



# The Flying Wire



**March 2026**

**Volume 65 Issue 3**

## **Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association**

### **Next Chapter Meeting: Wednesday, March 4**

**Dinner – 6:15 pm \$15**

**General Meeting – 7:00 pm**

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## Program: March 4 Meeting

### Speaker: Ben Marsh – Serial Warbird Aircraft restorer and Aviation fanatic!

Ben Marsh is one of a kind. Like a lot of us, he got bit by the Aviation bug as a kid. Like a lot of us, he's been involved with flying ever since. But in our opinion... Ben's taken it to a whole different level!

Ben's a serial aircraft restorer and builder and has done some amazing warbird restorations. He's been heavily involved with professional Air Racing and crewed with some great unlimited class race teams. Teams like Sanders and Dreadnought, Mike Brown and September Fury, Bob Button with Voodoo, and Ellsworth Getchell and his Sea Fury. He's also done some interesting work with telemetry analysis and Stevo Hinton's 3-kilometer speed record with Voodoo!

His Sonoma County roots run deep. He's been flying and working around here for years and much of his history is intertwined with us and our local aviation community. There are even unconfirmed rumors that he might have rode the beacon atop the KSTS control tower back in the day!

Come listen to Ben recount some of his amazing adventures and experiences in a life lived in aviation. It's sure to be a great night! We hope to see you there!



**Dinner Menu: A St Patrick's Day Feast!** Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage (lots of mustard!), Veggie Variety (potatoes, carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips), rye bread and butter, with Homemade Carrot Cake for dessert. **\$15**

**Slàinte!** (Good Health!)

# News and Updates

## Congratulations to Newly Qualified Pilot Sam James!



EAA Chapter 124 is proud to announce that our first Ray Scholar is also now our newest qualified pilot! **Sam James** passed his Private Pilot checkride on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Chapter 124 applied last year for the Ray Scholarship for the first time. After it was suggested by Bailey Caldwell, President Dom put together an impassioned plea to EAA to add Chapter 124 to the roster of EAA chapters receiving a scholarship for 2025. We were awarded the full scholarship of \$12k as reported at various Chapter meetings. After interviewing several deserving candidates, the nominating team universally selected Sam as the first recipient and his training began.

Sam worked during 2025 with CFI **Colin Rennard** with help from CFI **Campbell Potter**. **Dave Franco** generously volunteered the use of his Cessna 172 to help stretch the budget. After a final intense burst of training at Mike Smith Aviation in Napa, Sam took the checkride and was delighted to receive his temporary airman certificate that day. He will tell the story of his aviation journey at the Chapter meeting in March.

## Young Eagles 2026 – Volunteers Needed!

It's nearly that time of year again... we're already being bombarded with questions from parents about when we'll be holding our incredibly popular 2026 Young Eagles events!

Below is the schedule for 2026, and as always, we welcome your support. Please put the dates in your calendar, and if you are able to volunteer either as a pilot or on the ground, contact **Jenny Hollingworth** at [jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com](mailto:jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com) or at 650-483-5203.

Let's make this summer memorable for our future aviators!



## Prep for Chapter Dinners – Help Needed!

You may have noticed that our Chapter meetings are growing! This is great for the Chapter, but it also means that preparing our delicious dinners requires more and more effort. Our amazing Chefs Extraordinaire, **Sam and Andy Werback**, continue to do an outstanding job pulling it all together so that everyone can enjoy the dinner of the month. But this year, to keep the wheels rolling merrily along, we all need to give them some help.

Don't worry, you don't have to cook the whole meal (unless you want to!) The Chapter is looking for volunteers who can:

- ◆ Shop from a given list of ingredients
- ◆ Prepare vegetables and salads
- ◆ Provide desserts
- ◆ Offer stove top space at home to heat and then transport meals

