



# THE LEADING EDGE

NEWSLETTER OF MUROC EAA CHAPTER 1000

Voted to Top Ten Newsletters, 1997, 1998 McKillop Award Competition

President	Gary Aldrich	661-609-0942
Vice-President	Scott Weathers	661-317-9453
Secretary	Kent Troxel	661-947-2647
Treasurer	Doug Dodson	661-256-7276
Newsletter Editor	Russ Erb	661-256-3806

<http://www.eaa1000.av.org>

January 2011

Chapter 1000 meets monthly on the third Tuesday of the month in the USAF Test Pilot School Scobee Auditorium, Edwards AFB, CA at 1700 or 5:00 PM, whichever you prefer. Any changes of meeting venue will be announced in the newsletter. Offer void where prohibited. Your mileage may vary. Open to military and civilian alike.

## This Month's Meeting:



**Vanhoy Air Force**  
**Tuesday, 18 January 2011**  
**1800 hrs (6:00 PM Civilian Time)**  
**Mojave Airport Terminal**  
**Mojave, CA**

You've heard of the VAF, haven't you? Van's Air Force? It's kind of a joke about all the RV series aircraft that are flying around out there. OK, we ALL know about one RV-8 project that has grown an inch of dust over the last six months. But, it's true that you can't swing a dead cat around a fly-in without hitting an RV of some kind. Now, it seems, there is another VAF out there. Our own **Dave Vanhoy** is assembling his own air force, so VAF just

might refer to the **Vanhoy Air Force**. OK, a bit of an exaggeration, Dave.

Please forgive us for being jealous. Dave has the Giles G-202, and he has a T-6 Texan. We have a number of aviation history buffs in our number. Someone, please correct me, but I think the T-6 is the only aircraft bearing the name of a particular state resident. The C-47 is the Dakota, but not the Dakotan. There is not a Louisianan. But, I digress.

Reader, please note: If I did not just digress in the preceding paragraph, it only means that **Evil Editor Zurg** has once again stepped in and edited my newsletter input to keep me from embarrassing myself by, well, digressing.

**Dave Vanhoy** has graciously offered his hangar at **Mojave** for our meeting this month. He will let us examine his aircraft and badger him with questions.

To get everyone to his hangar, we plan to assemble at the terminal building at KMHV and walk to the hangar. **Plan on meeting at the terminal at 1800.**

We will have the usual fare of snacks and drinks and C-cubes (chocolate chip cookies). After drooling over Dave's airplanes, we'll move the meeting to a suitable venue for dinner. That way, we don't have to go home and tell our parents, spouses, and significant others that we had only cookies and soft drinks for dinner. If Dave is still speaking to us after we drooled on his airplane, we'll buy him dinner. If he makes us laugh, we'll super size it, or maybe include a desert. See you there.

- **Scott "Stormy" Weathers**  
 Vice Kommandant

## Last Month's Meeting

**EAA Chapter 1000**  
 Kommandant's Kwarters  
 Kwartz Hill, CA  
 28 December 2010  
**Gary Aldrich**, Presiding

The final meeting of 2010, which also celebrated the non-denominational holiday of **Festivus** (**Festivus**...for the rest of us) was held at the Kwartz Hill estate of **Kommandant** and **Mrs. Kommandant Gary** and **Anne**

## THE LEADING EDGE

**Aldrich** as has been our custom for several years now. The gala was co-hosted by **First Dog Pixel**.

Twenty or so members partook of the **Kommandant's** vast selection of brews and wine, and enjoyed a traditional **Festivasagna** dinner with jelly donuts and brownies for dessert. In may be of interest to note that no food was harmed in the production of this dinner, unlike previous events.

Following the dinner and dessert, everyone jockeyed for the best seats in the living room around the **Festivus Pole**, the lusterless and unadorned aluminum pole which symbolizes nothing. The **Kommandant** declared open an opportunity for the "**Airing of Grievances**", but no one seemed interested. Perhaps a good thing as food fights can be messy, and dangerous if **Mrs. Kommandant** were to catch you.

Next came the "**Kommandant's Krap**" gift exchange, where some real...ah, gems, were revealed, including the mysterious gnome left at the house a few years back. **Mrs. Kommandant** was able to "regift" it to an unsuspecting recipient.

The "**Feats of Strength**" and "**Wrestling the Head of the Household to the Ground**" were dispensed with in lieu of the Kommandant's awarding of "**Cheesy Certificates and Pins**" for honorable chapter service.

