

# TAILWINDS



**EAA CHAPTER  
974  
NEWSLETTER  
JANUARY 2016**



Butler County Regional Airport  
Hamilton, Ohio



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# **HONEY, I'M GOING TO BUILD AN AIRPLANE!**

## **BY LINDA PLEVYAK**

Honey, I'm Going to Build an Airplane!

Linda Plevyak, PhD

This article is written from the perspective of a spouse who has lived with an aircraft builder. So if you are a pilot that is building his/her own airplane, you could read this article, give it to your spouse or burn it quickly so your spouse won't have the opportunity to see what he/she is in for.

In 1997 I went to Sun-n-Fun in Lakeland, FL with my husband (Howard) with the idea that we would decide which plane he would begin building the next year. On the way to Sun-n-Fun, we stopped at a beach near Tampa, FL and I got the worst case of sun poisoning imaginable. I was in agony for days and had to wear pants the entire time we were at Sun-n-Fun. I am not a believer in omens, but it should have been clear to me then that someone or something was trying to tell me something.

With that being said, after lots of research, flights in various planes and much conversation, we agreed to buy a GlaStar kit that arrived in June 1998 encapsulated in a large wooden box. Little did I know that the incredibly large box only held the fuselage, wings, tail and various other parts. The engines, control panel, prop, and other very expensive items were nowhere to be found. After several years of wing and tail riveting (which I took part in), the plane began to take shape. A quick, but important side note, when Howard "convinced" me of purchasing the GlaStar kit, he assured me that it would take him no more than five years to build. His confidence in this statement was resolute. If you're a spouse of someone interested in building a plane, double or triple the time your husband/wife says they will need no matter how "confident" he/she sounds.

In 2000, we moved from Statesboro, GA to Cincinnati, OH which meant that the plane had to be moved over 600 miles – not an easy task. We had to rent a 26' U-Haul truck and have neighbors carefully help put the plane parts in various vises, boxes, supports with numerous blankets so they wouldn't move around on the trip (our own personal items didn't get the care that the plane received). Once settled in Cincinnati, the plane found a home in our two-car garage. Unless you have a rather large garage where both your cars and plane can fit together in harmony, it is a mistake to build at home. The cars get usurped to the driveway which means scraping ice and snow during the winter months or running from the car to the house with your groceries in the rain – not a good way to endear your spouse to the plane.

A couple of years after returning to my hometown of Cincinnati, the exasperation of deflecting plane parts drying on a line or tearing clothes which get caught on a sharp edge while traversing the garage became too much. It was time to find another home for the GlaStar. Howard did some research and found that there were other experimental plane builders at the Butler County airport. It wasn't long before the plane was again packed up and moved to its current location, Hanger T4, near the EAA Chapter 974 hanger (another side note – when deciding which hanger to rent or buy, the closer you are to a good quality bathroom the better).

So, you are now thinking, all must be well on the home front with the plane out of the garage, cars back in and everything back in its place. Well, not so fast. So goes the plane, so goes the husband. When the plane was in the garage, Howard was easily accessible, now he was a 30-minute drive away, not good when you want things done around the house. Soon plane building became an all-day affair – gone at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings until well into the evening. A night or two during the week rounded out the schedule. Many of you are thinking, well that doesn't sound so bad, what is all of the fuss? You would likely be right if it had lasted for a couple of years, maybe five as an outlier. But almost 16 years? Sounds ludicrous, right? Well, that's what happened – 16 years of plane building.

So, just a few more parting points before I sign off.

