

EAA Chapter 81 Project Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 1000 by President Erik Fjerstad at the Ryan Field hangar of the late Bob Olden. His step-son Josh was present and wanted to offer Bob's scaled-down Stearman PT-17 project to our chapter for possible completion. Chairs were widely spaced, and many wore face masks.

Secretary's Report: The Minutes of the January 18th Meeting, the last one held before we stopped meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic, were approved without being read. Disappointment was plainly seen on the faces of those present at this lost opportunity to experience a genuine literary treasure. And, if you believe that one...

Treasurer's Report: Eric Nelson was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a sheet stating that we have \$740 from dues since the last meeting, plus another \$240 in donations. The current balance in our account is \$4,461. We were reminded that the Chapter Hangar can be rented for \$10 per day or \$300 per month for final assembly, etc.

Visitors: Robert Lyman and Rachael are not pilots, but are interested in building. Gary Echebrecht is a pilot, previous aircraft owner, and has a strong interest in Young Eagles flights. Kevin Hamler has a Corbin Baby Ace in pieces and is looking for building support. As Chapter 81 Member Emeritus Dennis Hall has built a Baby Ace, we will try to put Kevin in touch with him.

Old Business: The D-GULL prototype that was donated to Chapter 81 by Mauro Cornejo (that's C-o-r-n-e-j-o, not C-o-m-e-j-o) was to be the subject of a project meeting before our schedule was disrupted by the coronavirus. It was clear that the chapter was not interested in completing the project, but it could be used to demonstrate riveting techniques. From the beginning, George Snyder offered to complete the project if Chapter 81 did not want to do so. Today, we voted to donate it to George, but store it for now in the Chapter Hangar. We still may use it for demonstration, with George's permission, until he is ready to move it to his hangar.

New Business. George Snyder also has a recent Mooney wreck, offered at a price of "cheap". Jerry Miel invites all to come see his Thorpe T-18 project, and has another for sale. For those not familiar, John Thorpe was an aeronautical engineer who designed, in collaboration with Fred Weick of Ercoupe fame, the Piper Cherokee. The T-18 was a plans-built aluminum side-by-side 2-seater with gull wings and a tail wheel. The plans were made available in 1963, and, in 1976, the T-18 was the first home-built airplane to circumnavigate the world. Van's Aircraft's later RV-6 resembled the T-18, but with a straight wing, and similar performance (top speed 200 MPH, cruise 180 MPH).

Ken Balinger is ready to rig the wings of his Kolb Firefly project and wishes to talk to our Tech Counsellors about this procedure.

Next was the discussion about the Stearman PT-17 (Model 75) Kaydet replica project. Before the meeting started, many had the opportunity to examine Bob Olden's project. It is beautiful, and painted in Navy Primary Trainer colors. Although visually a 2-seater, it is set up to be a single-seater, flown from the rear hole. However, some building shortcuts and questionable practices were spotted by several members, some of whom are A&P mechanics. After some

discussion, it was decided that Chapter 81 did not want to take on the project of completing the replica. Mobile Aire manager Bill McLearran purchased the gorgeous Rotec R2800 radial engine and Culver wooden prop; the fate of the rest of the replica is undetermined. For those unacquainted with the Rotec engines, they are made in Australia and come in two flavors: the R2800 7-cylinder (not to be confused with the Pratt & Whitney R-2800 of WW II fighter fame) and the R3600 9-cylinder. However, in the original, the 2800 refers to the engine's displacement in cubic inches, and in the Rotec, it refers to cubic centimeters. 2800cc comes to 171.8 cubic inches, a wee bit smaller than the 18-cylinder, double-row P&W radial. The power is a bit less too: 110 HP at 3600 (geared) RPM, vs up to 2100 HP of the P&W Double Wasp, as found in the Chance Vought F4-U Corsair and the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, among many, many others. Aside from its enormous displacement advantage, the P&W R-2800 is also supercharged; the Rotec radials are not. The Rotec R3600 (220 cubic inches) is rated at 150 HP.

The meeting was adjourned at 1020, but that's when the real action began. Josh held a hangar sale of many aircraft parts and tools, as well as the miscellanea that accumulate in a working hangar. Basically, Josh said, "bring the parts/tools/whatever to me and make an offer". It was speculated that Horrible Freight might go out of business without Bob's multitudinous purchases. Many happy airport people helped clean out his hangar, wallets somewhat lightened (Josh was quite reasonable in his pricing) and arms and carts filled with their treasures.

We will truly miss Bob Olden, who epitomized the spirit of Experimental Aviation. He lived and breathed flying and building airplanes, loved woodworking, and loved Chapter 81. Despite advanced age and severe health issues, he attended meetings as he could and continued to build as long as he could. May we all aspire to his example.

The next meeting will be held at the Ryan Field meeting room on Saturday, June 20 at 10 AM. Bob Miller will provide a presentation about AN aircraft hardware, why we should use it (even on experimentals, where it is not required), and how to understand its nomenclature (the letters and numbers that identify it).

Respectfully Submitted by
Secretary Bob Miller