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EAA Chapter 569 Newsletter

Lincoln, NE



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Meeting Announcement

Date: Tuesday, March 2nd

Time: 7:00pm

Program: Greg Whisler

Greg and his wife Terri own and operate [Whisler Aviation](#) at the Seward Airport. Besides all of the typical services an FBO has to offer, they also specialize in the disassembly and transportation of non-flyable or unairworthy aircraft. Greg will share some of these adventures with us. Because Greg's schedule can change in a moment's notice, please check the Chapter 569 Facebook page or website before heading to the Seward Airport.

Place: Whisler Aviation
Seward Airport (KSWT)



President's Message Tom Trumble

It has been a long cold spell. My 172 is so neglected it won't speak to me. It just sits in the hangar and looks sad.

Tomorrow is the Crete breakfast which I dearly love to fly to, but the forecast of low visibility and fog leads me not to plug the bird in tonight and drive to Crete.

Several decisions were made at the last business meeting on Feb. 16. Please read the minutes for the details.

Some bullet point items:

- The 2020 Christmas party was officially canceled with the 2021 event scheduled for December 5th.

- We are resuming our traditional general meetings on the first Tuesday of the month.
- Next meeting March 2, 7:00pm Seward Airport, Whisler Aviation. This is a fly-in location so if the weather is good saddle up the airplanes.
- Prior to the meeting we will gather at La Carreta Mexican Restaurant for dinner at 6:00PM. It is located about 1 mile south of the airport on Hwy 15 (3531 Progressive Rd, Seward, NE).
- Agreed to offer an invitation to the NE Corvette Association to attend our breakfast when the weather improves. Airplanes and Corvettes (or display vehicle) sounds fun.

I would like to continue to find more ways to involve youth in aviation in addition to the Young Eagles events. Anyone who is aware of a youth that has an aviation passion please let us know and help us get them involved. EAA has other activities, besides Young Eagles, such as model building. We would welcome volunteers to start a program.

Please consider joining our chapter or renewing your membership. \$20/year. See Cristi Higgins or visit our web site. <http://eaa569.org/>

Our next business meeting is March 16 at 7:00pm. This will be a Zoom meeting. We will send an email link. If you are unable to connect with a computer, the email will have phone numbers that allow you to join the meeting by phone.

Airplane-bike Touring

By Tom Winter

What if, when you land at a Nebraska airport, you want to explore the town? Take it from me, there are some great bike rides out there. Small town Nebraska is great for bicycle tours, and the people you stop and chat with are delighted that the guy on the bike got there (deliberately!) in an airplane.

Albion is a favorite, a three-mile bike ride through rolling countryside, with pleasant stops along the way to admire, and even to photograph the landscape, including a stop on the bridge over Beaver Creek.

Red Cloud, as a bike ride, is barely worth mentioning, as you could spit from the airport to the town, but you unfold the bike anyway, for the sake of exploring Red Cloud. Park anywhere. Drop in at Scott Osborne's bookstore for a hospitable free coffee and discussion. It's the first building south of the Willa Cather Center.

Ditto Falls City, which is also a "stone's throw" from the town, but so many people have tried it that the road is "paved" with rocks as big as your fist. I learned to ride a bike 70 years ago, and never have I ever dumped a motorcycle but I dumped the bike navigating this rock-strewn route. The Mars Rover would not be safe to land on it. Philip Chaffee there at Brenner Field asked me if I would like to use the courtesy car. Next time, I'm going to say yes — and stuff the folder in the trunk so I'm not stuck with a car when I get to the town. Love the town, though. Many an old and picturesque house,

many an old and picturesque building. Friendly people, too. The guy running the service station happily aired up my soft rear tire from a compressor he had in the back of his truck.

At Scribner, you have a choice of small-town tours, because airport SCB is smack between Scribner and Hooper. Skylar Steffes (Aeronautics Division Employee of the Year 2019), will offer you a ride into town. If your choice is Scribner, take him up on it. It's no fun bicycling three miles on Hwy 275. For biking, Hooper is the better choice: ride straight east on County Road J four miles into Hooper. There's a Mom and Pop little restaurant at the edge of town where you can refresh yourself with a soft serve cone. Don's Barber Shop, on Hooper's historic main street, is where I go to get my haircut. \$10, and you "look like a gentleman," as Don puts it. (The Hundred Dollar Haircut!) Bicycle straight east 4 more miles and you can see what the

mighty Elkhorn River has done to the town of Winslow.

