EAA Chapter 166

Hartford, Connecticut

March 2026

What's Inside...

NEXT MEETING

March 28, 2026,
10:00am

EAA166 Meeting
Brainard Airport

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Steve Socolosky

Hello EAA 166 Members and Student Members,

Once again, our Chapter 166 has earned and been acknowledged by EAA to receive Gold Recognition! Very simply, we are being recognized for practicing the "Spirit of Aviation" through all of the fantastic Student members and adult members we have in our chapter! When people ask how to "get into" this thing called aviation, I usually invite them to our meeting and encourage them to talk with others in our chapter, since there are many ways to get involved, whether you want to become a pilot or learn more about everything aviation! So, if you know someone who is curious and would like to meet some great people, invite them to join us!

Our next meeting will be Saturday, March 28th, 2026, at 10:00 AM at our meeting room in Hangar 1 at Brainard Airport! You're all invited to attend and please feel free to bring a friend or two or three! Enter the Hartford Jet Center lobby at 20 Lindbergh Drive in Hartford, and after signing in, there will be someone to direct you to our meeting room.

Thanks to all who attended our last meeting! We had over 60 aviation enthusiasts including many Student members who were inspired by Young Eagle and now United Airlines First Officer, Cullen Slocum's from-the-heart presentation on his aviation journey! Thanks, Cullen!

Our guest speaker this month will be Joe Palmisano of the Connecticut Soaring Association, which operates gliders out of Windham Airport (KIJD). If you've never flown in a glider, they're very, very cool (and quiet in the cockpit!) Joe will educate us about gliders!

We met many interested future Young Eagles and their parents at the New England Air Museum's "Women Take Flight" event on March 14th! Student Member, Julia Fry, who is an aspiring Professional Pilot, has taken the lead on our very FIRST, ALL-GIRL Young Eagles Rally and has SIX Female pilots enthusiastically ready to fly female Young Eagles! Stay tuned . . . and see you on March 28 at Brainard Airport!

Thank you—and Blue Skies!
Steve

EAA 166 Young Eagles

Promoting Young Eagles at New England Air Museum's Women Take Flight event on March 14, 2026. That's Aaron Torres wearing the right gear, left. That's Steve, Justin's mom with Ray Scholor Justin, Young Eagles Aaron and Aiden and Aiden's mom representing on the museum floor.

Cullen Slocum, 2004 Young Eagle, EAA 166 Member and United Airlines First Officer,
shares his continuing aviation journey!

...Young Eagles Throttled Up

Trig says, "This is great!"

Michael's flying!

Lucas wants to be a pilot, too!

"After listening to Cullen, I want to be an airline pilot," says Aiden

Captain Henry!

Member Activity

Did you fly an interesting route this month? Land for a good $100 hamburger? Earn a new rating or first solo? We want to hear about it! Submit any photos to test-flyer@cox.net.com to be featured in our monthly newsletter column, Member Activity!

More Alton Bay, New Hampshire ...

Steve Socolosky and Bob Pulford flew up to Alton Bay, New Hampshire so Steve could make his first landing with his Cessna T-41 warbird, N103CT, ON THE ICE! The runway closed for the season three days later.

Flight Advisor: Teardown Inspections For Safety

Ken Katz

It's been a long road. You completed the assembly of your kitplane, the FAA signed it off as airworthy, and you've completed the phases of flight testing. Now what? Close inspection, of course.

The fact is minor and major systems can break during the first hours of flying and you might not recognize these failures without a teardown inspection. There's enough to go wrong. Inadequate design might result in parts having insufficient strength for the structural and thermal loads that they experience in flight. Fabrication or assembly flaws could weaken parts. Fatigue can cause cracks which can turn into failures. Tubing, control lines, and wiring can rub against something, causing excessive wear and chafing and leading to failure.

Given these risks, inspecting after test flying is prudent. And the more intensive the inspection, the better as you're more likely to find hidden problems. But the problem with "more is better" is that while you might find problems, you can also create new ones. The NTSB reports are littered with maintenance-induced failures. Fasteners and parts can be damaged by removal and reinstallation, plus every time something is reassembled, there's the risk of reassembling it incorrectly.

