

EAA Smilin 'Jack Chapter 866

Newsletter

November 2022



Don Wilson presenting the chapter meeting with stories about his tour in Viet Nam in 1969 he was mechanic and crew chief on AC47 Gunships. The plane was often referred to as “Puff The Magic Dragon”.



Spooky -- AKA (Puff The Magic Dragon)



Dear EAA Chapter 866 Members and Friends,

As you all know, Hurricane Ian had other plans for all of our lives last month- and our breakfast was cancelled. The plan is to have our monthly breakfast, as usual, Saturday November 5th , preceded by our monthly meeting on Wednesday November 2nd . We had also tentatively planned a chapter work day on Saturday November 12th – but after talking to some of our members, and accomplishing some of the tasks ahead of time, we only have one major task left to do – the cleaning and sealing of the roof. Bob Rychel and Larry Gilbert have volunteered to do the pressure washing in the next few weeks and later we will organize a small work party to do the sealing – probably later in November. Stay tuned for that via email.

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Trip Log Florida to Cavalier, ND and return: Sept. 2022 – Bob and Kathy Anderson

Part 2

Last month's article on the first part of our trip ended in Cavalier, ND as we were heading to the airport to fly to the attractions in South Dakota. I will pick up the trip as we take off from Cavalier (2C8).

The day dawned clear with light winds: our destination: Mobridge, SD – a stop for MoGas - only 227 nm to the southwest. Though this fuel is typically available, construction was in progress on the fuel pump area. As a result, Brady, the airport manager, offered the courtesy car so that we could fill up our gas cans at the local station. Off we went heading over flat farmland and hundreds of lakes.

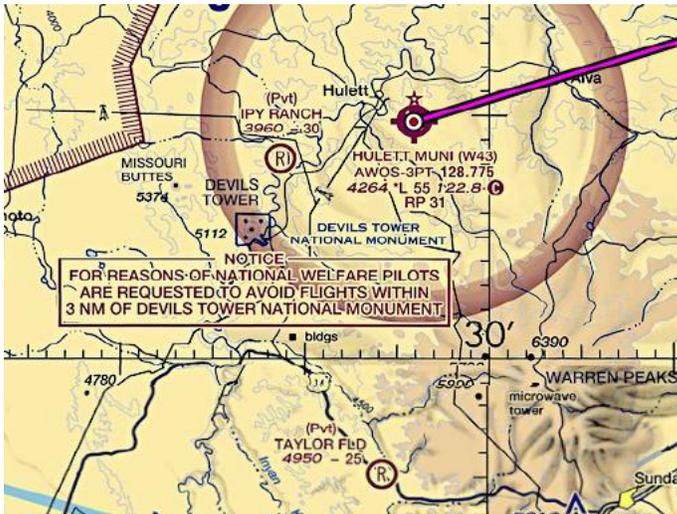


Approaching MBG, the major landmark is Lake Oahe – which was formed by damming the Missouri River near Pierre, SD. The car keys were sitting on the counter in the office as promised. We headed off to Burger King for breakfast and the staff there was fun and welcoming. Since the door of the courtesy car displayed “City of Mobridge” – we were approached in the parking lot by two fellows who wanted to know if we had flown in. Obviously they were veteran fliers who knew a courtesy car when they saw one; I think the cracked windshield was the true give away.

These guys – Daren and Ron – were pilots from Minnesota, but they were in town to hunt prairie dogs. They came to the airport to see us off and exchange stories. Next, we handed the car over to Chad, a gyrocopter pilot, who flew in right after we did. After emptying the gas cans, we took off with the goal of circling around the attractions in the Black Hills. As we headed west, the air became smoky and we were reminded that every summer the west is frequented with forest fires in remote places that keep burning until they are either burned out or rained out.



As we approached Hulett, WY (W43), the smoke was thickening and we realized that we would have to circle closer than the recommended 3 mile radius if we wanted to see Devil's tower.



There was no other traffic in the area, so we flew close enough to snap a photo, then headed southeastward toward Crazy Horse. As we did so, the turbulence increased. We were now in the Black Hills of South Dakota at an altitude high enough to clear the hill tops, but low enough to see what we were looking for. This was like bouncing around in a soupy fog, but we did not want to come this far and miss the attractions.

The smog thinned out a bit as we flew further south and we spotted the Crazy Horse construction site off to our left. Avoiding the 7200 foot peaks, we made our way toward the east. I was looking to the right for the monument, until I glanced left and spotted the nose of George Washington. We were monitoring 122.85, per the instructions on the chart. There was only one other aircraft in the area, a helicopter, who called us and said they had us in sight and were leaving the area. We made a circle back and I snapped a few photos while Bob flew.



