



**April 2008 “THE TAILDRAGGER” EAA Chapter 972 Gladewater, Texas**

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 10, 6:30 p.m.  
Gladewater Airport Office  
“New” Guadalupe's for dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Program: Kelly Smith  
Monthly Newsletter: Kelly Smith

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Roger That! By Roger Wieting.

*“Connected”*... Maybe that's it. Maybe being ‘connected’ is that thing which is somehow central to our passion as pilots; to our attraction for the air; to our deep fondness of flight. “Connected to what?”, you ask? I don't know—just “connected”, ya know?

If you really think about it, being ‘connected’ is a big part of being a pilot. We learn early on that a pilot must be “connected” with the performance and condition of his or her airplane. How many of us check the oil in our car each time we prepare to drive? How many of us ever give any thought to what percentage power is being developed by our car engine during the various phases of a trip? And though being in tune with the mechanical condition and the various nuances of the machines we fly is indeed important, the concept I am thinking of is really much broader than that. As pilots, we are part of a very elite (or perhaps more accurately, highly privileged) people group; a special fraternity, if you will. We are generally attracted to ‘all things aviation’--and to other people who are similarly pre-disposed. I have felt the connection to other pilots who were otherwise strangers many times when my path crossed theirs, perhaps in a distant FBO, while stranded under a couple days worth of poor weather. As pilots, we have at least a rudimentary understanding of each other from the get-go. It seems we can always strike up a conversation and become quickly acquainted with other pilots, because we have something very substantial in common.

I've read a couple of stories lately about the Gathering of Mustangs and Legends in Columbus, Ohio last September. Talk about connections! It seems impossible for virtually any pilot not to have some kind of instant “connection” with the deep, throaty sound of a P-51. And as pilots, we can have the privilege of “connecting” in some way with the heroes that flew the Mustang in WW II. Just reading about the various facets of such a gathering, we can feel connections to the technology of that day, the level of character possessed by those now-aged pilots and the sheer heroism that is part of their histories. Just imagine being a twenty-something year-old recruit with the job of climbing into one of these machines and going out to face the very real possibility of death, defending America and her allies.

How about Airventure Oshkosh—is that not basically a week of aviation “connection”? People, planes, technology, entertainment and on and on; all joined together –connected- through the thread

of aviation. Those of us who go may not have the conscious thought that we're making a 700+ NM trip for the purpose of "connecting", but I think one could easily make the argument. Old friends, new friends, new technology—don't we go up there to connect with these things?

And what about "connecting" closer to home? Chapter 972 provides an excellent way for us to do that, as evidenced by the survey results that Robert presented in the March meeting. From Chapter meetings to breakfast and lunch events, to Reklaw, the responses seemed most positive in the context of camaraderie; meeting together, working on airplane stuff together, going places together – you know; connecting.

With that said, let us remember the upcoming opportunities to connect: We have a 'double-header' Pancake Breakfast/Gumbo Lunch event scheduled for April 19th, which coincides with Gladewater's "Gusher Days" celebration. The idea is that we hope to draw folks in 'from afar', feed them and give them an easy way to visit the festivities in town. Charlie should have the ol' shuttle tram running so the transportation should be easy and convenient for our guests. The Parachute folks are planning to have a booth set up and we are working with a couple other groups to see if they want to join in with the fun. With such a full schedule, we can sure use a strong showing from the Chapter. Remember, this is a great way to CONNECT!

Many thanks also to everyone who helped out with the Gumbo Lunch on March 22nd. We really had a good turnout and a lot of fun. And we got one of those previously rhetorical questions answered in tangible form: Yes, the recipe DID change! Don't forget the Chapter meeting on April 10th and till then, fly safe. Hi Linda!

## **2008 Chapter 972 Member Survey Results**

For those who did not attend the March meeting, I will try to summarize the program I presented on the results of the Survey. All of the following are based on the 24 surveys that were returned out of 34 sent.

### **Personal Data:**

The chapter is made up a slight majority of retirees (13 of 24). Of those holding leadership positions, eight responded as having been president and vice-president. Fewer have served in the supporting positions, indicating they are holding these positions for multiple terms. Pilots in the chapter hold "private" certificates by a large majority and hold 3rd class medicals in most cases. None of the respondents hold A/P mechanic certificates. Only five reported participating in the FAA Wings program.

