



# Mountainland Flyer

## EAA Chapter 17, Knoxville Tennessee

### Next Meeting:

March 7th 18:00 EST: EAA Chapter 17 Meeting at Sky Ranch

## Chapter 17 Banquet "L" - (50 years)

I don't know if we have had fifty annual banquets. Unlike the Super bowl, (which actually began as a NFL-AFL championship game), we don't have a contiguous record of Chapter activities.

Still, On February 4th, we gathered in aviation fellowship to celebrate the uncontested 50 years of Chapter 17.

Don Miller, Chapter 17's AV crew



Don Miller pulled a event together that was worthy of our club's history and commitment to aviation.

The banquet featured charter members of our organization, and presented a program that excited the imagination for tomorrow in much the same fashion as the EAA Experimenter did in 1955.

Don's retrospective presentation reminds us how much aviation still remains the same after a half century— particularly the Restricted area northwest of Knoxville, on a post -WWII 4-course range chart.

Guest Speaker, Paul Lewis, the UT Director of Space Science Outreach, or "Ambassador to

the Solar System," provided a lively and thought-provoking talk on the current programs in space exploration, and the future of manned space flight. He brought a moon rock sample, and then took it away with him. I'm guessing that these are rare things, these moon rocks.

How will we top this for Chapter 17, Banquet "L P"?



Moon Rock

### Topic suggestions for *MountainLand Flyer* Articles:

We have compiled a list of ideas that you may want to pen an article:

**First solo**— what was it like, what went through your mind as you watched your instructor walk away?

**Most memorable views aloft** — What have you seen that made you realize "this is what flying is all about"?

**Most valuable flight lesson that you didn't understand until now**— We have all had it happen, we learn to fly, pass the tests, build the hours, and get on with life. Then one day, years or even decades later, we find a situation that makes us understand why they teach this stuff. What was YOURS?

Send your contributions to: [gpicou@chartertn.net](mailto:gpicou@chartertn.net), and be eligible for a \$20 gift certificate from Sporty's, and a big thank you from the editor.

By the way, the next issue will be **April 1st**. Maybe that will give you ideas . . .

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David Brown

## Win Buck\$ for writing what you know!

—Mark Scheuer

During one of the nominating committee meetings, a suggestion was made on how to make our monthly newsletter easier to publish for our new editor, as well as making it more interesting to our members.

The idea of having our members submit stories was floated and all at the table agreed that that would be an excellent idea.

But HOW to motivate our members to submit these stories? [Money.](#)

It was suggested that at each meeting, a drawing would be made from names of the individuals who had submitted and had published, an article that had something to do with aviation. A trip, a lesson learned, hints on making that perfect landing, even an old war story. The only requirement is that it would be aviation related.

Through a small grant from PS Engineering, Inc, along with the chapter's help, funds have been made available to offer the winner at each month's meeting, a \$20 gift certificate good at Sporty's Pilot Shop. You don't have to be present to win.

Then, at the January 2007 annual banquet, the names of the monthly winners will be placed back into the hat and a drawing made for a PS Engineering, Inc. hi-fi stereo headset, valued at \$280!

The articles should be submitted by way of email to Gary Picou ([gpicou@charternet.net](mailto:gpicou@charternet.net)) not later than the 15th of each month, for consideration in the next newsletter.

## An Airport Kid

By Dick Merian

Willoughby, Ohio is a small town just east of Cleveland along Lake Erie. In the 1940s, it was surrounded by three airports, Lake County, Lost Nation, and Euclid Avenue. Only Lost Nation (LNN) survives today.

In the summer of 1941 I was twelve going on thirteen. I had a job as a cook's helper in a restaurant at the east end of Lake County Airport. I hated the work and when a friend told me he had this neat job working at the airport, I applied and was hired by Gil Squires. ; A week later, much to my chagrin, my friend was fired.

My job was general flunky for Squires Aircraft Service located at the Lake County Airport on Route 20, between Willoughby and Mentor. At the time I was paid the munificent sum of \$10.00 per week. I worked full time during school holidays and part time from 1941 till the summer of 1949 when I entered the United States Air Force for pilot training.