Compared to the surrounding hills, the monument looks small: such is the view from 7500 feet.

Mission complete, our final destination for the day would be Spearfish, SD. Laura, the FBO manager, had arranged a rental car for us. I appreciated this, as the Enterprise website showed nothing available. (Actually, most every place I checked showed nothing available – apparently the FBO has a special arrangement with Enterprise. We had found this to be the case previously when we had flown into Pueblo, Colorado a couple of years ago – so checking ahead is important).



As we taxied in, the “follow me” golf cart lead the way, parked us, and presented us with the rental car. It had been a long day!

The FBO also had a special rate at the local Holiday Inn, which was a pleasant surprise. We used our empty gas cans at the Cenex Station and filled the plane with 87 octane. In this part of the country, they do not offer mid-grade or premium fuel. They had 85 octane ethanol free and 87 octane regular. We topped off the tanks and headed to *Guadalajara*, the local Mexican Restaurant, which was excellent!

The next morning, the sky was clear – though very smoky. Our destination was Emporia, KS, (KEMP) just 383 nm to the southeast. They boasted of 91 octane mogas and a courtesy car we could have for the night. On the way we passed over the “Badlands” – too bad the visibility was so limited; but I could see why the farmers would



name it such.

As we flew further south the visibility improved. By the time we landed in Kansas, the sky was bright blue! Below is the Dynon display – we flew at 8500 ft, burning 6 gph at 114 knots TAS.



We were offered a hangar for the night – which we gladly accepted; even though there was no weather threatening. Bob and I had vowed to accept a reasonably priced hangar whenever one was offered. [This was because last year, while staying overnight in Texas, we were offered a hangar due to violent weather that was expected that night. We said no and tied the plane down. We were awakened by a hailstorm in the middle of the night, which lasted for several hours. We did not think we would have a plane by morning – but there it was at sunup. We were told that they had no hail at that airport, but less than 10 miles away, the hail was the size of quarters. So – this night, “Trusty” was put in a hangar.]

Emporia was the site of the first Veteran’s Day observance. In 1953, their US representative introduced legislation to rename Armistice Day to Veteran’s Day – and so it was. Just another little tidbit of knowledge we

got from stopping in this town located on the turnpike SW of Kansas City: a friendly town with a great airport and a Braums Restaurant.



filled up with MoGas, checked the weather and decided to try to fly home. I say that because our original plan was to stay in nearby Meridian; and knew that the weather in Florida would be a challenge in the late afternoon, flying “against the

Everything was perfect until we approached the of Alabama and Florida and saw the area south of Palatka highlighted in red, orange and purple. Our shoes would stay on for the rest of this trip. We descended to 2500 feet to stay below the Orlando class B and below the clouds. Thankfully, the air was smooth.

Praying for a way to be cleared for us, the purple area began to move a bit to the east and the red areas gave way to orange. Tuning to 119.725 the announcement was: “ceiling 700 ft broken, heavy rain, lightening all quadrants”. It was now about 6:30 pm and the sky was fairly dark. I descended to 1000 feet and noticed how easy it was to see the strobes on the antennas. We were still VFR and I could see clouds below us – though they were patchy, thin and somewhat scattered. About 3 miles out, I could clearly see the PAPI lights for runway 15, and there were no longer any clouds below us. The rain was light and so was the wind. There was some standing water on the runway and the ditches at the airport were full – so the previous AWOS announcement had been true at that time. As it turned out, we had landed during a lull in the storm. The rain became heavy as we pushed the plane into the hangar.

Our next planned fuel stop was Quitman, MS (23M). This was to be the longest leg of the trip, 605nm. Since the weather was good, and we had no immediate threats or flying stress, we stretched out and got more comfortable. The flight was uneventful – which was wonderful!



We landed by noon, we clock”. border



That afternoon, our rain gage at home recorded over 5 inches. I'm think'n that next time – we should stay in Mississippi, per our original plan.

To sum it up: The plane, the engine, the constant speed prop and the gearbox all worked perfectly.

Here are the statistics from the trip:

3,556 nm total, 34.7 flight hours, 210 gallons of MoGas, 0 quarts of oil, many memorable acquaintances and memories to last a lifetime!

The spotlight this month is on Alberto Silva –

Alberto was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. His father was a contractor and decided that flying would be a great way to inspect all the projects that he had in progress. As a result, he obtained his private pilot's license. At this time, young 10 year old Alberto, became his photographer. They would take the door off the Cessna 150, put a small chain across the opening and fly around. Alberto thought this was great fun and determined right there and then he would be a pilot someday.