Planning helps. I often get on Google Earth, which is easier nowadays, just enter the town name in the search box, click on the map, then click on "satellite" at the lower left, and zoom in. You can get close enough, if there is a highway, to see if there is a ride-worthy shoulder. This often doesn't matter, as the typical road from a small town airport to the town is not heavily traveled! The road from Matt Christen's shop at Pawnee City is two-lane blacktop, and you'll be the only traffic on it! Sometimes I call Matt to check on the grass strip first. Exploring Pawnee City, you will soon find a bike trail past steel sculptures, that are aptly titled "Children at Play." The Pawnee City bike trail ends up in the 710 Trail. Again, you'll be the only traffic on it!

What makes all this possible is a folding bike that you can throw in the back of the plane.



Downtube Nova folding bike, in front of The Bluebird of Happiness, ready for the ride and tour of Superior, Nebraska.

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Back in November Jerry Mulliken and a newly-minted pilot Jeremy Griffin flew in from Fremont to meet me at my hangar. Why? To check out the folding bike that lives behind the seats of The Bluebird of Happiness! So I demonstrated. Maybe you are interested too.

The procedure:

Open the right hand door, slide the passenger seat all the way forward. To keep the seatback out of your way, tie that seatback forward (I use a tie-down rope looped through the handhold). Reach in, grab the bike, turn it upright, carefully pull it through. Let the wheels roll over the sill. Flip up the handlebar post and cam-lock it. Shake the bike in midair like shaking a blanket. You hear the Snap! as it unfolds and locks. Raise the saddle post and cam-lock it. Unfold the pedals. Click click as they lock into position. Hop on and ride! Seven speeds. I rode it around the apron, then Jeremy rode it around the apron. Then I folded everything back up and stuffed it back in the plane.

The Folders:

At the Monkey Wrench bike shop, they recommended Dahon folding bikes (usa.dahon.com). A Dahon comparable to mine is \$979, another at \$899 though their site does list cheaper ones. My Cessna 150 flying friend Jon Lindgren has a Bike Friday (bikefriday.com) "Handbuilt in the USA," and \$1200. Brompton ("Handmade in London since 1975." Website us.brompton.com) folders start at \$1400, and go up to \$2400. Mine is a Downtube Nova (downtube.com), made in Avon, NC. Still just \$359, and better by actual comparison to the Brompton and the Bike Friday.

Minutes of the Club Meeting

The meeting was called to order over Zoom on February 16, 2021 at 7:00 pm by President Tom Trumble.

Attending were: Steve Nast, Doug Volkmer, Lori Oliveros, Dennis Crispin, Don Osborne, Wayne Woldt, Tom Winter, Jon Sullivan, Cristi Higgins, Kermit Wegner, Tom Trumble and Jerry Mulliken.

Treasurer Cristi Higgins is logging donations for Jim Fix and Mark Werth memorial plaques for the Oshkosh wall, which cost \$500 each. Dennis moved, Lori seconded motion to use chapter funds to make up any donation shortfall for purchasing two plaques. Motion passed.

Dennis Crispin moved, Tom Trumble seconded the motion to approve February minutes. Motion passed.

Lori Oliveros announced the February 20 flight breakfast will proceed.

Tom Trumble asked if he could invite members of his Corvette Club to a future Chapter breakfast. The breakfast committee did not have any issues with this. They would like to know in advance when this will happen. Tom will ask the club if they are interested.

Doug Volkmer said the Chapter website now has a Builders Report section. Three member projects are highlighted there. Check this section often as there will be frequent updates.

Tentatively, there will be a Young Eagles event at Seward for St Pats

grade school in April and another in David City in May for the Boy Scouts.

The EAA is offering \$10,000 scholarships. The recipient must be 17-19 years old and active in an EAA chapter. The chapter also must be qualified and must submit the candidate. Tom Trumble offered to coordinate. He is gathering information.

Rather than try to reschedule the December, 2020 Christmas Party for the spring, it has been decided to cancel it. A reservation will be made by Tom Trumble at the Villa Amore for Dec 5, 2021 for the Christmas party.

A member meeting will be held March 2 at Whistler Aviation at Seward. Greg Whistler will speak about his aircraft relocation service if he is available. Tom Winter will bring 2020 chapter service awards to give out.

MAC 80 will have a play day on March 27th, 11:00am at Seward.

Help will be needed this spring to relocate chapter equipment in Dean Hoy's Crete hangar so Dean can close out the hangar.

