



# The Flying Wire



**February 2025**

**Volume 64 Number 2**

## **Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association**

**Next Chapter Meeting: Wednesday, February 5**

**Dinner – 6:15 pm \$10**

**General Meeting – 7:00 pm**

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*\*\*control & click on each line to go directly to the page !*

## Program: February 5 Meeting

### **SPEAKER: Jordan Haines, Oakland ATC Controller**

Please join us for our February Chapter Meeting to welcome Oakland ATC controller Jordan Haines!

Jordan Haines is one of the voices we talk to when flying through Oakland's Air Route Traffic Control. Unlike many ATC controllers however, he's also a pilot. Jordan received his private license in 2009 at age 17 and has been flying all over California ever since. He moved to the Bay Area in 2014 and continued his flying journey, earning his instrument, commercial and CFI ratings all within nine months. In 2016, he accepted a trainee position in Oklahoma City as an FAA Air Traffic Controller and afterward was lucky enough to return to the Bay Area to work at Oakland Air Route Traffic Control Center in Fremont.

Jordan's perspective is unique. Though he continues to work full time as an air traffic controller, he also plies his trade part-time as a CFI. With over 15 years flying experience and nine years working as an air traffic controller, his distinctive journey has given him greater insights into the dance and interplay between pilots and ATC.

Come listen to Jordan and learn about the wisdom gained from a flying career lived on both sides of the line. Look forward to seeing you there!

### **Dinner Menu:**

Our February dinner is *Chicken and Sausage Paella and Artichoke Risotto with a Cesar Salad and Texas sheet cake*. Thanks to **Bill Conklin** and **Marlon Young** for providing this month's delicious-sounding meal! A BARGAIN at only \$10!!

## News and Updates

### **Old Members – Lifelong Connections!**

One of the best things about EAA Chapter 124 are the lifelong connections and experiences we all share together with our mutual love of aviation! We recently received the email below from an old Chapter member, **Jim Horn**. Jim worked closely with the C.A.F.E. Foundation as well as pulling off the amazing work they did with our Chapter in the past.

#### **Subject: Greetings from the Columbia River Gorge!**

*Just ran across the Chapter's terrific Web site. Delighted to see such a fine group still going strong! It was a great honor to be an active member when living there (1979 - 1990). Now working in Hood River as the electrical engineer designing Overwatch Imaging airborne intelligent camera systems. All your influence and that of the CAFE Foundation made this possible.*

*Best to you all, always! - Jim Horn, 707-327-6253 [wb9syn@arrl.net](mailto:wb9syn@arrl.net)*

## **Congratulations to Mike Cingari on Retirement!**

We'd like to congratulate EAA 124 Board & Chapter Member Captain Mike Cingari on his recent retirement from American Airlines! Mike's been a professional aviator for over 39 years, with his last 10 as Captain of a 787 Boeing Dreamliner! He's pictured below with his wife Gretchen in the cockpit on his last flight. Mike is an A&P, IA, CFI and ATP pilot and very active in the Chapter 124 community. We hope to see even more of him now that he has some extra time on his hands!

Stay tuned for an upcoming Chapter presentation this spring on Mike's adventures in a lifetime of flying! Chapter 124 is proud to have Mike and Gretchen as members and we wish him the best in his retirement!!



