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San Jose, CA

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## July Fly-Out Info

Chapter Poker Run  
CHAPTER PICNIC/POKER  
RUN Join us in our  
Second Annual Poker  
Run and Chapter Picnic  
at the Wings of History  
Club House at South  
County Airport. We will  
have the potluck at 1 PM.  
Questions: Contact Brian  
Dal Porto at 408-802-  
7040

## Flying Gourmets

July 12th  
LODI Airport, Cash Only,  
no checks and/or credit  
cards. Meet inside the  
Lodi Airport Cafe which is  
on the field at Noon.  
Share a flight or need a  
flight, contact Terri at  
408-828-6707(C) or  
408-356-7443(H).

Flight Leader: Terri  
Gorman  
(408) 828-6707

## President's Corner - *Terri Gorman*



Within a few moments, we all lost a very good friend and a long time EAA Chapter 62 member. Vern Miller and his wife, Beth, lost their lives in the crash of their plane in a remote mountainous area of the Rogue River in Oregon. Vern, like the late Amelia Reid and John Godwin, was a relic at Reid Hillview Airport. Like Amelia, he had his 'private parking area' for his little yellow car. He was always smiling. Beth would bring him home made soup and sandwiches made with her own homemade bread. Beth was, also, a current pilot and a member of the Santa Clara Valley 99's. A portion of Jamie Miller's story on 'Taking Control' appeared in the June issue of the Intrepid Airmen. The rest of her story will be in this issue. Like her Dad and step-Mom, Beth, Jamie inherited a love for flying.

Vern took Marcie Timmons, a newly graduated Aircraft Mechanic, and taught her everything he knew about airplanes. Marcie has been with Vern for over five years. Like Vern, she's a very dedicated and meticulous mechanic and a very nice person.

Before and after becoming president of our chapter, I spent time talking to Vern about the chapter and sharing my ideas with him and listening to his many suggestions. Vern always would take the time to help anyone.

Since this tragic accident, I have met many people who knew Vern. One of them is Jim Meide in RHV Operations. Jim has known Vern since they were in the 11th grade at Cupertino High School. They were best friends. They remained good friends and Jim and Vern were both active back in the 70's in Chapter 62.

Vern's hangar was always overflowing with planes needing Annuals and/or other repairs, but he always took the time to talk or help someone who needed help. Pilots came from as far away as Redding to have Vern work on their planes. At Golden West Fly In, I camped next to a pilot in a Cessna 185, similar in color to Vern's. We struck up a conversation and he told me that Vern had taken care of his plane for over 25 years and Vern was the expert when it came to Cessna 180 series. This pilot's home base is Tracy.

Vern will be deeply missed by all of us. We received a note from his daughter, Jennifer, who lives in Salem. "It's hard to believe they are gone."

Newsletter Info  
Newsletter contributions are welcome, so send your news items, cartoons, photos and articles to the Editor, Paulette Dal Porto at [pdalporto@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pdalporto@sbcglobal.net)  
Newsletter Deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

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## President's Corner (*continued*)

They were taken too soon, but it was swift. The fact that they were doing what they loved most, in a place they loved to be in, was a big blessing. They are together now in heaven and are looking down at everyone with smiles on their faces."

Phoebe, owner of the Airport Shoppe, and Marici Reid established a Flower Memorial for Vern and Beth, along with chalk to write a note on the pavement on the side of Vern's hangar.

A Memorial for Vern and Beth will be held in the Amelia Reid Hangar on Sunday, June 25th at 1 PM with a Missing Man Formation Flight using all Cessna 180's. Marici Reid is organizing the Memorial along with the help from the Santa Clara Valley 99's.

Let's keep Vern and Beth always in our hearts. We were all very honored to know such wonderful people. They will never be forgotten.

