

EAA Chapter 1246

Exemplifying EAA's Qualities

By Natalie B. David

Located in McKinney, Texas, EAA Chapter 1246 began in November 1998 as an effort to bring the EAA experience closer to home. "There was another chapter over in Dallas that was a pretty long drive for those who lived out in the Plano and McKinney area," says Bob J. Rogers, current EAA Chapter 1246 president and founding member. "So we got together and formed a chapter and, sure enough, in the first year we had close to 100 members."

In what has been 10 years of activity, EAA Chapter 1246 has maintained more than 100 members in its fold with a goal that exemplifies both love for aviation and a thirst for knowledge of flight: guest speakers from a range of aviation subjects are the focal points of the monthly group meetings and Rogers estimates that a large percentage of EAA Chapter 1246's congregation has experimental aircraft. "That's a real big part of our chapter, but we don't exclude people just because they don't have an experimental airplane. It's broader than that," says Rogers, careful to note that some of EAA Chapter 1246's members are just aviation enthusiasts or owners of production aircraft.

Chapter members prone to construction build a wide range of aircraft; however, the group's building contingent typically fall into one of two categories: composite (fiberglass) builders or traditional metal plane builders. "There is some good-natured ribbing between the two groups," says Rogers, himself the proud papa of a metal-bodied Mustang II. "The composite builders and the traditional metal plane builders are always making jokes about the other person's type of airplane."

Many of the chapter's aircraft builders make the results of their efforts available via the club's award-winning Web site (it won second place at the 2007 EAA AirVenture) or their own personal Web sites that document the process. Chapter members are always more than willing to help out, in person, fellow club members who may



Very active in the community, EAA Chapter 1246 hosts a fly-in three or four times each year and other big events like a fish fry, poker run and even a chili cook-off (above), with winners listed on their award-winning Web site.

be having trouble with a similar aircraft. "There are many people who have already been down that road and are more than willing to go over and give their advice and help troubleshoot and steer the builder in the right direction to make sure that they don't go astray," says Rogers.

Beyond construction, EAA Chapter 1246 places emphasis on education, as exemplified by the monthly meeting speakers. Programs have covered topics ranging from the light-sport-aircraft movement, flying seaplanes and anti-collision and traffic avoidance systems. Speakers have included the executive director of Dallas's Frontiers of Flight Museum and even members from the Dallas Area Rocket Society.

In addition to the monthly meetings, held on the second Thursday of every month at McKinney's Collin County Community College, some chapter

members have impromptu fly-outs most weekends, usually \$100 Hamburger runs. The chapter also sponsors a monthly fly-out. "We encourage everybody in the chapter who can go and get together and fly to some pre-arranged destination that's usually within 100 miles, where we can have lunch," says Rogers. "And if you don't have an airplane, there's always an extra seat in somebody's airplane that you can catch a ride in."

Three or four times a year, the chapter hosts a fly-in, which often draws dozens of airplanes from outside the membership. "We often get more than 200 people at our events and they are a lot of fun," explains Rogers. Last year, the big events were a fish fry, a poker run, and even a chili cook-off, with winners listed on the chapter's Web site. ➔

For more information, visit www.eaa1246.org.