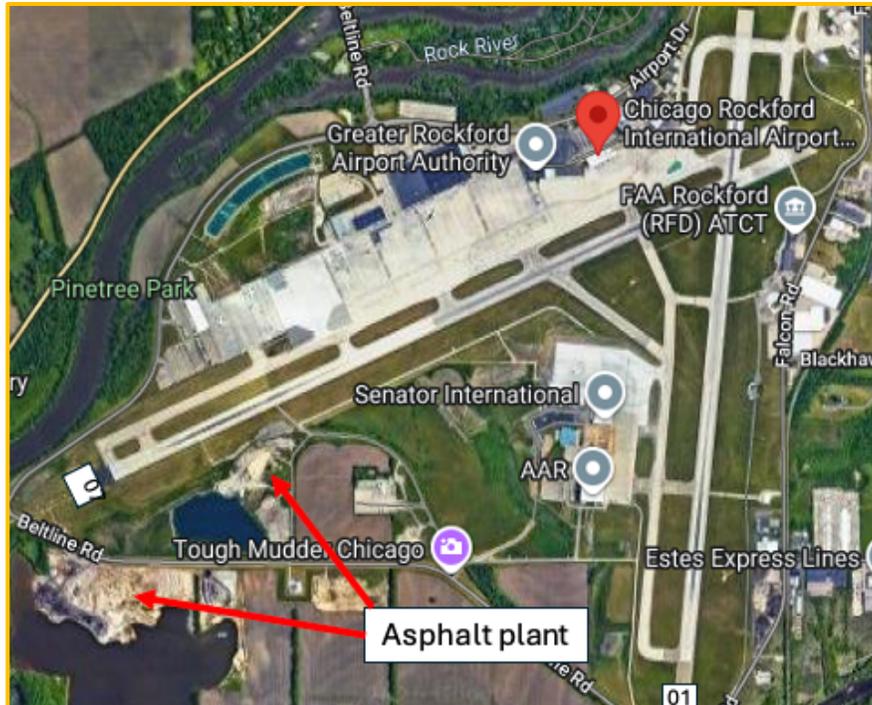
If this sounds like something you can do, on a monthly or just on an occasional basis, please contact Chapter President Dom Cerniglio ([dcerniglio@mac.com](mailto:dcerniglio@mac.com) or (310) 628 9008) for details.

*And thank you - we really appreciate your help!*

## Article: My First EAA Fly-in Was Not at Oshkosh

**By John Swanstrom**

The year was 1969, I was 18 years old and I had just graduated from Rockford East High School. I needed a summer job that would pay for my first year of college at the University of Illinois. With a lot of persistence, I finally convinced a blacktop contractor to hire me as a laborer for the summer. Their asphalt plant was located adjacent to the chain link fence at the South side of the Greater Rockford Airport. The job involved paving roads in the area from sunrise to sunset six days a week.



*Chicago Rockford International Airport*

One week I noticed a lot of interesting activity at the airport - lots of aircraft, people camping by their aircraft, and all of them clearly having a lot of fun. I wanted to see more, but since this fly-in event was in the daytime and I was working, I couldn't attend. But that Saturday we finished paving at 4pm, and I found myself looking through the chain-link fence at all the interesting things on the other side.

I decided this was my opportunity to explore. The entrance and parking lot was on the North side of the airport and at that time of day I'd have to park quite a distance away. I thought it might be easier to walk from where I was to the entrance... but that would still be a long way around the airport perimeter. Then I realized that all that was separating me from the fly-in was a chain-link fence, and being 18 years old, I decided to climb that instead. Thus, this became the first of my many EAA fly-ins.

According to [www.airplanesandrockets.com](http://www.airplanesandrockets.com), the 1969 Rockford Fly-in (actual photo on the left, aerial view on the right) attracted 527 aircraft on the ground, 600,000 attendees (I question this number), and 34,008 takeoffs and landings.



### **Paving Runway 1-25 at Greater Rockford Airport**

Not long after that event, my employer had a contract to asphalt resurface the main 07-25 runway. I spent many long, hot, humid days laying down 365 °F asphalt on that runway. By now I was an aviation enthusiast, and I thought how great it would be to someday land an airplane on this runway that I was paving. Little did I know then that someday I would do just that!



*The asphalt plant located next to the Rockford airport.*

## My Brief Meeting with Paul Poberezny

Towards the latter years of Paul Poberezny's life (he died in 2013), I was at a Zenith Aircraft builder's dinner in a tent near the Nature Center. Paul was also there and after dinner a group of us stood around him, listening to him talk. He told us about his desire to be buried on the EAA site, and the challenge of getting permits for it.