#### GENERAL MEETINGS

Our General Meetings will 'temporarily' be held in the Terminal Building at Reid Hillview Airport in the front room facing the runways. Hot Dog/Social time will be from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM. The meeting will begin at 7 PM, with the Business Portion and Break at 7:30 PM; Guest speakers can begin around 7:40 PM. We need to keep the times tight because the 'clean-up crew' for the building show up at 9 PM. We must vacate the room at 9 PM. Please try and be on time. I know this may be a hardship for a few people, but this is the best we can do until we relocate another facility. I'll be in Arlington, WA attending the EAA Seminar and Air Show and one of our officers will take over the meeting.

The August meeting will be on August 10th which allows most members to return from Oshkosh.

Until further notice, the General Meetings will be held in the Terminal Building. If anyone has any suggestions for another venue, please call me or send me an email. Since, some of our speakers like to show off their planes, I'd prefer to keep the meeting at an airport.

## EAA CHAPTER 62 PICNIC AND POKER RUN

Saturday, July 15th, Potluck begins in or on the grounds of the Wings of History Club House at South County Airport at 1 PM. Schedule your fly-out time to the five airports early as it can be hot later in the day.

Boxes containing Poker Cards will be dropped off at the following airports: Livermore, Tracy, Gustine, Los Banos and Hollister. Pilots will take one card from each Box. Last year, I placed the boxes close to the fuel islands at the airports. At Gustine, we can put it in the enclosed area that houses the fuel. (Brian Dal Porto and I are going to flip a coin to see who gets to go into Gustine a.k.a. Bugsville!!!)

## Board of Directors

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Shop & Swap — OPEN

## Calendar of Events

### JULY

**07/05 -09 Arlington NW  
EAA Fly in  
Arlington Municipal (KAWO),  
detail at  
<http://www.nweaa.org>**

### 07/06 General Meeting

**7:30 pm**

**RHV Terminal Bldg.**

**Reid-Hillview Airport**

**Speaker: TBD**

**07/08 Santa Clara Model  
Airplane Event at Model  
Airplane Facility in Morgan  
Hill. Large scale models  
flying. Contact Allen Roark  
at (409) 926-1711**

### 07/13 Board Meeting

**7:30 pm**

**Reid-Hillview Airport**

**Terminal Building**

## EAA CHAPTER 62 PICNIC AND POKER RUN (continued)

After collecting all the cards, return to South County for the Potluck. There will be a prize for the best Poker Hand.

Remember, this is POTLUCK. Hamburgers and drinks will be provided by the chapter. Bring a dish to share, anything you like.

Other EAA Chapters are invited to this event.

If you would like to donate a prize, contact Brian.

Again, if you have a seat available and would like to share the flight, give me a call at 408-828-6707.

Further info, contact Brian Dal Porto at 408-802-7040.

## FLYING GOURMETS EAT AND SHOP IN SACRAMENTO

On June 14th, nine EAA Chapter 62 members gathered together and had a great lunch at the Aviators Restaurant located on the second level of the Terminal Building at Sacramento Executive Airport. After lunch, we all walked 3/4ths of a mile to Sky Ranch where members had a private tour of how hoses are custom made for aircraft engines. Don't miss the next fly out to Lodi on July 12th. We may see a few Jumpers while eating our lunch. The Flying Gourmet gathering is a great time for our chapter members to get to know each other; come and join us. Terri

## Meeting Minutes

Ron Carmichael

### GENERAL MEETING

Vern Miller Aviation, RVH airport, San Jose, CA President Terri Gorman started the meeting at 7:30 PM and guests were introduced. Information was shared among builders on their projects. Upcoming events were noted. These were posted on the Chapter Bulletin Board and were available for members to view during the coffee break. Members should check the website as well.



Larry Reed, the B-17 Coordinator, read a letter from EAA Headquarters describing the details of the revenue returned to our Chapter for the Moffet Field Event. The check's total was \$3015.08 Congratulations to Larry and his helpers, Jon Garliepp, Paulette Dal Porto and all the volunteers who made it happen!

**07/15 Chapter Poker Run**  
Tentatively the event will happen at the museum at South County. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for details.

