

EAA Chapter 81 Meeting Minutes February 18, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 1000 by Secretary Bob Miller at the Ryan Field meeting room. President Duane Boyd was unable to attend this meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Mick Myal tells us that there is \$12,176.16 in the bank, and he should know.

Secretary's report: Bob was so flustered at having to run the meeting and try to take the Minutes at the same time that he was, for once, happy to clam up and let you read the Minutes of the January 21 meeting in Sky Writer or on the website, if you are so inclined.

Old Business: It was reported that, 20 years ago at the February Chapter 81 meeting, Ross Colebrook announced his Lancair 235 project! Chuck Valade reminded us again that it makes no sense to skimp on spark plugs on Rotax engines, as doing so has caused engine failures and plugs are cheap!

New Business: Eric Witherspoon has been doing some machining, turning down tubes to allow doubling them where called for on his Sherwood Ranger biplane project. Dan Wheeler, whose RV-6 was totaled in an off-airport landing, started his new RV-6 in September 2011. He is finishing the panel and will soon have the plane on the gear! Talk about your quick-build. Chuck Valade is doing the mandatory "B" modification on his Zenith 601 with spars replaced, one wing done and the other going together. Joe Seibold, on the other hand, has rejected the idea of taking all his good work apart again, and is looking for a buyer for his 601 project. Bob Olden is working on both a $\frac{3}{4}$ scale Stearman and a replica Fokker DR-1 triplane. Don Berlin is "sanding and filling", presumably on his Long EZ, so he should be done somewhere in the next few months to years. George Snyder is a new member, and is rebuilding a Swift. For those not familiar with this beautiful bird, it's a sleek, all metal 1940s design, looks like a side-by-side 2-seater version of a WW II fighter, and originally was equipped with an 85 HP Continental. Many have been modified almost beyond recognition, mostly with larger engines. George is making a sliding canopy, increased fuel capacity, and already has the 350 HP Lycoming that he is planning on shoehorning under the cowl. Four times the original power should be just about right, George figures. This brought on many a comment from the Peanut Gallery about how there is no such thing as too much power, and opposing comments pointing out that there are aircraft where one can not apply full power at takeoff without diverting into the weeds (or, in the case of a Corsair, into the drink)! It is believed that the tragedy at our last Pancake Breakfast, when a Legend pulled up suddenly at low speed and then augured in, may have been the result of too much engine torque and not enough altitude nor airspeed. George also has a set of currently certified aircraft scales, which he will generously make available to our members gratis. Chuck Valade added that, when calculating weight and balance of your new homebuilt, it is wise to use an equipment list for those variable items like instruments, rather than plotting individual weights. Don O'Rourke, who is flying a Celerity and working on a Marathon, informs us that instructor Marcus Paine (1-907-279-2002) teaches unusual attitudes locally in a Decathlon aerobatic trainer.

Announcements of upcoming events: The Antique Aircraft Association will be having the Cactus Fly-In in Casa Grande on March 2-3, and the 99s will be celebrating St. Patrick's day at Ryan Field by flying folks at 20 cents a pound on March 17th.

At 1035, featured speaker Rick Bernardi began his audiovisual presentation about his experience flying a Mooney M20J into Edwards Air Force Base. This unusual event was the result of a raffle, the 100 lucky winners of which had the opportunity to participate in the 2010 Lakebed Fly-In. This was not on the runways of Edwards, but actually on Muroc dry lake, with Muroc Tower (on a flatbed trailer) reactivated for the event. Rick is a member of EAA Chapter 113 in Meriden, Connecticut, and has flown 113 Young Eagles. His partner-in-crime was Jim Simmons, who has built an Airventure Grand

Champion Steen Skybolt. Highlights of the slide-show begin with a demonstration of typical east-coast flying conditions: 3 hours of solid IFR on the way out to first stop in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Then on via Arkansas to Clayton, New Mexico. Some sightseeing was done in the southwest, with stops in Santa Fe, Grand Canyon, and Las Vegas to meet with friends. Western weather was good until encountering thunderstorms near Edwards Air Force base near Mojave, California. Skirting these, they had 10 minutes of flying in the rain to wash off the dust of the trip. The “runway” is actually the lakebed itself, dry cracked clay marked off by spraying oil onto the surface. In the rainy season, the lakebed becomes a lake again, with up to 20” of water (and now, presumably, an oil slick)! Participants had received a DVD describing in detail how to make the approach. Activities during the Fly-In included a pancake breakfast and presentations by women in aviation, including a colonel certified in 36 types, who is the head of the Test Pilot Squadron, and another pilot who flew B2 bombers in combat. An actress portrayed the colorful Pancho Barnes, whose saloon was an integral part of the legend of the early days of flight testing at Edwards. For those not familiar with Florence Lowe “Pancho” Barnes, she was a premier aviatrix who was an air racer, broke Amelia Earhart’s speed record in 1930, founded the first pilot’s union, and owned the Happy Bottom Riding Club, a dude ranch and bar which entertained such luminaries as Buzz Aldrin and Chuck Yeager.

Rick and Jim departed from Muroc, stopping in Death Valley, where the summer asphalt is best described as “squishy.” They climbed to 16,000 feet in the fuel-injected, but not turbocharged Mooney, and enjoyed some canned oxygen on their way to Leadville, Colorado, the highest US airport at 9,927 feet elevation. Other landmarks on the way home included the Devil’s tower in Wyoming, Mount Rushmore, and the perpetually-under-construction Crazy Horse Monument. Oshkosh was also on the route, and, of course, they flew through solid IFR from Michigan to Connecticut. They used an Ipad for all flight planning and as a moving-map GPS, planned for a total of 33 hours of flying, and finished at just under 36! We thank Rick for sharing his adventure with us and for the amazing photography displayed.

Meeting was adjourned at 1110. The next meeting will be a Special Meeting at the Arion Aircraft Factory, called Lightning Southwest, where owner Greg Hobbs will welcome a Chapter 81 Pancake Breakfast on Saturday March 17 at 10 AM. Location is a few miles west of Marana Airpark at 18750 W. Avra Valley Road, Marana, AZ 85635. Call 405-6868 or E-mail Crystal at hobbs28@gmail.com. If you don’t want to ding your prop on the ½ mile dirt strip (which leads directly off the north side of Avra Valley Road), you can fly into Marana Airpark and call Crystal to come pick you up! You will have the opportunity to see the remarkable Arion Lightning, a fast-glass experimental that looks like a 7/8 scale Lancair. Powered by the flat-6 cylinder Jabiru 3300, its LSA version uses a climb prop to slow it down to legal cruise numbers, but, boy, can it climb!

Respectfully Submitted by
Secretary Bob Miller