

September 2020

# Latinas in Aviation Day



On August 20th, 2020 EAA Chapter 461, the Illinois Aviation Museum, and Clow International airport were the proud hosts for the inaugural Latina's in Aviation day! The event was covered by Telemundo and Azteca TV with live Facebook broadcasts by the Museum as well. Mayor Mary Alexander-Basta was present and the opening speech was performed by Bolingbrook Village Trustee Mike Lawler.

Bolingbrook Latina's were treated to airplane rides and many exposed to the wonder of flight for the very first time. Smiles abounded and the event was a huge success. Many people look to the sky and dream of flying but do not know how to even start, this event and others to follow, are overcoming that issue and opening the sky for everyone!

Bolingbrook is unique in the Chicago area for its welcoming and family-oriented airport that makes a real difference to the community by exposing the opportunities provided by aviation to people from every walk of life. The event sent a clear message that the sky really is the limit for young Latina's and that they can pursue their dreams right here in town.

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Bolingbrook residents can expect to see regular events at the airport for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 with Young Eagles proceeding as planned every second Saturday via pre-booked appointments. Additional events will be announced as plans are finalized.

## **November Elections**

Don't forget that we will be holding our annual Elections during our November 5th meeting and that the meeting will be host to our "Foods from around the world" event – Chapter members, their significant others, and rat-munchkin kids can compete for the Glory of winning exclusive prizes. I have already purchased the trophy I'm going to win – it's on display in my office. Thanks for all of your future votes!

## **View From The Left Seat (Wayne)**

There is no doubt that this year has been challenging for many reasons, not least of which from an EAA 461/Clow events perspective. I am heartened that everyone in the Chapter, and around the airport, has evaded the worst impact of the Covid virus and that we are all still pushing forward.

Despite Covid we have had an amazing year in some critical ways with the Latina's in Aviation event, Martin Pauley interview for the Future Aviators YouTube channel "Beyond the Flight Deck", Captain Joe's appearance and lovely film which contains some great Clow praise (you can find both of these on YouTube). For you Luddites out there, Martin and Capt. Joe are YouTube Aviation sensations.

Add to all this Emily Vineyard's success with the Give Back Scholarship earning her a full ride to either SIU or Lewis, and, of course, our very own Ray Aviation Scholar Alexander Falco Sonnenberg who has already completed his written test and is doing his lessons!

Let's press on with the Pietenpol build, Josh's RV training kit project and get ready for some more hangar restoration when the weather turns cold. We will finish 2020 strong, and next year is already shaping up to be an incredible adventure!

## **Future Aviators of America (Emily)**

We have had some very exciting accomplishments even through COVID. One being Austin starting a Podcast/Youtube channel "Beyond The Flight Deck" getting more kids into aviation, with doing interviews with wonderful people we have brought some exciting people to the airport. One being Martin Pauley, an amazing influencer for aviation, he has tons of Youtube followers who watch his content all the time which very's from many different things from trips in a Bananza to meeting more aviation influencers. Another surprising guest is Caption Joe! Hopefully, you have all heard of him but

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he is the highest YouTube aviation influencer with over 1.36 million subscribers! Mr. Pauley met with him at Clow a few weeks after he did the interview for the podcast. Me and some of the members of the FAA Club gave him an airport tour which he seemed to really like and may even come back! We are hoping to do an interview with him for the podcast soon!

We now have the P-40 pedal plane and I am watching the instructions on how to put it together so we can start on the project very soon. We may also be doing a lego build very soon! If you by chance have any lego sets that are not built and you do not want any more please let me know and we can work something out!

Again thank you all for your support of the club, we would not be where we are today without you guys! I hope you all have an amazing week and stay safe!

## **V**<sub>VEEP (Chad)</sub>

This month, I had planned to share a gripping tale of wide-eyed airmanship about man, machine, and mutt weaving their way through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Northwest as part of an annual cross-country adventure that would make Rinker Buck proud and Chuck Yeager blush; however, I decided to save that story (or perhaps spare you from it?) for now and give way to *Bringing Charlotte Home*, an account of Robbie Culver's acquisition of a magnificent 1945 Aeronca Champ and its fantastic flight home.



Thank you for the opportunity to chase a Champ, Robbie! -cec

## **Young Eagles Rally**



On August 8, EAA Chapter 461 held its first 2020 Young Eagles Rally. The event was very well received by the eager attendees, and we are looking forward to our next rally on September 12!

As an aviation organization, safety is always our top concern, and our commitment to public safety was readily apparent before, during, and after the rally. Several controls were employed to facilitate and maintain proper social distancing minimums among participants.

