

TAILWINDS



**EAA CHAPTER
974
NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2026**



Butler County Regional Airport
Hamilton, Ohio



IN THIS EDITION

- **THE PREZ SEZ**
- **CHAPTER GATHERING REVIEW**
- **NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS**
- **VALUABLE TOOL APPROVED**
- **OSHKOSH STORIES**
- **CHAPTER CONTACTS**
- **BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**
- **YOUNG EAGLE RALLY AUG 15**
- **GASSET HANGAR PICNIC AUG 15**
- **LSRAI COURSE REVIEW AUG 22-23**

COMING EVENTS

- **SEPT 13 CHAPTER GATHERING**
- **SEPT 19 YOUNG EAGLE RALLY**
- **OCT 10 FLY-IN**
- **OCT 11 CHAPTER GATHERING**



Hard to believe we are looking at the tail end of summer already. It feels like just yesterday we were packing up our bags, checking the weather, and heading up to Oshkosh for AirVenture. Now, the days are getting noticeably shorter, the evening air is just starting to cool off, and we are officially transitioning into late-summer flying.

This time of year is a bit bittersweet, but honestly, it is one of the absolute best windows for getting up in the air. We are moving past those dog days of July and August where the humidity feels thick enough to slice with a prop, and density altitude stops trying to rob your airplane of its climb performance. As a former column in Tailwinds beautifully put it, it's a great time for "anticipating the cooler weather without the many limitations of summer flying."

Still, late-summer flying comes with its own set of rules. The early morning haze can linger a little longer, and the convective activity from afternoon heating can still pop up a stray thunderstorm or two if you aren't paying attention. Keep a close eye on your pre-flight weather briefings, and enjoy those incredibly smooth, glassy evening flights. There is nothing quite like

a late-August or early-September sunset flight over Butler County to remind you exactly why we build and fly these machines.

Speaking of project progress, our builders have been capitalizing on the long daylight hours to put some serious sweat equity into their projects. Every milestone reached is a victory for the whole group, and as we look toward the cooler shop months ahead, I want to echo a challenge often shared in our newsletter: "As experimental builders, are we challenging ourselves to take that next step, finish that next portion of the project, sharing our progress with the chapter..." If you've reached a breakthrough on your build, or even if you've just run into a stubborn problem you need a second pair of eyes on, make sure to bring it up at our next gathering.

THE PREZ SEZ, CONTINUED

Page 3

Looking forward, we have some fantastic fall events on the horizon. First up, mark your calendars for Saturday, October 10th for our upcoming Chapter Fly-In and Swap Meet! Brandi Brewer has graciously stepped up to put this whole event together, and it is shaping up to be an incredible day. Start digging through your hangars and workshops now for those extra parts, instruments, or tools you've been meaning to clear out, and let's make this swap meet a huge success

Alongside the Fly-In, we will continue our youth outreach and have plenty of opportunities to get our Young Eagles and Eagle Flights up into the smooth autumn air.

Thanks to everyone who continues to volunteer, fly, and keep the spirit of aviation alive and well here at Chapter 974. Enjoy these last beautiful weeks of the summer season, keep the blue side up, and I'll see you at the next meeting!

Blue skies,

*Jason Pratt
President, EAA Chapter 974*

AUGUST 2026 CHAPTER GATHERING REVIEW

Here's a gathering that could be a record breaker! My best count was 60, and it's possible a few others came after my second count. It was standing room only! Well done EAA Chapter 974!

Thanks Prez Jason for ordering and picking up the great Jimmy Johns Sandwiches. Brandi Brewer's apple cake was wonderful as were VP Robin Kidder's brownies. If we keep this up we'll have trouble passing our medicals! What a way to go! Thanks all!!

Young Eagles Coordinator Scott Balmos announced that the goal of 2.5 million Young Eagles flown was reached at Airventure. Our next rally announced at this gathering, successfully flown on 8-15, is shown later in this edition.

Kevin Gassert reminded us of his upcoming hangar picnic on 8-15, also shown in this edition.