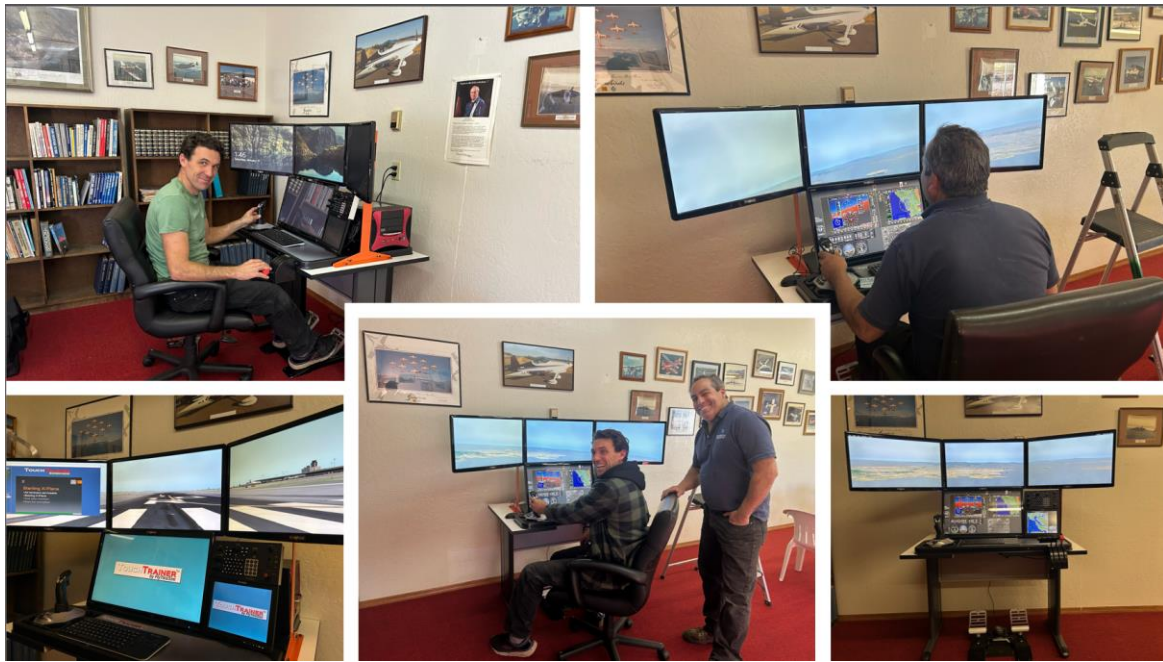
## **We Now Have a Flight Simulator!**

The New Year brought Chapter 124 some cool new gear! We are proud to announce that EAA Chapter 124 is the new owner of an FAA-approved IFR certified Flight Simulator!

The flight simulator station, made by FlyThisSim, is a complete Touch Trainer model loaded with the latest Cirrus aircraft and Garmin G1000 panel displays. Its main display of three contiguous flat panel screens show the flight environment, while two separate touch screens below display the Garmin G1000 and Cirrus Cockpit controls. It has the Cirrus side yoke, throttle control quadrant and rudder pedals, all mounted and contained on a factory designed and integrated table and stand.

The FAA-approved BATD simulator is now set up and fully operational in the rear of the main Chapter meeting room. We are currently creating start-up and shut-down checklists and will be laminating and attaching them to the desktop when they are finished. We're still exploring the workings of this piece of equipment and the extent of its capabilities, but we're very excited! Any Chapter member is free to use the simulator for official training or just to have fun!!





Special thanks to member **Scott Holder** who arranged for Chapter 124 to receive the simulator and flew down to the bay area to pick it up and drop it off at our hangar. We would also like to extend thanks to KSQL SR22 pilot **Michael Kobb** who so graciously donated the simulator to our Chapter. Board member **Jeremiah James** spent a Saturday assembling the simulator, screens, table and stand, and trouble shot the system extensively to get it to work. We are grateful for all their efforts to bring this great resource to our community.

Please help us to treat our equipment gently and with respect. We ask that you keep the simulator area clean and tidy and help us to take care of our newfound asset.

Problems, anomalies and operational questions should be directed to **Jeremiah James** at (707) 291-8445.

## Wine Country Flyers: A Search for a New Flying Field

For decades, Wine Country Flyers has served as a hub for model aviation enthusiasts of all ages, providing a space to explore the joys of flight, develop technical skills, and foster a strong sense of community. During this time, one of our persistent challenges has been providing people with a safe and secure flying site where people can gather and enjoy the hobby. Today, we are again looking for a new flying field.

### A Legacy of Flight in Sonoma County

Since its founding in 1989, the Wine Country Flyers club has been dedicated to promoting model aviation in Sonoma County. As a sanctioned member of the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA), we've always prioritized safety, education and fun. Our club provides a welcoming environment where members can learn, experiment and fly their creations, from beginners just taking off to seasoned pilots perfecting their techniques. It's a hobby that inspires curiosity and connects generations, with families like mine cherishing the opportunity to participate together.

