

# The Flying Wire



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## Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association

Volume 60 Number 9  
**September 1, 2021**

**Board Meeting - 5:30 pm**

**Dinner - 6:30 pm \$7**

**General Meeting - 7:00 pm**

[www.EAA124.org](http://www.EAA124.org)

[www.CafeFoundation.org](http://www.CafeFoundation.org)

[www.EAA.org](http://www.EAA.org)

EAA Chapter 124  
5550 Windsor Road  
Windsor, CA 95492

--- Mail ---  
PO Box 6192  
Santa Rosa, CA 95406

## In Person Chapter Meeting

[Current CDC Guidelines](#) Describe how fully vaccinated folks can feel safe doing things they have not done while trying to stay safe from Covid. Common sense, masks, distancing and fresh air still offer a reduction in risk, which as pilots we can all appreciate.

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## September 1, 2021 Program

### Josh Hochberg:

What is going on at STS and beyond from the perspective available from the one and only Sonoma Count Jet Center. Josh has it covered from so many angles it is bound to be a great presentation.

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### Dinner Menu: September dinner is ... yet again!

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs with trimmings. Along with Baked Beans and Super Salad. The special Dessert is Fiddle Faddle. \$7 please.

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## Events Calendar

Please send info about upcoming events!

**California Capital Airshow: September 24-26**

[California Capitol Airshow](#)

Bob Gutteridge: [bob\\_gutteridge@pacbell.net](mailto:bob_gutteridge@pacbell.net)

Stuart Deal: [eaal24newsletter@sonic.net](mailto:eaal24newsletter@sonic.net)

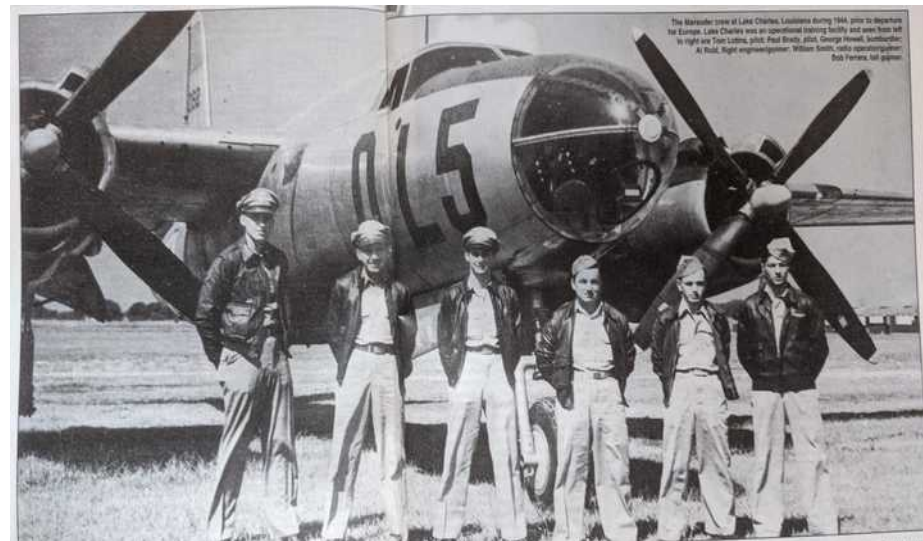
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## Lockheed Constellation - Voices from the Past

(by Andy Werback)

The Lockheed Constellation - Connie for some. Trans World Airlines, a.k.a. TWA. Howard Hughes. Voices from the Past.

My Uncle Tom Lotina flew for TWA. He flew the Connie. Later on, he transitioned to the Boeing 707. End of the piston engine age, start of the jet turbine age. Lt. Lotina was a B-26 pilot, Army Air Corp, WWII, in France and Germany, late in 1944 and early 1945. 557 Bombardment Squadron, 387th Bombardment Group. They had a good crew - his tail gunner, Sgt. Bob Ferrara, shot down an ME-262. (Uncle Tom is the tall guy on the left). The Martin B-26 Marauder was an awesome airplane. Not a widow maker once you got to know her.