Cristi Higgins moved, Tom Trumble seconded the motion to grant \$100 to NDOT for the aviation art contest. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Cristi moved the meeting adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Mulliken, Secretary

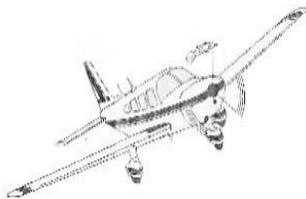


Harold Bickford
President, IAC/MAC 80

Here we are coming into spring with Daylight Savings time starting March 14 and Spring officially starting on March 20. If you haven't had much flying time over the last year why not get some dual instruction scheduled or perhaps look at getting an additional rating? The sky beckons and we ought to be ready for those future flights.

IAC/MAC 80 will be meeting on March 27 at 11am in the Seward Airport (KSWT) administration building. We plan to gather, go to lunch then have flying and evaluation sessions in the afternoon. Long range wx looks favorable. We will also take some time for planning the upcoming Midwest Aerobatic Championship June 24-27 at KSWT. As with all EAA activities we welcome anyone who wants to be involved!

This is an excellent opportunity to come and see what aerobatic flight is about in a relaxed setting. Whether in the air or on the ground there really is something for everyone in the aerobatics with the International Aerobatic Club or IAC. Like Warbirds and Vintage we are all part of EAA.

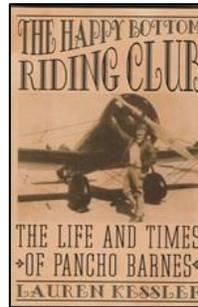


The Happy Bottom Riding Club:

The Life and Times of Pancho Barnes

by Lauren Kessler

Book Review



By *Dennis Crispin*

“Pancho Barnes was a force of nature, a woman who lived a big, messy, colorful unconventional life. She ran through three fortunes, four husbands, and countless lovers. She out flew Amelia Earhart, outsmarted Howard Hughes, out drank the Mexican Army and out maneuvered the US Government.” So begins a promotional effort for the book *The Happy Bottom Riding Club: The Life and Times of Pancho Barnes*.

Author Lauren Kessler published the work in the year 2000, the latest of several books on the amazing Pancho. Information on her also appears in other histories and biographies, mostly aviation related. Pancho appears as a minor character in the movie *The Right Stuff* and in the TV movie *Pancho Barnes*. The part of Pancho was played by sweet, lovable, pretty Valerie Bertinelli, probably the biggest example of miscasting in the history of movies.

Florence Leontine Lowe was born in 1901, the daughter of an ultra-wealthy, old money, socially prominent family. As a rebellious child, she totally rejected the manners, dress and social

expectations befitting her status in life. Her family pushed her, at age nineteen, into a marriage with Calvin Rankin Barnes, a clergyman ten years her senior. The marriage only lasted a few weeks before they separated, living completely apart before divorcing twenty years later.

Leaving her young son in the care of a nanny, she went on a personal adventure, riding a burrow across Mexico. Her traveling companion jokingly called her Pancho. She liked the nickname and used the name Pancho Barnes for the rest of her life.

She was avid about raising and training dogs and horses. Some of her dogs performed in western movies. With a connection into the movie business, she occasionally worked as a cameraman and script editor. Her ability to meet people soon developed connections and friendships throughout the movie establishment.

Suddenly enthralled with aviation, she learned to fly, becoming one of the first twenty American women to hold a pilot's license. Her money allowed her to buy nice airplanes, working her way up through a series of craft until eventually she owned a *Travel Air Mystery Ship*. The *Mystery Ship* was a powerful racing plane, only four were ever built. The plane made her the fastest woman on earth.

She was a contemporary and friend of Amelia Earhart and the other well-known women pilots of the era. Pancho set several speed records, participated in women's air races and was instrumental in the organization of the first women's aviation groups.

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Combining her aviation interest with her movie connections, she worked on the Howard Hughes film, *Hell's Angels*, flying her Travel Air to record the sound tracks for the aerial combat scenes. She organized the movie stunt pilots union and became the only female member.

Through it all, she became a rather notorious character, never exhibiting the manners, attire or morals expected of a young woman. But her drive and personality netted her a wide range of friends, particularly in the aviation and movie communities.

At an early age, she inherited her mother's estate which included two luxurious houses. One large house included a swimming pool, stables and a horse track. The other house was a 23-room mansion. Both featured an extensive domestic staff.

Pancho's houses became the hang outs for her extensive crowd of friends. An out of work pilot or an actor between jobs could stay for days or weeks, eating her food and drinking her liquor. Ruckus parties went on at all hours, sometimes ending with guests swimming nude in the pool. The neighbors often filed complaints.

