

# CHAPTER 55 EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2010



**Meetings are the 2nd Saturday of each Month**

**EAA Chapter 55 Hangar - Mason Jewett Airport – 643 Aviation Drive, Mason, MI 48854**

**Pres: Ken Vandenbelt 589-5051 Vice Pres: Bill Purosky 214-2729 Treas: Al Spalding 676-3370**

**Secr: Vickie Vandenbelt 589-5051 Editor: Warren Miller 214-2656 (all Area Code 517) [www.EAA55.org](http://www.EAA55.org)**

## Climb and Maintain Flight Level 55

Well, in August, I finally did my first Young Eagle flight. It went well and I had a good time. I'm just glad that the kids who were my first Young Eagles did not know how nervous I was. I kept wondering what I would do if they got sick, or panicked, or started screaming!! Luckily, that did not happen. My first two were a brother and sister. The sister exclaimed "This is cool" as soon as we left the ground. (I whispered "Thank you, Thank you".) Vickie and I never had kids so I can find them to be intimidating and scary. I let the sister take the controls and she started out good. I told

**Board of Directors Meeting  
October 6, 2010, 7:00 pm.  
Chapter Membership Meeting  
October 9, 2010  
Breakfast 8-9 Meeting – 9:00 am**

her to move the yoke slowly to bring the nose up. It was not slowly; we did a little whoop-de-do but not much. I looked back at brother and he had the sick bag in his hands. I asked "What are you doing with that?" He answered "I want it." I advised "You can't take it with you." He said "But, I might need it." Then, the light bulb went off in my mind "OK, your sister is done flying the plane." The airport was in front of us and we were headed back. He put the sick bag away and walked away smiling. And, I said another silent "Thank you, thank you." I ended up doing about five flights and it was a great time. So, with my fears behind me, I am ready for the next season of Young Eagle Rallies.

Sorry I couldn't be at the last month's meeting. I heard it went well and everyone enjoyed the MDOT program and Terry Lutz's talk.

On the Wednesday before the meeting, Vickie and I flew to Galesburg, Illinois, for the annual National Stearman Fly-In. The weather was great for a change; great visibility there and back - no fog, low ceilings. They did

have winds earlier in the week and the temperatures were on the cool side for down there but it was a great time. There were 107 Stearmans registered, good food and good flying.



Next year will be the 40th anniversary and they are hoping for 200 Stearmans. At the awards banquet, we met EAA President Rod Hightower. He is very personable and I think he is going to do great things for EAA. After all, he's a Stearman lover, so he has to be great!!



This month we have our field trip to Highfield's campus. They want to share information with us about their program for troubled youths. They will be serving lunch after the tour so I hope we can get a good group together for the trip.

November is elections - both national and EAA 55. If you would like to be more active in serving your Chapter, just let any current officer know.

And, plans are underway for another great Chapter Christmas party to be held at the Vevay Township Hall on the evening of December 11th. We will have our fun White Elephant Exchange plus a great dinner and door prizes. Pricing should be comparable to last year and Al Spalding will be collecting payments for reservations at our October and November meetings. Hope you can make it !!

Share the passion,  
Ken Vandenbelt

**DIRECTIONS TO HIGHFIELD:** US-127 south to the Leslie/Bellevue Road exit. Right (west) on Bellevue Road until it ends at Onondaga Road. Left (south) on Onondaga Road to Old Plank Road (first road going left). Follow Old Plank Road to the Highfields entrance; 5123 Old Plank Road.

**DIRECTIONS TO VANDENBELT'S:** Left on Old Plank Road to Olds Road (first road going left). Follow Olds Road east to Walker Road. Left on Walker Road to first drive on the left; 4870 Walker Road.