### **Military Aviation Experience**

Pilot: Ken Andrews, 20 years - USAF  
Harold Craig, 20 years - USAF

Mechanic: Bill Vawter, 23 years - NAVY  
Steve Garrett, 20 years - USAF

Crew: Bob Tippens - USAF

Radio/Radar: Bill Smith  
Elo Zinke - USAF  
Al Heinol - USAF

### **Civil Aviation Experience**

Pilot: Dave Mason, 33 years - ATP  
Gene Humphrey, 20 years - Banner Towing

CFI: Ken Andrews, CFII, MEI, ATP

Other: Greg Dorher, 5,500 hours logged

The 24 respondents documented a total of 33 aircraft owned, with 10 listed as projects.

The following are the top responses by category:

Meeting Interests and Expectations:

Interest Rating:

1. Powerplant, care and feeding
2. Aviation History  
Propellers, care and feeding

Skill Rating:

1. Powerplant, care and feeding
2. Powerplant, overhaul
3. Sheetmetal, riveting

Skills - Can Help:

1. Powerplant, overhaul
2. Powerplant, care and feeding
3. Fabric Covering

Specific Program Ideas:

1. Visit Control Tower
2. Welding Workshop
3. Projects Review - Monthly status at meeting, Project visits, Project section on website

When/How I became interested in Aviation:

1. At Birth (Inherited gene?)
2. Family Influence
3. Books, Movies, Model Building
4. Watching Airplanes

Expectations of this Chapter:

1. Support Aviation in local area and in general - e.g., Fly-ins, and Fly-outs
2. Camaraderie, Fellowship with other Aviators
3. Grow the Chapter with new members with emphasis on young people
4. Young Eagles
5. Social Activities and Family Activities
6. Learn new skills and get technical advice and assistance

Improvements I'd like to see:

1. More member participation in activities and events
2. Better meeting place or acquire chapter hanger
3. More members active in projects
4. Better planning of events
5. A mentor program for new members

Enjoy most about Chapter:

1. Camaraderie and fellowship with other members
2. Young Eagles - Flying young people
3. Fly-ins - Chapter Events
4. Fly-outs

5. Newsletter

6. Monthly Programs

Enjoy Least about Chapter:

1. Lack of participation by some members
2. Distance to meeting
3. Poor Organization at planned events
4. Monthly business segment of meeting

How to improve meetings:

1. More show-n-tell programs on projects; guest speakers; historical aviation topics
2. Improve venue - 07F terminal facelift; hanger meetings; project visits
3. Start on time; keep business brief
4. Publish meeting program topic in advance - may increase attendance
5. Have program at beginning of meeting
6. More technical based programs

Family Oriented Activities to Sponsor:

1. Picnic(s) at airport(s)
2. Charity Fundraiser Event

Chapter Leadership:

1. The majority of respondents think the chapter has a good leadership structure with the possible addition of an activities chairman and publicity officer.
2. The vast majority think the current leadership is doing a good job
3. The majority think the chapter is going in the right direction.

Chapter ranking:

The majority check that they did not have experience with another chapter. Of the remainder, most checked "better"

Satisfaction with Chapter meeting expectations:

The vast majority checked "good", "very good", or "excellent"

Volunteer Information:

Positions having interest in serving:

All positions had at least one person express an interest. The most checked position was "Historian" with 5 checks.

Events willing to serve:

All events had at least one person willing to serve. The most checked events were, "Local Fly-ins", "Young Eagles", "Reklaw Work Party", "Fly-outs", and "Local work party".

Specific Tools and Skills of members:

1. Jack-of-all-trades
2. Fabric Covering
3. Electrical
4. Metal Working
5. Woodworking

*Robert Caldwell*

## Members Go To Ranger Fly In.

On Saturday, March 15, Gene Humphrey and myself pointed his Tri-Pacer to Ranger, TX to attend the monthly meeting of the Texas Chapter of the Antique Airplane Assn. The municipal airport there has all-turf runways and is historically significant. We were one of the first five aircraft to arrive and we stopped counting when the count exceeded thirty. What a great turn out. It was really a great day and we were made feel welcome by all we met. I look forward to next time when I can take my Stinson Voyager.

The airport, Ranger, is the third oldest in Texas. The first documented aircraft landing there was in 1911 when one of the contestants in the transcontinental race, sponsored by William Randolph Hearst, landed. The airport was officially dedicated Nov. 11, 1928. In 1931, Amelia Earhart landed a Pitcairn Auto gyro in Ranger. The airport was a haven for L4 pilots during WWII since the skies around Ranger are generally clear.

On returned, Gene and I stopped at Dallas South Port (T13), a small grass strip 3 mi. north of Palmer. They have MoGas for \$3.24. It was the only MoGas between here and Ranger, so we took advantage of it. The pump is self-serve using credit card. While fueling up, an old Yak trainer came in for a touch-and-go, otherwise we were the only ones around.



Will have more pictures next newsletter when we have room.

