

EAA Smilin Jack Chapter 866

Newsletter

March 2024



The Round Rainbow Picture from the Carribean adventures of Alberto Silva, see article in this newsletter!

President Ott Thiel must be working on one of his electrical engineering projects up in Ohio so, no official president report this month.

Some things are happening at Dunn Airpark, the new AWOS will be up and running this month and everything has been installed except the special phone line required for its operation, we were told.

If you've been around the airport lately you may have noticed that there are quite a few planes that are tied down there now. Do you suppose that they are waiting to get hangars? Could be!

There is a resident who lives about ½ mile East of the field (X21) complaining about airplane noise and low flying airplanes over his house. I personally don't think it is a legitimate complaint and I know there are no EAA 866 flying members guilty of low flying over the neighborhood and I seriously doubt that any of the pilots from our airport are guilty of this. One of the complaints was that a plane flew over this person's home only 50 feet high and it was late at night when it happened!

Did you know that chapter member Bob Rychel has listed his gorgeous RV6A for sale on Barnstormers? Here is a copy of the ad. I think it would be a shame if the plane left our airport.

Larry Gilbert nsltr ed.

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SALE • \$70,000 • FOR SALE BY OWNER / BUILDER • RV6A Acquired Unfinished, Completed in 2017 TT 85hrs. Lycoming 0-290 D2 145hp/Catto Prop (have logbooks) TT 95hrs STOH, Light Weight Starter, BC410 Alternator, Oil Cooler/Filter, Mags 500hr Rebuild, Light Weight Exhaust, New Plugs. ADS B IN/OUT, IFLY 740B, Grand Rapids EFIS/ENG Monitors, Electric Aileron/Elevator Trim, Manual Flaps, All S/B Complied, Extension Rail/Sunshade, Dual Brakes, Anti-Splat Mods Nose Job, Air/Oil Separator • Contact [Clyde Rychel](#) , Owner - located Mims, FL 32754 United States • Telephone: 13217590726 • Posted February 25, 2024 •



Minutes of the February 7, 2024 Meeting of EAA Chapter 866 Inc.

The first EAA Chapter 866 meeting of 2024 was held on February 7th at 7:00 PM at the regular meeting location, 480 N Williams Ave, in Titusville, Florida.

Re-elected Chapter President Ottmar Thiele presided over the meeting.

Chris Fauver, Chapter Vice-president, Herman Nagel, Chapter Treasurer, and Richard Van Treuren, Chapter Secretary, and Larry Gilbert, Chapter Newsletter editor, all four of which agreed to serve another year, were in attendance.

Deborah Van Treuren, member-at-large of the Chapter Board of Directors was also present, as was much of the regular membership of Chapter 866, numbering around 30, thereby establishing a voting quorum.

The meeting began at 7pm with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Notation was made about the upcoming Women in Aviation event in Melbourne.

Progress reports were presented by members.

Tom Charlton presented a program about hand propping.

Brad Berry made a suggestion the Chapter hold a trash-clean-up effort to beautify Dunn and its immediate surroundings. He pointed out a local school group might be engaged to help, suggesting the Chapter provide lunch (hamburgers, sodas etc.) following the work. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to make it so, at a date TBD based on the volunteers' availability.

Debbie Van Treuren was recognized for her efforts to organize last month's annual chapter party.

The meeting adjourned about 8:00 for coffee and pies following the group thanking Bill Bilsky for his donation of two lemon cream cakes, both of which were consumed with gusto.

Richard Van Treuren

Personal Note: Larry Gilbert

One day in February a gang of us decided to fly up to Deland for breakfast and chapter member Willie Dorna flew his RV 6 that day and had a young passenger who is a Private Pilot by the name Nico flying along. So, we flew to Deland and as always, the conversations at our table were going strong and we were having a lot of fun. Nico might have felt a little left out of our conversations because he is only 26 yrs old and the rest of us are all over 70 and some over 80 years old. Loretta and I started to talk with Nico. He said that he recognized us from our breakfasts, and he had also taken a Young Eagle ride with me in our Citabria when he was 14 yrs. old! I said, "oh good tell everyone that ride is what inspired you to become a pilot." He said, "it might have been, actually!" That made me feel really good! That makes at least four that I know of from our Y-E events that went on to become pilots themselves!

