EAA 461 Newsletter

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Chapter Leadership

President & Web Editor: Chad E. Carlson
Vice President: Robbie Culver
Treasurer: Josh Krecek
Secretary: Alexander Falco Sonnenberg
Newsletter Editor: Robbie Culver
Young Eagles Coordinator: Al Bally
Membership Coordinator: Angela Greer
Facilities Coordinator: Robbie Culver
Mailing address: 118 S. Clow International Parkway, Bolingbrook, IL 60490
Email address contactus@eaa461.org

Inside This Issue

From the left seat

Greetings 461!

Before I get started in earnest, I want to apologize to Robbie for completely wrecking his newsletter schedule. He aims to have our newsletter published by the 10th of each month, and I have been a chronic breaker of that deadline. In my (weak) defense, I have been neck-deep in an airplane renovation since November 1, 2020, and that project has consumed pretty much all of the time and attention I have that is not otherwise allocated to family and work. I appreciate his - and your - patience. It is my sincere hope that I will be able to execute in a more timely manner once the renovation work is complete.

Speaking of renovation… this month's picture contradicts the column title since I am clearly occupying the right rear seat of my airplane instead of the front left seat. This is a clear indication that Melody's (N8ML) interior refurbishment is nearing completion. In fact, I am absolutely thrilled to report that Melody made three high-speed trips down runway one eight yesterday!

The high-speed runs were executed in order for Mike and I to verify that all systems were functional following a period of extended maintenance downtime. All went very smoothly, although I must admit it was a little strange to be on the ground with 70 mph IAS. I am usually about to transition into a best-angle climb (74 mph; followed by best-rate at 85 mph) at that point!

As I have navigated the ups and downs of the renovation project, I have had plenty of time to consider and contemplate my ever-evolving relationship with aviation. (There have been some bright spots and dark moments. I would give the contemplation exercise two stars - I do not recommend doing the same unless you are burdened with an excess of time and are unafraid of facing your affliction head-on.)

I fly purely for personal enjoyment with no aspirations for professional piloting, and I am inclined to categorize my relationship with aviation as a "hobby;" however, upon reflection, that assessment seems to land short of the threshold. I think "lifestyle" may be a more suitable way of describing my personal aviation experience.

In a nutshell, aviation is not something I do. It is something I am. I mean, if aviation were just a hobby, I doubt very seriously that I would have learned that there was a difference between AN and NAS hardware (thanks Bob, Jim, and Mike!), that the head of AN3 bolts is ⅜ of an inch, than AN363 and MS21042 nuts are equivalent despite the latter appearing substantially less significant in size, that an MS21042-3 nut goes on an AN3-4A undrilled bolt with an AN960-10 or AN960-10L washer, or that I seem to have a knack for upholstery work. (No, I will not be starting "Carlson's Aircraft Interiors" despite all of the cajoling to that end… but I sincerely appreciate the positive feedback I have received for my interior work and workmanship!).

Oh, and let me not forget the frequent, impromptu vocabulary lessons I endured (hosted?) after having stabbed myself with a sharp object or sliced myself on some sharp sheet metal.

Heck, the mere fact that I am writing these contemplations down suggests "lifestyle" is more applicable than "hobby.". Writing may be a hobby for some people, but those are not my people. You are my people. And with that, I ask you: How would you categorize your involvement in aviation? Is it a hobby or a lifestyle? What is your rationale?

Did I say lifestyle? Maybe I meant illness.

In other news…

We would like to thank Gary Wilkins for installing our Google Nest thermostat in Hangar 461. John Tatro graciously donated the device a few months ago, and Gary stepped up to help us get the installation finished after we experienced some initial connectivity issues.

I would also like to thank Dennis Miendersma for bringing his ladder and helping yours truly do the final tidy-up of the thermostat cabling. Of course, no job would be complete without a bit of "hangar heckling."

Thus I extend a special round of thanks to Jeff Krasowski for remembering to heckle us mercilessly from the comfort of the pilot lounge while I put life and limb in peril for the betterment of the community.

Thank you to Gary Wilkins for coordinating the donation of a POW-MIA flag from Rolling Thunder Chapter 1.

Thank you to Aras Lintakas for donating a U.S. Space Force flag to our Armed Forces flag display.

Cavalcade of Planes 2021 is officially ON! The kickoff planning meeting was hosted by Joe Depaulo on Saturday, March 20 at the Illinois Aviation Museum.

There are many details and unknowns that will need to be fleshed out between now and June 5th / 6th, and the event will look a bit different this year than in years past; however, one thing we know for sure is that we will need a litany of volunteers to support the event.