Since both inspecting and not inspecting have risks, it is desirable that the test program include an inspection plan with a happy medium. There is no one optimal inspection program, but there are things that should be considered.

- A thorough non-invasive inspection should be conducted before and after each flight.
- Thorough and invasive inspections should be performed after specific test events that are more likely to over-stress the aircraft, such as the first flight and load-envelope expansion to maximum Gs.
- Thorough and invasive inspections should be performed after unexpected anomalies that are more likely to over-stress the aircraft, as with flutter and hard landings.
- Thorough and invasive inspections should be performed after a specified number of flights or flight hours or some other relevant metric. The intervals between these planned inspections should be increased if the inspections reveal few problems or increased if the inspections reveal a large number of problems.

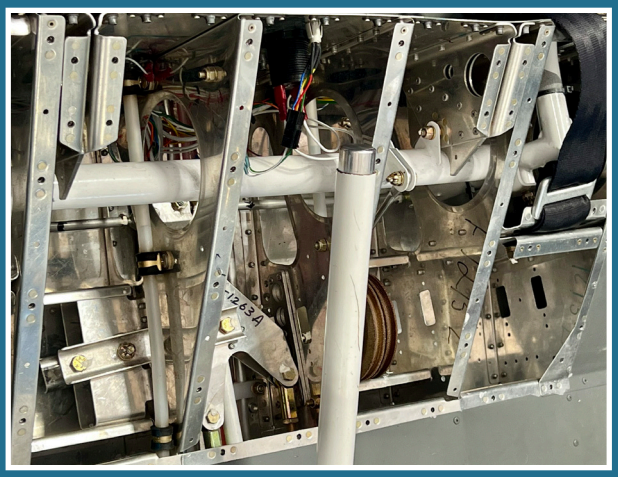
In many ways, the builder is the ideal person to conduct the inspections, since the builder probably knows more about the aircraft than anybody else—helping to identify problems. On the other hand, too much looking at the same thing can lead to oversights. A fresh set of eyes may be helpful. EAA Technical Counselors and fellow EAA members may be able to provide an independent perspective which could be helpful.

Inspections are a critical tool for the homebuilder to mitigate risk and when done properly can make for a safer, durable and dependable aircraft.

Inspect, Fly, Repeat

Somehow, you manged to rack up nearly 20 hours of initial flight testing on your kit project that was all over the shop floor for nearly 10 years and so far nothing terrible has happened. You've taken systems apart and put them back together more times than you can count and are certain it's all good—the last thing you want to do is take it apart again. Your work is far from over. The reality is like all aircraft, the work and inspections never end and for the amateur-built machine, aggressive and frequent inspection is a must-do chore. Safety and dispatch reliability hang in the balance, and you might avoid break-downs when away from home base.

