

EAA CHAPTER 866 SMILIN JACK

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2014

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President's Address

some thoughts about Oshkosh. As many of us prepare for the largest aviation event of the year, a bit of a reflection on what is it all about comes to mind. Sure there are the improvements to the grounds and all the interesting things to see, do and hear. There is also a palpable electricity in the air. The coming together of all of us who dream about building airplanes, flying them and being part of this wonderful and vibrant community of pilots and aviation enthusiasts! It is very hard to be complacent about any of this while standing under the arch and watching the War Birds fly in followed by flights of GA aircraft, static displays and the excited conversations of those who come to enjoy all that is on offer. Next month, I will have pictures to share and hopefully, this bout of Oshkosh fever will have subsided a little!

Read an interesting article several weeks ago. The article concerned the massive theft of avionics at a small Missouri airport. Sixteen hangars were broken into and the avionics carefully removed- the work of professionals. No one saw

anything. The targeted aircraft had glass panels and other sophisticated hardware. Most hangars were locked, but not very securely. Those that had better locks were not hit. It just reinforces the need to be vigilant and watch out for suspicious activity or persons you may not be familiar with hanging around. Be careful of used instruments with altered serial numbers on them if presented with a "good deal". We owe it to each other and ourselves to think about this and act accordingly so we do not become a statistic.

August 2nd will be our Breakfast. I won't be here to cook eggs, but Eddie has "stepped up to the plate" or rather the grille to do battle with the spatula! Thanks, Eddie for doing this.

In July we had a well attended breakfast of around 130 eaters. Excellent weather brought in many locals and about 30 airplanes.

As they departed, the Spruce Creek Gaggles honored our friend and fellow pilot, Stu Sammis, with the Missing Man formation as Taps played. It was a moving and solemn tribute graced by our new flag from Stu's family, flying proudly over Bldg 10...

Blue Skies,

Deborah



Missing man formation by Spruce Creek pilots in honor of Stu Sammis passing

July Breakfast

A very special event took place at our July breakfast, the Spruce Creek formation Alpha, flying four RVs, did the traditional missing man formation as taps were played. This was in honor of our member Stu Sammis who passed on June 30. An emotional moment for those who knew Stu!

We served close to 120 eaters at our July breakfast. Loretta and I started setting up at around 5:45 and got the grills going and started the coffee. By about 6:30 Jim Morgan came strolling across the flight line to begin setting up tables along with Les Boatright and before long we had the crew working and lying to each other. Our first guest was a man who has been around Dunn Airpark for a long time he got there at 7:14 and was a little disappointed that we were not ready to serve. He got a cup of coffee and waited till we got it all going. It was about 7:45. We got to rolling and all went smoothly for the rest of the morning. Deborah, our birthday girl, did double duty frying both bacon AND eggs. By 10:00 our truck was loaded up and we got home and finished cleaning up the dirty fry pans, utensils and pancake making stuff and replenishing the syrups, salt and pepper, coffee water and washed and ironed the aprons etc. We had all of this cleaned up by 1:00 pm and ready to take back to bldg. 10. Missed Donna and Ray they always take some of the stuff to their house to clean after our breakfasts too. They're off to Michigan to their cabin on a lake for a coupla months.



Flag Raising by Les at breakfast



Bob Rychel polices lot at breakfast

X59 Valkaria Airport

An awful lot has changed at Valkaria in the past couple of years and there is an article in the AOPA Pilot August 2014 about the transition it has made from a near derelict airport that many people nearby wanted to close to a beautiful recreational airport with facilities that may be used by the community nearby.

Our chapter has had a close relationship with the Valkaria folks and the EAA Chapter 1288 based there. Our breakfasts are attended by several Valkaria pilots and even Steve Borowski, who is the airport manager and largely responsible for the recent success of the airport. (Attached to the end of this newsletter is a copy of the AOPA article.)

Little Bit Too

Bob Rychel has two airplanes flying now, one of these is called 'Little Bit and the other is called 'Little Bit Too. Little Bit Too is the Zenith CH750 with the Viking (Honda) engine. He and I are flying the reqd. 40 hours off a little bit at a time. Well, I've finally gotten to the point that I know that right rudder is the wrong rudder to compensate for "P" factor and my takeoffs are more straight forward now cause left rudder is the right rudder for this! The plane is a hoot on takeoff because it's off of the ground so quickly. I can slow fly it at 30 mph easily. It is sensitive in pitch and it takes a very light touch to hold altitude in cruise. Pull power off and it comes down pretty fast add flaps and it's

like you're in an elevator shaft. Anyway, we're having a lot of fun getting used to flying her. For the time being we're landing without using any flaps and the landings are pretty short. I've been watching youtube vids about flying this and one of the pilots said he's had his flying for over a year and still doesn't use the flaps. Interesting and fun!



