



EAA Chapter 166

Hartford, Connecticut

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Steve Socolosky

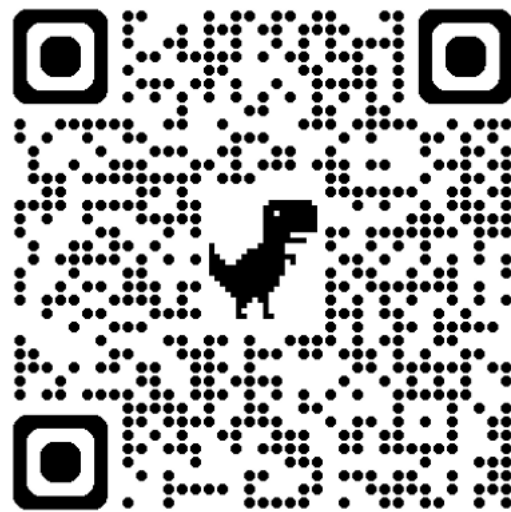
Hello EAA 166 Members and Student Members,

Thank you to all who attended our last meeting when our Student Member, Michael Thompson, received the first Joe Gauthier Memorial Scholarship. It means a lot to Joe's wife and family! Thanks also to David Maas for his AoA (angle-of-attack) technical presentation.

We have a very special meeting this month on Saturday, June 27th, 2026 at 10 AM at my hangar (rain or shine), for our ANNUAL COOKOUT! Please bring a little something to share and if you would like to cook something for yourself, we'll have the grill fired up.

At our cookout meeting, we will also begin exploring AeroEducate, which is a free EAA program for ages 5 to 17, which helps young people learn about aviation, including careers, through STEM activities. More and more parents are asking us if we have youth activities/learning opportunities, and AeroEducate could be an answer. As always, it will depend on interest and parent volunteers to help. Link to AeroEducate from the QR below.

I hope to see you all on Saturday, June 27th, at my hangar at Brainard Airport!



Thank you—and Blue Skies!
Steve

NEXT MEETING

June 27, 2026
10:00am

Steve's hangar
Brainard Airport

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EAA Chapter 166



EAA 166



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EAA 166 Young Eagles Rally



Thanks to all our student members, adult members and pilots for making this a SAFE and extremely FUN event!





Joe Gauthier Memorial Scholarship



Scholarship winner Michael Thompson and family along with the Gauthier family for the Joe Gauthier Memorial Scholarship presentation this past May.

Flying the NYC Hudson River Corridor

by Rick Montero

Recently, a few EAA 166 members took a sightseeing flight down the Hudson River to view the Manhattan Skyline and the Statue of Liberty. Steve Socolosky and James Capasso flew in Steve's Cessna 172 and Steve Oakley and I flew in the Lindbergh Flyers RV-12. If you have never taken this flight, it is definitely a worthwhile trip for the stunning city and river views, explaining why it's a bucket list item for many pilots.

But if you venture on this flight, some advance preparation is required because you are flying into the New York Special Flight Rule Area (SFRA), also known as the Hudson River VFR Corridor. Long ago the FAA established a VFR Corridor between the banks of the Hudson River and the overlying Class B New York Airspace specifically for VFR traffic to transit the busy New York airspace. Because you will be flying into a congested airspace, you need to be familiar with altitude and speed restrictions, and mandatory reporting points. To familiarize yourself with these requirements, the FAA has created a mandatory web-based training course, which is available at [FAASafety.gov](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/safety/vfr_corridor).



In addition to having completed the FAA training, you will want to ensure VFR conditions with good visibility throughout your flight, have plenty of fuel, and have current New York Sectional and New York Terminal Area Charts. Since the flight requires extended flight over the Hudson River, it is a good idea to provide life vests to everyone in your aircraft. Filing a flight plan is a good idea, but not necessary. However, I highly recommend the use of ATC flight following for traffic advisories from your departure airport to the Hudson River SFRA entry point. As you get closer to the New York Class B airspace it is comforting to know you have ATC guiding you into a congested area. However, once in the SFRA, it is up to the pilot in command to maintain safe separation from other traffic. This is where your passengers can help spot other aircraft. Communicating your position at mandatory points and monitoring the SFRA communication frequency (123.05) is also an important task.

During this flight, you get fantastic views of the city skyline, the George Washington Bridge, the Intrepid Aircraft Carrier Museum, Governors' Island, Central Park, Lower Manhattan, and the Statue of Liberty. The most congested area tends to be around the Statue of Liberty, and it's common to share the area with helicopters and other aircraft circling the Lady. This area is where pilots need to decide if it is safe to circle the statue or bypass it. If you get to circle the statue, it's a great opportunity to get a unique view and some stunning pictures of this icon of freedom. A flight down the Hudson River is one of those unique experiences available to the general aviation community and it is an adventure you will never forget. If you haven't experienced it yet, reach out to a fellow EAA member that will need to get a pre-flight briefing. They may be even willing to fly with you, plus it's a good idea to fly with someone that has done it before. Planning and preparation is a must for a safe and enjoyable flight. Thanks to Steve Oakley, Steve Socolosky, and Hillary Huttenhower for the photos.



