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Taking Flight...



Young Aviators Camp Gives Students Lessons In Flight & Life

by Steve Schapiro

A student flies a Cherokee 140 by a Racine, Wisconsin lighthouse.

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The last student walked into the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) building at John H. Batten Field in Racine, Wisconsin, 15 minutes late. And he wasn't the only one who wasn't on time.

With that, the eight high school students in the "Young Aviators Camp" got their first lesson.

"I taught them what a pilot is bound by – not only time, but being early," said Stephen Myer, a pilot of 52 years and a retired Vice President of Lockheed Aircraft Company. "At the Skunk Works, if you were 10 minutes early, you were 5 minutes late."

Myers and the other instructors expect the students in this 5-day summer program to be prepared and ready to go 15 minutes early. "No one was late the rest of the week."

The mission of the Young Aviators Camp is to light the spark of young people's interest in aviation, science, technology, engineering and math. But

the campers get much more than that.

"What we're trying to inspire is a lifelong experience," said Jerry Kirkland, Aviation Department Manager for SC Johnson, and a member of the camp's board. "This particular program gives kids an opportunity to say, 'I really didn't like it,' or 'This is what I want to do.'"

Students can explore whether they are interested in aviation-related careers while building their confidence and learning skills like discipline, responsibility and being prepared that will serve them in anything they do in life.

"Aviation is not like a car where you can pull off the road," said Phillip Fountain, the camp's flight simulator instructor. "If something is not right, there are consequences."

"We learned how to preflight an aircraft and how important it is to be in perfect condition," said Dan Rankin, a 16-year-old sophomore who participated in the camp last year. "I



Students work on an aircraft engine. (L/R) Dan Sellers, Matt Blank, Dan Rankin and Jake Bissen.

didn't know how important that was."

Students rotate between different activities. At any given time two students are in the air, while the other six may be in ground school, getting time on an FAA-approved flight simulator, or receiving instruction on mechanics. The highlight is getting an hour of actual flight instruction each day.

"It's really cool that they let you fly the plane," said Rankin. "The instructor tells you what to do and then you do it."



Jake Bissen at the controls of the simulator with Phil Fountain overseeing the instruction.

Dan Sellers, also a 16-year-old sophomore at Prairie High School, said he really enjoyed landing the plane, even though he thought that was the most difficult part of camp.

"The first time landing, I was tense; it was a little stressful. Once I did it, I realized it wasn't that difficult and I had a real sense of accomplishment," said Sellers. "It is the hardest skill in flying."

Sellers has been flying with his father in the family's Cessna 182 since he was young, but much of what he learned was new to him. He pointed out that he had never done any flight planning or navigation before.

"I didn't realize how much multi-tasking there is in navigation, with the maps and coordinating radials,

communicating with the airport and juggling all that."

Rankin thought the flight maneuvers were the hardest part. "Stalling the aircraft – I was really nervous. But the instructors, the confidence they have, helps you overcome your fear and anxiousness," he said. "In the end, it wasn't too bad."

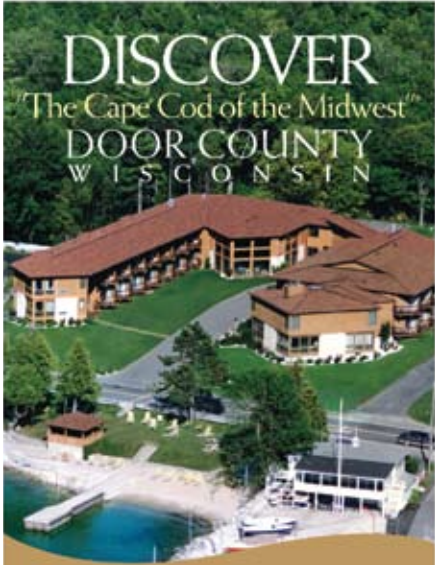


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* Source New York Times, October 20, 2006



(Front Row L/R): Dan Sellers, Matt Blank, Austin Beuhrens. (Back Row L/R): Ken Kaebisch, Ken Romzeis, Valerie Iverson, Jacob Lamb, Ryan Breaker, Jake Bissen, Dan Rankin and Phil Fountain.

Scott Sellers, Dan's father and the creator of the camp, pointed out that both boys were ready to solo by the end of camp, but since they were only 15 years old last year, they were not able to. Both boys intend to start flight training this summer and hope to solo soon.

"With the flight simulator and the immersion in the material, it is amazing how quick they learn," said the elder Sellers.

EAA Chapter 838 based at Batten Field has put thousands of dollars into making its flight simulator state of the art. The FAA has certified the simulator so time can be logged as simulated instruction and the LOA (Letter of Authorization) is framed and hangs on the wall.

The simulator is available for any pilot to use for flight training. You must be a member of the local EAA chapter, which costs \$35 plus \$5 for a nametag, and then it is \$20 an hour for simulator time.