My job was sweeping the floor, cleaning up tools, washing down engines, and helping the mechanics any

way I could. Gil Squires was a fine gentleman and something of a surrogate father to me. There were about five mechanics at that time. The Squires facility was on the west side of the field facing east, adjacent to it and at right angles was a large hanger and offices facing south. This housed the Horn Flying Service which soon moved to the Lost Nation Airport. Adjacent to it was a large open parking area and then another large hangar and office. This housed the Sanzo Flying service. Frank Sanzo was a handsome Sicilian who played the concertina for any number of appreciative ladies on a rainy non flying day.

There were a number of planes on the field belonging to East Cleveland industrialists. Many of them used their aircraft to vacation in Canada during the summer. We had Stinson Gull Wings, Stinson De-troiters, Fairchild 24s, and Waco cabin planes. The sport fliers had a real assortment that would be worth a fortune today. I used to haul car gas and



water for a fellow who owned an American Eagle Rock ( OX powered open cockpit biplane). There was a very fat fellow who owned an Aeronca C3 ( flying bathtub), powered by a two cylinder 36 horsepower engine. He did well until he tried to takeoff on the short runway over the power lines with another fat person on board. Fortunately they were not hurt but the aircraft was destroyed. Other unusual types of aircraft based there were a Davis, a Clemm, a Luscomb Phantom, a Fairchild 22 ( an open cockpit high wing parasol) and a number of others that I cannot recall at the moment.

In the summer there was usually an airshow on Sun-

I have an old album with some pictures of the airport and the planes taken with my box Brownie either the winter of '42 or '43. There were some unique airplanes on the field by today's standards. The newspaper clippings in my album are mostly about the Cleveland Air Races after the war when Cook Cleland was racing his FG1 Corsair.

## Airport Kid, cont'd

day afternoons with a parachute jumper and some sort of acrobatics display. I used to work for this fellow who owned a Waco cabin plane selling rides to the people who came for the show. I remember this lady passenger who exited the plane and stepped right through the fabric covered lower wing in her high heels. The chap who did most of the acrobatics had a hardware store, and owned the Fairchild 22. He was good but to me he was an old old man, I imagine in his sixties, who could barely climb in the plane. But he sure could make it go upside-down.

The CAP took over the office area where Horn vacated, so every weekend there would be all kinds of marching, military like formations, etc. Many of our larger planes were outfitted for submarine patrol such as the Stinsons and the Fairchilds. I do not know why, but after the war none of them ever returned to Willoughby.

When the weather turned bad in the wintertime, we frequently stored the airplanes on their nose in the hangars to get more planes inside. The technique was to raise the tail and put a

block of wood under the propeller hub.

Starting an old radial engine with no starter was a real challenge in the wintertime. I recall numerous times removing one set of plugs heating them up and drying them out on the stove. Then again trying to prop the engine. My winter experience flying in open cockpit airplanes cooled me forever on open cockpits.

I learned to become a pretty decent mechanic, although never licensed. Mostly I worked on rebuilding wooden parts of the plane like wings, recovering the fabric, and painting. All the planes I was familiar with of that era were wood, steel tube and fabric covered. I never did learn how to work with sheet metal aluminum planes that became popular after the war. When I was thirteen, a mechanic that I worked with named Bill Mason, unofficially taught me how to fly. He had been a barnstormer in the thirties and had broken his back in an aircraft accident. Some of the things he taught were straight out of the twenties; such as, don't trust any of your instruments (they all lie, well perhaps not the oil pressure gauge), judge airspeed by



the sound of the flying wires and the mushiness of the controls, judge altitude by the size of the object you can discern on the ground. It turns out that your eye has an angular resolution, I have found in flying gliders that this is quite accurate up to about 1500 feet.

Navigation was done with a road map, I never knew anything different until trained in the Air Force. I would fly home from Kenyon College by following route 3 to route 20, hang a right till you arrived in Willoughby. Bill Mason was a boozier and an old curmudgeon but I idolized him. From then on, I did Sunday jobs for many pilots in exchange for flying time. Usually, there was a licensed pilot in the right seat but occasionally, I was illegally on my own.

