

The Flying Wire



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Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association

Volume 61 Number 3
March 2, 2022

Board Meeting - 5:30 pm

Dinner - 6:30 pm \$10

General Meeting - 7:00 pm

www.EAA124.org

www.CafeFoundation.org

www.EAA.org

EAA Chapter 124
5550 Windsor Road
Windsor, CA 95492

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

March 2, 2022 Program

Introduction To Gyrocopters New member, Paul Hollingsworth has graciously volunteered to share his passion and speak about his experience with these fabulous machines.

Dinner Menu: The March Menu is Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage (lots of mustard!), Veggie Variety (potatoes, cabbage, carrot, parsnips, rutabaga), Rye Bread and butter, and Homemade Carrot Cake for dessert. \$10

Events Calendar

Please send info about upcoming events!

Doolittle Raiders - April 16 at Vacaville, KVCB Freedom of Flight Museum dinner event, 5-10 PM, with special guest speaker Jonna Doolittle to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Doolittle Raid.
<http://rowlandfreedomcenter.org/>

Gathering of Warbirds – May 21 at Madera KMAE
<https://www.warbirdsreunion.org/tickets.php>

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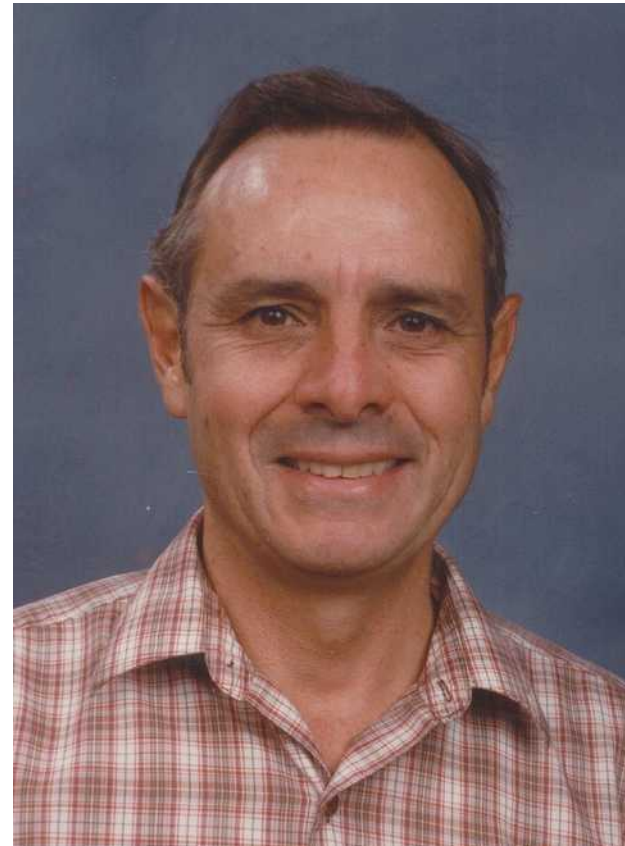
Things to think about...

By Andy Werback

Many times, it is interesting to see what's behind the headlines. I've seen a couple of announcements for friends from my original chapter, EAA 62 (San Jose), plus one of our members. The first one is for Bob Bissiri, EAA 124, published last year by Santa Rosa

Mortuary. Most of us knew him, a quiet guy with a long association with airplanes. The last 2 are EAA members from Gone West in the February 2022 issue of Sport Aviation. Rita Eaves and her husband Leonard were very much involved with home-built aviation – She was a member of the 99's and EAA. And you may have seen one of Merwyn Taylor's airplanes in the EAA museum!

I thought their stories were worth reading and remembering.



Robert John Bissiri

1924 - 2019

Obituary of Robert John Bissiri

Robert John Bissiri, or Bob to his friends and family, passed away at home in Santa Rosa on May 31, 2019. He reached the age of 94 years, 8 months, just one year shy of his personal goal of

surpassing the lifespan of his mother. Bob was born in Los Angeles to Lucile Danks Bissiri, a primary school teacher and his father Amerigo W. Bissiri, a dentist, on September 10, 1924. He was raised in Los Angeles and from a young age expressed an interest in all things mechanical and scientific. He attended University High School in the West Los Angeles neighborhood near UCLA.