Regrettably, the **Kommandant** did not repeat his world reknown juggling act involving a mug of beer and **Pixel** the dog.

The meeting concluded without injury or incident, any serious questioning of anyone's ancestry, or any threat by the Kommandant of his impending retirement.

Most, if not all, of this is true.

- **Kent "Cobra" Troxel**  
Minister of Propaganda

### Kommandant's Korner

I hope everyone survived the holiday season and is prepared for the challenges of 2011! The **Project Police** of Chapter 1000 sent off the old year with a bang with near-contiguous parties on **Festivus** and **New Year's Eve**. The **Festivus** bash was noteworthy as the first to be hosted by **First Dog Pixel**. Near as I can tell, the 19 assorted folks that attended the event at the **Kommandant's Kwarters** were pleased with the food and frivolity, though no one stepped forward to accomplish the traditional "wrestling of the host to the ground". I can only assume that Pixel's flashing fangs and razor-sharp claws hidden amongst a large ball of white fuzz scared everyone off. The tactic next **Festivus** should be to get her liquored-up earlier in the evening. The normally boisterous **Kommandant's Krap Exchange** was enjoyable as well and I think everyone was pleased with the gift they chose, or stole, or both.

There were only a couple of "health days" in between the **Festivus** party and a soiree hosted by **PPO Bill Irvine**

and **BFF Joanne** at L00's "**Flying Dog Ranch**". Though not an official Chapter 1000 function, the **Project Police** were well represented (though cloaked in holiday regalia to avoid detection) and acquitted themselves honorably. The New Year was rung in at the appointed hour (PST, not EST) as friends, new and old, celebrated with good food, music, and drink. (Note to self on the "drink"...Do not let **Lyn "Sweet Cheeks" McNeely** pour your Scotch. I don't quite remember the ride home, but **Mrs. Kommandant** tells me I was significantly "over-served".)

You may have noticed a conspicuous lack of flying-related drivel this month. Well, between the parties, a trip to Maui, and the passage of several fronts (both types: "weather" and "whiskey") the poor ol' **Fightin' Skywagon** has languished in a slightly soggy hangar since the Thanksgiving trip reported in these pages last month. I hope to push her out into the sunshine this weekend to see if I still remember how to fly it. I did get airborne a few times in December in the **TG-14A Ximango** but fear the transfer of training between a 1800 pound motorglider and a 3000 pound Skywagon is minimal, at best.

**Anne** joins me in wishing you and yours a happy and prosperous 2011. Please continue to Fly Safe and Check Six!

- **Gary Aldrich**  
Kommanding

### Gene's Top Ten List of Pilot Killers

(Reprinted by permission from <http://www.genebenson.com> . Suggested by the EAA HQ Chapter Office. Last month we presented methods 10 through 6. This month we present the top 5 methods to kill yourself with your airplane.)

#### #5 - Inadequate Preflight Preparation

More than a few years ago the FAA had a pamphlet titled "Safety Must be Planned." It detailed the importance of preflight planning. Such a publication would seem rudimentary by today's standards but the message is still important. Far too many accidents are caused by a lack of planning. Most result from inadequate planning regarding fuel but some come from failure to make sure that there is a suitable runway, that the weather will be satisfactory, and few other causes. The following accident illustrates the importance of planning every flight, even the local training flights.

Our accident example happened in 2006 in Colorado and involves a Beech turbocharged Bonanza. The pilot had recently purchased the airplane and was receiving type-specific flight instruction to comply with insurance policy requirements. He had accumulated 6 hours of instruction. The pilots declined his offer to refuel. According to the line serviceman, when he visually checked the airplane's fuel tanks prior to takeoff they were "half full." If accurate, the airplane had 18.5 gallons aboard at the initial takeoff. The airplane had been aloft for about 1 hour, 15 minutes, when it arrived at another airport and made 2 full-stop landings. On the next departure numerous witnesses

reported hearing the engine "sputtering and coughing" and seeing the extended landing gear being retracted before the airplane struck a parked semi truck in a residential neighborhood. It exploded on impact and both the airplane and semi truck were consumed by fire. The pilot and 15,000 hour CFI were both fatally injured. The CFI had recently retired after a career as a professional pilot.



