

**EAA SMILIN 'JACK CHAPTER 866 NEWSLETTER
MAY 2022**



Lots of our chapter members volunteer for the week of the Sun n Fun event at Lakeland .



Hello to all EAA Chapter Members and Friends,

Hello everyone! Since we did not have a meeting in April – due to Sun “n Fun, I have missed all of you! Anyhow, plans for an open hangar day did not work out for April, so we will instead have a social event before the meeting on Wednesday May 4th.

The plan – as sent out earlier via email – is to have an Italian dinner prior to the meeting. We will begin setting up at 5:30 so that we can eat starting at 6:00. If the evening is nice, I hope many of you could taxi your flying machines up to the ramp – just for fun.

The menu will include pasta with meatballs, traditional sauce and Alfredo sauce, lasagna, garlic bread, salads, and soft drinks.

At 7:00 Mark Fox, who hangars his homebuilt Pulsar experimental aircraft here at X21, and is an accomplished competition balloon pilot as well as a fixed wing pilot, will talk to us about piloting balloons. Depending on the weather, he will either bring his balloon and talk outside or speak to us in the meeting room about piloting balloons and competition balloon flights.

Following his presentation, we will have dessert – as usual.

On a personal note, my Rans S-21 will have about 30 hours on it by meeting time – I am happy with it so far. It has been at the Viking Aircraft Engine facility at Massey Airpark for about a week for engine tuning and some minor mods to enhance performance.

Hope to see you all on Wednesday – then again at the monthly breakfast on Saturday May 7th.

Our member spotlight this month is on Les Boatright, our previous chapter president and pilot extraordinaire!

Les was not born in a barn (like Dave Manning) but he did grow up on a family chicken farm in Suwannee County Florida in the 1970's & 80's. They raised about 200,000 chickens per year! It was often hot and dirty work raising those flightless (but delicious) birds. As we all know, farmers learn how to be self-sufficient and can fix just about any type of equipment you can imagine. As Les grew up he was fascinated with all things mechanical and when it was time for college, he studied mechanical engineering.

Les explains how he became interested in aviation – presented here with excerpts (and updates) from a previous write up Les did for our February 2016 newsletter:

Les Boatright

Even though my Dad was never a pilot or an airplane owner, I'd have to say he's the first person to blame for my lifelong addiction to aviation. Dad always had a fascination with airplanes. As a young boy my father worked on his own family's farm in North Florida. This was all throughout the years of World War II. Since Florida was home to many military training bases at that time, there was hardly a day that passed where he couldn't look skyward and see formations of WW2 trainers and bombers passing overhead and sparking his young imagination. In the post war years in Suwannee County, it became very common to see crop dusters working the tobacco and corn fields. It was a treat for my Dad to pull off the side of a rural road and watch those duster boys swoop up and down the fields at high speed, narrowly missing the tall pine trees at one end and the power lines at the other. Even when I was a young lad in the 1970's, I recall seeing many crop dusters in the Summertime. I especially recall one early Sunday morning when we heard a loud fuss overhead, and then a big yellow crop duster landed on the narrow paved road in front of our house and taxied down to a nearby fertilizer facility where he topped off the hopper and then we watched him take off again! There must've been a lot of "pucker factor" for the duster pilot on that one, because I never saw them do it again.

When I was only 5 years old, my Dad took me to the Cecil Field Naval Air Station open house airshow in Jacksonville. That's where I saw the US Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration team for the first time. The Blues were flying the A-4 Skyhawks at the time. Even though that was more than 45 years ago, I still clearly remember many parts of that airshow, as if it were just last week. There had been a buildup of aircraft performances all afternoon with skydivers, warbirds and even one of the very early BD-5J micro jets. It was awesome! But the highlight was the final act of the day. Those Naval Aviators in their blue suits marched out to their blue jets, snapped a sharp salute to their crew chiefs, pulled on their bright yellow helmets, pulled their straps down tight and then, in perfect unison, they lowered their canopies and fired off their turbojet engines. For a 5 year-old, it seemed to take them forever to taxi out and take off, but when they did, the action really began! Those six pilots started making high-speed knife-edge passes – roaring by in front of us just 100 feet off the ground. Those delta-winged A-4's made a beautiful formation, zooming around the Florida sky as if they were bolted together into a single airplane. They were trailing smoke as they swooped through the air, drawing circles and corkscrews and bomb-bursts in the sky. Oh Man, I was hooked!!



