

EAA691

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ISSUE 2607

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Tent Rocks

Jemez Springs, New Mexico

photo credit: Andrew DeVecchio

www.eaachapter691.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

pg

3	Letter from the Editor
4	Upcoming Events
7	President's Report
9	Flyers Almanac
11	Tech Corner
15	Dragonfly Project Update
16	Catching Up
17	Chapter Donation/ Member Renewal



WHO WE ARE

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Letter from the Editor

by Andrew DeVecchio

I had a friend from New York City visit just a couple of weeks ago. He was asking me to take him up for a flight but my plane is still down for now so I reached out to my hangar neighbor Bruce Adams who runs Southwest Safaris. He's been running his flightseeing tours for decades now and does this through NM, AZ, UT, and CO. What I found so remarkable is his vast knowledge of the geology and history of the area. At minimum, it's worth it to strike up a conversation with him and he may point you into some interesting directions

or better yet take a flight with him. He'll be sure to give you some fodder for the next flight you need to impress someone you're flying around. The photo on the cover and this page is from our flight over Tent Rocks and through the canyons surrounding the Valles Caldera.

Be sure to read Will Fox's article on "Tinkerer, Builder, Experimenter, Pilot" in this issue. Some of you may remember it as it is a reprint but if you're like me, maybe you missed it. Heck, I think Will could publish a book with all these articles he's written over the years.

I hope to see many of you out at the Member Fly Day this weekend in Los Alamos. It's always fun to get up in other members' airplanes and experience the different ways we all enjoy flying. Trust me, I could make a living out of bumming flights from you all. It's a great reminder of what makes this Chapter special.

Got something to share with the chapter? Send it to: helloeditor691@gmail.com

– Andrew

Upcoming Events

Saturday July 18th

Member Fly Day

Time: 8AM - 11AM

Place: Terminal Building, Los Alamos Airport
1040 Airport Rd, Los Alamos, NM 87544

Questions / RSVP:

Will Fox @ tailspinfox@gmail.com

This month's EAA Chapter 691 meeting will be devoted to giving fellow Chapter members a free flight. This annual event is a way to get our members who don't get a chance to go flying often an opportunity to get in the air. The flying will start at 8:00 AM (we will have coffee and pastries) and finish at 11:00 AM. Shortly afterward, we will host a cookout with burgers and brats in Roger Smith's hangar on the west end of the airport. All Chapter members and their families are invited. I've attached a map showing where Roger's hangar and the cookout will be located for anyone unfamiliar with the airport.



Upcoming Events

(cont'd)

Several of our Chapter pilots have signed up to give rides including Brian O'Neil in his Kitfox, Pierre Levy in his Mooney, Gary Goddard in his TriPacer, Paul Lisowski in his Mooney, Roger Smith in his Lightning, and yours truly in my Bonanza. We will have plenty of planes and experienced pilots available to give everybody a ride. The weather looks great for Saturday morning with calm winds and clear skies, so don't miss this great opportunity to get a free ride. Rides will be given on a first come, first served basis.

It would help to know who plans to attend so we can get an idea of how many people will be flying and how much food to buy. Please let me know if you plan to attend.

I look forward to seeing you all there.

Will

Upcoming Events

Saturday August 15th

Los Alamos Young Eagles Rally

Time: TBA
Place: Terminal Building, Los Alamos Airport
1040 Airport Rd, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Questions: helloeditor691@gmail.com

Saturday August 22nd

Mystic Bluffs Fly In (NM56)

Time: 7AM - noon, optional camping all weekend
Place: Mystic Bluffs Airstrip (NM56)
Questions: https://www.nmpilots.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=264824&item_id=2889091
Notes: RSVP requested, please see NMPA website for more info

Saturday September 12th

KLAM Airport Open House

Time: TBA
Place: Terminal Building, Los Alamos Airport
1040 Airport Rd, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Questions: gary.goddard@losalamosnm.gov

President's



Report

by Will Fox

Share the Gift of Flying

This month's EAA Chapter 691 meeting on Saturday, July 18th, 2026, will be devoted to giving fellow Chapter members a free flight. This annual event is a way to give members who don't get a chance to go flying often an opportunity to get in the air. The flying will start at 8:00 AM (we will have coffee and pastries) and finish at 11:00 AM. Shortly afterward, we will host a cookout with burgers and brats in Roger Smith's hangar on the west end of the airport. All Chapter members and their families are invited.