- ~Good to have a perfectionist mentality when building a plane, though not so good when you want to “git r done,” aka, fly the thing.
- ~Cost of parts is subtle as items are bought over time, but can add up and you can bust your budget, which can be a real “slap in the face”.
- ~Buy the hanger if possible rather than rent – builders tend to improve the hanger and essentially you are supporting the owner rather than yourself.
- ~When your spouse is talking about what was built, improved upon or changed that day, listening is optional, though it does pay to have a rudimentary understanding of the mechanics of the plane so you can nod and exclaim in delight at the appropriate times.
- ~Loving your spouse is not optional when he/she is building a plane as it becomes an all-consuming focus of his/her life, which can be a real drag on the relationship.
- ~Lots of home and life chores will fall to the spouse as the builder seems to be (sometimes) oblivious to lawn mowing, laundry, grocery shopping and all the other chores that delight us on a daily basis.
- ~Either build the plane close to home (garage, barn, outbuilding) or find a quality airport where there are other builders. Having a close community of builders enriches the experience.
- ~Develop/agree on rules – how many days/nights the builder can work on the plane and then stick with it. Need to also keep specific time for family.
- ~Good to have a sense of humor (not for the faint hearted) about schedules, finances, issues/set backs, and mistakes. Do try to keep a handle on what the builder is buying. At one point, there were three props in Howard’s hanger!
- ~Finances – if you are pinching pennies, probably not a good idea to become a plane builder. Over a 15 year period, these are the costs we encountered: base price of the kit: \$25,500, hanger rental: \$45,000, equipment for building, parts, engine, control panel/instruments: \$60,000.
- ~Needless to say, once the plane is built, gas and maintenance can add up as well. After 6 months of flying (100 total hours), we have spent \$3000 in gas.

So the real question is was it worth it? I personally would have preferred that Howard buy a used plane and refurbish it as we could have been flying together over a decade ago, though this of course is a vastly different experience than building a plane. Howard would definitely say it was worth it – he learned an incredible amount and can mentally imagine every system in the plane.

Howard had his first flight in May 2015 and after flying the first 40 hours by himself, we have logged an additional 70 hours together. It is amazing to take off in the GlaStar and head to Memphis, TN, a fly-in with other pilots (Rough River, KY) or Rick’s Café near the Eagle Creek airport. That has been the real joy of the plane – going places we would not otherwise have gone to and experiencing a different way of getting there. We have also joined a group called “Pilots n Paws” (<http://www.pilotsnpaws.org/>) which transports dogs to adoptive or foster homes.



**LINDA AND HOWARD RIVETING**

Now, it is time for you to decide to either give this article to your spouse (best case you’ll get a laugh, worst case you’ll find yourself on the street) or send it to the recycle bin.  
Photos: ed.



**LINDA AND HOWARD LIVING A DREAM**

## ***THE PREZ SEZ.....***

I have spent most of my life worrying about things that have never happened

**Mark Twain**

**Apparently, the EAA in its infinite wisdom has introduced new requirements for pilot participation in the Young Eagles program. This EAA initiative is called the “Youth Protection Policy and Program” Beginning May 1, 2016, EAA volunteers who are participating in activities involving children under the age of 18 must complete an online course and submit to a background check.**

***From the EAA.org website:***

“The online training and review will typically take about 20-25 minutes. After information is submitted for the background check, we expect verification to take no more than 10 business days.

Upon successful completion of the online training and review, and the background check, each volunteer will receive an e-mail confirming he or she has successfully met the basic requirements of the Youth Protection Program and a printable wallet-sized card.”

For more information, go to EAA.org.

My personal comment about this new requirement is not printable.

Mark



## ***CHAPTER CONTACTS***

[officers@eaa974.org](mailto:officers@eaa974.org) will reach president, vice president, treasurer, secretary as a group

[president@eaa974.org](mailto:president@eaa974.org) will reach chapter president (Mark Wyss)

[newsletters@eaa974.org](mailto:newsletters@eaa974.org) will reach newsletter editor (Bob Dombek)

[youngeagles@eaa974.org](mailto:youngeagles@eaa974.org) will reach Young Eagles Coordinator (Bob Burkhardt)

[techcounselor@eaa974.org](mailto:techcounselor@eaa974.org) will reach technical counselor (Ray Parker)

[general@lists.eaa974.org](mailto:general@lists.eaa974.org) group e-mail to all chapter members

**ELEANOR GOES TO THE PAINT SHOP**



After lots of blood, sweat and tears, Mike Wood's beloved Eleanor heads to the paint shop at Middletown. Mike has spent an enormous amount of time and effort scuffing, scraping and sanding to prep the fuselage for paint.

