at almost noon. I can't remember off the top of my head what the original destination was because we landed at Granite Falls, Minnesota to get on the ground and away from thunderstorms that were building ominously around us. As a matter of fact we saw a tornado touch down about eight to ten miles off our left wing in the vicinity of Rochester, MN. That will make a believer out of you.

Landing at Granite Falls was a fortuitous event. On final at approximately sixty MPH we had a 30 MPH plus headwind at >30 degrees to our left. This was about my eighth landing in this A/C and my anxiety level was elevated. The aircraft went right down centerline until the rudder lost authority and we drifted right over to the extreme right of the runway, but we managed to stay on it. We taxied up to the gas pump, but the wind was blowing so violently that we couldn't gas up and we pushed the A/C over to tie downs and doubled up on the lines as the winds I suspect were blowing about forty. We soon discovered that the FBO was vacant, but more perplexing was that it was

The Odyssey (cont.)

obviously a multi million dollar operation, but there wasn't a single soul anywhere. A town employee who was mowing the grass with a large tractor walked over and said to let ourselves in with lost com transponder code on the key pad and help ourselves to what we needed. They had a loaner car and we drove into town, had something for lunch, returned to the airport and nosed around. We soon discovered that the adjacent hangars housed a P-51 (Sweet Revenge) obviously worth well over a million dollars, one of the six airworthy P-38's in existence, an almost completely rebuilt P-40 and two other P-40's awaiting to be rebuilt. The other aircraft were a Cessna Citation B, a Cessna twin, and three or four other single engine A/C all owned by one man. All in a town in Minnesota with a population of three thousand! The wind was now down to about 25-30 and we gassed up and got out of there as cells were building every where.

As we headed southeast we passed Rochester, MN. At this time I was looking out past the left wing and saw a funnel cloud develop about 15 miles away and touch down three or four times. My first and hopefully last experience with tornadoes. Looking at the sectional and what was going on around us we decided to land at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. A beautiful little airport, also basically unattended adjacent to the Mississippi River. As we came in on a straight in final we passed over the river and a huge barge. Unfortunately we didn't have a camera ready because we were concentrating on the approach and didn't realize there would be a photographic opportunity. We landed, looked around---no gas available-- and lo and behold there was a motel and a Chinese restaurant literally across the street. It was about 7P so we decided that this was it for the day. I did a post flight and noticed some carbon around the cowl. Seems we had developed a leak from the exhaust manifold to the muffler. This did not look good. After we checked in to the motel and had something to eat I called an

A&P/IA/DART at Plymouth who said we could continue, but have it looked at ASAP.

The next morning was crystal clear and we had half tanks and we launched and headed for Platteville, Wisconsin about thirty five minutes away. We landed at Platteville, gassed up, put in a quart of oil, checked the engine and continued to march. With periodic radio problems and the exhaust leak we headed for Rockford, Illinois. We landed at Rockford and were treated to royal treatment by the owner of North American Aviation. The owner is a Mr. John P. Morgan, who has to be one of the greatest guys around. He had a A&P and an IA poke around the plane for about a good hour and a half, turn some wrenches, added a heat shield to the cowl, to protect the paint job from excessive heat, and offered us anything he had available. After the mechs were finished they kinda disappeared. I tracked the lead mech down and asked what the price of the repair was and he replied that he would have to check with John Morgan. Mr. Morgan said that everything was on the house. I was stunned. He said that two guys flying a cub across the country deserve something and it was his pleasure. I could only offer him our thanks and that I would go on the net and tell everyone what a first class operation he had--- which I did within twenty four hours after landing and again I'd like to say---"many thanks." I'd also like to add that Mr. Morgan rebuilds warbirds and probably is the sole dealer in the USA that imports, modifies to US standards, and sells L-29's, a Russian jet trainer. When he gets through with them they look like new pennies. I guess they go for about three hundred thousand a copy. From what I could tell, they look like more of a million dollar A/C, but what do I know. At any rate we thanked everyone and set off. Next stop was Goshen Indiana. As we were headed for Goshen we had Lake Michigan, Chicago O'Hare and Midway off our left wing. Then over Gary, Indiana.

The Odyssey (cont.)

We landed at Goshen, Indiana and were met by several folks who wanted to take pictures of the plane--the two crazies who flew over the Cascades and the Rockies, and were treated to lunch. We talked to some crop dusters, some guys who owned "cubs" themselves, and a gent who was a retired "purejet" Gulfstream corporate pilot. We departed Goshen, headed almost due east and flew by Cleveland, Ohio. The cells were now building all around us and again the weather was getting ominous. We again changed plans and instead of heading for Franklin County Regional in Ohio we stopped at Portage Regional in Ravenna, Ohio. Again the winds were picking up and were blowing twenty five plus from the west. We tied the plane down immediately after landing and when we were walking away we noticed a Cherokee six on downwind. We stopped to watch his approach. On final the Cherokee never slowed down and I thought we were going to be a witness to a rather eventful landing. The Cherokee bounced and became airborne again and at angles that I thought impossible to recover from. Amazingly the pilot saved the landing and the A/C, but I don't know how. After we went into the FBO we planned our last leg for the day, gassed up and off we went toward a small airport in central Pennsylvania, KIPT--I can't remember the name of the town. We were about 3500 ft MSL over the Susquehanna forest in western Pennsylvania, the relative humidity was probably up around sixty or seventy percent and it started to get very cool. Needless to say it appears we started to get continuous carburetor ice and the engine started to run very rough. I started to use almost continuous carburetor heat just to keep the engine going. Below us was hundreds of miles of hardwood forests and that's all. A faint feeling of nausea began to creep into my lower abdomen and there were brief periods of discussion related to our present predicament and long periods of silence. 121.5 was dialed up into the VHF. After what seemed to be an eternity civilization began to creep into our view, which had a slight calming effect. It was

now almost sunset and mist was creeping into the valleys as we called our destination fifteen miles out and advised of our intention to land. We had already called the FBO ahead of time and they were expecting us. The landing was almost textbook although a little long as I still haven't gotten used to the fact that this plane still wants to fly as slow as 40MPH. We taxied in and emptied the plane and were off to our motel inside a half hour. I think this was almost a nine hour flight and we were both very tired and hungry. We found our motel--a Super 8. Do yourself a favor and save your money. Don't stay at a Super 8. What a dive. After we dumped our bags we went out and got something to eat and returned to the motel. The motel was located close to a highway that appeared to be used as a drag strip from midnight to two A.M. without the intervention of the local constabulary. We were up at 0500 the next morning, packed up and off to the airport by 0630.

After 0730 we were off and headed east for Brainard Field, Hartford, Connecticut. The scenery was beautiful as we passed rivers, valleys, and farms. Civilization was rapidly approaching. Almost two hours later we landed at Brainard, gassed up and were on our way on the final leg to Plymouth which was about fifty minutes of flight time. We touched down in Plymouth about eleven thirty. Dumped our gear and gave the plane a well deserved bath. 2200.2 miles. 27 hours of flight time. 220 gallons of gas.

Amazingly we had seen only six other aircraft in the sky during the entire trip and they were as we approached O'Hare and eastward. I believe we heard only a few radio transmissions and those were only after Chicago and eastward. It's truly remarkable how vast this country is and how many miles you can fly at low altitude and not see or hear another plane for hundreds and thousands of miles. Good idea to have a fully functioning ELT.