

# Pike's Peak Flyer

The Voice of EAA 72

<http://eaa72.org>

March 2013

Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2012

Place: MAAA Hangar

Arrive about 6:30 PM.

Dinner will be served  
between 6:30 and 7:00



You are welcome to bring your own wine or other alcoholic beverage, we'll have everything else.

## EAA Chapter 72 Celebrates 51 Years

### Member Profile: Ken Hendrickson

*By Michael Jerger, Membership Director*

I had the pleasure of meeting with Ken Hendrickson this past Saturday. What was planned to be a visit to his home for an hour turned out to be story after story during a four-and-a-half hour visit.

Ken has one of those life experiences that almost every other pilot can only read about. For some of his stories, most pilots cannot even imagine what kind of history this is.

After a warm welcome and meeting his very cordial wife of 62 years, Marian, we

walked down the steps to his side basement shop. There, a Rans S-19 low-wing all-metal aircraft construction was in progress.



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# Member Profile: Ken Hendrickson

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Wings were stored neatly off to the side. The horizontal stabilizer hung with rope from the ceiling joist very close to the wall. A building table was just to center of the room. A shelf extending from the wall was on one side of the room. Just to the other



side of center of the floor was the fuselage and vertical stabilizer of the Rans. With pictures on the walls, he started telling his stories.

pilots were generous enough to take up visitors once in a while, so he got his first airplane ride at age 14. After that ride, he was offered a position as a "line boy". His duties were to fuel planes, hand prop some planes (there were no OSHA rules back then) and do many everyday chores. He learned how to perform simple jobs such as changing spark plugs and other tasks that did not require an Airframe and Powerplant license (if such training even existed).

In exchange for his help, he received a generous \$5 per week and two hours of flying time per week. He took advantage of that time and learned to pilot various aircraft. With that flight time and self-study, he scored the commercial pilot license at age 18. (The flying world was lot less restrictive back then.)

Not yet 21 years of age, he was offered a position flying US Steel executives. He had to handle them with care; one executive would not fly unless the weather was calm and nearly perfect for flying. The airplane of choice at that time was the DC-3, some of which were from the recently-ended World War 2 era.

From there, he flew for a while for Capital Airlines, which merged in 1965 with United Airlines. He has been the pilot-in-charge of Boeing 727's, the DC-10, and the Boeing 747-100, flying long legs to Japan, Beijing, and the famous Kai Tak airport, the only airport that uses a checkerboard to provide a landmark to long-haul aircraft. (Look this one up on the Internet.)

In between commercial flight, he restored cars such as the British-made MGT series of roadsters that were manufactured in the late 1940s.

One particular car he restored was the 1954 TF 1500. His efforts won a "Best of Show" award, a sterling silver trophy about the size and shape of a large dinner plate.



His very earliest exposure to an aircraft was when he was growing up on a farm in western Pennsylvania, a mail transport plane made a forced landing in a field just outside his home in the early 1930's. He was only three years old, but the sight of such a machine made a lasting image. It seemed like he could not get enough of this thing called an airplane.

Growing up, to satisfy his interest in flying, he would hang around the local airport. The local

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# Member Profile: Ken Hendrickson

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In other time over the years, he and Marian raised a couple of boys and a girl. All three took an interest in flying. One son, Eric, scored a world record for a sailplane flight out-and-back trip. That record stood for around two decades, when it was surpassed just a few years ago. Ken and son Eric both scored a Diamond rating in the sailplane world. (See web site <http://www.ssa.org/myhome.asp?mbr=5361749529> for details of ratings.) Each of three ratings requires exceeding a certain distance and altitude. Ken holds badge number 213, flying out of Pear Blossom, California. His son Eric holds a badge in the mid-260 range. This was when sailplane enthusiasm was not as obvious as it is nowadays, where the badges earned are in the mid-thousands range.

Ken could easily talk for hours about his experiences flying the DC-3. A favorite story was how he as copilot and the pilot-in-command ran into some heavy freezing rain in the eastern part of Kentucky and Tennessee. They had to really wrestle the aircraft; the ground radio navigation system was relatively primitive back then, a series of tornadoes took out some radio nav aids, wind updrafts and downdrafts varied in the 5,000 vertical feet range, clear ice was thick on the wings, engines were hard firewalled, and at times, there were mountains on both sides of them, as the target airport was in the valley. But they landed safely with next to no safety margin.

After that one unique unforgettable flight, he said the command pilot quit right there on the spot, as did the baggage steward in the back.