One of our club's youngest members is my 13-year-old son, who has a deep passion for flying and model aircraft. It's incredible to see how flying has sparked his interest in science and engineering, and it's through clubs like ours that he and many others find a supportive community for learning, exploration and fun. As a parent, I see the value of this hands-on learning environment, which combines technical skill-building with outdoor recreation in a safe and regulated way.

### What We're Looking For

Our ideal site would feature approximately **2–3 acres of level land** for a runway, parking, and simple structures for shade and storage. Additionally, we need 10–20 acres of open space for flying. Importantly, our club's activities are designed to coexist with agricultural or other land uses, ensuring minimal disruption to the surrounding environment.

As stewards of any property we lease, the Wine Country Flyers are committed to maintaining the site with care. This includes mowing, repairing fences and keeping the area clean. We're also ready to negotiate reasonable rent, offering property owners a chance to gain additional revenue while supporting a meaningful community initiative.

### A Community Effort

We've been actively reaching out to local landowners. It's our hope to find a partnership that benefits both the landowner and our club, creating a win-win solution that allows us to continue nurturing the love of flight in Sonoma County.

If you or someone you know owns land that might be suitable for our needs, we would love to hear from you. This is more than a search for a new flying field; it's an opportunity to sustain a cherished community tradition that has brought joy and inspiration to countless individuals over the years.

### Contact Us

To learn more about the Wine Country Flyers or to discuss potential site opportunities, please reach out to us at:

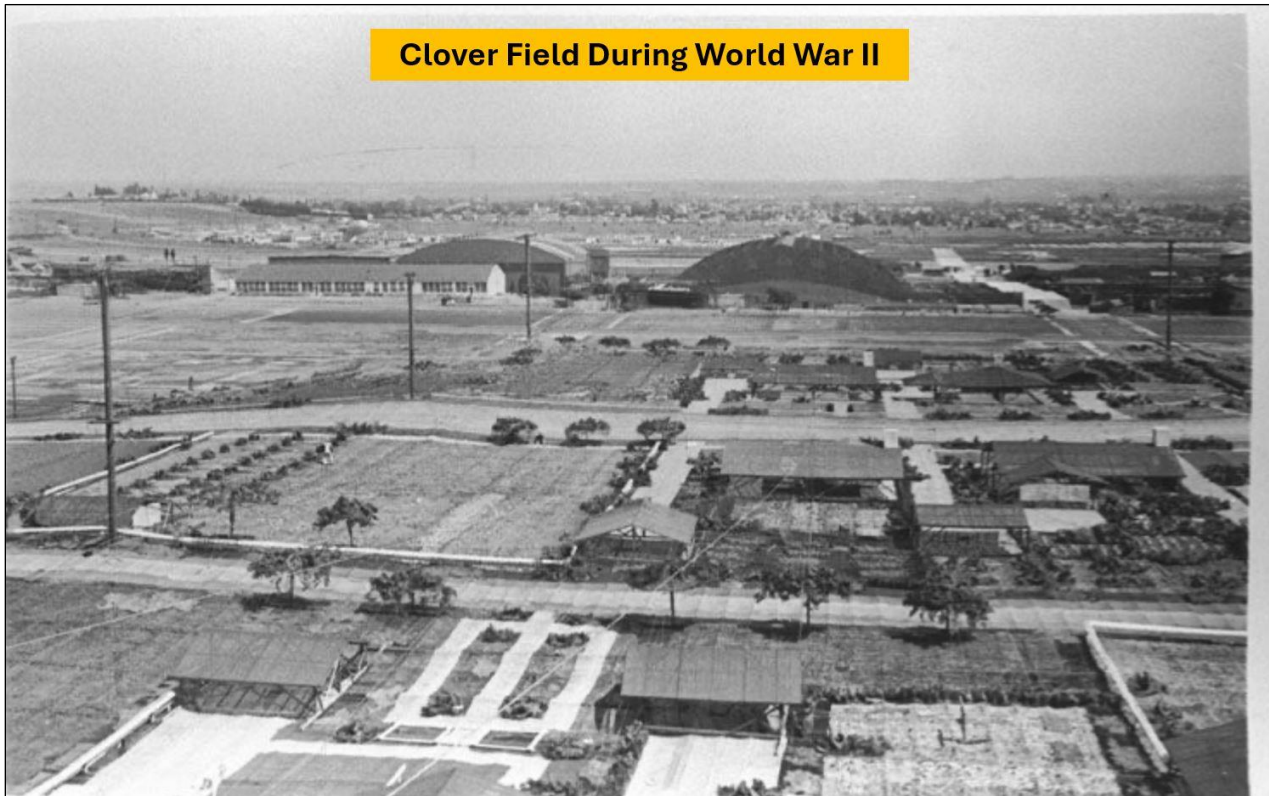
- Email: [kristin.nagata@gmail.com](mailto:kristin.nagata@gmail.com) or [contact@wcflyers.com](mailto:contact@wcflyers.com)
- Phone: **Kristin Nagata** at 949.294.4681