Then the conversation turned to the longevity of his association with the EAA, and he started asking the people around him when they had first attended EAA Oshkosh. When he asked me, I replied 1969. Paul smiled and said it wasn't in Oshkosh that year. I replied, "I know, it was in Rockford, Illinois" and told him about graduating from Rockford East High and working for the asphalt contractor at the South end of the airport. Then I confessed about climbing the chain-link fence on the final Saturday of the event. Paul smiled again. "Then you owe us the admission fee," he said, and with another big grin added, "Plus interest."

## From Paving the Rockford Runway to Finally Landing There

In 1969 I helped to pave the main 07-25 Runway at the Greater Rockford Airport. Now it was 2019 and I was back in town (after the EAA Oshkosh Fly-in) for my 50<sup>th</sup> Rockford East High School reunion. It was time to realize the dream of my 18-year-old self to land an airplane on Greater Rockford Airport's main runway.

I had previously called the Poplar Grove airport FBO to rent a C-172 and instructor. Their planes and instructors were quite booked up, but when I told the owner my story, he was very accommodating and promised that an airplane and instructor would be available when I wanted it.

On the day, my instructor warned me that the Rockford airport was much busier than it used to be - it was now the Chicago Rockford International airport, and served as the cargo hub for UPS, FedEx, and Amazon. He also advised me that GA aircraft are almost always assigned runway 01-19 because the 07-25 runway is typically very busy with the commercial cargo planes. Sure enough, I could tell from the tower traffic that there were a lot of UPS, FedEx and Amazon planes landing on it.

So I wasn't surprised, when I made my initial radio call to the tower, to be told to enter for runway 19 (my instructor said, "I told you so!"). But I then made perhaps my longest radio call ever to a very busy tower... "In 1969," I said, "I was 18 years old and I paved runway 07-25. I told myself that someday I would land on it. I'm back from California for my 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion and I'd really like to land on runway 07." Amazingly, my request was granted! The controller sequenced me behind an Amazon cargo plane and in front of a UPS plane for a touch-and-go landing on runway 07.

Even better - upon departing, the tower asked me where I was going and I told him to my hometown of Dixon, and that I'd be back for another landing. The controller replied, "We'll be sure and give you runway 07 again," and true to his word, they did.



## Article: Hunh? That's Weird...

**By John Fritsch**

An association of loggers asked my wife Lisa, a very unlikely lumberjack, to speak at their annual Reno convention in early January. Thinking about the physics of falling and rolling trees and chain saws, Lisa's topic of workplace safety was a perfect fit, so we were off for a little mid-afternoon trip over the hills, a rowdy party with burly guys in Pendletons, and an overnight at the Peppermill. The two of us traveling in our RV4 with a light wood prop always raises serious balance issues: formal and casual outfits and luggage go in the rear baggage way behind CG, and the dense, heavy stuff goes in the front baggage behind the instrument panel ahead of CG: wine; work and personal computers; books; oil; etc. This time, we had a brand new, big laptop that went up front with the other stuff, so it was quite a stack of stuff up there behind the panel.

All packed up, dripping with gas, with destination KRNO plugged into the Dynon and the early stages of a fading sunlight, we made an intersection departure with a little back taxi on 2 and Delta with a right turn on course to Reno. As we climbed away from STS, I rolled out on a heading I have taken dozens of times for places like Sac, Auburn, Truckee and Reno. I looked at the Dynon and the panel, and I thought: "Hunh, that's weird."



**What happened??**

**Answer:**

I knew the heading for KRNO from KSTS was about 055, and as we climbed out and adjusted for wind, the whiskey compass settled down to 058 degrees or so, and we settled down on to the Dynon course line from KSTS to KRNO. But the Dynon was indicating 117 degrees! And the little airplane icon was cranked around about 60 degrees clockwise from the course line. WTH????

Well, what did happen? When cramming all the stuff into the front baggage, Lisa's brand new computer was on top of the stack....and it was a very close to the Dynon magnetometer. Harrumph! We have carried computers up front for many years, but what I found is that the magnetic field of Lisa's (brand new) computer - whatever is in there - affects the magnetic field sensed by the Dynon magnetometer... and the trusty ancient whiskey compass that I have flown behind for almost 40 years was unaffected!

