

EAA Chapter 81 Project Meeting Minutes  
September 20, 2014

Meeting was called to order by President Eric Witherspoon at 1005 at the Marana Airport hangar of Dennis Crowley.

Treasurer's report: Treasurer Jim Gries was nowhere to be found, so, either he absconded with the loot or he just couldn't make it to the meeting. Either way, we have no idea how much cash might be in the bank. More about that at the next meeting.

Secretary's Report: Bob Miller, to the great relief of all present, moved to accept the Minutes of the August 16 meeting as published in SkyWriter and the website, without being read. Mercifully, the motion was seconded before Bob could finish saying it.

Old Business: President Witherspoon regaled us with the saga of Chapter 81's participation in the Pima Air and Space Museum Nightwings program. He was one of 5 chapter members who represented EAA at this youth-oriented program. He sees the need to get word out to the public that ordinary people can actually build real airplanes that can fly safely; only a few of those who approached the Chapter 81 table were aware that EAA exists. All ages were represented: kids, parents, even grandparents, and they had a chance to put hands on parts of a Sonex, learn what clecoes and clecoe pliers are and their role in riveting. We had little notice of the Night Wings program this year; Eric suggests that we do a table again next year and Joe Seibold added that we should plan this as a community outreach program. We could show slides from Airventure and have a more elaborate display. Sadly, the politics at PASM are such that Chapter 81's time and labor in rebuilding their cabin Waco is maintained a closely-guarded secret, rather than giving credit where due. Regardless, we have the opportunity to be the better organization, forthrightness-wise.

Although the next item might be considered New Business, it comes from Joe Seibold, whose birthdate actually precedes that of dirt, such that any news from Joe must be considered Old Business. He has a number of incredible sheet-metal working tools: stretchers, shrinkers, dimpling tools, available at the remarkably affordable price of Free (get them out of his garage)! Sheets of 6061 aluminum are also up for grabs.

New Business: Long ago, the Board of Directors of Chapter 81 decided that we should send some of our officers to the EAA Leadership Workshop held at Oshkosh several times per year. Of the present officers, Vice President Phil Peery and Secretary Bob Miller are available to go. Bob wanted it to be crystal clear to the membership that this meant spending Chapter 81 Treasury funds on airfare and car rental for the two to attend. Those present seemed to feel that the expense was justified, although some were disappointed when they found out that this included bringing them back. The upcoming Leadership Workshop will be held on October 3-5 with the program beginning the evening of Friday the 3rd and ending the afternoon of Sunday the 5th. Phil and Bob promise to provide a blow-by-blow description of the gruesome ordeal for which they have gullibly volunteered. Mind you, we have absolutely no idea what one of these weekends entails, yet plan to boldly go where no Chapter 81 member has gone before. If Bob and Phil don't make it back alive, we can take comfort in the knowledge that their brave sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Dave Schiffman informed us that the next AOPA Safety Seminar will be held at the Holiday Inn on Palo Verde on Tuesday Sept. 30 from 1700 to 2100. The featured topic will be Real World Weather, something of which many Southwestern fliers are blissfully unaware.

Tito Sanchez alerts us to an FAA Proposed Rule Making regarding use of federally funded airport hangar space for non-aviation uses. EAA (that means YOU!) needs to make it clear that partially constructed airplanes belong in hangars. Apparently, there are those who do not consider constructing an aircraft to be an aviation-related activity (whereas repair of aircraft is acknowledged). Your opinion needs to be heard!

Bob Miller spoke for his wife Lori, who arranges the Holiday Dinners. Unless someone has a better suggestion, we will hold it again at El Corral restaurant. The suggested date is Wednesday December 10, early enough before X-mas not to conflict with holiday parties and travel.

By 1017, everyone who had something to say had said it, or had been shushed by those who wanted to get to the Main Event: Dennis and Barb Crowley's presentation on their Just Aircraft Escapade. Dennis started with some history of the design, beginning with the Avid Flier, which is perhaps better known as the predecessor of the Kitfox. From the Avid, evolution advanced to the Ridge Runner and then the Sky Raider. The next step was the tandem Summit, then the Escapade. Most of these went to Europe where they qualified as Microlights. They were under 600 pounds and had 2-stroke engines. One can be built with a Rotax 912 engine, supposedly still coming in at under 620 pounds, stalling at 27 knots and cruising at 90 knots. The third design is the more popular Highlander, a more aggressive bush plane with longer wings, bigger flaps, longer gear and more elevator authority. The newest of the brood is the Highlander Super STOL (Short Take Off and Landing), which boasts a combined landing and takeoff distance of 125 feet. No, that is not a typo. Many tailwheel designs cannot even get the tailwheel up in that distance. This is a special-purpose design that really plops out of the sky onto its very-long travel gear, designed to take tremendous flops, with Valdez-type competitions in mind.