**07/22 7:30 AM to 1 PM ..**  
For folks not attending Oshkosh, fly over to Colusa Airport, O08, for an Old Time Fly-In. Free breakfasts for all pilots and passengers, aircraft judging, prizes, raffles and a Barbeque of hamburgers, hot dogs and home made salads in the afternoon. The barbeque is not free. For more info, contact Harry Krug at 530-458-0580 or email [hak@colusenet.com](mailto:hak@colusenet.com). Need a flight or share the flight, call Terri the week before as I will be on my way to Oshkosh on the 22nd of July. 408-828-6707.

**07/24 30 AirVenture 2006 OSH**  
Mark your calendars

**AUGUST**  
**08/10 General Meeting**  
7:30 pm  
Vern Miller Aviation  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Speaker: TBD

**08/17 Board Meeting**  
7:30 pm  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Terminal Building

**08/18 – 20 NW Antique Airplane Club Fly-In and Show**

**08/19 – 20 Wings Over Wine Country**

**08/25, 26, 27 Santa Maria 16th Annual Thunder Over The Valley, Military Demo Teams, Warbirds on Display, make this a weekend and/or just a day. Options, a short flight from Santa Maria will land you in the Santa Ines Airport. Buses run up to the airport on Saturdays. Tour the town of Solvang, or call the Indian Casino, which abuts the airport, for a free pickup. We will set up camping at Oceano for those who like to camp. Buses stop by the airport for transportation to a motel. This is a Heads Up Notice for**

## Meeting Minutes (*continued*)

Terri proposed that we have Chapter 62 hats made up. Contact Terri if you are interested.

Terri reported on her visit to a local school for "Career Day". Terri spoke on various careers that spring from getting a pilot's license.

Paulette Dal Porto, Newsletter Editor, reported that articles are pouring in and she hopes to lengthen future editions from the current 8 pages.

Minutes from the June Newsletter were approved.

Treasurer, Randy Wilde, gave the financial report. The B-17 income has not yet been entered. Check the website for details. The report was approved as read.

Terri reported on the return of the raffle to our meetings. Bruce Frank is the Raffle Chairman and has run the raffle in the past.. Proceeds will go into a designated chapter fund. Tickets are a dollar each or 6 tickets for 5 dollars.

This evening's speaker was our own V.P., Jim Manley, who gave a very interesting talk on his new project the helicycle (one man helicopter) and small gas turbine engines. A "Q & A" session followed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

Officers and Board Members present were: Paulette and Brian Dal Porto, Jon Garliepp, Terri Gorman, Randy Wilde, Ron Carmichael, Ralph Reichold, Wolfgang Polak, Rusty Wells, Jim Manley, and Larry Reed

Minutes submitted by Ron Carmichael

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

President Gorman called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm. She reported on the EAA "Chapter President's Roundtable" held at this year's Golden West Event. Ideas from other Chapters were shared.

V.P., Jim Manley, reported that he is trying to line up a speaker for the July 6 General Meeting. Possible speakers were suggested for Jim to pursue.

Jon Garliepp, Membership Chairman, reported on receiving an email from a member who is moving out of the area. Also that he will be ordering more blank badges for prospective new members.

Randy Wilde, Treasurer, detailed the revenue/expense items for the B-17 Event. It was voted to put this revenue into the Nilmeyer Education Fund. A \$532 check was sent to EAA via certified mail last Monday along with Lawrence Lee's Air Academy application.