Ray Scholar Jaxon Blight flew in with instructor Steve Polak. Steve praised his progress and noted his cross wind and solo progress with 13 hours solo. He will start cross countries and is studying for his written exam to be taken at the end of September. Well done Jaxon and Steve!

Fly-IN Progress: Brandi Brewer is coordinating the October 10 Fly-In. She continues to seek volunteers. There will be a swap meet. Chapter 974 members will get a free table. There will be a \$10 charge for non-members.

President Jason Pratt with a few announcements:

- Light Sport Inspection Course taking place in chapter hangar Aug 22-23 is now filled.
- Chapter hangar clutter is to be reduced starting with seldom used bikes.
- Volunteer for September gathering food needed.

Book Donations: Member Ted Tracy donated a stack of books, primarily about the Corvair engine conversion. Thanks Ted!

Brandi Brewer asked us to consider book donations for the Vintage Aircraft Association. Photos: ed.



NEW MEMBERS, VISITORS, AND A NEW TOOL!

Seen right is Caleb Hill. Caleb is a member of the incoming Butler Tech Class. He is enrolled in the Pilot Track. He is also a member of the Civil Air Patrol. Welcome Caleb!



Next is Leo Trip. Leo joined the chapter at this gathering. Your editor asks forgiveness for losing track of you after the gathering Leo. I wanted more information about you. I'll catch you next time. Welcome to the chapter Leo!



Here we see Chapter president Jason Pratt showing us a proposed addition to the chapter tool crib. It is a safety cable gun. Several members have used one of these and say it is big help in safety wire application, especially when access is difficult or for multiple repetitive applications such as propeller bolts.



This was discussed by the chapter board during the past two business meetings and brought to the chapter for a vote. The chapter voted affirmative.

The board will explore the purchase options and price, estimated to be around \$700. Chapter members will supply their own cable. The tool purchased will be for .032 cable.



Safety cable gun shown right. This promises to be a useful tool for chapter members.
Photos: ed.

There were several stories about Oshkosh Airventure this year. Most of them dealt with the difficulty in arrival. There was heavy haze and smoke from Canadian wildfires. This reduced conditions to IFR on Saturday and Sunday. Even when the smoke and haze cleared, the conditions were marginal, making Oshkosh arrival a real challenge.

Scott Balmos filed an IFR flight plan but was forced to climb to 16,000 feet to keep it in effect. He refueled at Wisconsin Dells, nearly out of O2. He was then able to proceed to arrive at the end of the Bonanza Mass Arrival. While at Airventure, Scott ordered a Vans 14A tail kit and, talk about planning ahead, has already reserved a slot with his paint shop. Well done Scott!



Mark Taylor was able to replace his medical certificate. Congratulations Mark!

Steve Pollak talked about the challenge of his Airventure Arrival. Along with the marginal conditions, the challenge for him was arriving with aircraft of widely varying speeds in poor visibility. There was also much back chatter with controllers at Fisk and even radio arguments among pilots trying to get in.

Photo: Scott Balmos

CHAPTER CONTACTS

CHAPTER CONTACTS—HOW TO CONTACT EAA CHAPTER 974

officers@eaa974.org — will reach president, vice president, treasurer, secretary as a group

president@eaa974.org — will reach chapter president (Jason Pratt)

newsletters@eaa974.org — will reach newsletter editor (Bob Dombek)

youngeagles@eaa974.org — will reach Young Eagles Coordinator (Scott Balmos)

techcounselor@eaa974.org — will reach technical counselor (Ray Parker)

eaa974@googlegroups.com — group e-mail to all chapter members

EAA Chapter 974

August 9, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

09 August 2026 / 12:35 PM

ATTENDEES

Jason Pratt, Roger McClure, Grace Hogan, Scott Balmos, Robin Kidder, Scott Hersha, Bob Dombek

SECRETARY'S REPORT

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Income	\$ 688.00 (Donations \$118.00)
Expenses	\$ 626.03
Checking	\$ 12,065.17
CDs	\$ 17,281.98
Savings	\$ 504.69
Total	\$ 29,851.84

YOUNG EAGLES

0 flown in July

Next date:

August 15th- 25 registered; 6 pilots

Ray Scholarship- Jackson is prepping for his written

AGENDA

Old Business

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES, CONTINUED

Fly-in on October 10, 2026 11-4. Brandi going to coordinate. NEED VOLUNTEERS. Candice approved date and initial plan. Must get flyer to EAA for insurance. Planned expenses are food, port-o-potty, flyers. Get info out by 1 August.