If you have not already done so, please consider setting aside some time to volunteer in support of Cavalcade. In addition to the weekend itself, we will need volunteers to help prior to the event (setup) and after the event (teardown / cleanup) so even if you are unavailable the weekend of June 5 and 6, there may still be plenty of opportunity to pitch in.

Spring has sprung (I think), and that means we are gearing up for Young Eagles (YE) season. Our first YE rally of 2021 is scheduled for April 10, 2021 at 9am, and Al Bally has been leading the charge to get us ready. Please stay tuned for additional details from Al.

And that is all for the moment. I will now send this tardy submission off to Robbie for publication and get back to work as I wrap up N8ML's renovation. If all goes to plan, it is my sincere hope that Biscuit and I will once again break the surly bonds of Earth and join the crowd in the pattern above Clow this weekend.

VFRs!

2021 Calendar

Young Eagles

Young Eagles coordinator Al Bally has set the dates for our 2021 Young Eagles rallies! Mark your calendars now for our monthly rallies, starting in April.

Saturday April 10th, 2021
Saturday May 8th, 2021
Saturday June 12th, 2021

Chapter Fly Out Events

AirZoo Saturday May 29th (Memorial Day Weekend)
National Museum of the Air Force June 25-26-27

Chapter information

EAA Chapter 461 is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization based at Bolingbrook's Clow International Airport (1C5) in Bolingbrook, Illinois.

Whether you fly, build, restore or simply enjoy airplanes and aviation, you are welcome to attend our events and join our chapter.

We are a group of aviation enthusiasts, aircraft builders, restorers, and pilots who get together with like-minded people to share ideas, exchange information, encourage safety, serve the local aviation community and have a lot of fun doing so.

Please come to our next meeting or event as our guest!

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Chapter meets on the first Thursday of the month at Clow International Airport, typically at the Illinois Aviation Museum starting at 7:00 pm. Family members, extended family and guests are always welcome.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership dues for EAA Chapter 461 are $25 per year and are due on the first of January each calendar year.

Chapter 461 members are to be current members of the EAA, Oshkosh, WI.

Individual membership to the EAA is $40 per year. Family memberships are available for an additional $10 per year. Both include a twelve-month subscription to Sport Aviation magazine.

Experimental Amateur Built (EAB) Signoff

Robbie Culver

Hello EAA 461!

Recently in your EAA 461 hangar a conversation about completing and signing off an experimental aircraft delved into the details of the process. The discussion centered around what is required for a project's final inspection for first flight and who is or is not required to sign off. This final inspection can be performed by the Flight Standards District Offices (FSDO) which is free or a Designated Airworthiness Representative (DAR) which is ***definitely*** not free.

The takeaway here that an A&P *is not required* to sign a project off as part of this process. The builder performs a condition inspection and signs that off on form 8130-6.

I reached out to EAA headquarters for clarification and the relevant portions of the response are below. For those that have never called or contacted EAA, I have found that they respond quickly and accurately and are a fantastic resource. Tim Hoversten has helped me in the past with questions about my Sonex when I changed propellers and wasn't sure what paperwork was required.

The response read, in part:

Thank you for contacting EAA about this.

There has NOT been any policy change.

FAA Order 8130.2J, the most current guidance for Experimental Amateur-Built certification, clearly states in section 15, pages 15-2 and 15-3 that the builder is authorized to perform the inspection.

Here is the actual information from the Order:

(3) Verify that aircraft records include a completed statement from the owner that the aircraft has been inspected per part 43, appendix D, or other approved programs, and was found to be in a condition for safe operation. The inspection will help identify any errors made during construction of the aircraft. This statement will support the owner's inspection and airworthiness statement in block III of FAA Form 8130-6.

Note: There is no requirement for a certificated mechanic to sign off on the inspection. The builder's signature on FAA Form 8130-6, block III, attests to the airworthiness of the aircraft.

In addition, it is important to understand that Technical counselors never "sign off" anything – they are there in an advisory (e.g. counselor) capacity only, and since they are not there to actually do work for the builder either, they are not liable for the visits.

The Technical counselor should not be making entries in the aircraft logbook, they just fill out a report form of the visit and give it to the builder. The builder can show the report forms to the FAA inspector or DAR at the Airworthiness inspection if asked.