Let's work together to keep the spirit of flight alive and thriving in Sonoma County!



# The WWII Secrets of Clover Field

**The Camouflage of the Douglas Aircraft Factory during WWII**  
*By Richard Orton (reproduced here by permission of the author)*



*The camouflage at Douglas Aircraft was meant to look like a residential neighborhood. A dummy plant was erected on empty land to the south. There's a real runway in there somewhere, painted green. So effective was the deception that even Douglas's own pilots often had trouble figuring out where to land.*

## **Prior to WWII, Donald Douglas was already concerned**

Even before the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, **Donald Douglas** realized that his Santa Monica airplane factory was vulnerable to enemy attack. The company began in a small shed on Wilshire Blvd., but as they grew, they needed more room and moved their entire operation to Clover Field in the late 1920s.

The business grew exponentially with the introduction of the DC-3 in 1936 and as the winds of war grew stronger military contracts made them busier than ever. And more likely to become a target.

Donald Douglas knew that somehow he needed to make his factory invisible from would-be enemy bombers. They needed what came to be called officially "passive defense". But there was no precedent for disguising a huge factory such as the Santa Monica plant from the air. The coast was so near that the big hanger on Ocean Park Blvd. could be seen by the periscope of an enemy submarine.

Douglas challenged his engineers to come up with ideas. They initiated several studies to see how they might accomplish this. That's when they reached out to Hollywood.



### Movie special effects

Warner Brothers Studios volunteered. The Hollywood artisans' experience with building movie sets helped them understand the fundamentals of illusion - making the eye see something it doesn't actually see. The studio made an exact scale model of the Santa Monica plant and photographed it from simulated altitudes until the perfect plan evolved.

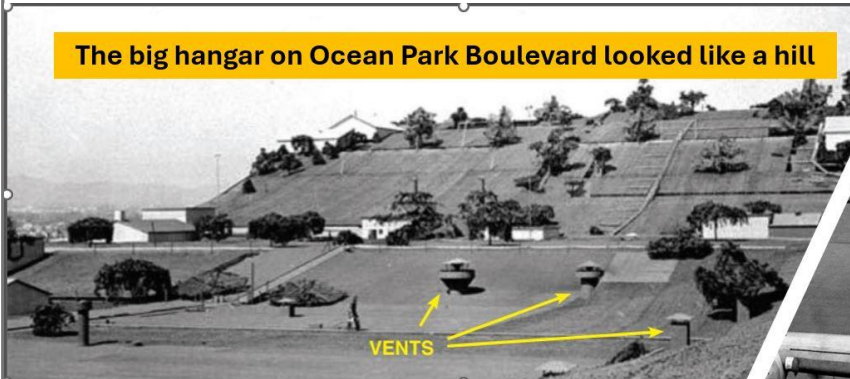
### An idyllic suburb made of chicken wire

The illusion of a suburban neighborhood was achieved by erecting 400 poles among the facility's various terminals, hangars and parking lots, then attaching a canopy made of nearly 5 million square feet of chicken wire and netting. Atop this mesh-like covering sat lightweight wooden models of suburban homes, including attached garages, fences and clotheslines complete with laundry swaying in the pleasant California breeze.

Next to these homes sat "trees" made of twisted wire and chicken feathers painted to look like leaves, which apparently smelled horrible whenever it rained. The tallest hanger was made to look like a gently sloping hillside neighborhood. Fake fire hydrants hid vents that helped circulate the air beneath the canopies and keep the factory workers comfortable.