As with many of the aptly named "Greatest Generation", Bob answered the call to join in the war effort during WWII. He received his military induction notice in February of 1943 at the tender age of 18 but was allowed to graduate high school prior to reporting to US Navy boot camp in San Diego. Because of his natural mechanical abilities Bob qualified for advanced technical training as an Aviation Machinist's Mate, 3rd Class, receiving such training in Norman, Oklahoma and Vero Beach, Florida. Bob was very proud of the fact that he was one of the first aircraft mechanics to regularly work on the then-new Grumman F6F Hellcat fighter aircraft. He also worked on all the other single-engine aircraft assigned to the carriers of the Pacific Fleet, including the Vought F4U Corsair, Curtiss SB2C Helldiver, and Grumman TBF/General Motors TBM Avenger torpedo bomber. While not assigned to an aircraft carrier, he was none-the-less proud of his service while stationed with a CASU unit state-side during (as he put it) "...the Battle of Los Alamitos, California".

Upon his return to civilian life after his discharge from the Navy, he returned to the West L. A. neighborhood of his youth and enrolled at Santa Monica City College where he met a demure and attractive co-ed named Deanna Van Leeuwen. Bob went on to earn his primary school teaching credential from California State University, Long Beach in 1949 and after a courtship of several years Bob and Deanna wed in December 1952. The young couple then moved to the oil-boom town of Taft, California where Bob taught in a school run by Chevron Oil that served mainly the children of oil-field workers. While Bob found the teaching position in Taft satisfactory, the draw of family called him back to Los Angeles County, where he obtained a teaching position with the Redondo Beach Unified School District in 1953. Bob was very popular with his charges, especially the junior high school kids, since he taught general science subjects during the post-Sputnik era when government agencies were keen in getting school children excited about

science, math, and engineering. He was famous for his scientific "demonstrations" where he would show how to make explosive gun-cotton, ignite magnesium flash-powder, burn sodium metal, make choking smoke-bombs, and send methane-gas balloons with timed fuses into the air above the school and then produce a fireball above the children's heads. However, as he would say years later "...lawyers and timid superintendents took all the fun out of teaching" when such methods of instruction were viewed as a bit more risky than the district was willing to tolerate. Unfazed by the increasing safety restrictions he continued to teach, obtained a master's degree in education, and stayed with the district until his retirement in 1986, rising through the ranks to eventually become a vice-principal.

But it was never all work and no play, for children and the long summer vacations occupied much of his leisure time. He and Deanna had three children together: a daughter, Robin and then two sons, David and Christopher. His kids, in turn, often were drafted into being one of his shipmates during the many years that he sailed the waters off the coast of Southern California. Many of these outings would include exploring the harbors of Catalina and two-week long excursions circumnavigating all of the Channel Islands except for San Nicholas and San Clemente Islands, which were property of the U.S. Navy and off limits to civilian sailors. Many years later, his adventuresome spirit prompted him to crew a racing yacht from Honolulu, Hawaii to Los Angeles Harbor, 16 "fun-filled" days across the Pacific.

About 15 years after retirement Bob and Deanna decided to relocate to Santa Rosa where his oldest son, David, resided. Bob found Sonoma County quite beautiful and noticed the great weather. In fact, he noticed that it was "perfect flying weather" as he had been taught by his squadron commander from his Navy days. Not to let a good opportunity pass him by he decided, at the young age of 88, to finally fulfill a life-long goal and go to flight school and learn to pilot an airplane. This he did and was able to solo at the age of 92 in the light-sport category of aircraft. He continued to fly until the age of 93, but only stopped because the favorite airplane that he rented, a Technam Sierra, was grounded

for extended routine maintenance. However, he satiated his need for speed by driving his vintage '66 Porsche 912 coupe on the numerous beautiful country roads of Sonoma County. In addition to flying and driving his Porsche, his other interests included membership in several historical societies, was a Son of the American Revolution, loved classical music and poetry, and true to his teaching career enjoyed reading an eclectic variety of books. He nurtured curiosity and wonder in many people, young and old, who came in contact with him throughout his remarkable and long life.