The Blue Angel's in "Delta" formation streaking thru the Florida skies in their A-4 Skyhawks!

From that day on, I knew I wanted to fly airplanes someday. Not long after that airshow, my Dad took me out to our local airport on a Saturday. It seemed like Dad knew everyone in the county back then. He managed to get us an airplane ride with a fellow he knew who ran a local crop-dusting outfit. I'm pretty sure we went up in an older straight tail C-172. At the young age of 5, I got to experience the wonder of looking out an airplane window and seeing the world below from a bird's eye view. It's a memory that has really stayed with me. I remember sitting in the back seat with Dad and sliding back and forth across the vinyl-covered bench seat every time the airplane banked! We flew over our house, and I got to see Mom outside waving up at us. I suppose I was a Young Eagle even before the Young Eagles existed.

With "chicken feed" for income, our family could certainly never afford to own an airplane, so I had to fuel my interests in aviation by reading books and building scale models. I didn't get another airplane ride until sometime in high school. However, I bet I logged thousands of hours of "imaginary" flying time with the many plastic models I

built. Those models were little 3D puzzles that taught me the virtue of patience, of carefully reading instructions, and the pay-off when the job was done right. I studied the basic aerodynamics of flight, and all the different sizes and configurations of airplanes and why each type is made the way they are. I also learned a good bit about 20th century history because many of the plastic models I built represented some type of historical airplane, and it seemed like airplanes were always there at some of the most interesting events of the early 20th century.

Later on in high school, movies like Iron Eagle and Top Gun were released and everyone wanted to be a jet pilot – including me. My grades were good, but my eyesight retreated away from 20/20 perfection just enough to keep me from a military flying career. I was still determined to fly, so after high school graduation, I started taking lessons in a C-152 at my hometown FBO in Live Oak, Florida. It was called Suwannee County Aviation, and they were a Cessna pilot center, with two airplanes, a 152 and a 172. I rented the C-152 in block times for \$28 / hour wet. I was 18 years old, and the only instructor available at the time was an older woman (she was 19)! She was a terrific instructor because she had just recently gone through the process of getting her private, instrument, commercial and CFI ratings, so everything was fresh in her mind, and she was excited to get paid to fly! She had the perfect demeanor and sense of humor to be an instructor. I recall when I soloed after only 8 hours of dual, she cut my shirt-tail and joked how it was her superior teaching skills that allowed me to learn so fast!

The next thing I learned about aviation was that good instructors tend not to stay in one place very long. Before I could finish the Private Pilot Rating, my teenage instructor moved out west for a better paying flying job, and that was the last I ever knew of her. It took another year for me to finish the rating while using the pay-as-you-go method and attending college full time. The instructor who helped me finish was a retired US Navy P-3 pilot and an antique aircraft restorer. He had restored a beautiful Bücker Jüngmeister bi-plane, and I eventually got a ride in that! He was also a terrific pilot, and I learned a lot from him. I took my check ride in Gainesville on August 21st, 1990, and to this day I'm as proud of that achievement as I am my college diplomas. According to my logbook, my very first "victim" (passenger) was my Dad, and I reckon he was pretty proud too. Just a few years before he passed, I managed to get Dad a front seat ride in the EAA Ford Tri-Motor. He loved that, and it's a memory I will always cherish. I think the most important lesson I've learned in pilot training is that no matter how many planes you fly or how many ratings you earn, they are only a "License to Learn". After 30 years of being a pilot just for the "Sport" of it, I still do not have a lot of hours in my logbook, and I still have a lot to learn, but that is part of the appeal of flying to me.