On one of our flights in February we flew to a non-towered field that happened to be very busy with arrivals at the time we got there. Our group was working our way into the busy traffic pattern and things were going well when a flight of several airplanes announced a straight in for the runway in use. In the meantime one of the planes from our group was dealing with a go around because the plane landing ahead of him decided to tie up the runway by landing and then slow taxiing to the last runway exit rather than exit the runway and use the parallel taxiway to taxi on. This made our guy have to go around. My entry to the pattern was on the crosswind leg and as I was getting closer, I could see what was going on and fell in behind that plane on crosswind and then downwind and not a problem, the plane in front of me was making calls and I was keeping my spacing and making calls. Well, the straight in group was arriving and on short final and there were three of them in that flight. Two were fairly close to each other and the other was a distance behind so the plane in front of me fell in line with behind number two them and the third one back decided at this point he should fall out of line and turn out to the right and do a 360 and rejoin on final. I was following our guy in front of us on final when the person doing the 360 is trying to get back on final once again and land. The problem was that he didn't see me and was getting too close to me at my 9 o'clock. I dove a little to pick up some speed and called him twice to ask if he had me in sight. No answer! By this time, I was far enough ahead of him that danger was past. He then made an announcement that he was going to do another 360 only this time on the other side of the airport. Another person in the pattern and on downwind made a radio call and said that sounded dangerous to him.

All the planes made it safely to land. Thinking about the whole scenario and discussing this later with the other pilots who flew there and were in the pattern or on the radio when it occurred concluded that the best way out of that situation for the plane that did the 360s would have been for him just to have done a go around by stepping off to the right and then re-join and come back and land.

The point is, it's better and a lot safer if you find yourself in a situation like this and you don't like the idea of being too close to other planes while on final approach it is probably safer and better to simply step aside and make a go around! What do you think?

Larry Gilbert



Flying the Caribbean: by Alberto Silva

This winter Elizabeth and I participated in a two-week structured flying vacation visiting five islands in the Caribbean. We visited Grand Turk, Tortola (British Virgin Island), Bequia (part of the Grenadines), Guadalupe (French) and the Dominican Republic, The group, organized by International Air Rally, was composed of twenty airplanes, ranging from us flying the Cessna 172 to a TBM. In between there was a Piper Arrow, a few Cessnas 182's, 206, and 210's, more than a few Bonanzas, Piper Saratoga, a Piper M600, a Baron, a couple of Cessnas 340's at least three Lancairs, and the fastest of the group, a TBM 850. At the end of the structured activities, all the airplanes returned to the United States or Canada except us. We went back from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico to spend the holidays with family and enjoy the island.

In the past, I used to fly to Puerto Rico and surrounding islands with some frequency. Additionally, as I was well versed in the procedures and routes, I would frequently either accompany friends who wanted to fly from Puerto Rico to Florida or vice versa, or fly their airplanes to deliver them whenever they purchased a plane in the US. With time, some things turn into routines, and they become less attractive. Therefore, I had not made a trip in my airplane to Puerto Rico in about ten years and had not flown a small airplane to the islands in about five. The incentive for this trip came from Elizabeth's desire to fly our airplane to Puerto Rico. Our friend Gustavo Rodriguez, from Hollywood, FL and Jay Bennett from Melbourne decided to participate in the excursion so it became a good opportunity to do something else other than just Puerto Rico in good company. Additionally, the island of Bequia is the southernmost point in the chain of islands that I would have been if we took the trip so, that fact sealed the deal and we decided to go on the trip. .

The group met at FXE on December 3, 2023 for a briefing the night before the departure. Being the slowest of the group we always departed first and were always the "first to arrive last" at our destinations.



The first official stop was the Island of Providenciales (MVPB) in the Turks and Caicos. Everyone had to stop there because, even though Grand Turk has an airport suitable for jets, they do not have any fuel. In our case, we flew to Stella Marris (MYLS) in the island of Long Island, part of the Bahamas Chain, for fuel. Even though I have five and a half hours of fuel, which can translate to approximately 500 nautical miles, I always limit my routes over water to 400 nautical miles, in case of unexpected winds or airport issues. It is always very tempting to make the 508 NM trip directly but, through the years I have not broken my 400 mile rule and wasn't about to start. Maybe with another few gallons.....On our arrival to Providenciales, there was a localized low ceiling at the airport which, in other places, could have been a problem. However, when you fly over the ocean, you can descend as required and in our case, the airport was clearly visible eight miles away at 400 Ft. It is nice to be able to fly around as needed without low fuel issues! We made an eight-mile straight in and landed without any issues. For our departure about an hour later, the weather was back to CAVU for us to fly the 66 NM to the island of Grand Turk. We stayed there a couple of nights enjoying the beach and the sights.