Allen Roark, Young Eagle Coordinator, reported that so far we have 3 pilots volunteered for the upcoming YE flights at RHV. Jon Garliepp will attend

*the Pilot/Renters. More details to follow in the August newsletter.  
Questions: Terri at 408-828-6707*

**SEPTEMBER**

**09/02 Young Eagles at Palo Alto Airport**

**09/07 General Meeting  
7:30 pm  
Vern Miller Aviation  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Speaker: TBD**

**09/13 – 17 Reno Air Races**

**09/14 Board Meeting  
7:30 pm  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Terminal Building**

**09/30 – 10/01 Salinas Air Show**

**OCTOBER**

**10/05 General Meeting  
7:30 pm  
Vern Miller Aviation  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Speaker: TBD**

**10/5 - 6 San Francisco Fleet Week**

**10/5 – 16 Albuquerque Balloon Festival**

**10/12 Board Meeting  
7:30pm  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Terminal Building**

**10/21 Young Eagles at South County Airport**

**10/26 – 29 Copperstate, Casa Grandem AZ**

**NOVEMBER**

**11/2 General Meeting  
7:30pm  
Vern Miller Aviation  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Speaker: TBD**

**11/9 Board Meeting  
7:30pm  
Reid-Hillview Airport  
Terminal Building**

**DECEMBER**

**12/7 General Meeting and Holiday Party  
Stay tuned for details.  
Suggestions for venue and**

## Meeting Minutes (*continued*)

and do wing ribs. Terri has an advertisement with 7 local newspapers for this event.

Homebuilder Coordinator, Rolland LaPelle, reported that he is working on articles for the Newsletter. Rolland urged that the Board work on promoting our mission statement and make up 5 year and 10 year plans. Discussion was held on this topic and was to be continued in future meetings

Terri reported that the purpose of the "Flying Gourmets" is not just to "have fun". Rather, it is for members to get to know each other better. Every month different people are going on these fly outs.

Paulette Dal Porto, Newsletter Editor, said that there are concerns about costs of printing and that she does not have the time to print out, fold and staple 40 copies each month. It was suggested that a surcharge be added to those members who require a printed version in lieu of the online version. Jon suggested that this be proposed at the next General Meeting.

The General Meeting Notes were given and approved with minor corrections. Meeting adjourned at 9:34pm

Officers and Board Members present were: Terri Gorman, Brian and Paulette Dal Porto, Rolland LaPelle, Ron Carmichael, Randy Wilde, Wolfgang Polak, Allen Roark, Jon Garliepp, Jim Manley, and Larry Reed

Minutes submitted by Ron Carmichael

## Membership Corner - *Jon Garliepp*

We welcome new member Rives Chalmers to EAA Chapter 62, he signed up at the June general meeting. Welcome to guests Daniel Shanahan, Robert Briggs, and John Stubbe all also attending the June general meeting. The Chapter encourages guests to attend any and all of our functions.



Badges: If you need a badge please let me know, new members get their 1st badge free, after that replacement badges are \$6.00.

I will be out of town for most of July and August; during this time I will have limited e-mail access. I will be at the July meeting, returning in time for the September meeting.

# AIRCRAFT DESIGNS, INC.

5 Harris Court. Building S., Monterey, CA 93940

[aircraft@mbay.net](mailto:aircraft@mbay.net)

program are welcome.

**12/14 Board Meeting**  
**7:30 pm**  
**Reid-Hillview Airport**  
**Terminal Building**

## Swap -n- Shop

Place your ads here for free

## Homebuilder's Corner

*Roland LaPelle- coordinator*

This month I am continuing the articles on magnetos and a foundation for the changes that will be discussed in the next article.

### Magnetos -Part II

#### Installation of Magnetos:

Prior to installation, the magneto must be placed in the "E Gap" position. The method of doing this is different on different magnetos.



Bendix Mags: Open inspection plug on top of magneto and align the chamfered teeth of the gear, often marked with red dye" in the center of the hole. (Note there are two teeth marked, one for clockwise and one for counter clockwise rotation.) An after market device to lock the mag in position is available at a reasonable cost which makes this job much easier.

Slick Mags: On the older mags a 6 penny nail was inserted when the two red marks are visible through the window. The newer mags are locked in place by a special stepped pin provided at no cost by the factory.