A coupla old chicken farmers flew the coup one morning and found a ride in an old Tri-Motor.

After college, I was fortunate enough to land my dream job working at the Kennedy Space Center. So, I moved to Titusville to work on the most interesting flying machines I could ever imagine, the Space Shuttles. It wasn't long before I found Dunn Airpark and the FBO called Ray Walkwitz Aviation, where I did a good bit of flying in their rentals. There was a time in the mid 1990's when Walkwitz had a C-170, which is where I first learned to fly taildraggers.

A couple years later, I took an introductory aerobatics course at the Flagler County Airport. The famous "French Connection" airshow act had a flight school based there, and I learned to fly the basic aerobatic maneuvers in a CAP-10 trainer, which was a Great Adventure!

By the mid 1990's I knew I wanted my own airplane, but funds were still pretty light, and I wanted something different than the Cessnas I had trained in, something a little sleeker and faster. Being an engineer, I wrote out a list of "desirements" for this flying machine: must be aerobatic, centerline seating, two seats, able to fly fast, but also fly slow & stable and safe and affordable and so forth. This was not an easy set of parameters to meet – until one day a co-worker said: "You want an RV-4!" He was right! The RV specs fit my "desirements" almost perfectly. The only problem was, I had to build it. Well, I thought to myself, how hard could that be!?? (It's ok, you can resume reading when you stop laughing at that line!)

Between the years on the farm and the years in the engineering classroom, I felt I had a good balance of both practical mechanical skills and the academic knowledge needed to build an airplane. Still, I didn't take a blind leap of faith, I also took a weeklong course in learning to rivet and repair sheet metal before I started the RV-4 project. I figured if I was careful and patient, then I could learn whatever I needed to know. So, I decided to Just Go For It!



Les building the RV-4 wing tanks around mid-1998.

“Now how does this fuel sender thingy fit in that hole???”

Early progress on the RV-4 project was good. When I got stumped, I learned how to research and find the answers I needed. I discovered that the process of problem solving was very interesting, and the results of holding a nicely finished part of your airplane was very rewarding! I also learned that building an airplane is time-consuming. It might be one of the best examples of “delayed gratification” ever. Along the way, I discovered that “Life is what happens while you’re building your airplane!” There was church and marriage, and then some really big medical stuff, plus the usual home and car repairs, constant day-job demands, family demands, obligatory vacations away from the airplane project, and then having babies and reading Sport Aviation articles to my girls during 2 am feedings.



Les and his Dad doing “The Fuselage Jig”



Les' daughter Emily is almost as excited about the new Prop as he is!

If life is more about the journey and the people you meet along the way, than the destination, then my RV-4 project turned out to be a tremendous success! I've learned a lot about building airplanes, about life priorities, and about myself while working on airplane parts in the garage. Plus, I've gotten to know all sorts of marvelously talented aviation characters along the way! Two of them even talked me into a building another airplane with them!

In late 2016, three notorious members of EAA Chapter 866 joined forces to build a single-seater sport plane called the Panther. Those three fellas converted the Panther kit from a big pile of parts into a finished flying machine in just 7 months! And they might've done it a lot faster, except that I happened to be one of those three characters! As we charged through the Panther build, I learned even more about building airplanes from my two Panther building partners and friends, Ed Brennan and Bob Rychel. We never set out to make it into a magazine, we just wanted to build a nice airplane. So, we were especially surprised and honored to have our little airplane featured in the July 2018 issue of Sport Aviation. Without a doubt, the Panther building and flight testing has been the most rewarding aviation experience I've had. It would not have happened without the Smilin' Jack EAA Chapter and the camaraderie it provides.



Les taking the Panther out for a late afternoon stroll around the pattern at X21.