As the command pilot of a 747 carrying 430 passengers out of California, Ken and his co-pilot were on their takeoff roll. They were approaching V1 speed, when they hear a very loud "BANG" from behind. Ken look real fast at the co-pilot, who also shows a puzzled face, and immediately aborted takeoff roll. (He had enough runway.) Now, sitting in the middle of a major airport at a dead stop, he told his passen-

gers to stay in their seats until that noise could be checked. He looked around from his seat and saw a series of crash trucks speeding their way. They began spraying runway foam at the main landing gear. Ken looked again from his window and saw probably a thousand gallons of jet fuel on the ground (That makes for a BIG pool of aviation gasoline!), and more spilling from near the wing root. He then ordered an orderly evacuation on the right-side of the airplane. But now another complication, a serious one, surfaced. (Nobody can make this up!). One of the slides did not deploy properly; it was defective! At least the other slides did work and everyone got off safely with only one minor injury.

The long investigation showed two faults. The first: a wheel bearing, maybe 18 inches in diameter, over heated and caused a main outside tire to explode from heat and over pressure. Lab forensics estimated the tire reached 500 psi before rupturing. A huge shred of tire flew upward and hit the wing fuel inspection port (a soft spot under the wing) exactly right, smashed it inward, and tore into the fuel bladder. That caused the uncontrolled spilling of at least one tanker of fuel very near the inboard engine exhaust. Had Ken not stopped the plane when he did, he would be leaving a very long fire trail. (History would repeat itself a few years later with an AirFrance C o n c o r d e ) .

More forensics showed the bearing was made of inferior components, like soft roller bearings. The combination of components got too hot for the tire to stand. Because the bearing was serial numbered, the airline, United, set out to replace all bearings of that manufacturing batch.

The failed slide: forensics showed the stitching in the slide fabric was all wrong. When deployed, some selective stitching unzipped itself, and the chute would not hold air. It became a dangling curtain. With that failure, United inspected every slide installation. They found at least a full dozen more faulty installation.

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All this was found because Ken made the command decision to stop the plane instead of continuing to lift off. Ken got scrutinized by the FAA for deviating from standard operating procedure. But there are probably 430 people who would agree with his decision. (Only Ken knows what he went through with the FAA. He kept a \$100 million airplane intact for another day.)

Ken's favorite homebuilt was a Christen Eagle (see photos on the Internet.) He had to sign an agreement with the manufacturer that he would paint it with the identical paint scheme that became the trademark of the company. He flew that one out of Meadville, Pennsylvania, before his commercial airline employer moved him to California. His tail number, 14HK (think: one for Ken Hendrickson), is still in use today by another pilot. This particular airplane caught the attention of Kenny Shoes executives. They paid Ken for loaning his plane in some photographs of a model wearing Kenny shoes that implied that "Kenny shoe wearers are upscale; they fly aerobatic airplanes". One particular photograph for Kenny Shoes shows clear as day the tail number "14KH".

Ken built other aircraft, too. One was the Quickie Q2, a design by Burt Rutan. His airplane was powered by a Brazilian-manufactured VW-derivative engine.

He took in a Super Cub that burned a quart of oil per hour and needed some skin repair. Cost: pretty cheap up front. He restored that and sold it; it is still registered and in the air yet today.

Before moving to Colorado, his EAA chapter was located (and still is located) at the Camarillo Airport, in the north Los Angeles area. When he departed there, he thought he would not build any more airplanes, so he gave all this tools to the local chapter. As it turns out, he did not give up building

after all. He purchased new tools and received a detailed listing of his donations to the Camarillo chapter with the advice of claiming such a donation on his Income Tax form. The detailed donation and claim for the donated amount was perfectly legal. He claimed the donation and increased his income tax refund.

When asked for a tour of what parts and pieces he was building, he provided outstanding examples and advice. He recommended various tools for bending thin sheet aluminum and downplayed other tools as satisfactory, but not as good. His attention to detail is obvious.

At this time, Ken and Marian are living quietly in the Cheyenne Mountain area. He builds on his Rans when he wants, and Marian helps and takes photographs. They are not heavy into watching television drivel, but keep their minds active with the airplane and Marian's pastime, embroidery. His favorite radio station for background music is from over the Internet, a site called Pandora.com. He says for \$30 per year, you can subscribe to advertising-free music of your choices.



So my one-hour intended visit turned into four and a half hours. If given enough time, I believe he could go on for days before he would repeat any story. Everybody should be so lucky as to have a life to provide the memories of flying that he has.



# The Jesus Nut

By Tony Nesse, Secretary

The mechanics were working on a new Huey as I walked through the maintenance section of our Guard hangar, on my way to the office. There was a strange part lying on a table - about the size of a dinner plate, with six or eight corners and a big round hole with threads.