In addition to his wife and children, Bob is survived by his sister Beverly; three grandchildren Ryan, Aurora, and Sebastian; son-in-law Owen Lewis; daughter-in-law Kimiko; and his cousins Paul Bissiri and Roma Bissiri Vosbigian



At 93, Rita Eaves maintains interest in aviation

BY KYLE SCHWAB KSCHWAB@OPUBCO.COM

Published: Sun, November 10, 2013 12:00 AM Updated: Sun, November 10, 2013 5:00 PM

Rita Eaves, 93, (EAA 2194) shares memories of her life and her 65-year marriage to late husband, Leonard Evans, who died in March, 2012 at age 92, when the small homebuilt plane he was piloting crashed near Yukon. Jim Beckel - THE OKLAHOMAN

MOORE — Rita Eaves misses her husband of 65 years, but takes solace in knowing he died doing what he loved.

Leonard Eaves, 92, lost his life on March 3, 2012, in the crash of his home-built airplane.

"The good Lord took him the way he wanted to go," said Rita, 93, of Moore. "For the last 10 years, he said, 'If I have to go, I want to go in the airplane.' And that wasn't his decision, but he got his wish."

The accident happened on a day Leonard was heading to Ponca City for a monthly fly-in breakfast with some buddies.

"I threw him a kiss and he threw one back," Rita said. "And that's the last time I saw him."

While flying over Yukon, Leonard noticed the canopy was loose in his Skeeter 1M airplane. In an attempt to land at Clarence E. Page Municipal Airport to fix the problem, he lost control, crashing the plane.

A National Transportation Safety Board report said he was coming in for a landing when he noticed another airplane on the runway. The fatal accident occurred as he turned his airplane away from the runway.

Rita was taken to the crash site and instantly recognized the plane.

Being able to see the wreckage, as well as knowing Leonard died the way he would have wanted, gave Rita some closure. But she still wishes she could have seen him one last time.

When they first met, she had a big interest in airplanes, but Leonard was afraid of them.

"He had been bombed so many times in World War II that he was afraid of airplanes," Rita said. "Every time one came over (his auto repair) shop, he would run and take cover."

Leonard's fear of flying didn't alter her dreams of flight.

After a couple years of easing him into the idea, Rita teamed up with a friend of Leonard's to get him inside a cockpit.

"Leonard took his first ride in an airplane and he crawled out of the airplane and he said, 'Let's learn to fly,'" she said, imitating Leonard's excitement by throwing her arms up.

Only a month later, Rita and Leonard bought their first plane.

"We started our aviation career," she corrected herself, "not career but fun, in March of 1949."

From then on, aviation was their life.

Leonard earned his pilot's license in August 1949. Rita got her license in December 1951.

They bought their second plane, a four-place Stinson Voyager, in 1950 but sold it in 1956 because it had become too costly.

They joined the Experimental Aircraft Association, an organization for aviation enthusiasts, and learned about home-built airplanes.

With nothing but a set of old automobile tools, a backyard garage and a history of working on cars, Leonard was determined to construct a flying machine. He bought plans and parts, and Rita and Leonard were on a journey back to the sky.

"It was a novelty," Rita said.

Every day after work they would spend hours in that garage, getting visits from neighbors and others curious for a peek.

Some 2,300 hours and 19 months later, the couple had their first home-built airplane. They later completed a second home-built plane. This second project was a bigger undertaking. Leonard wanted to build a plane of his own design, and that's what he did, spending six years in the process.

Leonard ended up designing three more planes.

Rita said Leonard would have to update his pilot's medical certificate each year, as well as perform check rides every two years. He had all his proper certifications at the time of the crash. Advanced age alone doesn't exclude a person from maintaining a private pilot's license.

Today, Rita is no longer flying, but she maintains her interest in aviation. Though Leonard is gone, Rita is never far from a memory. Her walls, shelves and drawers overflow with old photos, articles and scrapbooks.

"I think Leonard and I probably had one of the most exciting lives in aviation," she said. "It bonded us closer. We both loved the flying and we loved the association with friends that flew."