We had problems with ani-

mals straying onto the airport and inadvertently walking into a moving propeller. After a radial engine was overhauled and replaced in the plane, the plane was tied down and the engine run for several hours to break it in before it was flown. Mostly the animals were stray or neighborhood dogs but we had a next door neighbor behind the shop who kept chickens and pigs that were always wandering onto the airport. As a joke, a couple mechanics caught some chickens and pigs and spray painted them all different colors. When we came to work the next day all our shop windows were broken.

There were two brothers who owned a fifty-five horsepower Taylorcraft. During its annual inspection, a crack was found in the steel tube longeron that supported the landing gear

### Airport Kid, cont'd

( the result of an exceptionally hard landing). My job was to make up the metal bracings to be welded onto the longeron to strengthen the area. The adjacent fabric was cut away and wet rags placed where sparks might fall. Gil Squires did the welding while I stood behind with a fire extinguisher. In those days, the cotton fabric was covered with nitrate-cellulose dope, the same stuff of old time film. It is very, very flammable. A spark caught the planes fabric on fire and in the time it took me to turn around and pull the pin from the extinguisher, the flames left only the wing tips and tail surfaces. Both Gil and I had very singed hair. All this happened in a wooden enclosed hangar. How we survived without burning down the shop, I will never know. The brothers received a new covering job but would argue endlessly as to the color selection.

We had an aircraft owner on the field by the name of Groves. He was something of a pompous gentleman, I believe a banker in East Cleveland. He became a Lt. Col. In the CAP and delighted in strutting around issuing

### Monocoupe



all of us military commands. Mr. Groves purchased a very beautiful Monocoupe. Now, Monocoupes are pretty hot airplanes for the average pilot. He had this plane about two or three months when a forced landing caused him to set down in a farmer's field. Unfortunately, he ran into the only haystack on the field. The stack was supported by a bunch of vertical poles and he went right between two of them sheering off both wings. I spent all that winter working on that plane making parts for the wooden wings, helping to recover them and doping and sanding down twenty some coats of dope to make a glasslike finish. Later after we moved to Lost Nation Airport he pretty much destroyed the plane by landing on a ditch being built to house runway lights.

Sometime in 1943 or '44, the Air Corps released all the WASPs (female pilots used to ferry aircraft for the

military) from service. Several joined Frank Sanzo as instructors. I turned sixteen that summer so I could legally hold a pilot's license but had to take legal instruction.

My instructor was an Ex WASP named Coral Bloom, a little-bitty girl. I also took some instruction from two other WASPs, one of which was Marge Hurlburt, who held the National Woman's Speed Record for a while in Cook Cleland's Corsair. She was later killed in an acrobatic show flying a T-6. All those gals could holler at a student just like any Air Force instructor.

After the war, our airport was closed down to make room for a housing development. Squires Aircraft Service moved to the Lost nation Airport, at the north end of the large hangar. At that time there were no other buildings other than the office. The fixed base operator was Bill McNeely, an ex navy pilot.

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He was also the local Cessna distributor. The nature of our shop changed, the mechanics worked on piece work, that is they received so much for a 100 hour inspection,

etc. I was given the jobs that could not be done this way, such as rebuilding wing tips on Stearmans that had been ground looped. WWII surplus trainers were plentiful and cheap, to the point that they became for several years, disposable items. You flew one till it broke, then replaced it with a cheap new one. Stearmans were selling for \$300 per plane, today that same plane will cost you \$100,000. There were a few tragedies of low time pilots purchasing more ex-military airplane than they knew how to fly.

The three airports around Willoughby, Lost Nation, Lake County, and Euclid Avenue, plus the revival of the Cleveland Air Races after the war provided all the stimuli a young aviation enthusiast could handle.

I feel very privileged to have grown up in Willoughby.