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Specifically, we limited the number of flights to thirty, required attendees to sign up in advance for a seat in a defined time slot using an online reservation system (seats were booked full in less than 24 hours after registration opened!), and we did not permit walk-up attendees.

While waiting for their flight, attendees were requested to remain close to stanchions that were marked according to time slots. In the aircraft, all participants wore face masks, and each aircraft's cockpit was wiped down and sanitized after each flight.

## Pietenpol update

Progress continues on the chapter 461 Pietenpol build! We meet each Tuesday and Thursday evening from 7 pm to 9 pm for camaraderie, some build progress, and good conversation.

Currently we are in search of wheels, brakes and a master cylinder, as well as good AN hardware. You don't need experience to join us, and you don't have to donate or even do much. We'd love to have you join us, even if only to watch and learn.

To date, we have removed the tail and sorted out some minor challenges in our efforts to bring this beautiful project to life and see it fly. Our ongoing efforts are a carefully measured, step-by-step work in progress to ensure a safe, reliable flying aircraft.

Please join us!





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## Bringing Charlotte Home (Robbie)

My mother always said “Everything happens for a reason.” I’ve lived with that thought my entire life, and learned when to listen to that inner voice. This story is one of those moments.

I blame Tony Sabos for all of this. He had taken me up in JWA’s Champ a few times and I’d started renting it to get some time in type. The more I flew it, the more I loved flying it.

I love old vintage aircraft, especially tailwheel equipped, low and slow treasures. My wife and I had discussed looking for one to buy, but hadn’t seriously considered anything. We support one another’s passions, and were married at an airport. So she knows a lot about Aviation and is always the first to send me off to go fly. But we weren’t seriously looking. That all changed when my friend Eric Seber told me about a 1945 Aeronca Champ for sale at the airport he manages in Indiana, KDCY Daviess County.

Eric sent me some photos and it was immediately clear that this was a unique airplane. There are lots of Champs available. Many have been restored, some have not. But this one seemed special. The photos showed a clean, well maintained, and extremely well restored airplane. The logs were complete to the first test flight on December 21st, 1945. I did a title search through AOPA, and ordered the FAA paperwork on the aircraft to compare to the logs.

A family owned the Champ for 39 years and restored the aircraft from the frame up. The father and son that did the restoration had experience restoring Waco’s and other old aircraft. The Champ was a family jewel. And it shows.

My friend Eric is an A&P/IA and runs a shop on the field. He had worked on the Champ, done it’s annuals, and was well acquainted with the airplane and the seller. I arranged for Eric to do a pre-purchase inspection, and no major issues were found. Things began to look very interesting.

The aircraft is in an almost original state. No engine-driven electrical system. Hand prop required. Original wheel pants. Clean fabric. The wood spars and formers had been replaced and the frame stripped, oiled and repainted.

Josh Krecek and I decided we would fly down to KDCY to see the Champ, about a 217nm flight. Josh rented a G1000 equipped 172 from his flying club, and we set a date we both could get off work to go. With the date set, I contacted the seller to ensure I could test fly the Champ. He seemed reluctant at first, but I told him I needed to do a test flight. He finally agreed.

The morning of the flight down, the weather appeared perfect. There was a slight chance for storms, but the 172 was well equipped and both Josh and I are instrument rated. We left Naper Aero about 8 am for a smooth, easy flight down. We took the time to get to know one another a bit better and chat about flying and life. It was a great start to a fun day.

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When we got to DCY, my friend met us on the ramp and after the obligatory break, took us over to see the Champ. I couldn't believe it. The photos did no justice to the actual airplane. It was just beautiful. As I walked around it, I realized it truly was a gem. The logs matched the work I had been told was performed. The list of things wrong was short.

So we pulled her out into the sunlight, I set up my handheld radio, and began the process of doing a short test flight in the immediate vicinity of DCY. She started easily and just purred to life. I immediately began to grin. This was exactly what I had in mind for a low and slow, hopping rides, tailwheel equipped aircraft.

I let her warm the oil in the summer sun, and sat basking in the moment. It really was special, and there's no words to describe how I felt. But I had a test flight to perform, so it was back to business. I taxied out for a departure on 36 in very light winds, and took off.

The seller had said the Champ had a Continental A-65-8, a 65 hp engine. But I had done some homework. The RPM gauge had a red line of 2600, and a Continental A-65-8 only allows 2300 RPM. In addition, the data plate and 337 forms showed a Continental A-75-8, which is 75 hp. Not a huge difference, but enough to matter in a Champ.