Eisemann Mags: On LA type, (Shielded harness) remove cover and rotate shaft in opposite direction to normal rotation until the rotating electrode is in the center of the distributor plate window. On AM models (unshielded harness), remove the distributor plate after first noting the #1 electrode position. Turn the shaft until the electrode is in the same position. You are now ready to install the magneto.

I will now try to explain to you the proper method of installation and timing of the magneto.

In order for the installation of the magnetos to the engine to be successful, the crankshaft must be put in the proper rotational position. This is accomplished by identifying the compression stroke of the #1 cylinder, then setting the crankshaft at the correct firing angle. On most engines the number are on the case either above or below the cylinder. On radial engines it is always opposite the sump. Identifying the compression stroke on the #1 cylinder is most easily accomplished by removing #1 sparkplug and placing your finger partially in the hole while turning the crankshaft in the normal power direction of rotation. When you feel the air come rushing out it will be the compression stroke. If the #1 cylinder is not marked, the following general rules apply. (Of course, the best authority is the manufacturer's handbook.)

1. Prop shaft is the front end; accessory case is the rear end.
2. Identification of right or left is from the rear of the engine looking forward.
3. Radial are numbered clockwise as viewed from the rear. (Same as direction of rotation on US engines.)
4. In line and V types are numbered from the rear.
5. Horizontal opposed engines are normally from the front. The exception is Continental, as #1 is the right rear cylinder,

## Contact Us

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## Homebuilder's Corner (*continued*)

- 6 Odd numbered cylinders are normally on the right side of "V's" and "Flats"
- 7 On twin row radials, even number on the front and odd numbers in the rear. (#1 is rear top cylinder.)

Some engines have there timing gear marks under a plug. Firing orders are not standardized, but are normally found in the engine manual.

4 cylinder flats will generally be 1-3-2-4 or 1-4-2-3

Six opposed will generally run: 1-4-5-2-3-6

Radial engines usually have the following orders: (9 cyl.: 1-3-5-7-9-2-4-6-8) (7 cyl.: 1-3-5-7-2-4-6)

4 cylinder in line: 1-3-2-4 or 1-2-4-3

6 cylinder in line 1-5-3-6-2-4

V8 cw: 1R-4L-2R-3L-4R-1L-3R-2L

And for you lucky Mustang drivers (V12's cw: 1L-2R-5L-4R-3L-1R-6L-5R-2L-3R-4L-6R)

The degree marking on flats are generally found on the crankshaft flange, and are set to align to the split on the case. On all other engines and on a few old model flats, VW engines, and some auto engines a propeller protractor is needed as well as a top dead center indicator. Basically, this is a protractor with either a drop line or a level all of which can be clamped to the propeller to measure the rotational position.

This is actually the most accurate method, providing care is taken to eliminate backlash, but is sometimes awkward. Another device which is in common usage is the time right indicator, but had now become very expensive and requires special parts for each engine to be checked.

A top center indicator is a fixed probe that reaches down into the cylinder to touch the top of the piston. Many of the have an electric switch attached to the probe to determine the exact point of contact. By touching the piston on both sides of the rotation the Top Dead Center can be determined and used to set the "0" on the protractor. These devices can be purchased for a nominal cost from ads in Trade-a-Plane or from various aircraft tool suppliers. In fact, many people have made their own out of a dime store protractor and a clamp and level. The probe can be made from an old spark plug.

An other tool that will be needed is a timing light or buzzer. Several are available on the market or again one can make their own. These consist of some kind of oscillator or buzzer and often with lights typically red and green to indicate the circuit. Mine has a tone that changes depending on which mag is engaged and by listening to then it is easy to synchronize the mags with out having to look at the lights. The simplest device would be a battery and a bulb some hookup wire and clips.

Installation of Magneto on engine:

**WARNING:** Disconnect all sparkplug wires before beginning to work with engine timing to make sure residual fuel or oil vapors cause the engine to fire and cause an accident.



## Homebuilder's Corner (*continued*)

Bendix, Slick or Eisemann on flat engines.