A second, even larger, fortune came her way, this time inherited from her grandmother. A seemingly inexhaustible wealth is not inexhaustible when one has Pancho's talent to squander it. As the money started running out, she lost the houses, several cars, her horses and even her beloved Travel Air.

Salvaging what funds she could, she went into the California Desert and bought a small alfalfa farm.

Priding herself on her strength and not afraid of hard physical work, she threw herself into farming. Even running a hay bailer by herself that normally took two men to operate.

When the oncoming depression lowered the price of hay to unprofitable levels, she expanded her operations to include a dairy and then a sizeable hog feeding business. Always one to do things up in a big way, she soon had herds of quality Holstein and Guernsey dairy cattle and she scoured State Fairs to find top line Hampshire hogs. Numerous other ventures were tried, including horse and dog breeding activities. Some were successful, most were not.

Her farming operation was next door to an Army Air Corps bomb range known as Muroc. The post consisted of a couple dozen tents and was probably the worst duty station in the entire U.S. Army. The soldiers were always welcome at Pancho's house, often spending their off-duty hours eating in the big dining room where she fed the ranch hands.

Then World War II came along. The farming operation prospered, and the Army base expanded into a major training facility with several squadrons of aircraft and a couple thousand troops. Pancho met the demand with a bar and restaurant.

By time the war was over, the complex had expanded into a sizeable business. It would grow to include two bars, a restaurant, a barracks for the female help, horses, stables, a swimming pool, a motel, a dance hall, a rodeo arena and a private airport. In addition, there were larger barns for the ongoing dairy and livestock operations.

A guest, returning from a trail ride, complained that his bottom was not happy. Pancho jumped on the idea and named her business The Happy Bottom Riding Club.

After the war, the base at Muroc – eventually to be named Edwards Air Force Base – became the test and development location for the new generation of jet airplanes. The test pilots, like Chuck Yeager and Bob Hoover, would become legends in the aviation world.

Testing the airplanes was an exacting and dangerous business. The pilots, engineers, and technicians relaxed and let off steam at Pancho's. Pancho reveled in this new group of friends and expanded her contacts.

The Happy Bottom Riding Club became one of California's premier watering holes with guests flying into the airstrip and making the short drive from Los Angeles. There were dances a couple times a week and an annual rodeo.

Pancho employed a bevy of stunningly attractive young women to serve as bartenders and waitresses which added to the atmosphere. With all the features of the business, still the greatest attraction was the personality of Pancho herself.

It was always party time at Pancho's where the good times flowed as fast as the cheap booze (smuggled in from Mexico without paying taxes.) The business would surely have been closed by the authorities had it been in a metropolitan area. Pancho was not above doing totally outrageous publicity stunts like the fully nude "Lady Godiva" that rode through the arena to close the rodeo.

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Things went along well for a few years until a new commanding general came to the base. The general did not like his personnel hanging out in such a notorious place and he and Pancho got into a few fights. Things escalated into court battles. Then the Air Force decided they wanted to extend their runways across Pancho's property. Pancho refused to sell and the government responded with an eminent domain action. Things got hot in the courts for a few years as Pancho fought, serving as her own attorney.

The judge finally ruled in favor of the Air Force. The legal wrangling had tied up the courts for months and cost Pancho and the government great sums of money.

Then tragedy struck. A fire started in one of the buildings and quickly spread to the other structures. Everything was lost, Pancho's house, buildings, furnishings, equipment, and a lot of expensive saddles and tack. The dogs were rescued, but several valuable thoroughbred horses died in their stalls.

With the payment from the government and the insurance pay off, Pancho had another fortune to squander or to finance starting over. She tried to do both.

Pancho went another twenty miles out into the desert and went on a purchasing spree, buying up great amounts of near useless land. Her purchases included a store, gas station and café in a nearby small town.

She moved her livestock and farm equipment to the new ranch, but the soil was so poor that she could not

grow feed crops and had to buy grain and hay for her stock.

Pancho moved into a small, rundown house. In the front yard she parked a new airplane and a big, awfully expensive boat. Both quickly deteriorated into uselessness in the desert climate.

It was the plan to recreate the Happy Bottom Riding Club, but the properties were too remote and no one else was interested. Several other business ventures never got beyond the dream stage.

Life started going downhill rapidly. Several medical issues ended with a double mastectomy.

Three marriages had quickly failed, and she had indulged in dozens of affairs, both short term and long term. Her fourth marriage finally offered stability and something akin to love. But after the loss of the club and the move to the desert, that union ended in a nasty divorce action. Battling California's community property law in court, Pancho got the real estate while her husband got a wrecked Cessna airplane.

