AirVenture 2014

At the end of July, Tom and Carol Wathen very generously funded four students to attend EAA’s AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

A Wathen Center Selection board selected Tyler Howell, Colin Haines, Alan Salgado, and Nicole Edlauer to go. These young people were selected from the Wathen Center programs.

Tyler and Nicole help out at the Build-A-Plane/Wathen Center Stinson project. Colin works on the Sonex homestead project, and Alan works as an intern, giving tours for student field trips during the school year.

We treated the trip as a business trip in order to teach the students about standard business practices as well as having a good time at Oshkosh, and the young folks really responded well. We probably gave tours to 1,500 people in the DC-3 during our stay. I became hoarse by mid-week, but it sure was a lot of fun being around all that aviation activity.

We toured the EAA’s museum of aircraft and memorabilia, KidVenture, and watched daily airshows. If you go to AirVenture, don’t miss the night airshows.

Our students also acted as go betweens helping at the “Gathering of Eagles” event which raised 1.8 million dollars for the Young Eagles program.

Next time you go to Flabob on a Saturday morning, be sure to ask Nicole how she won the free ice cream eating contest for most ice cream eaten during the week!

~ Gregg Landolt, Director of Programs

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The Flight of Passage Journey was retraced by Chris and April Nesin along with Chris’s mom Janet Nesin, friend Tom Ford and their dog, Lenny Bruce. They traveled closely to the same route from the East Coast to the West Coast Kern that Rinker Buck flew back in 1966. The Rinker’s story was shared in the book, Flight of Passage. What is truly amazing, they flew the exact same airplane the Buck brothers flew 48 years earlier.

Chris and April finished their journey at Flabob Airport in Rubidoux, CA. on July 3rd and I had the opportunity to sit down with them as they wound down from their sentimental journey.

**How did you happen to find the original J-3 Piper Cub?**

Chris: I bought it September of 2011. Ken Burton is the guy I bought it from and he listed it as the Flight of Passage airplane. He was getting out of aviation and I was lucky enough to buy it. I had a J-3 and still do, but it lacks on power and speed. PA 11 is a near perfect airplane for me. It is still cheap to run per hour but it is 20 mph faster than the J-3. It will go 100 mph. Most of the trip, I flew it at 80-85 mph except when we had 20 mph headwinds then it was barely 60 mph.

**What were some of the highlights of your journey?**

Tom Ford: (a friend who flew his own Cub with the Nesin’s) Every airport was different and every airport we met people. People were so excited about it. They would come out of the woodwork saying, “I was following you on the Internet and watching you get close and we came down to see you. This is great!”

April: It was the people. It was overwhelming. Chris wanted to share this airplane with people interested in aviation, those that enjoyed the book. Not everybody could do this. It was a chance to share with all the people that had helped us to turn this dream into a reality.

Chris: The first couple we met in Pittsburgh drove 45 minutes to see us. They had been watching us and our spot tracker all day. A man in Wisconsin sent really nice floor boards made of a particular kind of plywood. So many people took the time to help us. I would fly people to St. Louis, feed them. I flew guys to Graham, TX. to help. They would work a week with parts, assembly, whatever needed to be done. Some places treated us like rock stars, others places nobody cared but it was all fun. We would make 4-5 stops a day and 51 stops total during this trip. Every state was different and had its own beauty.

April: Being at places like this, (Flabob) and hearing what they do here, meeting the people, why they like aviation and hearing their stories was the highlight for us. Everything else was a bonus such as getting to see the beautiful scenery.

Chris and April along with Chris’s mom, Tom Ford, Lenny Bruce and an extended team that spanned several states made their dream into a reality. The J-3 that was locked away in a dusty barn for almost two decades was revived once again to fly another couple on their own flight of passage.

~ Patti Landolt
Katrina Bradshaw Memorial BuildAPlane Center Opens at Flabob Airport
Source: Build A Plane Jul 23, 2014

July 23, 2014, LOS ANGELES--Build A Plane has joined with the Thomas Wathen Center in Riverside, California, to create a permanent facility that allows kids to build real airplanes. The Katrina Bradshaw Memorial BuildAPlane Center is outfitted as a complete A&P facility providing tooling and materials to build and restore aircraft.

Sixteen kids from around Los Angeles have signed up restore an early Stinson 108.

“We’re hoping to get the first airplane done by the end of August,” says Gregg Landolt, Wathen Center Director of Programs and Education.

The kids are supervised by an IA and two A&P mechanics. Other volunteers from Historic Flabob Airport also donate their time. All hours spent on aircraft restoration are carefully logged by the kids with the ultimate goal of earning their Airframe and Powerplant licenses.

When this Stinson 108 is completed, many of the same kids will use it to learn to fly thanks to generous grants provided by the Tom Wathen Center.

“We want to get this airplane done, and then we have another one ready to go right after that,” Landolt adds.

The Katrina Bradshaw Memorial BuildAPlane Center is expected to expand in coming months to serve more kids and service more airplanes. The Center was funded entirely by private donation.