Alberto went to the University of Illinois for a year where there was a great aviation program but it was too expensive. He decided to complete his engineering degree at the University of Puerto Rico and join the ROTC program – setting his sights on flying for the military. Unfortunately, his vision was not 20/20 and he was told he could become a navigator. Not interested- he wanted to be a pilot – so that dream was put into a holding pattern.

After graduation, he returned to the states to go to work for the Corps of Engineers. This was a one year commitment in Jacksonville. FL. He didn't particularly like the work he was doing, but while he was there, he met a NASA employee who was working there on a two week assignment as part of a military obligation. One thing led to another and on the exact day that his one year was up, he was offered a job working for NASA at the Kennedy Space Center. The year was 1980. He began his work in facilities construction, then the design group and later in the Space Station Program

With his desire to fly still in the holding pattern, he kept on working – work that he enjoyed – until finally getting his private pilot's license in 2003. He trained at Debenair Aviation at Space Coast Regional at the time when Annette Benson's business was in a trailer on the east side of the field. He trained in Cessna 150 and 152s. It wasn't long before he met our own Larry Gilbert. Larry had a friend in Pennsylvania who was selling his airplane – a Cessna 172, tail number, N9845T. Sound familiar?



Alberto and Larry flew commercially to PA to check out the plane - and he bought it – just like that! It was December and there was snow on the ground. Larry told him to shovel out and clean off the plane and it would be ready to fly in the morning – and it was!



Off they went - first thing in the morning - to fly south. They used paper charts and a small Garmin hiking GPS – into which Alberto had programmed GPS coordinates for several waypoints for the flight. Things sure have changed in regards to navigation – in just a few short years from paper charts to moving maps with live weather radar and traffic!

After he bought his plane, he flew a three week trip with an uncle of his – a retired airline pilot. They went to Sun N Fun, then on to upstate New York and Connecticut and back home. Later, continuing his cross country indoctrination, his Dad would come up and they would fly two week trips all over the country including the Caribbean.

He attributed his education in aviation mechanical work to his uncle, Larry and Gene Day. Gene was a well-known, experienced mechanic. Alberto worked under his watchful eye for several years until Gene signed off his experience, enabling him to test for his A&P license. The FAA representative at the FSDO saw Gene's name and signed off his paperwork with no questions asked.



One day, Gene called him and said a friend of his named Cliff was selling his Cessna 172 (180 HP conversion) and he told Alberto he should buy it – so he did! It is the plane he currently owns – N2690Q. He sold his 172 to a student pilot at Dunn, who never ended up with his pilot's license. N9845T sat in the hangar for several years – until Larry bought it – a couple of years ago!

Along the way, Alberto got his A&P, Seaplane Rating, Glider Rating and Instrument Rating. He used his seaplane rating for a flying vacation in Alaska where he flew Supercubs on floats for ten days. It was great to fly over the glaciers and ice fields and land on numerous lakes in the vicinity.



He flew several aircraft on long trips: most notably a Grumman Yankee to Puerto Rico; a Flight Star from Indiana to Florida – this was a high drag aircraft with a 2 stroke “Rotax blue head” engine. He did not have confidence in the engine, so he chose a route over roads in the event of engine problems – but he made it! One memorable flight was in a Beechcraft Sierra, which he flew from Puerto Rico to Florida, then on the Sacramento, CA. He remembers this aircraft as very underpowered – later he discovered that there was a leak which allowed a portion of the carb heat to enter the carburetor – all the time. He flew the Caribbean regularly to fly with his father in Puerto Rico and surrounding islands. A couple of times a year, friends would ask him to ferry or accompany them from the islands to Florida. These were always fun flights in different airplanes, including singles, twins and, in a couple of occasions a Cirrus Jet.



Alberto retired for a while, and later returned to KSC for 5 additional years to convert Pad 39B from the Shuttle program to the Constellation program. He enjoyed using his previous knowledge of the pad, recalled from several years in the past, to accomplish the work. After that, he retired permanently and began work on a Sonex OneX. Work progressed rapidly until one of his grandsons contracted brain cancer. At that time Alberto spent most of his next six months in Jacksonville, leaving the less important project behind; thankfully, his grandson recovered.



Soon after that, he met up with Elizabeth and they have been together ever since. She loves to fly and ride motorcycles – so they share the fun. As a result of her enjoyment of flying, Alberto has flown with the “Cessnas to Oshkosh” group every year.



