



# Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 27 News



Next meeting Sunday, April 18, 2004, 10 a.m., Meriden-Markham Airport, Meriden

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## Letter from the President

As I sat down to write this month's Letter from the President column, my mind wandered back to a conversation I had with some members during the break at our March chapter meeting. We were discussing the positive aspects of general aviation in the United States. Sometimes we get distracted from the big picture by negative issues. However, as we review those items that need improvement, we should never lose sight of the positive aspects of flying in the United States.

I looked up some national statistics that I believe are worth listing: (as of 2002)

Nationwide:

- 661,358 Total pilots
- 260,845 Private pilots
- 86,089 Flight Instructors

Connecticut:

- 6,404 Total pilots
- 2,827 Private pilots
- 887 Flight Instructors

EAA Membership:

- 170,000+ members worldwide

Americans enjoy a first class FAA infrastructure; including flight service stations, navigational aids and air traffic control. We are free to travel anywhere in the United States with a minimum of restrictions.

We can create, own, service and fly our own individual "dream flying machines." Last year alone, 707 EAA members completed, registered and flew their experimental aircraft for the first time.

Equally important, the enjoyment of our hobby, although certainly not inexpensive, is within reach of many family incomes. As indicated by the numbers above, many people can find their individual ways to share and enjoy the wonderful world of aviation. Enjoyment can be found at many levels; from renting planes, learning to fly, building planes or just being a part of the scene. Not the least of these pleasures is the opportunity to associate with people with like interests. And there is no better place to enjoy "aviation camaraderie" than at our EAA Chapter 27 meetings. We have a membership spanning a wide spectrum of experiences; from aviation enthusiasts to airline pilots, and everything in between.

So I suggest that the next time you're reading some negative article concerning aviation, try to remember: There's no better place on the planet to enjoy general aviation than in the United States.

Happy Flying in America!

—Jim Simmons

## Calling all partners!

Are you a partner, companion or spouse supporting the building of an experimental aircraft? EAA Chapter 27 is calling on you to join a newly formed support group to share your particular experiences as a partner to the birth of an aviator's dream. Whether you join in bucking rivets, encourage and cheer your partner, or are silently supportive we are interested in your thoughts, feelings and opinions about living with the construction of an airplane.

Joan Howell came forward with the suggestion for forming this group. As a newcomer to the EAA she was impressed with the women who stand by their partners during a lengthy and difficult process. And it's also inspiring that these women will later fly in the creation as well—evidence of their faith and confidence in their partner's skill.

If you're interested in joining this group, please contact Joan by email at [joan.howell@snet.net](mailto:joan.howell@snet.net) or via phone at 203-934-8960 (her office with 24/7 voicemail). She's looking forward to hearing from you!

April, 2004

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Barb Johnson has relinquished her duties as Chapter Treasurer for personal reasons. We thank Barb very much for her time and effort in this vital role.

Bob Ryan has agreed to fulfill the remainder of Barb's term. Thanks Bob!

## Choosing a Project

—James Pepe

I can remember the moment that I thought about building an airplane for the first time. Since then my life has been filled with homebuilt aircraft magazines, videos, building plans and questions. A lot of questions.

In September of 2002, I was standing in my uncle's garage surrounded by several people from the Meriden, Connecticut based Chapter 27, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) builder's group. They were assisting him with fixing the wings on his almost complete Van's Aircraft RV-6 homebuilt airplane.

Approximately seven years earlier he had begun construction of the empennage. At that time I was working on my private pilot license and wasn't particularly interested in building airplanes; I just wanted to fly. I had the typical non-builder reaction to his project, "Is he crazy?" I couldn't comprehend why someone would spend that kind of time and money building when there were certified aircraft available for immediate flight.

But then, on that night in September 2002, I saw it. For the first time, I really saw it. It wasn't just a fuselage here with the wing over there and the empennage in another room; it was a complete homebuilt airplane.

I stepped back and thought to myself, "I can't believe it, there is an airplane in my uncle's garage." I was truly struck by that revelation. I knew that this had always been the goal, but until that moment I hadn't ever quite grasped the fact that it was possible to build an airplane in your garage. There it was; a shiny new airplane and for me, a moment of awe, that I'm not sure I'll ever recover from... until I build my own.