1. Check to see if magneto direction is correct for the mags position for that particular engine. Some go the other way like Continental AJ65s.
2. Remove the timing inspection plug from the top of the mag and set the "E Gap" as described previously.
3. Turn the shaft so #1 cylinder at the firing position for that engine, by use of a "Time Rite" indicator or a timing disc and TDC indicator, or, as on most flat engines the degree marking on the crankshaft flange or as on many Lycoming's matching the markings to a dot on the starter casting or as recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Install both magnetos on engine and tighten the mounting nuts sufficiently to hold the magnetos in position, but loose enough to allow rotation.
5. Connect the timing light across the points. (An old P lead works just fine and makes it easy to connect across the terminals as that is what the P lead is normally connected across.)
6. Rotate the first mag housing in the direction of the mags normal rotation until the light comes on. Then slowly ease it back the opposite direction until the light just goes out. Secure the mag by tightening its mounting nuts. Recheck the timing by turning the crankshaft in reverse until light comes on and then forward until the light goes out. Check the degree marks to see if it is firing at the right angle and if not repeat adjustment until the light goes out at the correct angle as specified by the manufacturer.
7. Time the second mag to fire at the same time as the first unless the manufacturer specifies otherwise. (Most engines require that the mags fire at the same time) The easy way is to back up crankshaft until the light goes out. Then rotate the other mag until the mag goes out on it. Test as in the previous step for simultaneous firing and adjust as necessary.
8. Replace covers wires and Pleads and you are ready to go.

Some variation for setting mags on radials should be noted. All of the ones I know of require simultaneous firing. For instance on P&W R985 with Bosch mags one can field align mags on a quick change by rotating crank until a straight edge across the flat on the magneto shaft and rotate it until the straight edge aligns with two scribe lines on the edge of the casting where it mates with the cover. This is the E gap position of the mag. When the first mag is so aligned the second mag can be set the same way and installed. The coupling allows the mag shaft to be aligned at this angle with the crankshaft due to the number of teeth on the rubber coupling is one more on one side of the rubber coupling. This method of alignment is normally close enough for safe operation and a check for accuracy with a timing light can be made later.

The fore going two part article is an attempt to aid the "do it yourselfer" to install and time his own mags on normal installations, but does not in any way cover all the oddball installations that may exist. The foregoing works on most of the common installations, and I hope that it will serve

## **Homebuilder's Corner (*continued*)**

to dispel some of the "mystery" regarding magnetos.

Next month I will discuss the new types of ignition systems and from my view point what are the advantages and problems with their implementation.

## **Young Eagles Corner *Allen Roark***

By the time you read the July Newsletter, we will have had a very successful Young Eagles Event at RHV, I predict! Our next scheduled Young Eagles Event will be at the Palo Alto Airport on September 9th.

Chapter 62 has committed to Wing Rib Building at the annual Santa Clara County Model Aircraft Skypark on July 8th. I will need two to three volunteers to help the children with the wing rib building. If you would like to see a "real" aircraft show but only on a small scale, plan to attend the FREE event on the Monterey Hwy. 6 miles south of Bernal Rd off 101 South. Check [www.sccmas.org](http://www.sccmas.org) or call 408-292-1212.

## **Taking Control by *Jamie Miller (continued)***

A friend once asked me if I could have any super-hero power what would it be. My reply was immediate, "I would be able to fly like a bird." I have always felt that flying is the ultimate form of freedom; I have spent many a warm afternoon trudging to my next communication class and cursing my luck as I hear an airplane flying overhead. My mind goes into overdrive questioning where the pilot is going and just what does Southwestern University look like from a bird's eye-view? I wonder if there are children on the plane who press their noses against the window as I did when I was younger, and peer down at the miniature world beneath them with an expression that can only be described as pure awe. The world looks so tiny from thousands of feet above the ground.