Katrina Bradshaw was BuildAPlane’s executive director and recently passed away after a brief illness.

BuildAPlane is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization now in its 10th year of operation, responsible for more than 200 aircraft building and restoration projects across the United States.

Who is Katrina Bradshaw?

Katrina Bradshaw was the executive director of BuildAPlane, a national non-profit organization that motivates kids to learn science, technology, engineering and math by giving kids the chance to build real airplanes. In that pursuit, no task escaped her attention. She mentored students looking for ways into aviation, she helped move airplanes from donors to schools, sometimes all the way across the country and she assisted dozens of general aviation companies who were looking for ways to get involved with young people. Katrina was well known and liked in the aviation community, having spent dozens of years working with the Experimental Aircraft Association and AOPA, as well as working independently as a consultant for a number of her own clients. Katrina passed away last year after a brief bout with cancer.

Do you know of a derelict airplane?
Contact BuildAPlane
www.buildaplane.org
Eagle Scout Project at Flabob Airport

The road to doing my Eagle Scout project at Flabob started with the Air Academy week that I attended the summer before my seventh grade year. In this Air Academy, I really learned a lot about planes and it really excited me to do more with it and maybe be a pilot one day. After I did the Air Academy, I stopped going to Flabob, but in the mean time I was waiting for the Sonex project, where I would have the opportunity to assist in building an aircraft. When it started getting close to the date to start the Sonex project, I was also getting close to starting my Eagle Scout project. That’s when I thought about doing my Eagle Scout project at Flabob. So, I went to the front office and I talked to Chris Felton and he showed me a few projects that I could do.

The project I decided on was to build a large wood patio deck on the main office, one of the harder projects, but also a project that would be noticed and most useful for office staff and students at Flabob. Next, I started making plans for the deck with the help of my Dad. We started by doing a fundraiser at my school to raise money for my project as well as a Mission trip to Honduras. I also participate in the Mission trip, where we go to Honduras and we spend time with these kids that have HIV or are just left on the street. The Mission we work with is called Montana de Luz where we teach the kids bible and bring them clothes and supplies.

As I was getting ready to get started on constructing the deck in February, I broke my leg playing soccer at school. Wouldn’t you know it was at the last game of the season and just four days before my birthday and driver license test. Oh well, it just delayed my project a couple months. After two months of healing and physical therapy, I got back on track and we built the deck over the Memorial Day weekend. I am very happy how things turned out and appreciate all the help that I got from my fellow scouts, troop leaders, and my family. What pleased me the most was how excited the staff at Flabob is to have the deck to enjoy for many years to come. I look forward to staying involved with Flabob in the future and telling other kids about the great opportunities they have.

~ Colin D. Haines, Future Eagle Scout Troop 251
Hello! I’m Gregg Landolt, the Tom Wathen Center’s Director of Programs and Education. When Tom and Carol Wathen, Jon Goldenbaum, and the Board of Directors hired me, I was given the challenge of updating our programs in general, and that wasn’t an easy job given that Kathy Rohm had done such a good job with her students in the past! I have been busy these past few months and now it’s time to share with you all that has been going on. We had two Air Academies in July, a trip to the Experimental Aircraft Association’s (EAA) AirVenture, followed by another Air Academy in August, so we’ve had lots of stimulating educational opportunities!

**July Air Academies**

For the second year, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) along with Cal State LA teamed up with us to inspire young adults to get more involved with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Due to the fact that we have been successful in using aviation to inspire students to study STEM subjects, the DOT has taken our program and used it to fund programs at eleven other schools across the U.S., with plans to expand more next year!

The program operates like this – one week the students are at the Cal State LA campus, and one week they are with us at Flabob. While at Cal State LA, they learn Computer Aided Design, build a model bridge, and work with civil engineering subjects. While at Flabob, they learn about aeronautics and get their hands dirty building and working with airplanes and rockets. As you may already know, we specialize in working with antique aircraft and construction techniques here at Flabob, and to be honest, I am still learning just
how much of an advantage that can be in teaching students to get interested in STEM subjects.

I am always mindful we are competing with student’s smart phones and the internet, and I have been worried we were out of touch with the latest teaching techniques. This summer has taught me two important things:

1. We have a lot of unique assets here, such as the DC-3 (Flabob Express) and our replica racers (Comet, Meteor, Firecracker, Caudron, Rafael) and,

2. We have a dedicated cadre of mechanics and pilots who care very much about what they do.

Combining these two groups gives us a unique ability to give the students something many young people don’t experience anymore – having a “hands on” learning experience they won’t forget. Professor Hashe-mian of Cal State LA has computers and a professional staff of instructors. The Tom Wathen Center has real airplanes to work with and dedicated volunteers who are giving their personal time to teach others what it is about aviation that they love.

