

# TAILWINDS



**EAA CHAPTER  
974  
NEWSLETTER  
MARCH 2026**



Butler County Regional Airport  
Hamilton, Ohio



## **IN THIS EDITION**

- **FEB 8 CHAPTER GATHERING REVIEW**
- **THE PREZ SEZ**
- **CHAPTER CONTACTS**
- **BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**
- **VMC CLUB WITH BILLY BIE**
- **HANGAR HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION**
- **JOHN LABARRE'S WACO RESTORATION**

## **COMING EVENTS**

- **MARCH 8 CHAPTER GATHERING WITH CHILI COOKOFF**
- **MARCH 16 BUTLER TECH AVIATION CENTER RIBBON CUTTING @ KMWO 10-12 AM**
- **APRIL 12 CHAPTER GATHERING**
- **APRIL 18 YOUNG EAGLE RALLY**



# CHAPTER GATHERING FEBRUARY 8 2026

Welcome back EAA Chapter 974! Can you believe our February gathering was the first time for us to be back in the chapter hangar for a full gathering since November. We can thank mother nature for that. There were 45 us present for this "reunion" with our hangar. This was a real chance for us to try our new mini-split heat pump. Once the hangar was brought to comfortable level by the big propane heater, the heat pump maintained it without the noise of the big propane rig, a great "belt and suspenders" set up. More about our new heater later in this edition.



Our new president Jason Pratt did a fine job with his first meeting. Brandi and Stephen kept us well fed with chicken and noodles and Boston Crème Cake. Thank you all!

There were several visitors and potential new members that your editor did a poor job of connecting with adequately.

John Lewis, Building a Bearhawk. See next page  
Paul Fisher, moved here from Iowa, has RV7 and Q200 and is new member.

Mike Burns A&P

Jason Bunger

? Martinez, student pilot, sorry I missed your first name.

Scott Hersha's grandson was with him, helping with condition inspection.

Bill Hauck made trip to Idaho to pick up 2 Aero Stars

## PROJECTS

Joe Seibert thanked Scott Hersha for help with RV3 Panel

David Winter reserved N number for his Savannah

Greg Telford made first flight in his RV14 at Cincy West

Scott Balmos learned about temperature sensitivity in his Lithium Batteries when one died while cranking in cold wx

Greg Mullins also had lithium battery die while taxiing his gyro

Photos: ed.



## **WELCOME NEW MEMBER JOHN LEWIS**

*John is building a BearHawk 5 scratch built from plans  
Lives in Camden, Ohio  
Member of Victory Aero Flying Club*



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS**

### **YOUNG EAGLES**

*Young Eagle Coordinator Scott Balmos reminded us that the first Rally is scheduled for April 18 and subsequent rallies are scheduled for the third Saturday of each month through October weather permitting*

*There may be a possible Young Eagle Rally on May 30 at Middletown for incoming Butler Tech Students. There may be as many as 60 which may require a morning-afternoon split with 30 students each . Details still being worked out.*

*Scott also announced that we have been invited to the official ribbon cutting for the new Butler Tech Middletown Airport Campus from 10-12 AM.*

*Brandi Brewer talked about our future fly-in planned for October. She asked the chapter to think about awards such as distance flown, unusual types etc. She further stated that volunteers will be needed for cooking, marshalling arriving and departing aircraft, etc.*

### **DEMONSTRATION**

*Scott Balmos, confessing to be an inveterate tinkerer, has been experimenting with an idea using electroluminescence for backlighting his instrument panel. He brought a low voltage light to demonstrate. In this image, John Wilemski is holding a version of Scott's test light. Looks pretty cool! Thanks Scott!*

*Photos: ed.*



## **THE PREZ SEZ**

*Last week, Robin and I attended the Chapter Leadership Bootcamp. It was a fantastic experience, and it's clear that the national organization is more dedicated than ever to helping local chapters thrive.*

*We discovered several new programs that will help Chapter 974 grow, and I'm excited to start rolling these out. Of course our success depends on you — our members. Your participation is what allows us to share our passion for flight with the rest of the community.*

*On a delicious note, don't forget our annual Chili Cookoff at our next Chapter Gathering on March 8! I can't wait to see everyone there!*

*Fly Safe!*

*Jason*



## **CHAPTER CONTACTS**

### **CHAPTER CONTACTS—HOW TO CONTACT EAA CHAPTER 974**

[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 (Jason Pratt)

[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 (Scott Balmos)

[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

# CHAPTER BOARD BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

**12:10 p.m.** - Meeting called to order by Jason Pratt

**Attendees:** Grace Hogan, Roger McClure, Bob Dombek, Jason Pratt, Ray Parker, Scott Balmos, Joe Seibert

## Secretaries Report

- Motion made to wave reading minutes- posted in chapter newsletter.

