EAA Chapter 166

Hartford, Connecticut

May 2026

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What's Inside...

NEXT MEETING

May 30, 2026,
10:00am

EAA166 Meeting
Brainard Airport

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Steve Socolosky

Hello EAA 166 Members and Student Members,

We have a very special meeting this month on Saturday, May 30th, 2026, at 10 AM, at my hangar! Our very first recipient of the Joe Gauthier Memorial Scholarship, EAA 166 Student Member, Michael Thompson, will be receiving the first annual award from Joe's wife Carol and his daughters.

Joe Gauthier's many contributions to helping improve the world of homebuilt aircraft and his passion for sharing his knowledge and experience, will always be remembered and especially through this scholarship, which will be awarded each year to an EAA 166 Student Member who demonstrates the commitment and passion for aviation, just as Joe did.

We will be making the presentation at the beginning of the meeting, so please plan on being with us to honor Joe and our Student Member, Michael Thompson!

I hope to see you all on Saturday, May 30th, at Brainard Airport!

Thank you—and Blue Skies!
Steve

EAA 166 Young Eagles

On April 24, Fabrizia Spadaccini took her first Young Eagle Flight in an RV-12, an aircraft she helped build. She was a major contributor to the assembly of the aircraft canopy of the Lindbergh Flyers RV-12. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience of flying the RV-12 and has future aspirations to become an airline pilot.

Young Eagle Michael takes the controls of Steve Socolosky's Cessna!

NEAM Aerospace Career Day

The New England Air Museum at Bradley International Airport had just shy of 500 visitors on Saturday, May 23, 2026, and EAA Chapter 166 was among the exhibors who made the event a valuable resource for youngsters who might pursue aviation careers.

Painting an RV-10 Part 4: Colors

by Mark Welch

The project moved on from an all-white plane. Masking of the three additional colors was completed in March 2026 and painting of the black, metallic blue, and silver colors occurred in March and April. First, the staff at Ed's Aircraft Refinishing in New York removed all the control surfaces that Rick Montero and I installed for masking, and then the painting began. Black was sprayed first as it requires the least amount of color and was used only around the windows, plus it was used as a shadow for the tail numbers.

Next was silver then blue. Each step requires removing and re-masking of the white and other colors to accomplish each painting step. Fortunately, a number of the fiberglass fairings were one color so they did not have to be installed and then removed, but were simply painted the color they needed to be for the scheme. Once all colors were nearly completed, I went down to reassemble AURORA on April 4th and was there for four days completing the reassembly. This is a very delicate process because damage to newly painted surface is a real concern.

Ed has techniques to prevent damage and provide a long lasting paint finish. For instance, all screws are reinstalled by hand with manual screwdrivers. This prevents overtorquing of screws that can lead to damage of the paint surface. He also dips each screw in CorrosionX to facilitate cleaning out of the nut plates that may have accumulated paint during the painting process.

Next month: Final assembly, detailing, testing and flying the plane home.

History Corner: The Six Million Dollar Man

by Bill Barry

If you are of a certain age, or maybe spend too much time on YouTube, you may remember the 1970s television show *The Six Million Dollar Man*. The story centered around a test pilot, Colonel Steve Austin, who was "rebuilt" with bionic legs, an arm, and an eye after a horrific crash landing. The opening credits recapped the backstory and began with footage of a lifting body losing control on short final and flipping end over end in a cloud of dust. The TV show was based on the book *Cyborg* by prolific author Martin Caidin. His book was inspired by a real crash at Edwards Air Force base that happened 59 years ago on May 10, 1967.

In real life, it was NASA test pilot Bruce Peterson in the M2-F2 lifting body that crashed that day. Having flown in the Marine Corps from 1954 to 1957, Peterson finished his bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering at California Polytechnic in 1960 and joined NASA as an engineer that year. Two years later, he was transferred to the flight operations office and began work as a test pilot on a wide variety of cutting-edge designs. He got to make the maiden flight of the HL-10 lifting body in December 1966. That flight almost ended in disaster, but Peterson was able to overcome unexpected lateral control problems and safely land the craft. Less than six months later, Peterson encountered similar control problems on the 16th test flight of the M2-F2 lifting body (it was his third flight in the M2-F2). That's Peterson, shown right, after the first flight of the HL-10 lifting body in December 1966. (NASA photo).

Amazingly, Peterson survived the M2-F2 crash. He spent quite a while in the hospital, but didn't get any bionic parts. The one similarity with Steve Austin is that he lost an eye (due to infection in the hospital, not directly because of the crash). Peterson recovered enough to return to NASA test pilot work and flying duties in the Marine Corps Reserves. In the 1970s he left test flight operations to become Director of Safety and Quality Assurance at what was then known as the Dryden Flight Research Center (now the Armstrong Flight Research Center). He retired from NASA in 1981 and went to work for Northrop Corporation on the B-2 bomber program for a dozen years. He died at home in May 2006 at the age of 72.

Unlike Bruce Peterson, the M2-F2 was rebuilt and made better. Having flipped over six times, the M2-F2 was originally expected to be scrapped. But Northrop (the company that had built it) was able to repair it and implement changes that made it safer to fly. The most obvious addition was a third vertical fin to improve lateral stability. Redesignated the M2-F3, this craft flew 27 more flights and contributed greatly to the lifting body research program. A year after its last flight (in December 1972) NASA donated it to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. You can now see the M2-F3 on display at the Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia.