Rita Dreessen Eaves

September 3, 1920 - May 24, 2019

Rita Dreessen Eaves, September 3, 1920 - May 24, 2019, 98 years old, was born in Moore, Oklahoma to Anna (Harms) Dreessen and Henry P Dreessen. She married Leonard R Eaves December 21, 1946. Rita retired from Southwestern Bell after 30 years of service. She was a pilot and long-time member of the 99's and EAA. Along with flying, Rita enjoyed golf, gardening and training her ever present family dogs. But most importantly she loved her family. Rita was preceded in death by her husband, Leonard, three sisters, Imogene Stuhr, Mildred Calhoun, Coletta Ulrich, brother, Howard Dreessen and nephew, Steve Ulrich. She is survived by her sister, Bernita Thornhill, nieces, Marsha Derby, Donna Lawley, Carole Thompson, Linda Fenoglio, Barbara Shroyer, Becky Calhoun, and Janet Johnson, nephew, Gordon Thornhill and numerous great-nieces and nephews. Services will be 11:00 am, Thursday, May 30 at St. Andrews Catholic Church, 800 NW 5th Street, Moore, Oklahoma.

Published on May 27, 2019



Obituary: Merwyn (Mert) Taylor, 90

Posted on: December 8, 2021

On December 6, 2021, Merwyn (Mert) Taylor “slipped the surly bonds of earth.” Among other things, he was a farmer, aviator, vintner, inventor, and craftsman.

Although aviation was his first love, his wife, Marilyn (Mike) was his true love. They were married for 69 years before her death in 2019. Together, they raised five children: Dianne (Dick) Dunham, Sally (Steve) Watson, Donna (Scott) Allenstein, Steve (Chelli) Taylor and Frank (Lisa) Taylor. They, along with his 16 grandchildren, their spouses, and 36 great-grandchildren, were his pride and joy. Last August, they all gathered to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Mert learned to fly as a teenager. He loved flying, especially giving rides to family and friends, introducing them to the joys and freedom of flight. He designed and/or built six planes, one of which is donated to the Experimental Aircraft Association museum. He

was an early member of the EAA and proud of his low membership number – 156. He dedicated many years to the association and loved working in the Com Center with his “second family.” In July, his family joined to honor him as a Volunteer of the Year and to place a brick inscribed with his name in Volunteer Park in Oshkosh.

Mert was one of the founding members of the LaGrange Volunteer Fire Department and served as its chief for six years. His legacy lives on in two sons, three grandsons, and two granddaughters who are on the force today.

Mert was born to hard-working parents. He tended the farm that his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had tended before him. It continues under the good care of son Frank and grandson Eric.

When he moved from the family farmhouse, Mert and Mike built the home of their dreams in the woods – with an airstrip out behind. He loved cutting wood with his sons and stoking the wood-burning stove that heated his house and shop. The woods also provided wood for the sawmill that he built.

Mert loved making wine from his own grapes and sharing it with others. He loved restoring old cars, riding motorcycles, and going on adventures (especially adventures on motorcycles with his kids and friends). His coffee comrades helped him through these last two lonely years without Mike.

Explorers Program Needs Pilots

From Andy Werback

Here is a note from Kristen Gregory at Napa. This is under the auspices of the Explorers Scouting Program (affiliated with the Boy Scouts) and is much like Young Eagles. This would be a great opportunity to get involved and help out. Please contact Kristen at 707 246 4425 or email kristenhannum@gmail.com. Thanks!

(And note that PCAM has a similar summer program; contact them

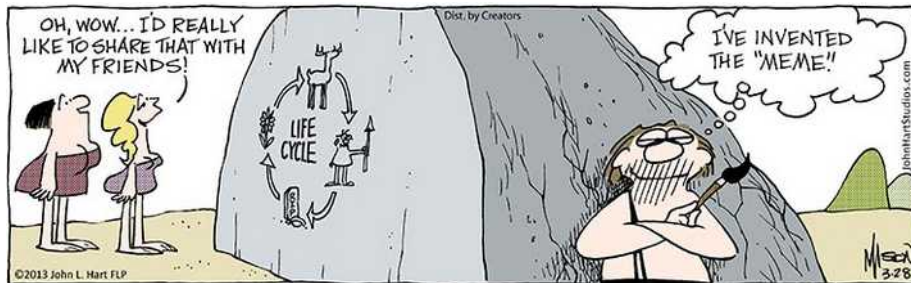
for more information)

She wrote:

We have a Summer Aviation program at Napa Airport (APC) we're starting up again, it's an eight week program, we have ground school for the kids on Tuesdays and then we have the kids fly a structured flight exercise on Thursdays. Eight Thursdays in total, from about 1 to 4 pm. I need volunteer pilots who can show up on Thursdays and take 1 to 3 kids up — I was wondering if you know of any passionate, safe pilots interested in getting kids excited about aviation.