Last month we had a very interesting and educational presentation by Omar Wooten about his loss of control accident while landing in a strong, gusty crosswind at Los Alamos Airport. Fortunately, Omar was not injured, but the Cessna 182 he was flying was totaled. Omar explained that while he

had done a number of successful landings and takeoffs in Taos just prior to landing in Los Alamos, he just didn't feel he was quite on top of his game. Then, while on final at Los Alamos, he experienced a strong wind shear that caused the stall warning horn to activate temporarily, even though his approach speed was slightly higher than normal and the aircraft nose was pointed down. In hindsight, he said he should have gone around at that point. The lessons learned were to pay attention to the clues that indicate that not everything is working in your favor, adjust your plan accordingly, and make sure you are not only current but also proficient in your flying skills.

Gary Goddard and I did two half-day STEM programs in June and July with the YMCA kids. We had 8 kids and two counselors in the first group and 9 kids and two counselors in the second group. We covered aerodynamics and how airplanes fly, did paper airplanes, simulators, floating balls, and drone flying. We also visited the EAA hangar and let the kids sit in Gary's and my airplanes. The kids in the second group also got to visit the Skycrane and crew that were on fire standby on the hot pad. We all had fun and maybe even learned a thing or two. 😊



Check out our Chapter YouTube channel for the latest videos at
<https://www.youtube.com/@eaachapter691>

For a schedule of upcoming events, go to the Chapter website at
<https://www.eaachapter691.org/upcoming-events/>



Report President's

Flyers Almanac

July into August: Monsoons

by ChatGPT / Andrew DeVecchio

By late July, the summer monsoon has become the defining weather pattern across northern New Mexico.

Afternoon thunderstorms are now a regular part of the landscape, bringing much-needed moisture along with rapidly changing flying conditions. While mornings often remain calm and clear, the atmosphere grows increasingly active as the day progresses.

Monsoon in Full Swing

Moisture is now well established, fueling daily convective activity over the mountains before storms spread into the valleys. Not every storm produces heavy rain, but nearly all can generate gusty outflow winds, turbulence, and rapidly changing visibility.

Expect:

- Regular afternoon and evening thunderstorms
- Strong outflow winds well ahead of precipitation
- Localized heavy rain and reduced visibility
- Lightning becoming a frequent hazard

The first sign of a storm is often the wind—not the rain.

Heat and Performance

Despite increasing humidity, high density altitude remains one of the biggest operational challenges. Warm temperatures and high-elevation airports continue to reduce aircraft performance, particularly during afternoon departures.

Expect:

- High density altitude nearly every afternoon
- Longer takeoff rolls and reduced climb performance
- Best aircraft performance during the morning hours

Early departures continue to offer the greatest performance margins.

Timing the Day

The contrast between morning and afternoon flying is at its greatest this time of year. Smooth conditions after sunrise often give way to thermals, towering cumulus, and scattered thunderstorms by early afternoon. Even storms many miles away can produce sudden wind shifts across an airport.

A routine flight can quickly require a change of plans.

Pilot Takeaway

July into August is the heart of the New Mexico monsoon. Good flying weather is still common, but it rewards pilots who plan around the daily cycle of heating and convection. Checking radar, watching buildups, and remaining flexible with departure times become part of every successful summer flight.

Expect:

- **Temp:** 84–89°F / 54–59°F
- **Wind:** Light mornings; variable afternoons with gusty thunderstorm outflows
- **Sunshine:** 8–10 hrs/day
- **Precipitation:** Frequent afternoon showers and thunderstorms
- **Key Factor:** Monsoon thunderstorms, outflow winds, lightning, and persistent density altitude



Tech Corner : Tinkerer, Builder, Experimenter, Pilot

by Will Fox

Editor's Note: The following article was originally published in the EAA Chapter 691 newsletter in March 2015. It is reprinted here for the benefit of newer members and because its message remains just as relevant today.