Share the passion,  
Ken Vandenbelt, President

**Breakfast Teams**

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>
Pete Chestnut	Tom Botsford
Rosemary Duckworth	Kirk Curtiss
Fred Honhart	J. Morris Hickman
Terry Lutz	Steve Houghton
James McFarland	Karen Meirndorf
Roger Reeve	Rick Riisberg
Drew Seguin	
Craig Tucker	



September Breakfast Team: Dick Bacon, Ernie Lutz and Jim Spry

**EAA Chapter 55**

**Board of Directors Meeting, September, 1 2010**

→Meeting was called to order at 7:04pm. →Directors present: Ken Vandenbelt, Bill Purosky, Al Spalding, Vickie Vandenbelt, Joe Madziar, Warren Miller, Doug Koons, Jim Spry. Absent: Dave James, Ed Search, →Secretary's Report dated 8/11/10; Doug Koons made a motion to approve; Joe Madziar second, all approved. →Treasurers Report dated 8/31/10; major income and expenses were for MAD with some expenses still outstanding; Vickie Vandenbelt made a motion to approve; Jim Spry second; all approved. →Young Eagles; Doug Koons reported 226 flown in 2010 with our new grand total at 2,590. We have two candidates for YE of the year. →Membership; two new members Jay Komnencic and James McFarland. →Nominating committee; Joe Madziar reported current directors willing to serve again; no new candidates as yet. →Personal Property Inventory; Warren Miller has finalized the list for EAA records. →Copy machine; Warren Miller will try to sell on Craig's List. →MAD wrap up; need to decide what we want to do for 2011 dates. Golf carts; pricing at \$2000/4seat range to expensive unless we find a real deal. →MDOT seminar; Jim Spry agreed to sign up and hand out pilot bags to guests. →Fire extinguishers; Ken Vandenbelt going to check some other services. →"Mason Cares" solicited donations for fire house clean up; Vickie will round up some of our extra chips, cookies, water, sanitizer to donate. →EAA55 received "Thank You" from Relay for Life for our donation of free MAD Breakfast certs to the silent auction. →Bill Purosky announced the Great Lakes Aviation Conference will be at EMU; only one day. Cost for booth will be \$150 but only includes two free admissions. →Doug Koons made a motion to adjourn; Bill Purosky second; adjourned at 8:33pm.

**EAA Chapter 55**

**Gen'l Membership Meeting, September 11, 2010**

Treas.report→Young Eagles no report, Doug Koons was not there,→Warren Miller report on inventory→Al St George report on cessna elevators→report on highfields trip→trip to Ken and Vicki Vanderebelt house to see his steerman build→Tom Bosford report on 9/11 cleanup on fire trucks at Mason fire department →MDOT seminar→Terry Lutz presentation on the 380 airbus. adjourned motion by Tom Bosford, seconded by George Moore note not much on the reports from other officers or committees it was a fast agenda because of the MDOT seminar.

**Tidbits**

**By Vickie Vandenbelt**

**INVENTORY REDUCTION SNACK SALES:**

Ice Cream, Cookies, and Pop are now on sale now thru the end of October!! See the sales sheet on display. (Sorry - but chips, candy bars, and water remain the same.) Stop by and pick up a treat each time you visit the airport.

**CHRISTMAS PARTY:** December 11th, Vevay Township Hall. Complete details will be in the November newsletter. Al Spalding will take payments at the October and November meetings.

**FORD PARTNER RECOGNITION PROGRAM:** The EAA/Ford Motor Company partnership spans more than a decade and continues to grow. The Recognition program provides preferential pricing on the purchase or lease of new Ford vehicles. We have a few copies of the latest brochure in our rack.

## Young Eagles

By Doug Koons

Nothing to report this month.

## Notes from Cape Juby

By Terry L. Lutz, Chapter 55 Flight Advisor

There is a small museum in Greenville, Michigan that brings more than just the story of a town and its people to life. It is a museum that tells the story of our country. It tells the story of people working together to do their very best. It tells the story of parents teaching their children what is meaningful to life and to country. And it is a story that hasn't stopped. It wasn't just a moment in time that someone remembered with a snapshot. The spirit continues, and in fact it thrives in the quiet town of Greenville.

The name of the museum is the Fighting Falcon Military Museum, located at 516 Cass St. Imagine yourself back in 1942. War was raging on two fronts, and the Army Air Corps had given contracts to 15 companies across the U.S. to build the WACO CG-4A troop carrying gliders. Two of the companies were in Michigan. The Ford Motor Company built the gliders in Iron Mountain, and the Gibson Refrigerator Company built them in Greenville.