“Life” never stops happening, and some dreams have to be re-vectored to a new heading. After more than 20 years and countless hours of on-again-off-again fabrication and assembly, I recently sold the 90% completed RV-4 project to a new owner. It was a very difficult decision to let it go, but I understand there’s a chance it will fly on “Tuesday”.

The education I’ve gained from the airplane building projects has been invaluable. It has had many intangible benefits which have spilled over into my engineering career. I probably should mention here that this month will be my 30 year anniversary with the space agency. As you can imagine, rocket ships are one of my other interests. It has been exciting to live right across the river from the Space Center, and to work with machines that carry people into space and back. I could probably write a whole other article about my interesting NASA experiences, and this story is too long already. However, I will say that I think I prefer working on the little airplanes more than the rocket ships because after all the fabricating, assembling, troubleshooting, testing, and maintaining is done, you can take the airplane up for a ride!

NASA has never let me do that with their rocket ships, and after that crosswind landing I made last week, I can’t say I blame ‘em.



Some of my favorite days on the job were Shuttle landing days!

I wonder how many chickens you could haul in that payload bay?

I do have a few other interests besides airplanes and spaceships, but I'm not sure they're worth reading about here. I occasionally take time to ponder on trivial things. Recently, I pondered a little about all the many ancient Kings, Queens, Emperors, and Pharaohs who ever lived before the 20th century, and how, despite their elevated station, not one of them ever got to experience the thrill and wonder of seeing the world from their own flying machine. Not one of them ever dipped their wingtip into the edge of a cloud and felt the thrilling sensation of speed as those wispy white vapors whisked by their machine, nor saw their shadow dancing across the rolling terrain below, nor felt the satisfying "thump" of hitting their own wake after a perfect 360 degree steep turn. Oh, what glorious things they missed! Oh, How Lucky WE Are!!

I'll wrap up by saying how thankful I am to live in a time and place in history where it is possible to experience the adventures of flight! I'm thankful for my Dad who instilled in me that first love of airplanes and adventure. I'm happy to have fearlessly fled from those feathery flightless fowls and found the fabulous flying friends at the flap-jack fly-in!

Keep on Building & Flying & Flippin' them Smilin' Flap Jacks, and remember, Life is what happens while you're building (& flying) your airplane,

Les Boatright

Private Pilot

EAA #563003



Days at Sun n Fun

Loretta and I volunteered for five days at the show again this year. We work at GAP (General Aircraft Parking) and that operation is run by Donna Frantz who is a very effective person to operate our crew. We worked 7 hrs each day, Loretta's duties were sometimes out on the line delivering water, coffee, and sandwiches at lunch time



to the people posted out on the line.

Sometimes she was doing what is called kitchen duties which she is very good at. I worked at various intersections out on the flight line sorting and sending arriving aircraft and pilots in the direction of their parking assignments. I really like this activity because it can be a very busy job and you have to be quite alert because you're dealing with moving aircraft with spinning propellers and are sometimes moving faster than they should be going. This can be a problem if they don't slow enough to make a turn when directed to do so and a wide swing in desperation to make the turn is also be a hazard due to the speed of the outside wing coming around. Sometimes when there is light or no traffic you get to see things like the picture above of the T6s departing early in the morning, (0730) to go out and practice their air show routine.

One thing I witnessed on Tues. morning was an incident where a landing tailwheel airplane had used all of runway 10 trying to land. It was very windy and the wind was directly across the runway and I think he had been concentrating on getting rid of all the drift across the runway to make a good landing. They waited until there

was no runway left to land on to apply power to go around I guess, it looked like they were very close to a stall and starting to turn to their right towards us! I wonder why they didn't just go around. My assistant and I were almost to the point of running (yeah right) to get out of the way! Luckily they recovered from that attitude and began to line up on a grassy area off of the end of the runway and made nice 3 point landing and rolling out went through a water filled ditch making a big splash! The plane came up out of the ditch on its wheels totally intact! The next thing we saw was the FAA vehicles rushing out there to give them an award for the performance, I guess. An hour or so later we saw them pushing the plane around an access road until they were back on the operational area of the field then they started the plane and went on to parking. The plane flew out that evening and back again the next day. I have a very poor quality video of this event that I'll play for you at our hangar at Dunn if you're interested.

