



Chapter 1344

P.O. Box 582

McPherson, Kansas 67460

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Chapter Meeting

01-18-07 7 p.m.  
McPherson Airport

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Eldon Akers	2-3
Answers & New Quiz	4-6
Airplane Nut	7-8

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

**President**  
David Britting  
**Vice-President**  
Paul Flynn  
**Sec/Treasures**  
Warren Holcomb  
**Young Eagles  
Coordinator**  
Mike Bailey  
**Newsletter  
Editor/Publisher**  
Sam Friesen  
**Ass't. Editor**  
Max Tequila

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WOW!!! So much has happened since my last newsletter, I barely know where to start. My computer died just as I was about to print the newsletter for September, then my daughter had twins on September 24th in Dallas. So, with the two things happening so closely I just didn't get around to making the newsletter. Naturally, Grandma wanted to spend as much time in Dallas as possible, and the twins and their mother are doing well. Now with the computer repaired and winter having arrived, I've had time to work with this and get it printed.

First and foremost, we lost a charter member of the Chapter in December. Check out Page 2 for details.

In the last issue, Russ Malm wasn't making much progress on his Sonex because of the heat, and now he's not making much progress because of the cold. While the temps were more to his liking, he did make some progress and has the tail feathers on and has the fuselage on the gear. Good job, Russ!

We also had a good turnout for the Christmas party at the December meeting. Seems there was more food than those attending could eat.

Also at the party, it was rumored that Ron Miller is contemplating building a Zenith CH601. It seems he spent time in Missouri and built a rudder to see if it was something he thought he could handle. Go for it Ron!

Mike L. said he was hoping to have his Tailwind ready to fly by this summer. When it takes to the skies, it will be easy to see with a brilliant white on top and an equally brilliant orange on the lower half of the fuselage. It sure looks good to me.

I have been intrigued by RC aircraft for many years, and recently a friend said he was going to *give* away some radios and servos. Needless to say, I asked him to make sure I was there when he gave them away and now I'm the owner of an RC trainer. Certainly not something I can fly, but something I can use to encourage my three grandsons to get involved with aviation at an early age.

Hope to see all y'all at the meeting Thursday at the airport.

gone west

*Not alone into the sunset but into the  
company of friends who have gone before him.*



Charles Eldon Akers was born in 1935 and lived in McPherson County his entire life. He grew up on the family farm and loved animals and learned the value of hard work, and his love of the country life never left him. He also loved to travel.

He began his education in a one room school house and from there went to McPherson High School and then on to McPherson College. After college he joined the Air National Guard receiving training at Flight Instrumentation School where his love of flying began.

In December 2006, Eldon passed from this life into the next to be with his Heavenly Father. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church, Masonic Lodge, and Experimental Aircraft Association. He was working on a Hummelbird before his health forced him to stop and he never had opportunity to fly it.

I personally will always remember him as a caring and giving man. He was very articulate in his speech and in everything I had the pleasure of associating in with him.

The “FLYER’S PRAYER” has been copied with permission from the back page of the memorial service bulletin. Eldon’s widow told me that the poem fit Eldon perfectly.

# **FLYER'S PRAYER**

*By Patrick J. Phillips*

*When this life I'm in is done, and at the gates I stand,  
My hope is that I answer all His questions on command.*

*I doubt He'll ask me of my fame, or all the things I knew,  
Instead, He'll ask of rainbows sent on rainy days I flew.*

*The hours logged, the status reached, the ratings will not matter.  
He'll ask me if I saw the rays, and how He made them scatter.*

*Or what about the droplets clear, I spread across your screen?  
And did you see the twinkling eyes, of student pilots keen?*

*The way your heart jumped in your chest, that special solo day-  
Did you take time to thank the one who fell along the way?*

*Remember how the runway lights looked one night long ago,  
When you were lost and found your way, and how you still don't know?*

*How fast, how far, how much, how high? He'll ask me not these things,  
but did I take the time to watch the moonbeams wash my wings?*

*And did you see the patchwork fields and mountains I did mould;  
The mirrored lakes and velvet hill, of these did I behold?*

*The wind He flung along my wings, on final almost stalled.  
And did I know it was His name, that I so fearfully called?*

*And when the goals are reached at last, when all the flying's done,  
I'll answer Him with no regret- indeed, I had some fun.*

*So when these things are asked of me, and I can reach no higher,  
My prayer this day – His hand extends to welcome home a Flyer.*

## **Area Events**

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month – Ponca City Airport Pancake Breakfast (PNC)

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every month – Beaumont Hotel (SN07) All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every month – Lufkin, TX (LFK) Fajita Fly-in 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Angelina County Airport

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month – Alva Regional (AVK) Alva, OK

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month – Augusta Municipal (3AU)

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month – EAA Chapter 455 Fly-in Breakfast at Enid Woodring Regional (WDG) from 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

January 20, 2007 – Wings of Remembrance Chili Cook Off Newton City/County Airport (EWK) from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (Rain, Snow, or Shine) All you can eat!