Pancho was able to sell the mineral rights to her properties which afforded her a small monthly income.

Suddenly Pancho was the target of dozens of lawsuits seeking payment for years of unpaid bills. There were actions for taxes that went back for decades. She tried to fight them in the courts, but almost always lost.

With judgements against her she began selling off such properties as she could. She moved into a desert shack which featured a dirt floor and no utilities.

Unable to hire ranch help, she found that caring for her remaining

stock was more than one woman could handle. She was served a summons for animal cruelty for not keeping some horses properly fed.

Pancho had the ability to run successful business as evidenced by the dairy and livestock ventures. The Club must have been somewhat financially sound, or she would not have been able to continue the constant expansion. But she had absolutely no knowledge of financial management. She ran her businesses on a cash basis, paying the bills out of a pocket full of money and keeping no effective records. She simply spent until the pocket went empty then took out loans and mortgages without any plan for repayment. Once, in court, she was asked about the financial status of one of the businesses. She testified that she had no idea if it was profitable or not, but that she had great fun running it.

Some of Pancho's old circle of friends rallied around her, often dropping by to help with ranch chores or taking her out for a decent meal.

Eventually she lost almost everything. Now in her 70s, she moved from the shack into another old decrepit house. At least this one had lights, heat and running water. There she lived in total squalor, neglecting such basics as personal hygiene and proper nutrition.

Then the world rediscovered Pancho Barnes. She started receiving invitations to speak before aviation and historic groups. She would clean herself up, have her favorite wig styled and even dress appropriately for the occasion. At the events, the guests found her to

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still be the Pancho that they had known and loved. She was still a great storyteller with a quick wit and a sharp memory of the people and events of the golden age of aviation. Her presentations were filled with the salty language that she was famous for.

One day she failed to show up for a speaking engagement. The sheriff sent a deputy to check on her. He found the house littered from wall to wall with trash and garbage and a dozen dogs running about. Pancho was on the bed. The coroner would say that she had been dead for at least a week. The hungry dogs had started to eat her body.

There is now a room at Edwards Air Force Base designated as the Pancho Barnes Room. Each year, for many years, her old friends held a party in her memory on the ruins of the Happy Bottom Riding Club.

The book's three hundred pages are beautifully written and an easy read. There is extensive documentation on the sources of material. Included is an insert of historic photos. If you have an interest in early aviation, a quest for 20th century history or simply want to read about a unique, utterly fascinating personality, then this book is well worth your time.



A BIG thank you to Dean Hoy for donating his Bendix King Handheld Transceiver to the Chapter. This will come in handy for Young Eagle rallies.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Jim Fix family. Jim was a long time member of Chapter 569. He passed away on January 30th. Jim was known nationally for his propeller work out of his Lincoln based shop, Fix Prop Shop. He gave an interesting presentation on propeller safety and maintenance at a Chapter meeting a few years back. He commented then that when a prop arrived in his shop, he could guess what type of plane it came off of.



Jim and his wife Janice regularly attended Oshkosh promoting their Hi-Tech Seat Foam.

Chapter 569 would like to add Jim's name to the EAA Memorial Wall at Oshkosh. A donation of \$500 will secure a name and inscription on the wall. If you would like to donate to help make this happen, contact our Treasurer Cristi Higgins. Her contact information is on page 1.

The Builders Report page is up and running on the Chapter 569 website. You can get to it by selecting Builders Report from the top of the home page. Thanks to the builders who have submitted reports (and those that said they will). We'll keep this updated as reports come in.

Didn't get a 2021 EAA calendar? Tom Henry has an extra one. He also has a share in an [RV-9A](#) for sale. His contact information is on page 1 if you're interested in any of these.

Did you see the Mars Rover descent and landing? How cool was that! If you didn't see it, [click here](#).

Events

Mar-Apr, EAA Webinars. [Click here for more information.](#)

Apr 13-18, Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL; <http://www.sun-n-fun.org/>

Jun 20, Nebraska State Fly-in, Hastings, NE (KHSI)

Jun 24-27, Midwest Aerobatic Championship, Seward, NE (KSWT). If you would like to volunteer, contact Harold Bickford @ 402-274-7530.

Jul 26 – Aug 1, AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI <http://www.airventure.org/>

And finally ...

Oshkosh Seaplane Base



Perhaps this 1949 Cessna 195B will be returning to Oshkosh in 2021. Right now, Oshkosh as well as Sun 'n Fun are on schedule. Click picture to enlarge. *(Photo contributed by Dennis Crispin)*

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