## Treasurer's Report –

Income	\$ 292.33
Expenses	\$ 4,120.21
Balance: Checking	\$ 3,251.11
CDs	\$ 17,065.34
Savings	<u>\$ 504.57</u>
Total	\$ 20,821.02

## Young Eagles –

- Total for 2025: 71 kids flown
- Public Open House at Butler Tech 3/16/26- Need Representatives. See Scott if you would like to be a representative
- 5/30 Young Eagles Flight for Butler Tech Students
- Next date: April 11th

## Old Business -

- Fly-in on October 10, 2026 11-4. Brandi going to coordinate
- Layout 5 year plan for Chapter
- Dues for 2026: \$25
- AC/ Heater Installed
- Chili Cook off to March in 2026

## New Business -

- T-Shirts, Sweatshirts, Polos available for order in March
- Learning sessions on how to use specialty tools
- Speakers for chapter gatherings
- For Sale Section in the Newsletter: To place ad you need to provide a jpeg picture, contact person information and brief description

## UPCOMING 2026 MEETINGS

February 8th, March 8th, April 12th, May 17th, June 14th, July 12th, August 9th, September 13th, October 11th- Hanger Crawl, November 8th- Chili, December 13t

**2026 Young Eagles:** April 18th, May 16th, June 20th, July 11th, August 15th, September 19th, October 17th

**1:14 p.m.** - Meeting adjourned by Jason Pratt

## **OPERATING AT NON-TOWERED AIRPORTS**

*This month Billy Bie led us through scenarios and best practices when operating at non-towered airports, such as Butler County. He started by posing the question of when to change to change radio frequency after departing. Minimum should be no less than 5 miles out*

*How about when inbound to a non towered field? AIM recommends announcing inbound approach at 10 miles without too much info clutter. Type aircraft, location and inbound statement is enough to start with. At 5 miles add pattern entry type to above info and remain on frequency. Best pattern entries are 45 degrees to downwind, midfield crosswind, or teardrop.*

*Billy described best practices with these entries. With 45 degree entry, start your 45 3 miles out. Establish downwind at safe glide distance from the runway in case of engine failure, at 1/2 to 1 mile at most. When entering via a midfield crosswind, make sure you are truly at midfield and not over the departure end. When making a tear drop entry cross over at least 500 feet above pattern altitude, proceed 3 miles beyond, then begin a gentle right hand descending turn before entering a 45 to the downwind leg.*

*At KHAO we often share the pattern with other aircraft with wide performance characteristics. If finding yourself in conflict with another aircraft on downwind, Billy recommends not extending downwind excessively. It's best to either make a 360 but even better and is to make a wide right turn away from the downwind and reenter on a 45. Another option is to turn onto a short base leg at pattern altitude, cross the approach end of the runway then turn onto an upwind turn, again remaining at pattern altitude.. AT that point continue around and reenter via crosswind to downwind..*

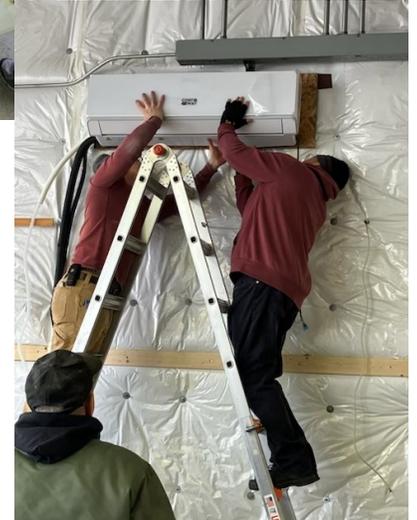
*Conflicts are inevitable, but Billy urges us to do whatever is needed to keep other aircraft in sight and, most of all, keep talking! The first question to ask others in the pattern is what is your altitude. Then, ask location.*

*Finally, Billy talked about runway incursions. When in doubt about entering a runway, stop first then ask.*

*Thank you Billy for another excellent VMC Club session!!*

# HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION IN CHAPTER HANGAR.

Shown here is the installation of the Mini-Split Heat Pump inspired and led by our new chapter president Jason Pratt. We lucked out with decent weather on December 27. Several chapter members jumped in to help. The work went smoothly and was completed in one day. The heat pump will serve well in concert with the propane heater and will take some pressure off the use of it on all but the coldest days. That will also help reduce noise during chapter gatherings. Thanks to all who volunteered to help. These photos were taken and sent to me by Dave Glassmeyer . A huge thanks Dave!



# JOHN LABARRE'S WACO RESTORATION CHAPTER 2

Work on the 1930 WACO ASO has continued at Brodhead, Wisconsin. One of the concerns has been to match not only the color but also the gloss of the paint. To this end I found a device called a gloss meter. They are used by auto detailers to show their customers the results before and after polishing. We used it to find the gloss reading of the original paint then used the test results to find the correct amount of flattening agent to mix with the Aerothane topcoat to achieve the desired gloss level. Catalyst is added at 4 to 1 then mixture is reduced 3 to 2. Keeping this ratios straight is key to consistent results.