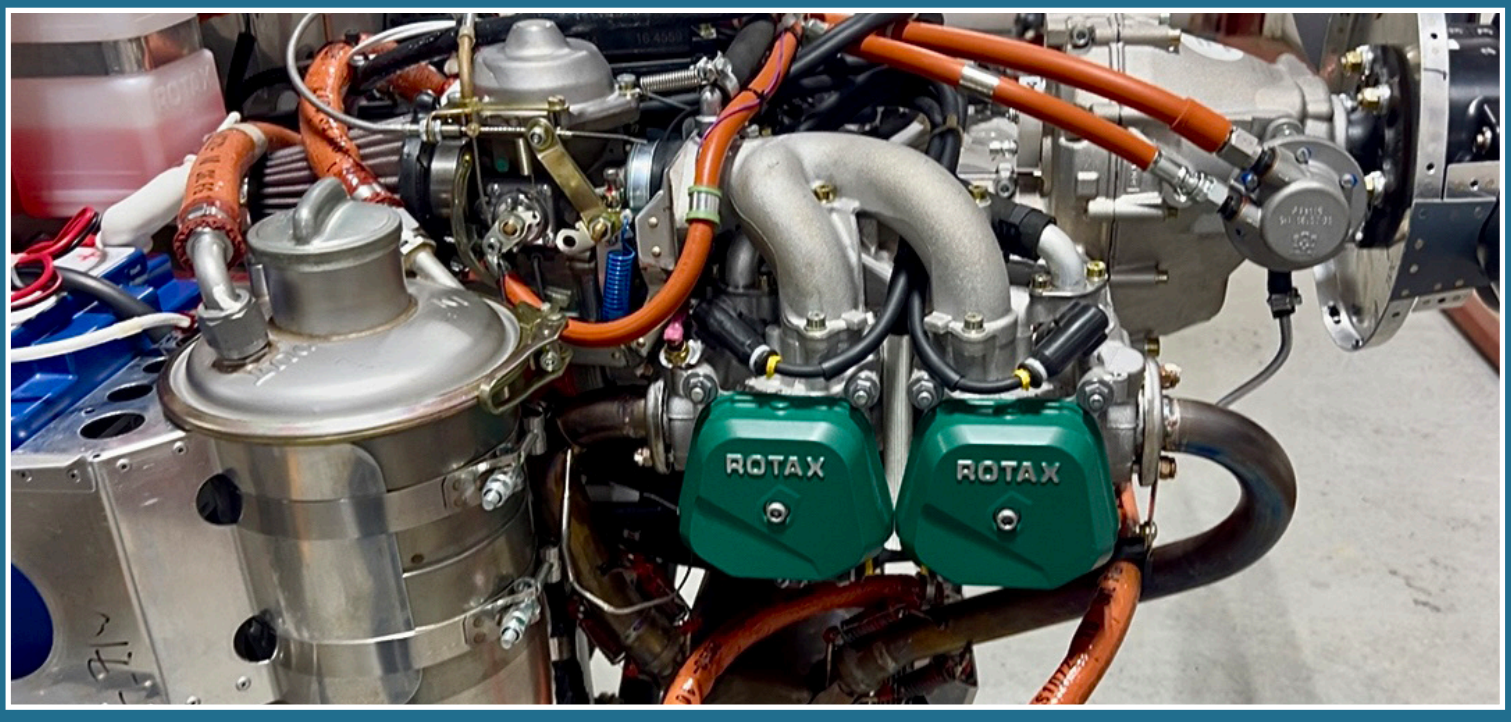
You can do hours of static runups (though it's not the way to treat a spanking new engine) to make sure everything works right before the first flight, but the harsh flight environment changes everything. It's all about vibration, component break-in, and infant mortality. Pick a timeline in the flight testing regimen to do a serious inspection and this isn't just looking for oil leaks. Five hours after trouble-free flight time seems to be a reasonable interval to really look things over. Start by completely uncowling the engine where fluid leaks should be obvious, though their source might not be. Inspect the engine baffling for security and examine the exhaust system. Pipes take a real beating when it comes to vibration and you want to inspect the junctions for signs of leaks. The hoses and wires under the cowling you worked so hard to secure might have shifted and you might find yourself repositioning them to avoid chaffing if they haven't done so already. Inspect engine temperature probe wiring—a common area for trouble.



Move further into the airframe and remove whatever you need to look carefully at control cables and tubes, pulleys, and servo motors to make sure stray pieces of hardware (you can bet there's some lurking in the bowels of the airframe) haven't worked into critical areas. Get under the panel and inspect wiring bundles for security and chaff protection. Use an inspection mirror to see hidden areas.

Last, make a inspection checklist and customize it based on the stuff you found that needed attention. Use it often because aggressive inspection is the key to safety.

— Larry Anglisano



History Corner: When Bears Fly

by Bill Barry

Can bears fly? Well, this one did. On March 26, 1962, Yogi, a two-year-old female black bear (pictured below) flew on a Convair B-58 Hustler. What was a bear doing on a supersonic jet bomber? Well, answering that question will take a bit of explaining.

The B-58 Hustler was the 1950s cutting-edge answer to improving Soviet air defenses. As the USSR rapidly developed more effective surface to air missiles, it was clear that high altitude bombers (the B-36, B-47, B-52, and originally the B-58) would be less of a deterrent. A very fast bomber flying at low altitude would be harder to shoot down, so the supersonic B-58 became the low-altitude option for the Strategic Air Command (SAC) nuclear bomber fleet. Although the Hustler's good looks made it a favorite for many, it had a troubled development and the low-altitude mission severely compromised its range and utility.