To integrate this fake neighborhood with the surrounding town, the canopy was painted with streets and sidewalks that aligned seamlessly with the real-world streets and sidewalks on the north side of Ocean Park Blvd. The plant's runway—a dead giveaway to enemy aircraft—was painted green to look like a field of grass.

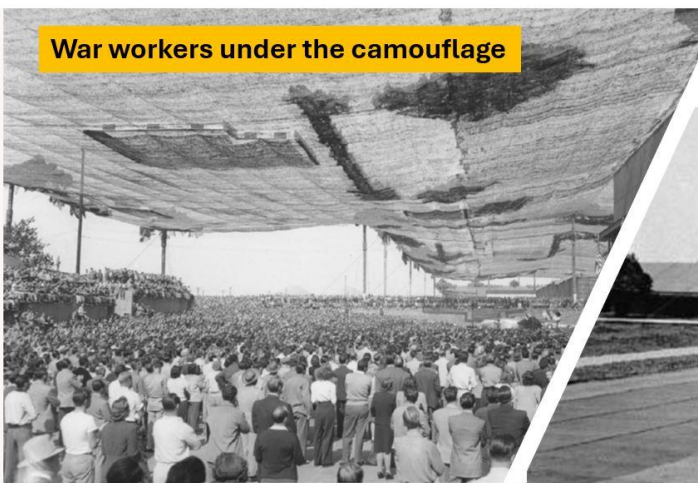
The big hangar on Ocean Park Boulevard looked like a hill



Under the camouflage war work continued



War workers under the camouflage



Fake road, fake houses, fake trees, fake telephone poles



### **Consider the importance of this effort**

If the Douglas factory burned, the military would lose the approximately 3,500 bombers and other planes it produced yearly, output that would take at least a year to restore.

Once the camouflaging was complete, the effect was so convincing that Douglas pilots had difficulty finding their home field and were forced to land elsewhere instead. To aid other confused pilots, Douglas stationed men on the runway and told them to wave red flags whenever planes were scheduled to land.

From the ground, the Douglas plant looked exactly like what it was: a factory churning out bombers. From the air, though, it resembled something entirely different: a leafy American suburb that could have been a set from an Andy Hardy movie. The disguise wasn't foolproof, but the illusion didn't need to be perfect; it just needed to be good enough. According to ***Douglas Airview***, "This would give defending planes and guns their chance. In the bookkeeping of war, that possibility is worth any cost."

### **The Army gets involved**

When the war started, the U.S. Army received orders that their engineers were to camouflage all endangered war plants. The army had their own ideas and gave orders not to deviate from those concepts. But when they found that Douglas had done the job so well an exception was made, and the work was allowed to remain. In fact, the Douglas camouflage became the template for other vulnerable plants across the country.

The man assigned to camouflage other plants was Army **Colonel John Ohmer, Jr.** An amateur magician, engineer and veteran of World War I, Ohmer's job for the army was to devise camouflaging and deception techniques. In 1940, before the U.S. was involved in World War II, he was visiting the U.K. to observe how the British used camouflage when he had the same insight into the future that Douglas had. He suddenly realized the U.S. was also vulnerable to an enemy attack.

### **Many local plants needed camo**

In Southern California, where Ohmer was stationed, Los Angeles was particularly vulnerable. The city was home to many of the nation's biggest aircraft manufacturers—including Douglas, Hughes, Lockheed and Northrop—which were already building warplanes for European allies.

This concentration of expertise and infrastructure—located perilously close to the coastline—was a ripe target for military juggernauts like the Japanese or Germans. In the first major war where airpower played such an essential role, the loss of just one of these plants could lengthen the conflict considerably.

Upon returning to the U.S. from Britain early in 1941, Ohmer, then a major, began proselytizing for the increased use of camouflage, urging his military superiors to do more. He believed that multiple targets, including Wheeler Field, the air base near Pearl Harbor, were vulnerable to attacks from a Japanese military that was already seizing other assets in the Pacific and expanding its area of control toward Hawaii. Ohmer even drew up a specific plan for disguising Wheeler.