Speakers for chapter gatherings

Christmas Party

Location: Check price for Curling Club.

Food: Check Magiano's for delivery cost

Improve Tool Crib check out process

Sell flight simulator. Scott has an estimated value for computer and screen. See him for details

New Business

Clean out old equipment and hanger sale/ swap meet at Fly-in

Upcoming Meetings

Date	Chef
September 13th	
October 10th- Saturday	FLY-IN
November 8th	Chili Cookoff
December 13th	

2026 Young Eagles:

August 15th, September 19th, October 17th

Meeting adjourned by Jason Pratt : 1:03 p.m

YOUNG EAGLE RALLY AUGUST 15

Page 9

Mother Nature was kind to us this month.....just barely! 9 pilots were able to fly 19 kids and tuck our planes away just before the weather moved in from the northwest. Until then, the morning was mostly overcast and winds were light and variable. The resulting smooth air made for ideal flying for the kids and pilots. We used the northern pattern from runway 12. Thank you pilots, escorts and Grace keeping us straight at the desk
Photos : ed.



KEVIN AND KATHY GASSERTS ANNUAL PICNIC

Kevin and Kathy never disappoint, especially with Chef Mike at the grill. Once again the Gasserts held their hangar picnic with invitations open to all who know them. It was squeezed in between the chapter's Young Eagle Rally and a pretty good storm that blew in. Fortunately, the storm was brief, the skies cleared and we were able to enjoy a great day. Thank you so much Kevin, Kathy and Che' Mike!

Photos: ed.



The following stories were submitted by John Labarre Steve Rumsey and Tom Martin who attended the Light Sport Repair And Inspection Course in our chapter hangar on August 22 and 23. Part of EAA's mission is education. In addition to Gatherings and allowing members to perform finish work on projects, I felt the class was another excellent use of our hangar. Thank you John, for sharing your experience with the chapter. And, Thank you chapter president Jason Pratt for putting it together.

"The Class was well received by all, plenty of info to fill the two days of class.

I think there were 29-30 attendees. Scott Balmos, Joe Seibert, John Patterson, Jr. and myself, plus a couple of other chapter members who I don't know attended.

Several folks came from far away, including an RV-8 owner from Naples, FL.

The test was open book, and if you took good notes, it was quite easy.

Information was adequate, but as we were told, no way to cover everything.

We had great lunches, and the chapter hangar was very comfortable."

~John LaBarre

"The class was OK. I think this might have been this instructors 1st time teaching it and it showed. I am a technical instructor and teach classes part time for the company I retired from so I am pretty critical in evaluation of instructors. He pretty much read from the slides and didn't add much from his own experiences. Several times he actually said things that contradicted either what was in the slides or what the FARs say. I did get a lot out of the class but I think I learned more from the audience who had a lot of practical experience with the subject being taught. "

—Steve Rumsey

From Tom Martin:

Earning the Right to Sign My Own Logbook: The Light Sport Repairman Inspection Course

What a great opportunity! Last month our Chapter hosted a Light Sport Repair and Inspection Course presented by the Lancair Owners and Builders Organization (LOBO). For those of us that took the course we spent sixteen hours in a classroom setting right in our Chapter hangar. The certification is one that I had wanted for a long time: a Repairman Certificate (Light-Sport Aircraft) with an Inspection rating, or LSRIA.