Seemingly too quickly every time, it was time to fly to the next island, which was Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands. Again, the distances to be flown always seem to fall just outside of the range. In this case, Tortola (TUPJ) is 479 NM counting the fact that we had flown 66NM to Grand Turk. Returning to Providenciales does not make it any better. The solution is to fly to Puerto Plata (MDPP) in the Dominican Republic for fuel. This route has the added advantage that it shortens the overwater flight considerably and is more scenic, as you can fly the north coast of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico on the way to Tortola, instead of over the ocean. This stop also has the disadvantage of one of the most expensive places for fuel.... \$12.00 a gallon!! The route also breaks up nicely the distance: 172 NM and 357 NM. I don't mind tanking fuel over the ocean. Other than the seemingly permanent few clouds over the islands, the weather was perfect. I enjoyed being able to fly the entire north coast of Puerto Rico at 8,500 Ft. Usually, when flying in Puerto Rico, I would never get that high and I had not seen the panoramic views of the island at that altitude. The scenery was beautiful. You could see in places both coasts of the island, the Atlantic and the Caribbean. Again, with plenty of fuel available, we did not necessarily fly point to point, so we did some sightseeing along the way looking at

different islands. The approach into Tortola is very scenic. As we had a fairly stiff wind down the runway, the video looks almost like a helicopter approach with great scenery. One thing worth mentioning is that in the islands, the trade winds are fairly constant from the southeast in the summer and from the east northeast in the winter. Most runways are oriented 8, 9, or 10 so the crosswind component is usually minor. Of course... there are exceptions! We rented a car in Tortola and went to my favorite beach on the island where Elizabeth ordered lobster and they served her a monster five-pounder! We enjoyed the island, its beautiful scenery, the people and the culture.



Time to fly away to the next island and weather wanted to participate actively. Most of our participants were content to fly point-to-point without any sightseeing. Many of them filed IFR flight plans regardless of the weather. The night before the departure to the island of Bequia (TVSB) they briefed the weather as menacing embedded thunderstorms and generally bad weather. I thought that the briefing was not quite what I was seeing in the weather reports, particularly because embedded thunderstorms are not common in the islands during the winter. Most weather conditions are localized, unlike the fronts that cover the US from west to east. In the morning, it was evident that there was cloud cover over the islands, which was my preferred route. I had planned to fly the islands for sightseeing and to reduce the overwater segments as Bequia is 378 NM from Tortola. My preferred route was a little longer but more fun. However, it became evident that the islands were pretty much covered, as reported by Gustavo who was trying the route. So, we decided to take the direct over water 378 NM route and bypass the islands. We flew a beautiful flight over the ocean with lots of clouds over the islands and arrived at Bequia dodging a few showers but otherwise clear. Other participants decided to stay in the island of Anguila and had a great time there. The approach to the Bequia, as most of the islands was beautiful. An airport on a shelf next to the ocean. We took a one day cruise in an old wooden 100 Ft sailboat that anchored in a beautiful beach. The sailing was great, the company perfect and the beach gorgeous. In Bequia, the roads are very narrow. We had transportation on a van with a very capable driver that drove the roads as if they were highways. The food was good and we even found some of the tropical fruits with a street vendor that right on the beach that we used to eat as kids. We made a 12 mile flight for fuel to Kingstown (TVSA) which illustrated the amazing control that the British, the French and most non US governments have over civil aviation. Even though this was a domestic 12 mile flight, we had to have passports, General Declaration forms and be on an IFR or VFR flight plan. Not only do you have to file the

plan but it is subject to the government's approval. If they don't approve it, you can't go!! This is the case everywhere except Puerto Rico, which is a US territory. You realize very quickly the freedoms that other countries do not offer to their citizens and visitors.



Time to move on to Guadelupe, (TFFR), just a seemingly short 200 NM jump. That morning the atmosphere was very active, and we departed in light rain. We were able to island hop at 1,500 Ft. dodging showers and clouds. It made for a great flight full of rainbows, with a mixture of sun and showers. There are two mountains near the coast in the island of Dominica that look great shrouded by clouds. We made it to the airport in Guadelupe after deviating a few miles to surround a shower that was over the city but not the airport and landed without any issues. On my landing rollout I noticed an Air France Boeing 777 waiting for us to vacate the runway so they could depart. A friend took a great picture of the big Boeing waiting for us. In Guadelupe we enjoyed the beach and the food. We had two nights there, so it was basically one day that we spent walking to the beaches near the hotel.