What are you, a Tinkerer, Builder, Experimenter, or Pilot? This is an important question to answer. Right up there with eggs, scrambled or over easy, and burger, with or without cheese. Folks build airplanes for different reasons. A lot of it has to do with the type of personality they have. Some people are **Tinkerers** who love to build and fly aircraft that they can customize and improve to their heart's content. Others are **Builders** who enjoy the challenge of building an aircraft more than anything else, even flying. **Experimenters** are the types of folks that want to create a new and different type of aircraft, an aircraft that is unique. **Pilots** are the types that build an aircraft because it is the only way that they can get the kind of performance or utility that they desire at a cost they can afford. Most homebuilders have a combination of these personalities, but one is usually dominant. It's fun to think about your

airplane buddies and try to figure out what type they are. I'll try to describe these personalities in a little more detail to help you figure out who is who.

A **Tinkerer** is someone who likes flying airplanes, but also enjoys building and working on them. Tinkerers spend just about as much time working on their aircraft after it is completed as they do flying it. They are always coming up with cool little improvements and trying them out on their planes. When you talk to Tinkerers, they like to tell you about their latest improvement and how it worked on the last flight. Tinkerers make many small modifications to their aircraft to customize and perfect it. This can be a lifelong process for a Tinkerer. They typically don't make large modifications to their aircraft. They just don't like the down time from flying. They also like the satisfaction that comes from small improvements that don't take too long to build and test that

they can share with their friends. For example, a Tinkerer is not likely to install a new experimental engine on their aircraft, because it would be too complex, take too much time, and the airplane would be down too long. Instead, they would rather try putting a different ignition system on their current engine, or add a tuned exhaust system to improve its performance. Tinkerers usually don't have a lot of money to spend on their aircraft, so if they can figure out an inexpensive, common sense approach to a modification they will. An example might be using a nitrogen lift strut off their car to hold the door open on their aircraft.

A **Builder** is easy to identify. They just love building stuff. Their workshop or hangar may have one or more airplanes under construction at any given time. You might also find other projects under construction in there as well, like a boat, or a car that they are rebuilding. Builders don't do much flying; they are far too busy building. They may build several of the same type aircraft, each time getting closer to the perfection they seek. These are the folks that win Grand Champion prizes at Oshkosh. When you talk to a Builder about their project, they love to tell you about the latest piece of tooling or a fixture that they have made to allow them to build a better airplane. They are experts in various types of construction techniques and have all the specialized tooling needed for them. They often

build aircraft to the plans, but with much greater accuracy and precision than required. Some Builders will scratch build their aircraft even though an excellent kit is offered, because it is more challenging, and they have the opportunity to do it better than the "factory". Builders get cranky when they are between projects, so they won't be there for long. Their flying skills often atrophy, because they don't fly very much, and they rarely do much flying outside of the pattern or local area. If you ask a builder what time it is, he will tell you how to build a watch.

Experimenters want to build something new and different. They are never satisfied with the status quo. They are much more interested in designing a new and unique aircraft or modifying an existing design to improve its performance than building a kit that is mass produced. They like to sketch aircraft designs on napkins and talk about what materials and construction techniques are best suited to building a particular type of aircraft. They will gladly explain to you how to properly flight-test an aircraft, but flying the aircraft is not all that interesting to them. The aircraft they design and build usually have specific performance goals like maximum speed, climb rate, or efficiency, and often suffer in other areas like aesthetics, creature comforts, and crash protection. Aircraft weight control is a religious experience for these folks, and if something isn't required to meet the performance requirements, it doesn't go in the aircraft. When you talk to an Experimenter about

their latest project, the conversation usually centers on the innovative elements of their design and how they solved various challenges that arose as a result. Any conversations not related to the project are often short, because Experimenters tend to be very focused individuals with little interest outside of the current project at hand. Experimenters usually adhere to the

goals. **Pilots** are often attracted to the aircraft that Experimenters produce because of one or another of the remarkable performance characteristics the aircraft exhibits. Experimenters like to fly, but they would much rather spend their time working on the next innovative aircraft that they have in mind. As a result, they are usually not exceptionally proficient flyers. They often use **Pilots** to



Pascal Critien, an Experimenter, built the first electric helicopter

KISS principle and the building is fast and furious. Some of the stuff on their aircraft can be pretty crude. The aircraft that Experimenters build can often be difficult or challenging to fly because of oddball handling characteristics and other performance deficits that weren't part of the mission

test their aircraft. It is a symbiotic relationship.