All Photos Pages 8,9,10 John Labarre

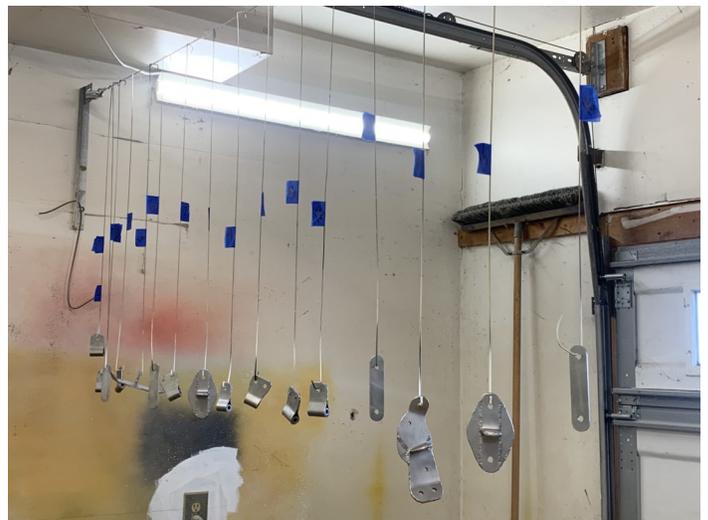


Calculations were made with reference to the Consolidated Aircraft Coatings manual so the correct amount of materials could be ordered. Once on hand, the Aerothane was mixed for uniformity.. This was custom matched paint, not off the shelf.

The center section of the upper wing has been finished and installed

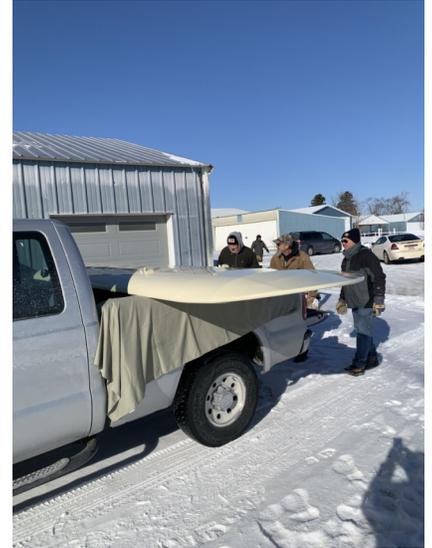


16 special fittings that connect the wings and wires to the airframe were stripped of paint, epoxy primed and repainted with Aerothane



## JOHN LABARRE'S WACO RESTORATION CHAPTER 2

Once the paint cured for two days, we transported it from shop to hangar. We used my brother's truck for this. He made several dry runs across the snow covered airport to make sure his truck wouldn't get stuck. We walked along side the truck, and got the wing to the hangar without trouble. It was about 15 degrees F but no wind.



Work gloves were placed over the landing wire fittings to protect the new paint. White plastic tubing can be seen hanging out of the fuselage above the main wheel. This was very stiff in the cold hangar and a challenge to route through the wing.

On right, lower port wing is installed and makeshift table removed. Estimated weight of the wing is 50 lbs with no aileron installed.



Once the wing was in the hangar, the various fittings had to have their holes reamed of paint so bolts could pass. After 25 years since last restoration there was still some rust and grime on stainless steel cotter and clevis pins requiring much polishing.



Seen left, we had to work out a way to route the pitot and static tubes through the port lower wing. This took some time and each tube had to go through small holes in each rib. We used some long pieces of welding rod taped to each tube to "fish" it through the wing. The connectors were marked with black dots to ensure we reconnected correctly.

Here is the starboard lower wing before being loaded on the truck for its trip to the hangar for installation. It had been painted but not cured enough to move to the hangar. At least there are no pitot/static tubing to be threaded through this wing!



A bit about the rigging of this biplane and some nomenclature.

“Flying Wires” are actually streamlined tie-rod ends. Their location and loading define them. The wires used are streamlined in cross section to reduce drag. Early airplanes used braided cable wire for holding everything in place. The Streamlined tie rods use right hand threads on one end and left hand threads on the other. They are in effect turn buckles and can be tightened to achieve the correct rigging. For incidence, dihedral and washout.

The wires holding up the lower wings are the landing wires which hold the weight of the wing is not producing lift. The wires attached to the upper wing are the flying wires and hold the weight of the aircraft when lift is produced.. The roles are reversed when the aircraft is inverted during aerobatics.

When manufactured, the threads are rolled into the wire, not cut, so that the potential for a stress riser crack and breakage is reduced. Some manufacturers have used cut threads and they have been shown to be strong enough for installations on airplanes of this size and weight.

In early WACO airplanes, there is no factory specified wire tension. Rigging in these early biplanes is part science and the rest is art. In order to tighten the wires, there needs to be enough tension to achieve strength and proper rigging but keep the wires streamline to the relative wind....and not break internal structure by over tightening! Wires are tightened one half turn at a time to achieve the desired rigging.

We returned home to Ohio where there was more snow and only slightly warmer air than in Wisconsin.

New fabric aileron gap seals are also being made as old ones didn't match the new paint. Gap seals are strips of fabric added between the aileron and wing to increase aileron effectiveness. These will be installed after the wings are completely rigged

We hope to return to Brodhead by end of February or first week of March to install top wings, rig everything and do final assembly, finish inspection then fly it home.