**Preflight planning could have prevented this fatal accident in Colorado in 2006.**

The fuel selector was positioned to the left tank which was apparently run dry causing the loss of power. There may or may not have been fuel remaining in the right tank but it is doubtful that switching tanks following a loss of power at low altitude on takeoff would have restored power in time anyway.

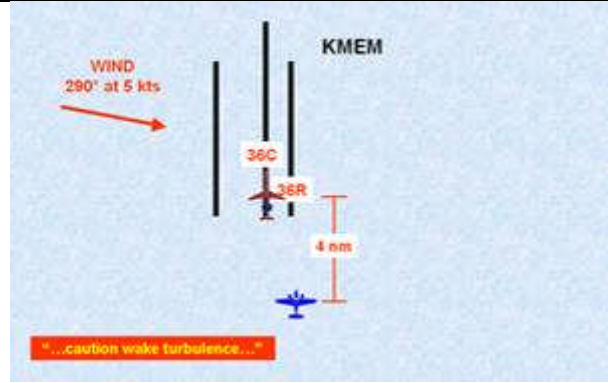
"The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: the pilot's inadequate preflight planning/decision by not having the airplane refueled prior to takeoff, and allowing the engine to be starved of fuel because he failed to switch the fuel selector valve. A contributing factor was the flight instructor's inadequate supervision of the flight."

This accident could have been avoided by planning the flight and the associated fuel consumption. The plan must include having enough fuel and when to switch tanks if the airplane does not have the capability to feed from both tanks.

**#4 Failure to Maintain Situational Awareness**

Maintaining situational awareness is important in many aspects of life. We need to be aware of our surroundings while walking through a mall parking lot after dark. While driving we need to be aware of the car approaching from the side street. Flying an airplane requires even more attention to the events happening around us because of the greater speed involved and the addition of a third dimension. Many of the flight factors having a safety impact can't even be seen so they must be tracked by indirect means such as an alert from a controller.

The accident example illustrates how the failure to maintain total situational awareness can lead to disaster. The pilot was given two warnings of possible wake turbulence but failed to plan his approach to compensate for the wake of a regional jet that he probably never saw.



**The EMB 145 was to land on runway 36C and the Baron was to land on runway 36R. Note the wind direction.**

The accident happened in Memphis in 2003. A Beech Baron 58 was approaching the airport after a flight from Tampa. An EMB 145 regional jet was also in the vicinity of the airport. The weather was very good VFR with the wind out of 290 degrees at 5 knots. The EMB 145 was to land on Runway 36C and the Baron was to land on Runway 36R. The Baron pilot was given a vector to intercept the Runway 36R localizer and was warned of possible wake turbulence from the arriving EMB 145. He was told that he would be 4 miles in trail. He was cleared to land by the tower and again warned of the possible wake turbulence.



Official NTSB photo

The EMB 145 had landed and exited the runway before the Baron approached. The Baron's approach was completely normal until it was about 15 feet above the runway. Witnesses observed the airplane make a sharp roll to the left and impact the ground between the two runways.

"The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: An encounter with wake turbulence on approach, which resulted in the pilot's inability to maintain control and subsequent in-flight collision with the ground."

This tragedy was completely avoidable. Every pilot is taught about the dangers of wake turbulence and how to avoid them. But to avoid this and other invisible dangers pilots must be aware of their surroundings and always think ahead of the airplane.

## THE LEADING EDGE

Click [here](#) to view an article on wake turbulence that features more details and graphics of this accident.

### #3 Failure to Have/Execute an Alternate Plan

Many things in life, from a football game plan to a flight, require a "Plan B" in case the situation changes. The most changeable element of aviation is the weather. Many accidents have been caused by pilots pushing the envelope when it is important to reach the destination but the weather has deteriorated.



Official NTSB photo

This accident example involved a Lake LA-4-200 amphibian that crashed into a hill while scud running in New Hampshire in 2004. The proposed route of flight was from Plattsburgh New York to Concord New Hampshire. The pilot was instrument rated but not current for instrument flight. He received a weather briefing that indicated marginal VFR conditions all along the mountainous route. He departed VFR and flew above the clouds at 9,000 feet until, nearing the destination, he spotted what he believed to be a hole in the overcast. He descended into the hole but reported that the hole closed at about 3500 feet MSL and that he stayed on instruments at that altitude for awhile. He learned that the ceiling at Concord was 1400 feet and he apparently began a descent in an attempt to get below the overcast. The airplane impacted mountainous terrain at an elevation of 2490 feet MSL. The pilot's passenger, his son, died in the accident but the pilot survived.