Over the next year I started attending EAA meetings and subscribed to "Kitplanes" magazine. I realized quickly that I had a lot to learn about the building process, but I went ahead and ordered a video from Van's Aircraft. I was



interested in the RV-9A, a tri-gear airplane that is advertised as non-aerobatic, docile and a good option for low time pilots.

I had given some consideration to the RV-7A for its aerobatic capabilities. I guess I had always thought it would be cool to do a roll or a loop, but I didn't really think I cared that much about aerobatics. Then one sunny day in October 2003 I was graciously offered a ride in a beautiful blue and white Steen Skybolt. I saw the world from a different point of view that day—upside down—and the aerobatic RV-7A crept back into my mind as an option.

Still, I worried about the cost of either one of these airplanes. I started flipping through the "Kitplanes" magazines that were stacking up on my coffee table, to see if there were any less expensive options. Comparing cost, likelihood of completion and performance, I became swamped with options and information.

I tried to define what I wanted: a safe, affordable, all metal, two-seat, low stall speed, tri-gear airplane that would fit in my one car garage. I purchased videos and examined the web-sites for the RV-9A, Sonex, Murphy Rebel and Zenith STOL CH 701.

They all seemed fine, but each one had its strong and weak points in my mind. The RV-9A might be too expensive for me. The Sonex seems small for an airplane. The Murphy

Rebel only offers a tail-dragger version. The STOL CH 701, well, it has grown on me over the past two years but it's still a little strange looking.

I really like the high-wing airplanes and seriously looked at the Murphy Rebel, but I wanted a tri-gear. So I strayed from the all metal models and looked at the Kitfox and some other tube and fabric designs. The Kitfox has become one of my favorite airplanes to research. It is beautiful, there are many examples flying, it seems safe and is relatively

affordable. But, the Kitfox is powered by a Rotax Engine. I had no idea what that meant. It struck me that I had better learn more about aircraft engines before going any further.

Van's suggests certified aircraft engines for their kits, which seemed reasonable to me, however, there are apparently many people using less expensive, and in their opinion, better options. The Sonex uses a Jabiru Engine. The Kitfox uses a Rotax Engine; as does the STOL CH 701 and countless other designs. There is even an Eggenfellner Subaru design for the Van's RV-9A.

The lower cost of some of these 'uncertified' engines has been tempting for me. Particularly, the Jabiru Engine in the Sonex and the Rotax Engine in the Kitfox, which many people seem to have successfully and safely used in their homebuilt aircraft. Still, flying in and of itself is an adventurous hobby; and while I am sure that there are some promising alternatives to traditional certified aircraft engines, I am not sure that I am the right person to experiment with those alternatives. As I learn more about engines and homebuilt aircraft, there are times when having so many options becomes confusing and tiring. What seemed clear-cut at first has become a difficult, time consuming decision. Still, it is better to have too many options than none at all.

## Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2004

Jim Simmons opened the March meeting at 10:00, with all officers present. Our new treasurer is Bob Ryan. Bob was the treasurer a few years ago. Welcome back Bob!

**General attendance:** George Anderson, Rick Beebe, Ted Brainerd, Steve Fraas, Joan Howell, Bill Jagoda, Barb Johnson, Max Lopez, Bob Ryan, Mark Scott, Jim Simmons, Bill Simon, Fran Uliano, Bob Upson, Mike Zemsta, Rob Aiksnoras, Bob Brown, Vern Carlson, Don Green, Maurice Libson, Chris O'Connor, Jim Pepe, Walt Schiller, Steve Socolosky, Stan Solecki, Don Turecek, Dave Pepe.

**Guests:** Wendell Peake, Anthony Cresswell, Joanne Brainerd, Jesse Brunson, Daniel Dombrowik, Rick Bernardi, Dennis Amato, Dave Tobias.

**Treasurer's Report:** Balance \$2027.46 starting, and \$1992.46 after income and expenses. *Please* note that dues are "due" now, if you haven't already paid it (\$15.00 for the year).

Bulletin Board Chairperson is needed to take over this creative opportunity: apply in person at the very next meeting, see Jim Simmons or Chris Kohler.

Website/Newsletter chair Rick Beebe looking for input, articles, or projects you have been working on.