The course covered everything from reading a maintenance manual and airworthiness directives to torque values, safety wire, control system rigging, and the discipline of a proper checklist. It was a full two days, and I came away with a fresh appreciation for how much goes into declaring an aircraft "in a condition for safe operation." I also came away with a certificate that lets me perform the annual condition inspection on my own aircraft.

The inspection rating has actually been around since the Sport Pilot rule came out in 2004, but for most of that time it was a narrow path. It only applied to experimental light-sport aircraft, and your certificate was tied to one specific airplane by N-number and serial number. If you owned a homebuilt someone else had built, you were out of luck. MOSAIC changed that. The FAA's long-awaited light-sport modernization rule took effect in late 2025, and along with the headline changes to weight, stall speed, and seats, it quietly opened the inspection rating to owners of amateur-built and other experimental aircraft. Take the sixteen-hour course in your aircraft's category, and you can inspect the experimental aircraft you own. No more N-number on the certificate, and no more waiting on the original builder. For a lot of us, that turned a rating we had read about into one we could finally use.

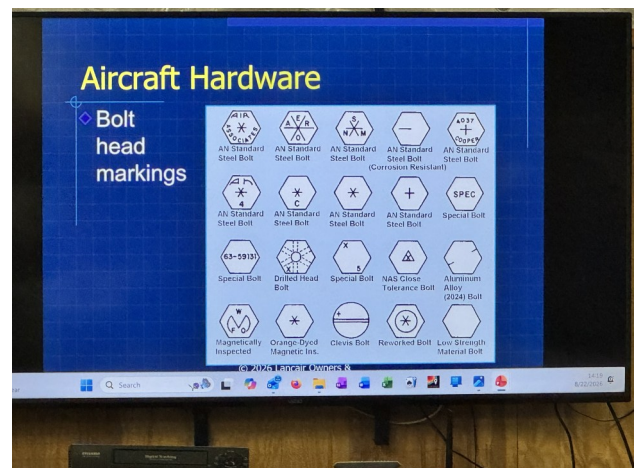
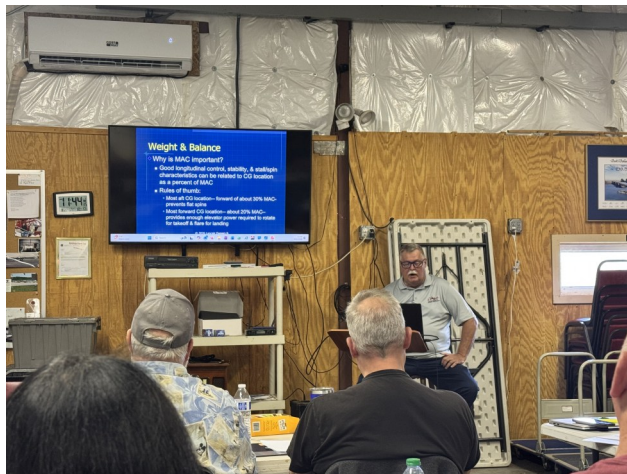
I do not take that lightly. Under Part 43 an annual inspection on a certificated air-

plane can only be signed off by a mechanic holding an Inspection Authorization, a credential that takes years of experience to earn. The FAA has decided that an owner who completes focused training, and who has the most at stake every time the airplane leaves the ground, can be trusted with the same responsibility on an experimental aircraft. That is a real vote of confidence in the experimental community, and it exists because organizations like the EAA spent years making the case for it. It is a privilege in the truest sense of the word, and it comes with the obligation to do the work honestly, to use the checklist every time, and to call a mechanic when something is beyond my skill or my tools.

The practical benefit is easy to state. I no longer have to schedule my airplane around someone else's calendar, and I will know its condition in a way that a once-a-year visit to a shop could never give me. The deeper benefit is harder to put into words. When I sign the logbook entry for my own condition inspection, my name is on the line. Sixteen hours was a small price to earn that, and if you own an experimental aircraft, I would encourage you to find a course and do the same.

Blue Skies!

Tom Martin



Photos: Tom Martin