A 22 year old tooling engineer named Bill Delp worked directly with the factory manager and the master mechanic during production of the gliders. Bill would later serve during WWII, and much, much later he would become the project leader to rebuild a CG-4A glider and establish the Fighting Falcon Military Museum. Bill

remembers that the drawings they had to work with were as big as bed sheets. Gibson hired a 24 year old manufacturing engineer named Eric Guenther. He was a manufacturing genius, and as a result, the first Gibson produced glider took flight at the Grand Rapids airport just six months after the contract was received.

The Class of 1943 at Greenville High School decided to try to raise enough money to purchase one of the gliders. In only two months they managed to raise \$72,000. Think about this for a minute. If the graduating class of 2010 tried to raise the equivalent amount of money, adjusted for inflation, they would have to raise \$883,500. The Class of 1943 may have accomplished the impossible. It was enough money to purchase 4 gliders, not one. There was a sense of duty in their hearts and minds, and they did it for a country who was committing their own uncles, cousins, brothers, and sisters to a war on distant shores.

For their efforts, the students were awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. On May 19, 1943, a CG-4A was assembled on the high school football field, and on the side was painted "Fighting Falcon, presented by Greenville Schools, Greenville Michigan". The glider was disassembled and shipped to Aldermaston airfield west of London. As preparations began for Operation Overlord, the allied invasion of France, a mission code named "Chicago" was in progress to launch troop carrying gliders in advance of the main invasion force. Ninth Air Force Headquarters ordered that the Fighting Falcon be the first glider released over Normandy.

The Fighting Falcon was towed aloft at 0119 on 6 June 1944 by a C-47, with 51 similar pairs of aircraft just behind them. The pilots were Lt Col Michael C. Murphy and Lt John M. Butler. They carried two soldiers, a jeep, and several 5 gallon cans of gasoline. Brigadier General Donald Pratt was seated in the right side of the jeep and his aide de camp Lt John L. May was in a jump seat behind the jeep with a satchel full of top secret documents and maps.

At 0400 they were released from the tow after more than two and a half hours wrestling the glider behind the C-47 in total darkness. Their altitude was just 450 feet, barely enough for one or two good turns before touching down. In the darkness, a hedgerow loomed unseen and they smashed into the trees. Lt Col Murphy was hanging half outside the fuselage and both his legs were broken. Lt May emerged unhurt, but Brig Gen Pratt and Lt Butler were killed. There is a photo of the wreckage that shows a GI holding up fabric cut from the fuselage of the glider, and the inscription can clearly be seen.

A total of 13,309 WACO CG-4A gliders were produced during WWII. The Gibson Refrigerator Company produced 1,078 in Greenville, along with bombs, bomb shackles, wing flaps, and jettisonable fuel tanks. The story of the Fighting Falcon may have been lost to history, had it not been for a call to the Greenville Board

of Education in 1994, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion. The call was from Jack Welborn of Tyler, Texas. Jack had been a member of the 26<sup>th</sup> Mobile Repair and Reclamation Unit in Crookham Commons, England when the Fighting Falcon was uncrated. Because of what was painted on the fuselage, everyone wanted to have their picture taken standing next to it. He had recently found the photo, which he had sent home during the war.

The receptionist at the Greenville Board of Education shared the story with Sue Edsall O'Brien, who had been a member of the Class of 1943 and she relayed it to others. There exists in Greenville a student organization called the Young Astronauts, inspired by astronaut Roger Chaffee who lost his life along with Gus Grissom and Ed White in the tragic fire aboard the Apollo 1 capsule. Roger Chaffee spent the first seven years of his life in Greenville. The Young Astronauts decided they would like to restore one of the gliders, and sought the advice of Bill Delp and Eric Guenther. They visited a similar project at the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum, and collected the parts necessary to begin construction. Enough was completed that they could sit in the center section while it was paraded through Greenville on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion.

The story of finding parts for the glider, locating and purchasing a building to house it, and the people involved in this impressive effort is a detailed story by itself. Bill Delp, one of the Gibson employees who spearheaded the project in Greenville, has kept the spark alive, and then some. When you visit the museum and come into the room where the restored glider is located, you are caught by two striking images. The first is a huge photo covering one entire wall, showing the gliders on the production line at Gibson. The photo was taken by Bill Delp, and the negative had enough resolution to produce that historic image. Second is not so much the glider itself, but the way it is displayed. The left side is uncovered, so you can see how it was assembled, the control linkages, the cockpit, and the troop seats. The opposite side is covered and painted in olive drab just like the original. And in place on the side are the words: Fighting Falcon, presented by Greenville Schools, Greenville Michigan.