History Corner: Brainard Field—Built For Safety

by Bill Barry

In the October 2025 EAA166 newsletter's History Corner, I told the story of the tragic deaths of two Navy fliers who crashed trying to takeoff from the Hartford Golf Club on October 3, 1920. This accident prompted the creation of what is said to be the first municipal airfield in the United States: Hartford-Brainard Airport. Just eight months after the accident, the airport was dedicated in a lengthy event on June 21, 1921.

This may seem like a ridiculously short time to build an airport, but things were different 100 years ago. There were no major buildings or paved runways to be built. The city simply acquired a 350-acre cow pasture alongside the Connecticut River and after some minor improvements, designated it as Brainard Field. While creating the airport may have been relatively simple, the dedication ceremony was anything but. The afternoon began with speeches, headlined by the President of the Hartford Aviation Commission, Hiram Percy Maxim. Maxim (photo below, courtesy www.earlyaviators.com) was an interesting character; a radio pioneer and inventor who made a fortune in the early 20th Century on the first commercially successful firearm silencer. According to Maxim, U.S.



government officials had declared that the new airport was “one of the best in the country and only inferior to the military aerodromes of the United States Army and Navy.” The photo above is the Brainard Field Dedication, June 21, 1921 (Source: Connecticut Historical Society).

Once the speeches were done, the flying began. It kicked off with a race from Hartford to Springfield, MA, and return. The winning time was 25 minutes, 30 seconds. Flour bombing was the next event. Each pilot was equipped with five “bombs” that had to be dropped from an altitude of at least 500 feet during passes north to south over the airport. E.P. Lott won this contest flying in a Curtiss Jenny. Lott also won the next event, a spot landing contest. This was followed by a seaplane contest that involved a trip to the bridge in Middletown. The final event was an aerobatics contest. Starting from 2,500 feet, contestants had to fly a loop, an Immelmann to the right, an Immelmann to the left, a spin and one other maneuver of their choice.

All of these had to be accomplished before reaching 1,500 feet (without being allowed to climb). E.P. Lott also won this event. With the demonstrations completed, the day's events ended with passenger flights for those interested.

On July 20, 1927, big crowds returned to Brainard Field when Charles Lindbergh made it his first stop on his national tour in the Spirit of St. Louis. (He and the plane had returned from Paris to New York City by ship.) In his speech that day Lindbergh noted that "Hartford is to be complimented on foreseeing the future of aviation, and breaking the ice, so to speak, by putting in a good airport ..." While we may not see the huge crowds drawn by the dedication, or by Lindbergh's visit, these days EAA Chapter 166 keeps up the traditions begun a century ago of introducing the public to flying, especially with our Young Eagles events.



Left to right; Lieut. K. Fastenau, Lieut. Warrender, Lieut. S.P. Mills, Major Post, Capt. R.L. Meredith, Stuart Chadwicke, W.L. Keough, John M. Miller, E.P. Lott, O.W. Snell, C.S. Jones.

Pilots participating in the Brainard Field Dedication Day events, image courtesy of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Flight Advisor: Qualitative Evaluation, Cockpit Design

by Ken Katz

I recently underwent a checkout in a type of airplane that I had not flown before. This experience brought to mind several things that I would like to share with you.

The first lesson is how valuable it is to get flight experience in as wide a variety of aircraft as possible. At the various test pilot schools, this practice is known as qualitative evaluation. Qualitative evaluation flights build perspective and allow the pilot to better recognize both desirable and undesirable characteristics of airplanes. Before you flight test your homebuilt aircraft, it would be a good thing to fly a few different types of aircraft, preferably kinds of aircraft that you have not flown before.

The second lesson pertains to cockpit design and human factors. The particular airplane that I was flying—and I will not name the make and model to protect the guilty—had a cockpit design with some awful characteristics:

1. The retractable landing gear position indicator was essentially unreadable. Even if it had been readable, it was placed in an awkward location that detracted from easily viewing it.
2. Too many control knobs for systems were of the same shape and color, making it difficult to distinguish them during flight without effort. During World War II, it became standard in American military aircraft that throttle, mixture, and propeller controls would have distinctive shapes, flap handles would have a flap shape and tailhook handles (for carrier airplanes) would be shaped like a hook. Similar principles can be used for general aviation aircraft.
3. The labels indicating the function of several of the control knobs were placed in locations that obscured them behind the knobs themselves. The confusion and extra workload caused by this design can easily be imagined.

As you design the cockpit of your homebuilt aircraft, it would be advisable to keep these bad design practices in mind and avoid repeating them.

Check out the content on
our YouTube channel!



EAA166 Hartford, Connecticut

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EAA 166 Ray Scholar Update

EAA 166 Ray Scholar Will Coates is in his Senior year at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, contracted as an Air Force ROTC Cadet. Will is going to the Air Force Academy for “summer camp” and hopes to become a fighter pilot. Meanwhile, EAA 166 Ray Scholar Logan Vidal, in his Junior year at Jacksonville University, is interning with Delta Airline at its hub in Atlanta and is doing some traveling. Both Will and Logan flew with Steve down the New York City Special Flight Rules Area (NYC SFRA)—a first for Will. It never gets old! Of course, flying over to Sky Acres Airport for breakfast after working up such an appetite was just what was needed before flying back home. That’s EAA 166 President Steve Socolosky pictured with Will (left) and Logan (back). Logan shot the stunning image of the Statue of Liberty from the back of Steve’s airplane.



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



Any explanation needed?