But this story is about the Constellation. A military and commercial aircraft, born and matured in the turbulent days surrounding World War II and the post-war era.

The Lockheed Constellation was a unique airplane in many ways. The Lockheed concept for a large transport aircraft was

developed in 1939, well before the start of WWII. Development was slowed by the priority for other war efforts and the availability of suitable engines, but it first flew in 1943, well before the Douglas DC-6 which had its first flight in 1946.

For comparison, both the Connie and DC-6 were “large” aircraft, for that time. Later versions of the Connie eventually reached 137,000 lb maximum takeoff weight with a 126’ wingspan, while the DC-6 was about 105,000 lb and a 117.5’ wingspan. They both had 4 radial piston engines. The Connie used the Wright R-3350 Duplex Cyclone rated at 3250 HP (same basic engine as the Boeing B-29), while the DC-6 used the well-proven and reliable Pratt and Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp (about 2400 HP, maximum takeoff power).

Just a few years earlier, 1935 for instance, the Boeing 314 Clipper was the premier long-range transport aircraft. The 314 had a 152’ wingspan and was powered by 4 Wright R-2600 engines (1400 HP. This engine also powered the North American B-25, famous for the Doolittle raid in April 1942). But the Clippers only carried about 24 passengers at 210 MPH. The DC-6 and Connie both cruised at well over 300 MPH and at much higher altitudes.

We flew the Connie many times in the early 1950’s, from Los Angeles to Chicago and back. Mostly night flights going to Chicago and evening flights coming back. I distinctly remember coming back in to Los Angeles in the late evening with the valley covered in a layer of fog. All of the car dealers had war-surplus searchlights going, with 4 or 5 at a time tracing patterns in the fog. And then taxiing all over LAX with the blue taxiway lights.

But the Connie was special. It was different. Elegant. Nothing but curves and long legs.

It had a triple tail – not to make it look unique, but so that it could fit in a hangar.

The tail was placed at the top of the aft fuselage, to be out of the propwash.

The wing design came from the Lockheed P-38 Lightning – just scaled up a bit.

The Chief Research Engineer was Kelly Johnson. Later, chief of

Lockheed Skunkworks...

No two fuselage frames were alike – the fuselage curved gracefully down towards the nose, and back up toward the tail.

The engines were the most powerful then available. Turbo-compound - Superchargers and Power Recovery Turbines (PRTs, driven by engine exhaust, directly driving to the crankshaft for an extra 450 HP. One PRT for every 6 cylinders). Fuel injection instead of carburetors.

And Howard Hughes liked it. He didn’t design it. He didn’t fund it. But he did want a new airliner very badly and he wanted a lock on it so he could have it for TWA before other airlines could get it. He did specify its performance – speed and range. Hughes set coast-to-coast records in it, stopping at Wright Field in Ohio to give Orville Wright some right seat time (his last flight, actually).

Some notable pilots flew the Connie. One of them was Gene Roddenberry, creator of the Star Trek TV series and several Star Trek motion pictures, who had been a WWII B-17 pilot. He flew the Connie for Pan American World Airways. He was famous for surviving the crash of Pan Am Flight 121, a L-049 Constellation, in the Syrian desert in 1947. He was able to organize the survivors and find aid for their recovery.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan\\_Am\\_Flight\\_121](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Am_Flight_121)

But as the Gene Roddenberry story indicates, the Connie was not the perfect airliner. It took a long time to mature, with many faults due to the engines. Many parts were made of magnesium, and almost any fire could turn into a major problem.

The Connie was known as the best “3-Engine Airliner” that every flew. Many times, the flight would be completed with 3 engines. But there actually was a 3-engine Connie – An engine fire resulted the #3 engine and prop falling off, and the aircraft survived a belly landing on a 4500’ grass strip. The #3 engine mount was removed and faired over. It took off on 3 engines to be repaired and fly again. Drop a couple of names? Vivian Leigh and her husband Lawrence Olivier were on that flight.