I've only run the program for two summers, and of the seven students we've had participate, two are pursuing their private pilot — one young lady has soloed, the other has her ticket already and is going for her IFR rating. One Fellow is joining the Air Force, and another has his sights on a job with the FAA in ATC. (Which I think is a tremendous success rate, tooting our own horn). Let me know if you know anybody

Kristen



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News / Notes From the Editor

There is good news on the Young Eagles front. Josh Hochberg has reached out to the airport authorities to get their help with the General Aviation outreach that is our Young Eagles program. Because they now see Young Eagles in this light they have enabled Young Eagles events to inspire future pilots without airport fees.

Thanks to Josh for all his efforts.

On another topic, as soon as you become aware of information that would be of interest to the whole chapter, it would be much appreciated if you would forward it to eaal24newsletter@sonic.net

That way we can have a healthy newsletter that serves the members. You may be surprised to know that this has been the way things operated in the past and it took the "Reminder" step out of the checklist. As the "Reminder" step is not in the checklist, please remind yourself to forward the news as soon as you can. Thanks!

Interesting Aviation Links

(Thanks Larry Rengstorf and David Heal)

NOTAM [Click Here](#)

Very Cool Flying [Click Here](#)

Universal Call for Help [Click Here](#)

Still Serving [Click Here](#)

EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022

Meeting Convened 5:30 pm

Board members in attendance: Dan Steinhoff (President), Ben Barker (Vice President), John Whitehouse (Treasurer), David Franco (Secretary), Larry Rengstorf (Facilities), John Fritsch, Tim Petersen, Josh Hochberg, Brien Seely.

Previous Meeting Minutes- Approved by unanimous vote.

Zenith Project- No progress

Motorhome- No progress

Webpage Social Media Outreach- Elaine Gee will be taking on the role of webpage manager. She will liaison with the existing web administrator.

Treasurer's Report- The coffers saw a modest monthly increase. The hangar rents are also largely current.

Young Eagles- Dates have been established for an invitational event on March 9th including Roseland Collegiate Prep. Other open enrollment dates April 23, May 21,

June 11, October 15. Any make-up rain days will be held on Saturday following the scheduled date.

Facilities Report- Paving of the common driveway is due to start soon. Yard lighting is being upgraded due to a flickering condition. Relations with PropJet seem to be going smoothly.

Meeting Adjourned- 6:12 pm

EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022

Meeting Convened 7:00 PM

President Dan Steinhoff welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

The next order of business focused on the Young Eagles schedule. Event dates are 3/9 for the Roseland Prep Invitational function. The remaining event dates are 4/23, 5/21, 6/11 and 10/15. Should rain cancel any of the dates, the make-up event will be on the following Saturday.

Presentation- Capt. Nick Welch Cal Fire Briefing

Credit Ben Barker for making it possible for Capt. Nick Welch of Cal Fire to address our group. Capt. Nick Welch outlined the changing nature of the air assets stationed at our Santa Rosa air attack base. He was most enthused about the capabilities of the new fleet of helicopters coming online.

Rather than pressing earlier general use models into service, as had been the practice, the new units will dispense with the under-slung water bucket device, and will have metal tanks and a snorkel designed to take water onboard. The much anticipated Cal Fire Hawk helicopters have been purchased by the State of California at a cost of \$288 million for a fleet of 12 highly capable units.

The new helicopters are capable of flying 160 mph with a 1000 lbs payload. In addition to their remarkably capable twin 2000 hp turbines, the helicopters are capable night missions. This added capability will allow any regional fires to be fought when winds and temperatures favor chances of getting the upper hand.

Meeting adjourned- 8:45 pm

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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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