



CHAPTER 172

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

April, 2018

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IMPORTANT TIME CHANGE: Our April meeting has been moved from April 14th to April 21st at 11:30am to accommodate Sun 'n Fun.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 21: Chapter 172 meeting, 11:30am at the Pea Patch 61GA

April 26: EAA 172 night out. 6:30pm at Southside Smokehouse, 1855 Central Ave (706-733-5464). For questions contact Virginia Bush: 706-554-5618.

April 26-30: Ford Tri-Motor at Daniel Field!

May 5th: Young Eagles Event, 9:00am, Daniel Field

South Carolina Breakfast Club

April 22: Broxton Bridge, SC SC55

May 6: Rock Hill, SC KUZA

May 20: Gilbert, SC SC99

President's Desk

Allen Nodorft

Spring flying season is about to go full swing. First up is Sun-n-Fun. I will be attending with my son Michael and I know a few others are going as well. Hope we can meet up there. I am not looking for anything in particular, but the nice thing about air shows is that you can "look" and enjoy it immensely.

Not part of an air event, but we went to Daniel field the last day of Masters to watch the aerial activity. There is a lot of activity and interesting things do happen. At the end it was nice to see 9 airplanes all lined up to leave at one time.

Just a reminder that we have our own aeronautical events planned too. The Ford Tri-Motor will be here at Daniel Field giving rides from 26 – 29 April. I hope some will take advantage of this opportunity.

After that on May 5th we will host a Young Eagles day at Daniel Field. Still a need for volunteers, both with and without planes. If you can help, contact Nandi Shetty.

Another event that I hope to attend is the Joe Nall meet at Triple Tree. It is for RC airplanes, but they do some amazing things with them and it is great to see.

I hope you all have some aviation themed event planned for this spring. There are plenty around, so no excuses!

April 21 Meeting:

Our April speaker is Keith Goff. Keith will tell us about constructing a Pietenpol Air Camper. This is an all wood aircraft. Weather permitting, he will fly it in.

This meeting will be at the Pea Patch with lunch starting at 11:30. This is our annual fish fry, so come hungry and bring a side dish.

Ford Tri-Motor!

Just a reminder of the schedule for our upcoming Ford Tri-Motor Event! We are still looking for volunteers, so please contact Allen or Alex if you would like to work the event!

- Aircraft Arrival: Monday April 23rd
- Tour Stop City/Airport: Augusta, GA @ Daniel Field Airport - DNL
- Tour Stop Dates: Thursday April 26th through
- Media Flight: Thursday 4/26 at 2PM
- Hours of Ops:
 - Thursday 4/26 2-5PM
 - Friday 4/27 – Sunday 4/29 9AM – 5PM
- Aircraft Departure: Monday April 30th



Our chapter has to provide support in a variety of ways.

Allen Nodorft will be in charge of general coordination. Other roles that he needs help with are:

- Marketing: Best if someone has some contacts with radio and TV in the area to drum up Advertising opportunities.
- We also need (4) people per four hour shift each day of operation. Their roles will be:
 - Cashier
 - Shift Team Leader
 - Passenger/Bench and Rope escorts
 - General Crowd Control

Veteran Crop Duster Coming in For a Landing

Re-printed from the *Augusta Chronicle*

From several hundred feet up, the earth is a quilt with oddly shaped patches in different shades of green. Each crop is a different shade and texture; the corduroy of mature corn rows, the waving velvet of wheat, rolling and worn stretches of pasture.

Pierre Smith has seen them all from his bumblebee-yellow Air Tractor. He circles his contracted field, scoping out hazards, towers, power lines, dead trees with their leafless limbs – harder to see but that can snatch a plane out of the sky. He plans his approach and descends on the downwind side of the crop.



He drops in until he skims the swath of green. He hits the lever and nozzles along the wings spray the chemicals, trailing white stripes that disappear into a killing fog that swirls and billows as it settles on the plants.

Then he pulls up, the horizon tilts and the world leans as he turns, preparing for his next pass.

After 46 seasons of dive-bombing the insects, weeds and fungi that threaten the livelihoods of area farmers, Smith is coming in for a landing. He will be 73 this July and has decided that it is time to retire from crop-dusting, a demanding career that every year costs several experienced pilots their lives.

His near half-century view from the cockpit has afforded him a unique perspective on the both the profession and the evolution of farming in east central Georgia.

Smith grew up in Rhodesia, Africa, but moved to the U.S. just a week after graduating high school and shortly before the Zimbabwe War for Liberation began. He was drafted in 1966 and ended up at Fort Gordon where he joined a flying club and earned his commercial, instrument, multi-engine and flight instructor licenses. Like so many agricultural pilots, he started out loading chemicals and fueling planes for a veteran in the field, Jack Sliker of Louisville.