## *Confessions of An Airplane Nut*

### **Part 5**

Telling other people that you are building your own airplane is a good way to start a conversation moving. Of course by the time the conversation is over most people will think you are “nuts” but, hey, that’s basically the point isn’t it? If the idea is just to go flying there are simpler and easier ways to get that accomplished – just buy or rent a “Spam Can” and have at it.

Aviation, like almost any other endeavor, attracts a wide variety of personalities, for a wide variety of reasons. The owners of those personalities will also bring along a wide disparity in talents. Some of those personalities will be TOTALLY unsuited to the “roll your own” requirements of homebuilding. For those personalities there are still alternatives available to flying a mass-produced, FAA certified, looks like everybody else’s, totally predictable flying machine. Those alternatives (in order of increased skills needed) include purchasing a “factory assembled” kit plane, buying somebody else’s completed project, or opting for a “fast-build” kit that already has much of the hard work done for you. One step up the difficulty ladder is the full kit in which the factory supplies all you need but you must do all of the assembly.

Each of these alternatives requires certain amounts of time, effort, and MONEY before you have a living, breathing, super-widget capable of ‘breaking the bonds of earth and dancing the skies on laughter silvered wings.’\* For the truly adventurous soul, however, nothing can substitute for an airplane built from nothing but a set of plans and a pile of raw materials. The only thing beyond this lofty goal is to design your own plane and draw your own plans. Even I know better than to trust my bod to something that came out of my fertile but somewhat feeble mind.

So I chose to build from plans – not a big, fast, expensive, complicated plane, but plans-built none-the-less. The Pietenpol Air Camper is the product of the mind and skills of Bernard

Pietenpol, a very talented woodworker, machinist, tinkerer, and farmer. The original aircraft was constructed in 1928 with a friend producing plan drawings in 1932. The plans have since been modified somewhat and individual builders have put their unique “enhancements” into the design but brand new Air Campers are being built today that are substantially the same as that 1928 model. Just about anything that a builder might want to try has already been tried and proved or disproved. This gives the modern builder a unique sense of confidence in the robustness of the aircraft design while giving him (or her) a wealth of research material to delve into during the building.

“A wealth of research material,” I like that – it sounds so formal and organized. In reality, I started out with a set of rolled plans and about 1/8” of typed pages put together by Mr. P and his family and a copy of the original 1932 Flying and Glider Manual containing Mr. P’s words of wisdom.\*\* That simple beginning has grown by numerous books, reams of printouts from downloaded web sites, seven VHS tapes and a DVD produced by previous builders.

Finally, (or should I say “Last but not Least?”) the modern builder has available the work of those who have gone before and, hopefully, the direct observation of some of those who have already done it. In my case, I have been in direct contact with several builders, two of whom have flown their completed Air Campers for several years, and others who are still in the building process. The swapping of questions, answers, and anecdotes with these guys is a regular part of my routine. The good advice does not have to come from someone who is building (or has built) the same type of airplane that I am building either. Just belonging to the local chapter of EAA has put me in direct touch with knowledgeable, friendly fellow builders who are constantly free with useful help and advice. Oh, and seeing someone else’s completed and flying perversion – er - ‘version’ of the plane doesn’t hurt either.

It has been said that building an airplane is really just sitting down (or standing up as the case may be) and completing many small projects. Each small project miraculously comes together to form one big project somewhere down the line. This is quite fortunate in my case as I have a shop building that is definitely limited to small projects. At some point when the little projects start to meld, I will have to find a larger building space. For now it is very convenient to have all of my tools and materials close at hand. (So close, in fact, that I frequently have to crawl under my work table to get to the other side as there is no room to go around.) Not a problem! Besides if I were to build in the basement where there is plenty of room, I would have to move the home off the foundation to get the airplane back out. (Sharon says “NO!”)

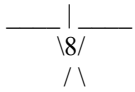
So, what do you think? Have I accumulated too many things to do and not enough time left in my “flying period” to get them done? Maybe I should just buy a propeller instead of trying to carve one. Or maybe I should have tried to find a half completed project and just finished it. Only time will tell. I read a disturbing statistic just the other day concerning old (eh – um) codgers like me who were taking flying lessons. It said that a HUGE percentage (I seem to recall 65%) would never complete their private license. It all boiled down to time and money. A similar statistic has been floating around concerning the number of airplane projects started versus the number completed – again a pretty dismal number. Do I really think that I can beat the odds? Darn tootin’! I never paid that much attention to statistics anyway. (Besides, “they” also say that 95% of all statistics are made up on the spot.)

What I do know is that it is important to stay focused on what needs to be done now and not worry too much about what has to happen sometime next year. As ‘they’ say, “Lord willin’ and the crick don’t rise” it’ll get done in its own time. Again, luckily, I don’t have a

'crick' running through my shop so I should be safe on that score. What I do have is a "Honey" that I will do anything for and she is pretty good at coming up with "honey do's" that have nothing to do with airplane building. I think I hear her coming now so I will sign off for the moment – nope, it's the grandson. "Blessings on you Little Man, barefoot boy with feet of..." ugh, what is that stuff between your toes?

Tom Stinemetze

The Airplane Nut



\* From the poem High Flight by Jonathan Gillespie Magee

\*\* Reprints available from the EAA Bookstore