Went to the exhibitor area one afternoon and spent about ½ hr there and bought a tachometer cable for Tango from Spruce. The counterman there (Josh) was very helpful with the purchase. If I had ordered this online or over the phone I'd have ordered a cable with the wrong lay and would have had the annoyance of exchanging this for the right one! There was probably a lot of new and interesting stuff to learn about there but, we didn't take the time to investigate. It's not as interesting as it used to be to me. We've attended Sun n Fun for about 35 yrs and I miss the old familiar faces hawking their simple stuff. The whiz bang flashy stuff isn't so appealing any more! It's probably just me because the flying that we do now is very simple. Our 62 yr old C172A that we occasionally fly off to lunch with or just go out and practice maneuvers and do power off landings for fun.

The Sun n Fun show was FUN for me because I enjoy the action out on the flight line and the folks we work with at GAP!

Larry



Airport Sign

The monument and sign at what used to be the entrance to Dunn airpark was built by an EAA C866 member some time close to when the chapter was formed. Chapter member Wayne Bullington kept the sign in good shape

for years until he was no longer able. Loretta promised Wayne that she'd take care of it. For years, Loretta kept it weeded and watered. Recently I took it apart for her and she repainted it for the second time. Brian Shol's young daughter decided one day that she would perk the planter up and planted the beautiful flowers shown in the picture above.

Larry



EAA Chapter 866 Inc. The *Smilin' Jack* Chapter

Minutes of the March 2, 2022 Meeting of EAA Chapter 866 Inc.

The March EAA Chapter 866 meeting of 2022 was held on the 2nd at 7:00 PM at the regular meeting location, 480 N Williams Ave, in Titusville, Florida, following a dinner of pizza, chili and salad.

Chapter President Kathy Anderson presided over the meeting.

Ben Charvet, Chapter Vice-president, Herman Nagel, Chapter Treasurer, and Richard Van Treuren, Chapter Secretary, 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 25, thereby establishing a voting quorum.

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

Ray Thomas's passing was noted by the assembly, and plans were made to attend his celebration of life on Thursday.

Alberto Silva briefed the assembly on the upcoming Old (er,) Friends fly-in for visitors to eat at the Dixie Crossroads on Thursday.

Visitors and new members were introduced.

Joe Marshall's donations to the Chapter's holdings were noted. A video of the Goodyear-Zeppelin *Wingfoot Two* was shown. President Anderson showed how to make an inexpensive canopy cover. Vice President Charvet did a show-and-tell about his plans-built biplane project.

The evening's main presentation was on mishaps: Chris Fauver gave his presentation, "Density Altitude." Chris vowed to return next month. Additional stories of near-mishaps were offered.

The meeting adjourned at 8pm for apple pie, coffee, and fellowship.

.....

Chapter Officers

President	Kathy Anderson	321-795-8810	N73ka@earthlink.net
Vice President	Ben Charvet	321 961 5117	bencharvet@gmail.com
Treasurer	Herman Nagel	407 568 8980	bhnagel@earthlink.net
Secretary	Richard Van Treuren	386 689 9914	rgvant@juno.com
Newsletter Editor	Larry Gilbert	321 747 8576	larryglbrt@gmail.com

Chapter Cookout

Weds May 4, 2022, 6:00 PM

Followed by our monthly meeting

Starting at 7:00 pm

Dunn Airpark

Bldg. 10, 480 N. Williams Ave

Titusville, FL

Chapter Monthly Breakfast

Dunn Airpark, Bldg. 10

Sat. May 7, 2022 , 8:00 AM