The B-58 had a three-person crew at a time when most bombers had a crew of six or more. This, and supersonic speeds, led to a high workload for the aircraft commander, navigator/bombardier, and defensive systems operator. The three crewmen sat in individual cockpits, one behind the other. The B-58 was known as a difficult aircraft to fly. This reputation came early, since the flight test program lasted from late 1956 to spring 1959 and involved the use of 30 B-58s. About a dozen B-58s crashed during that time. One of the many concerns with the Hustler was the problem of surviving an ejection at supersonic speeds, especially at high altitudes. In the 1950s most pilots who ejected while supersonic had been severely injured or killed by the powerful wind blast.

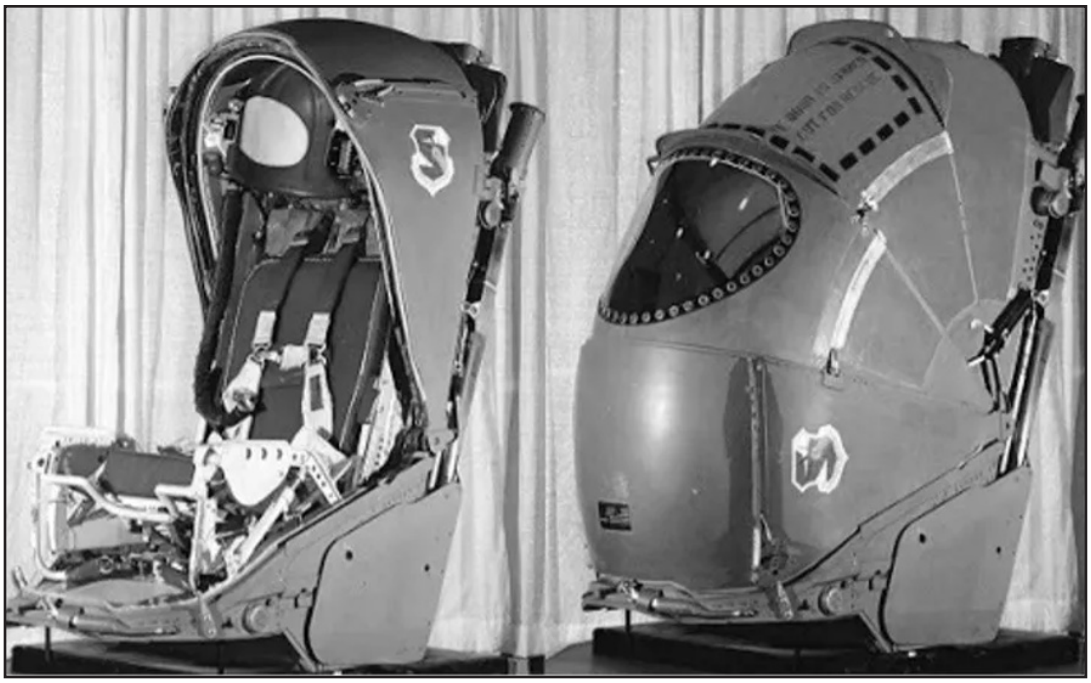
When the B-58 (pictured below, source U.S. Air Force) entered military service in 1960 it was equipped with standard ejection seats, but the Convair corporation had already contracted with the Stanley Aviation company of Colorado to create crew escape capsules for each of the three seats. Upon ejection, a protective clamshell would close over the crewmember before the capsule would be ejected by rocket. The capsule could be used at altitudes up to 70,000 feet and from 120 knots up to Mach 2.2. It was equipped with its own oxygen system, survival equipment and would even float if it came down on water.

Flight testing of the escape capsules began in early 1962. In February, Chief Warrant Officer E.J. Murray was the first human to test the system. He proved that the capsule worked well at subsonic speeds. But supersonic testing

was considered especially risky and that is where Yogi comes in. Black bears are a reasonable match for humans in size, weight, and internal organ arrangement. Yogi was the first of several bears that were ejected during these tests. Her ejection happened at 35,000 feet at Mach 1.3. About eight minutes later she was on the ground in apparently good health. The next month a second bear was ejected at 45,000 feet and Mach 1.6. This one didn't turn out so well. The bear survived, but had broken bones and other injuries. At least six more capsule tests were conducted through August while they worked out the bugs in the system. One of the tests had a chimpanzee on board, but the others all had bears. Each bear did only one test, because they were killed after the tests so that an autopsy could be done to determine if there had been any internal injuries.