## The Mighty Eighth

– Don Miller



We have planned to see several of the aviation museums in our southeast for two or three years now. Finally, the opportunity came with a free weekend and favorable weather forecasts. Our choice was the Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia, just outside Savannah. An interesting statistic is that of more than 350,000 members of the 8th Air Force, of this number, 26,000 were killed in action and 28,000 became prisoners of war during World War II.

The museum presents a powerful and visual reminder of the world political and military events in Europe between 1933 and 1944. 90,000 square feet of museum indoor space contains focal points from life in Britain during this period to U.S. air bases, the huge number of

missions into France and Germany, field training of aircraft system mechanics, prisoner of war and escapee stories, art of the era, Women's Air Force Service Pilot Corps, Tuskegee Airmen and awards given to members of the Eighth.

Although they display only six aircraft, two of them are quite unusual to see. A B-47 Stratojet and a German Comet fighter. The Messerschmitt Me-163 Komet Rocket Plane on display is the only existing aircraft of the type in the US. The Komet was the first and only true rocket fighter ever put into operation. It was the product of Alexander Lippisch's research in rocket planes, tail-less aircraft, and delta wings, and ultimately contributed to the research required for construction of later craft like the Space Shuttle.

We landed at SAV after a 2 hour



15 minute flight from DKX, thanks to a nice tail wind. Signature Flight Support is a very nice FBO with full service capability. Gas is a bit high, but service more than equals the fuel cost. We were greeted by a helpful lineman and our car was brought to the airplane within minutes. Everything was handled quickly and professionally. We had the option to have our top off done on the weekend at a 50 cent per gallon discount, which we did.

Being in Savannah offered some dining options not available in Knoxville. We had supper at "Sticky Fingers" on Friday; 7921 Abercorn Street, just a few blocks from our hotel - Courtyard by Marriott. This hotel is a special bargain, we felt. AAA rate was \$104 and the facility was easily three star. Renovated in 2004, it had high speed internet in each room, off street quiet and nicely appointed rooms. Our bed and linen was the best we had seen in a hotel. Saturday we ate at Carey Hilliard's. A bit more pricy, is the Pirate House if you want the best in seafood. It is in the old town on East Broad and Bay Streets.

Savannah is rapidly changing from the quaint old sea port flavor to a convention center and more cosmopolitan feel.





# EAA Chapter 17

## EAA Chapter 17, Knoxville Tennessee

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### FOR SALE.

- 1 plug in dynamic mike
- 1 plug in carbon mike
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EAA Chapter 17's mission is the promotion of education in aeronautics, flying safety, navigation, amateur or home-built aircraft, antique aircraft restoration and construction, and related aero-sciences. To foster aviation, education, and progress in light aircraft development and other closely related phases of aviation. And to maintain a non-profit cooperative association to obtain instruction and education in aviation.

Aviation needs more friends in the public and we have had fun staffing our program for these past several years.

### PLEASE CONSIDER:

The Young Eagle Pilot Coordinator has three basic duties.

1. **Send a notice** of need for a specific date to all members about two months out. Include the list of paperwork needed on or before the day.
2. **Send a schedule of times** and actions for the day of the event
3. **Hold a pilot briefing 30 minutes before the first YE flight.**

Hand out business cards for use with youth who complete the orientation flight.

**No other follow-on duties required.** Total time commitment about three hours before the day of the event.

On the web at [www.eaa17.org](http://www.eaa17.org)

If some parts of the above are delegated to others, it gets easier.

Please contact Darrell or Lee Erickson this week to discuss the opportunity for our next event.

*Congratulations 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, EAA Chapter 17.*

*Ray and I wish to thank everyone for gracious hospitality extended to charter members who attended the Feb. 4 banquet commemorating fifty years. Ray enjoyed exchanging memories of the first meeting with J. W. Steve Brooks.*

*The program presented by Paul Lewis was outstanding. He was generous to permit everyone a hands-on experience with objects from space. We all felt lucky as banquet tickets were drawn for door prizes, everyone a winner!*

*Thanks again and best wishes,  
Eva and Ray Wood  
EAA member # 1875*

Chapter 17 Charter Member says, "Thanks" Steve Brooks (l) and Ray Wood (r)