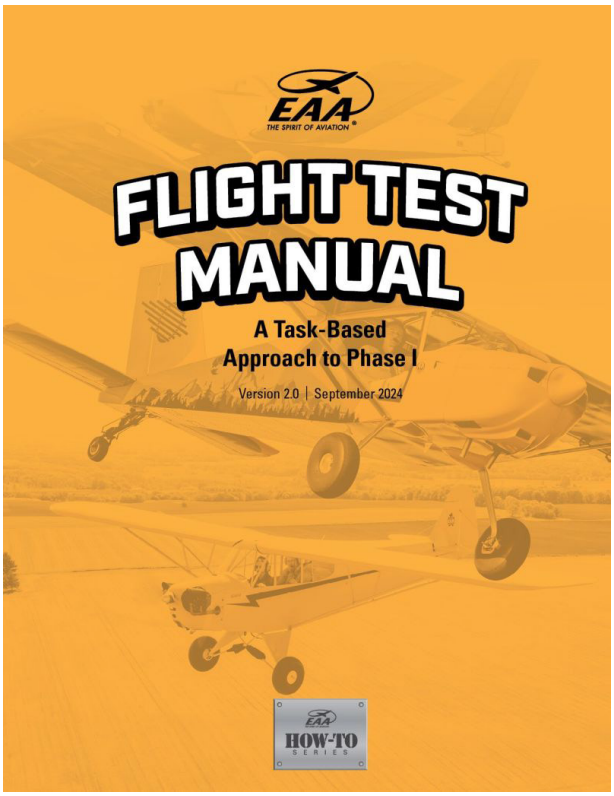
By the way, Bruce was not a fan of the TV show—he didn't appreciate having film of his accident broadcast on national TV every week for much of the 1970s.

Clockwise from upper left: The M2-F2 after crashing on May 10, 1967 (NASA Photo), the M2-F2 before crashing, and a still from the opening credits to The Six Million Dollar Man TV show.

Flight Advisor: Experimental Aircraft Accident Data

by Ken Katz

The Experimental Aircraft Association has reported that during the period from October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, fatal accidents in the Experimental category totaled 42—one under the "not-to-exceed" number set by the Federal Aviation Administration prior to that period. The not-to-exceed number is based on a rolling average based on the previous three years' data. The good news: Fatal accidents in amateur-built aircraft have declined by more than 25 percent over the past decade.



The root causes of changes in aviation safety are rarely straightforward. Like most complicated statistics, it is probably a combination of several factors. Experimental aircraft are affected by the same things as other general aviation aircraft. For one thing, the widespread use of advanced technology such as autopilots, GPS, ADS-B, digital avionics, and electronic flight bag software has increased situational awareness and decreased pilot workload—all things that tend to contribute positively to safety.

Specific to Experimental-category aircraft, EAA suggested that several of its programs have contributed to this favorable safety record. These programs include:

- Subsequent-owner guidance for transition training
- EAA Technical Counselor and Flight Advisor programs

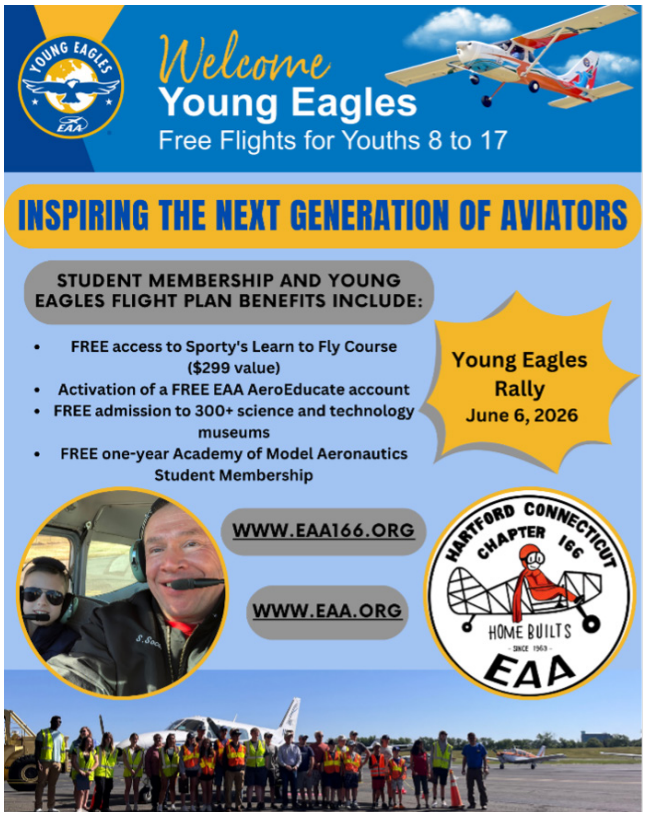
Another contributor to the safety of Experimental category aircraft may be the EAA Flight Test Manual and Test Card book. Not only do these products reduce risk during Phase 1 flight testing of Experimental category aircraft, but they result in better-tested aircraft at the completion of that testing.

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!

Larry Anglisano and Steve Socolosky flying the Lindbergh Flying Club's Van's RV-12.

YOUNG EAGLE'S DAY RALLY!
SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2026
FROM 10 AM to 2 PM



Volunteer for Young Eagles Rally June 6, 2026

Aerospace Academy At Home

Join us for Aerospace Academy at Home, a new digital learning program that brings aerospace history, science, and technology right to your door.

NEAM Corner ...

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

It's time to land on the grass ...