"The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: The pilot's continued VFR flight into IMC conditions, and his failure to maintain terrain clearance, which resulted in a controlled flight into terrain. Factors in the accident were the low cloud ceiling and the pilot's lack of recent instrument time."

It was reported that the purpose of the flight was to return the pilot's son to school. If this is true, there may have been some perceived urgency in making the flight. Perhaps an important exam or meeting was scheduled. In many weather-related accidents, the perceived importance of the trip is directly proportional to the degree of risk taken by the pilot.

Many accidents could be avoided if only an alternate plan had been formulated. A plan that would allow the

desired outcome to be accomplished without the need to fly in poor weather or with a known mechanical defect would greatly lessen the perceived importance of the flight. The time to travel by car from Plattsburgh to Concord is about 5 hours.

Click [here](#) to view an article on Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT) that includes more details and photos of this accident.

### #2 Failure to Follow Accepted, Safe Practices

This pilot killer is so pervasive that it is difficult to select a single representative accident. Accidents in this category include buzzing, failure to follow a checklist, neglected maintenance, flying without proper training and certification, and a host of other causes.



#### **In 2006 a pilot was fatally injured and his grandson passenger was severely injured and burned when the pilot landed his Cessna 180 on a residential street and attempted to takeoff.**

There is probably not a representative accident for this category but the following case illustrates an apparent lack of regard for accepted, safe operating procedures. In 2006 a pilot was fatally injured and his grandson passenger was severely injured and burned when the pilot landed his Cessna 180 on a residential street and attempted to takeoff. The airplane struck powerlines running parallel with the street, crashed and burned. A witness reported seeing the airplane flying low. It disappeared behind a house and the witness heard a loud noise which was the airplane striking a street sign as it landed. The witness drove down the street and observed the airplane taxi back, make a 180 degree turn, and begin a takeoff roll. The airplane struck the street sign for the second time and continued the takeoff roll. It became airborne and drifted off the center of the road where the left wing came up under the wires. The airplane rolled across the wires, impacted the ground in a near vertical descent and burst into flames.

The physician-pilot was a long-time resident of the Oklahoma town in which the accident occurred so it is unlikely that he mistook the street for a runway. Even if he did make that error, his decision to takeoff from the street is inexcusable. Taking off from a residential street certainly does not constitute following safe practices. Up until the takeoff the total damage was a bent street sign and a dented

leading edge. After the accident, the damage includes the death of the pilot, months of hospitalization, numerous surgeries, and permanent disfigurement for the young passenger, and a destroyed airplane.

"The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: The pilot's selection of unsuitable terrain, a residential street, for both takeoff and landing, which resulted in a collision with a static wire and terrain during takeoff-initial climb."

Accepted, safe practices have all evolved from accidents or close calls. They are the ultimate examples of learning from the mistakes of others. They exist for a reason and should be followed.

## #1 Failure to Exercise Due Diligence

"Due Diligence" is a legal term but has real meaning in the practical sense. It simply means that a person attends to required tasks and issues with the necessary standard of care. All pilots must accept a responsibility to perform due diligence in all aspects of their flying. Just as a patient who requires surgery trusts his or her life to the surgeon, passengers and others on the ground trust their lives to the pilot. This applies to the pilot of the smallest airplane as well as to the captain of a large airliner.



### **Making a heading check, following a taxi diagram, and observing company safety procedures would all be considered as exercising due diligence.**

This example shows how a professional airline crew failed to exercise due diligence and directly caused 49 deaths and one serious injury. The captain was among the fatalities and the first officer was the only survivor. The accident occurred in Lexington, Kentucky in 2006. The crew of a Comair CRJ-100 attempted to execute a takeoff on the wrong runway. They had been cleared to taxi to and takeoff from Runway 22 but instead lined up on Runway 26 which was not long enough. The takeoff was made in pre-dawn conditions. Runway 22 was well lit while Runway 26 was dark. Company procedures require a "sterile cockpit", or no conversation not directly necessary for the operation of the aircraft, below 10,000 feet. The cockpit voice recorder (CVR) revealed that casual conversation about their families continued as they taxied to the runway.

Every instrument pilot and most private pilots are taught to make a final heading check before beginning the takeoff. This very basic check confirms that the heading indicator is correct and that the airplane is on the proper runway. This check, required of every instrument flying

student, was obviously not performed by either of these (supposedly) professional pilots.