The last stop of the Air Rally was Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (MDJB). At 508 NM you always feel tempted but eventually stick to your self-imposed rule and stop for fuel. Fortunately, in this case, the island of Saint Croix is right on the direct course between our origin and the destination. The bad news is that it cost us \$100.00 just to stop in that airport. The fees in most of the islands are much more than anyone is used to in the US. Anywhere from \$100.00 to \$300.00!! Anyway, the fuel stop broke out the over water flight nicely in two segments of 206 NM and 300 NM. It also gave us the chance to sightsee the south coast of Puerto Rico at 8,500 Ft., which I had not done before either. The city of Santo Domingo is a huge metropolis, very impressive when approached by airplane. ATC kept us over the water and gave us a 15 mile final to the airport from the coast. In Santo Domingo we enjoyed the colonial part of the town with its nice restaurants and very nice cold local beer, even for me, who usually do not drink beer.

As December 15 rolled around, it was time to end the organized part of the trip. The weather to the United States was not the best. Some participants decided to return commercial and pick up their airplanes in a few

weeks, others stayed for a few days in the Bahamas and others were able to make it to Florida. We returned to Puerto Rico.



Our plan was to stay about two weeks, as I had a good place at a friend's ramp at the airport without having to pay \$50.00 per day. We ended up staying a full month through the holidays and until January 17. We flew with family and friends and went back sightseeing to the US and British Virgin Islands. The scenery is amazing. We went on boat rides with friends and family, rented a car and drove to many places in Puerto Rico thoroughly enjoying our time there. We visited different airports and participated in activities with the Puerto Rican Aero Club, where we met up with another 15 airplanes for a last flight of the year tradition. This, of course, involved lots of food and camaraderie.

When it was time to return home, we realized that in winter there is not enough daylight to complete the flight from Puerto Rico to Ft. Pierce the same day. Most of my previous trips were in faster airplanes or during the summer season with plenty of daylight. To solve this problem, we decided that two more nights at a beach resort in the Bahamas would be required to complete our journey. We flew in good weather to Stella Marris (MYLS) through Providenciales (MBPV). At 411 NM this stretched my usual range a small amount but flying west is the proper direction to catch tail winds, which we did. This gave us a ground speed of about 130 kts saving a good bit of fuel. In Long Island we stayed at the Cape Santa Maria resort for two nights and enjoyed one of the best beaches of the trip.

Anytime you travel long distances, especially towards CONUS there is a good chance that you will have to traverse some frontal boundary and ours was on the very last day, on our trip from Stella Marris to Ft, Pierce. Weather was forecasted as IFR in the morning at KFPR so we decided to leave mid-morning to arrive midafternoon, when the weather was supposed to clear. While the weather did clear as forecasted, the cold front that had moved south and was now starting to move to the north as a warm front was about two thirds into our route. Tops were not forecasted very high, about 7,000 Ft. We started at 8,500 but eventually had to climb to 10,000 to skim the tops of the valleys and cross the front. We deviated for about 30 minutes looking for the valleys and it worked out well. The other option was flying the trip at about 2,000 ft. dodging the rain down below. Neither option was ideal, but we made it OK, although my airplane was not climbing much more, if any. We waited until the last day to use up our luck and it worked out great. Our out was not too bad... staying another night in a nice beach in the Bahamas. So, we flew our 363 NM to Ft Pierce, that turned out to be more like 400+. We got some fuel in anticipation of the Thursday Old Farts Flying Club activity and flew home under clear skies.

Our six week trip was fabulous, filled with adventure and good company but, as it goes with every vacation, the flight home with a nice landing in our grass strip was great! We are ready for the next adventure.

Alberto Silva



Elizabeth and Alberto living the life!

Note: Alberto will be talking about their Caribbean trip at this month's chapter meeting

***** **Great story isn't it? I think it is wonderful for our members to submit stories like this one, don't you?**

Do you have a story? - Contact me if you do. Larry Gilbert nsltr. Ed.

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Sun n Fun is on the Horizon!!

Starting April 9 2024

Loretta and I will be working airplane parking (GAP) again this year and right now we're waiting to hear from Donna Frantz who is the amazing chairperson of this group. We should be there four or five days of the show. Looking forward to the excitement of it all! **Flying in? See links for arrivals below** Larry Gilbert

<https://flysnf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-SUN-n-FUN-NOTAM.pdf> (arrival procedures in print)

<https://flysnf.org/flying-in/notams/#vfrvid> (arrival procedures video)

Monthly Breakfast

Saturday March 3, 2024

Dunn Airpark, Bldg. 10,

8 am

Monthly Chapter Meeting

Wednesday March 7, 2024

Dunn Airpark, Bldg. 10

7 pm