“I thought, boy this is the way to live, flying airplanes and getting paid for it,” Smith said.

His first real gig was flying for Sliker, who had the Army Corps of Engineers contract to spray mosquitoes at Clark Hill and Lake Hartwell.



“I made \$300 a week and that was good money back then,” he said. “Plus I made money on the weekends as a flight instructor.”

The next year Sliker moved him to row crops, and in 1972 Smith bought a house in Louisville.

In the 46 seasons since then, he guesses he must have sprayed a million and a half to 2 million acres, mostly within a 30-mile radius of his hangar at the Louisville airport.

In that time he saw the first irrigation units brought to the county in the mid-1970s. New

hybrid varieties of crops and farming techniques were introduced. Crop yields and the overall sizes of fields have swollen, but the number of local farmers has shriveled.

“The changes, they have been so gradual it’s hard to say. It’s like watching your kids grow up. You know they’re taller from one year to the next though you can’t see it happening,” Smith said. “Hard times culled a lot of old farmers. A lot of them folded in the ’80s with low commodity prices, droughts. There’s a lot fewer, but it’s not uncommon for one to farm 5,000 acres when they used to farm 300 to 500. Back then they did most of it themselves.”

In the early days, the first aerial applications, which were in dry form, were dropped from surplus war planes like the open cockpit World War II trainer Stearman biplane. The clouds of chemical powders led to the term “crop duster.” Today, most of the chemicals are mixed with water and stored in clear-plastic tanks the pilots can visually monitor while flying. The sprays themselves have changed significantly over the years.

“The chemicals we used were harsh,” Smith said. “The antidote (for exposure) was the same antidote for nerve gas. We killed snakes and quail in the field. We were devastating the neighborhood. There was nothing left living in the fields when we got through spraying. Now the scouts try to conserve all the beneficials; ladybugs, spiders and praying mantises. Now we’re using synthetic pyrethrins, 4- to 6 ounces per acre compared to half a quart of the other stuff.

When he first started, Smith and other pilots were using printed maps and visual clues to navigate to and from the fields. The advent of GPS and related technologies have greatly increased their accuracy.

“We’ve gotten it down to 1 foot laterally,” Smith said. “I have a program that will overlay what was sprayed on a Google Earth map so you can show the customer all the swaths you made in the field. And you get much better insect control because you don’t leave a spot where a breeding group of insects were. Farmers have really benefited incredibly.”

Farmers all over the world now look at using unmanned aircraft to spray because of the inherent dangers associated with the profession.

“We lost nine pilots last year, seven in ag related accidents,” Smith said. “When I started we were losing 20 or 30 a year.”

Training and technology have both gotten better. The planes now are built to be more survivable when they do go down. Still, the fewest deaths he can remember in any one year is four.

Pilots and agricultural work are both individually ranked in the top 10 most dangerous professions, and aerial sprayers combine some of the biggest threats of both.

The pilots have to have above average concentration to avoid obstacles and monitor their instruments while flying 10 feet or lower off the ground with heavily loaded planes that shudder in the turns as they are pushed to the edge of stalling the engines.

“You’ve got to look for power lines, look for towers, dodge deer. They lay down in the rows and then jump up in front of you. Talk about (messing) your pants,” Smith said. “Buzzards, some feed lots I avoid. Running out of gas is a danger. Irrigation pivots, you have to jump over them. Then there are cross-country high-tension lines. Some places you can go under, but in the summer time when it’s 90 degrees they’ll sag 3 or 4 feet. It can be a tight fit.”

Then there’s potential exposure to the chemicals. On particularly calm days the droplets can be slower to settle, hang in the air and get all over the airplane where pilots could breathe them in.

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And many of these pilots are flying 12 hour-days, some seven days a week.

“You get into such a frame of mind, when I walk out the door in the morning I’m feeling the wind, what direction is it coming from,” Smith said. “You have to stay focused. Put everything else out of your mind.”

Smith is proud of the fact that he has never wrecked an airplane and never gotten hurt in one. He’s known far too many other ag pilots who have not been as fortunate.

“I’m not physically able to work that hard anymore,” he said, remembering the years he worked 12-plus hour days, landing by the runway lights. “My wife says it’s time for me to get out.”