For several years now the FAA has put great emphasis on runway safety. A key component of the FAA program is the use of a taxi diagram. It is hard to imagine that an airline crew could have avoided exposure to this program in some form.

Making a heading check, following a taxi diagram, and observing company safety procedures would all be considered as exercising due diligence.

Why would any pilot fail to exercise due diligence when lives are at stake? Most pilots don't consider themselves as daredevils. Most pilots want to be thought of as being safe. Failure to exercise due diligence is an insidious problem. It creeps into a pilot's psyche a little at a time. A hurried preflight inspection, a skimpy preflight plan or a single incidence of a skipped heading check all increase the probability of more carelessness each time they occur without consequences. Each time a pilot is careless and gets away with it, that behavior is reinforced and is more likely to happen again. We can't allow ourselves to fall into that trap. We must treat every aspect of every flight with the diligence it deserves.

## Summary

Nearly all accidents are preventable. Most are easily preventable. Pilots have a responsibility to themselves and others to, "Fly like your life depends on it."

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## Kommandant Inspects the San Diego Air Museum

Back in September 2010 the **Kommandant** and **Mrs. Kommandant** were near San Diego enjoying their timeshare. One of the things they did while there was to inspect the San Diego Air Museum. Located in Balboa Park, they have crammed an amazing number of aircraft into a fairly small facility. There is no confirmation to the rumor that the **Kommandant** was looking for exhibits to "relocate" to the Edwards Flight Test Museum.



**The Convair F2Y Sea Dart, the world's only supersonic seaplane, stands guard over the entrance to the museum**

## THE LEADING EDGE



Also outside the entrance is an SR-71, saved from the scrapper because of its very high asbestos content. Note the excellent *Project Police Pointing Technique* demonstrated by Mrs. Kommandant



Also in the Central Powers section was a Fokker Dr.1 Dreidecker, as flown by (amongst other aircraft types) Baron Manfred von Richtofen, displayed with its arch nemesis, Snoopy on his doghouse



Inside the museum, Charles A. Lindberg comes in after flying another mission and greets Mrs. Kommandant with a kiss



Since Snoopy can't be everywhere, he was supplemented with the SPAD VIIc.I, similar to the type flown by Eddie Rickenbacker



In the WWI section is the Fokker E.III Eindecker, similar to the types flown by Max Immelmann, who had an aerobatic maneuver named after him, and Oswald Bölcke, who didn't



After the war, we find an early Pan American Airlines airliner, the Ford-Stout Trimotor



Every excellent museum needs its own Jimmy Doolittle Gee Bee racer, where the only seat is way back in coach



"Hey, Gary! Do you think JDIII can get you checked out in this?"



Always very cool is the Horton Flying Wing, even if it never did go operational



Looking up is a Mercury Space Capsule, seating for one. Bring your own booster.



For those who like to travel with a friend, try the Gemini space capsule



Finally, always a favorite, the Pitts Special, similar to the original aircraft in the Vanhoy Air Force

### Web Site Update

As of 8 January 2011, the hit counter showed **135927**, for a hit rate of 16 hits/day for the last month.



Just a reminder that the EAA Chapter 1000 Web Site is hosted courtesy of Quantum Networking Solutions, Inc.

You can find out more about Qnet at <http://www.qnet.com> or at 661-538-2028.

**Chapter 1000 Calendar**

**Jan 18: EAA Chapter 1000 Monthly Meeting**, 6:00 p.m., Mojave Airport Terminal, Mojave CA. (661) 609-0942

Feb 1: EAA Chapter 49 Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m., General William J. Fox Field, Lancaster, CA. (661) 948-0646

Feb 8: EAA Chapter 1000 Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 p.m., High Cay, 4431 Knox Ave, Rosamond CA. (661) 609-0942

**Feb 15: EAA Chapter 1000 Monthly Meeting**, 5:00 p.m., Edwards AFB. USAF Test Pilot School, Scobee Auditorium. (661) 609-0942

Mar 1: EAA Chapter 49 Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m., General William J. Fox Field, Lancaster, CA. (661) 948-0646

Mar 8: EAA Chapter 1000 Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 p.m., High Cay, 4431 Knox Ave, Rosamond CA. (661) 609-0942

**Mar 15: EAA Chapter 1000 Monthly Meeting**, 5:00 p.m., Edwards AFB. USAF Test Pilot School, Scobee Auditorium. (661) 609-0942