I ignored the Dynon for the rest of the flight. Just about an hour later after a glorious flight, we glided over the last hills in an approaching twilight and into Reno, and a friendly controller gave us left traffic 17L instead of the advertised 17R so we could coast right into Atlantic (parking nowadays at Atlantic was waaaay down at the end near 26...harrumph).



Food for thought, folks!

Tailwinds,

**John**

## EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2026

**Members in attendance:** Dominic Cerniglio (President), John Whitehouse (Treasurer), David Franco (Secretary), Mike Tovani (Facility Maintenance), Jeremiah James, Paul Hollingworth, George Marshall, Campbell Potter.

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm

**John Whitehouse** addressed the increased workload of the job of treasurer. Handling the myriad methods of electronic payment has posed an unexpected workload. At the next meeting an effort is going to be made to recruit an apprentice to learn the Chapter bookkeeping system in hopes of finding a long-term replacement, with the intention of dividing the duties of treasurer.

**Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer reported that Chapter coffers remain healthy. Increased membership and increased attendance at meetings, which results in more meals being sold, has made a noticeable contribution.

**Meal preparation options:** After studying the present system it seems that assisting Sam and Andy Werback with their very successful meal preparation routine is how the board can best help. Efforts will be made by others to shoulder the responsibility for meals through the year.

**Chapter outreach:** Paul Hollingworth reported that he will assist with aviation-related exhibitors at upcoming Pacific Coast Air Museum events. Paul reported he is exploring the idea of working with the Petaluma flying community to hold Young Eagles events at Petaluma's airfield.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 pm

## **EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes**

**February 4, 2026**

The president called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Great thanks and appreciation was extended to **Garton Tractor** for donating the pork, which was purchased from the Sonoma County Fair 4H auction. The quality of the prize-winning pork was tastefully evident! Special mention was made of the newly opened **Santa Rosa Hills senior care facility** for their help in slow roasting such a large quantity of pork.

The president then asked new attendees to introduce themselves and tell the assemblage something about themselves. Several shared their personal history and aviation interests and were welcomed into the fold.

It was announced that **Sam James**, our Ray Scholarship recipient, has scheduled his check-ride and may soon earn his private pilot's license. Special thanks went out to flight instructors **Campbell Potter, Colin Reynard** and **David Franco** for making his plane available.

### **Presentation Topic: Cross-County Flying in a Magni Gyroplane**

Paul Hollingworth, the Chapter's resident gyroplane expert, shared stunning images gathered from his open cockpit Magni gyroplane. His cross-country adventure through the Southwest gave the audience an appreciation for the incomparable visibility that only a gyro can provide.

His route took him to Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, Monument Valley and ultimately to Salt Lake City. His presentation and accompanying videos have, no doubt, planted seeds of interest among the audience. The vividness of the experience and rich coloring of the incomparable rugged terrain left an indelible mark of viewers.

We look forward to other such adventures. Paul has made it a mission to visit all of California's counties - so far he has visited all but two of the 58 in total!

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 pm

# Chapter Business

## Chapter 124 Contact Information

<b>President:</b>	Dominic Cerniglio (26/27)	(310) 628-9008
<b>Vice President:</b>	Marlon Young (25/26)	(707) 479-9994
<b>Secretary:</b>	Dave Franco (25/26)	(707) 494-4259
<b>Treasurer:</b>	John Whitehouse (26/27)	(707) 217-2687
<b>Board:</b>	George Marshall (25/26)	(707) 293 4583
	John Fluno (25/26)	(707) 315 5524
	Jeremiah James (25/26)	(707) 291 8445
	Paul Hollingworth (26/27)	(408) 802 9242
	Campbell Potter (26/27)	(707) 396 8042
<b>Membership:</b>	Dave Franco	(707) 494-4259
<b>Facilities Chairman:</b>	Mike Tovani	(707) 321-2740
<b>Facilities Committee:</b>	Jeremiah James	(707) 291 8445
	George Marshall	(707) 293 4583
	Dominic Cerniglio	(310) 628-9008
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	Kevin Quirk	(707) 888-3263
	Rolf Unternaehrer	(707) 364-7935
<b>Flight Adviser:</b>	David Heal	(707) 953-5021
<b>Young Eagles:</b>	Jenny Hollingworth	(650) 483-5203
<b>Chapter Roster:</b>	Mike Tovani	(707) 321-2740

**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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