### **Army brass didn't listen**

But Ohmer's bosses weren't convinced it was worth the effort. They thought that the estimated cost of \$56,210 to disguise the Hawaiian air base was too high.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked Pearl Harbor and other nearby sites. Wheeler alone lost 83 planes, each one costing roughly the same as Ohmer's camouflaging proposal. Fate had just converted him into that most unfortunate sort of prophet who is proven right.

Realizing it had been an error to ignore Ohmer, the army corrected course by placing him in charge of one of the most ambitious camouflaging operations in history - and one of the more curious assignments of World War II. From Seattle to San Diego, vulnerable assets would need disguising, including airfields, oil depots, factories, air-defense stations and military bases. Based on what he had seen Douglas do in Santa Monica, Ohmer expanded and elaborated, then reached out to all the major studios for help camouflaging factories and air bases throughout the West.

### **Operation Hollywood**

Hollywood was happy to help. In those years everybody went to the movies, maybe a couple times a week. The studios were swimming in profits and eager to help with the war anyway they could.

After Pearl Harbor, March Field in Riverside County, California, about 60 miles east of Los Angeles, looked more like a movie set than the U.S. Army Air Corps base it actually was. Here, Ohmer brought set designers, animators, art directors, landscape artists, carpenters, lighting experts and prop designers from the Hollywood studios, including Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Disney, 20th Century Fox, Paramount, Universal Pictures and Warner Bros. Among the bustle of military aircraft and training drills, these entertainment-industry professionals designed and built the sort of props they had created for many blockbuster movies.

Not only did these artisans know how to work fast and under pressure, but their experience with building movie sets also helped them understand the fundamentals of illusion.



*Two women working on a bomber at Douglas Aircraft, October 1942. Above the factory they were protected by the camouflage disguise created with the magic of Hollywood craftsmen and designers.*

### **At the Douglas Santa Monica plant during WWII**

- 7,309 planes were produced, delivering 18 planes a day
- 44,000 people were employed working 3 shifts.

### **U.S. mainland attacked**

The recent attack in Hawaii wasn't the only thing motivating Ohmer's crew to work fast. Less than three weeks after that disaster, a Japanese submarine—I-17, a fully loaded warship that housed a reconnaissance airplane in the forward section of its deck—was spotted off the coast near Salem, Oregon. On February 23, it resurfaced off the coast of Santa Barbara and fired on the Ellwood Oil Field, an oil storage facility located near Goleta Beach. During the next two weeks, it sank two American cargo ships sailing in waters between San Francisco and Cape Mendocino.

The physical damage from the Ellwood attack was minimal, but significant psychologically. Throughout the Pacific states, talk of another domestic attack dominated conversations and headlines as the Japanese captured Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore in a time span of barely two months. Facing the grim reality before them, Americans set to work preparing.

Did all that camouflaging work to confuse enemy bombers? We never found out because fortunately, the enemy bombers never came.

### **The Battle of Midway made a difference**

It's reasonably certain the Japanese would have attacked the West Coast if they had ever gotten the chance, but they were never able to advance so close to the U.S. again. In June 1942, the Japanese Navy suffered an enormous defeat at the Battle of Midway, losing 4 aircraft carriers and forcing it to abandon its plan to take control of the Pacific. Over the next three years, as the war progressed and U.S. forces advanced, the chances of a large-scale attack on the West Coast diminished.

### **Douglas Aircraft is now gone**

Today, there's no trace of the old Douglas plant that ran alongside Ocean Park Blvd. The plant has been demolished, replaced by a modern business park, and most of the people who worked there have died. Soon the airport itself will disappear, most likely replaced with a slew of new construction and housing imposed by the state and validated by our city council. Will we ever see a park there?

## EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes

**January 8, 2025**

Meeting Convened: 5:35 pm

Members in attendance: Dominic Cerniglio (President), Marlon Young (Vice President), John Whitehouse (Treasurer), David Franco (Secretary), Larry Rengstorf (Facilities), George Marshall, John Swanstrom, John Fluno, Jeremiah James.

A motion was made to approve the previous minutes. Minutes were approved.

**CAFÉ Hangar / Zenith Project:** All outstanding disputes relating to the former CAFE hangar occupants are hereby deemed resolved due to the return of the Zenith project airplane, which had been donated to the Chapter and illegitimately removed by the former tenant group.