But to be honest, this was the age of passenger flight insurance. The ticket counters at all of the major airports were

close to rows of flight insurance machines. And for good reason. The CAA and NTSB hadn't really kicked in at the time, there was still a lot to be learned. I recall insurance machines into the 1980's, at least, well into the era of modern jet transport aircraft.



In the case of the Constellation, there were numerous accidents, incidents, and more than a few events beyond anyone's control. Lockheed Constellation Accidents (Wiki) show the following data:

	1943-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1988	Total
Crashes or Fatal	12	37	40	10	99
Flights					
Crashes/ Aircraft	17	57	48	16	138
Lost					
Total	22	62	49	19	152
Accidents					
Fatalities	236	1088	921	56	2301

The crashes amount to about 5 or 6 per year, or one every couple of months. Of course, there were thousands of successfully completed flights, and many aircraft flew for years without an issue. But of the 886 Constellations built, over 16% or 138 were lost to all causes.

Crashes covered many categories. The usual - Pilot/crew error. Engine fires. But even in those days, things happened. In-flight bombs, shot down (one by North Korea and one by Bulgaria), and hi-jacking (that has been going on for a long time!). Mid-air collision (over the Grand Canyon). Plus just plain unknown - disappeared. Fires were frequent - many aircraft lost an engine, and sometimes a runaway engine or prop could take out another engine. Sometimes there was a mechanical failure with the landing gear. The list goes on. But it's fair to say that it wasn't just the Constellation, other aircraft had problems too. The British Concorde - metal fatigue, for example. The Boeing 337 (or Convair B-36) with R-4360 engines. Even the Boeing 707 - parts would fall off or a fire could take out a wingtip (Pan Am Flight 843). You had to be tough to go fly.

But the Constellation was a grand airplane. Big, powerful. Fast. Sophisticated. Flew above most of the weather. Also an excellent airplane for the military - transportation, weather, radar search (before the E-3 AWACs). After jets took over the passenger routes, the Constellation survived for many years as a cargo/freight or specialized mission aircraft, including smuggling and operations in war-torn areas. A classic airplane. Good to go back and take a look at it.





## Fly Mart

Please send changes to [eaal24newsletter@sonic.net](mailto:eaal24newsletter@sonic.net)

**Your ad here (5-21)**

What you have for sale and how to reach you

707-555-1234

YourEmail@YourISP.com



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## News / Notes From the Editor Treasurer

A note from John Whitehouse

I have two items of note for our members:

First, the board has elected to raise our chapter dues starting with 2022. (It is the first increase in many years.)

Dues starting in 2022 will be \$50/year.

We will encourage early payers by deducting \$5, if you pay before the end of the calendar year. In other words, \$45 if paid before 12/31/2021.

All dues payments received now will be credited to 2022.

Members who wish to be included in the roster should pay dues on or before the February meeting.

Again, please note that to be a full chapter member enjoying membership privileges, one must also be a member of EAA National.

Second, for those who would prefer using online payments, we now can accept PayPal for payments.

Our PayPal account name is a chapter email,

[eaachapter124@gmail.com](mailto:eaachapter124@gmail.com)

We are working on a new website design as well, and there is a "button" to directly link to our PayPal account. Hopefully this will be a new, fresh design that can be updated and changed more easily than our old one.

This is a home website feature being offered by EAA National.

Thank you all for your continued support and membership, it's great to see your smiling faces again!

## Interesting Aviation Links

(Thanks David Heal)

Flying Tiges [Click Here](#)

## EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes August 4, 2021

Meeting Convened 5:30

July Meeting Minutes Adopted

Board Members: Marlon Young (President) John Whitehouse (Treasurer) David Franco (Secretary) Bob Gutteridge, Dominic Cerneglio, Larry Rengstorf, Brien Seely, Mike Fenn, Dan Steinhoff, Josh Hochberg

Zenith Project: No progress

Motorhome: No progress

Open House: Still on scheduled for Aug. 21, but Young Eagles event is cancelled.