Dennis liked the more rounded-tail of the Escapade. His charming and curvaceous wife Barb chimed in, stating that "Dennis likes round things". They bought it in Sacramento, CA, for \$15,500, 10 Grand less than the factory-new price, and with only 10 hours of work into it. They temporarily traded their Lexus for a Tundra so they could haul it back, and, while they were gone, the borrower wrecked the car! They aren't too disappointed, as no one was injured and they got a 2-year newer Lexus with 1/2 the miles on it. At this point, Barb put her foot down and said, "Finish the patio deck before building the plane!" This took 1 1/2 years. The Escapade is Dennis's first building project and he charitably describes the manual as "lousy". He depended on the Wings Forum, a builder's website, as well as other online resources. The build began in their 3-car garage, set up to hang the project from the ceiling and still use the garage for cars. The Crowley's '53 car-show-winning Porsche (that's pronounced por-shuh, you low-life) 356 provided the paint scheme: desert colors of cream, camel, and brown. A discerning eye will note that the Escapade's tail number is N356AZ, and it was reserved before Dennis became a pilot in 2006! The Porsche was proudly displayed next to the Escapade and they truly are a matching pair. The supposed 700-hour build of the Escapade ended up at an actual 2400 hours. This is not a bare-bones plane, but, despite its 770 pound weight, Dennis reports being "batted around" on his flight back from Oshkosh, where, incidentally, it won a Silver Lindy. It was, in fact, the best

tube-and-fabric kit plane award, as no Gold Lindy was awarded this year. This is a fine accolade to add to the Grand Champion as well as Best Tube- and-Fabric at the Copperstate Fly-In awarded last fall, and the Crowleys are understandably proud of their accomplishment. Weather was the reason why it took 5 days to get to Oshkosh and 7 days to return! 47 hours in the air is a good reminder that slow-ish LSAs are perhaps not the best platforms for long cross-country treks, unless you really like to take your time (and replace the fillings that got shaken out of your teeth). When Dennis says that he has no intention of ever flying back to Oshkosh, he has the same determined look as that of a mother who just went through three days of hard labor. Before he flew to Oshkosh, his longest flight in the Escapade was 50 miles; this time it was 1600 miles. This is like training for a marathon by walking the dog around the block. He thought that he would be smart when departing Oshkosh by waiting for the crowd to go first, but then discovered that his cabin leaks and that his radios do not like being wet. He taxied out using his handheld, which then died before he could receive his departure clearance. Fortunately, his panel radio then decided to work and he was able to talk to the tower and depart.

Dennis and Barb's Escapade is covered in Ceconite fabric and painted with the water-based Stewart System. Dennis built a dual paint booth in the garage with a moveable wall to adjust work space, allowing spraying of smaller items separately from the fuselage. There are 5 coats of primer and 1 white basecoat. A great deal of masking was required to spray on the cream, then camel, then brown, and then, finally, clear, with a lot of razor blade work to correct the overruns. Barb did all the staining of the interior wood, and the interior walls are made of Kydex laminate.

The Escapade flies at 90 knots, stalls very docilely under 35 knots, and can fly with windows open or closed, with vents. The cabin is 44 inches wide (a Cessna 172 is 39 inches), and can carry 100 pounds in the baggage compartment and still stay within CG limits. Installed after Copperstate, but before Oshkosh, are a landing light with two intensities (landing or taxiing) and custom sunshades made from window shades. The interior woodwork is truly a work of art and great care was taken to have seatbelt webbing match the interior, with matching bungee-cord belt holders. The throttle knob follows the Southwest theme and is rather unique in that it is made from a small gourd. Dennis would be happy to make another for other builders, but alas, he is out of his gourd. He loves his Dynan EFIS (electronic flight instrument system) and uses ForeFlight on Ipad for flight planning. On display were two photo albums: one of the build and one at Oshkosh. The wings fold against the sides in 2 minutes with 7 camlocks twisted to remove the turtle deck. It is theoretically convertible to a tailwheel configuration in 2 hours.

One could clearly see the connection between his Porsche restoration and his construction of the Escapade; both show a nearly fanatical attention to detail and pride of ownership. Meeting was adjourned at 1115, at which time a walking tour around the car and the aircraft was conducted by Dennis, who could point out hundreds of details and customizations to an appreciative audience.

The next meeting will be a Project meeting at the hangar of Tito Sanchez and his RV-12 on Saturday, October 18th.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Secretary Bob Miller