The museum is actually about more than the glider. It is a tribute to the men and women who fought from the Civil War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's also about the people who left Greenville to serve their country and gave their lives in the defense of liberty. There are separate rooms representing each conflict, with meticulously researched names of everyone who died. The room representing Viet Nam contains the empty place at the table, set for the one person listed as MIA.

Periodically, students come to the museum from the Greenville schools to do the vacuuming and dusting and other needs to keep the museum in top shape. There is also the neighbor boy who shovels the snow in winter and cuts the grass in summer. He was never asked to do it, and he never asked to be paid. When you see this museum, hear the story, and learn what a community could accomplish in war and can continue to accomplish today, makes you think that you have found the true heart, soul and mind of this great country. It is America as we would all like it to be.

For any EAA chapter in Michigan, a visit to the Fighting Falcon Military Museum in Greenville would make an ideal chapter outing. It is open Sundays from 2 to 4 pm, or you can organize a visit by calling 616-225-1940. And while you are helping someone who really needs it around the airport, remember that there are things we all can do to help our country.

## From the Flight Surgeon

By Gregory Pinnell, MD

Senior AME/ Senior Flight Surgeon USAFR

By far the most common chronic medical problem that pilots have is high blood pressure or "hypertension". Sometimes it can be treated with diet modification and exercise. In other cases the treatment by your doctor may require one or two medications and they must be taken regularly to keep your blood pressure down. The FAA allows virtually all of the common blood pressure medications and asks for only simple documentation which doesn't delay your medical certificate and needs only be done at the time of your flight physical. Fly healthy!

[www.OK2FLY.com](http://www.OK2FLY.com)

### CLASSIFIED

BEACON AVIATION RIDE SHARE: call Mike Marhanka 517-485-9190 or Jim McFarland 517-944-7796; sirjames1@sbcglobal.net

HANGARS FOR RENT: Storage hanger space at EAA55; \$70 month; Ken Vandenberg 517-589-5051. Other hangers; Deanna McAlister 517-851-7047 or Lloyd Brown 517-589-8619

#### FOR SALE:

2009 Kitfox; Model 4-1200; Rotax engine; many extras. Jack Toman 517 882 8831.

KIS TR-1, Subaru Legacy engine, low time engine and airframe, well maintained; vacuum gyro horizon and compass; electric turn and bank; Garmin 250 GPS nav/com; Collins Mode C transponder; cruise 170 mph. Excellent cross-country airplane. George Moore 517-536-1034.

Hunting Camp; 1/8 share of Whitetail Hunting Camp Inc. Well run and managed; comprised of 157 acres bordering on 155,000 acres of the Houghton Lake State Forest and the Roscommon Line. Dick Bacon 517-230-7808

Rans 2007 S6S Coyote II; 88 hrs; Rotax 912; many extras; \$49,000. Ernie Lutz 517-676-4601

DTV antenna; analog or digital TV; \$20.00 George Moore 517-536-1034

Telex ProCom 200 noise-canceling headphones. Bart Smith 517-676-2146

Generac Generator; \$350.00 Greg Hover 517-676-5126

Burning barrels; \$5.00 Dave Groh 517-676-4416

Yesteryear Aviation; new surplus hardware 517-676-4416

Military-style Dog Tags; \$5.00 Vickie 517-589-5051

Avon Products and Natural Beauty Soaps. Deanna McAlister 517-596-2506

Contact Warren or Vickie to place your ad here!

#### POCKET CALENDAR:

Oct 10 Hillsdale DP

Oct 17 Watervliet Chili Fly In

Oct 23 MDOT Seminar-Marshall

Oct 23 Kzoo AirZoo-Hops & Props

Nov 6 Hillsdale Chili Fly In

Dec 11 EAA55 Xmas Party

Jan 8 Great Lakes Aviation Conf.