The Zenith Project was also analyzed by the local Zenith representative. The existing fuselage is unable to be repaired and is worthless. The remaining kit components are in need of further inventory efforts and will be marketed for sale. The motion was made that the Chapter will not spend any money on the Zenith Project. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Newsletter Editor Change:** Stuart Deal has retired from his long-standing position as editor of The Flying Wire. The Chapter owes him a debt of gratitude for his efforts.

**Ray Scholarships Update:** The Sonoma EAA Chapter 1268 has reached out to share the partial scholarship award that they were awarded. Members are encouraged to volunteer for the Ray Scholarship Acquisition Board.

**Shade Hangar Clean Out:** The Chapter will attempt to sell the tall metal lockers and the street sweeper. They will be marketed for three weeks, starting January 8. Barring interest in the items, they will be sold for scrap value after January 31, 2025.

**Treasurer's Report:** Chapter coffers suffered a setback due to our insurance coming due this last month. A year-to-year comparison shows that the Chapter ran a modest deficit for 2024.

Meeting adjourned: 6.11pm

## EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes

**January 8, 2025**

Meeting Convened: 7:17pm

The president called the meeting to order and thanked the culinary crew for their delicious offerings. The president observed that over the previous year the meals have contributed \$2000 to Chapter coffers. The president recognized the extra efforts Gretchen and Mike Cingari have made towards rehabilitating the facility restrooms.

**Scholarship developments:** The Sonoma EAA Chapter contacted us in hopes of sharing the Ray Scholarship that they were lucky enough to receive.

**Treasurer's Report:** Last month the Chapter posted a modest deficit due to servicing our insurance premium. A year-end report was compiled which indicates the Chapter posted a manageable deficit which should be offset by increased fundraising this year.



**Newsletter:** In honor of Stewart Deal's long service as newsletter editor the Chapter has created a plaque commemorating his contribution to the Chapter newsletter.

**Presentation topic:** *How Not To Become A Tailwheel Accident Statistic.* Tailwheel instructor Richard Craig discussed the 10 commandments of tailwheel safety and shared numerous case study examples of poor tailwheel technique.

Meeting adjourned: 8:00 pm

## Chapter 124 Contact Information

<b>President:</b>	Dominic Cerniglio (24/25)	(310) 628-9008
<b>Vice President:</b>	Marlon Young (24)	(707) 479-9994
<b>Secretary:</b>	Dave Franco (23/24)	(707) 494-4259
<b>Treasurer:</b>	John Whitehouse (24/25)	(707) 217-2687
<b>Board:</b>	Mike Cingari (24/25)	707 280 0159
	George Marshall (23/24)	707 293 4583
	John Swanstrom (24/25)	707 758 9017
	John Fluno (23/24)	707 315 5524
	Jeremiah James (24)	707 291 8445
<b>Membership:</b>	Dave Franco	(707) 494-4259
<b>Facilities Chairman:</b>	Larry Rengstorf	(707) 570-5267
<b>Facilities Committee:</b>	Dwayne Green	(707) 544-4539
	Mike Fenn	(707) 481-5791
	Mike Tovani	(707) 838-1891
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	Rolf Unternaehrer	(707) 364-7935
<b>Flight Advisers:</b>	CJ Stephens	(707) 799-2878
	David Heal	(707) 838-0261 / (707) 953-5021
<b>Young Eagles:</b>	Josh Hochberg	(415) 999-0949
<b>Librarian:</b>	Open	

**EAA Chapter 124  
5550 Windsor Road  
Windsor, CA 95492**

Chapter meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. FOOD (\$10) AND SOCIALIZING (free) from 6:15 to 7:00 pm. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

**Directions:** The site is located on the west side of Sonoma County Airport. Take the Shiloh Road exit from Highway 101 in northern Santa Rosa. Turn left at the stop light (west) and continue to a "T" intersection. Turn left again and follow the road to the EAA sign on the left.

## **How to Submit an Article to the Newsletter**

Members are invited to submit articles of interest. You will be notified whether or not an article will appear in the current issue.

Email your article to: [jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com](mailto:jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com)

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted will be included in the newsletter at the discretion of the editor. All articles are copyrighted. To reproduce any article, please contact the editor.

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