We taught two Air Academies for the DOT, one on July 8th and one July 15th. Both were four days long followed by an EAA Chapter 1 Young Eagles flight. Besides adding some new instructors and classes, we have also added a trip to March Air Reserve Base (ARB). The trip to March ARB is difficult to get because of clear-ances that are required to get on base, but when we can make it work, we get a great experience for the students. The California National Guard’s 163rd Reconnaissance Wing flies the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles operating on the front lines defending America’s interests. C-17s, KC-135s, F-16s, Security forces, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, and the base Fire Department were all available to teach young people about our nation’s military – I spent 29 years in the US Air Force, and I still was impressed!

**August Air Academy**

The third Air Academy of the summer started on August 13 and was aimed at local area students. With most schools starting in August, our enrollment was lower than expected, but at least our army of volunteers was available to teach the students! This was a three-day Air Academy and it also included a special trip to March ARB. While at March, security forces showed us the weapons that are used in defending airbases around the world. It is one thing to play video games that simulate combat, but it is another entirely to meet folks who really handle these weapons. We also met the Explosive Ordnance Disposal people. They showed us how they handle unexploded ordnance and their bomb handling robots. Tours of the KC-135 and C-17 followed, which were impressive. If you haven’t taken the opportunity to see our military forces in action, please do so! Lastly, we visited the local base fire department.
These guys have to be ready for aircraft incidents, fires in building offices and homes, and local forest/desert fires all at the same time. I was grateful we have such well-trained, dedicated folks as our local fireman at March!

It’s been a great summer of Air Academies that could not have been accomplished without our wonderful group of instructors. I’d like to take the opportunity to mention and thank all of the volunteers who help with the summer Air Academies at the Tom Wathen Center:

**Kevin McKenzie**, a Wathen Center trustee, started off the Air Academies with his lessons on the Fundamentals of Flight, Instruments and Systems. His enthusiasm is always infectious and it’s a great way to start our programs. Kevin is an attorney who takes time off from his firm to help us – at least his rates are cheap!

We are lucky to have **Dr. Paul Foster** of the FAA as part of our teaching staff. Dr. Foster, using a large dose of humor, discussed Aviation Careers with the students. Dr. Foster is a very polished instructor who gets the students to look inside themselves to see what is in their future for a career.

**Jan Buttermore**, EAA Chapter One President and Flabob’s 2013 Volunteer of the Year (along with Tyler Howell) taught the students how to build an airplane wing rib. This is a wonderful hands-on activity that gives the student a memento of their Air Academy experience.

**Jon Goldenbaum** is the Tom Wathen Center Chairman of the Board, a general aviation pilot, military fighter pilot, and airline pilot with a fifty year career in aviation. He is still an active pilot at Flabob and is currently Captain of the “Flabob Express” DC-3. Jon
shared stories of his aviation career while speaking about human qualities or weaknesses. Jon is always ranked high in our end-of-course critiques.

**Professor Jim Spee** of the University of Redlands spoke about propulsion from pistons to jets and rocket propulsion and guidance. Professor Spee is an aircraft owner and all-around good guy here at Flabob. I have been pleased with Jim’s knowledge and thoroughness in his teaching methods – the students really respond well to him.

Following Jim Spee’s class on rocket propulsion and guidance, **Bob Barden** and **Bill Anderson** taught the students how to build a model rocket. On the last day of Air Academy, we went out to the field to launch rockets – our rockets fly as high as 800 ft! We had the pleasure of having **Dorian Crutcher** and Jacob Palmer assist the students during the launch day.

**Tyler Howell**, a Flabob Airport Preparatory Academy graduate and private pilot taught the students how to cover the structure of a tube and fabric airplane. He also assisted in the wing ribs structures class. Tyler has been an active member of the Stinson aircraft restoration project and is building his own EAA biplane. Tyler is new to teaching this class, but he is a natural instructor whom the students identify with. Good job Tyler!

**Jim O’Brien**, EAA Chapter 1 Vice President, private pilot and airplane owner, started off the August Academy class with a one hour course in aviation fundamentals. Jim’s enthusiasm for aviation was a great way to get the kids inspired to learn.

**Dick Glaser** is one of our newer instructors. He is a retired Delta Airlines Captain who shared with the students what it’s like to live and work in the Major Airlines. Dick brings a wealth of knowledge and teaching ability to the Academies.

**Jacob Palmer**, also a FAPA graduate and private pilot, taught a new course on radio controlled modeling. Jacob has years of experience in the RC field, and he used that experience to help the students learn how the field has advanced through the years. USAF Unmanned Aerial vehicles are overgrown RC models after all!

**Ms. Jocelyn Tarcelo** presented an interactive program on Women in Aviation. In case you’ve missed it, women aren’t just flight attendants anymore. One third to one half of our students are young ladies, we want to encourage them to follow their dreams, whatever they may be!

Well folks, that’s about it for now. This coming fall we are working on flying lesson grants, re-starting the Aviators, as well as the fall season of the interns and our aircraft building projects. There’s also a rumor I am going to upgrade my own status as a flight instructor. Stay tuned!

For More Information, Contact Gregg Landolt
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