**Young Eagles:** Fran has set June 12, 2004 as the next YE day. Jim notes that Harrison Ford is the new EAA Y.E. chair-

person, and has invited him to our Sept 12, 2004 mega-rally, where we will invite back 950 former Young Eagles—that's right, 950! More to be advised at upcoming meetings, be there!

**Upcoming Events:** June 12—Young Eagles Rally; Sept 12—Picnic and Young Eagles reunion. 950 kids; December 5—Annual Holiday Party at Hawthorne Inn.

**Pinch Hitter Course:** See Patty Zemsta for the details. Will start in May/June and cost about \$100.00.

**Chapter Products for sale:** Calendars—\$7.00; Golf shirts w/logo—\$22.00; plus Hats, Patches, etc....

Chapter article has been submitted to *Sport Aviation* by Jim Maher. Hopefully we'll see it soon.

Safety Fest is coming up soon, May 15, 2004 at Pratt & Whitney Customer Training Center in East Hartford. We have some volunteers for sheet metal. Anyone interested can go and help or just to represent the Chapter. Wear your new golf shirt!

Bob Brown won the 50/50 raffle, according to Chapter tradition, Bob will submit a personal profile for publication in the Chapter Newsletter.

**Seminar:** A good overview of the FSS services provided by Bridgeport FSS was given by Dennis Amato. He is a flight service specialist and a pilot and recommends the regular use of their services before, during and after your flight. Thanks, Dennis.

—Your Secretary, Dave Pepe

There are advantages and disadvantages with every airplane. At some point, you just have to make a choice.

So, where does that leave me? I guess it leaves me at the beginning. I am still lingering at the research stage of an exciting hobby. I am taking my time deciding and having fun looking through all of the alternatives. I have to say that throughout the process, I keep coming back to my first choice, the RV-9A with a Lycoming Engine, so I think that might mean something.

So far, the result of all of my research and pondering have been that I have learned more about airplanes than I knew from my private pilot training alone. And, I think that is the point—to learn as much as you can to try to become a better pilot. So I thank the people from EAA Chapter 27 for the aviation education that they continue to provide for me and others who want to learn.



Uncle Dave shows off his RV6 at a Chapter meeting

At this point, I've become more patient about trying to choose a project. I'm just waiting and thinking it over. When the time is right I'll make a decision and maybe someday I'll look out and see an airplane in my garage. Amazing!

### April Meeting

Dave Pepe will present AOPA's "Seminar in a Box" which is a safety-related presentation for general aviation student pilots, pilots and anyone interested in aviation safety. This particular seminar will review and discuss various flight scenarios on video. There will also be handouts and brochures. Be prepared for some lively discussion!

*Forget all that stuff about thrust and drag, lift and gravity; an airplane flies because of money.*

## New FAA Safety Web Site

The FAA Aviation Safety Program is undergoing some changes. One of the first steps in this process is to have better communications. To do this they have created a new website at <http://faasafety.gov>. This site currently provides a searchable listing of aviation safety seminars and events nationwide. It will also send you e-mail notification of these seminars and additional aviation safety information depending on how you set your preferences.

Our future plans for the site include:

- A searchable online aviation library

- Streaming video on aviation safety topics
- Interactive learning
- Automated administration of our Wings program
- Easy to find, customer based FAA information

Please use the comment feature on the site to let them know what you think of the site and to suggest additional features. Remember: <http://faasafety.gov>,

*TFRs can appear in your area any time! Always check for TFRs with Flight Service before you go flying. And tell your aviation friends about faasafety.gov*

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*The deadline for submission of materials for the May newsletter is May 5, 2004.*

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## 2004 EAA CHAPTER 27 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill in the following information and mail with your dues to:  
EAA Chapter 27, c/o Bob Ryan, 6 Manor Ct., North Haven, CT 06473  
(Dues are \$15.00 per year, make checks payable to: EAA Chapter 27)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

EAA Membership No: \_\_\_\_\_ Pilot rating held: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own an aircraft?: \_\_\_\_\_ Make & Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Registration No: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you building an aircraft?: \_\_\_\_\_ Make & Model: \_\_\_\_\_ % completed? \_\_\_\_\_

*Flying is not dangerous; crashing is dangerous.*



The Leader in Recreational Aviation

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Meetings held on the third Sunday of the month at Meriden-Markham Airport, Meriden, CT at 10am unless otherwise noted.  
[www.eaa27.org](http://www.eaa27.org)