Sure enough, as I began to climb off the runway, the Champ was definitely not a 65 hp. And both the RPM and climb rate reflected that. Another interesting moment of realization.....this may be a gem.

She handled perfectly. Mild mannered, lots of rudder required, no surprises. I spent about 30 minutes flying a wide orbit over the airport and getting a feel for her. And it was a good feeling. This was not your average rode hard Champ.

As I descended to land on runway 18 (the winds had changed), I listened closely as she puttered and burped almost as if she was happy. An easy three point landing and I taxied back in. We put her away and visited Eric's shop. We may have left some adult beverages there for him. Just sayin'. In the back of my mind, I began to think about what I had seen and felt. I try to never get emotional about anything I purchase, but I also know a good thing when I see it.

Josh and I said our goodbyes, flew home and dodged some weather on the way. I talked to my wife about the Champ, and we agreed to see if we could negotiate a deal with the seller. We ended up doing so, and arranged to fly down the following Sunday to pick her up.

This is where the story gets very special. My friend Coyle Schwab has a Cessna 195 based at Aurora, and had offered to fly me down to get the Champ. Chad Carlson, our chapter VP, is always up for a cross country adventure and offered to accompany me back. I joked with him that he'd get bored flying so slow. But it was a good idea and I accepted the offer. Our chapter Ray Aviation Scholarship winner, Alexander, was invited along for the adventure.

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We all left Clow at 8 am that Sunday morning for a very fun day of flying. The flight down was easy and fun. I'd never ridden in a 195 before, and Coyle let me fly a bit. What a wonderful experience! Chad wasn't far behind, and good conversation made for a short trip.

In what seemed like no time at all we were on the ramp at DCY, and the seller met us there. We headed to the hangar to close the deal, and I ensured everything was in order and ready to go. There were no surprises, so I set the Champ up with a handheld again, and added a GPS so I could navigate safely home. (Yes, I can hear some of you complaining I should have done it old school with just a map, but this is 2020 and even my iPhone has an Aviation app)

We fueled her up, and left for a short break in the FBO. I watched the seller on the ramp, taking photos and saying his goodbyes. The Champ had clearly been part of the family. I made sure he knew she was going to a good home, where she'd be flown and well cared for. As we left, he was by the runway shooting photos and waving. That had to be tough.



We made our way north, with Chad tucked in behind and to my right, and weaved our way through some summer crud that seemed reluctant to burn off. My original plan was a low altitude cruise, but we ended up at 4500' for our planned fuel stop at KDNV, Vermillion County in Danville, IL. My in-laws, Peter and MaryKate Bayer, planned to meet us there in the Champ they base at Naper Aero Estates for a fun formation flight home. The trip to DNV was uneventful, other than Chad enjoying the slow flight characteristics. I couldn't believe how fun it was, just moseying along in loose formation en route to Danville. Chad zipped past me a couple of times, and it was fun to see him just zoom off and bank away.

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After refueling the Champ and relaxing in the FBO's air conditioning, my in-laws arrived and taxied up. I walked out to meet them and introduce them to my new friend. Seeing the two Champs was a special moment. It's a family bond, flying, and I love it when we have new adventures. In short order it was time to go, so I taxied out first, followed by "Champ #2" and then Chad in his Cherokee. This was going to get fun!

The flight back was just incredible, and Alexander was able to get some photos of us flying two Champs in formation. We dodged one small storm, and skirted the rain shaft as we approached Kankakee.



All too soon, Lewis appeared on the horizon and Chad sped off to land ahead of us. My wife knew we were coming and had pre-positioned herself with our digital SLR and telephoto lens to capture the moment.

I won't deny the emotions of the last few minutes. My brother Mike, who got me into flying but passed away a few years ago due to cancer, seemed close by. I thought of other friends as well, and how lucky we are to fly. Having my in-laws right there with me just was icing on the proverbial cake.



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Soon enough I called a 45° entry to the left downwind for runway 18, and we entered the pattern in trail. I landed first, and my awesome wife captured every moment. The in-laws followed, and soon we had two Champs on the ramp, joined by Wayne and Emily in JWA's rental.

There was a definite buzz in the air. I'd completed a three hour, well planned flight in our new Champ (now named Charlotte) and safely brought her home to tuck in the hangar. Sharing the moment with Chad, Alexander, Pete, and MaryKate just added to the adventures. Mission complete. Another beautiful aircraft based at Clow, with many rides to be given and memories to be made.