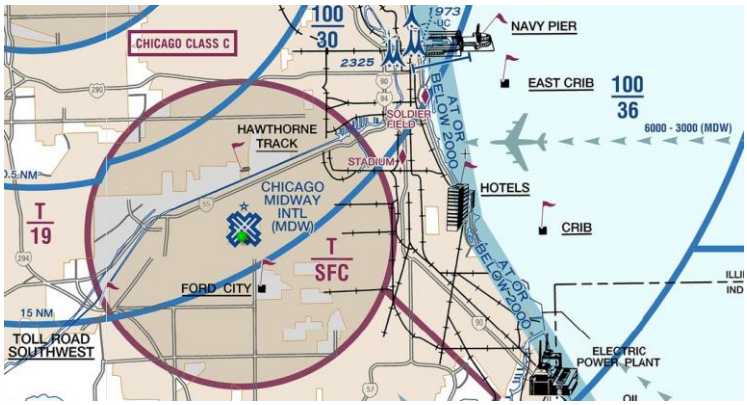
I hope this helps all involved, but please share my contact information so that anyone that has questions can contact me directly. My office hours are Mon-Fri, 8-5, Central time, my direct phone line is 920-426-6846, and my email is thoversten@eaa.org

What is important to note here is that a technical counselor visit is there in an advisory role. They are not making logbook entries. They are not signing anything off.

Also, important to note is that when a builder signs FAA form 8130-6, block III, they are stating that they (the builder) certify the aircraft is airworthy. The FAA will only issue the special operating limitations for the aircraft if this form is completed accurately.

The following text is part of that form:

D. CERTIFICATION - I hereby certify that I am the registered owner (or his agent) of the aircraft described above, that the aircraft is registered with the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with Title 49 of the United States Code 44101 et seq. and applicable Federal Aviation Regulations, and that the aircraft has been inspected and is airworthy and eligible for the airworthiness certificate requested.



Proposed Changes to Chicago Midway Class Charlie Airspace

"Proposed modifications are intended to enhance safety by deconflicting aircraft on approach to Runway 22 at Chicago Midway with Visual Flight Rules aircraft transiting the flight corridor along the Lake Michigan shoreline south of downtown Chicago."

Last month, my dogs tail wrote about the VFR flyway up Route 59. Recently, your chapter leadership became aware of a proposed change to the Chicago Midway (MDW) Class Charlie airspace above the lakefront flyway. We wanted to share the proposed changes and – most importantly – share the safety concerns driving the proposed changes. These are proposals right now. Nothing has been decided.

When Chicago Midway is using runway 22L for landing, the approach can have jets descending across the VFR flyway along the Chicago lakefront. The flyway provides a corridor at or below 2000' MSL beneath the Class Bravo airspace shelf that begins at 3600'. Because aircraft using the corridor are not always talking to ATC and may be above the 2000' corridor (up to 3599') and still be legal, this can cause conflicts with inbound traffic to MDW.

For those that have never had the privilege (and it *is* a privilege!) to fly the lakefront, there are few words that can describe the experience. It's a very special flight to go past downtown Chicago, especially very late in the day when the light is soft and streaming through skyscrapers just west of your flight path. (And if the wind is streaming through those same skyscrapers, the flight will have an interesting moment or three!)

No one wants to lose the privilege. But no one wants to see a collision with a passenger jet, either. There has to be a balance here of safety and accessibility to the flyway. I don't think that is an easy balance to strike.

According to a document from the FAA, "from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017 Chicago TRACON documented 69 traffic collision avoidance system (TCAS) events, reported by IFR aircraft landing on runway 22L at MDW."

The same document states the "number of TCAS resolution advisories (RA) events in this area is an indication of the increased likelihood for conflicts between IFR and VFR aircraft; with only the IFR aircraft in two-way communication with ATC."

There are four proposed solutions to the problem, and none have been implemented yet.

However, given the history of the changes to the Chicago Class Bravo airspace in recent years as the ORD expansion and 3 new runways forced additional airspace to be reserved for traffic into and out of O'Hare, it may be expected that something will come of these proposed solutions. They are presented here for informational purposes only, quoted directly.

Alternative One: Maintain the Status Quo. The current Midway Class C airspace has been in place since long before the implementation of the new RNAV/GPS 22L approaches.

Conflicts between IFR and VFR aircraft along the Lake Michigan shoreline have increased since the implementation of RWY 22L approaches. In an effort to increase awareness, Midway ATCT developed an outreach program to inform VFR pilots of the new approaches and issue cautionary NOTAMS. This is not a viable alternative!

Alternative Two: Extend the outer ring of the Class C: two shelves. This alternative is not consistent with traditional Class C airspace design. The shelving of the proposed extension could place an increased workload on the VFR pilots who are attempting to stay clear of the Class C airspace.

Alternative Three: Extend the outer ring of the Class C: single shelf. This alternative is more restrictive than alternative two. VFR pilots transitioning north and south along the Lake Michigan shoreline would be required to stay below 1,900 feet.