Pay Pal: Has been setup for remote payments via the new website.

Website Update: The page is getting setup, but not yet ready for full transfer.

Dues Motion: January 1st due date. Pay dues early for a \$5 discount (\$45) Before Feb. in order to get into the roster. Fee after Feb meeting would be \$50 per year. Carried by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: The coffers suffered an expected setback this month due to payment of our Sonoma County Tax obligations. Tie downs and hangar tenants are largely paid up to date.

Facilities Report: Outside tie-downs rate increase will be on the agenda for the next agenda. The county is still expressing interest in paving the access road.

Nominating Committee Update: Candidates for most vacated positions have been recruited with the exception of (1) Board Member (1) Secretary

September Meeting: Josh Hochberg will craft a presentation.

BBQ Rebuild: Payment for the used materials reimbursement \$200 has been approved.

Propane Tank Re-fill duty: Dominic Cerneglio will assume responsibility for filling the tanks.

Next Agenda: Cafe Hangar door repair, Covid compliance with new directive requiring masking indoors, even for vaccinated individuals.

Meeting Adjourned- 6:30 pm

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

### **August 4, 2021**

Meeting Convened 6:30 pm

The president, Marlon Young, welcomed new attendees to the gathering and announced that the Aug 21 open house is still planned, however, the Young Eagles portion of the event has been

canceled.

Builder Progress Reports- Mike Tovani relayed that he had gone to the Rans factory and built a tail component for his plane, which should arrive in kit form in the coming months.

Event Announcements: The 4th annual Gathering of Warbirds Renunion and Classic Car Show will be held at Madera Airport on Saturday Oct. 23, 2021.

Hot Dog Thursdays: Are again being held at the Pacific Coast Air Museum the first Thursday of every month from April through October 11:30 to 1:30

Elaine Gee Oshkosh Presentation: Elaine shared her Oshkosh experience with those in attendance. Her experience included hopping a ride aboard a locally based DC-3 which conducted a practice formation flying exercise in preparation of the plane's participation an actual airshow flyover. She recounted her thrilling experience and subsequent purchase of a Cubcrafters NXcub. As it turned out she and her husband were invited to camp with an EAA Chapter that has a standing reservation for prized camping spaces, and they extended an invitation to members of our chapter to join them next year.

David Franco's Oshkosh Adventure: He relayed his cross country adventure, which involved a layover at a grass strip in Chanao Illinois. It was from there that a group of planes all exited for Oshkosh with an exuberant mass exodus. David then shared his first experience with the extraordinarily crowded arrival airspace over Oshkosh. He reported that most participants praised the instituted changes the inbound approach instructions which alleviated much of the usual chaos. He highly recommended the Lycoming sponsored engine rebuilding seminars held throughout the week long event.

Meeting Adjourned- 7:30 pm

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## Chapter 124 Contact Information

**President:** Marlon Young (19/20) (707) 479-9994  
**Vice President:** Ben Barker (20/21) (707) 838-0238  
**Secretary:** Dave Franco (20/21) (707) 494-4259  
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**Facilities Chairman:** Larry Rengstorf (20/21) (707) 575-0331

**Facilities Committee:** Dwayne Green (707) 544-4539  
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Jerry Rice (707) 431-0206  
Kevin Quirk (707) 539-8589  
Doug Dugger (530) 526-4997  
Rolf Unternaehrer (707) 763-7729

**Flight Advisers:** CJ Stephens cell: (707) 799-2878  
David Heal home: (707) 838-0261  
cell: (707) 953-5021

**Young Eagles:** Josh Hochberg (415) 999-0949

**Librarian:** Walt Ferris (415) 482-8331

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### 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 (\$7 sometimes \$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.

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

Please email articles to: eaa124newsletter@sonic.net  
or mail to: Stuart Deal  
430 Secretariat Ct  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted after that date 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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