



EAA 172
O.B. Brown Memorial Fly-in
 May 16, 2015
 BBQ meal Noon – 1:00 pm
 Wrens Memorial Airport (65J), Wrens, Georgia

EAA 172 Meeting
 Meal at 12:30 PM
 June 13, 2015
 Pea Patch Aerodrome (61GA), Blythe, Georgia

Birthdays

| | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Greg CONNELL | 05-01 | | |
| Richard ZGOL | 05-10 | | |
| Allen NODORFT | 05-13 | Ronna Hiltz | 05-01 |
| Charles LEWIS | 05-15 | | |
| Ronald HALEY | 05-19 | | |
| Joel BIRNEY | 05-21 | | |
| Bruce HITT | 05-31 | | |

Anniversaries

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|-------|--|
| Billy & Marlyn | COUCH | 05-03 | |
| George & Frances | WEISS | 05-04 | |
| James & Karen | REEVES | 05-17 | |

EAA 172 Night Out

Thursday, May 28: EAA 172 monthly "get-together" -- Social Meeting 6:30 PM -- This is a monthly non-business social gathering held on the fourth Thursday. This month's location is the **Village Deli, 2803 Wrightsboro Rd., #28, Augusta, Georgia 30909 (near the corner of Highland Ave. and Wrightsboro Rd., across from Daniel Field.) Phone number: 706-736-3691. Map and directions: [Village Deli](#). For questions contact Shirley Harden 706-855-1553 e-mail: ghardensr@comcast.net.**

AVIATION QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Answer to last month's question: *When reading TAFs (Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts / Terminal Area Forecasts) in the summer months you know you'll see the term "VCTS" more than you'd like. That means thunderstorms in the vicinity. How is "vicinity" defined by the FAA?*

According to AOPA and the FAA: The U.S. uses the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) world standard for aviation weather reporting and forecasting. For them, "[vicinity](#)" in the US METAR (Aviation Routine Weather Report), means 5 to 10 SM from the point of observation. In the US TAF (Aerodrome Forecast), 5 to 10 SM from the center of the runway complex. However, when discussing something in the "vicinity" not pertaining to weather, the FAA has [written](#) "For a flight under IFR or a flight not in the vicinity of an airport, weather reports and forecasts, fuel requirements, alternatives available if the planned flight cannot be completed, and any known traffic delays of which the pilot in command has been advised by ATC; **We have no specific, fixed definition of 'vicinity', but instead, interpret its meaning on a case-by-case basis.**"

This Month's Question: While walking the ramp one day you were amazed by the beauty of one airplane's polished propeller blades. Is polishing an option for the propeller on your airplane – should you polish your prop?

“OLD TIMEY” AUTOGYROS MAY FLY AGAIN

Most readers viewed the flight of the [“gyrocopter” that landed on the Capitol lawn](#). After postal worker Doug Hughes flew his aircraft into the Washington, D.C., Flight Restricted Zone and landed on the Capitol lawn April 15, AOPA quickly stated that the man's actions were "unacceptable" and that they "should in no way be associated with the law-abiding professional and recreational pilots who every day follow the rules and regulations of the National Airspace System." Both AOPA and the media called Hughes' flying vehicle a “gyrocopter” since it seems that is the term he used for it. The FAA avoids the word in its regulations. They use the word "gyroplane" to identify a rotorcraft with normally-autorotating rotors. The word “gyrocopter” was originally [trademarked](#) by Igor Bensen in June, 1956 when he produced and sold his gyrocopter plans and kits for a simple gyroplane from his [Bensen Aircraft Corporation](#) at the Raleigh-Durham airport in North Carolina. He did not renew the trademark when he closed his business in 1987. Even though the FAA calls it a gyroplane, internationally that type of rotorcraft is known as a gyrocopter. The gyrocopter Hughes landed on the Capitol lawn was not actually an [aircraft](#) but an [ultralight vehicle](#) since it weighed less than 254 pounds and was cruising at 45 mph with a gallon and a half of reserve left on board. Many of our members have been at EAA 172's Wrens Fall Fly-in and have seen gyroplanes that were the same size as the one Hughes flew. Some of you even flew in a larger version of that small “gyrocopter.” In fact, one of those gyroplane builder/pilots who has been to our fly-in actually built that gyroplane seen in the news. It was sold two or three times before coming into the possession of the postal worker. It is not known if any gyrocopters will be at the O.B. Brown fly-in on May 16th but it is possible.



And this brings us to the earlier gyroplanes before World War II. At that time they were called autogyros or autogyros depending on your nationality. Bruce Charnov of Hofstra University is perhaps the world expert of the history of the gyroplane/gyrocopter/autogyro and has written a book and [many articles](#) about the gyroplane. Before 1941 autogyros were very common in Washington, D.C. [Amelia Earhart](#) flew them often. They were used to deliver mail (just as Doug Hughes was doing, but without authorization). At the invitation of President Hoover an autogyro even [landed on the White House lawn](#) in 1931.



The autogyro was originally invented and patented by Spain's Juan de la Cierva in 1923. He licensed it to Harold F. Pitcairn in the United States who built most of those flown in the U.S. by Earhart and the USPS. Unfortunately Pitcairn [licensed](#) the multiple inventions [for free](#) to the U.S. government during World War II. The rotor inventions were used during the War to develop helicopters. Pitcairn successfully sued the United States government to enforce his personal company and Cierva-licensed rotary-wing patents in 1951 as every helicopter which the military purchased was based on Autogyro control technology. Damages in the amount of \$31.4 million dollars were awarded on July 12, 1977, affirmed by the Supreme Court on July 23, 1977 with an additional award of \$600,000 for delay – a total of \$32,048,738, but it came too late for Harold Pitcairn. He became despondent about the delay and the fact that he was not given the credit due him. A number of years ago your newsletter editor talked several times with Pitcairn's son who did say it was a suicide.

Now a company is starting to build or re-build the old-time autogyro. Barry Jones of Derby, England, calls his autogyro “Bulldog Autogyro” and told Dan Johnson of [bydanjohnson.com](#) that his Bulldog Autogyro prototype will fly by July 2015. The original Pitcairn-Cierva autogyro had the rotor mounted on a framework above the cabin, but this one mounts the rotor on a scorpion-like extension emerging above the aircraft starting from the tail. The builder sees the lack of a tail rotor as an advantage over present-day helicopters, although its limitation to two passengers throws the advantage back to the helicopter. Like the early Pitcairn model, the Bulldog has a rotary engine, but this nine-cylinder engine has 150 horsepower and is built by Rotec instead of Wright or Pratt & Whitney. It runs on 100LL or high-octane mogas and burns seven gallons an hour. There's no prediction of a cruise speed on the Bulldog website, but a look at history indicates the Pitcairn autogyro cruised at 120 mph and was capable of reaching the mid-130 mph.



Bulldog Autogyro prototype.

(Information compiled from Prof. Bruce Charnov, Hofstra University → [Rediscovering the Autogyro . . . 2002](#) , [United States Patent and Trademark office](#), CNN 4/15/15 → [Aircraft Lands on Capitol Grounds](#), AOPA onLine 04/16/15 → [violation of DC airspace 'unacceptable'](#), Rotary Forum → [Gyroplane Lands on Capital Hill Lawn](#) , Wink News → [Gyrocopters in the Spotlight](#), USA Today 04/16/15 → [Pilot Arrested . . .](#) , AOPA ePilot 04/24/2015 → [Autogyro gets a second chance](#), [Bulldog Autogyro](#), [ByDanJohnson.com](#))