In late 1962, Convair began retrofitting all B-58s with escape capsules. Only 116 B-58s had been built and by this point there were less than 100 in service, so the upgrade was complete in 1963. Only two SAC units flew the Hustler: the 43rd Bomb Wing and the 305th Bomb Wing. Operational limitations and the expense of maintaining the B-58 meant that they had a limited career. In 1965, Secretary of Defense McNamara ordered the retirement of the bomber. By January 1970, the last of them was flown to the "boneyard" at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona. Now there are eight B-58s on display in various museums and the 82 remaining in the boneyard were sold for scrap in 1977.

The escape capsule idea also had a relatively short life. The prototype XB-70 bomber had seat capsules, which didn't work well following a mid-air collision. Three of the first four B-1A prototypes had an ejectable flight deck, that was not used in the production model. Beside the B-58, the only production U.S. military aircraft with a modular ejection system was the F/FB-111. The F-111 flew from 1967 through 1998 and the ejectable crew module saved many lives, but nearly 30 percent of the survivors suffered back injuries on ground impact. Maybe capsule ejection just wasn't a good idea … or maybe the bears got their revenge after all.



This is the pilot escape pod shown in both the open and closed positions. Source credit U.S. Air Force.

Outings ... Larry, Rick and a Cirrus Vision Jet

That's a 15-hour-new 2026 Cirrus Vision Jet G3 on the Signature Aviation ramp at Bradley International airport after a flight trial to Burlington, Vermont. The jet is equipped with CPDLC (Controller Pilot Data-Link Communications), Safe Return Autoland, Perspective Touch+ avionics, and a Williams FJ33-5A turbofan engine. Watch the inflight demo here.

Cirrus Aircraft's Matt Bergwall and Larry Anglisano at 310 knots

Rick Montero sampling the automation in the flight levels

Painting An RV-10 part 2: Masking, Base Coat

by Mark Welch

As you may recall from last months newsletter, "AURORA", my Van's RV-10, is in the paint shop. This is an update on the progress of the painting. Ed's Aircraft Refinishing on Long Island has two main hangars—one for prepping and the second for painting. This is very common in the plane painting world. Prepping dust does not mix well with painting. Some shops even have a third hangar for assembly and disassembly. Ed's hangars have floor heat, which allows them to be utilized year-round in this area of the country.

On February 16, 2026, I traveled back to Ed's facility to pick final colors from a chip library and to check progress. Next, AURORA was moved to the painting hanger where she was masked for priming and painting just before the February 22 snowstorm that dropped 30 inches of snow on Long Island and closed the airport for several days. Since my paint scheme has a significant amount of white, that color was applied first and to all surfaces. Next comes masking for the other colors. In order to accomplish this, you have to put back all of the components that have colors running through them.

Although I had a paint scheme that was detailed by working with a company that does schemes for aircraft, the actual masking is done by hand. This is because any type of masking templates can't take into account the curved surfaces very well. Once again, Rick Montero and I flew down to Brookhaven Airport on February 27 in the club's RV-12 to accomplish the reassembly.

So at this point, I have a completely white airplane. Masking of the other colors is currently ongoing. Ed sends me photos on an almost daily basis and we discuss minor tweaks to the layout. Next month: Adding some color.

From the Treasurer

Brenda Rossignol

Hello EAA 166 members! First, a reminder that membership dues are due and payable by January 1, annually. Payment via cash and checks are great, and you can pay at the meeting or by mail.

Our student membership is free of charge to any person age 8 to 18 who has completed a Young Eagles Flight.

Donation are always welcomed and appreciated. In accordance with IRS tax codes, a thank-you letter will be mailed to each donor of $250 or more.

For Pratt&Whitney employees, dues can be paid through the Benevity program. Go to the donations and volunteering link on the RTX Connect website.

Remember to complete the membership application.

Mail payments to:
Brenda Rossignol
33 Farrel Road
Portland, CT 06480

Aerospace Academy At Home

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NEAM Corner ...

Here's what's going on at the New England Air Museum

WHEN YOU OPEN THE HANGAR AND SEE YOUR AIRPLANE

... or helicopter!