April Meeting Minutes

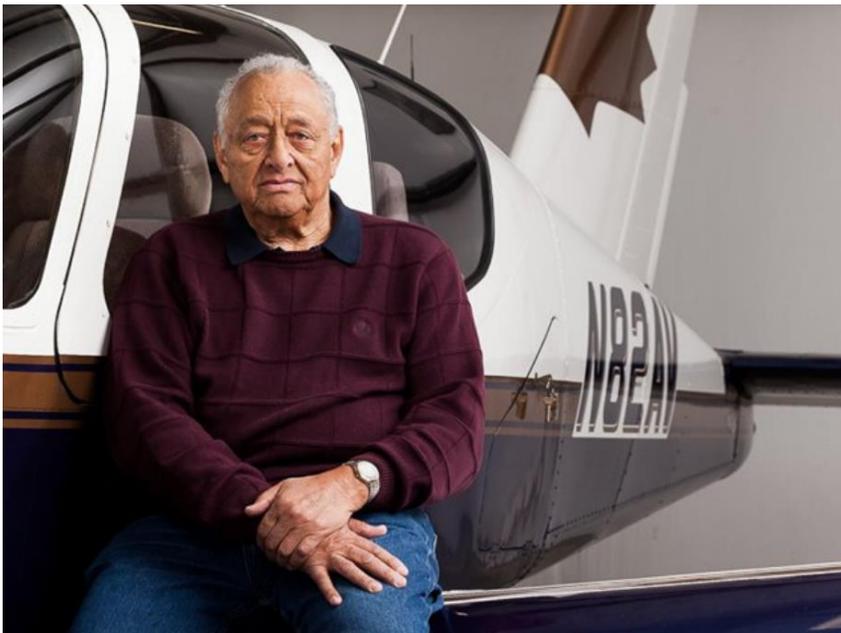
April's meeting was held at Daniel Field, our guest speaker was Dave Harris, 23 members and 4 guests were present. Allen Nodorft opened the meeting at 11:00am and announced that the April meeting would be moved from April 14th to April 21st to accommodate those wishing to attend Sun 'n Fun in Lakeland, FL. Al then gave the floor to Mr. Dave Harris.



Dave Harris was the first African-American pilot promoted to captain by a U.S. passenger airline, but his story starts much before that. When Dave enrolled at Ohio State University, ROTC was required for all male students for the first 2 years. Harris joined Air Force ROTC, and then joined advanced ROTC shortly after. Harris studied education and graduated with his diploma and as a second lieutenant with the US Air Force.

Harris spent 6.5 years in the US Air Force, where he piloted bombers from the B47 to the B52. His longest mission was 25 hours in the air, in a B52. After retiring from the military, Harris knew he wanted to continue flying. His experience flying in the Air Force meant he was more than qualified for a job with practically an airline. However, Harris did experience some difficulty landing a job (Pan-

Am would not even provide Dave with an Application) with an airline, many turned him down. Harris continued searching and was finally hired on by American Airlines.



Dave started flying with American as a flight engineer, before being promoted to co-pilot 2 months later. Dave made captain in 1967, just 3 years after joining the airline. Dave flew a long list of passenger airliners including: DC-6, Electra, 727, 767, and the md-11. Most recently, Harris has been flying his 1984 Socata TB-20 Trinidad.

Secretary's Note

Our new chapter website is now live! Our new web address is www.eaa172.org. I still have some work I would like to complete to make it as useful as possible to our members. I have a page created for both aircraft mechanics and CFI's. If any members have recommendations for each of these, please send the name and contact info of the A&P or CFI to webmaster.eaa172@gmail.com.

I also would like to feature member's aircraft and projects in both the website and newsletter. Please send a picture of your airplane or project and a short description, and I will be sure to add it to the website. If you have a current project in progress, I would love to receive periodic updates on your project to publish in both the website and newsletter. Furthermore, if any member has requests for an article or suggestions to improve the website and/or newsletter, please contact me at webmaster.eaa172@gmail.com.

Regards,
Alex LaFave

2018 Schedule

| Month | Day | Time | Event | Location | Food |
|-----------|-----|----------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| January | 13 | 12:30 pm | Basic Med – Joe Britt | Pea Patch | Chili |
| February | 10 | 12:30 pm | B-52 – Dave Dent | Pea Patch | Soup |
| March | 17 | 10:30 am | David Harris | Daniel Field | Pastries |
| April | 21 | 11:30 am | Pietenpol Air Camper – Keith Goff | Pea Patch | Fish Fry |
| May | 5 | 9:00 am | Young Eagles | Daniel Field | N/A |
| June | 9 | 11:30 am | Life at Oshkosh – Jim and Ronna Hiltz | Pea Patch | BBQ |
| July | 14 | 11:30 am | Nandi Shetti | Pea Patch | Burgers |
| August | 11 | 11:30 am | Oshkosh recap | Pea Patch | Cold Cuts |
| September | 15 | N/A | Wrens Fall Fly-in | Wrens | N/A |
| October | 13 | 10:30 am | TBD | Daniel Field | Pastries |
| November | 10 | 12:30 am | TBD | Pea Patch | Burgers |
| December | 8 | 12:30 am | Christmas Party | Pea Patch | Turkey |