Shown below and right is the paint scheme Mike is shooting for. This Navy Stearman showed up at Oshkosh, and was the inspiration for Mike's warbird paint scheme.

Hang in there, Mike and don't lose heart. She'll be more beautiful than ever when she's wearing her new clothes! She'll thank you with many more hours in the air not to mention the admiring glances you will both receive.

Upper and middle right: Eleanor on the trailer, Ready for Middletown. Photo credits: Brian Charlton

Lower right: Mike's inspiration  
Below: Mike's Ercoupe, Eleanor, in the paint shop with elevator and rudders removed.  
Photo credits: Mike Wood



# **IN THE NEST, CONTINUED**

## **RAY PARKER'S "NEW" LONG EZ**

Ray reports submitting the winning bid for his Long EZ at a bankruptcy sale. It was sitting at Lunken airport, and hadn't flown for about 3 years. The engine is a Continental-Rolls Royce O-240. It's very complete and in good shape but will need a little work to make it airworthy. Ray is just the guy to make that happen. Congratulations Ray!!



Photos top left and right: Brian Charlton



All additional photos: Bob Dombek, editor



# SECRETARY'S REPORT—MEETING MINUTES

EAA Chapter 974 Monthly Meeting  
Sunday, January 10, 2016

—  
Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance: 2:06pm

- **New Members:** None

**Guests:**

**Ted Tracy** – Lives in West Chester. Came about a year ago to one of our meetings, scoping out local chapter activity. Currently working on a Hatz biplane.

**Brian Turner** – Based over at Warren County with a VariEze.



**Secretary's Report:** Minutes from November accepted. December was Christmas party.

**Treasurer's Report:**

+\$4835 in income (\$1800 hangar dues, \$1670 annual membership dues)

-\$4338 in expenses (\$585.22 to Bill Morris for hangar condo fees, \$750 annual EAA chapter charter renewal)

\$496.43 increase in balance

**Historian/Librarian/Newsletters (Bob Dombek):** Nothing of note. Keep sending in the pictures, articles, etc. They're great!

**Young Eagles Report (Bob Burkhardt):** Bob is in Florida for the season, no news.

**Hangar Master Report:** Still hanging. **Please pay for the pop you drink!!!** We are critically low in the pop fund.

**Tech Counselor Report (Ray Parker):** Ray now has a new Long-EZ project to work on.

**Project Reports:**

**Scott** – Engine mount mounted, instrument panel built up and ready, starting wiring

**Mark & Caleb** – 750 fuselage starting to look like something now. Firewall is on temporarily. Finish kit with doors, controls, etc en route now. Picked up a tail kit from a guy near Gettysburg.

**Old Business:**

Discussion started on chapter hangar projects to finish

OSB board on sidewall near window

Kindly(!) clean out the library

Shelving in south side of the hangar, finish building out as a full workspace. Putting casters on workbench.

Garage door opener on back hangar door

Possibly putting in an overhead propane heater, partly funded by chapter and/or a poker party?

## New Business:

- Discussion about whether or not the chapter is to actively recruit new members. General consensus is that the chapter is active enough publicly that people who want to find us are able to.
- Have a chapter presentation every month, advertise up front in order to give members an idea of what to look forward to
- Chapter activity with Adam's Hope (adamshope.org), a local group that sends needed goods to Marines overseas

**Adjourned:** 2:45pm

Submitted,  
Scott Balmos – Secretary

\*\*\* **Reminder:** The February chapter meeting will be at Moss-Vale, Tim Morris's shop, a few minutes away from the airport. The address is 160B Donald Drive in Fairfield.

### *HIGH FLIGHT*

*Oh, I've slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things  
You've not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.  
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr., RCAF, September 3, 1941. (1922-1941) An American citizen born in Shanghai of Missionary parents and educated at Britain's famed Rugby School, John Magee Jr. entered the United States in 1939. He had won a scholarship to Yale University, but felt he must aid the cause of freedom, and so instead enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in September, 1940. He went to England to fly Spitfires. It was during a test flight at 30,000 feet that he was inspired to write High Flight. He was killed during a dogfight on December 11, 1941 at age 19.

This was taken from the book "Slipping the Surly Bonds" by Dave English