"Is everybody ready?" Mom and I answer "yes" in unison. The airplane approaches the runway and I can feel the engine vibrations in every bone of my four year-old body. I close my eyes tightly as Dad puts in full throttle. For some reason I am terrified whenever we leave the ground, so I try to think of something else, anything that doesn't make me think of the bad things that could happen. I imagine Snow White and try to name her seven dwarves in my head as the Cessna leaves the ground, but all I can hear is the noise pouring out of the engine.

"Doc, Dopey, Grumpy ..." my mind wanders; the engine's roar is filling my head. We are well into ascent when I open my eyes and peer outside of the window. The big city of San Jose, California is shrinking beneath us and I think to myself about how that wasn't so bad and that I wasn't really scared after all. My dad looks back at me and squeezes my knee. He

flashes a huge grin that takes over his whole face; he's always happy when he is in the air. I begin looking outside the window at the clouds that we are flying above. I look around for Jesus and all the rest of the people in

## Taking Control by Jamie Miller (*continued*)

Heaven because I'm pretty sure we are high enough to hit Heaven; they must simply be hiding from me. Every time I close my eyes I am sure that they are peeking their heads out of the clouds, but I cannot truck them into coming out no matter how closely I patrol.

Every pilot knows that eventually the instructor that has guided them will have to hop out of the airplane and force her or him into that first solo flight. This knowledge was not at all comforting to me. I was quite content to have Mike fly with me for the rest of my flying career if it meant avoiding the open air alone.

As I recall, July 11, 2002 began much like any other day. It was a cool morning, but warmed up quickly and I imagined how the dark vinyl of my Dad's Citabria 7GCBC would soon be sticking to my thighs. When Mike arrived I had already fueled up the airplane and ensured that the plane was airworthy. We went about our business and taxied to the active runway, and he told me that we were staying in the pattern. The "pattern" is basically a rectangle that surrounds the airport above ground. It serves to guide pilots in the surrounding airspace so they know where to go once they take off. Mike and I had flown the pattern many times before and by this time I felt like a pro. I could recite the altitude within the pattern, the speed I should be at during any given point in this rectangle -- I was good to go.

After about half an hour of practicing take-offs and landings, Mike asked something that caught me off-guard. "So you think you're ready to do this by yourself?" My stomach dropped. I stuttered back, "Y-y-you mean alone? Fly w-without you in here? What if something happens?"

Suddenly I felt like I was going to vomit all over the red interior of the airplane. He patted me on the back and told me to taxi over to a row of hangars that had a bench at the end of them, and I did so without a word. I couldn't speak; I choked back the lump in my throat as my eyes stung with the promise of tears. Words cannot describe the fear that pulsed through my veins when I learned that I would be flying an airplane on my own, even though it was something I would have to do some day.

My heart is pounding through my chest. I can't do this. I can't do this on my own. Oh God, I'm going to crash and get myself killed, and if the crash doesn't kill me, my dad will. I'm only nineteen! I don't want to die!

It is unspoken but when you are flying with an instructor in the seat behind you it feels as though you are not the actual pilot, at least not to me.

Granted, you are doing the work and controlling the airplane, but somehow you are not the one in charge. The instructor is always there to tell you what to do, even if he or she doesn't lay a finger on the controls of the airplane. Flying on your own confirms beyond the shadow of a doubt that you are indeed the pilot. It is the ultimate form of proof to yourself; the instructor is already well aware of the fact that you can indeed operate an airplane on your own, even if you aren't aware of your ability.

## Taking Control by Jamie Miller (*continued*)

He's gone. How could he leave me in here by myself? Somehow I manage to get my voice loud enough to be heard by the control tower, but it cracks as I ask for permission to stay in the pattern by myself. The guys in the tower know that it is my first solo, and they give me one of the two runways so I don't have to worry about other pilots invading my space. I want to vomit. I want to stop the airplane, turn it off, and just walk away. I don't want to be in the air alone.