A **Pilot** is someone who really enjoys the challenge of flying. Pilots like an aircraft with performance and utility that is fun to fly. Building an aircraft is usually a means to an end for them. It is a way for them to

get an aircraft with the performance they desire at a price they can afford. Often times they would prefer to buy an aircraft rather than build one, but if they can't buy what they want, then building becomes the next option. Usually they will purchase a fast build kit to accelerate the building process. They tend to hire folks to help them with the building tasks or find partners or associates with building experience to work with them. If you ask a Pilot how the building is going you usually get a litany of reasons why it isn't complete yet, and then hear about how great it is going to be when it finally gets flying. Pilots typically have another aircraft to fly while they are constructing their homebuilt. Once their homebuilt is flying, they usually fly often and with a purpose. Pilots are often found around Experimenters and Builders because the former create unique and performance oriented aircraft, and the latter are good at building the kind of aircraft Pilots want. When Pilots aren't flying they are usually talking about it, and when they are flying they are pretty dang good at it.

So, stop reading for a bit and think about your buddies and who fits what description.

Do their projects match their personalities? Most folks gyrate towards a project that matches their personality, but not always. With that in mind, let's talk about what happens when someone with a particular personality trait hooks up with the

wrong project. Let me give you a few examples. Suppose a Pilot falls in love with a sleek high performance homebuilt aircraft kit that uses an automotive conversion engine with lots of horsepower but not much reliability. He will get pretty unhappy as he find himself trying to solve engine problems instead of flying from point A to point B like a bat out of hell. Similarly, an Experimenter will likely never find happiness combing through another designer's drawings and tearing the plastic off prepackaged parts to assemble an aircraft that doesn't fly any better or differently than a thousand others like it. A Tinkerer who undertakes a very complicated aircraft to build and maintain won't be a happy camper when she finds herself spending a lot more time working on the aircraft than flying it. And how about the Builder that takes on a partially constructed kit and finds that most of it isn't up to his standards. He will probably end up rebuilding the whole thing, all the while complaining about how much it is costing him.

It is not uncommon to find homebuilders in a situation like this. They just picked the wrong project for their personality. I'm guessing that this is one of the reasons that a lot of homebuilts don't ever get finished. They just didn't get matched up with the right owner. Now you know why it's important to know the answer to scrambled or over-easy, or with or without cheese. If you don't know what you want, then you probably won't be happy with what you get.

Dragonfly Project Update

Stay tuned here. I'll have some updates on the brakes, wheels, fairings, new firewall forward, and new panel and instruments in the following months.



Catching Up

by ChatGPT / Andrew DeVecchio

Is ATOMATOFLAMES Required in an Experimental?

Most pilots remember the "ATOMATOFLAMES" acronym from primary training. It is the familiar memory aid for the Day VFR equipment required by **14 CFR 91.205(b)**. Airspeed indicator, tachometer, oil pressure gauge...you probably had it memorized once.

But here's a question many pilots never revisit:

Does 91.205 actually apply to your Experimental aircraft?

The answer is...not exactly.

Section 91.205 specifically applies to powered civil aircraft with a **standard U.S. airworthiness certificate**. That includes most certified Cessnas, Pipers, Beechcraft, and similar aircraft.

Experimental Amateur-Built aircraft, however, operate under a **Special Airworthiness Certificate** along with FAA-issued **Operating Limitations**. Those operating limitations establish what equipment is required for the kinds of operations your aircraft is approved to conduct. Depending on when your operating limitations were issued, they may reference the equipment in 91.205, or they may contain different language that accomplishes the same purpose.

The practical takeaway?

Don't assume the requirements for your airplane are identical to someone else's.

For certified aircraft, 91.205 is the place to start. For Experimental aircraft, your Operating Limitations are just as important and should be reviewed periodically—especially if you purchased the airplane from another owner years ago.

It's a good reminder that every pilot should occasionally pull out both the regulations and the documents that make **their** airplane legal to fly.

EAA Chapter 691

Membership Application/ Renewal Form

Please consider making a donation to our 501c(3) non-profit by mailing this form along with \$35 to our Chapter Treasurer, Checks can be made out to EAA Chapter 691:

David Young
819 Gonzales Rd
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Name: _____
Spouse/partner's Name: _____
EAA #: _____ Expiration Date (MM/YY) ____ / ____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: ____ ZIP: _____
E-mail: _____
Home phone: _____
Work phone: _____
Cell phone: _____
Please list your currently flying A/C and any finished or in-progress projects:



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