**"What's that?" I asked a mechanic. "Oh, that's a Jesus nut, he said. It goes on top of the rotor mast, and holds the rotor blades on."**

**"Why do you call it that?" "Well, if it comes off in flight, that is all you will have time to say."**

That got me thinking. About a month earlier I had set out on a flight to Wyoming to see a friend. If you grew up with a mountain in your back yard, and live in Minnesota, you tend to look for excuses to get back to the mountains. My Grumman AA5-B had just been through its annual inspection, and was running sweetly. That is, until we approached the South Dakota border. The engine was starting to run increasingly rough.

I decided to stop in Sioux Falls, just across the border. The mechanic on duty was a grizzled old veteran, who listened patiently to my story. He then opened the cowling, and grabbed one magneto, then the other. The left one rotated freely under his grasp. My friend the mechanic had forgotten to tighten the nuts after timing the left magneto.

A half hour later I was on my way again. But what if I had just kept going, hoping it would improve? With the spark increasingly advancing, the detonations would also increase. Would I have had the presence of mind to test my mags, and pick the smooth one? We will never know.

That brought to mind another episode from my active duty time in the Air Force. A Huey carrying relief personnel to a missile launch facility lost control of its tail rotor on landing there. It ended up resting on the front part of its skids, with the tail hung up on the chain link fence around the facility. No one was hurt. Turned out it had just finished a routine inspection, and the mechanic had joined the tail rotor control linkage just putting a bolt into it, but he forgot the nut. The flight was carried out in very smooth air, and hardly any control inputs were needed before landing.

**So what's the moral? Well, do you have any Jesus nuts on your plane? How about the ones connecting your control cables or pushrod to your elevator? If there is a castelated nut, should there be a safety wire? Wires corrode and break. Even locknuts can move if they have been reused. During your preflight, look at every nut you can see, and wiggle everything you can reach! If it moves, tighten it before flight. And after the annual inspection, do your own inspection. I once found a monkey wrench in the engine compartment!**

## President's Message



Young Eagles Planning Meeting - We had a great turnout **for the meeting and you'll see** a few changes as we start our Young Eagle 2013 season.

We'll use the March 23rd Rally **as our "dry run"** since we are only flying the AEFEO students. Most of the changes involve handling loading and unloading the planes and keeping the crowd controlled and involved.

The pilots and ground support crew are all expected to be there by 8:00 AM. **We'll do** a joint briefing and assign dedicated jobs to each of the ground support. **We'll assign** alternates or "buddies" to cover each other during breaks, etc.

So, pilots, please be at the hangar by 8:00 AM. Ground support, please show up by 7:30AM to help with set up.

Another change is an online reservation system to help us manage the numbers plan-

ning to come so we have enough help. The reservation system is currently being testing by the AEFEO students and will be added to the EAA Chapter 72 Young Eagle page this week.

### YOUNG EAGLE SCHEDULE (dates subject to change)

March 23rd  
 April 20th  
 May 25th  
 June 19th—28th (AEFEO Summer Program)  
 August 24th  
 September 21st  
 October 19th  
 November 23rd

March Meeting—Anniversary - Please join fellow members to celebrate our great chapter. Richard and I will be out of town but missing you all.

See you,  
**Sandy**



- March 19th, Tuesday—6:30 PM Anniversary Meeting
- March 23rd, Saturday—8:00 AM Young Eagles Rally
- April 6th, Saturday—0830—1400 / Colorado Springs Pilot Safety Briefing / Colorado Springs Airport East Terminal Unit (see website for more information)
- April 20th, Saturday—8:00 AM Young Eagles Rally
- May 18th, Saturday—International Learn To Fly Day and MLAA Airport Open House with EAA Chapter 72
- May 25th, Saturday—8:00 AM Young Eagles Rally
- June 19—28th, Aviation Education Foundation of Colorado, Inc (AEFEO) Summer Program

# CLASSIFIEDS

*Thank you for supporting these EAA Chapter 72 members!*



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# Sequestration

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Visit our website: <http://eaa72.org>

**Celebrate 51 years !  
Tuesday, March 19, 2013**

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#### About Our Chapter

EAA Chapter 72 meets at Meadow Lake Airport. **Meetings start at 6:30 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of each month** with a Chapter cookout the following Saturday most of the warm months April—November. Look for the calendar of events to highlight special chapter events like Young Eagle Rallies, fly-outs, and all other chapter sponsored activities.

The Chapter Newsletter is published monthly, normally mailed and available on the website a few days before each meeting. Readers are encouraged to contribute articles, photos, etc. by submitting them to the Newsletter Editor in hard copy — email, pen/paper, as long as it's not verbal—by the first Saturday of each month.

**Annual membership is \$20. Send to Sandy Martin, at 7505 Mallard Drive, Peyton, CO 80831 and start receiving the newsletter each month, attending the meetings and having a great time with sport aviation.**