When I finally make it to the runway I don't even think about what I'm doing. I simply take control. As I feel the Citabria leave the ground I feel the weight lift off of my shoulders. I am suddenly giddy. I'm flying. I am flying. Nobody else is keeping this airplane in the air, and I laugh at the pure joy of the situation. I take off and land three times on my own. Two of the landings turn into touch-and-go's. A touch-and-go is just what it sounds like; you bring the airplane down to the ground and then take off immediately, there is no stop involved. Usually for students, it means you screwed up and can't bring the airplane to a full stop for lack of runway space or because you brought the plane down too hard and bounced back up in the air, which is exactly what I did. The third landing, though, was golden, and it told me that I was finished for the day.

When I am done I can barely move my legs are shaking so badly. I ask the tower to let me taxi over to my dad's shop, where he and my instructor are waiting, and then thank them and wish them a good day. As I taxi over to Vern Miller Aviation I lift open the window and let the cool air wash over me. I am exhausted, and my legs are stuck on the seat of my chair, but I am pleased with myself nonetheless. I find out later that my dad and Mike both listened to the radio frequency I was on. Mike couldn't tell that I was upset, but I think my dad knew.

When I return from my lesson my dad is all smiles and hugs. He is very proud. My step-mom comes over and we order pizza to celebrate, and every customer that comes in that day gets to hear that I soloed earlier. They smile knowingly and congratulate me on my accomplishment. It is a day of celebration for all of us.

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I am a little girl in the front seat of the airplane. My feet dangle over my seat and my dad looks over at me and smiles. "Do you want to steer?" he asks. I nod and grin and place my tiny hands on the controls; my feet don't reach the rudder pedals but my dad takes care of those for me. I giggle as the airplane moves this way and that, responding to my immature touch. It is here that I realize that I am taking control of the airplane. It is here that I understand that it will take me wherever I want to go.

Author's Afterwords ..

I cannot explain my motivation for writing this article over this particular event in my life. There are so many things that are important to me, and yet somehow I knew that this flight was what I must write about.

## Taking Control by Jamie Miller (*continued*)

Understanding what happened to me on that day has never been something I have considered until now. Understanding the events in my life leading up to that flight was also important.

There was so much going on in my mind, so many emotions that I went through that this article helped me to explore. Much to my surprise I found the words came easily once I began writing. There was so much to say, and I'm sure I could spend hours adding in more detail or pilot-speak.

Learning how to fly was a daunting task, but even more difficult was learning to trust myself. I did not trust myself to make the correct decisions because I was afraid of the consequences. Flying an airplane is much like learning to drive a car in that you have to learn about your surroundings and get comfortable with what is going on around you. However, wrecking an airplane in comparison to crashing a car are two very different things; the stakes are much higher in the airplane. My solo flight gave me a reason to trust my judgment. It was a form of empowerment for me, and it has aided me to this day when I come to a problem that I am having trouble with.

Looking back on the events leading up to my flight, I have realized not only how important it was to me, but the impact it had on my dad in particular. Airplanes are his life and he loves being a pilot. I suspect that my flying has been more important to him than I had ever before realized. It is a source of pleasure for both of us, as well as my step-mom, who is also a pilot.



Send New & Renewal Memberships to:  
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- \$30.00 Annually
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**General Meeting: Thursday, July 6, 2006 7:30 PM**  
**Board Meeting: Thursday, June 13, 2006 7:30 PM**

**Our meetings** are open to the public. EAA members, their GUESTS, AND VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. Chapter 62 usually meets on the 1st Thursday of each month (the 2nd Thursday in August), at 7:30 PM. at Vern Miller Aviation, 2635 Cunningham Avenue, Reid Hillview Airport (main entrance, on Cunningham Avenue right side of the road).

**Hangar Hour** Come meet your Fellow EAAer's, make new friends, have some food, and enjoy the camaraderie. Food will be sold from 6:30: to 7:25, during which time you can "hangar fly" or view various 'How To' videos. The meeting will start promptly at 7:30 PM, with 10 minutes of announcements, 10 minutes of "open mike," and 10 minutes for the coffee break. The program starts promptly at 8:00 PM