Apr 5: EAA Chapter 49 Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m., General William J. Fox Field, Lancaster, CA. (661) 948-0646

Apr 12: EAA Chapter 1000 Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 p.m., High Cay, 4431 Knox Ave, Rosamond CA. (661) 609-0942

**Apr 19: EAA Chapter 1000 Monthly Meeting**, 5:00 p.m., Edwards AFB. USAF Test Pilot School, Scobee Auditorium. (661) 609-0942

May 3: EAA Chapter 49 Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m., General William J. Fox Field, Lancaster, CA. (661) 948-0646

May 10: EAA Chapter 1000 Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 p.m., High Cay, 4431 Knox Ave, Rosamond CA. (661) 609-0942

May 17: No Third Tuesday Meeting. Go to Airport Barbecue instead.

**May 21: Twentieth Annual Project Police Airport Barbecue**, Rosamond Skypark (L00), Rosamond CA. (661) 609-0942

Jul 25-31: EAA Airventure Oshkosh. Multiple **Project Police** missions are currently in planning.

To join Chapter 1000, send your name, address, EAA number, and \$20 dues to: EAA Chapter 1000, Doug Dodson, 4431 Knox Ave, Rosamond CA 93560-6428. Membership in National EAA (\$40, 1-800-843-3612) is required.

Contact our officers by e-mail:  
 President/Flight Advisor Gary Aldrich: gary.aldrich@pobox.com  
 Vice President Scott Weathers: flynwvx@pobox.com  
 Secretary Kent Troxel: kenttroxel@sbcglobal.net  
 Treasurer Doug Dodson: houdu@pobox.com  
 Technical Counselors: Gary Sobek: Gary@rvdar.com  
 Bill Irvine: wgirvine@yahoo.com

**EAA Chapter 1000 Technical Assistants**

<i>Composite Construction</i>		
<b>Doug Dodson</b>	douglas.dodson@pobox.com	661-256-7276
<b>George Gennuso</b>	pulsar1@sbcglobal.net	661-265-0333
<b>Brian Martinez</b>	brianmmartinez@aol.com	661-943-5379
<b>Bob Waldmiller</b>	waldmilr@qnet.com	661-256-0932
<i>Wood Construction</i>		
<b>Bob Waldmiller</b>	waldmilr@qnet.com	661-256-0932
<i>Aluminum Sheet Metal Construction</i>		
<b>Bill Irvine</b>	wgirvine@yahoo.com	661-948-9310
<b>Miles Bowen</b>	cessna170bdriver@yahoo.com	661-822-0806
<b>Russ Erb</b>	erbman@pobox.com	661-256-3806
<i>Welding/Welded Steel Tube Construction</i>		
<b>Russ Erb</b>	erbman@pobox.com	661-256-3806
<i>Engine Installation</i>		
<b>Bob Waldmiller</b>	waldmilr@qnet.com	661-256-0932
<b>Doug Dodson</b>	douglas.dodson@pobox.com	661-256-7276
<i>Electrical Systems</i>		
<b>Miles Bowen</b>	cessna170bdriver@yahoo.com	661-822-0806
<i>Instrumentation and avionics requirements for VFR/IFR</i>		
<b>Gary Aldrich</b>	gary.aldrich@pobox.com	661-609-0942

Inputs for the newsletter or any comments can be sent to Russ Erb, 661-256-3806, by e-mail to [erbman@pobox.com](mailto:erbman@pobox.com)

From the **Project Police** legal section: As you probably suspected, contents of *The Leading Edge* are the viewpoints of the authors. No claim is made and no liability is assumed, expressed or implied as to the technical accuracy or safety of the material presented. The viewpoints expressed are not necessarily those of Chapter 1000 or the Experimental Aircraft Association. **Project Police** reports are printed as they are received, with no attempt made to determine if they contain the minimum daily allowance of truth. So there!

**THE LEADING EDGE**  
**MUROC EAA CHAPTER 1000 NEWSLETTER**  
 C/O Russ Erb  
 3435 Desert Cloud Ave  
 Rosamond CA 93560-7692  
<http://www.eaa1000.av.org>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:**  
**MONTHLY MEETING 18 JAN @ MOJAVE APT**  
**FESTIVUS DEBAUCHERY DOCUMENTED**  
**TOP 5 PILOT KILLERS**  
**SAN DIEGO AIR MUSEUM REVIEW**



*The Leader In Recreational Aviation*