Alberto has served as the President of EAA 866 for a couple of years and he is always ready for another flying adventure or mechanical challenge.

Spray Pilot

There was a boy (13 yrs), who came to one of our Young Eagle rallies about 10 years ago and he was assigned to fly with Ben Charvet in Ben’s Pietenpol. His Name is Nathan Bierman, grandson of Larry Bierman who is a former member of our chapter. That was the beginning! Nathan came to me when he was in his last year of high school with 2 yrs of college behind him as well! We started flying together and he learned so quickly he could have soloed with the Citabria in around 7 hrs! He flew with me for ten hours learning the basic maneuvers involved with the Private license. I had no insurance to let him fly my Citabria solo. So, at that time we hooked up with a

flight instructor at Space Coast Regional (TIX) and he finished his private license there. He went on to Liberty University in Virginia and finished his education there in the aviation program with a Commercial license and added CFII, MEI to his ratings. After this he got a job instructing in Virginia. He stops by our hangar when he is in town and flies with me when he's here. I let him log the time as instructor instructing me as the student!

Last week he showed up again at our hangar and I asked him if he had his ATP yet and he said no, because he was having too much fun doing the flying job he has now. I asked what he was doing and he said he was a spray pilot. Then he told us what kind of spraying he was doing. The company he's working for has a contract to spray the state of Florida for mosquitoes due to the flooding caused by Hurricane Ian several weeks ago. He's spraying at night flying a Beech King Air at 300' agl using night flying vision equipment! The company he works for does aerial applications and aerial surveying. He's also had gigs doing aerial mapping in Alaska and spraying for fruit flies in California. Interesting and exciting work!

Anyway, that young Eagle flight may have been the beginning of Nathan's aviation career!



Ben and Nathan (13 yrs)

Larry

Keep an Eye on your Rotax Engine

Below is a link to an article about how and why there is a new demand for Rotax engines. These are being used in an unauthorized way and are being stolen from aircraft in Europe mostly and even some in the USA. Might be an interesting read.

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/bizarre-theft-wave-targets-same-rotax-engines-used-in-iranian-drones>

Tango

Our 1960, C172A has 47 flights on it since last annual in May of this yr. and has been running nicely. I'm getting more confident and comfortable with her every flight we make since the engine issue we had during the summer of 21!

So far this month we've made three flyouts, the first one was to the EAA chapter breakfast held on the third Saturday of each month at Valkaria, (X59). The flight in both directions was quite interesting because of low clouds and rain showers hovering over the city of Melbourne. Going direct from our airport takes us right over the class (D) of MLB. Dealing with the traveling in both directions down and back meant wide detours to the West to get there and back due to the rain. Interesting is what describes that venture best! We also made another trip to Deland on Oct. 20. and had breakfast there and then walked down to the Sport aircraft EXPO and took a few minutes to gander at the beautiful LSA planes there. The wx was severe clear with a little wind on the tail coming home. It's always fun to travel to these places with this group of characters!

The "Old Friends" group is starting to hold their weekly gathering on Thursdays to airports mostly within 100 miles of here so, we may discontinue the Friday breakfasts trips while the Thursday gatherings are going on this winter.

Larry

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NASA is targeting the next launch attempt of the Artemis I mission for Monday, Nov. 14. With liftoff of the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket carrying the Orion spacecraft planned during a 69-minute launch window that opens at 12:07 a.m. EST.

Artemis I is an uncrewed flight test to launch SLS and send Orion around the Moon and back to Earth to thoroughly test its system before flights with astronauts.

Inspections and analyses over the previous week have confirmed minimal work is required to prepare the rocket and spacecraft to roll back out to Launch Pad 39B at Kennedy Space Center in Florida following the roll-back due to Hurricane Ian. Teams will perform standard **maintenance** to repair minor damage to the foam and cork on the **thermal protection system** and recharge or replace batteries on the rocket, several secondary payloads, and the flight termination system.

The agency plans to roll the rocket back to the launch pad as early as Friday, Nov. 4.

NASA has requested back-up launch opportunities for Wednesday, Nov. 16, at 1:04 a.m. and Saturday, Nov. 19, at 1:45 a.m., which are both two-hour launch windows. A launch on Nov. 14 would result in a mission duration of about 25-and-a-half days with a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean Friday, Dec. 9.

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Chapter Meeting
Weds. 7:00 pm Nov 2, 2022
Bldg. 10
Dunn Airpark, Titusville, FL

Chapter Monthly Breakfast
Saturday Nov. 5, 8:00 am
Bldg. 10
Dunn Airpark, Titusville FL