It uses two computers and two monitors – one for the pilot and one for the instructor controlling the simulator. It has all the instruments you would find in a cockpit – a control yoke, rudder pedals and throttle quadrant, as well as radio and navigation stacks.

The instructor can control the pilot's view – selecting either a cockpit view showing the six main instruments (even though it's a computer, it's not a glass cockpit), or the view from just behind the aircraft,

which most students prefer. After the simulation, Fountain uses graphic depictions to show students how they were controlling the plane.

"The simulator gives them a chance to make mistakes," said Fountain.

The youngest student last year, the first full year of the camp, was 13-year-old Valerie Iverson. She would watch the other students as they flew the simulator to see what they were doing and compare herself to them.

"I really worked to encourage her," said Fountain. "Initially, she seemed a little scared, but she was determined."

Sean Dwyer, a retired chemist, teaches a portion of the ground school. His goal is to get kids to think by presenting information with lots of hands-on interaction.

One example is using a brown grocery bag from Piggly Wiggly to demonstrate *Charles Law*, which states a gas expands in direct proportion to its absolute temperature. Therefore, a bag of hot air has fewer molecules of air than the same volume of cold air, making a hot air balloon lighter than air.

"The kids think they're being entertained," said Dwyer. "But they are learning the chemistry and physics of aviation, about cause and effect."

In addition to learning the principles of flight, the students learn about weight and balance, basic flight planning, emergency procedures and mechanics.

Kirkland explained one of the goals is to include other parts of aviation. "Not everyone wants to be a pilot. Maybe a student will want to design planes, or fix them or be a navigator," he said.

Students toured the DeltaHawk factory across Batten Field to get a hands-on lesson in mechanics. They got to take apart the diesel aircraft engines that are made there, and learn how aircraft engines are similar to car engines and how they are different.

One of the things that Scott Sellers really liked as a parent, is how much of the camp included hands-on

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activities. "A lot of things for kids now are virtual reality. In this program they get to work with tools and a lot of different kinds of things."

Rankin noted, "The camp didn't just teach us how to fly. It gave us a little taste of everything." He is now considering a career in aviation, even though he isn't sure yet. "I would like to fly large airplanes somehow," he said.

For some parents, it might take a leap of faith to allow their child to participate.

"It's one thing to put your child in an after-school program," said Nancy Pierce, the organization's secretary. "It's something else to enroll your child in a program where they are going to fly in a small plane."

Sellers noted how serious and focused the kids were. "Every single one of them took the responsibility seriously," he said. "It was great to see them take this first step into mature adults."

Anyone involved in aviation knows that "safety" is one of the core principles, and it is stressed throughout the camp. All of the eight ground school and flight instructors have worked professionally in aviation.

One instructor is a retired Northwest Airlines pilot; another is a retired corporate pilot who flew Cessna Citations; and one of the flight instructors currently flies for SC Johnson. Since the Young Aviators Camp is a non-profit organization, the instructors are all volunteers, with the exception of the CFIs, who are paid by the camp for their services during the week.

This year the camp will be held August 9-13. To participate, students must complete an application, and say why they are applying. The camp costs \$550, which includes the five hours of actual flight instruction and five hours of simulated flight instruction, both of which can be logged.

Compared to regular summer camps, which can cost in the neighborhood of \$1,200, this is a bargain, noted Pierce. The flight time alone would cost more than the price of the camp, and that isn't including time in the simulator or ground school. Of the eight students last year, half received either a full or partial scholarship. Pierce said they hope to provide even more scholarships this year with two fundraisers.

The camp has already changed the direction of one of last year's students. Jacob Lamb, a Prairie High School graduate planned to major in information technology in college. As a result of the camp, he changed his major to engineering.

"They'll leave here with a little different mindset," said Fountain. "Even if they don't become pilots, they'll take this (experience) with them the rest of their lives."

For more information on how to



Young Aviators Camp board members (L/R): Jerry Kirkland, Steve Myers, Nancy Pierce and Phil Fountain in front of Steve Myers' Lancair.

apply or support the camp, visit the Young Aviators Camp web site, www.young-aviators.com. □

EAA Names Schapiro Senior Editor

OSHKOSH, WIS. – The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) has named Stephen A. Schapiro of Chicago, Illinois, senior editor of publications effective July 2010. In his position Schapiro is responsible for editing *EAA Sport Aviation*. Schapiro is a graduate of American University with a Master of Arts Degree in Print Journalism.



Stephen Schapiro

He has been an editor for a number of congressional and political publications, has been a volunteer and lecturer at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, program director for the AIDS Marathon Training Program, and assistant editor for *Air Cargo World*. Most recently Schapiro has written for *Airport Journals*, *Aero Brush Magazine*, and *Midwest Flyer Magazine*. Schapiro is a private pilot, and owns a 1968 Piper Arrow. □

A composite image for an attorney's advertisement. On the left, a man in a suit and tie is smiling, sitting in the cockpit of a red aircraft. On the right, there is text providing contact information and services.

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