Bruce Hotz



Dan Hillman brought Bruce over from Orlando to Dunn Airpark to visit and check up on some of the projects underway at the airport. When Bruce arrived, Loretta was finishing up a cap she was knitting – perfect, Bruce was in the market for one of these so, Loretta checked for fit and gave him the hat.

Before they came to the airport they stopped to see Norm Dibble who was in grave condition. Norm used to come down to Mims every winter and would attend our chapter meetings while he was here. He passed away the day after they visited him.

Bruce is very weak but, he is on the road to recovery and gets a little stronger each day and his spirits are high. He should be attending the chapter events again soon.

Stu Sammis Life Celebration

Sat. July 16, 2014 Titusville Elks Club

Bob Walker, Stus' stepson attended our July chapter meeting and informed us and invited C866 members to the Celebration of Life memorial at the Elks club on Sat 7/16. Thirteen of our EAA Chapter 866 members were in attendance at this, a very good turnout! This was an interesting event for me because I learned a lot of things about Stu's life that I didn't know, for instance, he was an Air Force Lt. Col and the Air Force Attache in France for a period of time. There were a lot of other interesting facts about his life. Also especially moving were testimonies by his stepchildren who were adults when they became acquainted with him.

Stus' wife and the Sammis family expressed their gratitude to me and probably other members for our participation in this event. Very nice people!



Don and Heidi Garrison show their RV grins as they prepare to depart for parts unknown in their beautiful RV8



Bob and Jan show their CH650 grins as they get ready to head out in Little Bit



Kip Anderson -Sonex grin

Y-E event coming up

Don't forget about our annual Y-E event which will be held on Sat. Oct 18, 2014. We got a great response from our members about participation in this event. So far we have 6 airplanes & pilots and 10+ ground support workers. This is such a fun time and all members are wanted to help even to take lotsa pictures of the youth and all of our crew. Eddie Brennan has agreed to be in charge of the flight line and all safety issues associated with this. He has a lot of experience doing this and I've seen him in action working with him parking fly-ins at Sun n Fun. Most of the other volunteers have not been assigned to jobs yet. Keep this date open so you can enjoy this fun time at Dunn Airpark.

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AIRPORT STORIES

Up from the ashes

Valkaria finds the formula

BY BILL WILSON



VALKARIA RC VELOCITY CLUB President Joe De Pinto and airport manager Steve Borowski look over the newly completed race course for radio-controlled cars at the Valkaria Airport Park.

YOU WOULD BE FORGIVEN if you wondered how an improbably named airport on the eastern shores of Florida would find the key to survival in a hostile environment—which might serve as a model for airports all over America. Valkaria Airport (X59), just south of Melbourne, has emerged from years of bitter controversy and not only prevailed, but is thriving. And, in so doing, it is providing other airports of similar fate with a formula for future success.

Born as a World War II Navy relief field with a triangular runway configuration, Valkaria was handed over to local authorities in the mid-1950s with the intent that it remain an airport. The goal was noble, but the execution lagged. Valkaria was subject to benign neglect for years and facilities suffered. Locals around the airport became restive when traffic picked up from a now defunct helicopter training school and began a drumbeat for closure. It accelerated to the point of dirty tricks, false accusations

against airport employees, public arguments, and political interference. The local newspaper was actively searching out controversy and finding plenty. If there had been a Las Vegas line against Valkaria it would have been 100 to 1.

Enter Steve Borowski, new airport manager. Fortunately, Borowski knew how to fight fire with fire. He lined up his own political support, got money for a master plan, and saw it completed. The FAA, which had given over keys to the airport and did not really want them back, supported the effort with repairs, refurbishment, and guidance. With the active involvement of AOPA, the State of Florida, and the local Brevard County government, the nearby political opposition melted away and Valkaria was on its way to repairing its damaged past and emerging as a full-fledged general aviation/recreational airport.

Borowski knew that playing to only pilots would not win the public opinion

lottery. So he worked out ways that surplus materials from the new runway, taxiway and other field improvements could be used to build facilities which could be used by the entire community. Today Skyman Park features a BMX bicycle course with jumps made from the coquina rock removed to build the new runway. In addition there is a radio-controlled car/truck/boat area that features not only a new pond and a smooth asphalt track for closed circuit races, but the largest off-road RC course in the country. The airport manager reports that bad blood which flowed so frequently from local political entities has almost vanished. Mutually beneficial communication channels are open and in regular use.

Borowski is sanguine about his success. "We're up from the ashes, but we've only just begun."



IF YOU GO

Valkaria Airport (X59)

Located one mile west of the city, X59 has two 4,000-foot runways with trees at each end. Be alert for model aircraft in the vicinity.

Tel. 321-952-4590

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Rental cars: Enterprise on field 321-728-7755
(www.aopa.org/cars) 866-315-9155

Chapter Breakfast

**Sat Aug 2nd 8:00 am Dunn Airpark (X21) Bldg. 10
Titusville, Fl**

Chapter Meeting

**Weds. Aug. 6th 7:00 pm Dunn Airpark Bldg. 10
Titusville, Fl**