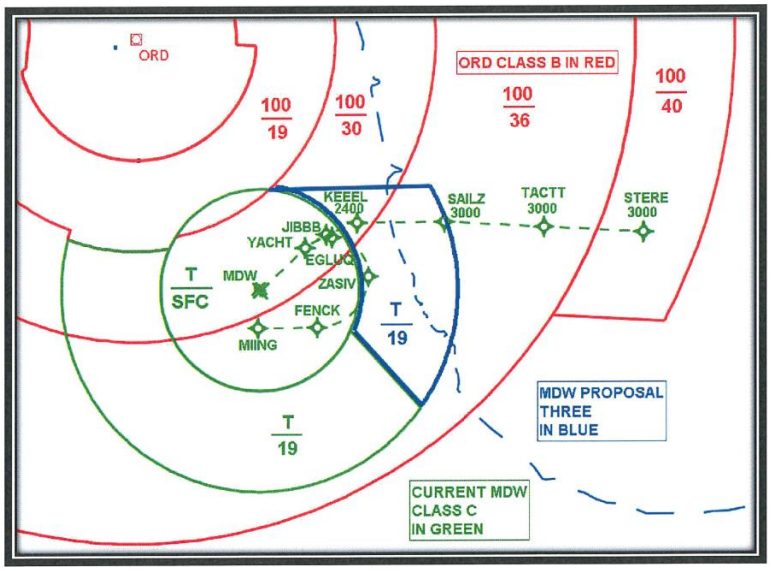
Alternative Four: Full Ring Version. This proposal is the most restrictive to VFR aircraft and includes more airspace than is necessary to accommodate the Standard Instrument Approaches to Runway 22L.

The document goes on to recommend alternative three.

"Alternative Three: Extend the outer ring of the Class C: single shelf. Increasing the size of the Class C Airspace east of MDW is necessary to provide positive control between the IFR aircraft inbound on an instrument approach from the VFR aircraft flying north and south along the VFR Flyway. With the exception of the status quo, the other three alternatives establish a new Class C that will provide this level of control.

Alternative Three, when added to the current Class C Airspace, will have a consistent base altitude of 1,900 feet between the 5 and 10 mile are, it is less restrictive to the VFR pilots than Alternative Four and the single shelf maintains the traditional Class C design.

Increasing the size of the Class C Airspace will reduce the number of TCAS events and the possibility of a midair collision. It will improve safety, enhance the management of air traffic in the NAS and reduce controller/IFR pilot workload by procedurally separating the IFR and VFR traffic east of MDW along the VFR Flyway."



As a pilot who enjoys the freedom to transition under the Bravo along the lakefront, I do not love this solution. It leaves me uncomfortably low over the lakefront. However, I will hasten to add that this is better than losing the privilege or seeing a major accident result in more dramatic restrictions. Being held to less than 1900' is better than not being able to go up the lakefront. My concern here is how they will handle the inevitable airspace bust when this is first implemented. I'm thinking of all the aircraft going to Oshkosh.

Alternative three – the one that seems most likely to be implemented – is further explained as:

Extend the outer ring of the Class C: single shelf — Starting at the intersection of the 5-mile inner ring and Interstate 290. The boundary will follow 1-290 eastbound past the Lake Michigan shoreline continuing east to intercept the 10-mile arc, then southbound until joining the existing 10-mile arc.

The vertical limits would begin at 1,900 MSL continuing upward to the bottom of the Class B.

The proposed addition, when added to the current Class C, will have a consistent base altitude of 1,900 feet. IFR aircraft will enter the Class C at SAILZ and remain in the Class C all the way to MDW providing separation from the VFR traffic flying north or southbound along the Lake Michigan shoreline. (SAILZ noted on the diagram is a GPS waypoint used during the RNAV approach)

If you look at the proposal and the current VFR flyway, this should solve the problem of VFR traffic conflicting with the approach. The problem will be one of education and adjustment. Particularly for those who have been doing it for years using the current configuration.

The SAILZ waypoint is at 3000' so descending from that to the KEEEL waypoint at 2400' definitely conflicts with VFR traffic at the current altitude of 3600' and below. The proposed 1900' limit would solve this. But keeping VFR traffic at or below 1900' in that area leaves very little wiggle room for VFR transitions and could lead to new, unanticipated problems.

I've said for years, to truly solve the (very real) challenges on the lakefront, any solution *must* include a designated frequency to be used for aircraft transitioning the corridor. Once Meigs closed, we lost any positive control of traffic that isn't talking to approach. And since approach used to basically tell us to get lost, it's going to take a lot of convincing to get us to believe they will help.

We are positioned close enough to this proposed change to keep a close eye on it. Stay tuned.